

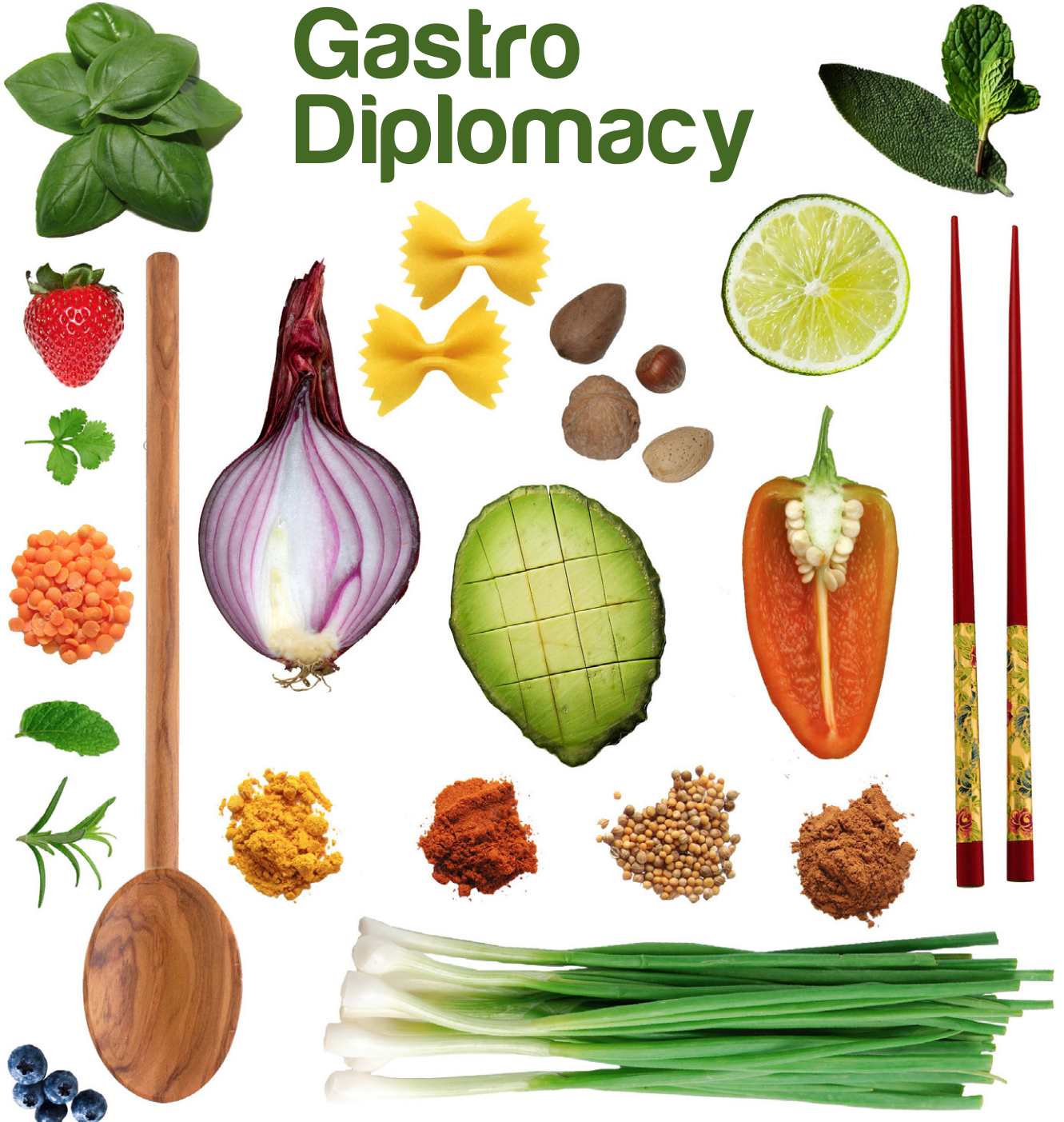


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Its unique mission is to provide a common forum for the views of both scholars and practitioners from around the globe, in order to explore key concepts in the study and practice of public diplomacy. *Public Diplomacy Magazine* is published bi-annually, in print and on the web at www.publicdiplomacymagazine.org.

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ABOUT THE COVER

by Reagan Cook

The cover design ties together a collection of social and cultural symbols of international cuisine. Distinct regional dishes are deconstructed into an arrangement of popular ingredients, handpicked from a global marketplace. This collection of foodstuffs, displayed as elements of a potential meal, invites the viewer to engage with the unfinished inventory, and to invent a recipe that fits their own individual creativity and taste.



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Assessing the Role of Middle Powers

*M*iddle power states have become important players on the world stage, carving out a unique and significant role in international politics. Their foreign policy considerations are different than those of superpowers or of developing states.

They face a delicate balancing act that is both an opportunity and a challenge. Middle states are clamouring for a larger role in global politics. They are seeking more recognition of their economic importance and their political clout, as well as cohesive greater role in international organizations.



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

ISSUE 11, WINTER 2014

Food brings people together. Throughout time, national cuisines have spread organically through migration, trade routes, and globalization. Others have been deliberately packaged and delivered to foreign audiences—both by state and non-state actors—as a means of expressing a country’s culture and values. This form of cultural diplomacy, whether deliberate or unintentional, has been coined “gastrodiplomacy.”

Gastrodiplomacy is the practice of sharing a country’s cultural heritage through food. Countries such as South Korea, Peru, Thailand, and Malaysia have recognized the seductive qualities food can have, and are leveraging this unique medium of cultural diplomacy to increase trade, economic investment, and tourism, as well as to enhance soft power. Gastrodiplomacy offers foreign publics the opportunity to engage with other cultures through food, often from a distance. This form of edible nation branding is a growing trend in public diplomacy.

The Winter 2014 issue of *Public Diplomacy Magazine* contributes to the burgeoning scholarship on gastrodiplomacy and its role in public diplomacy. Our feature and perspective pieces create a theoretical and practical framework for discussing gastrodiplomacy in multiple contexts. From the heated debate over the ownership of dolma, to how food television travelogues play a role in national image, to a prescriptive piece suggesting how to better measure and evaluate gastrodiplomacy programs. Our case studies examine the gastrodiplomacy of Japan and Greece, while our interviews cover an Asian night market in Los Angeles and elegant Indian food in Texas. In addition, *Public Diplomacy Magazine* speaks with a U.S. Foreign Service Officer who specializes in gastrodiplomacy. We close this issue with a book review on cultural icon and chef Eddie Huang’s new biography, *Fresh Off The Boat*, and an endnote to introduce our next issue: “The Power of Non-State Actors.”

We would like to express our gratitude to the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, the Annenberg Press, the USC Dornsife School of International Relations, and the USC Master of Public Diplomacy Program. Their continued support has helped make *Public Diplomacy Magazine* a leader in the field of public diplomacy.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank all our contributors for adding to the dialogue on the emerging and expanding field of gastrodiplomacy.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together. We encourage you to visit our website (www.publicdiplomacymagazine.com) to view our online-only articles on gastrodiplomacy, past issues, and to participate in the ongoing conversation on public diplomacy trends.



Shannon Haugh
Editor-in-Chief

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IN CHANGING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL IMAGE**

BRADEN RUDDY

THE STATE OF GASTRODIPLOMACY

BY PAUL ROCKOWER

It is fitting that a magazine devoted to studying innovations and trends in the field of public diplomacy has turned its focus on an increasingly popular form of cultural diplomacy: gastrodiplo­macy.

Public Diplomacy Magazine's Summer 2009 issue on middle powers explored the behavior of middle powers and the contours of “middlepowermanship.” Articles in this issue outlined how emerging countries are using public diplomacy more prominently to break out of a crowded field of competing nations. Meanwhile, the issue on cultural diplomacy looked at the various means that countries used to communicate their idiosyncratic cultures, ranging from Japan's use of *Anime* cartoons to conduct cultural diplomacy, to how Nigeria made their culture a continental phenomenon, through the Nigerian film industry, *No­llywood*. Both editions led the way towards a better understanding of the field of public diplomacy, and helped create the space in which gastrodiplo­macy is beginning to be understood.

THE GENESIS OF GASTRODIPLOMACY

Gastrodiplo­macy represents one of the more exciting trends in public diplomacy outreach. The subject of culinary cultural diplomacy—how to use food to communicate culture in a public diplomacy context—began with the application of academic theories of public diplomacy to case studies in the practice of the cultural diplomacy craft.

Gastrodiplo­macy was borne out of pinpointing case studies in the field and connecting these cases to a broader picture. An obscure word in an obscure article about Thailand's outreach to use its restaurants as forward cultural outposts as a means to enhance its nation brand has become a field of study within the expanding public diplomacy canon. The highlighting of disparate case studies such as South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Peru, among others, led to patterns of practice; patterns led to broader pictures of trends that proved an innovative means of conducting successful cultural diplomacy.¹

Scholars of gastrodiplo­macy have remained cognizant of the manner in which food has shaped both world history and diplomatic interactions. Mary Jo Pham notes:

Throughout history, food has played a significant role in shaping the world, carving ancient trade

routes and awarding economic and political power to those who handled cardamom, sugar, and coffee. Trade corridors such as the incense and spice route through India into the Levant and the triangular trade route spanning from Africa to the Caribbean and Europe laid the foundations for commerce and trade between modern nation-states. Indeed, these pathways encouraged discovery—weaving the cultural fabric of contemporary societies, tempering countless palates, and ultimately making way for the globalization of taste and food culture.²

There are few aspects as deeply or uniquely tied to culture, history, or geography as cuisine. Food is a tangible tie to our respective histories, and serves as a medium to share our unique cultures.

The most effective cultural diplomacy takes national traits and cultures, distills them to their most tangible forms, and communicates them to audiences abroad. Like the successful use of music as cultural diplomacy, gastrodiplo­macy also seeks to create a tangible, emotional and trans-rational connection.³ Both music and food work to create an emotional and transcendent connection that can be felt even across language barriers. Gastrodiplo­macy seeks to create a more oblique emotional connection via cultural diplomacy by using food as a medium for cultural engagement. On this emotional connection, Rachel Wilson comments:

Because we experience food through our senses (touch and sight, but especially taste and smell), it possesses certain visceral, intimate, and emotion qualities, and as a result we remember the food we eat and the sensations we felt while eating it. The senses create a strong link between place and memory, and food serves as the material representation of the experience.⁴

As such, gastrodiplo­macy understands that you do not win hearts and minds through rational information, but rather through indirect emotional connections. Therefore, a connection with audiences is made in tangible sensory interactions as a means of indirect public diplomacy via cultural connections. These ultimately help to shape long-term cultural perceptions in a manner that can be both

more effective and more indirect than targeted strategic communications.

THEORIES OF GASTRODIPLOMACY

In offering a theoretical construction for the field of gastrodiplomacy, it is necessary to define the framework. This author highlights the characteristics of gastrodiplomacy by comparing it to the practice of culinary diplomacy.⁵ In drawing distinctions to the field, the author notes the equivalence of diplomacy to public diplomacy, thusly culinary diplomacy is to gastrodiplomacy.⁶ While diplomacy involves high-level communications from government to government, public diplomacy is the act of communication between governments and non-state actors to foreign publics. Similarly, this author defines culinary diplomacy as the use of food for diplomatic pursuits, including the proper use of cuisine amidst the overall formal diplomatic procedures. Thus, culinary diplomacy is the use of cuisine as a medium to enhance formal diplomacy in official diplomatic functions such as visits by heads-of-state, ambassadors, and other dignitaries. Culinary diplomacy seeks to increase bilateral ties by strengthening relationships through the use of food and dining experiences as a means to engage visiting dignitaries.

In comparison, gastrodiplomacy is a public diplomacy attempt to communicate culinary culture to foreign publics in a fashion that is more diffuse; it takes a wider focus to influence the broader public audience rather than high-level elites. Gastrodiplomacy seeks to enhance the edible nation brand through cultural diplomacy that highlights and promotes awareness and understanding of national culinary culture with wide swathes of foreign publics. Moreover, as public diplomacy in the age of globalization transcends state-to-public relations and increasingly includes people-to-people engagement, gastrodiplomacy also transcends the realm of state-to-public communication, and can also be found in forms of citizen diplomacy.

Gastrodiplomacy should not be confused with international public relations campaigns to promote various national food products. Simply promoting a food product of foreign origin does not mean that such promotions constitute gastrodiplomacy. Rather, gastrodiplomacy remains a more holistic approach to raise international awareness

of a country's edible nation brand through the promotion of its culinary and cultural heritage. Gastrodiplomacy also differs from *food diplomacy*, which involves the use of food aid and food relief in a crisis or catastrophe. While food diplomacy can aid a nation's public diplomacy image, it is not a holistic use of cuisine as an avenue to communicate culture through public diplomacy.⁷

GASTRODIPLOMACY 2.0: POLY- AND PARA-

Thus far, most gastrodiplomacy case studies come from states defined as "middle powers." Middle powers are that fair class of states that neither reign on high as super-powers nor reside at the shallow end of the international power dynamic, but exist somewhere in the vast muddled middle of the global community.⁸

Public Diplomacy Magazine's issue on middle powers explored the hallmarks and techniques of middle powers and how they navigate the fight through the congested swathe of states in the middle of the pack in the global system. In writing about the challenges facing middle powers, Eytan Gilboa notes:

GASTRODIPLOMACY SEEKS TO ENHANCE THE EDIBLE NATION BRAND THROUGH CULTURAL DIPLOMACY THAT HIGHLIGHTS AND PROMOTES AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF NATIONAL CULINARY CULTURE WITH WIDE SWATHES OF FOREIGN PUBLICS.

Peoples around the world don't know much about them, or worse, are holding attitudes shaped by negative stereotyping, hence the need to capture attention and educate publics around the world. Since the resources of middle powers are limited, they have to distinguish themselves in certain attractive areas.⁹

States like Norway and Qatar focused on niche areas like conflict resolution.¹⁰ Other middle power states, like South Korea and Taiwan, have pushed to raise their nation brands through the arts, music, and cuisine that make their respective cultures unique.¹¹

There are a number of difficulties that middle powers share in regards to their visibility issues on the global stage. Middle powers face the fundamental challenge of recognition in that global publics are either unaware of them, lack nuance or broad understanding, or hold negative opinions—thus requiring the need to secure broader global attention. As culinary cultural diplomacy scholars have learned through the emergence of the field, gastrodiplomacy helps under-recognized nation brands increase their cultural visibility through the projection of national

or regional cuisine.

Yet it is not middle powers alone that are conducting gastrodiplomacy now. In 2012, the U.S. Department of State embarked on its own culinary cultural diplomacy campaign: the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership. The Diplomatic Culinary Partnership includes equal parts culinary diplomacy—through the creation of an American Chef Corps to help engage with the State Department in formal diplomatic functions—and gastrodiplomacy—through sending out the American Chef Corps to embassies and consulates around the globe to conduct public diplomacy programs using food to engage with foreign publics. Additionally, the program facilitates people-to-people cultural exchanges through the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) in chef exchanges in the United States.

If gastrodiplomacy conducted by middle powers was about using culinary cultural diplomacy to enhance the nation brand, then gastrodiplomacy conducted by great powers (the U.S., China), or culinary great powers like France, becomes more focused on illustrating and deepening nuance in the edible nation brand.

Unlike many middle powers seeking to simply highlight their edible nation brand as a means to increase their visibility, the visibility of the U.S. is not in question. Rather, the strategy of the U.S. gastrodiplomacy campaign is to create nuance and understanding so that the American edible nation brand is seen as more than fast food dishes and giant consumer chains, and includes a deeper understanding of regional differences. Thus there is less a need to highlight the cuisine as a whole, but rather a need to focus on the various regional and local dimensions that offer uniqueness. To this end, distinctive cuisines like Cajun cuisine from New Orleans, or cuisine from the Pacific Northwest, become the object of America's gastrodiplomacy focus.

As gastrodiplomacy moves forward as a field, we can expect two trends to become more prevalent: 1) gastrodiplomacy poly lateralism and; 2) gastrodiplomacy paradiplomacy. The term "poly lateralism," coined by diplomacy scholar Geoffrey Wiseman, refers to the interaction of states with non-state actors in the realm of diplomacy or public diplomacy.¹² Gastrodiplomacy is one area of public and cultural diplomacy where states are starting to work with non-state actors through public/private initiatives, such as the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Culinary Partnership—a public/private initiative that includes a partnership with the nonprofit James Beard Foundation.¹³

Another initiative that has taken on elements of poly lateral gastrodiplomacy is the Mobile Turkish Coffee Truck. Given that the Ottoman Empire had its first coffee shop in the Sublime Porte's capital Constantinople (Istan-

bul) in 1554, many centuries before Starbucks ever roasted a bean, the Turkish coffee campaign to educate audiences on the history and flavor of Turkish coffee is smart gastrodiplomacy.

The Mobile Turkish Coffee Truck began its gastrodiplomacy outreach in 2012 by handing out free cups of Turkish coffee up and down the East Coast of the United States, making stops in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. The campaign handed out cups of hot, sweet Turkish coffee with the grinds at the bottom, while an education component of the campaign informed audiences about the historical connection of coffee to Turkish culture. The campaign also included fun cultural diplomacy events, like fortune telling from the coffee grounds in the cups.¹⁴ The Mobile Turkish Coffee Truck is conducting a second round of outreach, this time in Europe with stops in Holland, Belgium, and France.

The Mobile Turkish Coffee Truck campaign in the U.S. was conducted initially as a private venture with sponsorship from Turkish-American businesses, the American-Turkish Association, the Turkish coffee company Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi and Turkish Airlines—as well as some support from the Turkish Embassy to the U.S. and Consulates. The program's success led to its second iteration in Europe, launched in a more poly lateral gastrodiplomatic fashion as a public/private initiative, including the support of the representative offices of Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Meanwhile, with the increased prevalence of "paradiplomacy," the phenomenon of sub-state actors conducting their own international diplomatic engagements, the necessity for these sub-state actors to also engage in public and cultural diplomacy has become more pronounced.¹⁵ Already some sub-state actors are conducting cultural diplomacy. In international forums like the Taipei Flora Expo in 2011, the State of Hawaii conducted its own pavilion separate from that of the U.S. Pavilion as a means to showcase Hawaii's unique flora and fauna. In addition, numerous sub-state regions conduct their own gastrodiplomacy at various food fairs to exhibit their unique culinary heritages.

The positive side of paradiplomacy engaging in gastrodiplomacy is that it makes cultural diplomacy significantly more localized. To make public diplomacy more successful as a field, it remains incumbent on local communities to understand their role in communicating culture. Creating sub-state buy-in can ultimately strengthen gastrodiplomacy initiatives and make more local communities realize their role in public, cultural, and gastrodiplomacy.


Just as gastrodiplomacy helps under-recognized nations expand their brands and cultural visibility through the projection of national or regional cuisine, gastrodiplomacy

macy by sub-state actors helps increase their own uniqueness and brand visibility in a similarly cluttered landscape. As more sub-state actors are starting to conduct paradiplomacy and seeking to strengthen their brand, we can likely expect these actors to turn to gastrodiplomacy as a means to highlight cultural uniqueness of their respective sub-state brands.

One additional trend that is likely to become more common is the use of gastrodiplomacy by non-state actors as a means to conduct public diplomacy and people-to-people diplomacy. As gastrodiplomacy becomes a more recognized field within public diplomacy, there stands a likelihood of more non-state actors using gastrodiplomacy to facilitate people-to-people diplomacy related to issues of conflict.

CONCLUSION

Representing one of the newer trends within public diplomacy, gastrodiplomacy has come a long way in a short time. In just a few years, the field of gastrodiplomacy has gone from obscurity to an issue of discussion and debate in academic journals, as well as the subject of its own conference at American University.¹⁶ Gastrodiplomacy embodies a powerful medium of nonverbal communication to connect disparate audiences, and thusly is a dynamic new tactic in the practice and conduct of public and cultural diplomacy.

As more states engage in gastrodiplomacy, new trends will emerge that will shape a new set of best practices in the field, such as increased polyilateral partnerships and gastrodiplomacy paradiplomacy, as well as non-state actors turning to gastrodiplomacy as a means to foster people-to-people connections. 

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Photo: Paul Rockower

FROM GASTRONATIONALISM TO GASTRODIPLOMACY: REVERSING THE SECURITIZATION OF THE DOLMA IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

BY YELENA OSIPOVA

"I don't think the war strategy has ever worked for humanity, but after thousands and thousands and thousands of years of earth controlled by humans, war still seems to be the answer? I hope one day, food will be the answer."

—José Andrés¹

Dolma is a simple, albeit time-consuming, dish to prepare. Grains or ground meat, rice, tomato paste, spices, and veggies (to stuff) or leaves (to wrap) are usually all there is to it. It comes in all shapes, colors, and sizes: from stuffed eggplants, tomatoes, peppers, and zucchini to carefully wrapped grape or cabbage leaves. Dolma can be made with beef or lamb, and there is a vegetarian option, too, with lentils, peas, or chickpeas instead. This tasty morsel, which has joined the list of globalized "ethnic" foods (usually marketed as Mediterranean/Middle Eastern in the West), is characteristic of many traditional cuisines in the area that extends from Central Asia to the Balkans, and from North Africa to Russia. The various permutations of the dolma recipe reflect its transformation and adaptation by various peoples who have inhabited that vast territory over millennia.

The variety and pervasiveness of dolma have led to disputes among countries of the region regarding the origins of the dish. Where did the dolma originate and whose "national cuisine" does it represent? This paper examines the food fight raging between Armenia and Azerbaijan – two nations in the South Caucasus that fought a bitter war in the 1990s and are still in a frozen conflict with each other. It posits that despite the intensity of gastronationalism in the region, gastrodiploacy can serve as an additional tool for achieving and maintaining peace between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis.

GASTRONATIONALISM

Culinary traditions and foodways, just like anthems or flags, are among the fundamental building blocks of national identity. Nations define themselves through things that give group members shared experiences and generate solidarity. Food, as a material artifact of culture,

is no exception.² As a basic necessity for sustenance and survival, food provides "links between social actors and their cultural pasts, shared bonds of familial or religious identity, and narratives of organizational identity."³ Culinary culture also recreates national myths and memories,⁴ functions as a language to articulate "notions of inclusion and exclusion, of national pride and xenophobia,"⁵ and, therefore, acts as "a boundary-marker between one identity and another."⁶

In a rapidly globalizing world where claims of authenticity and exoticism provide a competitive edge for goods on the global market, the importance of national signifiers for food products has increased further.⁷ Michaela DeSoucey has coined a term for the combination of this phenomenon with that of identity.⁸ Gastronationalism, she suggests, describes the "use of food production, distribution, and consumption to

create and sustain the emotive power of national attachment" that is later used in the production and marketing of food.⁹ Yet, much like other national symbols that rarely follow the strict rules of separation and the neat lines of political borders, international disputes over the "ownership" of certain foods and dishes are increasingly common. Some of the more prominent of these cases include the fights over hummus (as well as tabouleh, labne, or falafel, to name but a few) between Israel and Lebanon,¹⁰ kimchi between China and South Korea,¹¹ and "Turkish" delight between Cyprus and Turkey.¹² There is certainly an economic justification to patenting foods as one's national dish, as it can help promote sales and provide exclusive access to markets. However, underlying most if not all of these fights is also a fundamental contestation over identity linked to territorial and historical disputes.

CULINARY TRADITIONS AND FOODWAYS, JUST LIKE ANTHEMS OR FLAGS, ARE AMONG THE FUNDAMENTAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY.

MAKING DOLMA A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Conflicts regarding the origins of various cultural artifacts in the Southern Caucasus have been simmering for years over issues like carpet patterns, winemaking, horses, musical instruments, and dog breeds, to name but a few. The culinary controversies gained prominence in late 2011, when UNESCO decided to add keshkek, an Anatolian stew made with chicken and wheat berries, to its list of “Intangible Heritage” on behalf of Turkey.¹³ Armenians, who call the same dish *harisa* and consider it to be their own, were outraged at the decision and set out to find ethnographic evidence to overturn it.¹⁴ That served as a catalyst for the mobilization of several NGOs and youth groups in the country, which started calling for greater government involvement in reclaiming Armenia’s intangible heritage, as well as advocating for a more coordinated effort to preserve and promote Armenia’s culinary traditions.¹⁵

Those behind the Armenian initiative construed this effort in terms of a greater struggle for cultural survival and national security. As historian and analyst Ruben Nakhakyan stated in an interview at the time:

We are in the middle of the war of civilizations [...]. [O]ur not so friendly neighbors are trying to rob the entire Armenian highland, both the territories that are part of the Armenian Republic and those that aren’t. [...] A neighbor will always take what’s yours if you don’t protect it; and today we are dealing with neighbors who are acting upon a well-thought strategy, and we keep failing to resist their plots.¹⁶

The activists involved in this effort have promised articles and films on various Armenian traditional dishes, international campaigns that raise awareness and get recognition, as well as various festivals to engage the public at large.

Amidst this fight, *dolma* seems to have gained a special status. For the past three years, the *Development and Preservation of Armenian Culinary Traditions* (DPACT) NGO has overseen the organization of an annual *Dolma Festival* as a way of “disproving the wrong opinions that *tolma* [sic] has Turkish roots.”¹⁷ At the first festival, head of DPACT Sedrak Mamulyan noted that the choice of location for the festival – Sardarapat, a battlefield of major historical significance – was not accidental, since Armenians need to develop their “self-defense instinct” in the culinary world, just as they defended their homeland during the battle of 1918.¹⁸ He went on to say that the

Armenian cuisine “has served as a donor” to neighboring countries and that at its root, the cuisine of the region is actually Armenian. As evidence to support their claims, some of the chefs participating in the Festival claimed to have taken their *dolma* recipes from ancient archives, and some from cuneiform records dating back to the 8th century BC found in the Erebuni fortress (on territory of modern-day Yerevan), the capital of the Urartian Kingdom at the time.¹⁹ To prove their dedication to the dish and taking inspiration from their Mediterranean counterparts, who had engaged in bitter competitions over the biggest plate of hummus and the largest piece of “Turkish” delight, participants of the 2013 Festival competed over the longest *dolma* in an attempt to set a world record, the winner being a 25-foot-long “behemoth.”²⁰

Another campaign aimed at primordializing the *dolma* was an attempt to reconceptualize the etymology of the name, playing on the difference between the spelling – “*dolma*” and “*tolma*” – to suggest that *dolma* means “stuffed,” while *tolma* means “wrapped” – that is, in grape leaves. A prominent restaurant chef even went so far as to claim that “*Tolma* is a word that consists of two Urartu language roots, ‘*toli*’ and ‘*ma*,’ which mean ‘grape leaf’ and ‘wrapped.’”²¹ However, it is important to note that the root itself is Turkic and “*dolma*” in Turkish means stuffed or full of. The word for wrapped, on the other hand, is “*sarma*,” which is in fact what wrapped grape leaves are called in Turkey and some of the Balkan countries (but, surprisingly, not in Azeri, which has Turkic roots, too).

The difference between the spelling of “*dolma*” and “*tolma*” can be attributed to the phonological change as a result of the influence of the Russian language in countries like Armenia or Azerbaijan. This is demonstrated with the example in Armenian, where there is a difference between the pronunciation of the first letter, which is harder (“*d*”) in Western Armenian (spoken in Anatolia and by most of the current Diaspora) and softer (“*t*”) in Eastern Armenian (of Armenia proper, Iran, and the Former Soviet Union). All the while the spelling of the word remains identical.

These claims enraged the Azerbaijanis who accused Armenians of culinary plagiarism, and elevated the issue to a matter of national security. As a result, the Ministry of National Security established a National Cuisine Center – a watchdog of sorts – charged with “exposing the Armenian lies” about the dishes stolen from Azerbaijani cuisine.²² Furthermore, the Ministry of National Security, along with the Ministry of Culture and the national Copyright Agency, has been actively involved in publicity campaigns, including film screenings and publications on ethnographic origins and etymology.²³ And to highlight

the significance of dolma itself, in 2012 President Ilham Aliyev went as far as to declare it an “Azeri national dish,” effectively denying the claims laid to it by all other nations, including Turkey.²⁴

GASTRODIPLOMACY: AN ANSWER?

The dolma dispute is part of the larger conflict between the two nations, including that over Nagorno Karabakh, which remains unresolved. Writing about the hummus wars, Ari Ariel noted that in circumstances of conflict, those involved in the preparation and the sale of the food on both sides are seen as representatives of their respective communities: “If food and national identity are universally linked, here political dispute and warfare produce a rhetoric of violence that transforms cooks into combatants.”²⁵ However, beyond just being an extension of the conflict, food can also bring the two sides together – as long as they accept its shared origin. And this is where diplomacy of food can play a major role.

Sam Chapple-Sokol suggests using “culinary diplomacy [...] as an instrument to create cross-cultural understanding in the hope of improving interactions and cooperation.”²⁶ Paul Rockower, however, highlights the need to differentiate between “culinary diplomacy,” which he conceptualizes in terms of high diplomacy between representatives of certain nations and communities, and “gastrodiplomacy,” which is much broader and includes engagement with the public at large.²⁷ Gastrodiplomacy – “the act of winning hearts and minds through stomachs” – introduces foreign culture through familiar access points such as the sense of taste, and seeks to establish an emotional connection through food.²⁸ In terms of conflict resolution, gastrodiplomacy can serve as a medium for Contact Hypothesis, a theory suggesting that hostility between groups is “fed by unfamiliarity and separation.”²⁹ According to the theory, greater contact between the groups, under the right conditions, can bring an end to the conflict by promoting more positive intergroup attitudes. Gordon Allport who developed the Hypothesis identified four major conditions necessary for success: support of respective authorities who would foster the social norms that favor acceptance and ties, promotion of close contact between the members of the two groups, equal status between them, and the presence of cooperative interdependence between the groups to ensure mutual reliance and cultivation of

BEYOND JUST BEING AN EXTENSION OF THE CONFLICT, FOOD CAN ALSO BRING THE TWO SIDES TOGETHER – AS LONG AS THEY ACCEPT ITS SHARED ORIGIN.

trust.³⁰ Although these fundamental conditions might be absent in the current Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, given that other channels of resolution to the conflict do not seem to be working, food and, more specifically, dolma diplomacy should be given a chance.

MOVING FORWARD: CAN ENEMIES BECOME FRIENDS?

Both Armenia and Azerbaijan have been calling for the need to enhance their respective public diplomacy strategies abroad, in order to garner more international support for their stances on the conflict.³¹ Despite being few in number, there have also been calls for, and attempts at more engagement with each other through public diplomacy.³² Gastrodiplomacy can be a potent tool in this latter process, demonstrating commonality and creating a shared, safe space where a conversation can begin. Some projects – such as the Azerbaijani Cuisine Day organized in Nagorno Karabakh by the Helsinki Initiative NGO in 2007 – have met with success, because despite politics and hostility, both nations still enjoy each other’s food.³³ Other suggested projects can include – but are not limited to – joint culinary festivals, cooking competitions with teams from both nations, and cooking shows featuring chefs from both sides cooking


common dishes together. Over time, such activities and projects can bring about the “right conditions” for Contact Hypothesis outlined by Allport. Given the separation between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis, and their lack of knowledge or understanding of each other, exploring common traditional dishes can help establish the notion that the two sides share quite a bit in common – whether culturally, socially, or historically. Furthermore, engaging in joint projects where both sides have to cooperate to achieve a superordinate goal – such as in case of competitions or festivals – can help the participants overcome their distrust, which can then be used to build further dialogue. In this sense, the effort has high acquaintance potential and promotes cooperative interactions. Equal status is another important condition, since it can disconfirm negative expectations about the other.³⁴ Sharing a meal – such a dolma – which both sides would prepare together, could establish equality through a common sensory experience, as well as provide an atmosphere of intimacy where a constructive conversation can begin.³⁵

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Allport suggests that social and institutional support is vital for the success of the process, since without a conducive environment of tolerance and acceptance, no dialogue can take place and no achievements can be sustained. It is, therefore, important to ensure state support for such conciliatory measures. Nareg Seferian, an independent analyst and a cosmopolite currently based in Armenia, raises similar concerns. Seferian says that the Nagorno Karabakh issue is fundamentally a political one, where lives and territory are at stake.³⁶ Therefore, according to him, only a political solution – peace through diplomacy – can be a lasting one. “In order to maintain an atmosphere of neighborliness afterwards, though, I would say that food, among other things, can be used as a common marker. That can only be an afterthought, however.” Onnik Krikorian, a British freelance reporter and photojournalist based in Tbilisi, Georgia, expresses a similar sentiment: “Traveling around Georgia, I’ve seen ethnic Armenians and Azeris share tables full of dolma and other dishes without mention of ‘whose’ they might be. But that’s probably because they’re spared the near constant propaganda in circulation in Armenia and Azerbaijan.”³⁷ In short, unless the necessary conditions highlighted by Allport are present, success will be questionable, at best. Yet if the conflict is somehow resolved, gastrodiplomacy – along with other forms of public and cultural diplomacy – can be a potent medium for bringing the two nations together.

CONCLUSION

By no means is gastrodiplomacy suggested here as a solution in itself, especially given the context of a seemingly intractable conflict driven by nationalism and the propaganda of hate on both sides. However, it can serve as a tool for conflict resolution in two ways. Firstly, it can begin a peace from below, starting a movement towards a constructive conversation during which some of the other more difficult issues and fundamental disagreements can be negotiated. Gastrodiplomacy can provide the participants with an inherent understanding that some things are, have been, and should probably be shared: that collaboration and cooperation, and not exclusion or hostility, are the answer to the wider conflict. Secondly, gastrodiplomacy can follow a peace from above – one agreed to on the high, diplomatic level between negotiators and politicians – to establish a friendlier atmosphere on both sides of the border and create the conditions for lasting peace. In both cases, however, gastrodiplomacy can only play a supplementary role. There must be mutual will and recognition for any of it to work.

Cuisine, just like identity, requires a more complex

understanding, one that goes beyond mere lines that denote purported national borders on maps. Foodways are constructed over time through constant interaction and communication with others, meshing, reshaping, and often simply borrowing from each other. Labeling foods – especially ones that are popular around the region and more recently, around the world – as “Armenian” or “Azerbaijani,” “Lebanese” or “Israeli,” therefore, reflects a very simplistic understanding of the world, pandering to base nationalistic sentiments and emotions, for the purposes of achieving certain political ends. Gastrodiplomacy can help step beyond this worldview towards the higher goal of cooperation, demonstrating that differences are not truly as great or tangible as they might have been initially presented. After all, as Krikorian notes, “Does it actually matter [who “owns” the dolma], especially when the origins are hard to prove and the whole point is to eat it anyway? [...] I’ve seen Armenians and Azerbaijanis share tables numerous times. The toasts are nearly always to peace.” 

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CONFLICT CUISINE: TEACHING WAR THROUGH WASHINGTON'S ETHNIC RESTAURANT SCENE

BY JOHANNA MENDELSON FORMAN

WITH SAM CHAPPLE-SOKOL

It is a Washington cliché: you can always tell where in the world there is a conflict by the new ethnic restaurants that open. From Vietnam to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, to the Central American wars, to the civil war in Ethiopia, diasporas have come to this city in search of freedom. With them, they bring a sense of keeping the culinary culture of their country alive in the numerous eateries that landscape Washington's suburbs.

Teaching about war and conflict requires an ability to analyze current global upheaval. Yet if there is one thing I have observed from my experience as a policy expert on conflicts and transitions, and my academic research and years of teaching about weak and fragile states, it is that students today lack a basic knowledge of 20th century conflicts. It seems to me that, too

often, events before September 11, 2001, are considered too far removed and thus forgotten. Wars like Vietnam or the Russian invasion of Afghanistan are considered ancient history. And even the post-Cold War conflicts in the Balkans or in West Africa are not easily recalled. These gaps in understanding about past events make it harder to see the connections between what is happening in Syria or Iraq and what happened in Vietnam or Ethiopia. Wars today are not waged by regular armies, but more often by irregular forces that change the dynamics of fighting. Cities are the new battlefields. Civilians, not soldiers, are the victims of today's conflicts.

Through this course, *Conflict Cuisines: An Introduction to War and Peace through Washington's Ethnic Restaurant Scene*, a seminar at the School of International Service (SIS) at the American University in Washington, D.C., I hope to explore those events that have shaped modern conflict, while also demonstrating how the nature of warfare has shifted in the last sixty years.¹ This is a first—combining a serious course about conflicts with an exploration

of the culinary legacy of these wars as manifested by the Washington restaurants. By using readings about those wars, and utilizing other media, I hope to bring together the classroom and the communities who still use their cooking to retain a link with their former homelands.

To integrate the study of conflict with food, I asked food researcher Sam Chapple-Sokol to help identify four local ethnic restaurants where the owners would be willing to share their cuisine, but also to share with us a background on particular dishes that were representative of their national heritage. When I first discussed this idea with other colleagues who teach courses on war and peace they encouraged me to create this seminar. American University

has always had a mandate to integrate its global education mission with the local community. This course is considered one of the most tangible ways that we can connect with our neighbors to advance our understanding about the local impact of conflict.

In the next few pages, we describe our approach to teaching war and conflict. Such a course serves as a powerful tool for interdisciplinary understanding of the nexus of international events and the community. Conflict cuisines are also a wonderful example

of what has been described by political scientist Abraham Lowenthal as the "intermestic, referring to issues that have both international and domestic facets."² The purveyors of cuisines from countries in conflict can use their food as a means of communicating to U.S. domestic audiences about their culture, particularly how war has affected the civilian populations who are now in exile. This type of connection may be an unintended consequence of any given conflict, but it does have a didactic element that can help build support and understanding about other people and other countries.

While focused on the Washington, D.C. area, we also hope that the course format can serve as a template for

THE PURVEYORS OF CUISINES FROM COUNTRIES IN CONFLICT CAN USE THEIR FOOD AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATING THEIR CULTURE TO U.S. DOMESTIC AUDIENCES ABOUT THEIR CULTURE, PARTICULARLY HOW WAR HAS AFFECTED THE CIVILIAN POPULATIONS WHO ARE NOW IN EXILE.

others who want to connect different diasporas with the university. This new take on the town and gown divide may actually help bridge a gap that often exists in the United States: distrust of newcomers, or more significantly, misunderstandings about different cultural norms, and may help overcome xenophobia. Conflict cuisines can also promote a greater understanding about how and why people assimilate into a community, and how their international roots contribute to the strength and diversity of American culture.

This course has also been inspired by the growing field of “gastro” or culinary diplomacy which has become a part of the U.S. diplomatic toolkit, a soft power mechanism to bring the diversity of our culture together around a global table.³ During the first Obama administration, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton embraced the use of a variant of soft power, or “smart power,” to promote U.S. interests globally.⁴ U.S. chefs were made culinary ambassadors and traveled around the globe to promote the diversity of U.S. food culture. This modern version of commensality has its origins in ancient times. It was originally a technique used by Greeks and Romans to bring adversaries together over food to negotiate, to settle disputes, and even to divulge state secrets after long meals with ample wine to loosen tongues.⁵ Food is a means of communication. It is a conveyor of culture, precisely because it is used to communicate through rituals that involve its preparation and serving. The absence of food is a symbol of problems within a culture, a breakdown of rituals, and thus a potential problem within a given environment that gives rise to other societal breakdowns. A recent book by Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War*, illustrates how during World War II nations went to considerable lengths to secure adequate food supplies in a prolonged armed conflict.⁶

Finally, this course also reflects the observation that the expansion of ethnic cuisines in Washington is not only a manifestation of global conflicts taking place in other parts of the world, but also a symbol of loss and connectivity. As scholar Defne Karaosmanoglu writes, “Food cultures of a particular community help us to understand how that community connects to the past, lives in the present, and imagines its future.”⁷ As I looked around my own city it was clear that certain war-affected populations

had also become the center of enduring culinary trends—Vietnamese, Afghan, Ethiopian, Salvadoran—these communities were represented not only in numbers of their respective diasporas, but also through their cuisines. Yet how many people who enjoyed the wonders of pho, or the chewiness of injera, not to mention the ever-present pupusas—could actually tell you anything about how these dishes had entered into the Washingtonian diet? This knowledge gap about the provenance of these foods also presented an opportunity. Why not connect the study of recent conflicts with the cuisines that are emblematic of their national origins?

The conflicts of the Cold War were far more influential in terms of creating a new culinary diaspora than those that took place after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This is understandable since the United States, a nation of mainly European immigrants until the Second World War, already had a European culinary culture. However, in the second half of the 20th century a

much more diverse melting pot emerged, bringing in the foods of Southeast Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and the varied Central American diet that differed from the standard Tex-Mex foods that had been part of our border culture. After September 11, 2001, when the United States literally closed the door on millions of people from conflict zones, it became possible to observe a contraction of new ethnic cuisines in Washington, in most cases attributable to the restrictive immigration policies imposed as part of the United States counter-terrorism policies.

One of the most tangible ways to link past and present conflicts is through the culinary connection that refugees bring to their new homes. Anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois note that “the role of war and the roles of many kinds of social changes has been relatively neglected in food studies.”⁸ They suggest that this is an area ripe for research, beyond the current studies about food security, which are logical areas of inquiry for understanding the impact of conflict on culture. More telling is a point that Mintz noted in a series of review essays, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom*, where he observes that there had been a gender bias in early anthropological studies that did not delve deeply into the role of women in the kitchen, beyond the documentation of their presence. Indeed, today we know from conflicts around the

FOOD IS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION. IT IS A CONVEYOR OF CULTURE, PRECISELY BECAUSE IT IS USED TO COMMUNICATE THROUGH RITUALS THAT INVOLVE ITS PREPARATION AND SERVING.

globe that it is women who not only prepare the meals, but also replace their spouses or their brothers when wars divide families.⁹

Creating a course in which some of the world's most brutal recent conflicts are explored through a diaspora's kitchen may seem to trivialize these horrific events. But using the classroom and the local restaurant as a means of explaining the nexus of food and war can become a tool to illustrate not only the way such events affect history, but also how cuisines create a means of cultural communication that brings greater understanding to those sharing the experience of eating ethnic foods.

Moreover, the reality of global wars and their impact on affected communities can help students connect to international events in a very intimate way. Sitting at the table, talking with the chef, and learning about how a particular food or dish came into the diet of many Washington residents is a way to teach about a dimension of conflict that is often forgotten: the human dimension. This act of "commensality," or coming together around the table, is an ancient way to connect people through the act of sharing a meal together.

The plethora of cuisines from places that were once only known to most Washingtonians through newspaper headlines can also be viewed as a form of citizen diplomacy by those who have chosen to resettle in the Washington area. Just as the United States State Department has recently started to value the use of chefs as culinary diplomats, so the chefs from conflict countries can also become a bridge to a greater understanding of the history and heritage of any given country or region. Since 2012, when the State Department launched its Diplomatic Culinary Partnership, it has created a Chefs Corps, a network of chefs from across the United States who have agreed to collaborate with the Office of the Chief of Protocol, to serve as culinary ambassadors around the globe.¹⁰ A recent example occurred in October when chefs from Colombia, a country that still has an ongoing conflict, were recently invited to Washington to share their skills with some of Washington's local chefs. This type of exchange demonstrates what some have dubbed food diplomacy as another part of our soft power tool kit.

THEORIES OF FOOD AND CULTURE

The study of food as a manifestation of a specific culture has its roots in anthropology and history. Hunger, like sex, is one of the basic drives of human nature. Throughout history, the availability of food has not always been a given. Droughts, famines, and other natural phenomena greatly affect the food supplies of civilizations around the globe. In our American society of plenty, of super-sized meals and a groaning board of choices, it is often easy to forget that the United States still has a hunger problem. Food stamps are widely used, especially by women and children and the elderly. Globally, hunger remains an ongoing problem where more than one billion people still live on less than a dollar a day. Hunger can also be a driving force of conflict, especially when agricultural land or water is not available,

or warfare disrupts the normal growing season. Add the presence of land mines in many countries that have undergone civil wars, where both armies and insurgents plant hidden killers without mapping or regard for human lives, and you have a formula for disaster in terms of food supply. Finally, famines occur even in the world of plenty. They are often a symptom of bad governance or authoritarian rule. As Indian economist Amartya Sen observed, democracies do not starve their citizens.¹¹

When leaders deliberately cut off food supplies, as happened in Burma after the Cyclone Nargis, or by Al-Shabaab in Somalia, the result is disastrous.

What citizens eat and what a society grows for its own use and for trade are important parts of the social fabric. The study of material culture, which includes the study of food and cooking, provides a window on more than just the diet of any given group, but also reflects the economic and social underpinnings of how food production and cultivation support and sustain people over the ages.

The anthropology of food has too often overlooked the role that women play in the production and preparation of food. This omission can now be remedied in part by a greater understanding of the role women play during wartime. Not only do women often end up alone in refugee camps, but when their partners are fighting they are also left to continue agriculture and provisioning of the home, in addition to taking care of children and elders. Thus,

JUST AS THE [U.S.] STATE DEPARTMENT HAS RECENTLY STARTED TO VALUE THE USE OF CHEFS AS CULINARY DIPLOMATS, SO THE CHEFS FROM CONFLICT COUNTRIES CAN ALSO BECOME A BRIDGE TO A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF ANY GIVEN COUNTRY OR REGION.

conflict cuisines, those foods arising from war zones, are often imported to new countries by women, who in many societies are the bearers of food traditions.

IS THERE A CONFLICT CUISINE?

To answer this question, it is important to understand what we mean by the term “cuisine.” The word is derived from French, where it means “kitchen.” But, as anthropologist Sidney Mintz notes, how the term is used is very imprecise. For example, in the United States Mintz notes that “the term ‘cuisine’ takes on ethnic or national character,” so we have “Thai cuisine” and “Chinese cuisine” to differentiate these international foods from local ones. Moreover, Mintz suggests that “what makes a cuisine is not a set of recipes aggregated in a book, or a series of particular foods associated with a particular setting, but something more. I think a cuisine requires a population that eats that cuisine with sufficient frequency to consider themselves experts on it. They all believe that they know what it consists of, how it is made, and how it should taste. In short, a genuine cuisine has common social roots; it is a food of a community—albeit often a large community.”¹²

If we think about diasporas of recent conflicts as a set of different communities, then it is possible, by extension, to consider the food that these groups eat as a form of conflict cuisine. The different foods arise from a common set of circumstances, refugees from war-torn societies that use their cooking as a means of retaining certain traditions, or as a small distraction from the tremendous uncertainties that being uprooted can produce in any society. Indeed, it is often remarked that while language is the first thing to go after a generation among immigrant populations, food is the last.¹³ And in the case of cuisines from Vietnam, where almost 40 years has passed since the fighting stopped, the presence of numerous Vietnamese restaurants serve as a constant reminder of the role of food in national identity, and also of its use as a tool of cross-cultural communication. The same can be said for many of the other ethnic foods that have remained a mainstay of the diet of those who escaped from war.

If we are now beginning to understand the role that food (or the lack of it) played during World War II, the post-Cold War period of conflict and violence that resulted from the dissolution of the Soviet Union raises similar questions about the role of food in internal conflicts.¹⁴ The civil wars in Africa, from Somalia to Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo all demonstrated the challenges of giving foreign assistance in the form of food when the state was not able to control its distribution, or protect its supply lines. Food security, one of the central concerns of countries torn apart by in-

ternal fighting, is also a function of bigger economic development concerns. These include the lack of infrastructure that inhibits the delivery of supplies, the presence of non-state actors who control and occupy parts of recognized nation-states, and the role that providing aid has in exacerbating conflict, since food aid can be monetized and used for buying arms.

A CONFLICT CUISINE CURRICULUM

The challenge of integrating formal studies about the theory of conflict, prevention of wars, and ethnic cuisines as a manifestation of global international events is demonstrated by the eclectic nature of the readings and media used to help students understand that there is a nexus between food and conflict. From the Carnegie Commission study on prevention of deadly conflict, to Abraham Varghese's novel about his childhood in Ethiopia, to the most recent CNN series of Anthony Bourdain that connects transition countries like Libya or Burma, students will gain a deeper sense of what constitutes a conflict cuisine.¹⁵

Over the course of a semester students in this seminar will be treated to a varied set of readings about modern conflict. While this course starts with the Vietnam War and goes to our current day wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we place heavy emphasis on history—why some types of mistakes in managing conflict repeat themselves. For example, one of the first readings, Barbara Tuchman's *March of Folly*¹⁶, has an excellent overview of how mistakes made in addressing the colonial situation in Indo-China led the U.S. into a full-blown Asian war that continued to ignore lessons of the past. We then visit with restaurateurs who were deeply affected by this war—the diaspora who now lives in Washington. Many are second generation Americans, but their traditions and deeply rooted culinary culture are evident in the restaurants and food stores in the surrounding suburbs. Students will also be encouraged to explore on their own the recommended areas to learn more about cuisine and culture.

A methodology that combines serious readings about the conflict and class discussion, followed by a field experience with a member of the diaspora, can link the facts, figures, and theories of why such wars happen with those who actually lived through such times. Sitting around the table with the chef and often someone who can explain the history of a cuisine or a specific regional dish is an invaluable way to understand the course of a nation's history. When it comes to Afghanistan a recent article by Helen Saberi on Afghan food and culture can literally convey any reader into the depths of that war-torn society's kitchen in a way that traditional political studies often miss.¹⁷ Having the chef who is the cousin of a presidential candidate

discuss the Afghan kitchen can create the living history of a nation and its kitchen that will surely make for a memorable as well as educational experience.

Combining these bi-weekly dinners with classroom discussions about the reading can make for a semester that will help bring the realities of conflict and its impact on communities to a new level of understanding. As a learning goal it is my hope that no student leaves this course without a clearer understanding of how the human experience of sharing a meal can also tell a more profound story about global events.


And how does one grade students in this type of seminar? There will be written assignments about the readings, summaries responding to specific questions, and there will be a final project. Student teams will be required to find a conflict cuisine in the Washington area that we did not study over the course of the semester and provide a presentation about that country's history, its local purveyors, and possibly even a sampling of the national fare. Whether these new diaspora restaurants are actually a form of reverse "gastrodiplomacy" is something scholars of public diplomacy can debate as this field continues to grow.

But judging from this first effort to integrate a course on food and conflict into a curriculum that prepares students for careers in international relations it seems highly likely that this type of program can deepen understanding of the complexities of an ever-connected global culture.

CAN YOU TEACH CONFLICT THROUGH A KITCHEN? A TEST CASE

What we hope to achieve in this course is first, to create awareness that behind the foods that are now commonplace in D.C., is a story of war and hardship, conflict and reconciliation that merits study. These are the conflict cuisines that arrived at our doorstep. Second, through a country's kitchen one can garner a better sense of how food serves as a tool of soft power, of communication, when language alone is not enough. This can occur when immigrants try their hand as restaurateurs, bringing their cuisines to a new community and gaining acceptance through the kitchen. Third, this course, if successful, can be replicated in other cities in the U.S. and abroad as a framework for those who want their students to understand the integrated nature of culture and conflict.

Food is always present. It is easy to taste and feel, but less understood as a means of bringing citizens around the table. The diversity of the United States is one reason why the country is less prone to violent conflicts. The more heterogeneous a society, the less likely different groups will fight one another.¹⁸ Food is a unique component of this diversity that can help bring different communities

together, reach out to others, and carry something of one's homeland to a new country. Indeed, this makes American conflict cuisine a part of the country's expanding national food emporium, and also a learning tool for students interested in the study of war and peace. 

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1. SIS seemed an appropriate place to introduce such a course. It is the largest school of international affairs in the United States with more than 3,000 students from 150 countries. Louis W. Goodman, Dean Emeritus of SIS, notes that "our founders had a vision of peace that would educate citizens planning to be of service. That is the essence of what we do." And this course hopes to embody that sense of service and education.

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3. Paul Rockower, "Setting the Table for Diplomacy" in *The Huffington Post*, 9/21/12. Gastrodiplomacy seeks to communicate culture through food to the broader foreign public. Moreover, gastrodiplomacy seeks to engage people-to-people connections through the act of breaking bread. While the two are not mutually exclusive, I do think it is important to create such dichotomies as the discourse and practice of culinary diplomacy/gastrodiplomacy is expanding (like my waist line). There is an ongoing debate over whether the terms "gastrodiplomacy" and "food diplomacy" are interchangeable. Rockower argues they are distinct.

4. See Center for Strategic and International Studies, Joseph Nye and Richard Armitage, co-Chairs, Commission on Smart Power, Washington, D.C. 2007, Web.

5. Sam Chapple-Sokol, "Culinary Diplomacy: Breaking Bread to Win Hearts and Minds," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Volume 8, Issue 2 (2013) 161-183.

6. Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War*, Penguin Books, NY. 2012

7. Defne Karaosmanoglu, "Remembering past(s): The construction of cosmopolitan Istanbul through nostalgic flavors," in Janet Cramer, Calita P. Greene, and Lynn M. Walters, *Food as Communication Communication as Food*, (Peter Lange, New York, Washington, D.C./ Baltimore 2011) p. 40.

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14. Masha Gessen, "Russia: You Are What You Eat," *The New York Review of Books*, November 21, 2013, p.10. A review of Anya von Bremzen's book, *Mastering the Art of Soviet Cooking: A Memoir of Food and Longing*, describes the transition from the Soviet Union to Russia, and the impact this transition had on food supplies and cuisine.

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16. See Chapter 12, in *Afghanistan Revealed*, edited by Ahmed Rashid and Jules Stewart, Crux Publications, London, 2012

17. See Paul Collier and Nicolas Sambanis, "Understanding Civil War: A New Agenda" in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, February 2002, v. 46, 1, pp. 13-32.

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HEARTS, MINDS, AND STOMACHS: GASTRODIPLOMACY AND THE POTENTIAL OF NATIONAL CUISINE IN CHANGING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL IMAGE

BY BRADEN RUDDY

NATION, IDENTITY, FOOD AS POWER, AND THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF GASTRODIPLOMACY

Last year, former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton proclaimed that “food is the oldest form of diplomacy.” This is just one recent claim of the power of food and its use in diplomacy, both today and through the ages. In the last ten years, gastrodiplo-macy has emerged as a way for countries to use their unique culinary histories to promote themselves on the global stage. Gastrodiplo-macy is essentially a subfield of cultural public diplomacy that was first mainstreamed and perfected by Thailand through their 2002 “Global Thai Program.”¹ Since then, other countries such as Taiwan, Korea, Peru, Malaysia, and Indonesia have sought to use their own unique “culinary delights to appeal to the global public’s appetite,” with a view towards improving national image.²

Gastrodiplo-macy programs today seek to improve national image by using a nation’s food as a means to change public perceptions and promote itself on the global stage. While there are many ways for a nation to define and visualize its identity, food is a particularly tangible one. Indeed, just as, for the purposes of tourism, “countries will often design a national brand that makes use of their natural beauty and appealing geographic features,” governments now use food as part of their “broader strategy of cultural diplomacy.” This strategy seeks to export a cultural artifact to the wider world in the form of “a national dish, or more broadly, national cuisine.” In addition to Thailand, examples of this can be found in the gastrodiplo-macy programs deployed by Taiwan (“Dim Sum Diplomacy”), Korea (“Kimchi Diplomacy”),³ and Peru (“Peruvian Cuisine for the World”).⁴

The research undertaken in this study attempts to find the correlation between a country’s national cuisine and

its national image, through the main question of “does eating a particular country’s food change your opinion of it?” Other questions include whether a country’s food makes it an enticing tourist destination, as well as its “gateway drug” potential to a country’s other cultural exports. Linkages between national image and food among post-conflict and conflict countries are also explored.

This study contends that national cuisine does have the potential to change public perceptions of national image. It also argues that gastrodiplo-macy programs are in fact an effective way for countries to harness an integral part of their national heritage and promote themselves in a unique way on the global stage while simultaneously scaling up their national image. Food as a cultural export and defining national characteristic is also integral to our understanding of the modern nation itself and the power it wields, as well as how it is perceived.

GASTRODIPLOMACY PROGRAMS
TODAY SEEK TO IMPROVE
NATIONAL IMAGE BY USING A
NATION'S FOOD AS A MEANS TO
CHANGE PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS
AND PROMOTE ITSELF ON THE
GLOBAL STAGE.

METHODS

Public perception of the correlation between national cuisine and national image was measured through a quantitative survey strategy using a Qualtrics online questionnaire. The questionnaire targeted people living in the United States (though not necessarily American citizens) who eat various kinds of

international cuisine with a view towards gauging their opinions on perceptions of national identity and national cuisine.

The Qualtrics online questionnaire was the main data collection tool employed for this research study. The gastrodiplo-macy questionnaire created for this purpose successfully measured public opinion on the subject through 29 survey questions. While this study originally targeted 30 respondents to complete the online questionnaire, it ended up collecting completed surveys from 140 individuals.

DATA AND RESULTS

Data collected for this research study from the Qualtrics online questionnaire yielded a variety of talking points. As noted previously, the survey was distributed online and completed by 140 respondents. Respondent selection was done by sharing the survey link with various social and professional networks, and sending it out to somewhat unexpected viral success on various social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr).

Demographically, the respondent sample, somewhat surprisingly, contained many more females than males (71% female, 29% male). Age-wise, nearly half of all respondents (44%) fell into the 26-34 year old age bracket. This was followed by 18-25 (28%), 35-49 (12%), 50-57 (5%), 58-65 (11%), 66-71 (1%), and 72 or older (0%). The ethnic/racial composition of respondents broke down to a little more than half Caucasian/White (61%), followed by Asian/Pacific Islander (13%), Multiracial (9%), Other (7%), Latino/Latina (6%), Middle Eastern (3%), Black (1%), and Indigenous/Native American (0%). 36% also indicated that they grew up in an immigrant household.

More than half of the respondent sample lives in the Northeast region (57%), followed by the Midwest (26%), the West (13%), the South (4%), and the Great Plains (0%). 30% of the respondent sample also said that they live in New York City.

Food-wise, Mexican (18%) was the most popular answer to the question “What is your favorite kind of international cuisine?,” narrowly beating out Italian (17%). This was followed by Middle Eastern (12%), Thai (12%), French (10%), Other (9%), Japanese (8%), Chinese (8%), and Indian (6%). Malaysian (50%) was overwhelmingly listed as the type of food that the respondents had never tried, followed by Colombian (37%), Peruvian (36%), Turkish (18%), Lebanese (12%), Irish (10%), Korean (8%), and Thai (1%).

Stemming from the quantitative data collected for this research study from the Qualtrics questionnaire on the topic of gastrodiploacy, the following four sets of visuals are intended to show various ways in which perceptions of national cuisine correlate with national image.

Figures 1 & 2 (see Appendix: Figures 1 & 2) show how respondents answered a two-part question that first asked, “Has eating a country’s food ever changed your opinion of it?” If respondents selected “yes,” this was followed up with “What country’s food changed your opinion of it?” The data indicates that over half (55.71%) of the 140 respondents have changed their opinion of a country based on eating its national cuisine. This is represented with a pie chart showing the total number of respondents. If the respondent answered affirmatively, the follow-up to this

was a fill-in-the-blank question. The 78 write-in answers indicating the specific country whose food changed the respondents’ opinion were then entered into the textual frequency visualization program Wordle to show that Ethiopian food helped change perception of Ethiopia’s national image the most among respondents (7), followed by Turkey (6), Thailand (5), China (5), Korea (4), and Lebanon (3).

Figures 3 & 4 (see Appendix: Figures 3 & 4) show public perception of the application of food as a diplomatic tool and its ‘gateway drug’ potential to a particular country’s other cultural exports, image, and tourism. Figure 3 is represented using a bar graph, showing how respondents agreed or disagreed with former Secretary of State Clinton’s previously noted statement, “food is the oldest form of diplomacy.” The responses were overwhelmingly in agreement, with 32% strongly agreeing and 47% agreeing, as displayed in the graph.

Figure 4 visualizes the responses to the question, “Has eating a particular country’s cuisine ever led you to do the following?” The data leads to the conclusion that exposure to a particular country’s cuisine is overwhelmingly a positive experience, and that 112 out of the 140 respondents (84%) have thought about traveling to a new country on the basis of its national cuisine. More than half of the respondents also indicated that eating a particular country’s cuisine led them to perceive that country in a more favorable light.

The data from Figure 5 (see Appendix: Figures 5 & 6) indicates that respondents overwhelmingly perceive that gastrodiploacy programs could help post-conflict and conflict countries looking to improve their national image. Answer choices “definitely yes” and “probably yes” were evenly split at 35%, while 23% of respondents answered “maybe.” 6% of respondents answered “probably not,” while 1% answered “definitely not.”

Figure 6 (see Appendix: Figures 5 & 6) shows four case study countries and public associations of their food in relation to their other key cultural exports, as well as ‘war/conflict’ in determining perceptions of their national image.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

With over half (55.71%) of the 140 respondents indicating that they have changed their opinion of a country based on eating its national cuisine (see Appendix: Figures 1 & 2), the data points to the transformative potential national cuisine can play in public perception of national image.

The follow-up question, represented through the Wordle visualization (see Appendix: Figures 1 & 2),

yielded interesting results as to some of the specific countries that changed public perceptions of national image among respondents. As previously noted, Ethiopian food led the way in changing perception of Ethiopia's national image, with seven respondents writing it in. This was followed by Turkey (6), Thailand (5), China (5), Korea (4), and Lebanon (3). Ethiopian restaurants are commonly very warm, and inviting, and meals filling. For many people, this counters years of selective, negative news coverage (if any) of Ethiopia as a country plagued by famine or stuck in a cycle of war with its Eritrean neighbors. Of these six countries, a pattern emerges in that three of them are clustered in the general Mediterranean vicinity and three are clustered in Asia, the current epicenter of government-supported gastrodiplomacy programs.

Thailand, as previously mentioned, pioneered the practice of gastrodiplomacy and offered small business grants for citizens to open Thai restaurants around the world in large numbers. This has been helpful for Thailand in separating itself from a decades-old perceived association with conflict in Southeast Asia, and has also been a boon to its tourism industry. Korea is also engaged in gastrodiplomacy efforts, and has for many years been overshadowed by its more economically, politically, and culinarily powerful neighbors Japan and China. China was a bit of surprise, partly because Chinese food is so omnipresent. However, upon further analysis, it makes sense that many Americans' first interactions with Chinese people and culture occur at Chinese restaurants.

Turkey and Lebanon are interesting because while their food is somewhat similar and could both be classified as "Middle Eastern," both countries' food is promoted by their people, especially migrants, as opposed to their governments through officially-sanctioned gastrodiplomacy programs. Turkey, as a growing player in global affairs, may also be seeing public perceptions of it change in sync with more Turkish food options opening in the United States.

Data collected from the questions visualized in Figures 3 and 4 (see Appendix: Figures 3 & 4) show that not only do most respondents agree or strongly agree with Clinton's assertion that "food is the oldest form of diplomacy," but also that food has the power to make a particular country's other cultural exports more enticing to the public. This,

most notably, includes visiting the country itself. This is visualized in Figure 4, as a whopping 84% of respondents indicated that they have considered traveling to a country based on its food. These data demonstrate the immediate benefits that a focused and coherent gastrodiplomacy program could give countries looking to better their image and scale up investment and tourist spending to boost

their economies. Indeed, it is one thing to have a better opinion of a far-off country based on its cuisine, but it is another thing entirely to want to fly across the world and spend one's money taking in the food, sights, sounds, and culture of said country, simply based on that original entry point of national cuisine.

Figures 5 and 6 (see Appendix: Figures 5 & 6) look at associative data with a view towards identifying perceptions

of food, culture, and war/violence among four case study countries. The associations of Figure 6 lead me to conclude that food is the most important cultural signifier for both Lebanon and Korea, while Irish literature and Colombian sports are better known to respondents than their national cuisines. Irish literature was not surprising, considering the country's rich literary history that includes Joyce, Yeats, Beckett, and others. Colombia is interesting, because while it has actively engaged in concerted sports diplomacy efforts in the past 10 years (including hosting international tournaments like the very successful and well-attended U-20 World Cup, putting results-yielding money into their Olympic programs, and even possessing a President who live-tweets the matches of a resurgent national soccer team integral to the country's national identity), I was expecting Colombia's rich and heavily-exported traditional and popular music to be more recognizable to respondents.

These associations also indicate that perceptions of "war/conflict" in Korea and Ireland are low compared to Colombia and Lebanon. This is despite the fact that the two Koreas are still officially at war and North Korea continues to pose a deadly threat to regional security, and Ireland remains, as some would argue, occupied and affected by sectarian and paramilitary violence.

Of these four countries, only South Korea has an official gastrodiplomacy program. However, based on these data, it seems that Lebanon is already succeeding in unofficial, migration-disseminated gastrodiplomacy,

TURKEY AND LEBANON ARE INTERESTING BECAUSE THEIR FOOD IS PROMOTED BY THEIR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY MIGRANTS, AS OPPOSED TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS THROUGH OFFICIALLY-SANCTIONED GASTRODIPLOMACY PROGRAMS.

and is known for having some of the best Arabic food. Colombia, however, could have the most to gain by starting a gastrodiplomacy program along the lines of what Peru's Foreign Ministry has done,⁵ as its food seems to be something of an unknown quantity beyond Colombian immigrant-heavy areas in New York and Miami, and the country still suffers from substantial negative perceptions of the security situation and ongoing civil war.

For South Korea, gastrodiplomacy is just one part of a much larger public diplomacy initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade aimed at improving its national image on the international stage. Exporting its food alongside its increasingly regionally and globally popular culture such as K-Pop music, Korean soap operas, and more, became a top priority for former President Lee Myung-bak after he assumed office in 2009.⁶ This was undertaken in tandem with aggressive and fruitful efforts to increase its multilateral clout in key international fora, trebling its Official Development Assistance, as well as winning bids to host major international sporting tournaments through innovative sports diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

The research undertaken in this study centered on measuring the relationship between consuming a country's food and its national image. Overall, the research indicates that food does have the potential to change public perceptions of national image, and can also be a gateway to the consumption of a country's other cultural exports, such as music, literature, sports, as well as increase tourism to that country. This research study finds that, out of the range of potential benefits to arise from changing public perceptions through food, the potential to increase tourism was the most pronounced and tangible for countries. It also concludes that smaller and middle-sized countries have the most to gain from gastrodiplomacy programs, but that countries emerging from, and currently in, a state of conflict might find such programs useful to better their national image on the global stage.

However, such programs can't be applied in a one-size-fits-all manner, as each country is different and some may gain more from gastrodiplomacy than others. The data suggest that smaller and middle power countries that don't currently have a defining national cultural export, or have more negative national images, stand to gain the most.

Food is a defining feature in our lives, and has the potential to connect us with new flavors, cultures, people, and countries. While gastrodiplomacy is still a relatively new field of practice and study, both for governments and academics, the methodological research undertaken for this study demonstrates that it should occupy an increas-

ingly important cultural diplomacy resource in the future.



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FIGURE 1

Has eating a country's food ever changed your opinion of it? (Number of survey participants)



FIGURE 2

If yes, what country's food changed your opinion of it?



FIGURE 3

Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently said that "food is the oldest diplomatic tool." Do you agree with this statement? (Number of survey participants)

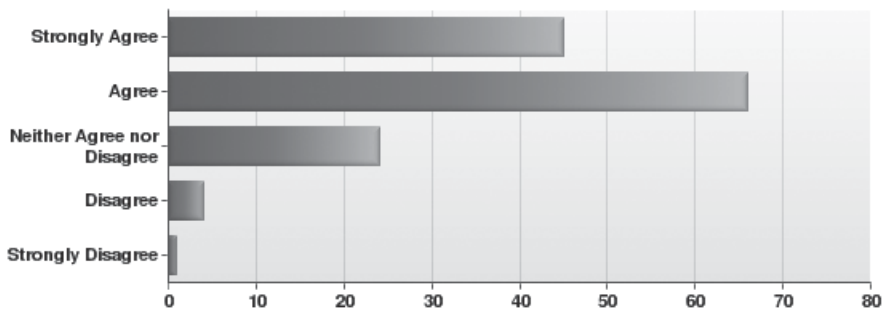


FIGURE 4

Has eating a particular country's cuisine ever led you to do the following? Please check all that apply. (Number of survey participants)

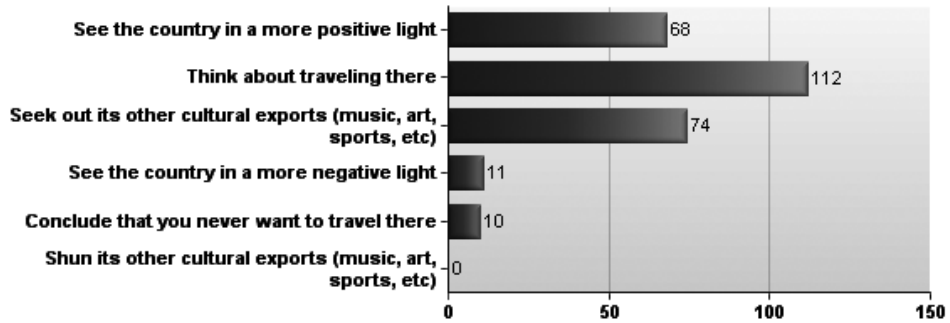


FIGURE 5

Do you think countries emerging from, or currently in, a state of conflict could benefit from gastrodiplomacy programs? (Number of survey participants)

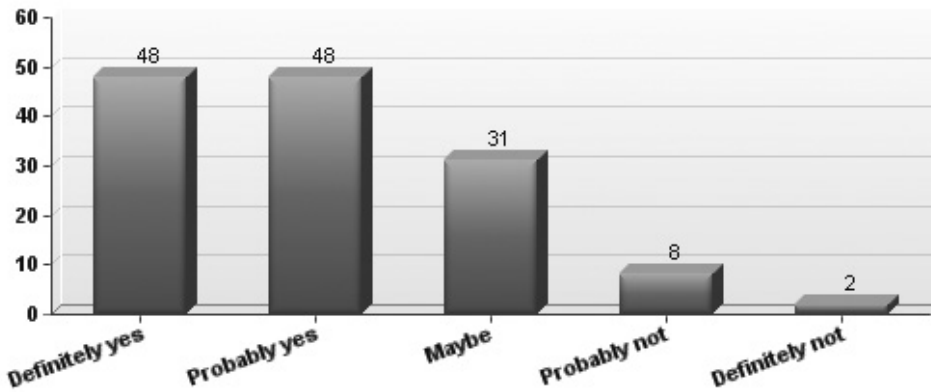
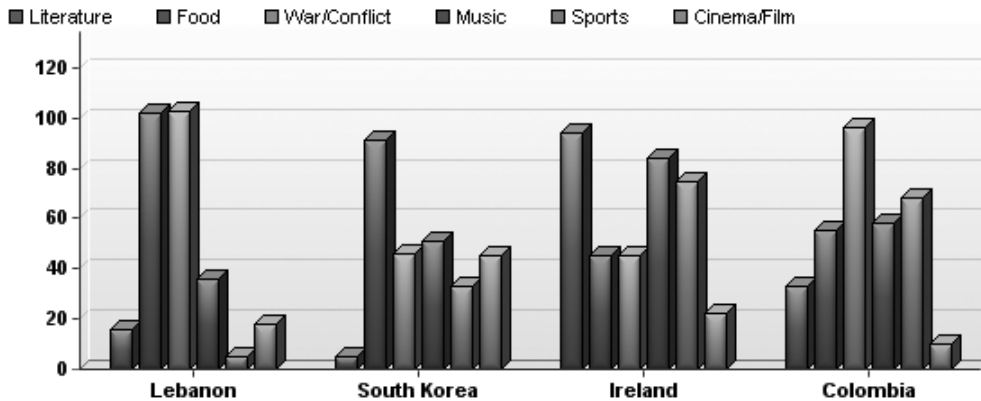


FIGURE 6

Which of the following do you associate with the four countries listed? Please check all that apply. (Number of survey participants)



PERSPECTIVES

**COOKING UP A CONVERSATION:
GASTRODIPLOMACY IN CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ART**
CARLY SCHMITT

**WAR AND PEAS:
CULINARY CONFLICT RESOLUTION AS CITIZEN DIPLOMACY**
SAM CHAPPLE-SOKOL

JAMIE OLIVER AND THE GASTRODIPLOMACY OF SIMULACRA
FRANCESCO BUSCEMI

COOKING UP A CONVERSATION: GASTRODIPLOMACY IN CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ART

BY CARLY SCHMITT

Food is one of the oldest forms of exchange. Our mutual dependence on food is often cited as the most basic element that connects people all over the world. Moreover, the various different processes of cooking and preparing things to eat are seen as an easily identifiable characteristic that sets us apart.¹

Many of the different conflicts and challenges we currently face on both local and international levels play themselves out in gastronomy. In the late 1990s the simple act of bringing people together was recognized as an art form. Since then, artists around the world have begun working with food as an artistic medium, because of the inherent abilities it has to bring people together. Contemporary artists are developing the ritual of sharing a meal into the basis for art. These projects use food as a foundation for intercultural exchange, and as an approachable way to encourage a conversation about larger, more challenging topics.

In this article I describe the current trends in contemporary public art to use food as an artistic medium that encourages intercultural exchange. I provide references to a range of projects going on within Europe and the United States that deal specifically with the idea of food as a tool for encouraging both local and international diplomacy. I provide detailed information about a variety of projects in order to illustrate the various forms these projects take on, as well as the variety of missions they are attempting to fulfill. Through the examination of these various artistic interventions, I hope to more clearly document the way in which this artistic trend is appearing in the contemporary art world, and how these art projects are helping to challenge and re-define the way in which artists interact with society.

In order to understand how food as a form of cultural diplomacy was able to enter into a conversation regarding contemporary art practice, let us first touch briefly on how the simple act of bringing people together has now been transformed into an act worthy of artistic merit.² This powerful trend in contemporary public art was termed “relational aesthetics” in the 1996 landmark text *Esthétique relationnelle* (Relational Aesthetics) by Nicolas Bourriaud. This text describes relational aesthetics as art that focuses on the social interactions between people as the genesis for an artwork. Bringing people together and creating a conversation, or interaction, are the main artistic objectives

in this style of artistic practice. Bourriaud identifies this artistic trend as a product of a society that is overburdened with material possessions, and although better networked, still more isolated than ever before.

The most classic example of an artist working with both relational aesthetics and food is Rirkrit Tiravanija. Tiravanija is a New York-based artist of Thai descent who grew up in Argentina, Thailand, Canada, and Ethiopia. He is best known for his work involving installation as a way of creating a specific environment within which he cooks various types of food for visitors as a sort of performance.

In his 1992 work, “Untitled (Still),” presented at 303 Gallery, New York, Tiravanija moved everything from the gallery storeroom into the exhibition space. In the empty space of a storeroom, he created a makeshift kitchen and cooked Thai curries for gallery visitors. The goal of this work was to directly involve the viewer in the art process and establish a different sort of relationship between artist and audience.³ In his performances, Tiravanija usually cooks Thai food, or some hybrid variation of it, and uses food to gather people together, inspire conversations, act as a symbol of home, and connect the audience to his personal history and culture.

Tiravanija’s way of working with food is very introspective and personal, and is conceived strongly as a way of challenging the conventional forms of displaying art in a gallery setting. Over the past 15 years, a new generation of artists have taken up the groundwork laid by relational artists like Tiravanija, and have begun working with food to create art that is more contextual and directly diplomatic in nature. These artists have adapted Bourriaud’s ideas and are no longer striving to create “ultimate utopias,” but are rather working to develop more manageable “micro-utopias” in, and outside, the gallery space.⁴ Similar concepts are found in the life and work of Joseph Beuys, who through his work coined the term “social sculpture,” a mixture of creative actions that leads to a potential social transformation.⁵ These artists are constructing their own concrete spaces and choreographing interactions with the hope that these gestures will activate what Mika Hannula calls the “social imaginary” in our communities and help us, as Bourriaud writes, “learn how to inhabit the world in a better way.”⁶

A good example of this is artist Michael Rakowitz. In 2007, he used food to create a critical dialogue in the

United States around the war in Iraq with his project titled "Enemy Kitchen." Rakowitz invited groups of students and adults to cook together and share a meal made from the recipes of his Jewish-Iraqi mother. Run like a workshop, Rakowitz used the time spent cooking together in the kitchen to talk about contemporary political issues. He did this with the intention of opening up a new dialogue around this conflict by using food as a mediating mechanism.

Rakowitz said that the practice of cooking and eating together "is a public act that enlists an audience as vital collaborators in the production of meaning."⁷ In holding cooking workshops like these in the context of the USA, and by using his mother's recipes, he hoped to evoke what he describes as "the poetry inscribed in the notion of consuming the enemy." In 2012, Rakowitz took this project one step further by creating an Enemy Kitchen food truck, based in his hometown of Chicago. An extension of the Enemy Kitchen project, Rakowitz's artistic goals remain the same, but the format has evolved so that now local Iraqi cooks prepare the food while Iraq War veterans act as servers and sous-chefs. In conducting this project, Rakowitz came to realize how few people have contact with an Iraqi or soldier who served in the war. Increasing the mobility of this project has allowed the Enemy Kitchen to reach a broader public.⁸

Much scholarship has been done around the topic of how food acts as a defining marker of cultural identity, as well as a gateway to understanding cultural difference; among them are the works of anthropologists Mary Douglas, Herbert Blumer, and Claude Levi-Strauss.⁹ In the global marketplace, food has become one of the most accessible ways of gaining access to other cultures. Through food, we can have the experience of encountering other cultures, often with the convenience of staying in our own country. Through food and this ritual of sharing a meal, one is suddenly extended an invitation into another culture. The consumer can feel knowledgeable, worldly, and perhaps even included in another cultural community, if only for the 45 minutes before the check arrives.¹⁰ Projects like Enemy Kitchen, and the similar project Conflict Kitchen, rely heavily on the feelings of cultural inclusion and understanding that such diplomatic food actions can provoke.

PROJECTS LIKE ENEMY KITCHEN, AND THE SIMILAR PROJECT CONFLICT KITCHEN, RELY HEAVILY ON THE FEELINGS OF CULTURAL INCLUSION AND UNDERSTANDING THAT SUCH DIPLOMATIC FOOD ACTIONS CAN PROVOKE.

Conflict Kitchen is an ongoing food-as-cultural-diplomacy project in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This take-out restaurant only serves food from countries with which the United States currently is in conflict. Every six months, the menu and font design change to represent a new country and culture. In addition to serving food, Conflict Kitchen also hosts events, performances, and discussion about the culture, politics, and issues at stake with regard to each country that the project focuses on. The food comes in a specially designed wrapper that features interviews with representatives from the "conflict country" living both in the United States and back home. Thus far, Conflict Kitchen has served food from Iran, Afghanistan and Venezuela, with Cuba and North Korea to be featured within the next year. This project uses food to open up a conversation in the United States about foreign cultures and the issues of geopolitics.¹¹

It is important to note that Conflict Kitchen acts and operates exactly like a fast-food restaurant. Participants pay for the privilege of sampling food from these unfamiliar cultures. This provokes the larger question: does a monetary exchange change the interaction and character of the diplomacy going on in this project?

Much scholarship has been done regarding the tradition of giving that often accompanies food.¹² When this tradition is broken and food is sold, rather than gifted, one could argue that the monetary exchange challenges the authenticity of the action, thus turning this form of cultural exchange into a spectacle.¹³ In the book *Cross Cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities*, an article by Allison James goes into great depth about the way people are able to buy into or literally consume a culture as a way of measuring individual status or prestige.¹⁴

This phenomenon can be seen around the world. When McDonald's opened their first restaurant in China in 1992, people stood outside in lines for hours, tripping over each other in their eagerness to taste "real American food."¹⁵ Most people do not consider McDonald's to be an excellent example of "authentic American cuisine," in fact, in terms of America's culinary reputation worldwide, McDonald's has done more damage than good. Moreover, in this example, it is important to recognize that the chance to have a "real American experience" was in some

respects even more important than the quality of the food. In this example of consuming American culture, food exchange has clearly become a cultural spectacle and a way for customers to enrich, or confirm, their personal identities, as opposed to engaging in a more authentic cultural exchange.

The American Reputation Aid Society (ARAS) is an ongoing art project that deals directly with this question of cultural consumption and authenticity. Frustrated by the very unauthentic way American culture is represented around the world through fast food restaurants and Hollywood movies, I developed a platform where people come together and discuss international politics on a more interpersonal level. Operating since 2010, ARAS, along with the ARAS Aid Wagon, has appeared in both Germany and the United States, staging “aid action” performances in farmers markets.

We constructed the ARAS Aid Wagon, a mobile kitchen modeled after an old-world pastry cart, out of mostly found materials that we use as the basis for my interactions. A typical ARAS Aid Action, or performance, consists of wheeling our wagon into the local community farmers market, buying local produce, and using the modest mobile kitchen to create home-cooked American food. Cooking up some of our favorite family recipes, or recipes submitted through the ARAS website, we use food as an invitation for conversation and a chance at having a truly authentic American experience overseas. ARAS does not charge for this food, and makes all the recipes available on-site and online, so that a large portion of our aid mission is connected to education.¹⁶

ARAS uses food as a vehicle that delivers intercultural diplomacy and, like the two other previously mentioned projects, uses food as a way to make the process of globalization more approachable. The ARAS project is particularly noteworthy because the artistic actions are taking place in both Europe and the United States. Moreover, this project represents a second subsection of art projects that use food as a way to address domestic issues or practice a form of “domestic diplomacy.” Although not yet a completely developed concept, one could argue that it is the lack of domestic diplomacy that has led to the strong polarization within our own countries. These polarizations are inarguably tied directly to geography, regionalism, and xenophobia.

When ARAS operates in the U.S., our focus shifts inward, and we stage diplomatic actions that focus more on local issues, such as nationwide obesity, cooking healthy food on a small budget, the challenge of finding fresh produce in low-income areas, talking about the way food is grown and distributed domestically, and how that


ties Americans into a larger global challenge. In the U.S., this project takes on a stronger “think global and act local” approach, and is purposely designed to get people talking about these important issues, and how they intersect with the concept of a “national identity.”

Robert Farid Karimi is an interdisciplinary playwright/poet and performance artist who is also working on issues related to domestic diplomacy. In his project *The Cooking Show con Karimi & Comrades*, Karimi has created a live, interactive cooking show infused with political satire and music. These shows are presented in a variety of contexts and locations, ranging from supermarket parking lots to the theatrical stage. His current show, *Diabetes of Democracy*, is working to promote cooking as a cultural movement that will combat the rising epidemic of type 2 diabetes in the U.S., which is predominately caused by obesity. In Arizona, his shows focused mainly on changing the eating habits of young Latinos, whose dietary choices are heavily influenced by both their cultural ancestry and the pressure to take on a more mainstream U.S.-American diet. Karimi himself is of Iranian-Guatemalan ancestry, and uses his familiarity with the first-generation immigrant community in the U.S. to create programs that strive to increase awareness around the links between food, cultural identity, and health.¹⁷

Through these shows, Karimi has found a creative way to use food, and food preparation, as an entry point into a larger conversation about domestic health issues and cultural identity. A group of international artists initiated a similar project in Leipzig, Germany, when they founded the Neue Leipzige Küche (New Leipzig Kitchen) in 2009. Like Karimi, the Neue Leipzige Küche also used their position as cultural outsiders to reach out to the new-immigrant communities living within Eastern Leipzig. This project brought people from Russia, Turkey, North America, South America, the Balkan Regions, and Germany together to cook with one another. Out of this collective action came new ways of cooking and understanding each other, which the artists hoped would lead to creating a new Leipzig identity. The Neue Leipzige Küche also focused on health issues by initiating international food tastings, and starting a conversation about nutrition as it relates to different eating traditions.¹⁸

Food has achieved a mythical status in modern culture, and food has become the embodiment of our cultural differences. Often, people fail to recognize that food cultures are the resulting process of hundreds, if not thousands, of years of research and refinement. History plays the predominant role in what, when, and how we eat. Moreover, it is inaccurate to say that a specific style of eating is a product of nature or was simply born

into a culture.¹⁹ These different styles of preparing and eating food are in fact the end result of years of cultural diplomacy and experimentation. The art projects featured in this article strive to expand upon the history of cultural food diplomacy and use that confusing divide between nature and culture as a catalyst for a conversation about health, justice, and internationalism.

All of the projects I mentioned in this article use food as a platform for critical dialogue. In some cases, that dialogue is intended to showcase the story of globalization as it is told through food and culture on an international level. Other projects work to make international issues visible by focusing their efforts on local concerns. This article exemplifies a few artists who are working in a very contextual way to develop projects that challenge and re-define the way artists interact with society. These projects take place outside of a typical gallery setting, and use food as a platform for conducting cultural diplomacy regarding both national and international issues. Is it possible that these small diplomatic actions will be able to encourage larger international results? Only time will tell, but if Oscar Wilde's optimistic words about the conciliatory power food carries are any indication, "After a good meal one can forgive anybody, even one's relatives," then projects like these have a good chance. 

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WAR AND PEAS: CULINARY CONFLICT RESOLUTION AS CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

BY SAM CHAPPLE-SOKOL

Food can be used as a tool of public diplomacy, variously known as culinary diplomacy, gastrodiploamacy, and diplomatic gastronomy. It remains a new and understudied field, but the foundations have been laid and this current volume is a major step forward. Food has been used as a diplomatic tool since the first time Neanderthal hunters sat around their kill together, but only recently has it been studied as such. We, as scholars, have started to analyze those people, organizations, and governments who use this tool every day in restaurants, at exhibitions, and at research institutes.

My goal in this piece is to take the concept at hand in a new direction; not only can food be used as a tool of diplomacy, there is potential in its use as an instrument of conflict resolution. In order to make this connection, I will rely on the contact hypothesis, borrowed from the field of conflict resolution, and will discuss the power of citizen diplomacy. Through citizen-to-citizen interaction, food can be used to cross battle lines in protracted social conflicts. There are not nearly as many examples of successful or even existent conflict culinary diplomacy projects, but I will endeavor to present what has been done and extrapolate when, why, and how those projects work.

I define culinary diplomacy as “the use of food and cuisine as an instrument to create cross-cultural understanding in the hopes of improving interactions and cooperation.”¹ I have previously addressed all levels of culinary diplomacy, from government-to-government interaction behind closed doors to government-to-citizen public diplomacy efforts, as well as citizen culinary diplomacy. In this paper I will focus solely on the third aspect, as it is at the citizen level that food can be best utilized as a tool of conflict resolution.

No matter how entrenched a conflict seems to be, even including deep debates about the origins of national cuisines, food can be a powerful tool to overcome tensions on a person-to-person level. This can occur on several planes, according to how deeply the parties’ interaction goes. At base, mere contact over food, as simple as sharing a meal, can be enough for a connection to be made. Food, as a vital part of life, quickly removes many barriers to interaction. The act of eating together, or commensality, can set the table for potentially healing conversations.

But for protracted social conflicts, with deeply entrenched sides who have limited interaction, more than

mere contact is necessary. Indeed, in those situations, food can be a major catalyst for conflict. In this paper I will discuss the concepts of both Track 3 diplomacy and the contact hypothesis to argue that it is not just eating food together, but thinking about it, preparing it, and serving it together as well, that provide true opportunities for improving interactions and cooperation.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH CULINARY TRACK 3 DIPLOMACY

The theory of culinary diplomacy has not been explored at length, although some work has been done. In a 2013 article, I discussed the roots of the field in Aristotle’s *Politics*, explored how Joseph Nye’s theory of soft power is connected, and fit culinary diplomacy into the wider fields of cultural and public diplomacy.² Scholar and practitioner Paul Rockower has written about the theory of the field, suggesting its value in the context of nation-branding, especially for middle powers like Taiwan, Thailand, and Peru.³

In the current analysis, it is necessary to delve more into the concepts of the contact hypothesis, as well as so-called “Track 3” diplomacy. In *Breaking Bread to Win Hearts and Minds*, I introduced the work of Allport, Brewer and Gaertner, and Amir to show that “sharing food ... brings people into contact in an intimate and pleasurable setting,” thereby “encourag[ing] people to seek mutual understanding and appreciation.”⁴ Allport, who extensively studied race and contact in the 1940s and 1950s, stated that when “barriers to effective communication ... are removed the result is the reduction of fallacious stereotypes, and the substitution of a realistic view for one of fear and autistic hostility.”⁵

This provides us the basis of the field, to which we can begin to add to our application of the contact theory. Instead of simple contact, relationships improve drastically when groups are given common tasks to achieve, especially when they involve an economic goal.⁶ According to Allport:

The nub of the matter seems to be that contact must reach below the surface in order to be effective in altering prejudice. Only the type of contact that leads people to do things together is likely to result in changed attitudes. ... It is the cooperative striving

for the goal that engenders solidarity.⁷

This idea of mutual cooperation underlies the ideas of Track 3 Diplomacy, which according to the United States Institute of Peace is defined as:

People-to-people diplomacy undertaken by individuals and private groups to encourage interaction and understanding between hostile communities and involving awareness-raising and empowerment within these communities.⁸

Track 3 diplomacy, unlike Tracks 1 and 2, does not specifically aim to resolve the wider conflict, and instead focuses on the concepts of contact and understanding as a way of setting the table for resolution.⁹

It is the cooperative aspects of the Contact Hypothesis, those that form the foundation of Track 3 diplomacy, that give maximal strength to the concept of culinary conflict resolution. In situations of deep conflict between groups, simple contact may not be sufficient to overcome generations of territorial, familial, ethnic, or national differences. There is a need for cooperation, for envisioning and carrying out a common goal. It is not enough to just break bread with an entrenched enemy; you must make it together first.

COMMENSALITY CREATES COMMONALITY

There are powerful examples of culinary Track 3 diplomacy, when food is used as a force for peace, understanding, and reconciliation. An exemplar is Pittsburgh-based restaurant Conflict Kitchen, which explores the nexus between food and conflict by serving food only from countries with whom the United States has an adversarial relationship.¹⁰ The restaurant has served food from Afghanistan, Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela, and works to connect American diners with counterparts in each “enemy” country. I and others have written extensively about the goals and methods behind Conflict Kitchen, including its use of Skype to connect diners in the United States and abroad as well as the packaging for each meal, which is printed with information about the country and its food.¹¹ The restaurant has started a new project, to

create speeches that the featured community – Iranians and Cubans so far – would like President Obama to give about their countries’ relationship with the United States. Through the medium of food, diners are introduced to an “enemy country” and its people, as well as its people’s bilateral policy desires. It is a complex connection, but

one that resonates due to its foundation in food. The effect of the connection is not felt just in Pittsburgh; while high-level policy shifts have not actualized in Washington or Tehran as a direct result, individuals in both the U.S. and abroad have been able to experience a shift in perceptions. The Iranian artist who hosted the dinner in Tehran said about the experience,

THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF FOOD, DINERS ARE INTRODUCED TO AN “ENEMY COUNTRY” AND ITS PEOPLE, AS WELL AS ITS PEOPLE’S BILATERAL POLICY DESIRES.

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The intention was to open up a dialogue between the two sides of the table and it did happen very organically. ... Everyone here was surprised to see tables from the two countries joining one another. I could see people staring at the projected image on the wall and wondering if that was in fact live footage of a table setting in Pittsburgh!¹²

The Virtual Dinner Guest Project is another that has taken one angle of the Conflict Kitchen idea – the Skype-linked dinner – and expanded upon it. Eric Maddox, the founder of the project, has worked to bring together groups of citizen diplomats from varying countries and backgrounds for a shared dinner, connected over Skype. The goal is for the virtual dinner party to “stretch across borders, cultural differences, and political divisions, placing a special emphasis on Conflict Transformation and the collaborative deconstruction of media stereotypes.”¹³ Maddox believes that using food is the fastest and simplest way to tear down barriers to conversation; groups will immediately launch into questions about what they are each eating, which, in theory, can lead to further conversation.¹⁴ The next step, what happens after dinner, is key – the project’s goal is to have each conversation brought to the conversants’ communities, thereby extending the reach of the meal and the interaction.

Various campaigns and movements have been undertaken to help immigrant communities settle into new homes. After incidents of violence against Indian

immigrants in Australia in early 2010, campaigners started a movement called “Vindaloo Against Violence;” Australians were encouraged to eat out at an Indian restaurant to show their acceptance of the population.¹⁵ In Rendsburg, Germany, a group of community leaders brought together German and Turkish women to cook for each other and share the others’ holidays.¹⁶ A cookbook published by the organizers, entitled “Buttercreme und Börek,” chronicled the citizen diplomacy undertaken by the participants, who came to understand and respect each other through the medium of cuisine. While it is difficult to evaluate these programs, whose unquantifiable goal is a shift in perceptions, the Vindaloo Against Violence had a strong response, with 10,000 people signing up, including Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Australia’s High Commissioner to India;¹⁷ Buttercreme und Börek also had a positive result: the two sides developed a lasting relationship based on cooking, even traveling to Turkey together to learn more about the immigrants’ homeland.¹⁸

Finally, food can be used to overcome (or try to overcome) internal conflicts. For the past five years, Somalia has been home to a group of restaurants attempting to bring normalcy back to the capital, Mogadishu. Somali chef Ahmed Jama returned to the city from London in 2008, early in the tenure of militant group al-Shabaab, to open a series of restaurants and reintroduce communal meeting points into Mogadishu life.¹⁹ The path has not been easy – 2012 and 2013 each saw fatal bombings at his restaurants – but Jama said that “someone has to start somewhere in history to change a nation.”²⁰ With nightly crowds in his restaurants and a staff of 140, Jama has demonstrated that conflict-weary Somalis will indeed venture out for dinner, despite the danger.²¹ Another movement to reduce internal conflict is in South Africa, a country of 11 different national languages and a deep history of domestic schism, where some are trying to use barbecue to unify the nation. Activists are trying to declare September 24 South Africa’s national ‘Braai Day,’ a time for all communities to unify around the grill.²² Jan Scannell, the creator of Braai Day, thinks that groups grilling boerewors, a sausage with cross-community origins, around a wood fire, represents the perfect tool for yoking the country.

The above are just a few examples of attempts around the globe to use food as a tool of conflict resolution. In each, the idea revolves around dining together, whether it be at a community restaurant in Mogadishu, a kitchen table in Munich, or a take-out counter in Pittsburgh. Each of these projects fits into United States Institute of Peace’s definition of Track 3 diplomacy, and each participant is a citizen diplomat.

FOOD AS A FORCE FOR CONFLICT

The picture is not all rosy, and we cannot look only at the peaceful side of food. A few examples from Palestine and Israel highlight how food can exacerbate conflict. For example, there is the question of za’atar, an herb commonly used by Palestinians, whose harvest was banned by the Israeli government and confiscated at checkpoints.²³ Gaza, the isolated sliver along the coast of the Mediterranean, has seen dire issues with access to food. This has led to a cuisine of necessity and improvisation. Laila El-Haddad and Maggie Schmitt, authors of the 2013 cookbook *Gaza Kitchen*, spent time traveling the Gaza Strip to learn about how Gazans view the siege as seen “through the kitchen window.” Referring to the history of the deeply embattled area, they write that:

This geopolitical ping-pong, as well as the frequent closure of Gaza’s borders, has isolated the Strip, obligating Gazans to adapt their cuisine as well as all the other aspects of their lives to wildly uncertain economic and political circumstances.²⁴

There are deep quarrels on the gastro-geopolitical landscape as well. Who invented hummus, who falafel? The concept of “Israelization” of Arab food has struck a chord in the region, as both sides claim ownership over dishes.²⁵ Southeast Europe and the Balkans are other areas with deep culinary rifts. Debates flare regularly about the origin of baklava (is it Turkish, Greek Cypriot, or Greek? Even President Barack Obama has entered the fray); lahmeceun (Greek Cypriot or Turkish?); and the stew keskek/kashika, which was named to UNESCO’s Intangible Heritage list as a Turkish dish, ignoring the Armenian claim to it; to name just a few.²⁶

BEYOND BREAKING BREAD: COMMON GOALS

As I have illustrated, food campaigns have been used as a tool to promote peace and a force for conflict resolution. It is in the most deeply entrenched conflicts – the ages-old struggles of the Balkans, the religio-historical morass in the Middle East – that food has been a powerful divider. We must think beyond the value of just sitting together around the table. Certainly, the soft power goal of culinary diplomacy is for commensality to create commonality; that is, breaking bread to win hearts and minds. But to move beyond, we must look at Allport’s concept of “reach[ing] below the surface” for contact to be truly transformational. There are limited examples of this kind of project, so it is impossible to draw comprehensive conclusions, but looking at these few may help us think about the future of

culinary conflict resolution.

At the most basic level, social entrepreneurs have created collaborative food products combining inputs from various sides of conflict. PeaceWorks, a food company whose slogan is “Cooperation never tasted so good!”, started selling an olive and sundried tomato spread under the cross cultural ‘Moshe and Ali’ brand in the mid-1990s.²⁷ The company, which labels itself as ‘not-only-for-profit,’ has the mission to “act as the catalyst for profitable economic interdependence” between Israelis and Palestinians.²⁸ Abdullah Ghanim, the Palestinian olive grower who sells his olives to Daniel Lubetzky, the Mexican Jew who runs the production facility in Tel Aviv, says that “Buying, selling, and interacting—this is one way of encouraging the two sides to make peace.”²⁹ Peace Oil, a British non-profit, combines olive oil from Palestinian and Israeli Jewish growers, with production done by Jews, Arabs, Bedouins, and Druze.³⁰ The economic importance of olives and olive oil throughout communities in the Levant adds symbolic weight to such a project. Each of these examples may have small impact for the growers and producers involved, but more and deeper collaboration in conflicts all around the world may pave the way to peace through culinary entrepreneurship.³¹

In *Breaking Bread to Win Hearts and Minds*, I discussed the Club des Chefs des Chefs (CCC), or ‘Club of Chefs of Heads of State,’ an association of chefs who cook either for their head of state privately or serve as the executive chef for official functions hosted by the head of state. In 2012, the founder of the organization, Gilles Bragard, and the chef in charge of official receptions in Israel, Shalom Kadosh, hosted a fundraising dinner for the Peres Center for Peace. Five members of the CCC, including chefs from France, Monaco, the United States, Russia, and Germany, each prepared a course, using a phalanx of sous chefs from Chef Kadosh’s kitchens. The sous chefs were divided equally between Palestinians and Israelis, who were each given an official CCC chef coat and the task to help prepare the meal, which would support the mission of the Peres Center, to “foster tolerance, economic and technological development, cooperation, and well-being.”³² Bragard’s objective with the meal was to bring together Palestinians and Israelis under one uniform, the chef’s coat.³³ The American representative to the Club, White House Sous Chef Tommy Kurpradit, cited the power of a common goal to unite:

When you put them [chefs] in one room, and they have to do for example a cheeseburger, they work together to put that out for the guest. It’s a single task that brings them together, and they’re not

going to fight about it, because it’s food.³⁴

Beyond these projects, there has not been enough work done to test the idea that the cooperative and economic aspects of food production can have a positive effect on conflict transformation. It is not even clear that the above have stimulated change; it is difficult to evaluate conflict resolution and soft power programs. But we should keep pushing these ideas. For example, cooperative cooking schools can be established across conflict lines. Training the next generation of chefs in conflict zones to be welcoming of their neighbors and fluent in their cuisines could be a recipe for bilateral culinary partnerships. A series of in-person dinners could be organized in border regions – along the India-Pakistan border, for instance, or in the Balkans – to bring cooks and hosts together with diners to create joint events. Immigrant communities can be welcomed in to new homes by not only cooking for their hosts (and vice versa), as in the Buttercreme-und-Börek example, but with them, as cooks trade lessons and can collaborate on joint cookbooks. These are all citizen level interventions, but as Allport wrote, “It is the cooperative striving for the goal that engenders solidarity” – and solidarity can perhaps engender transformation.


CONCLUSION: WAR OR PEAS?

As we can see, there have been a number of efforts undertaken to use food as a tool of conflict resolution, though it is far from a given that food can bring about peace. Kamal Mouzawak, the founder of the first farmers market in factious Lebanon, Souk el Tayeb, readily acknowledges that though there can be positive movement through food, conflict resolution action should be done at a “higher level – like introducing human rights – before moving to more subtle ways of ‘food reconciliation.’”³⁵ Maggie Schmitt and Laila El-Haddad, authors of *Gaza Kitchen*, are unconvinced by what they call “hummus kumbaya”³⁶ – El-Haddad has tweeted that “breaking bread can never foster coexistence if inequities go unaddressed.”³⁷

Two chefs who many see as leading by example when it comes to collaboration are also unconvinced about culinary conflict resolution. Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi, partners in a series of London-based restaurants and cookbooks, were both born in Jerusalem – Ottolenghi in the Jewish Quarter and Tamimi in the Muslim Quarter. They published a cookbook together in 2012 entitled *Jerusalem*, discussing the food with which each chef was raised. In the introduction to the book, they write, “It takes a giant leap of faith, but we are happy to take it – what have we got to lose? – to imagine that hummus will eventually bring Jerusalemites together, if nothing

else will.”³⁸ When pressed about that statement, though, Ottolenghi had the following to say:

People say [we’re] a great example of using food to bring about peace between warring sides. We really resisted this conclusion, but in the intro of the book [*Jerusalem*], what do we write? Do we put on a smiley face, we say maybe this will solve our problems, and take it? It’s quite a dangerous stance to take, because it’s very far from the truth. Food is not a binding force that brings these two cultures together in reality.³⁹

From the words of Mouzawak, Schmitt and El-Haddad, and Ottolenghi, leading voices in the food world, we might think that the situation is futile. Protracted conflicts wear populations out; how could a simple tool like food reverse years of ignorance, hatred, war, and schism? The answer may be built into the question: food is simple. As Eric Maddox stressed, food is the quickest way to remove barriers to conversation. It will not be a panacea to the world’s ills, though at the citizen level it may be able to bring people together for mutual goals and shared outcomes. This new instrument of conflict resolution, as old as human existence, may prove to be a valuable addition to our toolbox as we confront conflicts both new and old. 

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JAMIE OLIVER AND THE GASTRODIPLOMACY OF SIMULACRA

BY FRANCESCO BUSCEMI

This work aims to investigate the gastrodipomatic objectives of food travelogues on TV, and more precisely of the food travelogue *Jamie's Great Britain*, presented by the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver.

Food travelogues are television programs in which the presenter, often a chef, travels around a country in search of good food, which in these programs is always inextricably connected to the landscape, popular sights, and the nation. These shows are aimed at representing good food and beautiful landscapes and, through its food, invite the viewer to enjoy the nation that they represent. In this sense, these programs are profoundly interrelated with tourism by having the same final aim of promoting the nation. While tourism achieves this by adopting multiple weapons, food travelogues only serve the purpose by representing food in the national context. The problem, then, is to find out how these programs represent food and the nation. Related to all of this, the research question that this work poses is to what extent and how do TV food travelogues, and more precisely *Jamie's Great Britain*, act as gastrodipomatic texts?

In order to answer this question, the next section develops the relative theoretical framework.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Interaction Between Food and the Nation

In order to act as a text of gastrodiplocracy, these programs firstly need to reinforce the identity of the nation that they are promoting. To do so, they construct a mutual relationship between food and the nation. On the one hand, in fact, food “brands” the nation, for example when food helps to identify a common past for the whole state, or when shows represent dishes that are also national symbols. These phenomena in some sense guarantee the unity of the state, and promote the nation through a strong sense of identity. In *Jamie's Great Britain*, for example, Oliver cooks fish and chips in England and haggis in Scotland, two authentic symbols set in their birthplaces. In this case, food travelogues represent food to reinforce the nation.

On the other hand, sometimes it is the nation that brands foods, taking ownership of them and labelling them as “national.” Belasco has already demonstrated that national food is only a social construction.¹ Food, in fact, naturally comes from regions, local areas, or, on the

contrary, from globalization, thanks to the creolization of ingredients and dishes. When defined as national, an item of food is instead a social construction that has undergone a social and political process of inclusion/exclusion,² and continually negotiates its presence within the constructed national food culture. As the nation is a social construction,³ it never expresses food naturally. It is the state that needs to have national foods to appear unified by a so-called “natural element.” Related to this, Olwig finds that the representation of a natural element is more powerful than that of a socially constructed entity. If, moreover, there is also an ideological aim behind this representation, the natural entity results in being more convincing. In Olwig this happens with landscapes, represented to reinforce national identity. However, this study states that also food may be represented with the same aim, because representing and stressing the natural “provide a source of human identity”⁴ and it does not matter whether or not this naturalness is real. In fact, food in travelogues appears to be almost exclusively natural, with every sign of processing being carefully avoided. Natural food is more convincing when used in gastrodiplocracy. Similarly, even the nation is represented as natural, as composed of an ancestrally unified people, and not as a politically and socially constructed entity. This authenticity, however, is only the representation of authenticity, which “can become a fake in the course of increasing commodification”⁵ leading to an “illusion of authenticity.”⁶ Therefore, to represent this illusion, television needs simulacra.

Simulacra

Stringfellow et al., whose work is of direct importance for this study, start from the point that today, in the post modern and liquid society,⁷ members of the audience do not consume objects but simulacra,⁸ which for Baudrillard are “models or signs that simulate reality and thus conceal the fact that the real is not real.”⁹ Relating this theory to tourism, Stringfellow et al. argue that consumers do not consume destinations, but simulacra in the form of celebrity. Similarly, in the case of food TV, it may be assumed that simulacra substitute expensive or unattainable foods for consumers that cannot afford or attain them. Who will eat the veal cooked by Oliver in person? Who will visit the small house by the river of the Scottish fisherman,

as Oliver does in one of the episodes? Just Oliver, and other individuals that hold the status of celebrity. The members of Oliver's audience, instead, are not allowed to do so, not only for economic and social reasons, but also because there are too many of them to visit these small, exclusive locations. In this sense, simulacra may “meet ever-increasing consumption demands.”¹⁰ After enjoying food and the landscape on TV, members of the audience may buy the food promoted by Oliver at the supermarket and visit Britain on an organized tour, experiencing only the simulacra that they watched before.

In this sense, these shows do not promote the nation through food, but a simulacrum of the nation through the simulacra of its food, producing a televisual representation that is perfectly consistent with the kind of tourism it relates to. Finally, not only do members of the audience fail in reaching a higher status, but also they have to deal with the ideological assumptions that all of this implies.

Ideology

Many texts relating to food and the nation not only bear a representation of the nation, but also national ideologies.¹¹ In the case of Britain, as in many democracies, this ideology is put forward without any formal imposition, but through the softer weapon of hegemony.¹² When talking about food and Britain, the ideologies are multiculturalism and post colonialism. Multiculturalism, as opposed to nationalism, refers to a society “at ease with the rich tapestry of human life and the desire among people to express their own identity in the manner they see fit.”¹³ Post colonialism, instead, sees that the roles of the two actors, the colonized and the colonizers, must be re-written, “for the analysis of postcolonial discourse as a productive, hybrid ‘betweenness’, relocation and re-inscription.”¹⁴ Addressing the west and the east, “Bhabha shows how such polarization is simplistic and dangerous ... Colonialism conditions the world in which we live in complex ways. But we cannot explain this by dividing the world into the good (the formerly oppressed) and the bad (the former oppressors).”¹⁵

In conclusion, in watching the show, members of the audience also deal with the ideologies that national televisions put forward, and this brings about a new form

of interaction between the show and the viewer, who may absorb or challenge these ideologies to various degrees. The focus of this work, however, is the relationships between food and the nation and the creation of simulacra in order to deal with the increasing consumption demand and to promote the nation. Supported by all of the theories reported above, the next section analyzes *Jamie's Great Britain* and its representation of food, relating to this form of gastrodiploacy of the simulacra.

JAMIE'S GREAT BRITAIN

Throughout the six episodes of *Jamie's Great Britain*, the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver travels through Britain, cooking and tasting traditional and ethnic British foods. In following the theoretical framework, this analysis is split into two parts. The first part discusses the scenes in which food brands the nation while second section concerns the parts of the show in which the nation brands food. Both parts deal with issues that, as expressed in the theoretical framework, relate to ideology and simulacra.

When Food Brands the Nation

In *Jamie's Great Britain*, authenticity is the strategy through which food brands the nation. In so doing, the show acts as a means of cultural diplomacy. In representing the authenticity of British food, Oliver promotes the authenticity of the nation. Authenticity is represented by Oliver in multiple ways, all relating to adjectives like real, unprocessed, tough, and spartan. In one word, authentic. One of the most frequent of these is the way in which the show represents meat. Throughout the episodes, Oliver often shows scenes of slaughter, killing of animals, and hanging dead corpses of rabbits and birds.

Moreover, in one scene, which he defines as similar to an autopsy, he removes, cooks, and eats all the inner organs of veal. These scenes go together with the use of the adjective chef-y, which relates to the chef's elegant and refined way of cooking. Oliver continually repeats, while cooking, that what he is preparing is not chef-y, and there is nothing chef-y about his technique. In forgetting that he is one of the celebrity chefs par excellence, he distances himself from his colleagues and from elegant styles of cooking, often eating with his hands and continually using sexual

THE RURAL LANDSCAPE, HARD WORK, THE HANGING OF DEAD ANIMALS, AND TOUGH BEHAVIOR PROMOTE BRITAIN AS AN APPARENTLY “REAL” COUNTRY, IN WHICH TRAVELERS MAY EXPERIENCE THINGS WHICH ARE LESS COMMON ON TODAY'S ORGANIZED TRIPS.

double entendres. All of this adds authenticity to Britain, which is in fact socially constructed. The rural landscape, hard work, the hanging of dead animals, and tough behavior promote Britain as an apparently “real” country, in which travelers may experience things which are less common on today's organized trips (and on today's TV). Actually, as seen above, few members of the audience will be allowed to eat oysters on an old boat on the river or share memories of the old East End with the owner of the oldest pub in London, as Oliver does. The majority of them will just experience the simulacra represented in the show.

However, the most important means through which Oliver constructs authenticity is the army truck he travels around Britain and cooks in. The show highlights the role of the army truck by showing Oliver travel around inside it as he moves from place to place across the British countryside. The result is the suggestion that Oliver's army truck is visiting every corner of Britain, and in a sense holding the nation together, as “the spatial landscape ideologies are imagined as enduring spaces, spaces forged over millennia through the sacrifice of blood and toil.”¹⁶ In driving an army truck, in fact, Oliver plays the role of the soldier, and soldiers are part of the process of the construction of a nation.¹⁷ Thus, as a soldier, Oliver fights for the success of his gastrodipomatic mission. Finally, the wooden kitchen in the rear of the truck and the old and spartan utensils (none made of stainless steel and all of them with traditional shapes) reflect the image of Oliver's toughness and help the image of the chef-y celebrity chef to disappear forever.

Another element that guarantees the unity of the nation and reinforces its identity is the idea of a common past.¹⁸ As a gastrodipomatic means, Oliver's show represents how food gives the nation a common past. The resulting Britain is therefore a unified state that the viewers may apparently go around and take hold of, just as the celebrity chef does. In *Jamie's Great Britain*, this strategy is adopted when Oliver goes to Scotland and underlines the problem of Scotland's position within the U.K., and the desire of a part of this people to be independent from the rest of the U.K.. Oliver hints at Scottish pride and the desire for independence, and he cooks Scottish food. However, when he goes to hunt and praises the game that he cooks and eats, he says that England, Scotland, and Wales “as a whole”¹⁹ have the best game in the world, that “whole” meaning the state. Moreover, when it comes to finding the very origin of Scottish food, he says that it comes from the Vikings. The Vikings were certainly primordial in the construction of the nation, but primordial to which nation? They invaded England, Scotland, Wales,

and Ireland (and many other countries) from the 790s onward²⁰ and “the Viking kingdom(s) in Britain gave way to the newly founded kingdoms of Scotland, Wales, and England.”²¹ Thus, Vikings are not primordial to the nation of Scotland, but to that of the United Kingdom. In doing all of this, Oliver actually recognizes the diversity of Scotland without calling into discussion the unity of the U.K. This scene, therefore, also underlines the ideological assumption that the U.K. is an indivisible state. A national broadcaster, Channel 4, has been guaranteeing the inviolability of the nation. The branding of the nation through food, however, is not the only interaction between food and the nation in the show. The next section analyses its counter-process.

When the Nation Brands the Food

Since Mauss published *The Gift*,²² it has been widely acknowledged that any form of giving has its reciprocation. This scheme may be applied to what happens between food and the nation on TV shows that have a gastrodipomatic aim. If, on one hand, food brands the nation in order to promote the state at its best, the nation, on the other hand, takes ownership of some of the represented food, labelling it as national. As said in the theoretical framework, this national food is only a social construction and a simulacrum, certainly helpful for the nation. In *Jamie's Great Britain*, Oliver leaves out the idea of including/excluding regional foods in order to create British food. Instead, he constructs British food as made up of items and ingredients coming from outside the borders, but with a final, ideological twist. The acknowledgement that the majority of British food did not originate in Britain could have weakened that representation of authenticity of the nation that has been identified above as one of the principal characteristics of these kinds of shows, in order to act as a gastrodipomatic text. Instead, at the end of almost each “ethnic” scene, Oliver says that the food he has tasted is good, and therefore now it is British.²³ Thus, along with multiculturalism, Oliver also embodies post colonialism, and, in this scene, neo-colonialism, which is “a form of contemporary, economic imperialism.”²⁴ On the one hand, in fact, Oliver continually repeats that Britain has opened its doors to people from all over the world, and that has allowed them to move up the social ladder. On the other hand, the chef underlines that Britain has taken ownership of their foods. In the show, thus, multiculturalism is more complex than a simple acceptance of people coming from abroad. It also involves post colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the fact that Britain has constructed its national food culture thanks to these people. All of this seems to support the critical thinkers that

have always considered that multiculturalism “erects walls rather than builds bridges”,²⁵ and is simply an economic practice and a soft form of domination. Moreover, these scenes only give the members of the audience simulacra. Simulacra of the British past, of “the Other,” of the British nation, simulacra that the members of the audience may meet again in the stereotyped trips organized for them by the tourism industry of the liquid society.


Finally, another moment in which the nation brands the represented food, in this case also physically, is when Oliver prepares a pie. Oliver dedicates it to Prince William and Kate Middleton, and at the end of the preparation, on top of the pie, he puts RAF Wings, the symbol of the British military air force, and a crown, which he makes with the dough of the pie. In the scene, an apparently simple pie becomes the ultimate food simulacrum constructed by the show, relating to the oldest British institutions, the military and the monarchy, the second also being a recognized British symbol in the world. Again, this is just a simulacrum of a simple dish, because no member of the audience will ever eat that “Royal” pie. On TV, however, even the simulacrum of a simple pie has been transformed into a powerful means of gastrodiploacy.

CONCLUSION

This work analyzes the gastrodiploacy strategies of the food travelogue *Jamie's Great Britain*. The study delves into the mutual relationships between food and the nation in food travelogues in general as well as in the British show in particular. On the one hand, this study finds that food brands the nation through authenticity. In order to reinforce the national identity of Britain, in fact, Oliver strives to represent the nation as authentic, even resorting to crudity and toughness. The “real” Britain that he constructs helps hide the fact that what the program provides are just simulacra of food, which the members of the audience will never attain. Even the role of the soldier played by Oliver reinforces the idea that the show holds the nation together, and that the resulting unified, reinforced nation may constitute an interesting destination, thanks to its food.

On the other hand, in a kind of counter-process, it is the nation that brands food, through the construction of the simulacrum of national food. The nation takes ownership of some items of food that are classified as national. In the case of Oliver's show, the national food is made up of food coming from other countries, brought to Britain by the immigrants from the Industrial Revolution onward. This food is today to be considered totally British, because it is part of a mutual relationship between Britain and its immigrants, at least according to the show. Britain

has opened the doors to immigrants, even allowing them to move up the social ladder, and, in return, the state has taken ownership of their food.

All of these relationships involve dominant ideological assumptions that the show puts forward in many scenes. Firstly, the rejection of any attempt to break the unity of the nation; secondly, multiculturalism, understood as a form of post colonialism. In the end, this article argues that food travelogues on TV are certainly a powerful strategy of gastrodiploacy. 

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FRANCESCO BUSCEMI

Francesco Buscemi is a Ph.D. candidate at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. His Ph.D. focuses on political issues and power relationships in national food travelogues on TV. Supported by the Santander Grant Fund, he is studying how Nazi propaganda represented meat to defame the Jews. He has presented his research at the universities of Copenhagen, Lancaster, Newcastle, Fullerton, Turku, and York. Buscemi has written various articles and a book on the Italian film director Liliana Cavani.

INTERVIEWS

ON INDIAN FOOD IN THE DIASPORA

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ON INDIAN FOOD IN THE DIASPORA

AN INTERVIEW WITH INDIAN RESTAURATEUR ANITA JAISINGHANI

Public Diplomacy Magazine editors Jocelyn Coffin, Emily Schatzle, and Colin Hale sat down with Anita Jaisinghani, chef and owner of Indika and Pondicheri in Houston, Texas, to discuss the growing influence of Indian food in the United States. Since its opening, Pondicheri has earned two James Beard Award nominations for Best Chef of the Southwest 2011 and Best New Restaurant 2011. Based on her experiences growing up in Gujarat, India and emigrating to the United States in 1990, Jaisinghani talked to PDM about her views on Indian cuisine in the United States and the incredible potential for a formal Indian gastrodiplomacy program.



Public Diplomacy Magazine: You run two successful Indian restaurants in Houston, Texas and you have two James Beard Award nominations. Can you tell us a little about your career and the inspiration behind it?

Anita Jaisinghani: I was always into cooking, but I never thought I'd get into a business like this. And the main reason I did was because I couldn't find the food I was looking for. I was appalled by the quality of Indian food in America.

PDM: If we define gastrodiplomacy as a means of communicating culture and national identity, do you believe that Indian food and your work in particular qualifies as gastrodiplomacy? If so, how?

AJ: My hunch is that people see India as a very third world country with a lot of poverty. They don't think of Indian cuisine as an elegant cuisine like French food or Norwegian food, which is really hot right now. They think Indian food is cheap and should be readily available and not be high quality or high art. I feel like my food at Indika is very authentic, not traditional. I don't want it to be traditional because in India, the way we eat is different than how we eat in America. I want to bring it to Americans in a way they would recognize... I do think that the

perception of Indian food is rising. I don't think it's rising as fast as Korean, Japanese, or even Vietnamese are. Indians are just not as vigilant at showing where we come from. We all love our food but it's not a documented cuisine. There are no rules to follow. It is a very personal, family-inspired cuisine so when you say how do you like daal, it means curried lentils, and there are a thousand different ways to make it, and a hundred different lentils to make it with.

I feel like food is certainly a point where people can come together and sit to enjoy a meal without fighting about their cultural differences. I am a big believer in putting out what I think is cross-cultural. I was born a Hindu and it's okay to eat beef. In America that's what we eat and we are living here.

PDM: Do you think there is an Indian-American fusion cuisine? If so, what do you think that represents?

AJ: I am in the interest of getting Indian food to be more recognizable. I don't care if they take samosa and naan as being the epitome. Look at what David Chang does in New York with his Korean food. It's not Korean food, it's totally fusion. But at least people are recognizing the fundamental basis of Korean food. I think fusion food is great as long as you have food that ends up tasting good. As long as people are eating Indian food, I am happy. I don't care how they're eating it, as long as they are eating it.

PDM: You focus on using fresh, locally-sourced ingredients that you can find in Houston, where your restaurant is located. Do you think that using ingredients local to Texas undermines the authenticity of your Indian food?

AJ: Not at all. I found just about every ingredient and spice that I needed [in Houston] and I didn't need to use local ingredients. I chose to. I could've stuck to only what I would eat in India, but to me that's like living in Texas and not breathing the air. How could I live in Houston and not use the great seafood I was getting at my door and use something that's only in India? That's why I wanted to use

local ingredients. To me there was no other way to cook.

the foodies - because the food has universal appeal. 

PDM: You said it has been easy to find Indian ingredients in Houston, where there is a large Indian community and there are many Indian grocery stores. Do you think that says something significant about U.S.-Indian relations?

AJ: I hope it does. Now you can get Indian food at Trader Joe's. A couple of my customers tell me that the best frozen Indian food is from Trader Joe's. Indian food is very addictive. I think people come to our restaurant on a daily and weekly basis because they just love that flavor. People are into health and eating vegetarian, and South Indian cuisine provides them with a healthy option. Indian food is really good for you and it has so much more flavor than eating just potatoes or any other vegetable.

PDM: Immigrants to the U.S. bring their own cuisines and flavors, but sometimes the food gets homogenized and the nuances get diluted. For example, many Chinese restaurants in Los Angeles serve the same dishes, such as orange chicken, lo mein, etc. What are your thoughts on this?

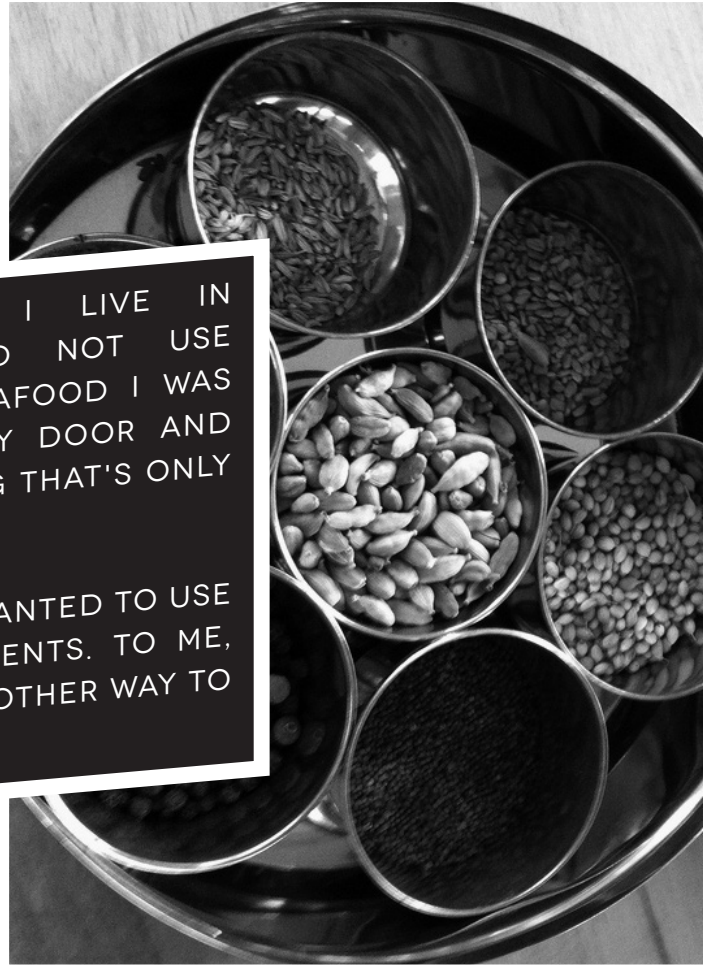
AJ: That happens with any culture. I think Indian food will come and is coming into its own. I certainly hope that in my lifetime I see it becoming as mainstream as Japanese or Chinese cuisine. The problem with Chinese again is also that it is very diluted. I think this has to do with self-preservation for a lot of immigrants. They'd rather do something that's safe, tested, and tried.

PDM: India does not have an official gastrodiplomacy program. Do you think they should? If so, what do you think that program might look like?

AJ: I think it would be a great idea for India to launch an official gastrodiplomacy program. I think it's about bringing Indian food to the street level in the U.S. It's not about a highfalutin cuisine. It's about taking something basic and putting it out there. I don't know what the other countries do to actually bring it down to an everyday, every persons' level, because really you want to hit everybody - not just

HOW COULD I LIVE IN HOUSTON AND NOT USE THE GREAT SEAFOOD I WAS GETTING AT MY DOOR AND USE SOMETHING THAT'S ONLY IN INDIA?

THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO USE LOCAL INGREDIENTS. TO ME, THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY TO COOK.



*Photo: Late-Bloomers
Flickr Creative Commons*

ON THE 626 NIGHT MARKET

AN INTERVIEW WITH FOUNDER JONNY HWANG

Inspired by the lively and colorful night markets found in Taiwan, in 2012 Jonny Hwang and his friends started the 626 Night Market in the San Gabriel Valley, just east of Los Angeles. On weekend summer nights, 80 Asian street food vendors and 70 local merchandise vendors gather to sell spicy tofu, dumplings, oyster noodles, and other delights. The crowd of 40,000 to 50,000 attendees are entertained by live performers, DJs, games, and dancing. In summer 2013, the 626 Night Market featured a six-foot tall glass container filled with 320 gallons of boba, including 125 four-inch tapioca balls. *Public Diplomacy Magazine* editors Jocelyn Coffin, Caitlin Dobson, and Maria Portela interviewed founder Jonny Hwang to learn more.



JH: We prefer small, local businesses. We want to make sure we have enough Asian flavors and authenticity, but we do not limit businesses to only Asian-related. In 2014, we are expanding our events to Los Angeles and Orange County. We anticipate these events will be more diverse, but will still retain the Asian night market roots.

PDM: Why is food such an important focus of what the night market offers? What sort of impact do you think food has on the attendees' experience overall? Why food and not something else?

JH: Food is a very important component of Asian culture. Oftentimes the first or second thing you ask a friend when meeting them is if they have eaten. People go to night markets in Asia primarily for the food. Food is a very social experience for Asian cultures, and also in America. With the advent of social media tools such as Instagram and Facebook, sharing the food experience has exploded in popularity and in turn, that helps promote all the great, small businesses that attend our events. Attendees can express themselves through

their food choices almost like a fashion statement. Food, without a doubt, is the main attraction of our events.

PDM: What are the main challenges in successfully sustaining the 626 Night Market? What strategies do you have to deal with these challenges?

JH: In Los Angeles, trends and fads are extremely common. Night markets have survived in Asia for decades, if not centuries. Our strategy is to constantly evolve our events with new foods, entertainment, arts, technology, and experiences. We want our events to not only be a platform for food, but a platform for any category that our attendees are passionate about.

Public Diplomacy Magazine: What kind of environment do you hope to create with the Night Market? In terms of creating an atmosphere, what is the advantage of hosting the market at night versus another time of day?

Jonny Hwang: We wanted to recreate the spirit and energy of the night markets in Taiwan with the 626 Night Market. Night markets are often found in Asian countries such as Taiwan, China, and Thailand. As many of these Asian societies have a vibrant night scene vastly different from America, it was important to have our events at night to emulate the feel of an Asian night market.

PDM: Do you have any criteria for selecting businesses to showcase? Does there have to be a direct connection to Asia or Asian culture?

AS MANY OF THESE ASIAN SOCIETIES HAVE A VIBRANT NIGHT SCENE VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM AMERICA, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HAVE OUR EVENTS AT NIGHT TO EMULATE THE FEEL OF AN ASIAN NIGHT MARKET.

PDM: Is the market known outside of the Taiwanese/Asian diaspora? Does 626 Night Market try to attract others outside of this diaspora?

JH: When we first started in 2012, probably 98% of our attendees were Asian. By our seventh event, it's become about 80% Asian. We are definitely starting to get known outside of the Asian diaspora. We believe that expanding into Los Angeles and Orange County will further broaden our demographic reach.

PDM: What is the main goal you hope 626 Night Market will achieve for the diaspora in the San Gabriel Valley? What do you think the Night Market does in terms of cultural survival and maintaining a cultural identity?

JH: The main goal for the 626 Night Market is to provide an event that the Asian diaspora can identify with and rally for. Whether people participate as vendors, artists, or support their friends, or come as attendees, they are involved in the experience. Rarely do Asian communities have something to call their own that unites them and that many of them support. It's definitely a way to tie them to their culture and maintain cultural identity, but also a way to tie their American experience with their ethnic origins, because our events infuse American/LA lifestyle elements with the concept of Asian night markets.

PDM: What does a market platform offer - that other platforms don't offer - that encourages intercultural exchange through food?


JH: A market platform with the diversity of vendors that we have offers an insight into pan-Asian foods, businesses, and artists. Food is often the first or simplest way for intercultural exchanges to happen. It's a common denominator that people from all cultures are interested in exploring.

PDM: How do you hope the expansion of the market to Los Angeles and Orange County will amplify the cultural exchange that currently takes place in San Gabriel Valley?

JH: We hope that our expanded locations will carry the energy and lifestyle culture of our market to LA and the O.C., but we also want to showcase the differences and

talents of LA and the O.C. in the same way we did with the 626.

PDM: What role did/does the diaspora play in the conception and the implementation of the 626 Night Market?

JH: The diaspora plays a huge role. We draw from the entrepreneurs, artists, creators, and supporters of our communities, and provide them with a platform to showcase and chase their passions, ideas, and be innovative, which in turn helps our events. 



FOOD IS OFTEN THE FIRST OR SIMPLEST WAY FOR INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGES TO HAPPEN.
IT'S A COMMON DENOMINATOR THAT PEOPLE FROM ALL CULTURES ARE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING.

*Photo: nate.cho
Flickr Creative Commons*

ON GASTRODIPLOMACY CAMPAIGNS

AN INTERVIEW WITH U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER MARY JO PHAM

U.S. Foreign Service Officer Mary Jo A. Pham is an expert in gastrodiplo-
macy. Pham has a MA in International
Communication from the School of
International Service at American Uni-
versity and a BA in International Rela-
tions from Tufts University. Pham sat
down with *Public Diplomacy Magazine*
editors Shannon Haugh, Bryony Inge,
and Lauren Madow to discuss several
case studies on gastrodiplo-
macy, the el-
ements of a successful gastrodiplo-
macy program, and who should be practicing
gastrodiplo-
macy.

This interview was conducted in a
private capacity. All opinions and views
expressed are her own and do not necessarily reflect any
policy or view of the U.S. Department of State or the U.S.
government.



And then on the back of the packaging
it tells the story of the history of man-
du, or Korean dumplings, and how the
dumplings came about. It's a tiny slice
of history, but it gives consumers a new
word in their lexicon of food. No lon-
ger are dumplings just dumplings. And
they're not gyoza, which is the Japanese
term for dumplings. And they're not
Chinese dumplings, but they're mandu,
Korean dumplings, something very dis-
tinctive. When it comes to communicat-
ing national identity, governments that
are beginning to include cultural tidbits
like that are taking a step in the right
direction.

The agriculture of a place and the ingredients it pro-
vides matter as well. One of the things I have written
about before is what kind of food is planted, where it's
planted, and how it's planted. It's all historically so deeply
interwoven with civilization, a particular society, a local
culture that is now connected to a national culture, which
can then be connected to a foreign culture through gas-
trodiplomacy...Consider for example the story of a wine
written on the wine label. Or, when you go to Trader Joe's,
and there's a note about the history of a wine. The land in
which food is produced can't be divorced from the local
culture there.

**Public Diplomacy Magazine: Gastrodiplo-
macy is defined differently by different actors. What is your defini-
tion of gastrodiplo-
macy?**

Mary Jo Pham: I look at it as a government practice of
exporting its national culinary heritage, under the um-
brella of cultural diplomacy. A government would pursue
gastrodiplo-
macy as part of its effort to do several things.
One is to raise national brand awareness. Two is really to
encourage economic investment and trade within its bor-
ders, and also to foster that outside of its borders with
exports. And then finally, it's for governments who seek
to engage on a cultural and personal level with everyday
diners.

**PDM: Could you talk more about how food can commu-
nicate national identity and cultural heritage, and raise
country brand awareness?**

MJP: First of all, when it comes to gastrodiplo-
macy, the su-
perficial tier is, look at the national brand. Look at, for ex-
ample, South Korea, because everybody thinks South Ko-
rea is an excellent example of a successful gastrodiplo-
macy campaign. They have two products they are exporting that
are now being sold in Costco across the United States.
The packaging looks great and everything is wonderful.

**PDM: What would you say are the elements of a success-
ful gastrodiplo-
macy campaign, and what are the goals of
such a campaign?**

MJP: A campaign can be driven by tourism, and it can be
driven by economic interests. Consider South Korea, for
example. I was reading a South Korean newspaper that
said by 2017, the South Korean agricultural ministry for
fisheries, exports, and forestry are projecting their food
and fish exports will double...That's something the gov-
ernment is trying to work on right now. I think they are
investing \$2 billion in improving their farming technol-
ogy to contribute to the global food basket. When it comes
to a recipe for success of a gastrodiplo-
macy campaign, it
really depends on the country and whatever goals it has.

The second most important thing is to know your his-
tory, your food, and knowing what sets you apart. Govern-
ments who are interested in this really need to know what

would make sense to share with the world.

Third, countries need to be sure they have their resources available and the systems in place that allow them to pursue a successful gastrodiploamacy campaign. Gastrodiploamacy is not just about saying, “here’s our story, here’s our national narrative, look at our history, we have a rich history of farming, we hope you like our food products, please enjoy.” That’s not enough. I don’t think that’s really gastrodiploamacy, I think that’s PR... They need to make sure they have people inside the government and outside of the government. Diplomats are wonderful, and governments have their experts, but then there are people from different communities within different countries such as chefs, artisans, local farmers, nutritionists, food experts, health experts that may not work for the government, but should definitely have a seat at the table when it comes to thinking of ways to publicize the food.


Fourth, governments need to know their audience. Your audience in New York City is going to be completely different from your audience in Spain, and your audience in Spain is going to be completely different from your audience in Saudi Arabia. There are many markets, and some people look at that as a disadvantage. I think that it can be an advantage. Maybe it’s an inconvenience to tailor your product or message about food and a food experience when it comes to gastrodiploamacy for the United States and make it different for Saudi Arabia, but it also provides new opportunities. What interests a market in the United States might not interest a market in Hong Kong.

Finally the fifth point, gastrodiploamacy is not just about putting up a pretty picture. It’s about sustaining not just the narrative, but the conversation and the engagement that needs to take place beyond the initial dining experience. This means building a cycle or even a vertical chain that allows people to first learn about a country and its food product...the consumer must be able to purchase that product, consume it, and then share that product, and then also continue talking about it. The experience needs to be present and relevant. That means governments not only need to set themselves up for success by building a very careful, thorough gastrodiploamacy campaign and supporting it with a national brand. But it also means they need to do other things outside of just directly promoting it. This means maybe doing things that are behind the scenes. It means providing scholarships for your chefs to travel overseas and collaborate and participate in cultural exchanges with other chefs. It means supporting your diaspora overseas.

PDM: In your opinion, what type of nations benefit most from launching a gastrodiploamacy program?

MJP: Countries that may be able to benefit from a gastrodiploamacy campaign are middle powers. An example of a middle power is Thailand. I’m sure you’ve read about and heard about how Thailand launched their Thai Kitchen to the world. The objective of that effort from the Thai government was to, first and foremost, increase the number of Thai restaurants around the world. At the time, there was an estimated 5,000 Thai restaurants globally. After the campaign, the number of restaurants had more than tripled, and still counting. The Thai government recognized they’re a middle power. At home they have a wonderful foundation for tourism. They have a strong interest in promoting tourism at different marketeers. luxury tourism, eco-tourism, tourism for the average backpacker. They knew they had so much to offer domestically at home. They also knew there was a growing interest in Thai food. So thinking about how they could sort of capitalize on this, they structured a gastrodiploamacy campaign that not only boosted the number of Thai restaurants around the world, but in the beginning they set out to help restaurateurs by certifying their Thai restaurants as a great Thai restaurant. They also were able to harness this interest in Thai food overseas by supporting exports of Thai food products that would be made available for Thai restaurants around the world. So not only were they working on building storefronts and restaurants overseas, they were also shoring up the food production at home to help support this initiative overseas.

PDM: Gastrodiploamacy is a fairly new field. What do you think is the future of gastrodiploamacy?

MJP: I always talk about gastrodiploamacy as really important and a very relevant means of communicating important elements of national identity and narrative. But food alone is not going to be the answer for a lot of things. I hope people recognize, governments especially, that a gastrodiploamacy campaign needs to be sustained through other connections to other very important areas of governance, whether that’s through security interests in terms of food security. Countries need to be thinking about conducting diplomacy on many levels, and gastrodiploamacy is one very important element, but it needs to take place in concert with strategic interests in mind. I think sometimes gastrodiploamacy is dismissed as a “kumbaya diplomacy” effort, which it’s not at all. But as long as there’s engagement on the part of government and the diner and consumer, I think it provides a pathway for that sustained dialogue, and that sustained participation in the cycle I mentioned earlier. 

CASE STUDIES

**MOST F(L)AVORED NATION STATUS: THE GASTRODIPLOMACY
OF JAPAN'S GLOBAL PROMOTION OF CUISINE**
THEODORE C. BESTOR

GASTRODIPLOMACY: THE CASE OF THE EMBASSY OF GREECE
ZOE KOSMIDOU

MOST F(L)AVORED NATION STATUS: THE GASTRODIPLOMACY OF JAPAN'S GLOBAL PROMOTION OF CUISINE

BY THEODORE C. BESTOR

Sushi in Tashkent, ramen in Melbourne, tofu everywhere, and edamame coming soon to (or already at) a salad bar near you! Japanese food has been globally appealing for at least a generation. So, why is Japanese cuisine (washoku) now the object of Japan's gastrodiplomacy? What's to promote, protect, or prove?

Anxiety over "authenticity," Arjun Appadurai argues, becomes an issue as cultures (and cuisines) encounter globalization directly. "Doubt [about culinary authenticity] ... is rarely part of the discourse of an undisturbed cuisine."¹ If so, what are the "disturbed" (or disturbing) culinary trends addressed by Japanese gastrodiplomacy? One factor may be fusion (or confusion) in the global cafeteria: what really is Japanese cuisine? Equally important may be reinforcing, at home, significant conceptual distinctions between washoku, as the culinary essence of the national diet, and other "non-Japanese" foods (probably consumed on a daily basis as much or more than washoku).

Assertions of a distinctively "Japanese cuisine," of course, speak to historical continuity and cultural heritage.² And Japan's gastrodiplomacy takes shape through idioms of cultural heritage to promote, protect, and prove the essence of culinary authenticity, internationally and domestically.

JAPAN'S CULTURAL HERITAGE AND UNESCO

Japan is widely credited with fostering governmentally protected cultural heritage through legislation in 1950 that recognized "National Cultural Treasures": tangible artistic and architectural masterpieces, as well as the people who sustain intangible traditions of artisanship and performance.³ Observers of contemporary cultural heritage movements internationally, and of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations

(UNESCO) role in institutionalizing criteria, standards, and practices for recognizing and preserving heritage sites, cite Japan's efforts as an early, influential example of cultural policy-making.

In 1972, UNESCO adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.⁴ Over the four decades since, UNESCO's designations of cultural and natural heritage sites have become increasingly significant in many nations' strivings for status and prestige (and tourist revenue). As of December 2013, UNESCO has designated 981 World Heritage Sites across the globe (759 cultural sites; 193 natural; and 29 mixed; across 160 states). Seventeen of these are Japanese, including the recently added Mt. Fuji (June 2013).

In 2003, UNESCO adopted an additional agreement, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.⁵ Japan played a very active role promoting this Convention, and perhaps not coincidentally, it was adopted during the term of the first Japanese Director-General of UNESCO, Kōichirō Matsuura (in office: 1999-2009; previously Japan's

Ambassador to France: 1994-99).

The first examples of Intangible Cultural Heritage were recognized in 2008, following UNESCO's defining of "intangible cultural heritage" as "traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts."⁶ As of December 2013, UNESCO has recognized 327 items of Intangible Cultural Heritage worldwide, of which 22 are Japanese.

JAPAN'S GASTRODIPLOMACY
TAKES SHAPE THROUGH IDIOMS
OF CULTURAL HERITAGE TO
PROMOTE, PROTECT, AND PROVE
THE ESSENCE OF CULINARY
AUTHENTICITY, INTERNATIONALLY
AND DOMESTICALLY.

In 2010, UNESCO opened new vistas for national cultural aspiration when it recognized French cuisine as an Intangible Cultural Heritage (officially “Gastronomic Meal of the French”), as well as “Traditional Mexican cuisine” and “Gingerbread craft from Northern Croatia.”⁷

UNESCO AND WASHOKU

From 2010, a growing queue of countries, including Japan, has sought similar culinary honors. On December 5, 2013, UNESCO announced its recognition of Japanese cuisine as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, with the official designation being “Washoku, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, notably for the celebration of New Year.”⁸

The Japanese application defines washoku in socio-cultural terms, as sets of practices and values that link foodways to social relationships, affirm connections to the environment and appreciation of nature and seasons, and express deep cultural affinities for rituals and patterns of communal life. Japan’s application says relatively little about ingredients, foodstuffs, flavors, dishes, culinary techniques, menus, terroir, regional styles and local specialties, or many other gastronomic attributes customarily associated with discussions of cuisine and food culture.

This is not accidental. UNESCO criteria are closely tied to the social and cultural ubiquity of food as lived experience within a particular social/cultural context. The designation of French food culture does not focus on haute cuisine (nor on great chefs with Michelin stars), but rather on the ways in which food preparation and consumption hold particularly important places in the daily fabric of French culture and social life, on the integrative quality of cuisine. Japan’s proposal successfully emulated this approach (which some officials quietly admitted was an homage to the French).

Japan’s application was also framed implicitly by a negative lesson. A couple of years earlier, another Asian country was asked to withdraw and resubmit its application, which presented the cuisine of its former royal court. UNESCO critiqued this proposal as focused narrowly on elite and rarified aspects of cuisine, not on more populist and inclusive versions of culinary experience. Despite initial efforts by Kyoto chefs to focus Japan’s bid on the aristocratic cuisine of kaiseki ryōri, planners broadened the scope of Japan’s proposal, after the other country’s

UNESCO application stalled.

WHAT UNESCO RECOGNITION MAY MEAN (AND FOR WHOM)

The UNESCO application was clearly embedded in broad agendas of cultural diplomacy and global projections of Japanese culture, as many of the government officials I interviewed made clear.⁹ UNESCO recognition was anticipated to have both international and domestic impact.

Internationally, many officials saw the application explicitly in terms of Japan’s projection of “soft power” as a key to maintaining Japan’s

standing in the world.¹⁰ More specifically, officials linked the UNESCO application to the concept of “Japan’s Gross National Cool.”¹¹ This keyword refers to the economic (and “soft power”) clout (and coolness) of Japan’s so-called “content industries” (whose products range from Pokémon and other manga and anime, to digital media, fashion, visual arts and design, and cuisine). The global successes of the “content industries” sharply contrast with the lagging fortunes of formerly mighty industries: automobiles, consumer electronics, and heavy industrial machinery. The products of “content industries” are cool, and appeal to relatively upscale consumers around the globe (and “cool” drives tourism). Japanese cuisine itself has long since joined the product array of “cool Japan” as a global icon of urban sophisticated consumption.¹²

Officials also hope that UNESCO culinary recognition will neatly mesh with other dimensions of cultural projection that the government had been working toward for some time. In June 2013, UNESCO listed Mt. Fuji as a World Cultural Heritage site. In September 2013, Tokyo was awarded the 2020 Olympics. UNESCO’s washoku recognition completes a Triple Crown for Japan’s international self-presentation. Domestically, Mt. Fuji, the Olympics, and washoku will be promoted to bolster Japanese morale (battered by the long recession and the disasters of 2011) and provide reassurance that Japan is not falling behind internationally, even as it may feel eclipsed or threatened by its neighbors.

Both MAFF and JNTO also anticipate that UNESCO recognition of washoku will convey an implication of safety, in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Of course, UNESCO did not consider radiation issues, but the hope is that UNESCO recognition will imply (to

DESPITE INITIAL EFFORTS BY KYOTO CHEFS TO FOCUS JAPAN'S BID ON THE ARISTOCRATIC CUISINE OF KAISEKI RYORI, PLANNERS BROADENED THE SCOPE OF JAPAN'S PROPOSAL.


both domestic and international audiences) that Japanese food products are safe, and that Japan is a great destination (especially for the 2020 Olympics), Fukushima notwithstanding.

UNESCO's imprimatur obviously should bolster Japanese cuisine internationally, but also domestically. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) promotion of "Cool Japan" (which celebrates and promotes Japan's centrality in global cultural consumption) has included cuisine among its cultural elements for at least the last 15 years. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Japanese National Tourist Organization (JNTO) also both promote Japan's "cool cuisine," MAFF to encourage Japanese agricultural and fisheries exports and to promote domestic production and consumption, and JNTO to promote domestic tourism, and to attract international tourists. (A 2008 JNTO survey reported foreign tourists selected "to eat Japanese cuisine" as their leading reason for coming to Japan [65.4%; among multiple choices]. In 2010, cuisine was second favorite, with 61.0%).¹³

And one aspect of the UNESCO bid had a distinctly domestic audience in mind. MAFF hopes to use UNESCO recognition to encourage Japanese to value their culinary heritage and to eat traditional foodstuffs (and thus sustain domestic food producers and processors). It is a matter not only of economic but also cultural concern that the ordinary diet in Japan increasingly consists of "non-traditional" (and often imported) foodstuffs. In this light, eating local and enjoying a traditional diet is an important goal of "shokuiku" (food education), incorporated into Japan's elementary and secondary school curricula since the 1990s, which highlights food, body, nutrition, and communal consumption (family, school, community, etc.), and connections among agriculture/fisheries, environment, and society. The values embedded in the shokuiku curriculum are closely mirrored in the washoku proposal.

CONCLUSION

Japan's UNESCO washoku campaign incorporates both external and internal goals, and illustrates some of the cultural and political dimensions that shape considerations of "cultural heritage." The protection and promotion of cultural heritage, as a bureaucratic process, transforms loosely coordinated cultural features—such as aesthetics, historical referents, daily life and practice, social ritual and social hierarchy—into matters of government policy and official definitions. Diverse cultural and social practices are moved from the realm of relatively unselfconscious daily life into bureaucratically defined categories of distinction and differentiation, projected on a global screen of cultural identities (nationally defined) and cultural politics for na-

tional recognition, as well as to promote domestic goals of cultural identity formation. As Aoki Tamotsu, an anthropologist and former Commissioner of Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs, has argued, elements of ordinary life become the basis for "national cultural brands."¹⁴ The brand consciousness may well be as much for domestic as for international consumption; gastrodiploacy is inherently circular in its logic and in its effects. 

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THEODORE C. BESTOR

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GASTRODIPLOMACY: THE CASE OF THE EMBASSY OF GREECE

BY ZOE KOSMIDOU

In December 2013, the Embassy of Greece will begin applying the idea and theories of gastrodiplomacy to spread the word about the Healthy Greek Diet and Greece's healthy way of living. On December 4th, a wide variety of specialists from leading health, food, and nutrition related organizations, media, academic/educational institutions, think tanks, international organizations, businesses, and members of the United States Congress will come together in the Rayburn House office building for a night of delicious healthy food and education. The program will include keynote speaker Artemis Simopoulos, author of *The Omega Diet*.¹ The speeches will provide insight into how the Greek diet is among the healthiest in the Mediterranean Region and how it can be easily implemented into daily life.

As the presentation on Capitol Hill will emphasize, the traditional Greek diet is very beneficial to one's health. In fact, it is the Western diet that most closely approximates the natural diet of the Paleolithic age, by which early humans sustained themselves and evolved.² It places an emphasis on whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruit, and seafood, and allows for red meat only a few times per month. Most importantly, Greeks consume substantial amounts of olive oil in place of less wholesome animal fats, such as butter.³ By maintaining this balanced diet, one can benefit from necessary vitamins, minerals, protein, and healthy fats (such as omega-3 fatty acids, found in seafood and wild plants), while avoiding the saturated fats found in meat products and the sugars that refined grains and sweets contain.

Whereas Western diets today are linked to high rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and cancer, the Greek diet has been proven to decrease the likelihood of their occurrence.⁴ Most notably, the diet has a positive effect on longevity. Until the late 1960's, when most Greeks kept to their traditional diet, they had the longest life expectancy in the world.⁵ This is not surprising, con-

sidering how many serious diseases can be prevented by following the diet's guidelines. According to Dr. Artemis Simopoulos, president of the Center for Genetics, Nutrition and Health, the Greek diet is one of the few in the world to have a balanced ratio of the essential omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. This combination promotes cardiovascular health⁶ and decreases the risk of cancer.⁷ Additionally, just the consumption of olive oil in itself can prevent a wide variety of illnesses. Namely, it can protect against heart disease, atherosclerosis, diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer, asth-

ma, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, dementia, and age-related blindness.⁸ These benefits are only a few out of many that the Greek Mediterranean diet can offer, and the presentation on Capitol Hill will highlight many more.

Healthy food by itself, however, is not enough to maintain health and prevent disease. Another important focus of the presentation rests


on the Greek lifestyle, including physical exercise and an emphasis on eating slowly and with company.⁹ The benefits of physical exercise are obvious and have been widely researched; the latter part, however, may not be as obvious to the average American. Greeks have traditionally taken the time to enjoy their food in the company of their family or friends. A typical dinner may last two hours, in which the people gathered around the table will take turns eating and exchanging hearty conversation with their neighbors. This practice both encourages mental well-being and reduces the tendency to overeat, which may come about as a result of eating too quickly or alone. The common practice of taking a siesta, or short nap, after lunch also helps reduce stress and promote cardiovascular health. Therefore, even though the actual food consumed is key to leading a healthy life, Greek cultural habits surrounding eating and napping are just as important.

The traditional Greek diet is heavily linked to the country's culture. This becomes obvious when considering

WHEREAS WESTERN DIETS TODAY ARE LINKED TO HIGH RATES OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, DIABETES, OBESITY, AND CANCER, THE GREEK DIET HAS BEEN PROVEN TO DECREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF THEIR OCCURRENCE.

the history of the diet, which stretches back to ancient Greece and continues relatively unchanged to the present day. During the famous philosophers' time, Greeks enjoyed whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruit, fish, olive oil, honey, and herbs, much like today.¹⁰ And one cannot forget the importance of the legendary symposia, in which philosophical discussions were carried out over drinks.¹¹ They sound surprisingly similar to the current Greek practice of eating with company. Furthermore, the prevalence of athleticism, evident in the tradition of the Olympic Games, emphasized the importance of physical exercise.¹² Later on, with the emergence of the Byzantine Empire, this legacy traveled east to Constantinople. Once again, the Byzantines ate the same types of foods but embellished them with the grand variety of spices they obtained from all corners of the world.¹³ These spices are still widely used by Greek housewives today. Thus, it is clear that the Greek diet has a significant cultural basis, making it an integral part of the modern Greeks' way of life.

Gastrodiplomacy has existed in Greece for almost as long as there has been a traditional cuisine. Ancient chefs such as Arcestratus traveled around Greece and its neighboring regions in search of new and better recipes. Such collections were then recorded and passed down, so that many of the recipes are still in use today.¹⁴ As Greece's power and influence spread, so did its cuisine and products. The popularity of the Greek diet and lifestyle gained such fame that when Greece was conquered by Rome, Greek culture and culinary arts became prominent in the capital of the Republic.¹⁵

Through this presentation, the Embassy hopes to educate the populace not only about a healthier lifestyle, but also about one of the oldest cultures in the world. Greece's history is rich with arts and politics that most people never get to experience, but hopefully with the help of gastrodiplomacy they will begin to. At the Embassy's event there will be samples of many Greek dishes and Greek wines, catered by celebrity chefs in collaboration with different Greek Mediterranean restaurants all over Washington D.C. While traveling directly to Greece may be out of the question for most people, sampling fine cuisines is an easy way to learn more about the culture of a country. The restaurants that will be catering the events will be provided with a chance to show their wares to many potential customers, and participants will have an introduction to the many Greek Mediterranean restaurants that D.C. has to offer. 

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BOOK REVIEW

EDDIE HUANG'S *FRESH OFF THE BOAT: A MEMOIR*
REVIEW BY JOCELYN COFFIN

EDDIE HUANG'S *FRESH OFF THE BOAT: A MEMOIR*

REVIEW BY JOCELYN COFFIN

Quoting the likes of rap artists Cam'ron, Jadakiss, and his own father, Eddie Huang's first memoir, *Fresh Off the Boat: A Memoir*, presents gastrodiplo-macy with a sharp sense of humor. Most famous for his New York City Taiwanese bun shop, BaoHaus, and hosting a TV show on Vice, also named *Fresh Off the Boat*, Huang is proudly a mix of American popular culture and Taiwanese tradition. As a rising chef in the United States, he has learned a crucial lesson: "I didn't allow America to sell me in a box with presets and neither should you. Take the things from America that speak to you, that excite you, that inspire you, and be the Americans we all want to know."

A self-described "Chinese-American kid raised by hip-hop," Huang's memoir traces his life in the United States through food anecdotes. From dinners with his Taiwanese family to food with friends, and finally, catching up to his most recent professional experiences, Huang's determination is the fuel behind his success. Huang has immersed himself in American culture, particularly black culture, equally as much as he hopes that others will immerse themselves in his food. For Huang, "the one place that America allows Chinese people to do their thing is in the kitchen."

Huang believes that when preparing food, you must serve it right. Vividly describing a Taiwanese restaurant of his childhood, Huang brings out his passion for tradition with a focus on detail. A young Huang knew that a perfect soup dumpling has eighteen folds and that, "Even a six-year-old can tell that using the cheap soy sauce would ruin a perfectly good soup dumpling." It was indisputable. And even more indisputable, cutting corners, even when creating a local dish continents away, could be easily detected.


Dedicately carrying the values of his youth into his professional life, Huang recounts the first time he walked into the Food Network studios for the show *Ultimate Recipe Showdown*, in which four home cooks from a national



HUANG: "I DID WHAT EVERY CULTURE DOES WHEN AMERICANS CAN'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING: I PUT IT ON BREAD."

pool of more than 13,000 contestants competed in various categories. On an American show that broadcasts to a generally American public, Huang was forced to adapt to certain food culture norms. Given the task of making "party food," he decided to prepare Chairman Mao's red cooked skirt steak over rice, only to be told to make something handheld, a characteristic of American "finger food." Huang accepted this request for Americanization and turned his dish into Chairman Mao's Cherry Cola skirt steak.

The suggestion did not insult him, but rather inspired him to use his multicultural heritage to create something innovative. Huang playfully recaps, "I did what every culture does when Americans can't understand something: I put it on bread."

Often feeling like an outsider, creating food empowered Huang to find his unique place in an international America. As quoted by Huang and as spoken by American rapper Jadakiss, "Yeah yeah, I design things and you know I'm in the hood like Chinese wings." 

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JOCELYN COFFIN

Jocelyn Coffin is a first year Master of Public Diplomacy student at USC. Her passion for security studies and writing brought her to pursue a dual path of diplomacy and journalism. She will be spending the summer in Washington, D.C. working with the U.S. Department of State in the Office of Central African Affairs.

ENDNOTE

**OUR SUMMER 2014 ISSUE:
THE POWER OF NON-STATE ACTORS**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE BENNETT
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, AMAZON WATCH**

AN INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE BENNETT

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, AMAZON WATCH

The Summer 2014 issue of *Public Diplomacy Magazine* will explore the power of non-state actors (NSAs). The age of globalization and information has led to an increase in the power of NSAs on the global stage. Through the Internet and other powerful tools of mass communication, NSAs shape the international system and attract followers like never before. It has become clear that states must share the stage with NSAs.

Public Diplomacy Magazine editors Andres Guarnizo-Ospina and Shannon Haugh sat down with Caroline Bennett, Communications Director of Amazon Watch, after she spoke at the “Public Diplomacy of the Americas” conference at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism in November 2013. Through her media-driven presentation at the conference, she demonstrated how nonprofit organizations are setting the global agenda: by using the power of media to communicate stories and reverse the actions of international actors.

Public Diplomacy Magazine: Can you start by telling us what Amazon Watch is and what it stands for?

Caroline Bennett: Amazon Watch is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to protect the rainforest and advance the rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin. We work directly with indigenous communities and at the regional and international levels to protect ecologically and culturally sensitive ecosystems in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, where millions of acres of rainforest and wetlands are under threat from oil and gas development, mega-dams, roads, and other unsustainable infrastructure projects.

A huge part of what we do is through high profile campaigns to persuade decision makers, international financial institutions, national governments, and the public to honor the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination and free, prior and informed consent over “development” decisions in their territories. We use media exposure, legal action, shareholder and public campaigns to foster widespread understanding of the intrinsic value

of indigenous peoples stewardship and the global significance of the Amazon as a storehouse for cultural and biological diversity.

And finally—and where I most fit—we leverage storytelling, cutting-edge online organizing and social media tools to mobilize support for our indigenous partners. Really at the core of everything Amazon Watch does is communications—and public diplomacy really, as I’m starting to better understand it.

PDM: Can you describe a case in which Amazon Watch considers itself successful in its mission?



CB: Sure, I’ll go ahead and illustrate the case of the Achuar, our indigenous partners who live deep in the Peruvian Amazon. A Canadian company, Talisman Energy, had been doing some exploratory drilling in their territory since 2004 and the Achuar came to Amazon Watch and asked for help with facilitation and negotiation. Moreover, they wanted us to help tell their story in Canada: to the Canadian public, to voters who affect policy, shareholders and other influencers, and to the company itself. Achuar leaders representing their communities wanted to go straight to Talisman’s boardroom and sit across from the CEO and make it real for them. And so the Achuar traveled once a year for four years to Talisman’s corporate headquarters and they met with the media and the Canadian public to tell their story. They held demonstrations. They met with the CEO and various other shareholders and board members. Finally, last year, Talisman announced they would withdraw from the Peruvian Amazon and cease all drilling in Achuar territory.

PDM: What do you think was the key driver behind your success in reversing Talisman’s actions in the Achuar territory?

CB: I truly believe that a big part of our success had to do with education and storytelling, with making this a human story that hit home for the Canadian public and

decision makers. I think the decision to stop drilling was partly made by a huge shift in Canada's public awareness. The delegations garnered major attention and support in Canada's largest metropolitan centers, the *Globe and Mail*—the nation's largest national newspaper—did a huge Sunday spread with a lot of “human” photos. This had a real ripple effect. To me, this is the measurable effect of storytelling: making issues real, raw, and alive to stakeholders, influencers, and the public. So while much was also at play on paper and behind close doors, storytelling and media work played a huge role in pressuring Talisman to renege on their decision to drill and got them to realize that it was not good public relations to move forward with the project.

PDM: What are some of the communication tools or public diplomacy tools that you use in storytelling?

CB: The media landscape is changing rapidly. While my friends in the journalism world, people are worried about layoffs and changes in publishing formats, I see this as a great opportunity. All of a sudden the gatekeepers are gone. Traditional media is important, but you don't have to go and bow to the editor anymore! An organization can build its own audience and “BE” the media, opening platforms for indigenous voices and the voices of underrepresented communities everywhere. As a former journalist, I was really excited when I started working on the communication strategy side of things to create stories with a plan, stories that move beyond awareness to inspire people to action. With much help and some luck, we grew our audience from 12,000 to a quarter million since I started working with Amazon Watch; that is bigger than a mid-size city newspaper. You've got a quarter of a million people waiting for your direct content and no editors or corporate control to slaughter and misconstrue it.

I see in the future, a deeper layer to this through incorporating more interactivity. I envision an innovative plat-

form for collaborative storytelling, communities voicing their stories directly through multimedia platforms. And a third layer for integrating social media and methods for the public to interact with the storytellers themselves and essentially get rid of the need for a middleman, which historically has been an editor or a journalist. I think that all of these things working collaboratively make for more transparency, a more honest approach to storytelling, and direct access to your audience.

It seems to me that public diplomacy, PR, and really any organization's strategic communications share the same foundation and really aren't that different. It's all about knowing our audiences, connecting with them where they are, and choosing the appropriate platforms to do this. And I think at the heart of all this is storytelling delivered in one form or another – it's about making it *human* and *real* for whoever your human and real audience is. Advertisers are *so* good at this, and we're starting to catch up.

Tool-wise, we have Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and access to an unprecedented slew of social media channels, and transmedia platforms as well. We also use mapping and data visualization for different ways of showing stories. People are very visual! Going back to advertising or traditional media, what you are really trying to do is have your message resonate and pull at the heartstrings of people; to take them there and make the issues—the stories—human and real. At the end of the day, we're all just living, breathing human beings regardless of what audience we belong to or what decision we are making.

PDM: It sounds like Amazon Watch acts as a broker of relationships internationally. How do you go about deciding what goals to represent, who to bring to the boardroom, who to speak to, and how to address a foreign audience? Do you train people

from the tribes you represent in speaking to the media?

CB: First, we don't actually seek out campaigns. We do not go and look for something that is going wrong and



I THINK AT THE HEART OF ALL OF THIS IS STORYTELLING DELIVERED IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER. IT'S ABOUT MAKING IT HUMAN AND REAL FOR WHOEVER YOUR HUMAN AND REAL AUDIENCE IS.

latch onto and then come parachuting in. In every case, Amazon Watch has taken on, it has been about partnerships with indigenous communities on the ground who found the need to come to us, calling for facilitation or access to the corporate, government, and other “worlds that we have access to. Our indigenous partners are deciding that they want access that oftentimes their culture, homeland and very survival depend on. We also do some capacity building and we go in and try to get a better sense of the situation and gain perspective in order to help our partners to tell their stories.

Where Amazon Watch perhaps functions best is as a door opener and “translator” from deep Amazon worlds to “our” world and channels. Through capacity building, storytelling, direct actions online coming straight from the ground, petitions and letters....to facilitating live delegations for understanding and even negotiating in spaces that wouldn’t ordinarily be accessible. Our role is really to serve as translators between the groups on the ground and the corporate boardrooms, the media, or anywhere that policy and decisions that affect them are made. These are very foreign channels to a lot of people who might not know that a TV exists, or that men dressed in suits are meeting in California or Calgary to make decisions that affect their daily lives and future. Their worlds are very removed from these boardrooms, foreign governments, and cultures. It is critical to note that everything is community-led with Amazon Watch. And that is what I admire about this organization, and sometimes this is also what makes this work really complicated.

PDM: What challenges do nonprofit advocacy organizations like Amazon Watch face?

CB: There are a number of challenges, particularly when talking about cross-border, cross-cultural work that involves a diversity of sectors with countervailing interests. There are stark power asymmetries and deeply rooted histories of racism and discrimination in the region that we work in. Add to that, a legacy of governments and corporations acting in bad faith and utilizing divide and conquer strategies that plague communities for decades.

At a basic level, we’re talking about extremely different worldviews about very different ways of living on this

planet that we share, not least of all how we deal with natural resources within indigenous territories. Then there are some interesting concepts to consider that many of us take for granted or never consider at all, such as: the individual vs. collective/community, short-term vs. long-term visions, varied understandings and interpretation of rights...even very different timelines and senses of what time even means in the grand scheme of things.


PDM: Looking forward, what role do you see for nonprofits like Amazon Watch in the advocacy and empowerment of indigenous communities?

CB: I showed you some instances where Amazon Watch, partnering groups, the public, and influencers were able to unite and leverage communications strategies that inspired change and strides forward that wouldn’t otherwise have been possible due to access.

Again, I think perhaps our most important role is to serve as translators between “their” worlds and “our” worlds and to facilitate access to spaces and platforms for our partners’ voices to be heard and considered seriously.

Look, there’s no guarantee that people will act if they are aware and educated about these issues, but they sure as heck won’t if they don’t know. “Translating” these worlds, storytelling and leveraging

strategic communications have an immense power to connect with people as people and to meet them where they are, to make human and relatable these otherwise “foreign” issues.

As the world becomes interconnected – we get lost in translation and must develop solid platforms for understanding. This is so important for many whose very survival and culture is at stake! It is also essential to our coexistence and success on the planet, and for cherishing, making valuable and protecting the cultural differences that make us unique and diverse. Communications, storytelling, public diplomacy collectively has the power to relay this in a language we all understand; I think our role has perhaps never been more critical. 

AT THE BASIC LEVEL, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT EXTREMELY DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS ABOUT VERY DIFFERENT WAYS OF LIVING ON THIS PLANET THAT WE SHARE, NOT LEAST OF ALL HOW WE DEAL WITH NATURAL RESOURCES WITHIN INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES.

Photo: Amazon Watch



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