

**GASTRONOMIC MEMORIES IN
HOSPITALITY: ARE WE
LEAVING THE TABLE HUNGRY?**

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by

William J. Gregorash MA (Thunder Bay, Canada)

School of Management

University of Leicester

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Abstract

Gastronomic Memories in Hospitality: Are we leaving the table hungry?

Bill J Gregorash

The food service industry is all about feeding people away from home. This thesis is about the experiences of those who want to dine away from home, nearby or on holiday, foodservice in commercial context. To determine how gastronomic memories are created, twenty-one participants were interviewed using auto-driven photo-elicitation, the process explored trigger points within the tangible and intangible attributes of the presented experience. A focus group was also conducted using food-elicitation, an avant-garde meal served during the event. The findings demonstrated that food and atmosphere were equally deemed as a 'driver' in memorable experiences but the surprising factor that played the biggest role was the people themselves who were at the table. This discovery leads to believe that food, service and atmosphere are only *in* memorable experiences. Self-constructing a memorable gastronomic experience ensues during an event when the participant's 'state of mind' is in tune with the surrounding attributes. This research shows that gastronomic experiences can be created that are unique to everyone but it is still up to the participants to determine if it will be memorable based on the interaction occurring around the table and how they personally construct the surrounding attributes. This study used photo-elicitation (also food-elicitation) discovered that there are two types of memorable gastronomic experiences, one that reflects the 'state of mind' during the event and the other focuses only on the food and beverage consumed. An incidental finding from this study argues that consumer experiences in gastronomy are overall becoming banal events due to polished best practices in the industry.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction – Nature of the Hospitality Industry (foodservice)

“The business of life is the acquisition of memories, in the end that’s all there is.”

Carson, (the Butler) Episode #4.4 Downton Abbey (2013)

Having a meal away from home is not the ‘memorable event’ it once was. In fact, we do it more than our parents do and it is now becoming a way of life. The aim of this thesis is about meal experiences away from home and how we remember them. Specifically this study researches the role of authenticity in the creation of positive memories within gastronomic experiences to locate the trigger points of memory creation.

In today’s world, I feel that meals consumed away from home are more frequent and soon forgotten. As a professional chef having been in the industry for many years I would like to think that this should not be the case as I see restaurant offerings today are better and more unique than ever. The current environment presents the hungry consumer with multiple foodservice options within a stone’s throw from home. Think of your last meal out, and then think of your most memorable gastronomic dining experience. More than likely, there were hundreds of meals consumed in between but none as memorable. However, why do I always feel empty after paying good money for one of these so-called “*memorable experiences*” and can’t remember what I ate two weeks ago? My memory is only refreshed at times when I receive my American Express credit card statement; I see the charge and try to remember the details of the event. Yet restaurants offer “memorable experiences” in their advertisements constantly, and have plenty of opportunities to obtain advice from the many sources available on how to create these positive experiences. So what is the problem? New restaurants are going out of their way to be unique with their food, service and atmosphere as are older established restaurants...and both are hit and miss. Finkelstein (2003) argues:

“Although the creation of a mass cuisine and the industrialization of food have been the virtue of delivering different kinds of foods to a global marketplace, they have also fundamentally changed the individual’s relationship to food by standardizing and transforming comestibles into a highly regulated and closed commodity, which

in turn can produce greater passivity, disinterest, and boredom in the consumer” (p.199).

This being said, I ask the two main questions of this study, “*do the food, service and atmosphere in gastronomic experiences contribute to the creation of positive memories?*” and “*does authenticity have a role in the memory creation regarding food, service and atmosphere?*” What does it take to create a gastronomic memory within the hospitality industry? The aim of this thesis is about the search for trigger points in our memories specifically about gastronomic experiences away from home and includes a discussion regarding current hospitality (restaurant) experiences in general.

1.2. Problematization is the framework for investigating this study

This thesis uses a disruptive mode (*problematization*) based on the studies by Alvesson and Sandberg (2011). These studies (Alvesson and Sandberg 2011) best describe the formulation of the research questions here because the *problematization* methodology challenges the assumptions of existing theories and industry practices. Basic *track-bound* or *gap-spotting* modes, specifically the *neglect* and *confusion* versions, are other methods of research question construction (Alvesson and Sandberg 2011). This study uses the *problematization* methodology in the formulation of the research questions to “*develop an alternative assumption ground*” that seeks to provoke a reader response of “*That’s interesting!*” (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011).

1.3. Why is this study in disruptive mode?

My research domain is the foodservice/hospitality industry overall. While all restaurants cater to the public, some restaurants only cater to tourists (those located at tourist attractions); therefore, all literature pertaining to foodservice in the hospitality industry is open for discussion in my study. The major underlying assumptions within the foodservice domain are that all customers have expectations prior to their culinary experiences and when the foodservice establishments meet these requirements the

customers are then satisfied (Culinary Institute of America 2014, p.256). Sometimes their expectations have been exceeded which is a bonus. Foodservice industry literature is focused on best practices to meet or even exceed consumer demands because best practices are used as a tool to promote marketing advantages (Culinary Institute of America 2014, p.266). These are the assumptions “*worthy to be challenged*” (Alvesson and Sandberg 2011) by my research. My alternative assumption is that culinary experience memories can only be created when foodservice establishments offer services that the customers did not know existed. Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999) agreed and argued that contrary to standardize “*no surprise*” service for the consumer that it was “*...important to reintroduce, in the servicescapes, microevents, incidents, and happenings, making people get together*”. Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999) were proposing this servicescape initiative to transform “*modern non-places to post-modern common places*”. The majority of culinary experiences for tourists and non-tourists are uneventful (non-events) or “*too standardized*” and, as Albrecht (2011) summarizes in his study of the Olive Garden Restaurant chain (Italian theme-casual dining), customer experiences may be non-authentic banal events. Albrecht (2011) adds that restaurants like the Olive Garden

“...bridges the gap between the extraordinary and the banal, the exotic and the familiar, and between culinary tourism and everyday dining. The restaurant appeals to the post-tourist, one who has forsaken the idea of attaining a truly authentic experience through tourism (p.111).

Urry (2002) adds “*Post-tourists*” *find pleasure in the multiplicity of tourist games. They know that there is no authentic tourist experience, that there are merely a series of games or texts that can be played*” (p.11). With this being said can we assume that the commodification, consumerism and standardization in contemporary restaurant cuisine is leading to more ‘Olive Garden’ style restaurants which is now affecting how we experience meals out of the home. All this inauthenticity of restaurant offerings can only lead to confusion of realities as consumers are exposed to these experiences. Another research aim is to look at the disparity between dining out experiences and customer acceptance because understanding the motives of consumers is an objective of stakeholders in business. In

addition, this research aims to investigate the data by breaking down culinary experiences into attributes of food, service, and atmosphere, (a common distinction discussed in the literature review), and examines how authenticity affects the creation of memories in the customer.

Finally, the literature of the foodservice/hospitality domain supports problematization methodology in the creation of my research questions because the assumptions in the literature focus on gastronomic experiences without linkages to authenticity in the attributes of food, service and atmosphere. This research looked for linkages between the food, service and atmosphere of gastronomic experiences because authenticity is believed to add value to events, an important factor in attracting customers (Tsai and Lu 2012). Developing research methodology in a problematization mode challenges foodservice industry best practices. Authenticity may exist in the foodservice industry; this study adds to the existing knowledge with respect to the consumer who is hungry for an experience! In addition, may not be getting it!

1.4. The significance of memory creation in the food service industry

Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (1999) identified that there are many implications of their conceptualizations for new service development in creating memorable experiences in organizational settings. *“New service development”* concerns all the activities involved in the innovation of new service opportunities, as well as business model design, service or product design and marketing. They state:

“First, it is hard to copy a successful experience because experience is an emergent phenomenon created during an interaction. Second, the logic of customization for products or services usually focuses on identifying preferences of different customers and shaping characteristics of the product or services to meet those preferences. Third, we contend that a failure to realize the unique competitive advantages provided by the experience concept can erode the very core of an organization’s business” (p.49-50).

With this being said, can we assume that a foodservice establishment that does not follow the dogma of Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons then failure is imminent and if they abide success will follow? Informally I ask the question if success is measured by memory creation or customer satisfaction and repeat business. We know that restaurants survive on repeat customers and word-of-mouth advertising (e.g. social media) through shared favourable comments (Everett 2016). One does not have to dig too far in the memory bank to bring up the fact that if you are hungry and in a hurry then McDonald's will solve your problem. The study by Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola, (2013) (more on this study in Chapter 3) refers to this as "*memorized consumer experiences*" where experiences are transformed into "memorized consumer experiences". However, as Braun (1999) points out, memorized experiences are reconstructed rather than based on strict facts. An earlier study by Braun-LaTour, Grinley and Loftus (2006) presents findings on how tourists' memories are distorted of prior events when exposed to current types of information such as advertising and other tourists' memory stories. In other words a vacation memory is inadvertently constructed by the tourist after the trip from exposure to external sources when home.

Can foodservice operators modify the way we categorize our memories through their tangible and intangible products? The aim in this thesis is to explore how memories are created in hospitality we must inspect all of the moving parts within the industry that are relevant and perhaps irrelevant due to changing consumer knowledge and attitudes. This study's central theme is the 'gastronomic experience' therefore examination begins with the 'producers' then the 'consumers'.

1.5. Explanation of language and terminology used -Gastronomy

Gastronomy is often referred to as the art of cooking and good eating and it is suggested that there is a relationship with gastronomy (food) and culture (Kivela and Crotts 2006, p.354). I believe that all food is cultural, and gastronomic is a term I use as verbiage to describe uniqueness in my role as a certified chef. A simple family meal of fish stew made by a family cook living on the coast in Southern France could be classified as 'gastronomic' to many gourmards, but to the Southern French, it's dinner. In the past, the work by J.A Brillat-Savarin, *Physiologie du Gout, ou Meditations de Gastronomie*

Transcendante (1862) [English translation by Fayette Robinson (2004)], provided a classical definition that gastronomy was the study of ‘good eating’ and explained how the term gastronomy was used synonymously with ‘culinaria’. The term ‘culinaria’ describes a country’s or regions dishes, foods and food preparations that gave rise to a country or region’s distinctive cuisine.

In 2017, gastronomic experiences are available to a wider population than in 1862, and gastronomy is more than ‘good eating’. This change in demographic and the addition of current knowledge available (books, blogs, internet video) has given access to all those who are curious or seeking change in how they consume their food and beverage. What we are eating in restaurants today is different from 1862; therefore, a reason for developing a new meaning of all things ‘gastronomic’ is needed. In 1862, only those in the upper class of society partook in gastronomic experiences. In 2017, gastronomy is more than the art of eating, it is *‘the art of living well by being thoughtfully active (environmentally, too) with food and beverage gathering, and the preparation, and/or consumption and education’* (my working definition).

1.6. Definitions of Key Terminology in this Dissertation

Foodservice Industry- In the context of this study, the food service industry is comprised of establishments that serve food for immediate consumption (prepared); restaurants, market kiosks (with prepared food), hotel/resort food outlets, cafeterias, institutions, street vendors (trucks), farm/winery hospitality, and catering companies. (Note: in the UK the Foodservice Industry is commonly referred as the *Catering Industry*). Edwards (2013, p.223) defines foodservice as: *“The serviced provision of food and beverages (meals) purchased out of the home but may be consumed both in and out of the home”*. The difference between definitions is that foodservice meals consumed (experienced) at home are not part of this study.

Foodie- *“A food lover; one whose personal and social identity encompasses food quality, cooking, sharing meals and food experiences; foodies incorporate all aspects of food into*

their lifestyle, which often leads them to travel for new and authentic food experiences” (Getz, Robinson et al. 2014).

Food-Elicitation – (A term coined in this dissertation) is a proposed method of interview in visual sociology, research that uses food to elicit commentary from sensory stimulation (visual, taste, aroma, texture, sound). Interviewing to record how subjects respond to the food, attributing their social and personal meanings and values. Either the interviewer or the participant could provide the food. It is not a qualitative evaluation of a food product but a tool to evoke meaning through sensory stimulation. Photo-elicitation methodology techniques could apply to food-elicitation.

Gastronomic Experience - Santich (2004, p.15) argues that gastronomy is a “*slippery concept*” to explain and define...’gastronomic’ character of a country (kinds of food and drinks produced and consumed), gastronomic specialties (the foods and drinks particular to a country, region, restaurant, cook) and gastronomic tourism (a form of tourism focused on food and drink, gastronomic specialties in particular). Most dictionaries define gastronomy in terms of the art and/or science of good/delicate eating (p.15-16). Symons (1999) states “*Gastronomy which can be defined most simply as the study of meals, still scarcely exists as an academic discipline*”. With all this being said, a gastronomic experience would then be an event in time devoted to the consumption of gastronomic specialties and good eating. In this study, **all** gastronomic experiences examined/discussed are in a commercial context.

Culinary Experience- A gastronomic experience can be classified as a culinary experience but a culinary experience may not necessarily be considered a gastronomic experience because the characteristics of food consumed in a culinary experience may not qualify as gastronomic. Culinary, which relates to kitchen or cookery (Getz, Robinson et al. 2014) encompasses all cooking. For example a lobster roll (lobster meat/salad on a bun) consumed on the dock in Shediac, New Brunswick (Self acclaimed lobster capital of the world) could be considered a gastronomic experience but a lobster roll consumed at McDonald’s restaurant in Winnipeg, Manitoba (2,500 kilometres from the ocean) perhaps would not. It would be a culinary experience...where it get “*slippery*” according to Sanich,

is having a lobster roll in McDonald's in Halifax, Nova Scotia on the patio overlooking the water where the dinner came from. The fact that McDonald's produced the roll (or any popular food) denigrates the cachet originally associated with the food item...and also creates confusion with regard to authenticity (more on this in Chapter 3).

Cuisine – A style of cooking (as in Italian cuisine); food that is cooked in a particular way (i.e. spicy food)

Culinary (Food) Tourism – Rebecca McKenzie the Director of the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance stated the term culinary tourism is being changed to “*Food Tourism*” to better describe the discipline. The word ‘culinary’ denotes an implication of complex cooking requiring highly skilled (McKenzie, 2016). Sally Everett widens the scope and refers to “*food and drink*” tourism that encompasses culinary tourism plus special interest tourism, gastronomic tourism, serious leisure, foodways tourism, heritage tourism, cuisine tourism, gourmet tourism, rural/urban tourism and cultural tourism (2016p.10). The World Food Travel Association (WFTA, 2015) (previously known as the International Culinary Tourism Association) gave a succinct definition as “something every visitor does”. The most common definition used in many academic papers is the definition by Long (2004):

“Culinary tourism is any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, or consumes branded local culinary resources. In other words, culinary tourism is an intentional and reflective encounter with any culture, including one’s own through culinary resources. Culinary tourism encompasses travel specifically motivated by culinary interests as well as travel in which culinary experiences occur but are not the primary motivation for the trip” (p.7).

Culinary (food) tourism is important to this study because many gastronomic/culinary experiences that are examined in the thesis are the result of food tourism (food in a commercial context). Also note that according to Wolf (2014) the “*food and drink tourism industry is now more than 10 years old as a defined segment of the tourism industry*” therefore the depth of literature on food in tourism is just now gaining traction.

Culinary Tourist – A practitioner of food tourism, those both aware and unaware, McKercher, Okumus and Okumus, (2008) recognized that many culinary tourists don't identify themselves as culinary tourists.

Throughout the thesis, the attributes of a gastronomic experience are mentioned. Therefore an understanding of the details is required for the reader. I have only three attributes to simplify the line of questioning, as these three are understood in the realm of a culinary experience (Culinary Institute of America 2014). Throughout this study food, service and atmosphere are presented in the following context:

Food (Attribute) - The food is defined as any prepared product available for the participant in a commercial context from any foodservice operation (i.e. Foodservice Industry). It is understood that beverages could be included in the narratives if volunteered participants were not asked for specifics on beverage consumption to keep this study centred on experiences surrounding food.

Service (Attribute) – The service within a food experience includes contact from not only front-line personnel such as waiter/waitress, but from those who may act as support; hosting staff (Maitre d'), bar staff (sommelier), cook/chef, bussing staff, counter/stall staff, managers and proprietors/owners. All of those listed have the potential to influence the service aspect of a food experience.

Atmosphere (Attribute) – The definition used in this study is perhaps the most complex as it is not only the physical surroundings (tangibles) of the food experience but also it includes the people who may influence the event (intangibles). This includes the other patrons in the restaurant or area and those seated at the table with the participant. What makes this attribute unique is the fact that the operators of the establishment cannot fully control this attribute as with the food and service because they have no influence as to the people within the boundary of the establishment. For example, a busy restaurant that is full of patrons with a waiting list presents a different 'atmosphere' than if the seats were only half

occupied. Also important (and out of the control of the foodservice operator) is who the participant shares the table with for the food event. The actions of other patrons and tablemates are beyond the control of foodservice operators. Another important factor included in the atmosphere attribute is the sensory implications, the smells, temperatures, visuals and touch that accompany a food experience. All of these details are implied within this study when referring to atmosphere.

1.7. Description, Rationale and Aims in Research Approach

As individuals, we have the opportunity to create or partake in many gastronomic events at home or when dining out and we do so without a conscious plan of creating a positive memorable experience. Positive memories create a warm smile in our reminiscences that we can enjoy (or share), and considering the number of occasions food and beverages are consumed in one's life, seeking a memorable time can be a goal. For Levi-Strauss (1978), cooking was a metaphor for the human transformation of nature's rawness into a 'cooked' culture. The process of transforming raw substance into edible food and drink is most fascinating; it is a thing that we humans do which makes us unique in nature and defines our cultures.

This dissertation focuses on gastronomy in the commercial context as to the objective of the practical implications stated, that knowledge will be gained for stakeholders offering gastronomic products. It should be understood that gastronomic experiences could happen without exchange of money. The fact that perceived value plays a role in whether an experience can become positive or negative with the introduction of cost, this is brought to light when the consumer is asked if the experience is "*worth the price*" (Wurgaft 2008:57). There are many factors that can affect a gastronomic experience; restaurant managers should understand that food quality is only one determinant of satisfaction (Ladhari, Brun et al. 2008:570). This study examines the factors within gastronomic experiences not only with regards satisfaction, but also if, how the memory of the experience was created, and specifically how authenticity within the experience was a factor.

To address the two main research questions mentioned earlier there specific aims within this thesis that are investigated and discussed 1) meal experiences away from home,

2) does food, service and atmosphere create positive memories, 3) is there difference between dining out experiences and customer acceptance, 4) investigate each attribute – food, service, atmosphere, 5) explore all ‘moving parts’ in the industry with respect to consumer knowledge and attitudes, 6) how does authenticity factors into a gastronomic experience, 7) what drives those to seek gastronomic experiences, 8) is culture, history and place a factor in authentic food experiences, 9) investigate only experiences in a commercial context, 10) are there ‘other factors’ than previously studied in a memorable food experience, 11) what are the emotional needs of those who dine-out 12) this study does not only focus on culinary (food) tourism, 13) what constituents of ‘peak experience’ create memories, 14) how is food a construct of a gastronomic experience, 15) explore if there is inauthenticity in mind of a consumer regarding food, service and atmosphere, 16) attempt to understand the underlying essence of memorable gastronomic experiences to potentially recreate.

1.8. General Statement of Contribution

The contribution made by this study demonstrates that positive memories of gastronomic experiences are created by the state of mind of the participant, the influence made by the restaurateur or chef is integral but not a significant factor.

This contribution comes against a background where hospitality ‘producers’ of gastronomic experiences believe they are in the business of creating ‘memorable experiences’ for ‘consumers’ by constructing differentiating attributes from research on determinants with food, servicescape and perceptions. In reality, the consumers are co-constructing their memories from within hospitality experiences built on what they bring to the event which includes their previous experience and ‘state-of-mind’ bringing them to a state of existential authenticity. This study argues that consumer experiences in gastronomy are overall banal events but on occasion, a memorable event will occur as a result of experiencing this moment of existential authenticity

What is important to note is that the memories from the attributes (food, service and atmosphere) are constructed individually based on previous life experiences which obviously vary between individuals. This self-fulfillment through food in a commercial

context is in contrast with other theories that look at consumer experiences from perceptions based only on the quality of the event and attributing factors (i.e. food, service and atmosphere). In addition, this study presents evidence that encountering one's authentic self in a gastronomic experience does not depend on current 'best practices' in hospitality.

The restaurant meal has become an opportunity for people to immerse themselves into a special world where time and the stresses of the day are suspended. A positive culinary experience is the goal for diners, and can be created regardless of the food, service and atmosphere because the success of a gastronomic experience is based on the state of mind of those participating. As for authenticity, there was one common trait where all participants felt that their memorable experience *were* genuine, but opinions swung widely when asked for their definition of authentic experiences and what is authentic food? The findings do show that perceived authenticity in gastronomic experiences is in the 'eyes of the beholder' or as Sharron Hudgins argues in the book *Authenticity in the Kitchen* by Hosking (2006):

"Authenticity exists on the tongues of the taster, in the nose of the inhaler, and in the eyes of the beholder – all of which come together in the mind as a culinary experience, whether it's the comforting cinnamon-sweetness of Grandmother's peach cobbler or the postmodern frisson of Ferran Adria's sardine foam" (p.246).

Even though there was some common ground with the participants -- most were all well-traveled -- there were no 'aha moments' singling out obvious commonalities. A key factor to note is there were three study groups within the participants, groups were determined on their involvement with food and ability to travel (Foodies that travelled, Foodies that didn't travel and Traveler's not focused on food) This 'triangulation' of perspectives was crucial to eliminate potential bias from one demographic sector in a common discipline (food).

An incidental finding of this study indicates the direction the hospitality industry (foodservice) is heading and how millions of dollars are spent by operators on superfluous amenities which are only enjoyed momentarily. People are seriously curious about *where* their food comes from and hungrier than ever for experience.

Finally, this study employs a new methodological tool, ‘food-elicitation’ that was used in a focus group to encourage participants to offer meaningful thoughts through discussion over a prepared meal. This process created a relaxed atmosphere through the use of food that was unique but not distracting to the goal of the study. The process provided rich data that complements the narratives from the interviews. Food-elicitation is a tool that could provide future researchers an option in qualitative and quantitative research within the food service industry, including gastronomic experiences.

1.9. Plan for the Remainder of the Dissertation – Overview of the dissertation

Chapter 2 will begin the development of a critical review of how the act of eating out has been conceptualized in academic literature starting with the discussion of why we eat out. This chapter then examines the restaurant scene, the menu, and takes a close look at the creation of restaurant patrons, called ‘foodies’. And because food plays a large part in the tourist experience, food in tourism is also explored. This chapter will then focus on the anatomy of a gastronomic experience specifically within the categories of food, service and atmosphere. The final section will look at determinants within food service and studies that focus on consumer satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

Chapter 3 examines the literature regarding authenticity within general consumer experiences and then takes a look at work regarding authenticity in tourism and hospitality. This is followed by a presentation on trends that are shaping the ‘authentic tourist’. This chapter then investigates the authenticity of food and gastronomic experiences in detail, unpacks the theories within the literature on existential authenticity and presents arguments on ‘non-events’. The remainder of the chapter is about memory creation, beginning with souvenirs and their meaning, then literature on gastronomy and tourism. The chapter concludes with a presentation of material on trigger points in memory creation, the use of social media as a tool to activate memories and finally the types of memories.

Chapter 4 will present and justify the methodological strategy and paradigm adopted for this study. The chapter begins with the introduction of the research questions,

research philosophy, the research paradigm and the decision for using social constructivism for theory generation. Next is a presentation of literature that supports this strategic plan that can be used as a framework with the discipline of hospitality. This chapter then goes into detail regarding the narrative theory and supporting reasons for the interview strategy and then explores participant selection based on differentiation and the selection process. The chapter then introduces the rationale behind the use of photo-elicitation and food-elicitation in the interviews and the focus group along with fieldwork reflections. The conclusion of the chapter outlines a framework for the analysis of the focus group along with a discussion on the photos used in the interviews.

Chapter 5 is the beginning of the analysis in two parts; part one is a presentation and discussion on the narratives regarding the participants' auto-driven photo-elicitation. The focus is on the first (of two) research questions of this dissertation - *How do the tangible and intangible attributes (food, service, and atmosphere) in a gastronomic experience affect the creation of positive memories?* The 'state of mind' theory is unpacked with discussion using the supporting themes using the narratives of individual participants. This chapter also looks at factors in the participant photos, the specific attributes contributing to the gastronomic experiences – food, service and atmosphere. Part two of the chapter presents analysis of data surrounding the participants' photos, such as their personal connections to food, foodies, travel and their other memorable gastronomic experiences.

Chapter 6 is a continuation of the analysis that attempts to answer the second question in this research "*How does authenticity play a role in all the memories within gastronomic attributes (food, service and atmosphere)?*" It begins with analysis on the findings regarding the line of questioning that investigated the authenticity within the participants' memorable gastronomic experiences. Specifically, the attributes, food, service and atmosphere were separately examined to determine how authenticity could have played a role in the memory creation. One section presents analysis on participants' interpretations on 'authentic restaurant experiences' and what makes food 'authentic'. Also a discussion surrounding a specific ethnic chain restaurant that portrays itself as authentic, a few participants spoke of this restaurant in their narratives.

Chapter 7 will summarise the research findings in relation to the research questions. The chapter addresses each of the research questions and reinforces contribution of this research to the relevant academic literature. To conclude, the chapter will present a reflection on the research process and engage with a discussion on the foodservice industry in today's society.

The thesis will begin by reviewing the relevant literature on gastronomy, the gastronomic experience and in the following chapter discussing authenticity in gastronomy and memory creation.

Chapter 2: The Gastronomic Experience

2.1. Chapter Overview

First, the literature chapter will develop a critical review of how the ‘act of eating out’ has been conceptualised in the academic literature, examining how the meal away from home has become important and how it is being used for the purpose of research. This section will begin with a look at a general tourism experience and then the trends in foodservice industry with a discussion of how food away from home has changed the way we live. This research study does rely on the literature of gastronomic experiences because food in tourism (gastronomy) is widely researched over gastronomy at home. A discussion follows of how restaurants and other foodservice establishments are presented to consumers and their tactics to create memorable gastronomic experiences. The purpose is to review how foodservice establishment have impacted society, the birth of the ‘foodie’ as a major component in trends is debated and the drive by them to produce authentic experiences which they feel will give them a competitive edge. This study takes the position that food consumed outside the home includes that while on holiday; therefore culinary (food) tourism is reviewed to demonstrate relevance. The home discipline for this thesis is in hospitality and the related disciplines of sociology of food consumption, culinary (food) tourism, consumer experience, and trends in foodservice.

This chapter will then focus on the attributes of a gastronomic experience, the food, the service and the atmosphere as presented in the academic literature, trade publications and personal experiences. This section will critically review and highlight the main issues within a gastronomic experience beginning with the discussion on foods, the impact of service and effects of atmosphere. This section also reviews the new literature on the emergence of the ‘foodie’, the role and the implications to the foodservice industry are debated.

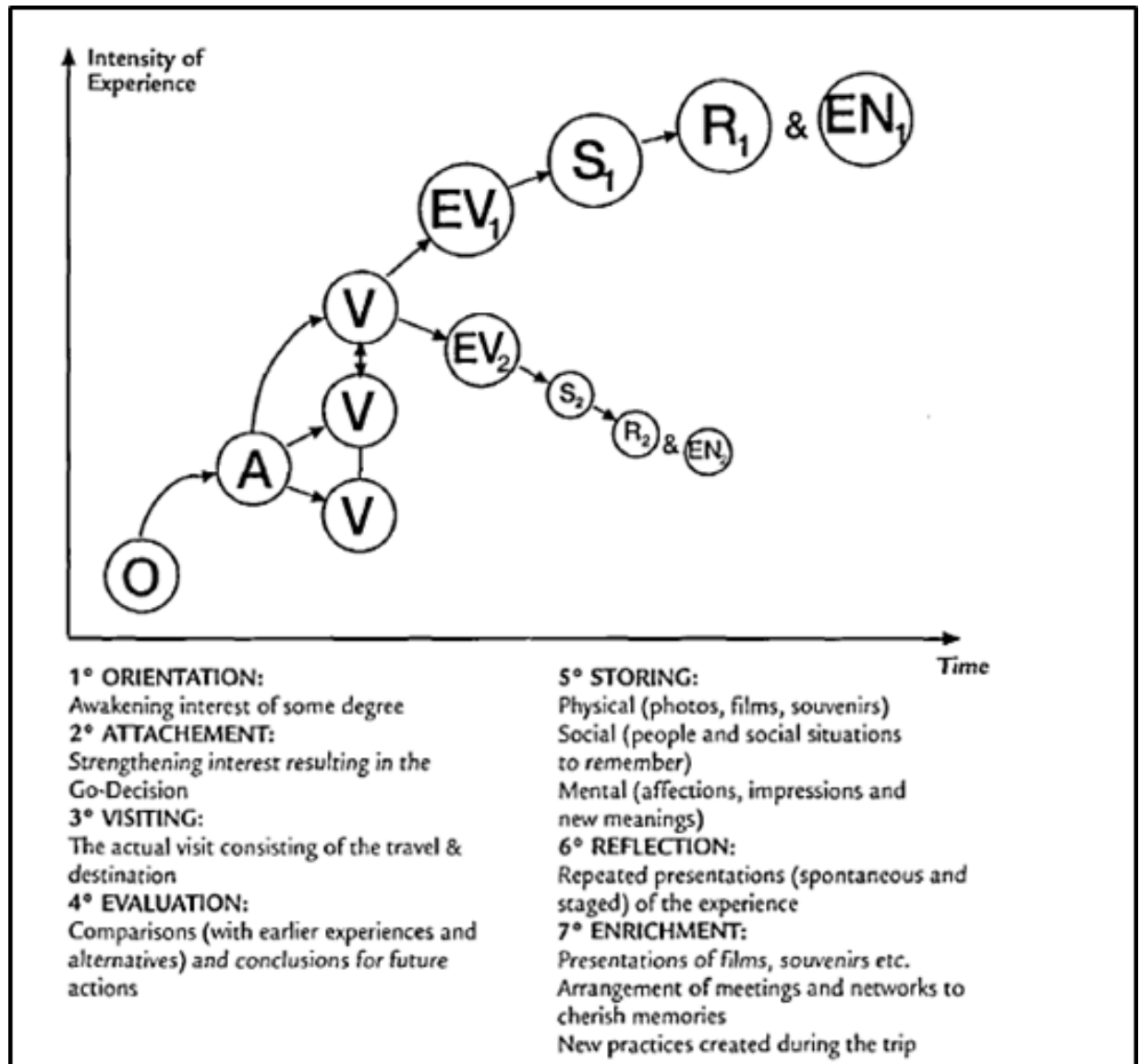
The final section of this chapter will describe the many constructs (moving parts) that comprise experiences in gastronomy. The variety of events in the foodservice industry that can be experienced is examined and a discussion on the relevancy of how they are accepted by consumers. By looking at the interpretations of experiences this chapter will

seek an understanding of consumer acceptance and rejection of foodservice industry practices.

2.2. A consumer (tourism) experience

Aho (2001) presents work that distinguishes the main characteristics of a tourism experience that easily is adapted to a gastronomic experience. The processes Aho (2001) asserts is that tourism can be considered as a combination of activities that are voluntary, and intentionally proposed for producing experiences by moving people about. The experiences may have significant components; amusement, emotions, learning, relaxation, and various activities. Aho (2001) identifies four core elements of a tourist experience; emotional experiences, learning experiences, practical experiences, and transformational experiences. Aho further argues that there are variables that affect people in their ability to obtain and enjoy experiences such as time, money, knowledge, skills, attitudes and social. Aho has developed a *process model of the tourism experience* (Figure 1) with qualities worth review. The model presents the following stages of possible progression; orientation, attachment, visiting, evaluation, storing, reflection, and enrichment.

This model by Aho offers the connection to gastronomic experiences, for example, the McDonald's dinner experience may not make it to "*storing, reflection and enrichment*" stages and a dinner out with family and friends might. This model also identifies the factors in potential restaurant 'non-events' discussed later in this chapter. The fact that many gastronomic experiences never make it past the 'evaluation stage' therefore there is no 'storing' of physical items (photos, souvenirs), social storing (people/situations), mental (affections, impressions, new meaning) which would eliminate further 'reflection' and/or 'enrichment'. All this because of restaurant best practices and banal offering that blur one experience into the next.



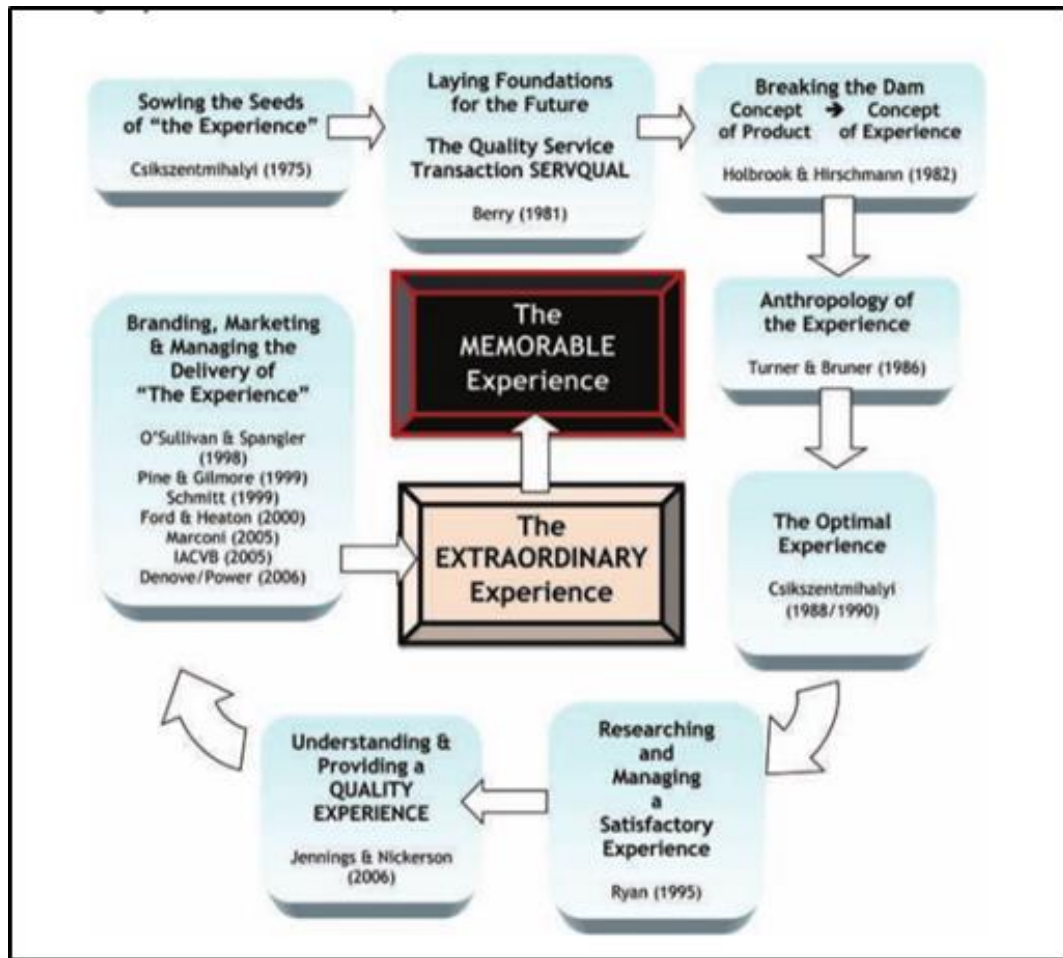
2.3. Figure 1. A process model of the tourism experience: Source Aho (2001)

Ooi's (2005) theory of tourism experiences draws on the psychology of attention and perception to illustrate the limitations of management planning and design. *"Tourism destinations, attraction operators and other tourism businesses assume that experiences can be managed and packaged, so that tourists will only be offered exciting and memorable experiences"*(p.51). The 'other tourism' businesses referred to by Ooi could be foodservice operations, standalone or combined as in a hotel or resort. Ooi states three characteristics of tourism experiences, the first; *"Experiences arise out of people's social and cultural*

backgrounds” because of the unique backgrounds interpretations are varied of a single tourism product which then asks how?

The second characteristic is *“Experiences are multifaceted. They arise from activities and physical environment, as well as the social meaning embedded in the activities.”* Even if everyone is participating in the same event, each will take home differing experiences. The third characteristic is *“Experiences are existential”* They are personified and can only be experienced as individuals (p.51-52). In summary, even if tourists say they enjoy themselves in the same situation, it does not imply that they all have exciting and memorable experiences.

Figure 2 below is a depiction by Ritchie and Hudson (2009) to graphically capture the elements of the evolution of the travel/tourism experience, beginning with the experience ‘flow’ concept in 1975 by Csikszentmihalyi. *“The best moments of people’s lives”* which occur, *“...when a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile”* (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, p.3). This builds on the previous notion that these experiences build individual memories, and experiences can be gastronomic in nature. Ritchie and Hudson assessed and then scored these studies in Figure 2 under six research streams, then using a ten point scale to assess each based on their conceptual/theoretical complexity, the amount of research that remains undone, average difficulty and overall difficulty. The six research streams used; the essence of the experience, choice and behaviour, methodologies for experience research, understanding specific kinds of tourism experience, research related to managerial concerns, and evolutionary focus of experience research. The six research streams present a framework that offers a better understanding of the challenges faced in consumer and tourist research, this framework offers application to gastronomic experiences as well.



2.4. Figure 2. Evolution of the extraordinary experience/memorable experience:
Source Ritchie and Hudson (2009)

2.5. Why the Gastronomic (and Memorable) Experience?

The act of eating out is the heart of this study, what is it that drives us to seek gastronomic experiences out of the home is not the focus of this study but is a future topic for investigation. We are hungry for more than the food itself. The ritual of breaking bread with friends, family or special people in our lives provides us with emotional and fulfilling sentiments and makes our lives complete. Once one has had a ‘taste of experience’, an individual will long to repeat the event and perhaps attempt to outdo the previous. We never forget the taste of that ripe raspberry we picked in the heat of summer from our grandparents garden as a child and forty years later, we have a flashback to that event while seated in restaurant eating our dessert. The most basic of meals can therefore deliver a

novel gastronomic experience (Hjalger and Richards 2004). To seek a memorable experience one does not need the assistance of a Michelin star restaurant. Simple foods can create memories, and we build our knowledge of food from our experience in travel and experimentation. The simple meal is depicted here according to Bode (1994, p.198):

“A piece of bread, an apple and a piece of cheese.

As long as our attitude insists that:

The bread is good and fresh, the apple is ripe and the cheese mature and we have the sense or wisdom to know that they are so.

If we can add to this a simple meal, a glass of wine and find a friend to share it with us, all the important factors in gastronomy have been satisfied.”(p.198)

This statement by Bode is important to this study because it contains all the components of a food attribute in a gastronomic experience which can be dissected, part of the atmosphere (the friend) but none of the service. To begin, this statement by Bode identifies the fact that the participant has the “sense or wisdom” to determine the quality and distinguish the subtleties of the taste because this is only learned through experimentation. There is a whole group of food aficionados out there who make food experimentation a huge part of their gastronomic education (Everett 2016; Oh 1999; Rivera and Shani 2013; Sharma, Moon and Strohbehn, 2014; DiPietro, Yang and Charles 2013). To discover the perfectly ripe apple, the mature cheese and great glass of wine means that you have to eat many unripe apples, imperfect cheese and bad glasses of wine in the process. I liken the search for perfection in food to the quote from Boethius (c.480-525ce) *“For in every ill-turn of fortune the most unhappy sort of unfortunate man is the one who has been happy”*. Simply put, if you have tasted a truly great glass of French Burgundy (i.e. Domaine de la Romanee-Conti [\$\$\$\$\$]) you may spend the rest of your life seeking a similar experience from other Pinot Noir wine looking for that ethereal aroma and voluptuous taste. The same goes with cheese and fruit. Many people who travel ‘discover’ foods while abroad return home and try to repeat the gastronomic experiences by seeking ‘perfect’ ingredients or bring home food souvenirs (Morgan, Pritchard 2005). The Bode statement mentions the addition of a *“friend”* which would be considered part of the atmosphere of a gastronomic

experience which denotes that when one has obtained a ‘perfect’ combination of gastronomic components there is the need to share. Sharing is a huge part of gastronomic experiences, eating fine food and drinking great wine is a sin to do it alone (to me) yet some do as in the documentary movie *“Foodies, the Culinary Jetset”* (Jackson, Landelius and Stockare, 2014). Bode makes no mention in the statement about the service or additional atmosphere which perhaps denotes that service is not a key factor in positive gastronomic experiences and neither is the atmosphere that important also. The atmosphere has always contributed to the success of consumer experience (Kotler 1973). This statement by Bode confirms that the substance of a memorable gastronomic experience need not be complex or expensive but at a level of quality acceptable to the participant which would be the decidedly important variable.

Food is not only for sustenance and fuel, it is for comfort and a component of our daily lives, and if food were regarded primarily as fuel then restaurants would be similar to petrol filling stations...all selling the same product. A great example of emotion and taste is in the animated movie ***Ratatouille***, (Walt Disney, Pixar Animations) (Bird 2007) that depicts a chef (and a rat) working in a Paris restaurant trying to be successful in business. A pivotal scene occurs when Ego the restaurant critic visits the restaurant and tastes the variation of Ratatouille (the dish) created by Remy and Colette (Heroes) with the help of the rat... and he (critic) is brought back to the fond memory of his childhood and his mother’s cooking, gives the restaurant a rave review and everyone lives happily ever after. I’m sure we can all think of our own personal history to recollect on a food ingredient that brings us to another happy (or sad) place or time. This example, even though depicted in animation confirms the proposal presented by Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013). In this case, the food is the tangible that triggers the memory of the childhood. Kauppinen-Raisanen , Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) also revealed that remembered, positive and pleasurable food-related experiences originate mainly from sensory, emotional, and social bases, as suggested by Dube and Le Bel (2003). As a side note Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) also stated: *“Despite the influential role of remembered eating and food experiences, the issue has so far received little scholarly interest. In particular, the nature of remembered eating experiences remains under researched”* which is why this study may lack literature for review. As a suggestion

for future studies Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) observed that eating experiences stored in memory are not only subjective, but may be cultural (Marshall 2005). Taking the advice, this study examines if culture, history and place (geographic locale) is a factor especially in the role of authenticity of food within experiences because of the link between food and culture.

The study by Andersson and Mossberg (2004) explored the restaurant as an arena for a multidimensional experience. Their study assessed how important the various aspects are, and to what degree restaurants succeed in providing satisfaction for customers. It was presented that customers expect evening restaurants to mainly satisfy social and intellectual needs whereas lunch restaurants mainly cater for physiological needs. The study strongly indicates that social needs are dominant for evening restaurants (Andersson and Mossberg 2004, p.176). TV cooking shows, internet 'how to video', food blogs and public cooking classes are tools for everyone to cook at home, yet people are frequenting restaurants proving that consumers are seeking something more than taste. The studies by Ritchie and Hudson (2009), Aho (2001), Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013), Andersson, and Mossberg (2004) are all examining the 'experience' at a granular level, examining the composition because experiences are goals of tourists, foodies and diners. For example Andersson and Mossberg (2004) drill down and examine the dining experience on the importance of food, service, fine cuisine, restaurant interior, good company and other customers.

Tourism *is* involved in this study because the gastronomic experiences are away from home in a commercial context. Gastronomy is an inextricable part of the holiday experience (Kivela and Crofts 2009; Fields, Hjalager and Richards 2002; Richards 2002; Scarpato. Hjalager and Richards, 2002; Everett 2016; Getz, Robinson et al 2014; Frost and Laing 2016). It is important to note that my study differentiates between gastronomic experiences that occur as tourists and those close to home.

Pillsbury (1990:4) takes a unique perspective by dividing food catering (foodservice) into two categories: body food and soul food. Body food comes from fast food restaurants, which fulfil the need to feed the stomach rapidly in standardized environments that do not challenge intellectual capacities in any way.

“Soul food has another appeal. Soul food restaurants serve the inner person, we dine on soul food to celebrate, to reward, to impress, or create a mood. There is an almost endless variety of soul food restaurants, but all have something in common. The very thought of dining there raises expectations of pleasure in the mind. The décor brings a sense of satisfaction. The food must be beautiful, but not necessarily gourmet. It must evoke a sense of pleasure in the mind” (Pillsbury 1990, p.5).

Anyone seeking an evening out on the town could be said to be seeking ‘pleasure in the mind’ regardless of the motive (i.e. dinner with mother-in-law), therefore more is at stake than the quality of the food, service and atmosphere being investigated in my study.

Pavesic (1989) states that:

“Customers will evaluate a restaurant as a place to eat-out or as a place to dine-out. If a restaurant is considered an eat-out operation during the week (a substitute for cooking at home), customers will be more price conscious. If a restaurant is considered a dine-out operation, the visit is regarded more of a social occasion or entertainment and price is not as much of a factor (p.45)”.

This statement by Pavesic is saying the same thing previously by Pillsbury, that we may designate foodservice establishments based on physiological needs and others on the potential to bring ‘pleasure in the mind’. Both arguments have a position not ‘set in stone’, as either moments can create a pleasurable experience that is memorable. A potential dinner for the soul may end up only feeding the body (physiological) and an ‘eat-out’ establishment could nourish the soul...it is the context within gastronomic experiences that can affect the outcome.

Investigating gastronomic experiences in a commercial context comprises the research presented here; the objective is the examination of memorable experiences (ME) within events. Gaining an understanding of what makes certain experiences special, outstanding and aptly memorable will make a contribution to how we define consumer satisfaction. Memory is important not only to the consumer of experiences but to those who

sell them. Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) make the connection of a destination to memory with regard to branding:

“A Destination Brand is a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience.” (p.103)

It is regarded as important to the foodservice industry as food can be used as a means of marketing and branding for a tourism destination (Lin, Pearson Cai, 2011; Frochot 2003; Boyne and Hall 2004; du Rand and Heath 2006; Hashimoto and Telfer 2006; Fox 2007). Satisfying the customer through the creation of these experiences that are unique and high quality offer opportunities to create memories, Pizam (2010, p.343) argues:

“... that what drives customer satisfaction and willingness to pay high prices for hospitality ‘products’ is the quality of the experience. Thus, the quality of the experience is the moderating or intervening variable between the independent variables of quantity and quality of tangible and intangible products and services, and the dependant variables of customer satisfaction and willingness to pay high prices.” (p.343)

Pizam also states that it is not price that dictates the customer satisfaction (I agree), a \$600 per night hotel room is not necessarily ten times better than a \$60 per night room as both provide an experience. Pizam’s statement might be extended to that it is not the cost of the experience or the quality of the tangibles and intangibles, as a ME can be achieved in either scenario. Pizam (2010, p.343) concludes:

“Consequently, creating memorable experiences is the essence and raison d’etre of the hospitality industry. One can create memorable experiences by building opulent environments, providing outstanding services and serving sumptuous and exotic

food prepared by top chefs. But one can also achieve the same results while staying overnight in a Bedouin tent located in the Sahara desert and eating rice and lamb with one's fingers." (p.343)

This statement identifies the fact the MEs can be created by simple acts in simple settings...I would argue that even though this 'meal in a tent' may seem simple, one has to get there in the first place which is by itself an opulent and exotic trip. I have personally had simple meals that are very memorable and inexpensive, but when I factor in the cost to getting there, it is a different story. What Pizam describes is what could be considered an authentic experience (meal in a tent), the food would be authentic to the area because the tent is authentic for the Bedouin people and the event takes place in the authentic Sahara desert. Could one recreate the 'meal in tent' experience in Brooklyn, NY by dining at the 'Bedouin Tent', a restaurant that specializes in Middle Eastern Food? Or could one book a dinner safari in the Dubai desert that will set you back between 545-1500 AED (Platinum Heritage, 2015) and will leave you wondering if the experience at all was authentic or simply staged? Does the amount paid for an experience then define the level of authenticity? Is cost a factor in the creation of memorable experiences, does the amount spent (or not spent) a determinate?

We cannot talk about gastronomic (tourism) experiences without including the composition of the person participating in the experiences. Plog's (1974) definitions of traveller personalities on a scale could apply to gastronomic participants as well. First, at the far left are *dependable* (psychocentric) travellers, the ones who are as Plog (1974) states: intellectually challenged, conservative in their daily lives, restrictive in discretionary spending, prefer popular brands, have little self-confidence, look for guidance, passive and non-demanding, like structure in their lives and enjoy being surrounded by friends and family. At the opposite end of the spectrum are the *venturers* (allocentric) who are intellectually curious, make decisions quickly, have no problem spending discretionary money, choose new products on the market, self-confident, look to their own judgement, assertive, prefer challenges and don't mind being alone (p.15-16). Plogs' scale does have middle mark and options to those classify those as 'near' venturer or 'near' dependable. The purpose of the scale is to assist with tourism marketing and understanding your

customer, it helps define or create your product. People approach eating out of the home with obviously the same tactics, the *dependables* would stick to the well-known restaurant chains like McDonald's and KFC (if they do go out at all) while the *venturers* are the ones looking for meals out of the tourist friendly zones and are unafraid to try new food experiences. Chawla et al, (2014:73) presented thirteen 'psychoculinary profiles' based on surveys that identified five major segments of food tourists ranging from the "*dedicated foodies who love local, organic and authentic fare at one extreme, to the novice foodie who is new to the experience at the other extreme, and with an eclectic segment in between who like a bit of everything*"

Edwards (2013) concludes in the study titled "*Eating out is more than just a meal*" that eating out involves more than simply matching meals with consumers and the ingestion of food; but a myriad of other factors, which can affect the eating out experience. My research seeks to explore 'other factors' highlighted by Edwards; to gain an understanding of the situation of the experience within a foodservice (gastronomy) event.

'Other factors' highlighted by Edwards (2013) and examined in this research are the emotional needs in dining out, and the perceived differentiation within experiences when all the tangibles are similar and when foodservice industry 'best practices' are in place to meet the intangible aspects (Edwards 2013; Gustafsson et al. 2006). Best practices in food service are designed to present uniformity and consistency of their product (brand) in consumer experiences that are aimed to create customer satisfaction (Culinary Institute of America, 2014). Many restaurants do a good job in creating satisfying experiences and making a profit as evident by the global, national and regional expansion of food service establishments (Wolf, 2014).

2.6. The Restaurant Scene

To gain an understanding of the arena in which gastronomic experiences are produced, it is useful to understand the viewpoint and context of these 'producers' especially if you have only been active on the 'consumer' side of hospitality foodservice industry. The central theme of gastronomic experiences begins with the core product of a restaurant which is not necessarily the food but the 'experience of being entertained away

from normal life' (Silkes, Cai and Lehto, 2013). Some marketers in standard college hospitality texts identify unique levels of restaurant products such as 1) the core product 'the client came to restaurant to eat'; 2) the generic product 'the restaurant itself'; 3) the expected product 'music, comfort, service, cleanliness; 4) the augmented product 'singing waiters, brewery, good wines; 5) the potential product 'restaurant in a unique locale' (Reid, Bojanic 2009). If the core product of a restaurant really is food, then people would visit the grocery store on Friday night with friends.

Field-to-fork, farm-to-table, kitchen-garden, organic-farming, sustainable-agriculture are some of the terminology used by restaurants to create differentiation among the mass spectrum of offerings in the food industry (DiPeitro et al. 2013). Creating the image of a chef with a basket under his arm who, first thing in the morning picks the daily specials from the small garden behind the restaurant (or on the roof) is a selling point that promotes sustainable ideology. As a chef, the practicality to actually do this is impossible; admittedly there are a few who practice this, but the set-up is different, usually a small restaurant behind a larger farm, which does not cater to high volumes of people. These set-ups are hard to find, always out of the way, and have sporadic service times but if you find one, the experiences are always unique and potentially memorable as a result. A good example would be the *Eigensinn Farm* operated by chef Michael Statlander (Eigensinn Farm, 2015).

A current popular movement in the food service industry is the 'field-to-fork' premise where restaurants can point to where their food was sourced to demonstrate sustainability practices and their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR in the food service industry is not new to the small independent restaurateur; in the past, this field-to-fork style of operating a business was not a gimmick or marketing ploy but was done out of common sense. CSR in the foodservice industry has now become a marketing tool to attract those concerned about the environment, many consumers care about 'green' restaurants and will support them (Jang, Kim et al. 2011; Namkung and Jang 2013; Schubert, Kandampully et al. 2010; DiPietro, Yang and Charles, 2013; Rivera and Shani 2013). All of this CSR in the restaurant industry regarding 'green' practices perhaps give consumers a warm and fuzzy feeling while dining knowing that their indulgence is part of a sustainable operation,

they are not destroying the oceans and lands. This ‘feeling’ may contribute to the overall experience.

A chef/owner of a small restaurant who required quality ingredients for their menu items would grow their own food out of necessity simply because (a) there was no readily available supply or (b) the quality that was available was poor and unacceptable. The handful of restaurants that produced its own vegetables have been around for decades, one of the most notable being *Chez Panisse* in California, North America, which was co-founded by Alice Waters in 1971 (Chez Panisse, 2016). This restaurant was one of the first to feature organic produce on its menu, which changes daily based on the availability of products. Small organic restaurants such as *Chez Panisse* displayed CSR long before it had a trendy tag and catered to the few regarding sustainability practices, way ahead of general restaurant goers. What has happened over the past four decades is that consumers are more educated regarding food and have been awakened to quality levels newly available. Those who were raised on eating at the chain grocery store (or chain restaurant) [flavourless] *Tomato*, have realized that they have been eating the most bland and boring variety of food; they have made the discovery of ‘heirloom’ varieties from local farmers’ markets thanks to TV chefs, upscale grocery stores and social media (Everett 2016).

The Barcelona Field Studies Centre identifies five key consumer restaurant trends affecting culinary tourism (Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance, 2015). The first is referred to as ‘trading up’; consumers that have sufficient income/time can advance from basic food essentials and indulge in the next level contained in food quality, freshness and organic local offerings. Health has also become a driving factor in the rising demand for quality/organic products (Poulston and Yiu 2011).

The second is the change in ‘demographics and households’; aging populations and changing lifestyles have influenced the way we approach food. As mentioned earlier, demographic groups like the baby boomers are more educated with respect to food and have the income to allow experimentation. The 25-35 year-olds are affluent and see food as part of their social world while 45-55 year-old ‘empty nesters’ are out and about with their disposable income. Food is seen as a respite to those who are stressed; a good food experience can transport those who feel beaten down by work and life (Josiam, Henry 2014).

The third trend from the Barcelona Field Studies Centre is the ‘rejection of the mass production model’, which perhaps explains why *McDonald’s* restaurants are losing their market share and restaurant chains like *Chipotle’s Mexican Grill*, which offers fresh vegetables/meat alternatives is gaining ground. *McDonald’s* is changing the customer experience by ‘blowing up the front counter’ to make it more personalized; by 2017 customers in all 1400 Canadian outlets will be able to order premium burgers with thirty options (CBC, 2017) (More on this in Chapter 3). The bottom line is that consumers are rejecting restaurant experiences with mass produced food and seeking new and improved ones that meet standards based on quality and uniqueness.

The fourth trend identified from the Barcelona Field Studies Centre identified is the “growth of the multi-cultured consumer”. Driven by globalisation and the movement of people, plus social media, has brought acceptance of different cultural food and even demanded this variety. Food from many cultures is now available and widely accepted as interesting and exciting alternatives by those seeking unique gastronomic experiences. Having cultural alternatives educates the consumer in specific cultures and is a positive thing. However, this creates new issues further down the road when we look for authenticity in a cultural offering (Pitte 2002).

Finally, the fifth trend from the Barcelona Field Studies Centre identified was presented as “the role of the celebrity chefs and the media as having a major impact on consumer activities”. This alone has educated consumers to a level that has brought many to become more knowledgeable about food than some chefs and restaurateurs; everyone can now be an expert. Celebrity chefs are admired by foodies and celebrity fans (like rock stars) (Barnes 2014; Henderson 2011). TV cooking shows have moved from afternoons to primetime slots and are watched by everyone, not just by a few homemakers as in the past. When you add the influence of the internet on food, one can basically learn how to cook/prepare/serve just about anything online and free of charge, making it a great time to be a foodie (or just hungry!).

The fact that all restaurants and not just fast food chains are ‘upping their game’ to meet the demands of the new educated and demanding consumer. *McDonald’s* is not only working on the food but adding a new service component to build a new customer experience. *Starbucks*, in an attempt to demonstrate CSR in their food program, announced

that they would be using only eggs produced from ‘cage-free’ chickens by 2020, to match the commitment made by *McDonald’s* and *Burger King* (Time, 2015). This announcement by *Starbucks* also makes the bold statement that they are not just in the coffee business anymore; they are adapting to capture new consumers through product diversification.

Locavorism is a food movement that has gained increasing attention in the past few years and that incorporates the concepts of food miles and local food and where a locavore is a person interested in buying and consuming locally produced food (Azevado 2015, p.81). This Locavorism along with organic foods has lately influenced the contemporary social trends in the developed world toward how food service establishments differentiate their menu items. With this increased popularity in local and organic food, research in this area is starting to pick up as well, Carmela-Aprile, Caputo et al. (2015) suggests broader geographic sampling in studies to better understand consumers’ preferences and attitudes toward local foods, different cultural contexts. Hempel and Hamm (2016) suggest further research is needed also to find out more about differences in the preferences for local and organic, processed and unprocessed food products, as comparable studies could not be found. This example by Hempel and Hamm (2016) argues the lack of research within current trends in gastronomy.

Food service industries in the developed world have increased awareness of consumer trends and are trying to give customers a product similar to those customers demand at home with respect to local and organic ingredients. As the Starbucks example mentioned earlier in their planned use of ‘cage-free’ eggs in an attempt to demonstrate corporate social responsibility. Cage-free eggs are considered ethically appropriate and perceived as organic by consumers, they are not though ‘local’ which brings in the contrasting argument by Navin (2014, p.365) that there are consequences from developed areas using local only food as this lowers the demand for food imported from the world’s poorest societies, therefore creating an ethical dilemma. Navin (2014) suggests a hybrid food economy – a mixture of local food and food imported from the world’s poorest societies.

Another sustainability initiative in the food service industry is the ‘nose-to-tail’ practice where every part of the animal is used in the menu. Fergus Henderson and Anthony Bourdain’s cookbook *The Whole Beast, Nose to Tail Eating* (2004) was one of the

pioneering works to bring the methodology of using the whole animal into the restaurant without waste, a practice that has been used on farms since the dawn of time. The majority of consumers demand only the choice cuts from recognizable animals and shy away from the other offerings like organs, feet, head, tails and ears. Why would someone go out for dinner on a Saturday night and order liver when they *had* to eat it at as a child at home prepared by mom? Fergus is quoted, “*If you’re going to kill the animal it seems only polite to use the whole thing*” (2004) which only seems natural when living on the farm and feeding your family, but what about the 200-300 people in a restaurant?

In conclusion, it is necessary to summarize the changes in the restaurant scene because this affects the current consumer experience. Restaurants must be at the knowledge level of the customer...the restaurateur needs to be prepared for the informed consumer otherwise; consumers will not respect the establishment.

2.7. The menu

What restaurants have done to achieve popularity in a wide market is to offer a menu with items that are popular with everyone because to offer anything that does not sell is considered wastage. The restaurant menu is relevant to my study because it is a contributing factor in a commercial gastronomic experience; when guests are presented with a menu that features common variations of food, their experience could lean toward banal (i.e. chicken Caesar salad). Therefore, the taste or concept presented by a restaurant is communicated to customers through menus. A study by Taar (2014) presented pertinent findings regarding ‘taste’ as an important factor in ‘food-liking’ and food consumed in restaurants and cafeterias was deemed “*better remembered*” than home cooked meals. The study by Taar had weak validity and reliability due to a limited sample of only twenty-two participants who were female and based in Estonia.

The concept of a printed menu (before the days of in-house laser printers) was to support the restaurateur not the customer, simply because the chef had a standard list of food to order, prepare and cook that offered consistency to all the plates leaving the kitchen. The menu is a guide for the staff who work in the back of the house as well as the front line staff; everyone learns the menu and then sells or cooks it as opposed to the daily

menus being written by the chef where all staff must study the new items. The standard static menu is the clear choice for consistency of product and service while the daily menu opens the door to inconsistencies and service errors if not executed properly by management. Here lies the potential negative issue with restaurants today; this is the static menu, where chefs and management are forced to stick to only what is printed and only occasionally offer a few 'specials' as extras. This common practice is advantageous for the owners and management because it offers cost control and consistency of product, but is it good for the customer? The customer *does* get the opportunity to sample a menu item repeatedly and/or return to try another item but what this does is create expectations from frequent guests. It is at this point, pressure is put back on the food service establishment to perform by forcing staff in the kitchen and dining room to repeat the experience to the guests regarding the quality of the food and service. The reason many restaurants fail is because they cannot perform consistently even with printed menus because the management lacks the ability to enforce controls in food production and service (Culinary Institute of America 2014).

The printed menu for restaurants is well researched and discussed as a tool for the management of a successful food service business; restaurateurs can turn to the 'bible' called *Wenzel's Menu Maker* (Wenzel, 1979) first published in 1947 for advice. Wiley Publishing has seventy-five books available for struggling restaurant managers looking for help classified under 'Food Service Operations and Management' (Wiley, 2015). Wiley is a global publishing company with many titles on hospitality, culinary and tourism that cater to higher education in North America). They all make reference to menus, design, pricing, and/or menu engineering (strategy). This being said, it is clear that printed menus are here to stay and will continue to assist restaurant managers delivering consistent products to satisfy the expectations of their customers. However, when this expectation is met and the customer *is* satisfied, does this create a positive memory? The memory of a problem-free meal is perhaps a good thing should one want to repeat the experience or share with someone, but will it be the signature food event story?

For example, lamb; racks of lamb are a popular menu item so if a chef buys a whole lamb from the farmer which yields only two whole racks of lamb and now stuck with the rest of the carcass. There are chops, legs and shanks, but also stewing and ground meat

(organs, head, etc.) which are not as popular. This is the dilemma restaurateurs are faced with in attempting nose-to-tail menu initiatives; they must learn to use the entire animal and market the less popular parts to the consumer (Henderson, Bourdain, 2004).

The question here is whether the average consumer wants the nose-to-tail menu or just the prime cuts in their gastronomic experience, as they are accustomed. In pork for example, this would mean utilizing the ‘lower cuts’, shanks, pork butt, and jowls along with the popular ‘higher cuts’ as in chops and tenderloin. This is the very definition of eating “high on the hog” (Weiss, 2012). Malcom Gladwell in a 2004 Ted Talk argues that consumers do not know what they want until presented with options; he quoted a Jewish proverb “To the worm that lives in horseradish...the world is horseradish” (Ted, 2004). The menu also represents the positioning strategy of a restaurant and is an important tool in creating the ‘brand’ (Walker and Lundberg 2000). In addition, Fakih, Assaker et al (2016) offer evidence that menu information that conforms to consumer expectations has an indirect effect on consumers’ intentions to dine at the restaurant and recommend to family and friends.

Gyimothy and Mykletun (2009) present the case that “*scary food*” such as the Nordic gastronomic dish “*Smalahove*” (a salted, dried, smoked, cooked, sheep head) can contribute to designing a new tourist experience. The farming township of Voss (Norway) has been preparing this scary dish for over 700 years and only lately it has gained popularity as a *must try* experience for tourists with over 60,000 being sold per year (p.265). Cultural practices that celebrate and prepare traditional food like those in Voss, now being shared with tourists, help build the brand for culinary tourism. These tourists return home and tick off another item on the bucket list and share their experience of “scary food” in a story with social media and hence, the brand is built. Food that is not ‘normal’ offers restaurant a differentiating factor (Goldfarb 2014) in marketing and gives customer great stories, and stories about food is the research goal in this dissertation.

Mkono (2011) argues, using netnography, to present findings that explore the “Othering in Food Adventures” (p.253) which are categorised under four themes; “*scary*”, “*unusual food*”, “*eating the authentic Other*” and “*the reassurance in mixing familiar with unfamiliar*”. This study not only offers the tourist comments from food neophiliacs but also those with food neophobia, the extreme opposite, the abhorrence of unfamiliarity

(Gyimothy and Mykletun, 2009). The common term for a food neophiliacs is ‘foodie’, which deserves attention as there are two key questions asked of the participants in this study; what is a foodie, and are you one? The next section reviews the history and current literature of the term ‘foodie’.

2.8. What is a foodie?

Many of my colleagues are foodies who absolutely abhor the term ‘foodie’, these people are knowledgeable professional chefs by trade and are very in-tune with the current restaurant/food scene. A conversation always leads to food, either what was cooked lately or an experience at a restaurant because these folk live and breathe food, no matter what the topic of conversation, food will pop in. For example, if I just returned from work related trip I would immediately be asked by my foodie friends “*where did you eat?*”...no questions asked about the business, the travel or results of the trip...just the food facts. I do not have to speculate why those chefs hate the tag ‘foodie’ because the term has grown to encompass almost everyone. In conversation with a chef colleague regarding that he may be referred to as a ‘foodie’ stated:

“I don’t get angry, but yes it is snobbery, but more like I’m pissed that I spent so much of my life and gave up so much to have some 20something say they didn’t like their meal on fucking twitter and potentially ruin my career.” (S. Warwick, 2016).

Today anyone can appear as an expert at food and challenge professionals at their craft and create lasting damage, just check TripAdvisor for proof (Leia and Law 2015; Pantelidis 2010). The food we eat will always be questioned by amateurs and professionals in many realms; we are *all about* what we eat. Who this day in the western world does not care about the quality of the sustenance they consume and where it comes from.

In my experiences as a diner and a chef, I do note the current influx of ‘food stories’ being told on restaurant menus that support the local and organic trend which brings us back to the foodie. Foodies are the backbone of the participants in this study, therefore

understanding the history is important when listening to their story, which is the raw data of this dissertation.

It seems obvious to me that my chef colleagues feel the foodie label is below them because there is no separation today for the term between a teenager who ‘likes to cook’, a retired school teacher ‘want-to-be-chef’ and a real chef professor of thirty years. Food, like other material goods has elitist practitioners. In contrast, Johnston and Baumann (2010) argue that one of the primary reasons that the term foodie is rejected is because it is associated with snobbery and the faddish trend-setting of elites. In my world, I see the rejection of the foodie label for the opposite reason; those colleagues of mine who by definition practice trend-setting (are not snobby) do not think they are foodies because foodies are not equal in their knowledge and skills. There is after all, no recent test that one can take to qualify as a true foodie, except the Barr and Levy (1984:8) “*Are You a Foodie?*” quiz. One of the eleven questions asks “*What do you think of tomato ketchup*” and offer three choices “*a) Nice, b) Nasty, c) What is tomato ketchup?*” and the obvious correct foodie answer is ‘b’ or ‘c’, as this is 1984, ketchup is for those who aren’t hip! Today, any gastro pub serving fresh-cut organic heirloom fried potatoes (aka French Fries) would present an accompanying made-in-house signature ketchup (or selection of). This question would be irrelevant today in determining a true 1984 foodie, with this being said can we state that definition may be the same but the bar has been raised in the necessary knowledge of today’s foodscape to self-qualify.

The term “foodie” has been credited to Barr and Levy (1984) from their *book The Official Foodie Handbook Be Modern – Worship Food* who defines a foodie as:

“...a person who is very very very interested in food. Foodies are the ones talking about food in any gathering – salivating over restaurants, recipes, radicchio. They don’t think they are being trivial – Foodies consider food to be an art, on a level with painting or drama.” (p.6)

Before the term foodie arrived, some people who took interest in food and drink were referred to a “*gourmets*”. Foodies and Foodism were christened independently by Harpers and Queen in August 1982; Gael Green had used the word ‘foodie’ earlier (Barr and Levy,

1982:7). Barr and Levy (1984) also describe the passion that foodies have towards food to the extent that one can become a ‘bore’ ...the cause of petty annoyance, as in the coffee bore. Johnston and Baumann (2007) state:

“To put it somewhat differently, what seems to matter in foodie discourse (for both those who accept and those who reject the term) is not necessarily the precise list of food that one consumes or the restaurants one dines at, but the disposition one brings to food – as a subject for study, aesthetic appreciation and knowledge acquisition.”

There is a tongue-in-cheek side to the foodie movement, in Canada’s national newspaper the Globe and Mail an article titled “*We’ve Reached Peak Foodie*” by Margaret Wentz. The article describes examples:

“I always thought the idea was to remove dirt from your food, not add to it, but I am not a gastronome. Modern chefs believe a little dirt simply takes the concept of terroir to its logical conclusion. In Tokyo, a restaurant called Ne Quittez Pas offers a six-course soil dinner that includes soil soup, fresh truffles with soil, soil sorbet. Evidently it’s quite popular” (Globe and Mail, 2016).

Finally, a snowclone for the foodservice industry mocking the bizarre place we have arrived in gastronomy. For ‘interesting food’ examples (Style-Canvas, 2010) check out the dessert “Sex on the Beach” at the Bo Innovation restaurant in Hong Kong.

2.9. Culinary (Foodie) Tourist

The term “*culinary tourism*” was developed by Lucy Long in 2004 and is defined as experiencing and participating in the foodways of other people which include but are not limited to consumption, preparation, and presentation of food items (Long, 2004). This broad definition could include almost any traveler. The research paper on “food tourism as a viable market segment” conducted in Hong Kong by McKercher, Okumus and Okumus,

(2008) categorized survey respondents into five segments: 1) non-culinary tourist, 2) unlikely culinary tourist, 3) possible culinary tourist, 4) likely culinary tourist, and 5) definite culinary tourist. They recognized the fact the culinary tourists may not think of themselves as culinary tourists due to the fact that individuals rate what is important on a vacation uniquely. This indicates most tourists do not even know their own role in culinary tourism until it is brought to their attention as in the McKercher et al. (2008) study and I can assume this as well with foodies 'self-identifying. An individual may not label themselves as a foodie even though they meet all the criteria according to the literature a) because they have no knowledge of the term, b) they do not want to be a foodie because of the negative connotation associated with the tag. It should be noted here that a culinary tourist could be labeled a foodie (according to the literature), but a foodie may not be a culinary tourist because they do not travel, a requirement meeting the definition of a tourist.

The relevance of whether or not someone is a foodie is important in this study because the types of participants selected attempt to eliminate any bias. It is important to this study that all participants have some interest in food experiences in order to research 'remembered' events, as those with no interest (if they exist) would have no contribution. The fact that this study interviewed probable culinary tourists is coincidental as this study is not about culinary tourism directly, it so happens that culinary tourists have rich data to offer due to their many unique dining experiences from visiting other countries and cultures.

2.10. Food in tourism

A definition by the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA), a non-profit organization that consults on food and beverage themed tourism development worldwide states: "Food tourism is any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, and/or consumes food and drink that reflects the local, regional or national cuisine, heritage and culture" (Skift, 2015). It should be noted here that OCTA is changing its terminology to *food tourism* from the original term of *culinary tourism*, to encompass food offerings not necessarily cooked or processed by 'culinary personal'. This change removes the elitist stigma using the word *culinary* in depicting food and drink. Food tourism is not only about restaurants but food from markets and farms as well (McKenzie, 2015). The term *Culinary*

Tourism and *Food Tourism* are both used in this literature review and study, for all intents and purposes they have the same meaning when used interchangeably.

Food in tourism is important to this study as many memorable experiences are created while on holiday, in fact culinary tourism has been studied extensively (Silkes, Cai and Lehto, 2013; Ab Karim and Chi 2010; Horng and Tsai 2012; Henderson 2009; Ottenbacher and Harrington 2013). A reminder here that this study is not about culinary (food) tourism or tourism, but it is interested in the stories from those who partake in experiences away from home in commercial foodservice. Although the findings from this study may assist those tasked with destination development (food service operators, DMO's, investors) in the creation of a culinary brand that is unique, it is not the objective..

All tourists must satisfy physiological needs while on holiday therefore dining away from the comfort of home is a necessity, but how a tourist immerses themselves into unfamiliar cultures is unique as food is a “*polysemic artefact*” (Everett, 2008). Cohen and Avieli (2004:758) argue that tourists travel in quest of novelty and strangeness, but most need a degree of familiarity to enjoy their experience: an “environmental bubble” of their home environment. In the dimensions of food, whether familiar or strange, motivates Fischler's (1988) distinction between “*Neophobic*” and “*Neophylic*” traits in taste. Fischler argues that both tendencies may be found in individuals. Tourists dislike or suspect new unfamiliar foodstuffs and cuisines or they actively seek for novel and strange food. What is interesting is where exactly is the line drawn...how familiar does food need to be and what is considered strange.

Food connected to foodies demonstrates an emotional commitment to a product or brand, this bonding is positively linked to future purchase intentions (Ladhari, Brun et al. 2008:571). Quan and Wang (2004) bring an interesting theory of foodservice in tourism to this study, they state:

“Gastronomy is thus seen as an important source of marketable images and experiences for the tourist. Nevertheless, within the literature on food in tourism, it is still unclear whether food consumption in tourism is regarded as the peak touristic experience or as the supporting consumer experience” (p.299).

Based on the emergence of the ‘foodie’ I would say it could be both because food to them is a consumer experience and potentially a peak experience as well. This paper by Quan and Wang is not relevant to the core of this study but does demonstrate the state the literature with regard to gastronomy as an overall experience.

Frost and Lang (2016) discuss the ‘changing views’ of travel. They argue that in a short period of time ‘foods and cuisines’ have shifted to being one of the key motivational factors for travel and offer seven qualifications with food a factor. 1) The enjoyment of food while on holiday becomes a mass phenomenon. Trends, fashion, media and marketing combine to link food to culture and to provide it with status as an integral part of the tourist experience. Everett (2016) confirms this by arguing that increasingly; local and regional foods are a part of a packaged commodity and identity linked with a ‘sense of place’ through emotional attachment. 2) Frost and Lang (2016), state travelling for food shifts from the domestic to the international. The status now arises from consuming the exotic. This is not a new ‘changing view’, perhaps revived as Minca (2000) identified the ‘discovery’ of new places ‘exotic’ years ago. 3) The changes are demand centred. Tourists want to indulge in food and associated cultures. Adventure replaces risk in influencing food experiences. This could include interactions with exotic sellers of food and beverages and the consumption of unusual – even normally repulsive – foods and meals (Frost and Lang 2016). “*Exotic and global foodstuffs have become part of a new post-modern culture*” (Everett 2008). 4) Interest in food and cuisine becomes an example of *serious leisure* (Stebbins, 1992). People are interested in learning about food, having new experiences and seeking out new tastes, and they link this to their own personal development and identity. 5) The *demonstration effect* is critical. To gain status, people copy others. A food-savvy elite leads the way, but is quickly followed by the mass market. There are leaps across cultures. The rapidly expanding Asian middle market, for example, follows Western trends, although in recent years there has been a refocus on their own traditions and cultures. 6) These interests in gastronomy and tourism are often constructed in opposition to modernity, both as a reaction and as an antidote. *Globalisation*, for instance, generates a movement towards *localism*. The growth and ubiquity of *fast food* leads to *slow food*. 7) Supply is altered to cater for demand. Tour operators develop food themed tours. Certain destinations reinvent themselves as attractive *food destinations*, through marketing campaigns and the

developments of culinary attractions, trails and routes (p. 6-7). These seven factors presented by Frost and Lang (2016) help to provide a better understanding of our present state regarding foods and cuisines. In order to investigate the practitioners of those involved in food and cuisines it is necessary to comprehend the environment because of the speed of changes over the past 50 years.

2.11. Experiences in Tourism/Food

Experiences are the objective of tourists (MacCannell 1976; Gilmore and Pine 1999; Hjalager and Richards 2004; Cohen and Avieli 2004; Kivela and Crotts 2006; Urry 1990; Larsen 2007; Sanchez-Canizares and Lopez-Guzman 2012), and food experiences are an important component not only for the tourist but for destination development of a tourism region (Kivela and Crotts 2006; Gyimothy and Mykletun 2009; Henderson 2009; Everett 2008; Hjalager and Richards 2004). This research study relies on the literature of gastronomic experiences because food in tourism (gastronomy) is widely researched over gastronomy at home because of the commercial implications.

Pillsbury's (1990:4) argument that food consumed is either for the 'body' or 'soul' would not hold up in a tourism context as I could argue that all food consumed on holiday is for the soul...to quote Pillsbury: "*Soul food, raises expectations of pleasure in the mind*"(p.5). When on holiday would the simple toast and tea for breakfast taste different in a café overlooking the ocean than the toast and tea in front of the television at home? With this being said, we can argue that consumers perhaps have preconceptions prior to eating away from home, one is to fill the stomach and the other to fill the mind *and* the stomach..., which could be at any time of day. I will ask if it is possible that a consumer can receive the opposite of their objective, is it possible to duck into a strange restaurant for a quick bite to fill a void that then turns into a gastronomic experience?... an experience not soon forgotten? An event planned for a gastronomic 'experience' at a specific restaurant can also fizzle into just sustenance, as the service, food and atmosphere were not as expected. Therefore no memory created...

As mentioned earlier, tourism is about experiences and all food consumed away from home could be considered an experience within the overall tourism experience. Gastronomic experiences in a tourism context may create memories easier than

gastronomic experiences at home. Regardless of where the experiences occur the similarities and/or factors that favours memory creation in either gastronomic event were in question in this research.

Customer service for example is a major factor in food service experiences and there are plenty of management texts and academic articles that preach best practices to achieve guest satisfaction (Pierson, Reeve et al. 1995; Ryu, Han et al. 2008; Stierand and Wood 2012; Pruyn and Smidts 1998; Kimes 2011; Albrecht and Zemke 1990). In my previous research in China (Gregorash 2012, p.12); I discovered that the western definition of good service (consensus for guest satisfaction) was not the same as the locals. I also realized how culture plays a part in how we perceive the world around us. In my research in China, I interviewed Chinese nationals on *their* definition of “good” service in a gastronomic experience setting and to my surprise it is not the same as mine or the ‘best practices’ laid out in service reference books like the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) (2014) “*Remarkable Service*”. This finding demonstrates that cultures have constructed standards within their own gastronomic attributes, in the case of service to Westerners in China.

Boorstin (2012[1969], p.106) argues *‘the tourist seldom likes the authentic (to him often unintelligible) product of the foreign culture; he prefers his own provincial expectations’*. This account by Boorstin was directed at all aspects of the tourist product including the service as well as the food. Based on the China research results, Boorstin’s statement was demonstrated by the tourist’s actions when they seek familiarity when away from home. Culture was also identified by Chow et al (2007:706) to play an important role in influencing customer expectations of restaurant service performance and the assessment of service. Cultural factors within restaurant experiences.

Customer expectations with regard to service can present itself as an additional surprise along with new, unusual or foreign food. Fine (1992) identifies that “*The skill in running a profitable organization is to provide goods or services that clients desire and that appear to be worth more than they cost to provide.*” These services when presented to customers beyond expectations or deemed worth more than expected create positive “moments of truth”. The ‘moments of truth’ were presented as service milestones by Jan Carlzon (Carlzon, Polk et al. (1989) who was the Chief Executive of Scandinavian Airline

(SAS). ‘Moments of truth’ are the contacts made between the front line service and customers, for example a customer may have many ‘moments of truth’ with different company representatives such as an airline, from booking, checking-in, boarding, in-flight, luggage, etc. Carlzon, Polk et al. (1989) argue that a company has many opportunities during these ‘moments of truth’ to win over customers with exemplary acts of service and equal opportunities to fail as well. Albrecht and Zemke (1990) states that “*When the moments of truth go unmanaged, the quality of service regresses to mediocrity*” which perhaps explains why so many gastronomic experiences in my life are ruined by service expectations.

Five dimensions related to service quality were identified by Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) in their GAP model (identify gaps between customer expectations and actual service expectations): Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. This is a developed version GAP5 model of an exploratory on consumers’ views on service quality by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, (1985), This GAP5 model is a useful tool that identifies five distinct ‘gaps’ in the delivery of a product to the consumer and by closing these gaps, the quality of the product improves and the consumer obtains a product that meets (or exceeds) their expectations. This is a simple solution to a business problem where the intangibles of service delivery are identified and then corrected by internal communication and external marketing. This is not so simple to use, when you are in the business of delivering culinary experiences, because when we fill in the gaps of a gastronomic experience, we create ‘best practices’ that ultimately deliver what I refer to as blandables... a deliverable that is bland, boring, banal and soon forgotten and perhaps at best ‘mediocre’ as stated by Albrecht and Zemke (1990). The next section introduces a critical review of literature regarding the attributes of gastronomic experiences –food, service and atmosphere.

2.12. The anatomy (attributes) of a gastronomic experience

There are three simple attributes (referred to in the study) of a gastronomic experience that I use that are important in my research; the **food**, the **service** and the **atmosphere** which comprise any gastronomic event (experience) and to research the

relationships of the determinants within (table 1). These attributes are derived from the literature, specifically from *The Five Aspects Meal Model* (FAMM) presented first by Gustafsson (2004) who researched the factors influencing customers' meal experiences in a la carte restaurants. Later Gustafsson, Ostrom et al. (2006) used the FAMM to measure customer acceptance and consumption of a meal. In detail, this is a tool used to evaluate consumer restaurant experiences, the Five Aspects Meal Model is one that breaks the experience into five distinct segments 1) the '*room*' where the meal is taken, 2) the '*meeting*' the interactions of the staff and fellow guests, 3) the '*product*' the food and beverages itself, 4) the '*management control system*' defined as the factors relating to all economic, laws and logistical aspects, and finally 5) the '*atmosphere*' which is the actual overall ambience and feeling (Gustafsson, Ostrom et al. 2006, p.84). A comparison is presented (table 2.) that shows attributes of the FAMM.

This model was originally derived from the Michelin Guide's way of evaluating hotels and restaurants (Carlback 2008:76) which perhaps is suitable for this purpose but my research is not looking for a list of top restaurants based on objective reviews. Carlback (2008) used the FAMM to better understand chain/franchise operations and environments in which they operate, the study was found important in the role of developing concept creations, formulating strategies, the selection of new outlets and the selection of possible outlets for assimilation.

The FAMM guide has been used in various restaurant experience studies, Edwards and Gustafsson (2008) used the FAMM as guide for teaching the structural factors involved in "eating and eating out" in culinary education. Jonsson and Knutsson (2009) used the FAMM to extend the view of the management control, specifically the behavioural control of decision-making influence on the other four aspects. Lundberg (2011) uses the FAMM to explore the experiences of frontline hotel workers; specifically a critical incident technique was employed in the collection of critical service encounters. The FAMM was used by Lundberg to categorize the causes of the service encounters that enabled insight to guide management in decision making regarding restaurant product development, training, design, and management control systems. Meiselman (2008) expanded on the FAMM to put the meal into a much broader perspective with the goal of a comprehensive understanding and appreciate the complexity of the meal. Meiselman used unique

perspectives and the interest within each field in conceptualizing meals. One of relevance to my study was the psychology aspect that identified that “psychologically, the meal is a fundamental in our daily thinking and acting”. Meiselman suggests that the psychological aspect of meals will get “more exciting” in the next few years with exploration of mood and emotions that result from meal.

Attributes	Determinants
Food	Presentation, taste, selection, ingredients, texture, value
Service	Efficiency, integrity, presentation, emotional intelligence
Atmosphere	Décor, music, patrons, presentation, location, other guests,

2.13. Table 1. – *Food, Service and Atmosphere attributes (For this study)*

Attributes	Determinants
1. The Room	Physical space where the meal is consumed
2. The Meeting	Interactions customers and staff Interactions with those between customers and staff
3. The Product	Combined foods and beverages
4. The Management Control System	Economic Legal leadership
5. The Entirety of the Meal	The “intangible” factors The atmosphere

2.14. Table 2. – *FAMM Attributes and Determinants (Edwards and Gustafsson 2008)*

The FAMM does offer insight on evaluation which I used in developing the qualitative line of questioning, for example; factoring in the other customers and those at the table of the participant may provide relevant information on overall memory creation in experiences. By factoring the ‘other players’ at the table in a gastronomic experience was a valuable finding in my study whereas food, drink, and service appeared as the likely only contributors.

In my structure of attributes and determinants, presented above in table 1 (2.13.), the ‘room’ (#1) and ‘atmosphere’ (#5) of FAMM are included as one in the atmosphere attribute. ‘Management control system’ (#4) is not required as this study does not focus on how the management controls the restaurant- smoothness of operation, cost of meal, payment procedures, and staff adeptness (training). ‘Room’ (#1) and ‘atmosphere’ (#5) of FAMM are combined in my model of atmosphere because in the FAMM study, ‘The Room’ (#1) is presented as an independent physical space combined with ‘The Meeting’ (#2) and ‘The Product’ (#3) within ‘The Atmosphere’ (#5). My study separated the food (Product) from the atmosphere. This study (FAMM) will see the end-product of the management in how experiences are presented by participants through their narratives.

For my study, I break down the attributes into three simple categories which comprise a gastronomic experience in a commercial setting 1) food, 2) service, and 3) atmosphere. This breakdown is kept basic because the theme of questioning the participants will revolve around only these three attributes which are easily recognizable and easy to identify. In conclusion the FAMM #5 is perhaps the attribute that I investigated with an understanding of how FAMM #1 “*The Room*”, FAMM #2 “*The Meeting*” and FAMM #3 “*The Product*” affected the overall gastronomic experience.

Bisogni, Falk et al. (2007) identified eight interacting dimensions (Table 3.) and features of eating and drinking episodes that characterize the consumption of food and drink among U.S. adult. These eight dimensions were the result of a comparative analysis of eating and drinking episodes that formed a conceptual framework, the participants of the Bisogni, Falk et al study used and created “*labels*”(e.g. dinner, unwind time, birthday dinner). The framework identified the fact that the “food and drink consumed is only one of a number of dimensions in an episode that highlights the view that food and eating may be a major or minor parts of an episode”. With this being said it is important not to place too much emphasis on “quality gastronomic experiences” as the only potential vehicle in creating memorable/positive experiences.

Attributes	Determinants
1. Social Setting	People present Social processes
2. Physical	Nourishment

Condition	Other status
3. Time	Chronological Relative Experienced
4. Recurrence	Commonness Frequency What recurs
5. Location	General/specific Food access/facilities Temperature/weather
6. Activities	Nature Salience
7. Mental Processes	Goals Emotions
8. Food and Drink	Type Amount How consumed Source

2.15. Table 3 - *The Eight Interacting Dimensions* (Bisogni, Falk et al. (2007))

2.16. The food

Hegarty and O'Mahony (2001) argue that the importance of food in the realm of cultural understanding (and phenomenon) is the fact that food has infinite variability and the variability of food is not essential for the survival of our species. It is this variability of food choices that makes this study complex due to the broad nature of available gastronomic experiences 'out there' for the taking. *"Obviously mankind must eat to survive. We have this in common with all living things... [However] we grow up eating what our parents and friends eat. We eat what is available"* (Lovatt 1989, p.2). A human biological need has developed a cultural playground filled with food choices that also nourishes our emotional needs which is why studying gastronomic experiences is popular. It is the link between food and emotion that is interesting. Wurgaft (2008) speaks about a dinner with a tasting menu at Thomas Keller's famed French Laundry Restaurant that cost \$300 USD per person and stated

"Food of this type is inherently 'unnecessary'. It attempts to do something more than just provide calories. Its function shifts from the register of the economic to the

register of the cultural, just as nice clothes flatter us in ways that surpass their function as covering and protection”(p.56).

This creativity with food (and cost) does not necessarily create memorable experiences in food. As one who has dined at both ends of the spectrum from three star Michelin restaurants in Paris to street food in Beijing hutongs, I can say price and prestige do not guarantee memories.

The first attribute (in this literature review) is the food, which may be considered the ‘driver’ of gastronomic experiences, as food is most important as it satisfies our physiological need to survive as humans...as we can live without good service and pleasurable surroundings. Whereas the combination of all three attributes may be desired to meet our emotional or esteem needs (level 4) as in Maslow’s *Hierarchy of Needs* which is above physiological, safety and belonging needs. Being fully engaged and immersed within food experiences whether it is cooking at home, at a market or in a restaurant is what theorists refer to as “*peak experience*” (Getz, Robinson et al. 2014, p.35) Peak experience is defined by Maslow (1943) as “*moments of highest happiness and fulfilment*”. When a food tourist loses track of time because the experience is so engaging and enjoyable, that is a peak experience and one that will be remembered always (Getz, Robinson et al. 2014, p.35). The constituents of peak experiences which create memories are the object of this study.

Food is important to the survival of humans; cooking food has created cultures based on this ability. The philosopher Levi-Strauss (1969) in the book “*The Raw and Cooked*” identified how cooking differentiates humans in the animal world as a result we have developed into distinct cultures. Food is a part of our daily lives physiologically and socially, we think of it when we do not have any and we think of it when we do, it is engrained in our semantic memory. Holtzman (2006) speaks of food and memory by stating:

“As for food, we may readily define it in a strict realist sense – that stuff that we as organisms consume by virtue of requiring energy. Yet it is an intrinsically multi-layered and multidimensional subject – with social, psychological, physiological,

symbolic dimensions, to merely name a few – and with culturally constructed meanings that differ not merely, as we naturally assume, in the perspectives of our subjects, but indeed in the perspectives of the authors who construct and construe the object of food in often very different ways, ranging from the strictly materialist to the ethereal gourmand.”

With this being said, I seek to address the ways that questions of how memories are created, and how food is a construct of a gastronomic experience. Food quality and hence food acceptability are determined by attributes related directly to the product and those determined by the market (Pierson, Reeve and Creed 1995). Finally, food consumption studies are predominantly concerned with understanding the determinants of various food-related behaviours, most commonly including liking, preference, choice and intake (Mak, Lumbers and Eves, 2012).

2.17. The service

Managers should determine whether focusing on creating a sense of relationship through transaction is truly important to the hotel or restaurants' success. The issue for managers is to determine what level of service fits a particular operation” (Walsh 2000, p.50). The service concept is a “picture” or statement that encapsulates the nature of the service business and captures the value, form and function, experience, and outcomes of the service (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons 1999). The following elaborates on these attributes of the service concept. First, is the *Value*, what consumers are willing to pay. Second, the *Form and Function*, the overall shape of the service, the creation and operation is defined. Third is *Experience*, as perceived by customers and finally the *Outcomes*, the benefits, stated or assumed that it provides the customer and the organization. Based on the attributes service can be difficult to evaluate as each participant in a gastronomic experience brings to the table (literally and metaphorically) their own sense of values, opinions on form and function, experiential perceptions and goals for the outcome.

Sobaih (2015) presents the perceived image of the hospitality worker in Egypt that has commonalities in the Western foodservice industry; 1) the hospitality industry generates low-paying job and anti-social working hours, 2) the hospitality industry

generates low-skilled jobs, 3) the hospitality industry provides fewer training and advancement opportunities to its employees, 4) the hospitality industry offer reasonable work security and full time career opportunities to its employees, 5) the hospitality industry often segregates women in low-level jobs (p.22). All of the images presented by Sobaih (2015) can be applied to the Western hospitality industry; especially the first, wages and the overall perception of the foodservice industry is poor.

A study by Ladhari, Brun et al (2008) concluded that there are three main sources of customer satisfaction with restaurant services: positive emotions, negative emotions, and perceived service quality. It empirically showed relationships between satisfaction and three behavioural intentions; recommendation, loyalty and willingness to pay more (Ladhari, Brun et al. 2008, p.572). To add to the study by Ladhari, Brun et al (2008) a paper by Kim and Jang (2014) examines the Fading Affect Bias (FAB) that occurs after service encounters. FAB is a psychological phenomenon in which information regarding negative emotions is forgotten more quickly than that associated with pleasant emotions. Kim and Jang (2014) suggest that individuals exhibit a positive bias for negative events. Basically, effective fading is greater for negative events than for positive. Participants experiencing a negative event will dissipate their anger and discontent by reappraising the event in more positive light and boosting implicit favourable experiences (p.109). This FAB explains why we return to restaurants again and again regardless of the previous level of service and may affect the narratives of recalling gastronomic experiences where only the positive is the central theme Kim and Jang (2014).

2.18. The atmosphere

The first attribute within atmosphere is the décor. In a gastronomic experience it can be elaborate physical structures and furnishings in an exotic setting with priceless views such as the 160 floor Burj Khalifa building in Dubai to the busy street corner in ‘any city-anywhere’. Atmospherics is defined as *“the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhances the purchase probability”* (Kotler 1973, p.50). Simply put *“make it a place conducive to spending, eating and enjoyment”* and people will come, tell their friends by WOM (Word of Mouth) and return. A study by Ariffin, Bibon et al. (2012) identified that atmospheric elements of style have

significance in contributing to customer behaviour in various ways (lighting and style) and these factors should not be ignored by restaurateurs. The study by Ariffin, Bibon et al. (2012) unfortunately did not drill down deep enough to identify the specific sentiments of the youth (21-25 years old) participant in their study that measured the dimensions of colour, design, lighting and restaurant layout. Restaurant decor has evolved drastically over the last thirty years, a fact easily shown just by entering in your local ‘hot spot’ and notices the absence of tablecloths, fine china, silver, soft furnishings, lighting and music which was the gold standard in 1987. Today “*industrial-chic*” (a.k.a. steampunk) is now the look regardless of the type of cuisine...other terms that fit the setting today are “*modern industrial*” or “*deco industrial*” (NPR, 2016). This is the look achieved when stripping the façade from tired looking interiors of old commercial buildings converted into restaurants (gentrification?) process- exposed brick, duct work, Edison light bulbs, and bare steel. The money in restaurant construction now seems to be spent on commercial kitchen toys like Pacojet appliances (fancy sauce food processor) and combi ovens (steam and convection) that can replace a regular convection oven, kettle, steamer, fryer, smoker and dehydrator for the same price of a compact car. Regardless of the exact detail of the shifting “*servicescape*” as it is referred to by Bitner (1992) the factor is that the décor in the analysis of the gastronomic experiences is part of the ‘big picture’ within the narratives.

Music is another attribute of atmosphere that affects the participants of a gastronomic experience, Ting points out (2015) that music is a controllable environmental factor that can affect customer waiting time. Background music effect the time customers spend dining in a restaurant; the faster the pace of music the waiting times decreased and slower paced music extended the customer waiting times. A study by Sullivan (2002) argued that music can have an influence on the behaviour of restaurant patrons; the length of time spent in the restaurant was significantly affected by the volume of the music and its popularity whereas spending on food and beverages was significantly affected by volume only. This is common sense as the louder the music, patrons spent less time therefore the sales declined. What is interesting is the implications of the Sullivan study which recommended restaurant operators play music at relatively low volume to increase expenditure on food and beverage. This study was fifteen years old at the time of writing and I wonder how true this is with new demographics. There is not very much recent

research on this subject. Josiam and Henry (2014) confirm this thought in their study that looked at added entertainment to restaurant environments and concluded that:

“...patrons’ are motivated in most fun experience restaurants. This gives restaurateurs an advantage in considering ideas at their attention and helps to add to the bottom line as well as create happier experiences and a great meal for guests. This would allow them to have more enjoyable experience in a different setting from the norm” (p.199).

A marketing differentiating selling point for restaurant which undermines the central objective of a restaurant which is to focus on the menu; restaurants will now be critiqued on the music *and* the food. This music ‘add-on’ to atmosphere is another factor in memorable gastronomic experiences as music is an intangible and can influence participants unknowingly perhaps through positive or negative music preferences. Lin (2004) confirms this by concluding that *“A piece of music that does not fit the surroundings will not contribute positively to customers’ evaluations”* (p.170). Finally, music is an important factor financially as purchase intentions are affected by the type of music played in a restaurant (Wilson 2003).

The *other patrons* surrounding the participant complete the entirety of a gastronomic experience by contributing to the *“atmospherics”* the term used by Kotler (1973) to describe buying environments. Other patrons contribute to the experience just by ‘being there’, there needs to be no personal contact (conversation) or communication of any kind. Whether the participant is alone or with a large group other patrons contribute silently in a number of ways, first and most obvious is that they can present the image the restaurant is ‘busy’ which denotes the establishment is *the* place to be at that time. Second, just knowing that the establishment is busy reconfirms that the judgment to patronize the restaurant was a good idea especially if they made the decision for the group. Third, the other patrons may be of a social class or status the participant would like to join and be a part of (Kotler 1973).

Kim and Moon (2009) argue that *“...the stimuli from servicescapes influence perceived service quality and, in turn, indirectly affect customers’ behaviours”* (p.152).

They then add that perceived quality of servicescapes have to be included with service quality, food quality, and price/value with regard to repatronage behaviour (p.153). Morgan (2012) looks at how the symbolism of the shared meal has the ability to not only create relationships but to define them as well. Morgan sums up the context of *others* in this statement:

“In its purest sense, gastronomy is a blend of science and humanities woven around the need for food. Its more complex nature illustrates relationships people form with food and in particular, the act of sharing food. Shaped and defined by culture, commensality acquires the symbolic functions of messaging. Commensal partners (hosts and guests, or even two strangers sharing a table in a café) send and receive communications that denote perceived power or equality, importance, and position. At basic social of familial level these ‘messages’ can provide foundation for anxiety (‘I hope I don’t sit next to her!’; ‘Do I have spinach in my teeth?’; ‘How can I politely decline sweetbreads?’)”(p.147).

The *presentation* attribute within the atmosphere is the senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch that come from sources other than the food in front of you. The smell from the moment one enters the restaurant can trigger an emotion perhaps that of familiarity or exotic and unknown. The sounds of a working restaurant are stimulating- the clinking of glassware, cutlery and china, the drone of the patrons conversations, the distant shouts and clatter from the kitchen and the best part, the eruption of occasional laughter. The appearance of the room, the components, colours, shine, gloss, translucency, size and shape and surface texture represent the room environment (Gustafsson, Ostrom et al. 2006, p.90). The taste factor is not necessarily from a specific dish but the overall flavour arising from a gastronomic experience, like the “*taste of place*” or “*terroir*” described by Trubek (2008), but on a smaller scale. The taste associated with a particular restaurant serving a unique product, for example a southern USA Barbeque that uses specific seasoning and wood to cook which imparts a unique ‘taste’ to its menu items. Being exposed to a new cuisine or restaurant is the beginning of stages of creating a personal ‘taste’ that could eventually lead to a longing. Fu, Morris and Hong (2015) reinforce this thinking in a study

of expats living in Hong Kong, how those away from home are affected emotionally. The bottom line is that a restaurant can trigger a primal emotion based on familiar taste or create a new longing based on the new 'tastes', either way our memory is the key repository important to my study.

As mentioned earlier many of the discussions surrounding gastronomic experiences in the literature are in the context of tourism obviously, because location adds to the overall experience. Therefore, gastronomic experiences become components of tourism experiences which *are* well documented in the literature and comparable memorable events. Situational factors, precisely location and environment were identified by Taar (2014) and listed as the top two factors of frequency dimensions in the study that examined extraordinary eating episodes. The fact of being out of normal routine of life whether on holiday or out for dinner at a restaurant is a prime time for creating new memories. Where a meal is consumed is an obvious factor that contributes to the memory of the occasion, dinner with a view is always a premium destination. This is important to note as 'restaurants with views' entice consumers with expectations of quality and market a 'memorable experience'.

What you do end up taking home is the overall experience and through the magic of FAB (Fading Awareness Bias) (Kim and Jang 2014) the experience is altered in the repeated storytelling. Memory of the location of gastronomic experiences through the participant's narrative is important to my study.

The last of the atmosphere factors is the *other guests*, different from the *other patrons*, as these are the people included at the table of the participant. There is a connection somewhere...friend, co-worker, family or partner. The FAMM (Five Aspect Meal Model) (Gustafsson, Ostrom et al. 2006) does not take into account those who are at the table as this model is to evaluate the customer experience based on the restaurant's performance and presentation. Whom the customer brings with them to the restaurant is out of control of the restaurant yet this may factor huge in the overall experience of an individual. If judging a gastronomic experience strictly on the basis of quality of service, quality of food and overall atmosphere versus the evaluation of a memorable gastronomic experience there will be conflicting outcomes. There is a difference between the two because an experience with fantastic food, outstanding service in a relaxing surrounding

may not be memorable just as if a memorable gastronomic experience may not necessarily have great food and service.

Watz (2008) presents a picture that compliments my comments regarding the details of a meal experience:

“A meal without rhythm, movement and dynamics is a dead meal evoking no sensations. Meals ‘speak’ to us through the rhythm, movement and dynamics that make up its atmosphere. Plates give an interesting perspective on meal sounds. Plates differ not only in colour and shape, but also in the sounds they make. For example, soup pouring into a plate can give a hollow, unreliable sound; a thin paper plate gives a hollow, unreliable sound; a thicker stoneware plate sends out a more solid sound and the nature of the soup also has an effect. Another sound that can irritate or give a calm experience is that of the knife and fork on the plate and there are many other sounds that can affect the entirety of the meal”
(p.103).

Watz (2008) touches on one of the many details within a gastronomic experience. Spence, Hobkinson et al. (2013) argue that “drinks taste better when served from a heavier cup/glass” and wine bottles that are heavy are perceived to be more expensive than lighter ones. Spence, Hobkinson et al. presents an example of extreme detail with a gastronomic experience at Nerua Restaurant in Bilbao, Spain. As the service start the diners find themselves seated at a bare table, no cutlery, no glasses, no plates...the waiter then arrives with a ‘warm’ napkin, next the cutlery is ‘served’ and depending on its temperature, the diner can infer if the plate served next will be warm or cold (Nerue, 2016). This of course is from the top end of the dining spectrum; the next example is closer to where we live.

As Pine and Gilmore (1998) suggested almost twenty years ago to “engage all five senses” to create an experience which support a theme, The Rainforest Café has done brilliantly, I can hear the rain, see the greenery of the rainforest, feel the cool mist and smell the humidity...and of course taste the food, which I do not remember. Gilmore and Pine (1999) recognize the same effect I felt when experiencing the Rain Forest Cafe “It’s impossible to be unaffected by this one, sensory-filled cue” (p.60). The central theory by

Gilmore and Pine (1999) is that a business needs to “*set the stage*” in order to meet the demands of the current service economy. They do this by developing simple sensory cues to heighten consumer experiences. This theory of setting the stage is very prevalent in the operation of a restaurant. First, in the planning stages a ‘theme’ is created to meet customer demand. This positioning is crucial to ensure that identity of the establishment is understood. Second, the operation of a restaurant is similar to a theatre production, the ‘mise en plus’ (prep) must be in place before the doors open (curtain rises) and the staff (actors) must be skilled with product knowledge and dealing with customers’ expectations. Establishments like the Rain Forest Café are unique in that they place emphasis on the atmosphere more than most restaurants with respect to the sensory attributes which creates a compelling experience. The sensory aspects regarding food combined with the understanding of the surrounding cultures was given the term “*gustemology*” by Korsmeyer and Sutton (2011, p.215) who also suggest that “*food and senses could become central ethnographic foci in their own right*”.

The Rainforest Café takes additional suggestions from Pine and Gilmore (1998) by adding “*memorabilia*” to their restaurant experience. Each restaurant dedicates square footage for a store dedicated to selling ‘Rainforest’ memorabilia (souvenirs), hats, t-shirts, trinkets and toys. Patrons can shop during dinner or after dinner but most common is the pre-dinner waiting for a table to open. The cost of a product from an experience (i.e. Rock Concert T-Shirt) is at a premium because the price points are a function less of the cost of goods than the value the buyer attaches to remember the experience (Pine and Gilmore 1998, p.104). These trinkets, toys and clothing are the tangibles people can bring home to remember their experiences from a chain restaurant. A tangible is available from a restaurant at the opposite end of the food service spectrum as well. Researchers have identified souvenir shopping, a component of tourist shopping, as a primary travel motivation, an important source of enjoyment and excitement during a traveller’s trip. (Dallen and Timothy 2005). (See Chapter 3: *Souvenirs of Restaurant Memories*)

2.19. Understanding the determinants within foodservice

There are major studies that focus on restaurant satisfaction and behavioural intentions that are quantitative and measure determinants/attributes (Table 4.). These studies in the table are lacking two important factors that are the knowledge and attitude of the customer sitting down at the table. The problem I have with these studies is they assume that participants have equal knowledge and similar ‘frame of mind’ in the evaluation of restaurant experiences. I find these studies are about ‘ticking the boxes’ which is common in quantitative research but like any research, the quality of the data is in the validity of the participants. Studies that produce ‘best practices’ assist in the creation and management of restaurants offering zero-defect experiences become ‘bus rides’ from point A to point B...banal experiences.

Table 4 presents the focus of study and determinants from academic research regarding the factors in which success is measured within gastronomic experiences. Measuring ‘factors’ begins with assumptions of what is deemed critical. In the study by Yuksel and Yuksel (2003) there are forty-two “importance items” listed under nine major factors. The heading for the factors begin with 1) Service quality and staff attitude, 2) Product quality and hygiene, 3) adventurous menu, 4) Price and value, 5) Atmosphere and activity, 6) Healthy food, 7) location and appearance, 8) Smoke, 9) Visibility. The Yuksel and Yuksel (2003) study was measuring “tourist satisfaction with restaurant services” to determine whether tourists could be grouped into distinct segments which is useful data for tourism DMOs (Destination Marketing Organizations) and restaurant associations.

Study	Focus of Study	Determinants
Dube-Roux (1990)	Determinants of satisfaction	Affective reports and cognitive evaluations
Dube et al (1994)	Determinants of restaurant return patronage	Food tastiness, consistent food, menu variety, waiting time, attentive server, helpful server, and atmosphere
Kivela, Inbakaran and Reece (2000)	Determinants of dining satisfaction and return patronage	Dining out frequency, dining out occasions, age, gender, occupation, income, situational constraints, and satisfaction with dining experience
Haemoon (2000)	Determinants of behavioural intentions	Perceived product and service quality, perceived value, perceived satisfaction, past experience, and reputation
Soriano (2002)	Determinants of restaurant patronage	Quality of food, service, cost/value, and place/ambience concerns
Yuksel and Yuksel (2003)	Determinants of dining satisfaction	42 Attributes
Sulek and Hensley (2004)	Determinants of overall dining experience and repeat patronage	Waiting time, seating order fairness, waiting area comfort, wait area crowding, host staff politeness, server attentiveness, dining atmosphere, dining seating comfort, and food quality
Inglesias and Guillen (2004)	Determinants of frequency patronage	Perceived quality and satisfaction
Chow et al. (2007)	Relationships of service quality, customer satisfaction, and frequency of patronage	Perceived quality and satisfaction
Ladhari, Brun and Morales (2008)	Determinants of dining satisfaction and post-dining behavioural intentions	Positive emotions, perceived service quality, negative emotions
Edwards and Gustafson (2008)	The Five Aspects Meal Model	The room, the meeting, the product, the management control system, the entirety of the meal
Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013)*	Remembered Eating Experiences described by the Self, Place, Food, Context and Time	The self, place, food, context, time

*Qualitative study

2.20. Table 4 – Major studies on restaurant satisfaction and behavioural intentions

Table 4 is an example of the many moving parts within a gastronomic experience which can seem to be evaluated individually and uniquely by consumers therefore creating unclear consensus on ‘best practices’. Simply put, what is acceptable to one person could be considered a failure to those experiencing identical foodservice attributes food, service and atmosphere.

2.21. Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has examined many of the ‘moving parts’ of the foodservice industry that began with the consumer experience in the context of gastronomy. Next was the examination of the restaurant ‘scene’ and trends literature which led to the discussion of the menu and what people eat. The creation of the ‘foodie’ was discussed within the literature; how foodies have influenced the restaurant industry and food we eat in general. This was followed by ‘food in tourism’; a major topic as most of the literature regarding food is in a tourism context, next was a presentation of the literature surrounding food experiences in tourism. The heart of the chapter began with the examination of the literature pertaining to the attributes of a gastronomic experience; the food, the service, and the atmosphere and concluded to look at determinants of foodservice that seek best practices in foodservice and tourism.

Chapter 3: Authenticity in Gastronomic Experiences and Memory Creation

3.1. Chapter Overview

This literature chapter will begin by developing a critical review of how authenticity has been conceptualized in the academic literature, looking at how the definition of authenticity has emerged and how it is being used for the purpose of research. It begins with the various definitions of authenticity used in the hospitality field primarily in tourism, food itself with consumer perceptions and then a look at existential authenticity. The term authentic is tossed about in hospitality marketing as a hook adjective to lure consumers and consumers take the bait, successful only if the product fits their definition. Authenticity is used as an asset to attract visitors (Chhabra, Healy and Sills, 2003; Olsen 2002; Bruner 1997; Cohen 1988). The main part of this chapter is a discussion based on literature on how consumers interpret and accept authenticity in hospitality products plus the effects of socio-cultural influences. The review continues with the phenomenological hermeneutic position of Martin Heidegger and how his work can be presented in hospitality.

The chapter will then engage with the literature on ‘memory creation’ focusing on consumer food related experiences in hospitality arguing that memories are reconstructed. This will be linked to the presentation of the types of memories such as episodic and semantic and how consumers recall events, which is a goal of this study. The study will argue that consumers are exposed to trigger points that create memories and how the foodservice industry attempts market memorable experiences as a product.

The final section will focus on discussing non-events in gastronomic experiences which is a key theoretical and conceptual framework for this doctoral study. This section will begin with an overview of gastronomic experiences and then focus on identifying the key areas of foodservice events that this study looks to contribute to. It will continue by discussing the link between this doctoral study and memory/non-event sub-discipline. There will also be a review of the existing gastronomic experience literature in hospitality, its history and criticism currently faced.

3.2. Authenticity in general consumer experiences

There are numerous debates in academia regarding authenticity, Taylor (2001) states “...*there are at least as many definitions of authenticity as there are those who write about it*”. This section begins with a general definition concerning cultural texts:

“How are we to evaluate authenticity in a cultural text such as a work of literature or music – or something that is, by its very nature, a performance? When it comes to evaluating authenticity in cultural texts, critics as well as consumers often react in manner similar to Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart when asked to define the parameters of obscenity in a particular film. Stewart famously quipped that while he could not come up with objective criteria for defining what was and what was not obscene, ‘I know it when I see it.’ Stewart opted for a pragmatic approach, one that inevitably leads us into a tautology that cannot escape the socially constructed nature of authenticity” (Cobb 2014, p.5)

This statement from Cobb sets the stage for the discussion on authenticity, particularly when it comes to defining its parameters. The discussion then heads into the general literature on authenticity; gastronomy can be a performance as well as a product in art form (Hegarty and O’Mahony 2001, Harris 1971). Watz (2008) argues, “...*the substantial entirety of a meal is like art, seeking to inspire and to overshadow any feeling of ‘commodity’ that it might have*” (p.96); therefore gastronomy by this statement make it applicable as a cultural text according to Cobb. “*In principle a work of art has always been reproducible*” (Benjamin 1968, p.218).

Gilmore and Pine (2007) presents *the authenticity paradox* as the core of business thinking:

“Businesses long to fulfil the need for authenticity, but cannot really provide it. Yet consumers do perceive many inherently inauthentic offerings - as they do countries, cities, places, and nature – as undeniably authentic, so enterprises must learn the discipline of rendering their offerings as real.”

Gilmore and Pine's (2007) book *What Consumers Really Want: Authenticity* is a 'business self-help' guide that basically muddies the water with vague concepts and projecting authenticity as a good marketing tool that will enable a CEO to help better position their product in the eyes of the consumer. Gilmore and Pine offers five axioms of authenticity:

1) "If you are authentic, then you don't have to say you're authentic." 2) "If you say you're authentic, then you'd better be authentic." 3) It's easier to be authentic, if you don't say you're authentic." 4) It's easier to render offerings authentic, if you acknowledge they're inauthentic." 5) You don't have to say your offerings are inauthentic, if you render them authentic." (p.90)

Smith (2009) translates the Gilmore and Pine (2007) axioms to the understanding: *"You can't claim that either it [your company] or its offerings are authentic through marketing or any other means. You must earn the privilege of being deemed authentic only through the act of rendering"*. Gilmore and Pine (2007) then present two standards of authenticity, first, *"Is the offering true to itself?"* Second *"Is the offering what it says it is?"* Then four combinations of authenticity are presented in a quadrant and offer opportunities/risks *1) "real-real", 2) "real-fake", 3) "fake-real", 4) "fake-fake"*. Smith (2009) points out that this topic of authentic offering is neither black nor white; half of the Gilmore and Pine book examines the questions that many may find frustrating. The message presented here is perception; consumers will construct the authenticity in their mind of a product and weigh the value.

Beverland and Farrelly (2010) present findings in their 'quest for authenticity in consumption' that contributes to our understanding of the consumption and production of authenticity in a number of ways. Their study identifies three broad goals (control, connection and virtue) that drive the systematic selection and evaluation of different consumption experiences as being (in) authentic by consumers. Beverland et al. (2010) propose that literal or indexical authenticity is desired authenticity when correct but prompt in situ decisions are necessary. They give the example in the context of selecting beer; cues

that clearly enforce one message are desired when informants want to make the correct beer choice (p.855).

The study by Grayson and Martinec (2004) brings in the discussion on indexicality and iconicity beginning by identifying the type of cues that identify each type of authenticity influence of each. The first is perceived evidence that something is authentic. Authentic things therefore provide consumers with a sense of hard evidence and unequivocal verification (p.302).

“The second potential benefit of authenticity has been identified in studies outside of consumer research...when consumers believe they are in the presence of something authentic, they can feel transported to the context to which the object or location is authentically linked , and thus they feel more connected with the context” (Grayson and Martinec 2004) (p.302).

The first benefit described above –perceived evidence they argue is fostered from indexical authenticity and a phenomenological experience of fact (Grayson and Martinec 2004). For example, to judge whether a 1933 Indian head gold eagle coin is an indexically authentic coin, the buyer must have some verification (certification or trustworthy source) that the coin was actually made in 1933, is made of gold and from the right source (mint). To judge whether a reproduction 1933 Indian head gold eagle coin is iconically authentic, the buyer must have some knowledge of how a 1933 Indian head gold eagle coin looks and feels. Grayson and Martinec (2004) admits to contributing to the tensions associated with the perception of authenticity by specifying how authenticity can be both a social construction and source of evidence, also by detailing how the perception can depend on the simultaneous application of imagination and belief (p.310).

There is the topic regarding *who* is claiming authenticity, Peterson (2005) argues *“While many kinds of people may be involved in authentication, some kinds become more or less important over time”*. He then makes the statement:

“I don’t know any studies that have made this point, but from the examples available, it seems that the end users have more of a voice in authentication

initially, but that the most visible keepers of collective memory, the critics, historians, archivists, teachers, documentary makers, music reissue specialists and the like, are increasingly important in enunciating the evolving idea of authenticity in any creative field as time goes by” (p.1092).

Peterson was discussing the authenticity of specific country and western music; a presentation of authenticity in the tourism/hospitality context is the next section.

Authenticity presents an issue when being used in the context of food. To some people a specific prepared dish can remind them of mom’s cooking, to others it can be a new exiting experience or reminiscent of a dish consumed in their travels and to some it’s just dinner. If someone has never tasted wine before and for the first time tried highly rated Chateau Mouton Rothschild 1982 (K&L Wine Merchants, 2016) would it be enjoyed with the same affection as by seasoned wine aficionado. Dining on authentic Ortolans in France could be a similar experience for the newbie and the gourmand (Note: Ortolans are small European birds cooked and eaten whole, a rare delicacy now an illegal activity) (Robuchon and Montagne, 2001). In summary, the authentic label on food is dependent not only on the food source and locale where it is being consumed but on the prerequisite knowledge and experience of those doing the consuming. Appadurai (1986) asks the question “*who is the authoritative voice*” regarding the measurement of authenticity standards in cuisine. Appadurai’s full argument is presented later on in a personal context.

3.3. Authenticity in tourism and hospitality

Authenticity has been debated and discussed in the tourism literature; there are differing conceptualizations that have been presented that have resulted in numerous papers advancing the knowledge. The term ‘authenticity’ has been argued in the field of tourism studies to explain why certain experiences are sought after and others avoided (Kim and Jamal 2007; Sims 2009; Yeoman, Brass and McMahon-Beattie, 2007; Lau 2010). The centre of the debate lies in the meaning of authenticity (Kim and Jamal 2007, p.182). The quest for authentic experiences is considered one of the key trends in tourism (Kolar and Zabkar 2010). The often implied meaning of authenticity (something original vs. fake)

(Kolar and Zabkar 2010, p.662) will need defining in the context of gastronomy, “*the search for authenticity of experience that is everywhere manifest in our society*”(MacCannell 1976, p.589); this was a goal of MacCannell forty years ago, and still is today as part of tourism research. The quest for authenticity has been a long established motivation for travel, and has been at the heart of understanding tourism for at least a half a century, possibly longer.

MacCannell (1976) presented theories of authenticity within tourist settings in his book *The Tourist*. The book’s chapter on Staged Authenticity speaks of how tourists who commonly take the guided tours can find authenticity when they ‘get off the beaten path’ and get ‘in with the natives’ or as he puts it “*the back stage*”. He concludes, “*The touristic way of getting in with the natives is to enter into a quest for authentic experiences, perceptions, and insights*” (p.105). MacCannell (1976) also introduced the concept of ‘staged authenticity’ in the context of ethnic tourism.

Mkono (2012) states “*Some academics have argued that authenticity is a spent issue in tourism: indeed that authenticity is no longer relevant to tourists*” referring in particular to postmodernists academic studies. Mkono goes on to present reviews and argues:

“*...failing to reach consensus over how authenticity can be operationalised is understandable. However this is not sufficient ground to dismiss authenticity outright. What might be kept in mind for future research is the need for more situated, that is, context specific research, so that authenticity develops from being a Eurocentric grand narrative to one which entails local, cultural discourse.*”

To elaborate on this Cobb (2014) argues:

“*After all, the very word ‘authenticity’ is only a few linguistic paces removed from the word ‘authoritarian’, and both words conjure up the idea of a single authority who imposes a master narrative of meaning. Rejecting authenticity, then, would seem to be a liberation from both the physical shackles of the real object and from the ideological controls of meaning*” (p.1)

I see a dichotomy in the way authenticity is presented in gastronomic literature: the personal viewpoint of artefacts carried by a participant and the accepted labels created by delegated surrogate authoritarians. Simply put, I may carry a perception of a gastronomic artefact until someone convinces me otherwise with a presentation on new information. Regarding authenticity in an experience would be the same, as in the case of customers visiting an ethnic restaurant like *The Olive Garden* (Italian Concept in the USA) where I may believe I am having an “authentic Italian” experience because I have never been to Italy. The servicescape presented to customers by The Olive Garden, or any ethnic restaurant, is the tangible external impression where they make judgements and evaluations from one’s own predisposition, expectations, motives and knowledge gathered from past learning experiences. Albrecht (2011) refers to this phenomenon as “*domestic culinary tourism*”.

Kolar and Zabkar (2010) state “*the initial dispute regarding authenticity concept is the question whether authenticity is an objectively identifiable property of objects and cultures or a subjective, socially and individually constructed perception of them*”(p.653). Cohen (1988) argues that with the commodification of tourism cultural product, tourists still willingly construct authenticity through participation in a contrived experience even if they truly are not convinced of its authenticity (p.383).

Yeoman, Brass and McMahon-Beattie, (2007) identified ten trends from scenarios that will shape the ‘authentic’ tourist and these are depicted in table 5 below with a point form description of evidence and assumptions.

Trend 1	A global network	Technology has revolutionized personal communications The consumer is a part of the global network society
Trend 2	Ethical consumption and volunteerism	Consumers with greater affluence are turning to ethical consumption as a means of contributing to society
Trend 3	The affluent consumer and the experience economy	Luxury, once for the minority is now a mainstream phenomenon
Trend 4	The educated consumer	Education is a key driver in authenticity as the consumer is more discerning, affluent and sophisticated in the choices they make
Trend 5	Trust in the past	Taylor (1991) concludes that the consumer feels safe in the past as the future is uncertain
Trend 6	Individualism	The shift in which the consumer searches for products and services which meet his or her individual needs
Trend 7	Multi-culturalism	The whole process of globalisation has significantly amplified the meaning of the term multi-culturalism
Trend 8	Resistance to marketing	The consumer turns to their family and friends or independents for advice on purchasing activity, hence the rise of the network society
Trend 9	Time pressures and authenticity	Time has become a more precious commodity as affluence has increased and opportunities and horizons have broadened
Trend 10	Increased competition amongst tourism destinations	The worldwide growth of tourism must count as one of the most remarkable achievements of the last 50 years

(Source: Yeoman, Brass and McMahon-Beattie, 2007)

3.4. Table 5. - Trends Shaping the Authentic Tourist

Yeoman, Brass and McMahon-Beattie, (2007) conclude that within tourism “*authenticity should be: ethical, natural, honest, simple, beautiful, rooted and human...*” A destination founded on authenticity needs community involvement and a strong brand proposition in which the equity of authenticity is positioned. Much of this is information for DMO’s (Destination Marketing Organizations) to assist in destination development but is relevant to build a picture of the environment which currently exists (experience) with regard to authenticity.

For example, an ethnic restaurant can market itself as ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ and present acceptable experiences which are in the eyes and minds of consumers who have never experienced anything different to be true. ‘Acceptable’ experiences are ‘satisfied’ experiences, Hunt (1977) defined satisfaction as “*an evaluation rendered that the (product)*

experience was at least as good as it was supposed to be” (p.459). The statement “*supposed to be*” infers that there is a preconception of the experience that is obviously gained from either previous events or knowledge from other sources. Word of mouth literally or digitally from social media (i.e. TripAdvisor) has the ability to influence consumer behaviour in the foodservice industry, but is only reliable as the source of who submits comments on social media regarding a business. A discussion on who is the authority to make statements in hospitality is in the next section.

3.5. Authenticity in food/gastronomic experiences

In 2012, I conducted research for my Master’s thesis in mainland China (Qingdao) and at the time was associated with a College that specialized in hospitality and culinary. One day over a spectacular lunch I questioned the assistant to the College president as to what constitutes ‘authentic Chinese food’ and received the reply “*To be authentic, the ingredients and the cooking methods are the determining factor*” (Qui, 2012). At first, this struck me as a perfect simple straightforward answer until I read the following:

“Authenticity measures the degree to which something is more or less what it ought to be. It is thus a norm of some sort. But is it an immanent norm, emerging somehow from the cuisine itself? Or is it an external norm, reflecting some imposed gastronomic standard? If it is an immanent norm, who is the authoritative voice: the professional cook? The average consumer? The gourmand? The housewife? If it is an imposed norm, who is its privileged voice: the connoisseur of exotic food? The tourist? The ordinary participants in a neighboring cuisine? The cultivated eater from a distant one?” (Appadurai 1986, p.25)

Abarca (2004) made a similar simple argument like the one I received from my colleague in China that was that authenticity was condensed to two elements, the authenticity of the cook and the authenticity of the cooking process. Nothing to do with the quality of the

food, but one would assume the cook would require proper ingredients to produce authentic meals.

This section is about the academic literature related directly to the food in gastronomy to provide an understanding of the past and rapidly changing current image of food presents in society. To begin Robinson and Clifford (2012) argue, *“If authenticity as a construct has precipitated much consternation among tourism fraternity the world/s of cuisine, gastronomy and foodways the term has equally befuddled”* (p.577).

Symons (1999) denotes authenticity to mean strict “obedience” to tradition and used the example that authentic Bolognese cooking in Italy must adhere to the precise recipes offered in Bologna. This is interpreted as change was not allowed, the dish has to be prepared the way it has always been. Another contention by Symons (1999) is that dishes can never be precisely replicated elsewhere (p.116). With this being said how can a Bolognese dish be replicated under these guidelines? Symons (1999) offers a quote by Sokolov (1991) to answer this question: *“without some rough sense of where we have been (the authentic), we cannot reasonably embrace the new or reject the bogus”*.

Consumer demand for foods that are professed to be ‘local’ and ‘traditional’ can also be viewed as a related quest for authenticity (Sims 2009). The next topic to arise is what is deemed local? Recently at a conference on culinary tourism a discussion came up at the table as to what qualifies as local. Some said there is a distinct mileage while other said products from a region are local and some went as far as to say national items could qualify. For example, Parmesan cheese in Italy could be classified as a ‘local’ product throughout Italy regardless of the fact it is only from the distinct region (province) of Parma in Emilia-Romagna. A thorough discussion on food, taste and place is contained in the book titled *Taste of Place: A cultural journey into terroir* by Trubek (2008) that goes into detail that defines terroir as the flavours derived from food products grown in specific geographic regions. The term terroir has been the buzzword in the wine world for years to describe the subtle differences in similar wine varieties grown in different regions and soils. Sims (2009) concludes:

“Despite extensive disagreements about the precise meaning of ‘local’ food, the idea of a link between food and place remains a powerful one and the evidence

presented here show that offering visitors a way to experience some form of authenticity through food can assist the development of sustainable tourism in a number of ways”(p.333).

Everett (2016) makes the comment: *“Research points to a growing resistance to an apparent homogenisation of food-stuffs in an industrialised food system structure, where ‘localisation’ becomes adopted as a panacea to the process of globalisation and a perceived sense of “placelessness’.”* From this, we bring in the perceptions of consumers, tourists and foodies into the authentic conversation beginning with Getz, Robinson et al. (2014) who state:

“It is often said that foodies search for authentic cultural experiences, including regional and national cuisines, but what is authenticity and how do food tourists determine that their experience was indeed authentic? Exactly what is ‘authentic’ is almost always open to interpretation” (p.77)

Personal factors might emerge as an individual connection between the produced and the consumed, which may be based on the ethnicity for example (Johnston and Baumann 2007). Perceived authenticity depends on self-identity, personality, personal goals, lifestyles and values (Getz, Robinson et al. 2014). Johnston and Baumann (2007) identify a set of specific discursive strategies that food writers use to socially construct authenticity. The four qualities of food that are used to frame food or cuisine as authentic are in table 6.

Geographic Specificity: The Value of Place-Specific Foods	In gourmet food writing, linking food places is an effective way to set foods off from the “ <i>inauthentic</i> ” mainstream. Most common discursive strategy for legitimating food.
“Simplicity”: Handmade, small scale, and the “Simple Life”	Everything from “ <i>simple</i> ” nonindustrial harvesting techniques, to “simple” cooking methods in upscale restaurants.
Personal Connections: Food with a face	Connections of food to specific personalities, families, or creative individuals. Distinguished as “ <i>quality</i> ” artful food, and distanced from industrial food’s faceless, mass-produced lineage...
Historicism: Food Grounded in Tradition	Connecting food to a specific historical or ethnocultural tradition. Food that has stood the test of time and has been deemed timeless appropriate rather than an ephemeral food fad.

(Source: Johnston and Baumann 2007, p.179-185)

3.6. Table 6. - Four qualities to frame authentic food

So far authenticity in hospitality has been presented from different directions – from the food itself, from the hands of the cook, from the region, place and culture then from the end user who judges the offering by using the knowledge acquired to date. This is all important information to bring forward into the analysis of my study where authenticity is factored in the second research question. Continuing with Weiss (2011) who also brings in history and place into the authenticity discussion:

“In conclusion, I would argue that tradition without awareness of history and without possibility of change is mere stereotype, and that innovation without consciousness of genealogy and situatedness is sheer experimentation. Consequently, the proper question to ask is not, ‘Is it authentic?’ but rather, ‘How is it authentic?’ This is really to ask, ‘What does it mean for such a version of a dish to appear at this time and place?’ Consequently, one might go so far as to say that terroir means histoire.”

The final factor regarding the definition of authenticity of food is the stigma that arises from inauthentic food being not as healthy as authentic foods. All one has to do is check out the latest popular diet fads over the past years, the ‘cave man diet’ (Palaeolithic

or Paleo diet) where you eat only foods that are unprocessed fruit, vegetables and meat. The ‘wheat belly diet’ is all about avoiding foods that have been manufactured using processed grains and the ‘Mediterranean diet’ that features classic foods from the region like fish, olive oil, vegetables, fruit and meat in moderation. All of these diets have one thing in common which is that people are experimenting with food from our past, the cave men survived, people lived without processed wheat for centuries, and those indigenous to living around the Mediterranean Sea are found much healthier than the population in the western world. The experimentation has encouraged the development of ‘heritage’ tourism where people can return to not only the physical sites of the past but have opportunity to sample the cuisine from the past as well. There are numerous visitor attractions throughout the world that are food related, Jolliffe (2014) writes of many food sites to visit from spice plantations in Sri Lanka to museums of paprika in Hungary, some are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The rise in food related tourism presents the opportunity for people to seek authenticity of food items of interest.

The documentary *Food Inc.* (Kenner, Kenner et al. 2008) and the book *Supersize Me* (Spurlock and McElroy 2005) disclosed the way we eat and brought attention to alternatives in our eating philosophy such as Slow Food. Yeoman, Brass and McMahon-Beattie, (2007) state:

“The rise of the Slow Food movement has a direct correlation with people changing their diet across all social grades, indicating a growing health consciousness and also a desire to change their ordinary lives to accommodate something that is perceived as incorporating more goodness for their bodies”(p.1135).

The slow food movement (Slow Food, 2017) should be theorised and considered within the wider concept of Slow Tourism and its philosophy and principals (Everett 2016). The Slow Food movement began in 1986 by Italian Carlo Petrini who was a journalist upset by the opening of a McDonald’s restaurant near the Spanish Steps the famous tourist attraction in Rome. In 1989, the founding manifesto of the international Slow Food movement was signed in Paris by delegates from 15 countries and has grown to become a global movement of over 100,000 members in 150 countries (Everett 2016). The mission of the

Slow Food movement is to primarily preserve traditional cuisines, educate the population about food and promote local artisanal food producers and farmers at a regional level. Movements like Slow Food help perpetuate authentic food to a wider populace bringing awareness to the importance of what we eat as it affects our health, but more importantly, it creates more people who are now seeking authenticity in their lives. The Slow Food movement is not without its critics: Frost and Laing (2016) present four areas of concern. First, as a potential elitist practice, citing that “*Slow Food was only for those with discerning tastes and/or wealthy incomes*”, second, an arcane and romanticised heritage, honouring dishes of cuisines today that were not every day fare in the past, some linked to peasant cuisines where the work was done by female labour over long hours. The third critique is the long-term viability of slow food as recent festivals have had to retool by changing name and themes. The fourth concern is the appropriation and distortion of Slow Food. Frost and Laing (2016) state:

“As Slow Food becomes more well-known and popular, there is a danger that it will be appropriated and modified by conventional commercial interests. This commodification of dissent may divert the impetus for real change in gastronomy and may lead to disillusionment amongst consumers” (p.96).

The Slow Food movement is important to my study because this represents a trend that can become the “*imposed norm*” that Appadurai (1986) refers to as the one which defines authenticity in gastronomy, in fact may have already begun to do so. The Slow Food dogma may have begun to determine authenticity for us the same way a diet book tells us what to eat. Those who adopt the Slow Food movement are also another segment of foodies. The search for authenticity continues in the next section with a presentation of literature on existential authenticity.

3.7. Existential authenticity

Steiner and Reisinger (2006, p.299) state that the term authenticity in the literature is “*often used in two distinct senses: authenticity as genuineness or realness of artefacts or*

events, and also as a human attribute signifying being one's true self or being true to one's essential nature". The study by Steiner and Reisinger (2006) focused on existential authenticity in relation to human nature, precisely the essence of human individuality. Regarding tourist authenticity Steiner and Reisinger (2006) state:

"When products are packaged, priced and marketed to attract mass tourists, the emphasis is on sale and profit, not on authentic experiences of different cultures or of making one's own way through an alien environment. Of course, not all tourists are looking for opportunities to be authentic or to experience authenticity in others."(p.312)

Cohen (1972) identified the modern tourist when being transported on foreign soil in an 'environmental bubble' and can basically view the culture through the *"protective walls of his familiar environmental bubble"*. For example staying in a familiar multinational hotel chain like the Hilton allows for tourist to venture out of the hotel in short excursions to experience the strange culture. Boorstin (1962) argues *"The tourist seldom likes the authentic (to him often unintelligible) product of the foreign culture; he prefers his own provincial expectations"* (p.106).

Osman, Johns and Lugosi, (2014) argues that familiar spaces like McDonald's *"offer simulacrum of home that tourists recognize as rich in personal, social and ideological meanings."* I noticed this affect firsthand when I was researching in China, I spoke with many first-time western tourists whom I met in Starbucks Café who had just arrived in China the previous day and were now having their first cup of coffee in a familiar locale. Experiencing a new culture is like visiting the ocean; you can sit on the shore and admire it or venture into the water as deep as you like and get a personal feeling. As Steiner and Reisinger (2006) conclude:

"Most existentialists see anxiety as a productive emotion that contributes to or motivates authenticity, so it seems logical that researchers might like to explore tourist and host anxiety as a research theme. Likewise every traveling holiday calls

for some degree of courage, to leave the safe and familiar environment that most people seem to prefer.”(p.313)

In addition, Steiner and Reisinger (2006) say, *“In all, the concept of existential authenticity viewed through a Heideggerian framework seems to be quite clear and uncontentious despite being rich and complex.”(p.313).*

Kivela and Crotts (2009) offer four categorizations of tourists based on their attitudes and preferences for food that are existential, experimental, recreational, and diversionary. Existential gastronomy tourists are those that:

“...seek food combinations and eating experiences that foster (culinary) learning. For these tourists, food consumption and drinking not only satisfy hunger and thirst but also an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about the local or regional cuisine and the destination’s culture” (p.182).

And experimental gastronomy tourists are those who:

“...symbolize their lifestyles through food - usually trendy and ‘in’ foods. These tourists actively seek the destination’s smartest designer cafes and restaurants that serve innovative menus and offer equally chic service. Experimental gastronomy tourists keep up to date about trendy and fashionable foods, ingredients, and recipes” (p.182)

I would challenge that these two are only separated by one factor which is money, the lack of it or unwillingness to pay for the ‘deluxe’ options. The experimental tourist may not wish to ‘go on the cheap’ or risk having a bad experience at a local ‘dive’ and the experiential tourist cannot afford the trendy options or would rather stick to the establishments where the locals hang out. I would argue that both are experiential and experimental in nature because both are involved at a financial level that is comfortable and each walk away satisfaction based on value. Everett (2016) puts forward a basic three-part decision-making process with regard to tourism 1) General interest tourism *“Where would I*

like to go?” 2) Mixed interest tourism “*Where do I want to go and what activities can I pursue there?”* 3) Special interest tourism “*What interest/activity do I want to pursue, and where can I do it?”* (p.59). In this process one must ask ‘what’ can be done which then obviously brings available funds in to play. In the end, it all about what someone is willing to risk versus the potential reward.

The argument presented by Wang (1999) on the relationship between tourism and existential authenticity is an attempt at conceptual clarification of the meanings of authenticity in tourism experiences. The framework presented by Wang (1999) with respect to tourism, can be used to build a concept in this thesis because of the similarities between tourism experiences and gastronomic experiences. Wang presents the position that tourism enables people to move away from the inauthenticity and constraints of their daily life as tourism offers a temporary place away from these constraints. Wang also states that authenticity is an ideal state, a way in life where people can be true to themselves. Brown (2013) also argues tourism as a catalyst for existential authenticity and draws on Heideggerian phenomenology and Sartrean existentialism as a comparable underpinning using Heidegger’s *Spielraum* (trans. ‘playroom’), an ‘escape from everydayness’. Brown presented this concept of *Spielraum* imagined by Heidegger as a parallel of the ‘space for reflection’ offered by tourism (2013, p.183).

If everyday life does not allow this authentic state to be grasped, then tourism is seen as a path to fulfilment. This is where the similarities come to play with the Wang (1999) study, if we then substitute a gastronomic experience for a tourism experience, and then a gastronomic event would provide the same relief from daily inauthenticity. This interim “*fix*” of a gastronomic experience would provide a quick shot of ‘authenticity’. To support this substitution of experiences, Brown suggests that prospective research into tourism as a catalyst for existential authenticity would show “*trip duration would be of little relevance, as moments of vision (escape) can be experienced even during a short break*” (2013, p.187). If an ‘escape’ is not defined by time then a gastronomic event could qualify and allow the tourism experiences to be compared with those gastronomic. Finkelstein (1989) recognized the resemblance between the characteristics of the tourist experience and the nature of the extraordinary meal experiences. She argued that in the restaurant “*the individual needs to feel no sense of accountability nor personal history...the*

restaurant as an institution offers all its patrons a sheltered anonymity with which there is ample opportunity to assume whatever role and postures the individual may desire” (p.14).

This study investigates gastronomic experiences with regard to inauthentic in the mind of the customer regarding food, service and atmosphere. What is it that makes a positive memory and was authenticity a part of the attributes? Taking in a gastronomic experience at a restaurant is what Josiam and Henry (2014) refer to as “*an away from home experience! It’s sometimes referred to as a hedonic approach to dining as opposed to a utilitarian one.*” The reason for participating in a gastronomic experience in the first place is purely for pleasure and spontaneous due to the hedonic nature (Babin, Dardin and Griffin. 1994), Josiam and Henry (2014) also state “*...hedonic motive is said to have more fun characteristics rather than functional characteristics as with utilitarian motive.*” Liu, Huang et al. (2012) argue “*Restaurants create a more value added appeal when making experiences more memorable and unique*”.

In conclusion, of Brown’s (2013) call for empirical research the statement is made: “*Furthermore, the philosophy underlying existential authenticity should not end with the literature review and the methodological approach: it can also be helpful if not vital in the task of data interpretation.*”(p.197)

3.8. Heidegger –Being and Time

A particular work used in this study is Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1927; translation 1962) due to the influential contributions to philosophy particularly existentialism, hermeneutics and deconstruction. Observations in my study are made between existential authenticity and gastronomic experiences where gastronomic participants are compared to tourists also seeking an existential ‘state of Being’ as argued in the paper by Wang (1999). Heidegger (1962) tells us that his preliminary aim is to give an account of that entity that has some understanding of what it is ‘to be’, specifically human being, or as he calls it, *Dasein*.

‘Understanding of Being’ is itself a definite characteristic of *Dasein*’s Being...*Dasein* is an entity for which, in its being, that Being is an issue” (Heidegger 1962, p.32). The entity which each of us is himself...*Dasein*, (Da-sein) means “*being here*” or

“*being there*” Heidegger’s way of referring to both the human being and to the type of Being that humans have. *Dasein* translates from the German vernacularly to ‘*existence*’ or literally ‘*being-there/there being*’. My research is about ‘interpreting’ gastronomic experiences and hermeneutics is the method used to process the data. It is important to make clear that Heidegger stated that hermeneutics no longer refers to the *science* of interpretation, but rather the *process* of interpretation that is an essential characteristic of *Dasein*, because *Dasein* is an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly towards Being (1962).

Heidegger (1962, p.233) makes the argument that people live in a state of *unheimlichkeit* that translates to uncanniness and being uncanny which is the opposite of feeling ‘at home’, this ill-at-ease feeling. In a state of dread and anxiety (Brown 2013, p.180). Heidegger states that this is a natural action to the chaos of life and the inevitability of death making the core of life fundamentally unsettled. “*Human nature is radically finite. It ends in death*” (Moran 2002, p.240). Moran (2002) refers to Heidegger’s argument that in the natural course of life humans spend most of the time passing information along, not too caught up in things, not dwelling on the significance of events, but living in the vague understanding of everydayness. Heidegger (1962) states that everydayness offers people a “*constant tranquillisation about death*” (p.295); it allows people to pretend that ‘death’ is a mishap which is constantly occurring’ (p.296), but which has nothing to do with them. Unable to confront the painful truths of *Dasein*, Heidegger states that people are constantly tempted by and drawn into complacency and routine of ordinary and conformist life. Everyday existence according to Heidegger is full of averageness, which brings ‘a levelling down of all possibilities of being’ (p.165). ‘Falling’ is the term used to describe the voluntary inauthenticity adopted by people in everyday life. Heidegger states that people choose to fall into a world of ‘they’, of undifferentiated conformity: ‘in everydayness, everything is all one and the same’ (p.422). Grene (1952) argues, “*There are no natural slaves, but most of us have enslaved ourselves*” a statement which assumes that there is a choice that can be made in life (p.267). It is this everydayness where the connection can be made linking tourism (and gastronomy) to Heidegger’s view on hermeneutics by introducing ‘*Spielraum*’.

‘*Spielraum*’ literally translates to ‘playroom’, a term introduced by Heidegger in the book *Being and Time* which denoted a place in time and space where ‘pause’ in the daily life can be made. A ‘reprieve from everydayness’ best describes *spielraum* which allows an individual to be thoughtful (Brown 2013, p.183). With the *spielraum* there is an uncomfortable view of the inauthentic aspects in life of the individual, and one then has the time to ponder the life they lead and the changes that could be made. It is of course possible for one to conclude that life is good and no changes are needed upon this reflection. The paper by Brown (2013) argues that there is a parallel between the as *spielraum* imagined by Heidegger and the space for reflection offered by tourism. Tourism offers a break from the routine of daily life; in Heidegger’s philosophy it allows a kind of state, a crusade outside of the stasis. I present the case that a gastronomic experience is comparable to a tourism experience, as both offer a short pilgrimage away from Heidegger’s everydayness and a distraction from the inevitability of death. A tourist experience as defined by Tung and Ritchie (2011, p.1369) is the relationship between people and their total world-view dependent on the location of their centre with respect to the society to which they belong.

The perspective of a tourist by Goeldner and Ritchie (2012, p.3) states that “*The tourist seek various psychic and physical experiences and satisfactions. The nature of these will largely determine the destinations chosen and the activities enjoyed*”. Underlying the foregoing conceptualization of tourism is the overall concept of traveller, defined as “*any person on a trip between two or more countries or between two or more localities within his/her country of usual residence*” (Goeldner and Ritchie 2012, p.6). It is generally accepted that all travellers engaged in tourism are *visitors*, and therefore, a same-day visitor is a tourist. With this being said, a same-day visitor visiting an attraction that is gastronomic by nature would be considered a participant in tourism *and* gastronomy that can then be construed as departing Heidegger’s everydayness and entering *Spielraum*.

This also is profound concerning this thesis, as there are many events that take place in our lives that can have significant impact on memory creation. Some are memorable and others not so. Kim (2010, p.781) argues that researchers in memory studies suggest that extraordinary events, such as travel experiences, stand out and are distinctive. With this being said, it offers proof that gastronomic experiences within tourism and those that stand alone will be plentiful and offer an opportunity for this thesis to gain understanding of what

makes them distinctive. My study is not the first to adapt Heidegger's *Spielraum* or *Dasein* in hospitality and tourism study but unique as it is applied to authenticity within gastronomy and gastronomic experiences which are components of hospitality and tourism.

3.9. Final observation on authenticity in the literature

Albrecht (2011:99) examines the ways in which a national American restaurant chain called the Olive Garden positions itself to offer “*real*” Italian food and “*real*” Italian experiences to demonstrate the practice of domestic culinary tourism. This domestic experience in ethnic dining is a form of culinary tourism, offering tourism as a mode of engagement and experience rather than a specific form of travel (p.100). This ‘domestic culinary tourism’ is important in research because participants, who have not travelled in regions well-known for food, may have unique views on authenticity of food, service and atmosphere from those participants who have travelled to experience gastronomy first hand.

There are common factors, a variable within the attributes when added (or removed) to the tangibles and intangibles of a restaurant experience that perhaps creates memory. The factors may have to be equally affected by a unique contribution of a said factor. Authenticity is a variable in the tangibles and intangibles as a factor in a gastronomic experience.

Albrecht (2011) applies Auge's (1995) theoretical framework in his critique of the Olive Garden Restaurant, which is an American suburban chain restaurant that features ethnic cuisine (Italian). Albrecht chastises the restaurant because of the way it positions itself as offering ‘real’ Italian food and ‘real’ Italian experience. By using Auge's theory, he characterizes restaurants like the Olive Garden as non-places, “*because they have ostensible history that affirms their identity or uniqueness. He defines a non-place as ‘a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place’*” (p.102). Albrecht (2011) goes on to state “*However, the characteristics of the Olive Garden that mark it as a non-place might be among the reasons for the restaurant's popularity*”. Non-places also foster the conditions of possibility for ‘pseudo-

events' to transpire, a term that Boorstin (1962) uses to distinguish them from 'real' events (Albrecht 2011).

"Tourist attractions serve their purpose best when they are pseudo-events. To be repeatable at will they must be factitious" (Boorstin 1962, p.103). Urry and Larsen (2011) argue that 'Tourist spaces' are thus organised around what MacCannell calls *"staged authenticity"* (1973). The development of the constructed tourist attraction results from how those who are subject to the tourist gaze respond, both to protect themselves from intrusions into their lives backstage and to take advantage of the opportunities it presents for profitable investment. By contrast, then Boorstin argues, *"pseudo-events result from the social relations of tourism and not from an individualistic search for the inauthentic"* (p.10).

Another common critique of restaurants such as the Olive Garden is that they are all the same (Albrecht 2011). Albrecht then brings in the model *"McDonaldization"* created by Ritzer (1996) to back up his theory regarding commonality among restaurants. Ritzer (2010) in his book *The McDonaldization of Society 6* introduces a perceived standard in modern business practice that is similar to the management philosophy of McDonalds, the global restaurant chain. Ritzer argues that uniformity and consistency of product, along with stringent cost control, can be applied to business models outside of fast food restaurants. Casual/fine dining restaurants, hotels and even manufacturing operations can benefit from applying the same strategic initiatives that focus on standardized control in product presentation and customer service. The product is delivered as advertised and meets the consumers' expectations; unfortunately, the encounters (experiences) that are created by McDonaldization are these banal, non-events that trigger no recollection (p.7). This spread of McDonaldization into the casual gourmet restaurant segment has enabled restaurants to 'tick all the boxes' providing gastronomic experiences by following industry best practices, and like the fast food segment, experiences can be banal, non-events soon forgotten. Finkelstein (2003) also presents a supporting argument against McDonaldization:

"Yet, the McDonald's experience has been widely criticized for being bland and boring. Indeed, the brand name has been corrupted into neologisms (such as News

McNuggets, McDoctors, McWork, McAcademy, and McHealth) used to signify instances of unwelcome trivialization and debasement brought about by rationalization and, by the close of the 20th century, the McDonald's empire, along with other global corporations, is showing signs of exhaustion" (p.198).

Finally, statements by Urry (2011) that offer potential new theories that could apply to restaurant gastronomic experiences based on the 'post-tourist':

"Furthermore, it has been argued that some visitors – what Feifer (1985) terms 'post-tourists' - almost delight in the inauthenticity of the normal tourist experience. 'Post-tourists' find pleasure in the multiplicity of tourist games. They know that there is no authentic tourist experience, that there are merely a series of games or texts that can be played" (p.13)

With respect to the theory of the 'post-tourist', to understand that they are tourists and tourism is a series of games Urry argues:

"The post-tourist thus knows that he or she will have to queue time and time again, that glossy brochure is a piece of pop culture, that the apparently authentic local entertainment is a socially contrived as the ethnic bar, and that the supposedly quaint fishing village could not survive without the income from tourism" (p.114).

Is the world becoming a theme park filled with fakes as depicted in the book *Travels of Hyperreality* by Umberto Eco (1987), where one of the philosophies presented fits this literature review: *"The Palace's philosophy is not, 'We are giving you the reproduction so that you will want the original,' but rather, 'We are giving you the reproduction so you will no longer feel any need for the original'" (p.19).*

Inauthenticity in hospitality and tourism products is not necessarily a bad thing otherwise how would we explain the success of tourism destinations that blatantly exploit 'fake' (reproductions) experiences like Las Vegas, Nevada. Plenty of literature on the Las Vegas tourism 'product' exists that discuss authenticity, for example going back to Belk's

(2000) study that reveals the fake Egyptian artefacts on display in a popular Egyptian theme hotel museum. It is no secret McDonald's produces factory-like uniform and consistent bland products to a receptive audience despite the media reports of the poor nutritional values and high calorie counts. In fairness, McDonald's has made a recent effort (2015) to "*reposition*" their fast food into a premium niche market with a "*gourmet creation*" burger where the customer can add toppings such as "*a dollop of garlic aioli*" (Frost and Laing 2016). However, in November 2016 headlines in the trade papers read "*McDonald's finally realizes fancy build-your-own burgers aren't worth the effort*" (Eater, 2016). It looks like it (McDonald's) is what it is, a successful purveyor of banal non-events in spite of attempts to compete with upscale independent burger joints. Boorstin (1962) argues: "*Tourist attractions serve their purpose best when they are pseudo-events. To be repeatable at will they must be factitious*", perhaps advice to McDonald's as they are a food attraction.

The majority of academic literature regarding authenticity in gastronomic experiences is only of recent duration. Authenticity within tourism has been debated somewhat longer. A case in point is the book by Warde and Martens (2000) *Eating Out; Social differentiation, consumption and pleasure* which is a study on 'eating out'. The book covers a range of topics under major headings such as 'Modes of provision', 'Access', 'Delivery' and the 'Enjoyment: the attraction of eating out'. The sub-headings cover topics like 'The development of the habit of eating out in the UK', "the meaning of eating out", 'Patterns of eating out', 'Mapping food tastes', and 'Elements of enjoyment' plus many more. What is missing is the discussion on local foods, authenticity of food and the emergence of the 'foodie' (term coined by Barr and Levy 1984). This is an example of how the foodservice industry is changing the way we eat out because when you look close the food is basically the same but we have changed how we value the importance of what we consume.

3.10. Memory Creation - Souvenirs of Restaurants

Restaurant souvenirs are obvious trigger points for gastronomic memory recollection in the same fashion as travel souvenirs are for holiday memories. However

there is not much attention given in academic literature strictly to restaurant souvenirs compared to tourism souvenirs overall. Location specific souvenirs (i.e. plastic Eiffel Tower) are the tangible evidence of travel (Watson and Kopachevsky 1994, p.652), restaurant souvenirs are therefore the tangible evidence that a gastronomic experience took place. The souvenir will then occupy a space somewhere within the world of the owner, a mantle in the living room, a shelf in the kitchen, top of a desk at the office at work or perhaps banished to a 'junk' drawer. The value placed on an item depends on the owner and their agenda and intentions for the item (Ballengee-Moris 2002, p.103). Some restaurant souvenirs may not be from the actual restaurant, for example, the souvenir could be an ingredient purchased in a local market to replicate a taste experienced at restaurant; for example I purchased 500 grams of sumac spice at a market in Dubai so I could make a Fattoush salad at home to match the ones I enjoyed while there.

Some souvenirs not only help with the recollection of the experience linked to it, but make a connection with history and famous people. La Tour D'Argent, a restaurant in Paris, has been in operation for nearly a century at the current location and in the Parisian business scene since 1582 has developed a unique tangible 'take-away' postcard (image 1). What makes this postcard unique is that it comes with the order of their special "Tour d'Argent Duckling" (160€ for two) (Tour d'Argent, 2017), this item which has been on the menu since the middle of the 19th century.



3.11. Image 1. – Author's *Le Numero de votre Canard* postcard

Each postcard has the number of the duck served to the guest who ate it, in 1880 Edward VII Prince of Wales ate 382, Thomas Rockefeller ate 51,327, and Authors “Le Numero de votre Canard” is 1,078,198, then 808 ducks later another Bill (Gates) ate 1,079,006 (The Culture Concept Circle, 2016). This card triggers a recollection of the gastronomic experience but more importantly it reminds me of who I was with at the time and good time we had together. I can also say I have a common experience with the rich and famous. The food itself was not the best I had ever had, but the interaction with the people we were with made the positive memory. The food and drink can be secondary to the participants within the gastronomic experience, an example of how a souvenir can create a memory.

A common restaurant souvenir in the past were match books (boxes) that were part of the table set-up in an ashtray on the table when smoking in a restaurant was allowed. Most western cultures have since snuffed out the smoking, and matchbooks that have the restaurant logo, address, and phone number are becoming extinct as well. I have demonstrated in image 2 a personal collection of restaurant take-home swag that includes

match books from ‘memorable’ restaurants in Paris, in particular ‘Les Deux Magots’ where I spent many hours watching the world go by with my wife on our honeymoon. The chocolate truffle box from Le Cirque in New York City reminds me of a great dinner with my sister and her husband before he became ill. An ashtray from Mi Burrito y yo, a restaurant my wife and I stumbled on in a secluded courtyard in Barcelona and had a leisurely lunch on our 10th anniversary and the porcelain duck (chopstick holder) from the Beijing restaurant called Quanjude that feature the famous ‘Peking Duck’ as a house specialty. When I look at these objects, I immediately return to the scene of the experience and relive the moment. Morgan and Pritchard (2005) argue that souvenirs are:

“touchstones that have the effect of bringing the past into the present and making the past experience live. Hence, these artefacts have the power to merely act as symbols of our past experiences but to evoke and animate memories which inform our present self” (p. 41).

The souvenirs I have collected are few, the ones I do have bring special moments back to life and helps to enrich my life as being privileged and grateful. I remember the people I was with more than the food and drink...



3.12. Image 2. - *Author's Collection of Restaurant Souvenirs*

Items like the restaurant matchbooks were designed as marketing objects for consumers to take home with them; their task was to later remind them to return when eventually found in a coat pocket. In restaurants today the business card and the take-out menu brochure, which does the job properly marketing the restaurant but not an object you would place on a special keepsake shelf in your home, have replaced the matchbook. Another trend in restaurants today is to offer signature food ingredients available to the public, the Keg Restaurant chain; a national steakhouse chain in Canada makes available its steak spice plus many other signature menu items. The Keg Customer can bring home the signature ingredients from select grocery stores to create their own memorable experience (Keg Steakhouse, 2016).

The meaning of a souvenir to a traveller (or restaurant patron) is primarily use-value, a tangible carrier of vacation memories (Paraskevaidis and Andriotis 2015, p.8), people want to remember the sites they travelled to and less for utilitarian usage. Photos act

as tangible artefacts for travellers from gastronomic experiences, with the smart phone it is easy to capture moments in time and replay at will. The photo-elicitation used in my study is a digital form of bringing a tangible souvenir by the participants to the interview and then tell the story that comes with it. Bjork and Kauppinen-Raisanen (2014) argue that souvenirs can function as a means to relive the positive food and eating experiences and travellers can share their experiences with friends and relatives by providing them with souvenirs (p.17). The souvenir deserves scholarly attention that may reveal valuable insights to the act of purchasing souvenirs like their origin and the motives for purchasing them such as ‘internal’ and ‘external’ validation (Bjork and Kauppinen-Raisanen 2014, p.17). A photo (food) is a souvenir and therefore to be treated the same with regard to academic research.

3.13. Memories in gastronomy and tourism

The section presents literature on memories with hospitality and tourism followed by memory creation in general. The importance of delivering memorable experiences is well documented in the existing literature (Kozak 2001; Braun-LaTour, Grinley and Loftus 2006; Tung and Ritchie 2011; Kim 2014). For example Marschall 2012 argues “*Tourism and memory most obviously intersect in the niche area of heritage tourism, where historical sights and preserved artefacts as embodiments of collective memory are commodified to attract tourists.*” As food is an obvious part of heritage therefore, memories are recalled, reconstructed or created within tourism experiences specific to gastronomy.

3.14. Remembered eating experiences

The Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) study titled *Remembered eating experiences described by the self, place, food, context and time* explored remembered positive eating and food experiences aimed at understanding the nature of these past experiences. The Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola findings are important and relevant to this study but differ as they do not focus exclusively on gastronomic events in commercial contexts. The Kauppinen-Raisanen paper explored all

eating experiences which were categorized, in analysis, into four main themes- childhood, tourism, family/friends and homemade food. The findings of the Kauppinen-Raisanen paper observed that authenticity was a factor in two of the major themes, *Eating and Childhood Memories* and *Eating as Part of Tourist Experiences*. This identification of ‘authenticity as a factor’ is a positive lead that will enable expansion in my investigation to dig deeper into memory creation. Under the Kauppinen-Raisanen suggestions for future research, they state ‘...focusing on the dimensions that characterize the various themes, which could reveal a basis for understanding the nature of various food-related practices and experiences that become memorable (p. 668).

Experiences can be transformed into memorized consumer experiences if and when the experience becomes stored in the brain (Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola 2013, p.668). Every story of an experience goes through a process starting with a fresh memory and then it can change from postexperience marketing to become distorted. Marketers have, for instance shown that postexperience information can make even a really bad experience seem better in retrospect, leading the consumer to want to purchase the product again (Braun-LaTour, Grinley and Loftus, 2006). This finding confirms why gastronomic memories of experiences become more positive as time passes from the effects of marketing: the culinary tourist now remembers selectively the good points of the food experience attributes. Even though we may construct a memory as a result of a gastronomic experience it can be changed subconsciously, that meal consumed at X restaurant three years ago ‘wasn’t that bad, perhaps we should go again’...after seeing many TV commercials and magazine ads. Memories can change over time with stimulation. These memorized experiences are reconstructed rather than based on strict facts (Braun, 1999, p.329). They build upon three stages; 1) an event, such as an eating experience in a restaurant, is experienced and the information is encoded in memory, 2) the information on the event is stored into memory; and 3) the stored information on the event is retrieved from memory (Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus et al. 2013, p.668).

Kauppinen-Raisanen (2013) goes on to argue how tangibility may lead to deterioration of post-purchase experiences for consumers as they ‘get used to’ and ‘continue comparing’ the products purchased whereas the intangibles provide memories that can be reconstructed at any time (p.143). How does this exactly happen, how do

memories get sorted? Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) does discuss the various types of memories: *episodic* in which the memory refers to events the person has experienced; *Semantic*, which refers to knowledge stored as facts (p.668). Memories of food experiences therefore begin as episodic and then with multiple exposures to events (experiences) they transform into the semantic memory. The characteristics presented in the paper was that the majority of food experiences had a social context followed sensorial experience and to a lesser degree emotional and physiological. The literature does speak to the fact that physiological needs are the least important in food experience as it is a given that one will 'eat'. Emotional, although not ranked high as a factoring context is the driving factor to partake in a food experience in the first place, the desire to be social comes from the state of our emotional well-being.

Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) concludes with a multifaceted and multidimensional conceptual framework that links "*The Self*", "*Place*", "*Food*", "*Context*" and "*Time*" to four interrelated themes of experiences "*Childhood*", "*Tourist*", "*Family/Friends*", and "*Home Made Food*". An interesting finding was that commensal eating with family and friends lead to enduring memories and the study noted none of the participants recalled a food or eating memory that referred to a solitary context (p.680). Based on this finding, a challenge of my study was to determine if memorable gastronomic (culinary) experiences could occur for an individual diner.

Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) was special because of its link to authenticity as a factor whereas others focused on emotions. Kim (2010) investigated the effects of travel experiences on the autobiographical memory with no connection to gastronomic experiences. The study by Bisogni, Falk et al. (2007) investigated "*eating and drinking episodes*" through recalls by participants that described the food, beverages consumed, location, people present, thoughts and feelings, and activities during the time but no connection to authenticity or details surrounding the food. The goal of Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, (2012) was to develop a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences that provided relevant components of "*the tourist experience*" but nothing specific to gastronomic experiences as a potential factor within. Kim (2014) also presented the development of a scale to measure the destination attributes associated with memorable experiences that did not include gastronomic experiences in the results but lumped in with

general tourism experiences. Desmet and Schifferstein (2008) looked at sources of positive and negative emotions in food experiences that presented a finding where participants reported indirect conditions such as expectations and associations. Recollections of past food experiences were deemed pleasant but no connections were made to authenticity or external contexts i.e. atmosphere.

3.15. Trigger points in memory

The trigger point to create a memory has to start somewhere, and this research seeks to demonstrate the source(s) within the points of contact with the consumer who is trying to feed his body or mind through gastronomy. Researchers in memory suggest that extraordinary events, such as travel experiences, stand out and are distinctive (Kim 2010:781). Travel experiences do include gastronomic (food) experiences as the World Food Travel Association (WFTA, 2015) gives the succinct definition of food tourism as “*something every visitor does*”.

Distinctive memories from the past envisage relationships associated with those memories and a decision is made if it is positive, neutral, or negative. With this being said, every service encounter (travel, hotel, and restaurant) has a ‘moment of truth’ (point of contact) where a relationship is developed from a point of contact; a company or organization has the opportunity to win over a customer from competition. In the food service industry, ‘best practices’ dictate numerous ‘required’ contacts to ensure customer satisfaction therefore it would appear there are many opportunities to make a new relationship or a perception, which could be considered the beginning of a relationship.

Much of the focus in the field of memory studies focuses on objects and tangible structures as ‘containers’ of memory (Marschall 2012). Marschall (2012) also points out that there is growing attention to less tangible *lieux de mémoire* or ‘sites of memory’, notably smells, sounds and performances, which increasingly impact on heritage interpretation and the tourist experience (p.218). Everett (2008) argues the concept of “*tastescape*” of food tourism.

“the research has found that places are only fully activated and apprehended through immersive bodily expression, for example personal memories were resurrected through direct olfactory encounters; tourists only felt they had experienced the place when they undertook multisensory activities such as eating fish by the sea; and a sense of temporal escape was only truly realized once the body was sensorally immersed” (p.353).

3.16. Social media as a tool to activate memory

To emphasize, the importance of this study is reinforced by Braun-LaTour, Grinley et al. (2006) in the statement “...memory is important for the tourism industry because future decisions are based on it”. Tourists use their memories to reinforce decisions on whether or not they return to a destination (Kozak 2001) or pass on experiences through social media and old fashion ‘word of mouth’. Advertising that features tourists’ experiences in a destination, such as the current “*What happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas*” vignette, may transform both how tourists experience their vacation and how they remember it (Braun-LaTour, Grinley and Loftus, 2006). The truth is, no matter whether a hotel, a restaurant, or a destination chooses to play an active role in social media, consumers might have already shared their experiences in a travel review website or within their social media networks (Kwok, Yu 2013). Like most people today, foodies are equipped with smartphones that have the power to communicate with large audiences, quickly.

Social media is a space where foodies have opportunities to spread the word of their gastronomic experience. Bussell and Roberts (Wolf 2014, p.423) noted that “*digitally connected consumers simply log into their Twitter, Facebook, Foodspotting, Vine, or Yelp accounts and share their experiences in real-time – the good, the bad, and mediocre – before their bill has even been presented*”. This tactic obviously affects foodservice operators but for this study, we look at social media as a tool for foodies to post accomplishments. This ‘bragging’ of sort is not about passing on word-of-mouth gastronomic information to the next foodie; it is a statement that says ‘look at my gastronomic experience’. This one-upmanship is presented in the documentary movie

“*Foodies, the Culinary Jetset*” (Anderson et al. (2014) where a sub-set of foodies are on a mission to dine at the best restaurants in the world. One character in the movie set a goal to dine at every Michelin three star restaurant; another took multiple photos with a professional camera (no smart phone) to post later on her blog. What is important to bring from this documentary is the fact that many of those in the movie partook in the gastronomic experiences alone, therefore their gastronomic memories we can assume are positive without social interaction as argued in the Kauppinen-Raisanen paper. There was one instance at the end of the movie where a Chinese national man proclaimed his *best* gastronomic experience was with a group of Chinese friends in a restaurant in China that featured local specialties; this man travelled exclusively alone throughout the documentary. Information on the social aspect within gastronomic experience memories seem to be lacking in the literature. There is no academic research on foodies using social media to increase social status among other foodies; this would be helpful to understand the motives of participants who are willing to participate in a food related study such as this.

3.17. How to create a memorable experience

Pine and Gilmore (1999) remind us “an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event”. They also explain, “*While commodities are fungible, goods tangible and services intangible, experiences are memorable*” (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p.11). Larsen argues (2007, p.13) “*when tourists are asked about their holidays, they do however often refer to experiences, and these experiences are memories that are created in a constructive or reconstructive process within the individual.*” Therefore, we can say that gastronomic and culinary experiences must be included in the tourism conversations as they would qualify. Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005) present practical implications regarding the importance of creating memorable experiences:

“While tourism planners can neither directly influence the emotions that tourists feel during the experience, nor the consequences of the experience (e.g., social

development), they can nevertheless, use branding policies to deliver the promise of the types of MEs [memorable experiences] that tourists expect at their destination.”

Foodservice operators can do the same first by defining through marketing who they are categorically (i.e. fine dining, fast food, gastro pub, etc.) and then operating at distinct value classification (i.e. budget, moderate, expensive). The Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005) study raises an interesting point that the emotions of the tourist are beyond the control of the host. Examining the ‘mood’ of the participants within gastronomic experiences would be valuable to determine if there are other factors that trigger memory creation other than the stimulation from the environment and what’s on the table. Understanding emotions is crucial for service firms because the way consumers feel about a product or service will affect their purchase decision (Barsky and Nash 2002).

In the hospitality industry, the stage is the physical surrounding or atmosphere...décor, lighting, music, aromas that could be in a tent in the Sahara desert or the dining room in the Plaza Athenee Hotel in Paris. The props are the food and drink with emphasis on the presentation whether it is served in a plastic bowl and spoon or a fine china gold rim platter with crystal stemware it does not matter as it is the contextual significance that makes the moment. The delivery of the service of the props/goods on the stage is the significant key piece to creating the experience transforming it to a memorable one in comparison to standard ‘best practice’ intangible service. In hospitality the server becomes an actor and is ‘on-stage’ delivering, the props/goods using emotional intelligence to create personal ad lib dialogue with ‘guests’ as opposed to formal scripts used on ‘customers’. However, what is it that characterizes a memorable experience? The development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences presents seven domains (i.e. hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty) as an attempt to identify important components of the tourism experiences that are likely to affect a person’s memory (Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, 2012). This memory measurement scale (Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, 2012) can be used in the analysis of my study by creating codifying themes from my interview data as a starting point to determine key memory trigger points. One of the interesting findings in the study by Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, (2012) was that individuals tended to recall more easily the positive

experiences rather than the negative as my study is about the positive aspects of memorable gastronomic experiences. Another argument by LaTour and Carbone (2014) is that customers overall impressions from an experience regarding the design elements will decay...this means a well-designed experience must be resistant to fading – and that a aspects of the experience must be “sticky” and memorable.

Tung and Ritchie (2011) approach memorable experiences by integrating the research in psychology to gain understanding of the essence of what constitutes an especially memorable experience and ultimately how to facilitate memorable experiences. Their study (Tung and Ritchie 2011) presents a good definition of a tourism experience: *“An individual’s subjective evaluation and undergoing (i.e. affective, cognitive, and behavioural) of events related to his/her tourist activities which begin before (i.e. planning and preparation), during (i.e. at the destination), and after the trip (i.e. recollection).”* This definition can also apply to gastronomic experiences as they follow the same series of events; before planning and preparation (i.e. reservation, discovery, and recommendation), the destination (i.e. duration of the food experience) and the recollection after (i.e. feeling satiated, and contentment with sacrifice- cost). Tung and Ritchie (2011) also assert the central role of tourism planners is to: *“Facilitate the development of an environment (i.e. the destination) that enhances the likelihood that tourists can create their own memorable tourism experiences.”* The study also acknowledges that destination managers cannot directly deliver memorable experiences to tourists since individuals recall experiences subjectively and uniquely regardless of the fact that services, events and activities were delivered equally. The Tung and Ritchie (2011) statement and I have similar goals which are to understand the underlying essence of memorable experiences so that not only tourism planners (restaurant owners too) can enhance the probability of delivering to tourists’ experiences that are unique, valued and truly memorable.

Tung and Ritchie (2011) identified four dimensions; specifically they were *affect, expectations, consequentiality, and recollection*. *Affect* is about the positive emotions and feelings regarding the experiences, *expectations* are about the fulfilment of expectations and/or descriptions of surprises encountered during the trip that was above and beyond tourists’ planned agendas. *Consequentiality* refers to responses that suggested some sort of personally perceived importance from the outcome of the trip and *recollection* refers to

responses containing numerous references to “*telling stories*”, “*showing photographs*,” and “*purchasing souvenirs*.” (Tung and Ritchie 2011). The “*showing photographs*” was especially of interest to my study due to the methodology I am using explicitly auto-driven photo-elicitation that will drive the interviews as will be discussed in the methodology chapter.

A study by Hanefors and Mossberg (2003) that was not about memory but a search for extraordinary meal experiences identified five interrelated dimensions along which an extraordinary meal experience can be characterized and distinguished from for example, other meal experiences such as fast food meals. The dimensions from the findings were *motivation, expectation, interaction, involvement, and satisfaction*. *Motivation* referred to the de-routinization of consumption (i.e. atypical object and mode) and seeking/escape, *Expectation* was considered in the pre-consumption stage that featured no script, curiosity and the capacity to act. In the consumption stage, *Interaction* included being part of the production, opportunities for action and recognition and the other dimension was *involvement* where absorption, familiarity and emotion were the dominant factors. Finally, in the post-consumption stage *satisfaction* was measured through surprise, pleasure, enjoyment and memorability (Hanefors and Mossberg 2003). There are similarities between the Tung and Ritchie (2011) study and Hanefors and Mossberg (2003) paper where both list *expectations* as a dimension of an experience that is relevant in my study as questions will be asked regarding actions surrounding participant experiences. For example, an important inquiry would be about the capacity to act and preconceptions of memorable experiences, I am speculating that when participants step out-side their comfort zone or as Cohen and Avieli (2004) refer to it as a “*culinary environmental bubble*” and expose themselves to unfamiliar cuisines memories are created.

There are recent studies that attempt to seek factors in the creation of experiences like that of Taar (2014) that looks at eating episodes that from the outside look helpful to my study but once you read the methodology and conclusion there is not much usable data. This study only used females and never factored the location of where the ‘eating’ took place, I did note the *Dimensions of eating* figure (fig.1) that had some similarity to my figure 3. (p.106) that listed situational factors but never included the overall context of the locations of the participants. The conclusion admitted, “*It is impossible to generalize the*

findings of such a small study...” (Taar 2014), and much of the data related to taste which was the main factor influencing the likability of the food. There are many studies in food relating to taste. An interesting study by Spence, Hobkinson et al. (2013) presents unique techniques in creating memorable experiences. For example, the weight of glassware and material of the cutlery we use can influence how we evaluate taste of food and drink. My study takes all aspects of the gastronomic experience into light, as the photographs presented by the participants will expose the fine details of specific events.

3.18. Memorable versus Extraordinary

It is important to note that studies like Taar (2014) were looking for the factors that contribute to extraordinary “*eating episodes*” and not the factors affecting ‘memorable gastronomic experiences’ as my study is. There are many similar studies (like Taar 2014) that explore factors contributing to gastronomic experiences (Bjork and Kauppinen-Raisanen 2014; Kivela and Crotts 2006, 2005; Cardello, Schutz et al. 2000; Hanefors and Mossberg 2003; Andersson and Mossberg 2004). Seeking what makes a gastronomic experience memorable and what makes a gastronomic experience good are two different objectives...if someone asks me ‘what is the best meal I have ever experienced’ would get a different answer than asking ‘what is my most memorable gastronomic experience’. The factors contributing to memory are not the same as the factors contributing to good food.

Piqueras-Fiszman and Jaeger (2015) in a UK study attempted to seek “*what makes meals memorable*”. They drew on the tripartite conceptualization of the food, the context, and the person as the major underlying food choice – behaviour decisions and explore memorable meals through a reflective approach of real life dining events. Because of qualitative and quantitative data convergence, their findings suggested that a memorable event typically involves family/friends, a positive emotional state, cooked food and wine (p.233). Piqueras-Fiszman and Jaeger (2015) asked, “*what makes a meal memorable*” whereas I asked “*what was your most memorable gastronomic experience*”. There is a difference...answering the Piqueras-Fiszman and Jaeger question one could ‘list’ the details (moving parts) that *could* ensure a quality experience, for example; fine cuisine, great wine, proper table settings, mood lighting, good friends, etc. In essence, participants

were asked to construct an experience that would be memorable. Answering my question involves recollection of details surrounding the memorable event; I deconstructed the experience of participants after the event.

Research into the memory creation of gastronomic events builds from a case study by Lugosi (2008) that examined “*hospitable moments*”. My research build on two fronts. First, I focus on events within hospitality and the trigger points that create memories and not just moments tied to “*communitas*” within the event. Second, I also take the position of Lugosi that the majority of transactions regarding food and drink in foodservice are “*mundane and ubiquitous*” when it comes to satisfying basic physiological needs, but I add the theory that those engaging in purposeful hospitality transactions seeking social and/political end up with banal, non-events experiences now more than ever.

Lugosi (2008) identified “*mundane transactions of food, drink, shelter and social intercourse*” in commercial transactions as the base (bottom) of the nature of experiences that “*fulfils basic human needs as hunger, thirst, and tiredness.*” The second “*manifestation*” (level) identified by Lugosi (2008) was the engagement of food, drink, shelter and/or entertainment for “*social relationships or the pursuit of political agenda.*” Lugosi argues that both of these expressions of hospitality can be “*anticipated, and its mundane forms can be managed within the service environment*”. I believe that regardless of the motive by the consumer there is no guarantee or predisposition that a gastronomic experience will be memorable (or enjoyable) event. Lugosi’s third and final tier of manifestations identifies “*meta-hospitality, which is infrequent, existential in nature and emotional in essence.*” Lugosi (2008) describes “*meta-hospitality*” as these moments of short-lived emotional bonds that perhaps are constructed or experienced through transactions within hospitality. This meta-hospitality is this short-lived, emotional state of being created when the participants are in a shared existential space where differences are temporarily renegotiated or tempered (p.147).

3.19. Types of memories

Psychologists have assigned long-term memory (LTM) into three different types based on content: semantic, which is general knowledge; episodic, which is experiential

knowledge; and procedural, which is the memory for skills and routines. Episodic memory fades most quickly but is also paradoxically the type of information given the most weight in customer decision-making (LaTour and Carbone 2014). Hoch (2002) argues that experiential information is vivid and engaging...and because it is personally derived, it appears nonpartisan.

Episodic memory is the makeup of our autobiographical memory. Endel Tulving coined the term ‘episodic memory’ in 1972 to refer to our ability to recall past events about what happened where and when. Episodic memory is distinct from other kinds of memory in being explicitly located in the past and accompanied by the feeling of remembering, whereas other knowledge that we acquire is purely factual, without any personalised pastness attached to it (Clayton, Salwiczek and Dickinson 2007, p.189). My research will depend on tapping into participant episodic memory for them to tell stories (narratives) of gastronomy.

Conway (2009) presents nine properties of episodic memory elements (table 7.) which are important to my research as they can be related to the attributes in gastronomic experiences. In table one I list the nine properties of episodic memories by Conway (2009, p.2306) and those potential relationships to gastronomic experience attributes. Conway states that with respect to properties eight and nine, they consider the role of episodic memory specificity and in triggering [recollective] experience. Recalling ‘stories’ has always been popular in culture, starting with our early ancestors recording pictographs of “the hunt” on the walls of caves...the first gastronomic story perhaps.

Conway's Properties	Gastronomic Experiences
1. Contains summary records of sensory-perceptual-conceptual-affective processing	
2. Retain patterns of activation/inhibition over long periods	
3. Often represented in the form of visual images	Gastronomic experiences are visual (food and atmosphere)
4. They always have a perspective (field or observer)	Gastronomy is an individual experience within a group - each has an opinion
5. Represent short time slices of experience	Gastronomic experiences are short lived
6. They are represented on a temporal dimension roughly in order of occurrence	
7. They are subject to rapid forgetting	Some gastronomic experiences are soon forgotten
8. They make autobiographical remembering specific	Gastronomic 'storytelling'
9. They are recollectively experienced when accessed.	Gastronomic 'storytelling'

3.20. Table 7. - *Nine properties of episodic memories (Conway 2009)*

3.21. Summary of memory creation segment

To review, this 'memory' section began with souvenirs. The memory creation of a gastronomic experience can begin with a tangible tchotchke picked up during an event as a memory recall object. In addition, a specialty food ingredient could be acquired that will be used to recreate the experience when back in the 'home' kitchen. Either will offer an opportunity for the participant to travel back in time and revisit the gastronomic experience and savor the flavor, company and state of mind at the time. Semantic and episodic memories were presented and discussed; remembered eating experiences and how we remember is important to the way we accumulate knowledge about the gastronomic world around us. It was noted that extraordinary events and 'moments of truth' are deemed trigger points in the creation of our distinctive memories and new encounters with our senses. Word-of-mouth communication in the foodservice industry through social media is a new phenomenon deserving of more research because it is a definitive factor in evaluation and future intentions of foodies. How to create memories by setting the stage, and drilling down to understand the dimensions of a gastronomic experience were examined which led to discussion of 'extraordinary' versus 'memorable'. Here was the important differing of

literature as many studies look to the factors that (construct) could make a memorable gastronomic experience whereas my study deconstructs the experiences. Finally, a table presenting the properties of episodic memories is illustrated to make the connection to gastronomic experiences and potential analysis. Next is the conceptual model created before the research how I vision the attributes food, service and atmosphere in relation to authenticity and memories.

3.22. Conceptual model derived from the literature analysis (before research)

Figure 3 represents a model of how a gastronomic experience is linked to the creation of a memory of an event based on the literature as reviewed in chapter 2 and chapter 3. The three main attributes – the food, the service and the atmosphere are shown across many empirical studies to be the agreed significant drivers of any gastronomic experience. In a commercial context, these three attributes are the factors that determine if a gastronomic experience is positive or negative (Gustafsson, Ostrom et al. 2006). Authenticity touches on all three attributes as each has equal opportunity to present a product that is truly genuine that enhances the customer experience. For example, the service can be deemed genuine should the server in the experience present the consumer with a Duchenne smile (Grandey, Fisk et al. 2005). The food can be perceived more genuine in the dining experience based on the racialization of the people who are seen to be associated with the cuisine (Hirose and Pih 2011, p.1499). Finally if the cuisine being consumed is indigenous to the location of the experience the atmosphere will be rated as true to the source...authentic. In the centre of the model is the objective of this research study, the memories, and a projected outcome should all the attributes align equally within an aura of authenticity. Achieving that euphoria in a gastronomic experience because of a potential alignment then one would think this make the event memorable. I present this model (figure 3.) because it represents a scenario of the conditions to breed a memorable gastronomic experience based on the attributes food, service and atmosphere.

Figure 3. Conceptual Model (Before Research) - Gastronomic Attributes, Authenticity and Memories

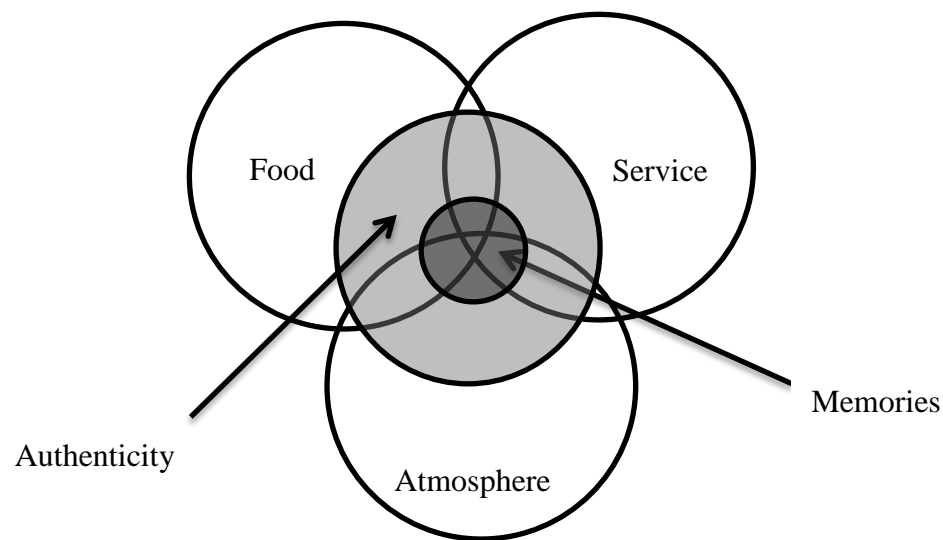


Figure 3. The relationships between the three attributes (food, service, and atmosphere) can determine the quality of a gastronomic experience. When one attribute is unique, can it overshadow the others in either a positive or a negative fashion? The more uniqueness shown by each attribute, the more enhanced the gastronomic experience is created. This study explored if this enhancement of attributes creates positive memories and when factoring in authenticity within the attributes, did this play a role? Authenticity can be presented in gastronomic experiences in numerous forms as discussed in the literature therefore understanding its role should shed light on memory creation.

3.23. Figure 3 - Conceptual Model Before Research

3.24. Conclusion of the Literature Review

Chapter 2 and 3 have reviewed the literature beginning with the evolution of the gastronomic experience, the restaurant scene which is the stage and the actors, or ‘foodies’ the participants making this study possible. The next section explores in detail the attributes of a gastronomic experience, the food, service and atmosphere as determinates of quality in foodservice. This chapter (3) began with the literature on authenticity in consumer experiences, authenticity in tourism and hospitality and authenticity within food/gastronomy. Following this was a presentation on memories in foodservice such as souvenirs, specific knowledge on memory creation in hospitality that lead to a conclusion with literature on types of memories.

In summary of this literature review, I present the research questions of this study that are as follows:

1. *How do the tangible and intangible attributes (food, service, and atmosphere) in a gastronomic experience affect the creation of positive memories?*
2. *How does authenticity play a role in all the memories within gastronomic attributes (food, service and atmosphere)?*

I believe that the literature covered in this review is adequate to bring forward this study as support for additional knowledge to the academic area of gastronomic studies. The academic literature in the field of gastronomy has only just begun to take interest among researchers as there are two ‘camps’ within the discipline; the academics looking at gastronomy in theories within tourism and then the practitioners looking for ‘best practices’ as educational tools. There is countless literature on foodservice industry best practices unfortunately; they do not link to the theoretical research and vice versa. As a chef practitioner and academic, I feel that this study can attempt to bridge the gap and create knowledge useful to both groups. In 2017, it is clear that the foodservice industry has been growing and ‘eating out of the home’ is ever more popular. Where I reside there is an issue within the industry regarding the lack of qualified people working in foodservice at all

levels; back of the house, frontline and in management. Hopefully there will be more studies that research gastronomic experiences as a standalone rather as a component of tourism as is the current situation.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out to present and justify the methodological strategy for conducting this study. Beginning with the research questions, I explain the philosophical and theoretical framework underpinnings of the research including a justification of my epistemological position. Then a detailed analysis and justification of the methods used in gathering the narratives from the participants through interviews and the unique focus group. The chapter then presents a discussion of the focus group used in the research as this deserve full explanation because this model was unique to qualitative research in hospitality and gastronomy. Next are the reflections on the interview fieldwork process, the use of photo and food elicitation in the interviews and focus group. In conclusion, there is a discussion on the participants' photos used in the interviews.

4.2. Research Questions

The aim and research questions are the foundation for a researcher to potentially build new theories and philosophical assumptions about the nature of human reality (Tracy 2013). This study asks the following questions:

1. *How does authenticity play a role in all the memories within gastronomic attributes (food, service and atmosphere)?*
2. *How does authenticity play a role in all the memories within gastronomic attributes (food, service and atmosphere)?*

These questions lie at the heart of this study and guide the entire research process in the fieldwork. Of course there are sub-questions within the main body of the above inquiry that drill down into the individual attributes within a gastronomic experience (for interview questions see appendice).

4.3. Research Philosophy -Social Constructivism – Theory Generation

Contained in this research paradigm is the philosophy of *hermeneutics*, as Rakic and Chambers (2010, p.116) state “*hermeneutics appears to be an appropriate paradigm for tourist-experience research as it incorporates the aspects of constructivism and phenomenology*”. Hermeneutics is a method associated with interpretive social science that originated with religious and literary studies of textual materials and in-depth inquiry into understanding deeper meanings. In studying text true meaning is rarely obvious on the surface, it can be reached only through detailed examination of the text by contemplating its many messages and seeking connections with the parts (Neuman 2007, p.101). Ablett and Dyer (2009, p.210) state that *hermeneutics* has emerged over the past four decades to become a significant framework for research in diverse areas including tourism. *Interpretive social science* is related to *hermeneutics*, a theory of meaning (Neuman 2007, p.101) and, as Gadamer (2006, p.52-53) argues, “*hermeneutics offers a philosophical reflection on the limits of all scientific and technical control of nature and society*”. A *hermeneutical* understanding of interpretation addressed the cognitive psychology of the way humans obtain, retain and process information (Ham, 1983, p.12) which can assist in the research goal to determine how memories are created in gastronomic experiences.

Phenomenology as mentioned also needs clarification on how this philosophy fit into the research paradigm. The depiction by Pernecky and Jamal (2010, p.1056) states “*phenomenology as the study of essences, the science of phenomena, and the exploration of human experience.*” Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising which emphasises the attempt to get at the truth of matters, to describe *phenomena*, in the broadest sense as whatever appears the manner in which it appears , and manifests itself to the consciousness of the experiencer (Moran 2002:4).

Hermeneutic phenomenology combined, addresses experience from the perspective of “*meanings, understandings and interpretations*”, and as “*an inclusive, critical and dialogical endeavour*” (Ablett and Dyer 2009, p.226). Experiences are an integral component of any tourism product and gastronomic experiences are a part of food tourism that is becoming one of the most popular and interesting areas in the tourism industry (Kim,

Kim and Goh, 2011, p.1159). Linking tourism experiences (gastronomic) attributes to authenticity is a theory where authenticity is the driver for positive (or negative) memories with tourists; therefore the exploration into human experiences (gastronomic) through *hermeneutic phenomenology* (interpretations) could reveal practical or theoretical commonalities helpful to tourism and hospitality planners. For example, “*staging*” authenticity within heritage tourism events affects tourist expenditures, authenticity or more accurately the perception of it – generates revenue and the tourist (Chhabra, Healy and Sills, 2003, p.716) considers its preservation important. Having a better understanding of those involved with experiences whether it is heritage based or gastronomic based, a drilling down into the narrative of participants will benefit the hospitality industry. Examples of tourism research (and their philosophies) are presented next regarding my research paradigm and a discussion why other philosophies were not as suitable.

This research uses qualitative research methods with *constructionism* as the philosophy. It needs to be noted here that a *social constructionism* philosophy assumes there is no existing reality and researches how people invent structures to make meaning of their surroundings. It is epistemology that is good for processes and meaning, flexible and good for theory generation (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012, p.25-28). A *constructionist* epistemology that uses triangulation/comparison methodology can collect the different realities and perspectives that can result in the generation of new theories (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012, p.25-28). This is the premise presented here for the understanding of gastronomic experiences. Kumar (2014, p.386) defines triangulation as the use of the same set of data from multiple sources which best achieves the objectives of your study, simply using different approaches to gather data from a sample group to draw conclusions. The multiple sources of data in my study are interviews from three distinct groups of participants and in the focus group and the use of photos from the participants.

To understand a gastronomic experience is to understand the reality of the moment through the interpretive descriptions from those who lived the experience; *social constructionist* epistemology is the most suitable methodology. This view is commonly shared by several researchers in the last decade, for example Olsen (2002, p.160) recommends a *constructivism* perspective in the study to understand non-object related

tourist experiences that are labelled authentic by the tourists themselves and sold as such by the industry. Rakic and Chambers (2010, p.27) demonstrate that in their research of tourist material they use a variety of visual and textual methods underpinned by a constructivist approach. Pernecky (2012, p.1116) presents the argument that tourism researchers are in the business of generating knowledge, and constructionism is one theory of knowledge that critically examines the applications, pitfalls and prospects of constructionism in tourism studies.

According to the research on the definition of a gastronomic experience, a first assumption would label it both a non-object (service and atmosphere) and object (food and atmosphere) experience. To support my argument for *constructionism*, I present how *positivism* does not have the characteristics to support qualitative research and how the addition of *hermeneutic phenomenology* strengthens my *social constructionism* paradigm as it contributed to detailed interpretive philosophies that provide ‘understanding’ rather than ‘explanation’.

Szarycz (2009, p.47) also presents research that states *positivist* paradigms have dominated scientific enquiry in tourism studies for decades and then goes on to argue tourism researchers have come to realise that the perspective of humans espoused by quantitative methods does not allow for researching human phenomena as holistic and interactive. Pernecky and Jamal (2010, p.1071) conclude in their study “those [researchers] inclined towards *positivism* and the scientific study of tourism should note that *positivistic* approaches to studying experience (e.g., Husserl, Giorgi, van Kamm) may have to face the critique of dis-embodiment and Cartesian dualism (separating mind / consciousness from body)”. They add that in contrast, “Heidegger’s *hermeneutic phenomenology* provides for situated and embodied accounts of tourism, and offers the opportunity to delve into the understanding of a tourist’s experience”. Examining tourism (gastronomic) experiences from within the participant’s view of the world places the researcher at the level where they (researcher) can comprehend the narratives in real context rather than as superficiality in a positivistic methodology.

A *hermeneutic phenomenology* paradigm will support intrinsic, value-laden axiology (worthy) whereas a *positivism* paradigm will display it extrinsically and value-free in comparison (Ritchie and Palmer 2005, p.104). *Phenomenology* is but one method

gaining in popularity in tourism studies that affords a systematic way to interpret the nature of consciousness and an individual's involvement in the world (Szarycz 2009, p.47). Pernecky (2012, p.1132) concludes in a study of phenomenology in tourism, "*a large part of what constructionism can do for tourism is to bring about new understandings of how something becomes 'of tourism'*"; with this being said, it is reasonable to then say that gastronomic experiences are a part "*of tourism*". As a reminder here that this study focused on gastronomic experiences in all contexts not just those within tourism.

The questions used for the research are subjective in nature; the answers come from those involved in experiences through their interpretations. Reality of the experiences as humans can only be told by the individuals involved. The philosophy of *social constructivism* is the best fit for my research paradigm; the theoretical perspectives of *positivism* will not be suitable based on my above argument

4.4. Research Strategy - Narrative Inquiry

This section discusses the research strategy used for the study, namely a narrative-based study using interviews and a focus group. Narratives include ways of talking about experience and stories, and as a research tool, this approach has become increasingly useful in studies where much research involves the interpretation of experience in some form or another (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012, p.200). Tsoukas and Hatch (2001) argue "*narratives give access to and appreciation of context that logico-scientific thinking cannot provide*" (p.998). Narrative analysis (collecting people's accounts) is a vital requirement to 'making of meaning' and understanding for analysis in this research. This recalling of gastronomic stories based on experiences with participants; autobiographical 'recall' to construct meaning of positive gastronomic events, is the basis for my research. The photo (photo-elicitation) provided by the participant is the key in starting the conversation.

Kumar (2014;194) argues narratives have almost no predetermined content except that the researcher seeks to hear a person's retelling of an incident or happening in his/her life and further states "*occasionally, you encourage the individual by using active listening*

techniques; that is, you say words such as ‘uh huh’, ‘mmm’, ‘yeah’, ‘right’ and nod as appropriate.”

“Narrative analysis typically takes the perspective of the teller, rather than that of society, as in Propp’s and Levi-Strauss’s models. If one defines narrative as a story with a beginning, middle, and end that reveals someone’s experiences, narratives take many forms, are told in many settings, before many audiences, and with various degrees of connection to actual events or persons” (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, p.465).

Using a collection of ‘stories’ (narratives) from the participants of gastronomic experiences as told in contexts can address “*who we are*” as individual people or they can be public narratives that link us to larger groups, communities, or nations (Neuman 2007, p.524). Neuman presents six features of a narrative that are all relevant to this research; 1) it tells a story or tale, 2) it has a sense of movement or process, 3) it contains interrelations or connections within a complex, detailed context, 4) it involves individuals or groups that engage in action and make choices, 5) it has coherence, that is, the whole holds together, 6) it has a temporal sequencing of a chain of events (p.525). Participants in my study recalled the events of their gastronomic experiences through narratives. The next section presents how the interviews were conducted in detail pertaining to my thesis.

4.5. Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews occurred first in this research then followed by a unique focus group, both allowing for stories to be told that: 1) are concerned with the temporal ordering of ideas, 2) usually tend to focus on the sequential patterning of events and the role of various actors within them, 3) enable a researcher to build a complex picture of social situations in order to examine the actions of the various actors in a story, and explore their own values, ideas and beliefs (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012, p.200). The interviews began with the story surrounding their submitted photo (see section 4.14. for details) then moved to their other gastronomic experiences.

The interviews took place in a public area, at a restaurant not at peak service time as to provide a comfortable setting where a beverage could be consumed (coffee, tea, wine, beer). The session was recorded using two devices an iPhone and digital recorder, a sound check was made in advance to ensure proper audio levels and no external unwanted sounds. The participant needed to feel comfortable and secure, a restaurant was a 'natural setting', a place where each views each other as having equal status (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012, p.139). The restaurant setting is a suitable locale for conducting interviews as the study itself was focused on experiences in gastronomy outside the home.

Establishing rapport is a very important goal with semi-structured interviewing as it creates an understanding between the participant and the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p.367). My experience as a chef in a restaurant setting and as a cooking class instructor to 'hobby cooks' have demonstrated that the majority of these foodies enjoys conversing with anyone 'who can cook'. The people in the restaurant or at the cooking classes look for validation of their own cooking achievements from me as an instructor and now as a researcher, they offered stories. Most of the participants had knowledge of my cooking background prior to the interviews so I do not think this affected the outcome of the narratives but did build great rapport.

Seidman (2012, p.86) presents two favourite approaches for interviewing as qualitative research, the first is 'ask participant to talk to you as if you were someone else' and second 'ask participants to tell a story'. The second approach was the goal of this research study that is to seek an understanding of the gastronomic experience outside the home; many participants may have already told the very story I was seeking to family and friends. Seidman (2012:87) elaborates that when people are asked to tell a story they suddenly remember a particular incident, become deeply engrossed in reconstructing it, and tell a wonderful story that conveys their experience. Of particular interest to this study in respect to memory creation is Seidman's advice on asking participants to reconstruct their experiences rather than try to remember it (p.88). As an example, I should ask 'What was your _____ restaurant experience like' instead of 'Do you remember what your _____ restaurant was like'. Interviewers can assume that the participants will be able to reconstruct their experience and thereby avoid many of the impediments to memory that abound (Seidman 2012:88). This means, when put in a situation (interview) without

usual distractions that can affect memory, the participant will tell the story to the best of their recollection.

As this thesis was based on collecting gastronomic experiences to seek an understanding of why some are memorable among the many we can have in a lifetime there is a need to revisit the nature of hermeneutic-phenomenological inquiry.

“In phenomenological research the emphasis is always on the meaning of lived experience. The point of phenomenological research is to “borrow” other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole human experience” (Van Manen 1990, p.62).

The process of interviewing participants of their ‘lived experiences’ with respect to gastronomic experiences is a tool to gather data. Van Marten (1990, p.66) argues that interviewing serves a very specific purposes: 1) it may be used as a means for exploring and gathering experimental narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon, and 2) the interview may be used as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience. This second point was the direction my study took with respect to ‘lived experiences’.

In addition to the narrative approach, auto-driven photo-elicitation in the methodology was also used so as to allow participants to offer personal reflections on gastronomic meaning in contextual situations. *“Visuals act as bridges between respondents and researcher experiences” (Scarles 2010:87).*

Many of the studies reviewed in chapter 2 and chapter 3 were qualitative in the methodology; a few studies are available that used photo-elicitation in tourism contexts but none that I found had used auto-driven photo-elicitation in researching gastronomic experiences. The use of auto-driven or ‘participant sourced’ photo-elicitation makes my study different rather than going down the ‘well-trodden path’ in gastronomic research. There was only one a study that involved food by Justesen, Mikkelsen and Gyimothy,

(2014) that sought reflective comments from hospital patients from photographing their meals during their stay. This study by Justesen, Mikkelsen and Gyimothy was a different variation of photo-elicitation where the photos were ‘produced by the research participant’ for the narratives (not gathered).

Finally, what is most difficult for me is to distance my knowledge and presuppositions from entering this research, this is referred to as “bracketing”, a term introduced by Husserl and used by later representatives of the phenomenological movement (Crotty 1998:83). I needed to be cognizant that I collected and analysed data in a way that did not prejudice the subjective personality of the interview participants. Crotty (1998:83) offers advice to researchers (which I took):

“To ensure that the subjective character of the experiences is not prejudiced, these researchers tend to gather data by way of unstructured interviews in which only open-ended questions if any are asked. The researchers also want to make sure the themes are pinpointed in the data do, in fact, arise out of the data and are not imposed on them.”

4.6. Photo-Elicitation and Variations

Food related photos from the participants are used as elicitation for narratives involving food experiences in specific contexts. Today, the use of mobile smart phone technology makes taking photos of experiences (ie. gastronomic) very easy plus the sharing of these experiences to wide audiences. In the book *Foodies and Food Tourism*, Getz et al. (2014:87) state that using photographs for tourism purposes is quite common; many demand-side studies identify how people interpret messages in photographs and followed up in determination purposes regarding market segmentation. The book by Getz, Robinson et al. presents the results of a photo-elicitation exercise conducted with participants from Germany, England, Italy and a group of Norwegians using a focus group format. Those in the groups were presented twenty-four photographs that the researchers judged to represent a wide range of possible tourism experiences including food in different settings and were asked to pick activities that they preferred when travelling. The exercise concluded that

pictures with food related motifs are attractive, and three out of the top four in one way or another alluded to food experiences. The most popular picture “*Enjoy regional cuisine in a local restaurant*” depicts a young couple eating at a seafood restaurant and the second most attractive “*Enjoy a farmer’s market to look and buy fresh food*” depicts a customer savouring delicacies at a food market (p.91). This exercise is important as it presents relevant findings that are pertinent to my study, firstly by showing the importance of food in our lives, second, how when given a choice of experiences we commonly choose those that are food related. Thirdly, as most of us travel, we must have food related experiences that we are willing to share and finally, these experiences are in a commercial context therefore participants are plentiful.

A definition of photo-elicitation is “*the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview*” (Harper 2002). Photographs within interviews facilitate rapport generating spaces of comfort and establishing trust as participants talk around photographs showing content they themselves have selected. Elicitation studies are not limited to photographs; other visual images can be used to incite reactions within an interview. Examples of other images are paintings, drawings, cartoons, and graphic presentations like charts and maps (Harper 2002).

The use of photographs as a technique of elicitation originated with the work of Collier in 1957 and 1967 (Rakic, Chambers 2010). It is important to note that their versions of photo-elicitation commonly used social science research. Matteucci (2013, p.191) states in a tourism based study that a review of literatures indicated that there are four main versions of photo-elicitation that have been used in social research. These are when visual materials are 1) produced by the researcher, 2) gathered by the researcher, 3) produced by the research participant, or 4) gathered by the research participant. Harper (2002) gives the example of the John Collier (1957), a photographer and researcher who produced photos of houses for surveys that made it possible for researchers to agree on previously taken for granted categorization based on quality. Collier’s research team at Cornell had experimented with photo-elicitation where they conducted similar interviews with and without the photos to test each method; in the end, they felt that photos sharpened the areas of misunderstanding. Collier (1957) concluded:

“The characteristics of the two methods of interviewing can be simply stated. The material obtained with the photographs was precise and at times encyclopaedic; the control interviews were less structured, rambling, and freer in association. Statements in the photo-interviews were in direct response to the graphic probes and different in character as content of the pictures differed, whereas the character of the control interviews seemed to be governed by the mood of the informants.”
(p.856)

Matteucci (2013) states that most image based studies consist of secondary data (photos) gathered by researchers but tourism researchers who are interested in tourist experiences predominately use photographs gathered by the research participant. Photographs gathered by participants would be from previous collections prior to the research therefore they are considered secondary data whereas photographs produced for the research are classified as primary data. An example of ‘produced by the participant’ is a study by (Bell 2010) who asked his participants to photograph the landscapes of Hadrian Wall using disposable cameras supplied to them. Bell did this for four reasons, first, to limit the number of pictures taken by participants. Second, had they used a digital camera they would choose photos based on aesthetics, the object of the research was to create narratives around their experiences and encounters. Thirdly, it gave the researcher direct face-to-face contact with the participants during the distribution of the cameras to convey the purpose of the research. Fourthly, it gave all participants opportunity to participate in the research as not everyone has a digital camera; it created ‘active’ participants. Harley (2012) offers a version referred to as PDPE or Participant-Driven Photo-Elicitation (produced by the research participant) and has three phases which are as follows; first training in the use of cameras and ethics to generate images for inductive research; second, specific photographing of subjects and scenes representing the theme or issue under study; and third, discussing photographs in interviews and focus groups (Harley 2012). PDPE was used as a self-reflective tool as part of a food geography classroom assignment, as a result the students were empowered as learners and gained a quality of insight and depth of engagement. The students participated in the “*Stone Soup Project*” that positions them as both researchers and participant-subjects (Kurtz, Wood 2014).

(Cederholm 2004) study of backpacker's experiences uses photos gathered by the research participant as a "*can opener*", a triggering mechanism for the memory of the participants. The use of photo-elicitation with the participant's own photos are a:

"...vital tool for eliciting both subjective emotions, thoughts and reflections as well as patterns in the cultural and social constructions of reality. It is especially useful in tourism research, since taking photographs is such a ritualized and integral part of tourism" (p.240).

Auto-driven photo-elicitation (gathered by the research participant) is where the interviewee or research participant supplies the photographs, thus "*driving*" the interview. The major advantage of auto-driven photo-elicitation is that the inclusion of photos contributes to full, data rich interviews (Shaw 2013). Auto-driven photo-elicitation was the variation used in my research. In addition, auto-driven photo-elicitation in previous research has provided the following benefits (table 8) which demonstrates how these benefits assisted with my thesis in research gastronomic memories.

Benefits of Photo-elicitation*	Benefits to this Research
Helps interview participants take the lead and teach the interviewer*	The participant will come prepared, ready to talk as they chose the topic in selecting a photo.
Invites open expression*	The topic is chosen and therefore the participant is never at a loss for words.
Sharpens memory*	A picture may help in recollecting the events within the photo.
Relieve participants' stress of being the subject of an interview*	Having selected the photo for discussion removes the fear of an unknown line of questioning.
Illuminates dynamics or insights not otherwise found through other methods*	Participants will have perceptions of the interview process to be undertaken.
Breaks the "frame" of the interviewer's interpretation of the interview and allows interviewees to interpret their reality in their own voices*	The interviewee will talk to their stories and their experiences based on their selection of photo.
Assists with rapport and trust building*	The rapport will begin prior to the actual interview in the conversation regarding the photo selection criteria.
Often produces unpredictable information*	The interviewer with no expectations of the photos selected therefore creating unpredictable narratives.
Promotes longer, more detailed interviews*	The topic of food itself is multi-faceted; a photo could be the tip of the iceberg.
Provides a component of multi-method triangulation*	The participants' narrative could confirm group differentiation as per the criteria to participate
Tends to increase interviewee buy-in because it is engaging*	Selecting a photo by the participant in advance would confirm acceptance to be involved in the research.
Lessens the awkwardness of an interview because there is something upon which to focus*	Food is a popular topic in everyday conversation and a photo is a good 'ice breaker' in meeting new people

4.7. Table 8. - Benefits of Photo-Elicitation/Research

*Collier 1986; Clark-Ibanez 2004; Harper 2002; Hurworth 2003; Loeffler 2004; Samuels 2004, Taylor 2002.

Methodological tools that induce memories would be in the best interest of this study and especially with the adage, "*a picture is worth a thousand words*" will hopefully be true and elicit pertinent conversation that leads to theories. The selection of the participants in this research study is described in the following section.

4.8. Selection of Participants

All of the participants (prior to the interviews/focus group) were told this research study is regarding gastronomy/cuisine in restaurant settings and there is no mention of ‘authenticity’, ‘tourism’ or ‘memories’ in the participant’s invitation to take part in this research (web page ‘billgregorash.com’ and print material). It was felt that any mention of these words would be ‘leading’ and enticing stories prior to contact in the interviews or focus group. To achieve the objective of this research which focused on memories and authenticity, giving participants time to prepare a story was felt defeated the overall plan.

The initial objective for participants to take part in the interview process was set at twenty-four, with twenty as the minimum. It was felt that the interviews would be the ‘main course’ in this study and the focus group session would be the ‘dessert’...more specifically the ‘icing on the cake’.

4.9. Selection criteria

The qualitative researcher early on identifies his or her biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study. By identifying one’s biases, one can see easily where the questions that guide the study are crafted (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, p.212). With this being said, I made sure that I followed the criteria in the initial pre-selection of interview candidates:

- No friends, family or fellow employees, for obvious bias reasons and,
- No current hospitality employees, these people could be classified as ‘experts’ within the food service industry and possibly enter a bias based on their experiences based on their place of employment. This study is more about how the general populace experience foodservice and not how foodservice personal experience food and service. A question in the participant (application) form asks if they are currently in the foodservice industry, of course, a participant may have past experience that is common in Canada and I feel not an issue.

The second selection criterion was to ensure I had participants who could be categorized within one of three groups based on their gastronomic activity; I have selected seven

participants for each group. It is known that cuisine plays a role in tourism, as tourists *must* eat at the destination, therefore gastronomic experiences *must* occur (Everett 2016). With this being said and we have seen that tourists each have priorities when it comes to how they enjoy their physiological needs, and it is safe to say that most people have the same standards (adventurous/cautious) at home as well as on holiday. It is also a safe assumption to make that those who travel would have the opportunity to experience unique gastronomic events rather than the psychocentric's who choose to stay close to home. This study looked for those with many gastronomic experiences and determined that those that travel will have 'plenty of them' and wish to share their stories.

A short questionnaire was administered to determine which group potential participants fit into (see appendices). The criteria for three groups (A, B, and C) would have specific characteristics:

4.10. Group A

Foodies Well-Travelled (FWT)– Would be composed of self-admitted culinary tourists who have travelled to at least two or more gastronomically branded tourist regions outside their country, specifically outside of North America (Canada, United States, Mexico) as this is the source of this study's participant pool. I determined that the popular gastronomically branded regions outside North America would be France, England, China, Thailand, Japan, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Peru, and the less popular, but would still qualify was North Africa, Poland, Russia, Australia, the countries of South and Central America including the Caribbean. Any travel outside of North America qualified as Group A because I felt that American cuisine was well represented in Canada and so was Mexican therefore added nothing drastically unique to the experiences. The same applied to food events in the Caribbean, which is not known for gastronomic experiences. I feel that there are huge gastronomic differences 'across the pond' justifying the reasoning in identifying the groups.

The Group A travellers admitted that they chose destinations based on the desire to sample cuisine of a specific culture as a primary reason for the trip. Participants who

selected the ‘cuisine’ ahead of ‘sightseeing landmarks’ for the ‘reason for visiting’ the destination was the qualifying entry characteristic to participate in Group A. I would categorize these people as “the Foodies Well-Travelled” (FWT) and using the terminology by Getz, Robinson et al. (2014) to define this group including Highly Involved Foodies (HiFs) defined as those who:

“prefer active hands-on food experiences, for example farmers’ markets, food festivals, meeting and learning from chefs, and food trails. The remainder of “foodies” sample prefer sedentary (eating) food experiences, for example good food while at a harbour, romantic dinners and regional cuisine at local restaurants; also hiking and viewing wildlife, experiencing and outdoor concert and staying at a spa” (p.85).

4.11. Group B

Travellers Not Foodies (TNF) would be composed of frequent travellers who visit primarily for sightseeing and culture in the same gastronomically branded regions as mentioned for Group A, the difference with this group is that food/cuisine was not the driving factor in choosing the destination, it may be listed as important but not a primary factor. Having these participants in the study provides a control group who would be dispassionate regarding food and beverage experiences. Analysis of the data between the Group A (FWT) and Group B (TNF) will provide varied observations regarding cuisine as each group has differing priorities while travelling.

4.12. Group C

‘Foodies’, people who eat and cook for a hobby but not big travellers, those who have not been to places like France, England, China, Thailand, Japan, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Peru. Barr and Levy (1984) define a “foodie” as a person who is very, very, very, interested in food. They do not think they are being trivial – foodies consider food to be an

art, on a level with painting and drama (p.6). The foodies in this category are perhaps no different from the foodies in Group A about their personal philosophy towards a lifestyle with food and beverages, the difference is that this group has not travelled. The reason for the lack of travel in this group is not part of this study, as there could be various, lack of money and fear of flying to name two. The important fact is that this group is mostly practicing ‘omnivores’ and need to be included in this study because they will add local perspective versus a global one especially regarding authenticity of ethnic foods and cooking. For example, the Group C foodies will have only sampled ethnic foods in a local ‘close to home’ context as opposed to the Group A foodies who have been to the ‘source’ of certain ethnic cuisines. This differing of gastronomic experiences allowed the participants to express viewpoints on authenticity of foods and beverages based on the extent of their personal experiences through travel, or lack of.

With this being said it is important to understand the participants in this study brought their experiences to the interviews that are unique perhaps only to them. By ensuring that two thirds of the participants in this study have been exposed to foreign cultures outside, the western world (where they reside) created rich data from food stories. The experiences of tourists with respect to food are just as important as the experiences from those who have food experiences at home, because it needs to be noted one third of the participants are not travellers. To remove the bias, this study will treat all food experiences equal of content value and devoid of context.

There is another group that was not included, those people who do not travel and do not qualify by my standard as ‘foodies’, this group would have nothing to add to this study as the focus here is on gastronomy in a commercial context. These folk maybe content with dining out occasionally therefore would not have the depth of experiences needed to validate this study. Future research may involve this group and ask why they do not seek gastronomic experiences.

4.13. Group Differentiation

As this study is only dealing with gastronomy in a commercial context, therefore accepts ‘food out of the home’ as more ‘unique’ food experiences. In addition food

experiences that take place while on holiday are consumed perhaps in a different frame of mind. Kivela and Crotts (2005) argue “*it is normal that we should experience pleasure as an essential part of a holiday experience, and dining out should be a pleasurable and memorable part of that experience*”(p.42). With this being said, this study can expect participants to recall gastronomic experiences from on holiday and those close to home, therefore both need to be treated as equal experiences, emphasis will not be placed upon gastronomic experiences based on where they occurred.

The first reason for the three distinct groups is to look for themes regarding food and authenticity that are unique based on how important food is to the individual over and above meeting physiological needs. The second is to look for interpretations of authenticity within gastronomic experiences between groups, as each will have distinct exposure from their travels or lack of.

4.14. Photo Requirements in Interviews/Focus Group

All of the participants for the interviews and the focus group who are eligible to take part in this study were asked to submit **one** photograph prior to the interview or focus group. The photo has to be related to a past *personal* gastronomic/food experience in a digital format that they wished to share with me (researcher) and others (for focus group). The content of the photos submitted by all participants in this study are *not* part of the data for analysis. The content of the photos have personal meaning that drives the narratives from the participants and the only interest to this study is their story. The photos are only a ‘prop’ to help the participants recollect their memory and any analysis of how *I* interpret the photo by me is not an objective of this study but I did make comments on the content and selection. All participants’ sign a release as part of the ‘informed consent’ process should their photo be included in published literature providing they are not previously copyrighted if they were sourced on-line. The photo stipulation was kept simple with few restrictions that allowed for ease of submission. The photograph requirements communicated to the participants are as follows:

1. A photo depicting a **past** personal gastronomic/food/beverage experience in a commercial context (i.e. restaurant, hotel, resort, club, winery, market, farm, artisanal shop). The photo has to be of a past event/experience, a photo depicting a future ‘place to visit’ by a participant will not bring a narrative that speaks of a memory.
2. Photo can show people/place or thing. The photo can be of a ‘plate of food’ which is very common with today’s smart phone technology; these photos are commonly posted to social media sites for sharing. As on a three-star Michelin chef at the New York City, Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Show stated, *“Ten minutes after a plate leaves my kitchen, ten thousand people know what it tastes like”* (D. Boulud, personal communication, November 12, 2011). Photos may also include people associated with the gastronomic experience, for example, restaurant staff, customers, table guests, celebrities, or family.
3. Participant does not have to appear in photo. The photo may be that of an exterior of a restaurant or marketplace which would be enough to elicit a memory.
4. Photo could have been taken by other than participant (known or anonymous).
5. Does not have to show a specific food/beverage.
6. In good taste (figuratively).
7. Standard digital JPEG format that will allow ease of use to produce a PowerPoint presentation (focus group).

During the interview, participants were presented with their chosen photograph along with a semi-structured line of interview questioning. Photographs within interviews facilitate rapport generating spaces of comfort and establishing trust as participants talk around photographs showing content they themselves have selected.

4.15. Sourcing Participants

Social and other online media offer new ways to connect directly with foodies in an apparent and sometimes real one-to-one manner (Getz, Robinson et al. 2014, p.188). Foodies have countless sources of online information regarding food and beverages; the

ability to create an experience is a touch away through the use of smart phone technology. With apps like 'Open Table' a reservation can be made at a top restaurant in any city with 3-4 taps on a smart phone creating the opportunity for a gastronomic experience. In addition, online marketing was directly aimed at foodies (the public as well) concerning gastronomic offerings and food blogs, retail kitchen equipment shopping, gourmet products, wine offerings and recipes. This study will take advantage of this online activity to source potential participants by setting up a web page that introduces this study and offers opportunity to qualify for participation.

My place of employment (Confederation College, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada) gave me the opportunity to consult with experts (colleagues/professors) in web page design/operation, online application processes, social media platforms and online digital marketing as resources which were most helpful. The web page is under the URL 'billgregorash.com' making the task of finding the site easy. The site will present a bio of me, a brief CV, and an introduction to the research study in an easy to navigate manner with a professional on-screen appearance. The focus of the web page will be on the research in general with the exception of the actual research questions. It was felt necessary to hold back using the words 'memory' and 'authenticity' to eliminate implied bias for potential participants. Instead the research will be portrayed around 'experiences' within gastronomy in a commercial context (restaurant, hotel, resort, farm, market, artisanal producer). I will ensure there are plenty of gastronomic photos from my collection available on the web page to make the site somewhat interesting to encourage potential participants and even a few favorite recipes from my days working in the industry. In addition a simplistic 'food blog' will be included on the web page where I would share my gastronomic experiences and seek feedback from all those visiting the site. This may provide insight for future lines of questioning as people visiting the blog would speak to what is current in the industry and offer their opinions of gastronomy.

Visitors to the web page will have the opportunity to apply using the 'participant in the research' drop down page and complete an online form and questionnaire that would help determine which group they would qualify as per the methodology; Group A 'foodies well-travelled', Group B 'travelers not foodies' and Group C 'foodies'. The groups will differentiate the participants based on their exposure and experience in gastronomic

experiences offer perhaps unique narratives. The data from the participant questionnaire is not part of the analysis in this study; it is only to determine which group they could qualify for and if they qualify at all. An attempt will be made to equally conduct individual interviews from each group to present an all-round sampling for the analysis of this study.

4.16. Web Page Questionnaire

The web page application process would only ask for a name and contact information (email) and the questionnaire in table 9 lists the five questions and rationale.

Questions	Rationale
1. In the past 10 years list which countries you have travelled to? (Space provided to type answers)	This question includes business travel, even though the destination for business travel is not selected perhaps by the participant, business travelers may wish to share gastronomic experiences. Those who travel for business most likely would be categorized by default as Group B ‘travelers not foodies’ because their motive for travel is not for food...it is possible they may be foodies which will not unbalance the participant mix.
2. When (or if) choosing a location/place/country/city to visit for pleasure, pick a factor important in your decision making process. (Choose one) <input type="checkbox"/> New Sightseeing Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> New Experiences in Food <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure Activities (beach, spa, etc.) (Required)	This question will differentiate Group A and Group B participants by their choice of factors, this question also will identify foodies. If an applicant chooses ‘New Experiences in Food’ and has no travel experiences, this would lead me to believe that this person is an obvious foodie searching for more experiences away from home.
3. When dining away from home, how important are food ‘experiences’ in your life? (Drop down menu) <input type="checkbox"/> New sight-seeing opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> New experiences in Food <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure activities (beach, spa, etc.) (Required)	This question seeks to determine if the applicant is a ‘foodie’, Getz, Robinson et al. (2014) defines the foodie as “ <i>a food lover, one whose personal and social identity encompasses food quality, cooking, sharing meals and food experiences; foodies incorporate all aspect of food into their lifestyle, which often leads them to travel for new and authentic food experiences</i> ”(p.6). In addition this question also frames the answer to be in a commercial context which is one of the strategies within this study.
4. Do you currently work in the foodservice industry? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	This is the exclusion question
5. If you are selected to take part in this research study would you be willing to submit and share a photo depicting a past personal gastronomic/food/beverage experience in a commercial context (i.e. restaurant, hotel, resort, club, winery, market, farm, artisanal shop)? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	This is the final qualifier to participate in the research study, those selected to participate will be given the additional photograph requirements.

4.17. Table 9. - Web page questionnaire

Potential participants were directed to the web site using 8 ½ x 5 ½ printed cards that offered a brief description of the research and a bio of the researcher. These cards were designed and printed in color with the help of fellow marketing and multi-media colleagues to make them attractive and ‘interesting’. The cards offered the applicants the opportunity to win a gift certificate at a popular fine dining restaurant in a lottery format once they applied using the web page (billgregorash.com). The cards were available at select restaurants across the city of Thunder Bay where the management directed staff to distribute them at will to customers with the presentation of guest checks. The participating restaurants will be offered a copy of the completed study as a thank you for helping to gather participants; after all it may be in their best interest to learn about how memories are made within gastronomic experiences in a commercial context.

4.18. Incentives

Because this study took place in Canada, I felt it necessary to include the issue of ‘offering incentives to participate in research’ and how the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (2014) Tri-Council Policy Statement Article 3.1 that states addresses it:

“Incentives are anything offered to participants, monetary or otherwise, for participation in research (incentives differ from reimbursements and compensation for injury, which are discussed in Article 3.2[j]). Because incentives are used to encourage participation in a research project, they are an important consideration in assessing voluntariness. Where incentives are offered to participants, they should not be so large or attractive to encourage reckless disregard of risks.....This policy neither recommends nor discourages the use of incentives. The onus is the researcher to justify to the REB [Research Ethics Board] the use of a particular model and the level of incentives. In considering the possibility of undue influence in research involving financial or other incentives, researchers and REBs should be sensitive to issues such as the economic circumstances of those in the pool of prospective participants, the age and capacity of participants, the customs and

practices of the community, and the magnitude and probability of harms (see Chapter 4, Section B).”

(TCPS2, 2014)

To address the incentive potential issue, a prize was offered that would enable the winner to partake in a dining experience no different from the one experienced where they were approached to take part in the research. The value of the prize is near the value of a dinner for two in a Thunder Bay up-scale restaurant, therefore the prize is not a distractor from the research study, only an enhancement for participants. The incentive offered in my study was also approved by the University of Leicester Research Ethics Board.

4.19. Research Ethics/Informed Consent

This study is deemed ‘minimal risk’ and is generally eligible for delegated Research Ethic Board (REB) review by most Ontario College Boards. Normally full REB review is the default requirement but an REB may delegate research ethics review to an individual or individuals in the case of minimal risk research. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (2010) policy defines minimal research as “*research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research*” (p.23). In this study, an ‘Informed Consent Form’ will be used that offers participants the following basic information such as the **purpose** of this research study ‘to explore the role of authenticity in the creation of positive memories within gastronomic experiences so as to gain an understanding in memory creation’. The **possible risks**, minimal ‘low risk’, **benefits** which are none, **participation and withdrawal from the study**, which is voluntary, and **cost and payment for participation**, there are none. Most importantly, the participant was offered confidentiality and release of personal information as the form will state:

“All information related to this research study will remain de-identified and the extent permitted by applicable laws and/or regulations will not be made publically available without your written permission. Data (narrative in text) derived from

this study will be used for research purposes, only the principal investigator will be granted direct access to all the data related to this study. Transcripts and photos will be de-identified and pseudo names used within the written study. By signing and dating this informed consent form, you agree to such disclosure.”

A possible issue may be the fact that this study used a focus group where a dinner was served. As with any meal in a commercial context there are risks with regard to allergies and food reactions (i.e. food poisoning) but basically the same risk that one would encounter within normal aspects of ‘daily life’. To mitigate these potential risks, all participants were asked to advise the researcher of any food allergies to be conveyed to the designated chef preparing the meal. In addition, as certified chef du cuisine, I ensured the quality of food and the cooking methods used to prepare the meals were sound standard practices that promised food safety. The menu also was planned by myself and took into account that the food (and beverage) will be in season and easily prepared for the focus group safely. The restaurant used for the focus group dinner had a ‘clean’ bill of health as per Thunder Bay District Health Unit standards, a published list of restaurant health ratings are available on-line.

Research ethics approval was sought from not only the University of Leicester but Confederation College as well due to the fact I am an employee conducting research. I am currently a member of the Confederation College REB and will declare a conflict regarding my application. Also, note, I am a REB board member of the Thunder Bay Health Sciences Centre also and as a result of my participation and experience on two REBs I feel that the ethical treatment of the participants within this research were securely embraced and not ignored. Twenty-one participants were recruited and interviewed for this study and seven returned to take part in the focus group. Participants for the interview and the focus group dinner signed separate informed consent forms.

4.20. Reflections from the fieldwork – Recruitment Process (n=21)

Looking back at the fieldwork process beginning with the recruitment, I would say it was a lot more difficult than first expected as the issue was getting the message out into the community. Learning how to make and manage a web page was the first step that enabled potential participants a place to ‘sign-up’ and learn more about my research. The second step was to hire a graphic artist to design and print ‘post cards’ about the research to hand out at select restaurants. The cards had information on my research and information to drive potential participants to my web page. The third step involved the actual getting the message out there, I set up a static display (hall-table) in the college where I work, I was a guest on the local CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio morning show talking about my research plus I set up a table at the local farmer’s market for five Saturday mornings during the summer where I was there to offer information and take applications. After two months I had just over forty participant applications, but because I had wanted three distinct groups (Groups A, B, C), the challenge was to have equal numbers to draw from in each group. The magic number I was aiming for was 20 to 24 participants, a number based on similar qualitative studies; Taar (2014) used “22 *recall stories*” to identify factors that influence the experience of gastronomic satisfaction. Marshal et al. (2013) argues between 20 and 30 interviews are recommended for qualitative studies that took saturation into account.

Group A and C participants were most abundant, group B participants were elusive, and these were the folks not into food for travel but did travel. The next step was also very time consuming, which was responding to the potential participants by email and now requesting a photo of ‘their’ gastronomic experience. Once I received the photo, I would consider the participant was serious to participate and then schedule an interview. I tried to conduct the interviews at times convenient to the participants while juggling my own work schedule, interviews were conducted in restaurants, my office, their offices and their homes. One participant was in Toronto who heard my radio interview and wanted to partake so was accommodated with an interview while I was on a business trip to Toronto. I enjoyed the interview process and felt that I was getting better at interviewing the more I conducted. If I was to start over I cannot see doing anything differently, I’m glad that I held

out and made sure I got equal representation of participants from each group as it offered diverse stories of gastronomic experiences.

4.21. Data Analysis

Framing the collected data with respect to the philosophical and methodological assumptions was an important goal of this research. The challenge was to condense the highly complex and contextual information into a format that is sharable in the hospitality and academic community. Because the qualitative nature of this research is based on a social constructivism perspective, the focus will be on thematic analysis, supported by the assertions of narrative inquiry.

Phenomenology is an empirically based methodology that seeks *“to find and systemize forms of thought in terms of which people interpret aspects of reality.... [Through] description, analysis, and understanding of experiences ...”* (Marton 1981, p.180). Perceptions of experience are gained from others are hierarchically inclusive relationships. The structured categories of descriptions produce a comprehensible framework, from the perspective of the participants as a whole, for understanding the ‘outcome space’. This outcome space describes the common, intersubjective meanings of the phenomenon that are stable and generalizable across situations (Bazeley 2013, p.247).

The process of phenomenological analysis *“is a strongly iterative and comparative one, involving the continual sorting and resorting of data, plus ongoing comparisons between data and the developing categories of description, as well as between the categories themselves”* (Akerlind 2005, p.324). The recommended steps in this process are based on Akerlind (2005), Marton (1981), and Sin (2010):

- Within the limits of the topic, select a maximum-variation sample to interview, to facilitate comparative analysis.
- Ask questions about the phenomenon being studied. Follow up questions by asking interviewees to reflect on terms that they have used (even those that appear obvious).

- Once all interviews are completed and transcribed, read all the transcripts to become familiar with the data.
- Identify different conceptions of the phenomenon, taking into account both its referential (meaning) aspect and its structural aspect, and code into a collective scheme to maximize similarities within categories and differences between categories. Data will now be re-conceptualized in terms of the category, rather than the individuals who provide them, although the individual context will be checked to confirm interpretation.
- Revise, recode and review as necessary in an iterative process to identify global meanings (those that are supported by evidence of being widely held), along with associated structural features, The idea is to separate forms of thought from the process of thinking and the thinker so as to discern categories of description held by the collective mind.
- Report findings by describing the qualitatively different categories of conception of the phenomenon. Each conception should offer something distinctive, but the goal also is to be parsimonious: *“we have repeatedly found that phenomena, aspects of reality, are experienced (or conceptualized) in relatively limited number of qualitatively different ways”* (Marton, 1981, p.181). Use quotations to support and clarify these conceptions, ensuring that they have been selected to correctly convey the interviewees’ intended meanings.

The goal of research adopting a phenomenological approach is to provide a thematic description of the participants’ experience by adopting a holistic strategy and trying to relate the participant’s descriptions of specific experiences to each other and to the overall context of their life-world (Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989). The verbatim transcriptions become the text from which interpretation arises (Kvale 1983). “The exclusive reliance on verbatim interview transcripts reflects three methodological criteria of phenomenological interpretations – the emic approach, the autonomy of the text, and bracketing”(Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989). Emic and etic are terms to represent approaches for analyzing cultural and social settings first presented by Pike (1957). The first criteria, “*emic*” method, rely on the interpretations of the respondents, their accounts,

descriptions analyzed in their terms rather than the researchers (Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989). In contrast, the “*etic*” constructs are descriptions of behavior or beliefs regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the community of social analysts or scientific observers (ibid).

Using the participants’ own terms is a way of remaining grounded to the life-lived experiences. The second methodological facet of the autonomy criterion is that any interpretations should not adopt hypothesis, conjectures and implications that exceed the evidence that was obtained in the transcripts (ibid.). The final criterion is “*bracketing*” described by Tufford and Newman (2012) as “...as a method used by some researchers to mitigate the potential deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the project.” The fact that I have been connected to the foodservice industry for most of my adult life bracketing was an important technique to focus on at all points in the research. I applied the method of bracketing by writing memos throughout the data collection and analysis. This was a means to examine and reflect upon the data; Glaser (1998) defines the process of memoing as one of freedom, as opposed to one of restriction, which may lead to important understandings on the part of the researcher.

The objective of conducting phenomenological research on participants’ memorable gastronomic experiences was to identify common themes from their events on how they individually interpreted meaning from their photo and recalled ‘food in restaurant’ stories in the context of memory creation. The goal of the research is to give a thematic description of experience (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989); therefore data analysis for this research study was conducted through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis permits large amounts of qualitative information (transcripts) to be analyzed in a methodical manner. This helps the researcher to gain a better understanding and interpretation of behaviour (Boyatzis 1998). The qualitative software computer program NVivo version 10 (later 11) was used in the coding process after the initial bracketing of memos in a journal.

Due to the line of questioning that surrounded the photo (elicitation) of the participant, codes categories were developed in line with the specific inquiry to begin formations of themes. “*The term ‘theme’ is best used to describe an integrating, relational statement derived from the data that identifies both content and meaning*” (Bazeley 2013).

“Theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection” (Saldana 2015). Thematic analysis is sometimes presented as an alternative to coding, especially by those who indicate concern about fracturing or segmenting data in a way that does not allow for reconnection of fractured elements. This was the case due to the multiple directions coding could have taken the data from the questioning of the photo experiences alone. *“The consensus among those who seek to interpret, analyse, and theorise qualitative data, however, is that the development of themes on data coded already”* (Bazeley 2013). Bazeley (2013) offer various strategies for generating themes, the pertinent points to this research are listed below:

- If you become aware of a pattern of trend (a theme) while reading/working through the data, note it in an analytic memo.
- Cut out (physically or electronically) exemplar quotes or expressions and arrange these into piles of things that go together [note: NVivo was a great tool to do this].
- Note repetitive or patterned relationships between identified elements in the data.
- Create thematic connections based on the relationship between a set of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences.
- Go beyond identifying or constructing simple thematic statements to consider how the various themes intersect to create a constellation. Explore their content and their interrelationships to build a coordinated network of understanding.

4.22. The Focus Group Details

In addition to the 21 interviews a focus group was conducted comprised of the previous available participants (up to 7 people). On June 8th, 2016, I held the focus group for this research, in a private dining room (restaurant) in Confederation College. An invitation went out a month in advance to seven participants who were selected at random from the group of twenty-one previous interview participants. Those that were available to attend were asked to submit (digitally) another photo of a memorable gastronomic experience; this was my way to ensure they would participate again. As a result, all seven

who were invited showed up for the focus group, I did send a ‘gentle reminder’ six days prior to the event.

4.23. Framework for Analysis on the Focus Group

Bazeley (2013) outlines a framework for analysis that emphasises the interactivity expected within a focus group illustrated in table 10.

Group component	Aspect of interaction for analysis
What?	What topics/opinions produced consensus? What statement seemed to evoke conflict? What were the contradictions in the discussion? What common experiences were expressed? Did the collective interaction generate new insights or precipitate an exchange of information among participants?
Who?	Whose interests were being represented in the group? Were alliances formed among the group members? Was a particular member viewpoint silenced?
How?	How closely did the group adhere to the issues presented for discussion? How did the group members respond to the ideas of others? How did the group resolve disagreements? How were the emotions handled? How were the non-verbal signs and behaviours used to contribute to the discussion?

4.24. Table 10. - *Analysing group interaction*

Source: Bazeley (2013, p.199)

Exploring the contribution of the focus group participants using the Bazeley analysis assisted with the themes that were the determination of additional themes that coincide with those from the interviews and bring in new thoughts.

After thorough reading of the interview and focus group transcripts and memos, a full list of emergent themes was generated and the responses categorised into themes. The

development of these themes called for a substantial amount of interpretation and imagination on my part. The codes started with the line of questioning and documenting notes of developing patterns then began the process of formally processing each transcript individually using NVivo. Each transcript required a thorough review to identify significant quotes and expressions that would support emergent themes and discovery of new themes. In this way, the quotes and selected text used in the analysis to support the key arguments had a rationale for inclusion.

4.25. Focus Group and Food-Elicitation – Setting the Table

I would like to introduce and explain the term **Food-Elicitation** to this research as this was a tactic in the methodology; the objective was to serve a four-course meal during the focus group that would elicit narratives regarding further gastronomic experiences. At this time there was no previous research in gastronomy where **food-elicitation** was used in a focus group. There are obvious focus group situations where the food is the object of discussion in a focus group. We know that product testing using focus groups is done as a norm to test consumer product acceptance: in my focus group, the food was never intended to be part of the research study. Field notes will be recorded on the strategy, as using food in a focus group would be of interest in separate studies in gastronomy, consumer experience and methodology techniques.

The food at the focus group was intended to create an environment where participants would feel comfortable as opposed to awkwardness associated with the meeting strangers for the first time. I took the *literal* advice of Tracy (2013) who offered recommendations for “*planning the logistical details of focus groups*” and stated “*Like planning and hosting a party, focus groups require a combination of event planning and organizational skill, crowd control, graceful introductions, and sustained good cheer*” (p.168). Having years of experience in the hospitality industry, organizing a four course dinner was a piece of cake, what was the challenge, was my agenda. Setting out what I wanted to achieve over the course of dinner. In creating this food-elicitation focus group the participants had an idea of their agenda the same as attending any function (party) with a sit-down dinner being served, they could pace themselves in conversation. It is obvious that the participant

attendance was influenced by the fact that they knew in advance of my qualifications as a chef and history of operating a fine dining restaurant and as a result, there were no “no-shows”.

The experiment of adding ‘eclectic’ food to a group of people who were there to mainly talk about food felt like a natural thing to do. However, the fear was that the participants would focus on the food at hand and not previous memorable experiences or the conversations would veer of course as a normal dinner party banter drifts aimlessly. Another potential threat to the outcomes of this unique focus group was the addition of alcohol. Inviting someone for a “chef prepared” four-course dinner and not serving a proper glass of wine would not seem the right thing to do, mainly because the participants were known as ‘foodies’ for one and they were extensive travellers. The thought of conducting the focus group without wine was never an option, note this was mentioned in the Leicester Ethics review process and approved (the server for this event was qualified to serve alcohol for commercial hospitality by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario). One would think the effects of wine would only add to the relaxed nature of a focus group especially when combined with fine food and create free flowing conversation

As a backup, I had readied a PowerPoint presentation just in case I needed to get the group back on track the subject at hand, the PowerPoint had a few “topics” I could have brought up. Here are the back-up topics I could have presented on-screen; “Ethnic authenticity, what is it? Is it a memory maker?”, “Recollection triggers? Why this and not that?”, “Is the person(s) you are with an important factor?”, “Do we have to leave home to make gastronomic memories?”, “What is authenticity within food, service and atmosphere?” and finally “How does value play a role?” I also included the new photos provided by the participants in the PowerPoint for additional photo-elicitation narrative should time allow.

The goal was to keep the conversation focused on food experiences, as they were in the midst of one, I did not want the food being served to detract from the narratives. The food served was designed to be somewhat avant-garde and not ‘gourmet’ (expensive/rare ingredients) therefore the food would divert the conversation. I like to think the food would add a diversion to keep those who may have felt uncomfortable ‘just listening’, would have

something to do rather than sit and appear attentive if there was no meal as in a regular focus group.

In summary, the food in the actual dinner was only used as props to elicit conversation surrounding memorable gastronomic experiences and never analysed as part of this study. The photos submitted (on PowerPoint) were a back-up in case the conversation began to drift away from the objective on gathering new stories of memorable gastronomic experiences using the “group effect” (Tracy 2013).

4.26. The Participants

Of the seven participants who attended the focus dinner, there were four females and three males, ages from late 20’s to early 60’s. There were four participants from Group A traveller/foodies, two participants from Group B travellers/non-foodie and one participant from Group C non-traveller/foodie. None had any dietary constraints. Each had been previously interviewed six months earlier.

4.27. The Focus Group Setting

A table was prepared for seven participants and that allowed for ample room and comfortable chairs, the room was carpeted and a tablecloth used to keep the ambient noise to a minimum as the session was recorded using two portable digital sound recording devices. I decided that video cameras would not be used to record the event due to the obtrusive nature of cameras. As a result, I do not think the recording devices I used were even noticed on the table, the participants did know the table conversation would be recorded.

4.28. The Food and Service

The menu was planned by a colleague (Shane Warwick) a certified Chef/Pastry Chef of thirty plus years with minimal input from me on the details. I did provide certain

parameters, 1) make it fun food not too gourmet, 2) make it somewhat avant-garde, 3) use minimal cutlery to cut down on table 'noise', 4) four courses using combination of 'family style' and 'plated' service 5) keep the food budget reasonable as this expense was out of my pocket. The service for the event was by Janice Chase a service instructor/lab technician of the Confederation College Culinary Management Program.

The menu consisted of:

Antipasto Tray (on arrival)

"Frito Pie"

"Noodle Bowl"

"Stew and Sticks"

"A Split Dessert"

Note: Sparkling wine was served upon arrival and two varieties of a dry chilled rose wine with dinner as it was 'summer' weather at the time.

4.29. The Event

The event began at 6pm with an offering of a glass of sparkling wine to each participant, this was a 'stand-up' portion of the evening, there was a platter of antipasto, crackers and breads available to compliment. It was during this time I presented each participant with a consent form, different from the one used for the interview as this involved food and drink. Participants had the option to refuse eating the food or consuming the beverages, the consent form was approved by the University of Leicester and Confederation College Research Ethics Boards. At 6:30 pm the guests who were invited (7) were asked to sit down, the recording devices were turned on and each participant was asked to state their name. The purpose of the brief introduction was more of a sound check for the transcription person. I scheduled two and half-hours for the session with the dinner. I had prepared a PowerPoint presentation that had 'topics of discussion' as mentioned earlier to display if the conversation began to lag plus the actual participant photos I had available to show at the end of the session if needed also.

The first course (Frito Pie) was promptly served, wine and water was available during the dinner. The Pie consisted of fresh Chili con Carne, sour cream, guacamole,

served on Frito corn chips using the actual bag as the bowl. This course was to elicit conversation of unique food experiences the participants may have had in past gastronomic experiences.



4.30. Image 3 - "Noodle Soup"

The second course (Noodles) was a fresh-made Asian noodle soup with chicken and herbs, the soup was served in an emptied disposable “cup of soup” container to create the illusion it was a store-bought convenience item (Image 3). The ‘convenience’ menu item was to remind the participants that food has changed drastically over the past few decades and offer gastronomic stories of day past.

The main course was served family style, it consisted of a French style beef stew, chunks of tender braised beef in a demi-glaze brown sauce with tender carrots, mushrooms, and baby potatoes...on the side, the chef prepared Indian style flatbreads . The guests were presented with a bouquet of freshly sharpened twigs (tree branches) to be used as utensils to...stab a piece of meat and vegetable, place it on a flatbread and dine as perhaps our ancestors did around a campfire. Spence, Hobkinson et al. (2013) presented a similar example of a meal created at the “*House of Wolf*” in London 2012 also to stimulate the senses of diners by engaging their sense of touch. One of the courses at this session involved patrons using “*small whittled tree branches as cutlery*” (p.6) to eat a traditional

Scottish venison dish. The rationale here was to stimulate memory perhaps of other gastronomic events where the senses were extraordinarily activated.

The dessert course consisted of a split banana with two balls of ice cream, passed around the table were ‘gourmet’ style toppings including chocolate ganache, fresh pineapple compote, candied pralines, strawberry coulis, fresh mascarpone cream and marinated cherries. This dessert was the ‘grown-up’, ‘modern’ version of a typical banana split, another delicacy of one’s youth.

4.31. Focus Group Agenda

6:00pm to 6:45pm	Guest arrival – Sparkling wine and appetizers (passed) Consent forms for focus groups completed
6:45pm	Seated for dinner Formal introductions Explain the process (goal)
7:00pm	Serve the first course Comments on the food welcome
7:30 pm	Serve the second course Comments on the food welcome
8:00pm	Serve the main course Comments on the food welcome
8:45pm	Serve the dessert Comments on the dessert
9:30pm	Conclusion and Thanks

This agenda was only a guideline; a PowerPoint presentation was prepared with a few ‘topics of interest’ talking points around authenticity of food.

4.32. The Focus Group – A Reflection

The focus group was probably the most valuable component of this research for five reasons. First, it allowed the participants to confirm their feelings of their initial story behind their photo in the interview with new similar stories. It allowed me as the researcher to follow up and confirm the attitudes towards meanings in the gastronomic experiences and gather more thoughts from them on what is authentic with respect to food and events. Almost half of the two hour, fifty-three minute dinner session was a discussion related to authenticity of food, restaurants and experiences. There is plenty of data (transcript) in this section alone to write papers on perceptions of authenticity on food, restaurant experiences, atmosphere and service.

Second, this group had an enlightening discussion on ‘foodies’, a topic mentioned in this paper earlier but here there is a critical discussion that is out of the focus for this study but plenty of narratives to begin future conversations relevant in today’s culinary world. Third, the focus group entered into a discussion on restaurants and senses (specifically smell) which again were discussed briefly in this study but not into the detail, it deserves. I can envision a future study looking at consumer perceptions, experiences or memories linked to sensory attributes in gastronomic experiences. The fourth reason this focus group was valuable was it offered insight into consumer perceptions on the restaurant industry as a whole. Beginning with a continued conversation on the Olive Garden Restaurant, trends in food and ethnic restaurants in general, all of this is valuable data for future research. Finally fifth, the focus group conversation offers opportunities to factor how service in the restaurant is perceived by participants, many of the stories tell of how the interaction of restaurant staff affect the gastronomic experience. The participants tell many short stories of their culinary events and accompanying service staff.

I am glad that I conducted this focus group especially in the format I did (food-elicitation) because it offer non-stop narrative around the topic of food while serving food. What was unique was the fact not one participant made any commentary regarding the meal they were served which meant everyone stayed on the topic at the table. The focus group for this study adds to the full-bodied interviews, I like to think the unique nature of this focus group was the ‘icing on the cake’

4.33. The Photos – A Photo-Elicitation Reflection

The content of the photos presented by the participants are not part of the analysis; most important to this study is the context that portrays each participant's story. The subject of the photos presented by the participants could itself comprise a gastronomic study with analysis on the photo composition, location, cuisine type and purpose. Trying to link the photo content within the analysis of my study would be far too complex, but I did make overall comments on the photos (**Photo Facts**) to give the reader an understanding of what was presented to me. I do feel that there are important factors surrounding the photos that need mention in the analysis, first is the fact that three of the photos were specifically produced for the interview.

4.34. Photo Fact – 'Current Photo'

Two of the three participants, Tylor and Dicky admitted in the interview that the photo was taken after they were contacted to participate in the research, prior to this they had only submitted the initial five-question application and were not selected for an interview at that time. The other 'produced' photo was by Maxine that she downloaded from the internet of a food item that was similar to the one she would describe in her gastronomic experience interview. Maxine's photo was acceptable as my instructions stated "Photo could have been taken by other than participant (known or anonymous)", a downloaded photograph fits this specification. I allowed 'sourced' photos because I did not want someone *not* be able to tell their memorable story just because they had no personal photo.

Had I known that photos would be taken just to participate in this research, I would have stipulated that the photo needed to be of a 'past' gastronomic experience and not 'present'. During the process in recruitment, Tylor and Dicky were willing to be interviewed, Tylor sent in a photo that I did not realize was current until the actual interview, and this was a surprise to me. Dicky, who I wanted to interview because of his extensive travel experiences and lack of interest toward food (in the initial questionnaire) had difficulty arranging an interview as he was travelling at the time. In addition, he

(Dicky) told me he was trying to source a photo for the interview, I assumed he was ‘looking’ for a photo not looking for an opportunity to take one. Again, I was surprised to find that the photo was ‘fresh’ once the interview began. In hindsight, I should have stipulated that the photo needed to be at a minimum of six months old and asked specifically how old was the photo submitted. Through the interview process, I discovered that some of the photos were older than I imagined. Specifically adding age of the photos (memories) to the analysis may have added interesting perspectives on special memories, I speak to this in the analysis. I believe that these two interviews do not jeopardize the reliability of findings in fact strengthens my argument on two fronts. First, Dicky confirms that participants classified in my study as ‘travellers not foodies’ (TNF- Group B) do exist otherwise he ‘should’ have had memorable photos because of his travels. Dicky does contribute to my study with narratives on other gastronomic experiences and his comments on authenticity. The second is Taylor who was classified as a ‘Foodie’ (Group C) who had not travelled and was new to gastronomy. Using a locally sourced photo for this research was understandable, one other group C participant Shaun also used a local photograph, the remaining group C participants’ photos were all within Canada, USA and Mexico (close to home). Both participants’ narratives are not necessarily unique, but could be classified as outliers because of this photo tactic.

4.35. Photo Fact - ‘Location’

The second photo fact was the location of where the photos were taken as three of twenty-one were taken locally (where the participants resided). Five of the photos were within Canada (including the local) and the remainder were taken outside Canada in the Caribbean, Mexico and Europe (none in Asia). One of the locally shot photos was also one of the photos taken specifically for the interview. It needs to be noted that two participants had their gastronomic experiences (photos) outside the normal realm in what is considered the standard food service environment of a restaurant. One experience was on a farm in the Caribbean (Dominican Republic) with a tour guide where a light meal was served outdoors. The other was at a mobile street food cart in Germany, with food to-go (take-away – UK?), (Hot dog cart – USA?).

4.36. Photo Fact – ‘Plates of food’

A third photo fact was that fifteen of twenty-one photos were of plates of food; presented as they would have been to the participants at the time of their gastronomic experience. Five of the photos portrayed a combination of people *and* food and one photo was an exterior shot of the restaurant where the participant experienced their gastronomic event (photos other than food were allowed).

4.37. Photo Fact – ‘Variety’

The fourth photo fact was the variety of food presented in the interviews, fourteen of the photos depicted the food indigenous to where the photo was taken, a hot sausage with sauerkraut in Germany, a dish of poutine in Quebec City, tapas in Spain, a cacao plant in the Dominican Republic and fine dining events in the cities of Toronto, New York City and in France as examples. Three of the photos portrayed Asian food (2 sushi, 1 stir-fry) and neither one were in Asia; two were in Canada, one in Mexico!

4.38. Photo Fact – ‘Time’

The fifth photo fact only came up in the findings by accident, and in hindsight, a specific question should have been asked regarding the age of the photos presented in the interviews. One participant during the interview stated, “*from what I can recall*” with respect to the service received during their gastronomic experience as it was “*five years ago*”. I can assume that the majority of the photos other than the three ‘produced’ for the interviews were at least 6 months old or more. Understanding the ‘age’ of a photo may strengthen the significance of a memory, perhaps there is a correlation as in the ‘five year old’ photo presented...the memory is still strong. The national/international photos I can assume are from past trips (on holiday) and are not only gastronomic experiences but also could be classified as culinary tourism experience memories and/or tourism experience memories. The reason in the first place we take photos is to capture a memory of a period in time in our lives so that we have the ability for future reflection whenever we want.

4.39. Photo Fact – ‘A Coincidence?’

It is very interesting to note that two participants submitted the exact same photo from their trip to Spain, more precisely a tapas bar in the city of Logrono, Spain. The photo depicted a view of the food (tapas) on the bar and the bar staff preparing drinks for customers, neither participant was in the photo. Both participants were recruited at different times; Peter applied as a participant using my web page (billgregorash.com) on July 11, 2015 at 10, p.30am and was interviewed July 16, 2015. Barbra applied on August 31, 2015 at 6, p.35pm also using my web page and was interviewed on September 6, 2015. Due to participant confidentiality, I could not reveal this fact to either of them even though I was greatly tempted by this coincidence. I had no knowledge that either participant had relations with each other, as it turned out (through the interview) I put two and two together and realized that participant Peter and his wife was travelling with another couple on holiday, Barbara and her partner Eric. Eric was also a participant in my study; his gastronomic experience narrated to me was at another time in a different European city. Again, I was confounded within the interview as I had no idea all three Peter, Eric and Barbara were friends as Eric and Barbara had differing surnames. Eric who was interviewed last of the three did mention that he and Barbara did spend plenty of time deciding on which photo to submit. I can assume they did not collude with Peter on this decision (if they did I would not have had two exact similar photos) and for that matter I cannot even assume they knew Peter was involved in my research. The bottom line is that the negative of ‘snowball’ methodology in research worked in my favour, for example, I got three participants with similar extensive travel experiences, all foodies, rich narratives through their stories and almost all similar (elicitation) photos. My goal was to find those of similar psychographics, Tracey (2013) states that “...one downside to snowball samples is that they can quickly skew to one type of group, clique, or demographic”. I have no reason to believe that some sort of collusion took place between the two in producing identical photos for my research. I also found out through the interview process with them that these two couples have travelled extensively over the past fifteen years.

Regarding the narratives from Peter and Barbara surrounding their similar photo, both extolled the social atmosphere of the tapas bar as their primary description of the event that unfolded in the photograph. They were both overwhelmed by the friendly

hospitable nature of the crowd. Peter especially, as he was approached by a Spanish local woman who celebrating her birthday requested he buy her a drink she obviously did not need. Once the woman found out that Peter (and group) were from Canada the party picked up intensity with the singing of happy birthday (Peter is over 6' tall with a rich baritone voice) then she physically 'jumped' on Peter ("*ombre grande*") to thank him ! Besides this commotion, Peter and Barbara commented extensively on the array and quality of food (tapas) available in a format they were unaccustomed, like the bartenders 'honour' system in the calculation of the food tab. Besides Peter's incident (as he called it) with the Spanish woman at the bar, both gave similar accounts of their event surrounding their photo with regards to the food, service and atmosphere.



4.40. Image 4 and 5. Photos submitted from Peter and Barbara

On a final note regarding the photos (Image 4 and 5), many participants rather enjoyed the exercise of selecting only one photo to submit for discussion in the interview, I had many who submitted up to five photos. I had to ask them to narrow it down to only one for the actual interview while some expressed frustration with this selection task, it was important that *they* made the decision on which photo they picked as I removed myself from assisting. All photos had to be submitted by digital file format in email prior to their interview, I had no control when they sent multiple files. I am positive had I asked participants to bring in more than one photo of memorable gastronomic experiences I would have had no problems receiving them based on the participant's off the record conversations. As mentioned earlier, many did enjoy the process and struggled to pick only

one, I could see a future study that could analyse the content of photos in determining memorable experiences.

4.41. Limitations – Interviews and Focus Group

A research study is only as good as the sum of the parts, and in this study, the parts are the participants. Sourcing participants for this study was not an issue with availability of technology used in getting the invitation out. Conversations regarding food, beverage, dining out and travel are all welcome subjects in our daily lives. Therefore, it was easy to get participants to talk freely regarding their experiences. Because this research takes place in Canada, (Thunder Bay) there will be perhaps a cultural influence in the findings as Canadians are different regarding the importance of food in our culture. The fact this study was conducted in Canada is the only limitation. Would French participants' answers be similar? In France, gastronomy is taken far more serious than it is in Canada. In fact the 'Gastronomic Meal of the French' is recognized by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) as an 'intangible heritage' safeguarded by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention (ICHC) (Jolliffe 2014, p.188) . The application to the ICHC describes the Gastronomic Meal of France:

“A customary social practice for celebrating important moments in the lives of individuals and groups, such as births, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, achievements, and reunions. It is a festive meal bringing people together for an occasion to enjoy the art of good eating and drinking. This very popular practice, with which all French people are familiar, has flourished in France for centuries. It is constantly changing and being transmitted” (UNESCO 2010).

Traditional Mexican cuisine and the Mediterranean Diet are also safeguarded as 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' by UNESCO (Jolliffe 2014, p.187). This alone is proof that cuisine is regarded at a higher level in regions outside of Canada which could present unique findings if this study was conducted in Europe or Latin America. Trying to comprehend the importance (or lack of food on) other culture's lifestyles hopefully does not create confusion to the reader.

4.42. Chapter Summary

To use the analogy that the methodology of a research study is equivalent to the ‘recipe’ of a cooked product is accurate. As a chef I understand the importance of good quality ingredients to produce good quality products, one cannot take rotten vegetables and spoiled meat and make Beef Bourguignon suitable for Michelin Star service. This study not only used the typical off-the-shelf qualitative high quality tools of interviews and a focus group, but added the unique enhancement of auto-driven photo-elicitation and enhanced the focus group with dinner (food-elicitation). What is equally important in any recipe is the ‘method’ of combining the ingredients...what separates the ‘chefs from the cooks’ is the techniques used to ‘cook’ the ingredients....this study also focused on the cooking process. The combination of using fresh picked participants from online sources ‘folded-in’ with the interviews and a focus group was emulsified with the photo-elicitation that provided fresh baked data for analysis. This chapter has presented the methods in detail, the process of gathering participants, gathering narratives and reflections on the fieldwork. In conclusion, the discussion of the photos offered insight to the beginning of the analysis in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Memorable Gastronomic Experiences

5.1. Gastronomic Experiential Accounts

As the interviews were conducted and with the focus group complete I at first felt at an impasse, as the obvious answers I had assumed would probably surface did not, which left me even more curious. Eventually, I came to the conclusion that the data was leading me in a different direction, someplace new I never thought to look which was the emotional ‘state of mind’. Participants using their photographs telling their story of their memorable gastronomic experience represented this emotion. A moment came when I realized that what wasn’t in the interview data was a major incidental finding, a significant absence that needs discussing and perhaps future research...the banality of foodservice experiences.

The analysis begins with themes related to the attributes of a memorable gastronomic experience that were deemed least important and then move to those that did contribute. The first research question was an inquiry into how the tangible and intangible attributes (food, service and atmosphere) affect the creation of positive memories; this began to develop a common unexpected theme. A theme on how the ‘relevancy of the attributes’ in a gastronomic experience with regard to creating a memory is presented. The three, the food, service and atmosphere findings are next that demonstrate how these attributes contributed beginning with service...the least important.

5.2. Service - Least Important Attribute (but valuable)

With regard to service, the participants offered comments like: “*Service, hmm. Well thankfully unobtrusive*” (Janna) and “*The service was very interactive*” (Shaun) display a wide spectrum of service ‘hands-off’ and ‘hands-on’ respectively. Then comments like, “*Not particularly, I don’t remember anything particularly positive or negative about the service*” (Nadine) and then: “*From what I recall, and granted this was five years ago now, the service was great. I think that was part of the positive experience that we had*” (Katherine) demonstrates that the participants had to dig into their memory bank to recall

the service aspect of their memorable gastronomic experience. Katherine even had to “*think*” if it was a factor in her experience.

It is safe to say that none of the participants had a memorable gastronomic experience where the service was poor; therefore service does contribute to a memory in the form that it needs to be adequate and need not be spectacular (as none of the participants exulted on their service, also none insisted that service needed to be spectacular to be memorable). Of all the attributes, service was ranked as last with food and atmosphere in importance as the ‘driver’ of a memorable gastronomic experience. When asked which of the three the driver of memorable experience was, the answers were evenly split between food and atmosphere.

Darin elaborated on his service aspect with detail:

“Yeah, it was a young woman, she was very busy, she was attentive, and service is important me, to us. There was something – what I do remember about the service was, she had an interaction with the table behind us that wasn’t very positive and she dealt with it very professionally and then she came to us, she flipped a switch and she was very positive. So I can remember that as well. She was also – she took the time to talk to us about the food, the presentation, the duck fat, where they got the cheese curds from.” (Darin)

The participants could not recall specific interactions other than the overall event were positive. All of the participants were asked to pick the attribute that was the significant driver that made their gastronomic experience memorable...the food, service or atmosphere. Only Janna insisted that all were equal in the creation of their memory “*The whole thing...they’re all equal*”. Alison who visited the farm in the Caribbean insisted the service was the driver in her event as the food was available back home but the service from the tour guide made the experience. Alison was the only one to vote for the service the others favoured food over atmosphere. Here are replies regarding the ‘driver’ of the experiences that demonstrate the feelings of the participants how they arrived at their decision:

“I would say it still comes down to the food...the service and the atmosphere certainly add to the overall experience, but even if I was treated like a queen and the room was beautiful, if the food was crap the experience is crap” (Maxine)

“It’s the food. Not necessarily, not that individual piece of food but it’s freshness, the quality of the food in general. Yeah, that’s the driver” (Jarrod)

“The atmosphere...I’m the eternal optimist, so I always think the food’s going to be good unless I get some recommendations it’s not going to be. So I look for atmosphere, so, for example, a friend of mine has opened a new restaurant on Bay Street, And I went in during the construction phase and I know her, she’s a ton of fun, so I’m thinking her restaurant is going to be a ton of fun. And it’s smallish so I think the atmosphere is going to be really cool, so I’m hoping to try it this week” (Margot)

“The cavatelli, absolutely memorable. The cheese, not so much. So the dish, absolutely, or one of the dishes, absolutely the atmosphere and the overall environment contributed greatly” (Pamela)

“Well, all three but I’m going to put the atmosphere...Yeah, the excitement, the people going in and out that stuff. This was sort of a typical at all the tapas though. We went to some that were more fun than others and part of it had to do with if there were more people in there then it would be sort of noisier, more social, and livelier. I think the guys behind the counter make a difference too. Like, you can see him and he’s doing something there. He’s refreshing a platter or he’s helping a customer” (Peter)

In summary this appeared as a difficult question for many, to pick the driver of their experience; it took most participants time to come up with an answer, Margot argued: *“I’m going to go backwards, I’m going to say the service is the least important, well it was critical - because if it had been bad service it wouldn’t have affected it as much as if we*

hadn't had - ". Then Margot went on to say, "If we'd had bad service that just becomes something funny, like a story to tell..."

With all the participants, the service was the least talked about attribute during the discussions and ranked last as important in a memorable gastronomic experience. Even though service was last, there was not one experience shared in this study where the service was close to being bad or poor. What I found interesting was the lack of detail remembered by participants in recanting the service aspect of their 'memorable' experience therefore resulting in the least important attribute of the three. It was this lack of detail available from the participants that leads me to believe that service is not a major contributor of gastronomic memories as an attribute. Service that 'meets the needs' at the time of the gastronomic memory is all that is required based on the findings...exemplary service was a bonus.

5.3. New Restaurant on the Moon?

...The food's great but no atmosphere (Moon)! This section is about the participant's narratives regarding the atmosphere surrounding gastronomic experience in their photo and during the focus group. The common theme amongst the participants was that atmosphere was definitely an important attribute. All of the participants offered narratives of their surroundings, here are some samples of the detail offered that speak of their experiences and the atmosphere:

"It was kind of busy. I mean, it was almost like a strip mall, but it doesn't look like that. So there was a restaurant, you could see in the windows, and they had a big brick oven and there was lots of people getting takeout, so that door was very, very busy. So it didn't bug me, it didn't take away from it all." (Janna)

Janna describes the physical features and includes people as part of the atmosphere. Edwards and Gustafsson (2008) separate 'other people' from the atmosphere in the FAMM model from the 'room' (physical space) and the atmosphere in the 'entirety of the meal'. Edwards and Gustafsson (2008) measure the 'interactions' between customers and staff as

a determinant in their study. In my study there is no ‘interaction’ with other restaurant patrons but the ‘other customers’ do add to the atmosphere by ‘being there’ mentioned by Janna. Peter, on the other hand, spoke of an ‘interaction’ with regard to his ‘incident’ in the tapas bar that was a major part in his story. In a restaurant, ‘other people’ without ‘interactions’ are an understandable addition as part of the atmosphere; interactions are not a requirement for memorable gastronomic experiences based on the participants in this study.

“Relaxed. The lights were dim. There were hundreds of bottles of wine right beneath my back where we were taking the photo. So it was not really relaxed but an easy and comforting environment.” (Pamela)

Pamela describes briefly the surroundings but focuses more on the feelings the environment offered. The objective of the atmosphere in every restaurant is to convey a positive ‘feeling’ while dining, but what was unique in this environment was the case with Pamela’s experience that she noted. Jarrod’s view of atmosphere was different, he stated:

“Oh dry desert heat, wind blowing like a blast furnace, a little bit of shade over you and then good quality food with probably margaritas and Mexican beer.” (Jarrod)

Jarrod said nothing of the restaurant physical structure but made the connection with beverages pairing with heat. Peter offers a more detailed answer:

“Yeah, beyond her it was social with everybody. People would cheer the person beside them and if you were reaching for something and someone was researching at the same time you would do a little how do you do kind of thing. These places, they’re very interactive and very social.” (Peter)

To Peter the atmosphere was the people, his only mention of physical context was the bar the tapas were on. Margot comments from her pilgrimage:

“It was cool because it was very rustic and the fact you had to wind our way, some people went through the back yard and down the steps and through the garden to the basement – that way. We didn’t know that there was a roundabout way that way and so we went through the hostel, in between the rows of bunk beds, and we saw all their stuff and their pack sacks and whatever, and you could smell the dirty socks. And then we found the back door and then went down the basement steps there and we found we could hear everybody and so then came around the corner and found them.”

“Oh, it was loud, it was fun, it was busy.” (Margot)

Margot paints a detailed picture of the physical setting for her moment that includes people as well, the social factor common in some of the experiences.

“Just a beautiful outdoor day and nice environment. Everybody was chatting at the tables and just nice-” (Nadine)

To Nadine it was all about the feeling...nothing specific regarding atmosphere that was worth mentioning in her memorable moment other than she was outside on a beautiful day which is hard to beat no matter where you are in the world.

“It’s an outdoor restaurant...some canvas kind of covering, lots of tropical...sound of the ocean.” (Martha)

It is important to note that the participants had more vivid memories of the atmosphere in their memorable gastronomic experiences compared to the memories of the service. The service memories encountered were where many details were sparse.

It was important because this would rank the significance of atmosphere over other attributes- food and service. As a result, the majority stated the atmosphere as “*Absolutely*”, a factor in the success of their gastronomic experiences. Max noted from his experience:

“Yeah, totally, cause I mean if it was brightly lit, tons of noise it’d probably be a little bit annoying, you know what I mean. So I like the quiet, dim atmosphere. Personally I like seeing what I was eating but it was enough light that you could see what you were doing.” (Max)

Janna, who disagreed, had a unique answer:

“No, it wasn’t...If I’d have been in the restaurant probably there would have been more atmosphere, it you will. But I was on the patio”, “No, I don’t think so because I didn’t think about that until afterwards”. (Janna)

Janna’s answer here depicts the physical surrounding and not the ambience or Bitner’s (1992) servicescape that presents the total surroundings other than physical. To Janna atmosphere is décor, perhaps I could have clarified the definition of atmosphere in more detail upon asking the question. Because I did not clarify the question, I think it allowed participants to construct their version of what restaurant atmosphere is to them.

Many participants conceded that the atmosphere was a contributing factor in their gastronomic event, also the reason they picked the photo for this research. Here Jarrod offers his take on how the atmosphere surrounding his experience contributed to his memorable event. Margot describes the multifaceted nature of the atmosphere in which her memorable gastronomic took place:

“Yeah, but the food captures I think the essence of it. It’s tough to tell that. I mean you’re sitting in Baja in a dusty little bowl somewhere. So, the atmosphere could contribute but the food was the big draw.” (Jarrod)

“I would have to say it’s because – out of all the pictures that I chose to send you in the first place, this one is the more complicated because it involved my daughter and it involved me in a goal and it was kind of like right in the middle of – because there were still many kilometres left to go and it was the traditional food that I loved that I wanted to share with her, and that was her first chance to have it. Plus I

can just picture all the people that were sitting around the table that I have such great memories of.” (Margot)

Both answers here capture the complexity of atmosphere in a memorable gastronomic experience, the participants’ picture the main players of their event in the foreground. They see themselves and/or others in front and atmosphere as background such as painting. This would explain why service is not remembered as it is an intangible component that cannot be pictured as easily as food and physical atmosphere aspects.

Asking the participants if they felt the atmosphere matched the food and service was a probe into the gastronomic experience to expose if one attribute (food, service and atmosphere) was out of balance. An experience ‘out of balance’ could have signified that this was a factor that made the participant choose their photo, as my initial speculation was that attributes (food, service and atmosphere) played the major role in creating memorable gastronomic experiences.

Most agreed that the food and service matched the atmosphere, some comments were, Pamela stated:

“Yeah, well the food is – it really does – is quite good. It could have - you could have it in a – fancier place than that and quite enjoy it...not that this place isn’t – there’s anything wrong with it. It’s clean. It’s nice” (Pamela)

Pamela confirms there is a possible connection where food, service and atmosphere are matched. Margot said:

“Yeah. Yeah, it was pretty low key, pretty non – like very informal and nobody was out to impress anybody else, (Margot)

And this comment by Tarvo paints a detailed picture of his setting:

“It was – the building they told me was about 400 years old, but I mean the interior had been redone obviously sort of to meet code and stuff. But yeah, it’s an old

restaurant. It's not open full time. They tend to book between let's say half a dozen event a year. So you know it's just sort of the atmosphere of a restaurant but we had it all to ourselves with the grandma and grandpa cooking" (Tarvo)

Of those few who replied "No" regarding this question was Alison (a college student), her gastronomic event was at farm in the Caribbean and she stated:

"I guess it's my version of what a farm atmosphere should be like, because a farm in Dominican Republic is not the same as the farm in our back yard" (Alison)

Another was Dicky who took the photo specifically for this research interview stated:

"Strangely, no...But it certainly wasn't Thai atmosphere or anything like that, it was a brewery. And had it been pizza or even a roasted chicken or something it would have been more appropriate" (Dicky)

(Note: the Dicky's photo was that of a plate of Pad Thai, an Asian dish in a Brewery/Restaurant in British Columbia, Canada). Based on the answers I have to say that there were no photos selected based on experiences admittedly deemed out of balance with regard to the food, service and atmosphere. An admitted 'out of balance' gastronomic event may have had the potential for a memorable gastronomic experience, perhaps a new theme.

5.4. Food Important...Really?

Only half were able to give details about the ingredients and the specific tastes associated with their gastronomic experience. This demonstrates that the food did not make an equal important memory trigger point amongst all participants. Some of these participants were able to recount minute details like Pamela: *"cavatelli was in cream sauce"*, Shaun: *"surprising depth of the flavour"*, Tarvo: *"kidney bean stew with pig skin"*, Erik: *"with caraway seeds"* are some of the examples from the participants. The other half of the participants offered vague descriptors of their gastronomic experiences; Dicky, *"I*

think it was a stir fry”, Janna said: “was the special of the evening....although I can’t remember it, it was amazing...”, Nadine commented: “I’ve been trying to think about that. I’m pretty sure that I had the [Calabrese] salad...”

Violet, when asked of the food in her photo simply stated;

“Yeah it was crap. And you know what? Because I knew this was stale and it was old, what you don’t see off to the side is the jam and the whipped butter and that you’re going to put on to try to make that palatable”. (Violet)

She was referring to a croissant in her photo (Image 7)

The fact many did not remember the specific details (or did not care) helps build my argument that gastronomic memories are not necessarily about the food but about the ‘moment in time’ and ‘state of mind’. Even though a photo represents a thousand words, the lack of detail offered by many participants regarding the food (and drink) suggests there is more at play in memorable gastronomic experiences. Why did some of the participants select a photo for research investigating ‘gastronomic’ experiences if they barely remembered the food in the photo? Even though the majority of the photos were of ‘plates of food’, many did not provide details or in fact deem the food to be unique. Katherine is a good example; her photo (Image 6) was of a bowl of soup, white chowder, in a white bowl on a white plate with a white paper doily, (very unassuming). The plate was on a blue placemat and the only other detail was a sprig of parsley, but what was very prominent in the photo, was an arm and hand holding a spoon. The arm belonged to Katherine’s brother. The photo meant to her: “...*spending time with my brother, which I don’t get a chance to do very often because we don’t live in the same city*” Katherine replied and then added – “*and this particular photo, you know reminds me a lot of my childhood, partially because of the fact that it is Nova Scotia. The fact that’s its chowder and, you know. My mother is from Nova Scotia, and we spent all of our summers.*” It needs to be noted here that Canada’s province, Nova Scotia is on the east coast and renowned for its seafood. In fact, tourism Nova Scotia features seafood restaurants across the province with distinct driving ‘routes’ for food tourists. One such route is the “Chowder Trail Road Trip” (map) (Nova Scotia, 2017).

To many first time visitors to Nova Scotia, ‘authentic’ chowder may have been a gastronomic experience to them but to Katherine she admitted the soup was “*good standard Nova Scotia like, maritime seafood chowder*” and the tastes were not unique to her. She admitted later that she selected the photo based on the ‘experience’ of being with her brother that supports that the state of mind is a driver in memorable gastronomic experiences. In addition, through our interview, Katherine, an admitted foodie mentioned a time reference when she stated “*From what I can recall, and granted this was five years ago now...*” this would suggest that her memory with her brother was still very strong. Nevertheless, I am puzzled by her answer when I asked: “*What comes to mind when you first look at it?*” She stated “*...seeing my brother’s arm in that photo, I can see a look on his face...*” Her photo (see image 6) depicts only the arm, but she states that she can see the look on his face (not in the photo) leads me to two thoughts. First, is that Katherine’s photo may have been cropped because she did not want to identify her brother; an indication the photo is not the original. To Katherine this was something more than a gastronomic experience, it was a special experience between and sister and brother that just happened to be over a bowl of soup at lunch. The bowl of soup qualified her photo as gastronomic. Katherine admitted, “*I actually had a really hard time choosing a photo*” which could indicate she had to choose a photo with food in it and then perhaps cropped it to suit this research. In this cropped photo, she can see the look on his face because she has the untouched original.

My second thought is that Katherine really can see the look on her brother’s face in her photo of a bowl of soup and arm. The image in her memory of that event is so vivid it transforms her back to the moment in time of that special lunch, her state of mind of being with her brother. Either way the photo may be that of a bowl of soup, but there is more going on in that image for Katherine. In hindsight I could have asked her about the photo, but did not know at the time what I know now, also why, would she take a photo of a soup she has sampled many times?



5.5. Image 6 – Katherine’s Photo – “*I can see a look on his face*”

A question was proposed to determine if sampling ‘new’ foods was a determinate of memorable gastronomic experiences. Surprisingly only a fraction of the participants replied with a “*Yes*”, the majority had said this was not a new type of food, some even said they make this type of food at home. Those that found the food not new described their experience in a nonchalant manner as if they did this often. Mady, when asked if the tastes were unique in the food in her photo said “*Yeah definitely*” and followed up and later admitted “*it’s the reason I even took the photo, I don’t usually take pictures of food*”. Mady’s photo was that of a pizza shared with her partner on holiday in Alaska; she wanted to remember the meal “*I can taste it. It was that good. I can smell it*”. Erik when asked if the tastes were unique regarding the tastes of the sauerkraut and sausage (hot dog) street food stated, “*It’s not how I prefer. But I, I like doing it because, again, that’s, that’s how they serve it there*”. Then asked if the memory of the taste was an important factor in

selecting his photo, he added, *“Again, only in that it was a positive experience”*. I take from this the food was not unique, Erik also said *“...with a name like [insert German name] I have a lot of sauerkraut in my background”*. This was all about his experience at the time, his state of mind, noting his German heritage consuming traditional German food while on holiday in Germany. Erik was a Group A participant, a Foodie Well Travelled (FWT), his photo was of a hot dog.

Inquiring on the specific taste of the food in the photo was important to understand the role of the food in the gastronomic memory creation. As mentioned earlier, a gastronomic experience is comprised of many moving parts and taste is one of those parts. Emphasis on remembered taste and if the tastes were unique was the line of questioning. Getting the feedback on the tastes not only exposed the strength of the memory of the food consumed itself but leads to how ‘genuine’ the tangible appears to each participant. The age of the experience was brought into light when Shaun stated:

“By looking at it, I can reflect on the flavours of it, like the avocado and the shrimp and the – this was a number of years back, so...” (Shaun)

Shaun’s memory of the taste was vivid but interestingly the tastes were not new to him, it was the combination of the flavours throughout his experience that he really enjoyed from the tasting menu. Similar detailed sentiments came from Maxine:

“So you’ve got the richness of the mousse, you’ve got the crunchiness of the bread and the salt...the hint of bitterness or sourness...”

We know that Maxine enjoyed mousse (Pâté) at the Four Seasons Hotel Restaurant Café Boulud many times so this was not a new experience for her. Many participants admitted that their tastes were unique while those that stated *“No”* used this moment to boast of their ‘foodie’ experience:

“Not entirely unique, I was familiar with...”, (Tarro)

“No, because I’d paella before and like to come home and make stuff...” (Margot)

Max described a negative taste in his memorable gastronomic experience;

“And lots of ginger in that. I was going to remember for the next time to tell them not to put ginger in cause I’m not a ginger fan” (Max)

In spite of the ginger in the experience, it was memorable enough to warrant selection as the photo for this research. As a result, taste is not a definitive driver in the creation of gastronomic memories when some participants admitted the flavours were not unique to them and one even had a negative experience. And if taste was not a driver then perhaps authenticity of the taste was not a factor also.

It could be argued successfully that familiar tastes trigger previous positive memories as in the ‘Ratatouille’ movie example presented in Chapter 2 or presented in the Kauppinen-Raisanen (2013) paper that connected remembered eating and food experiences to self, place, food, context and time. Unfortunately, all but one of the participants who were familiar with the tastes did not mention memorable previous encounters or experiences; Katherine was the only one who mentioned her other experiences (east coast clam chowder) and her positive memories of family and childhood. Katherine’s example supports the Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) findings that recognized themes connecting eating to childhood memories; Katherine’s experience was with her brother visiting an area they holidayed as children. I would argue Katherine’s experience was experientially authentic similar to Erik’s in Germany as both participants encountered exterior influences that combined with their experience, internal disposition and knowledge to create a positive memorable gastronomic experience.

It was important to ask if the memory of taste was a factor in the selection of their specific photo for this research. Supporting the previous finding, (the unique taste question), over half responded with a yes, the memory of taste was the reason they selected the photo. Therefore concluding taste was not a definitive driver of positive memorable gastronomic experiences. However, this question revealed deeper meaning for the reasoning some participants chose their photo.

Some interesting comments of those who mentioned taste was a factor in their selection was from Jarrod who stated:

“Memory of taste would have been an important factor, but memory in general was important to bring me back to a space in time” (Jarrod)

Jarrod’s referral to his particular “*space in time*” denotes that his state of mind at the time was more important as the memory over the taste of the food. Jarrod’s state of mind at a specific “*space in time*” was his trigger to his positive memorable gastronomic experience. Nadine also echoed Jarrod’s reasoning in her selection of the photo by stating:

“I think my first thought of selecting it was just the positive feeling of the whole day there. And then as I thought into it more that the meal tasted good was part of me choosing it, I guess is why.” (Nadine)

Nadine’s “*positive feeling of the whole day*” also speaks of her state of mind at the time of her positive memorable gastronomic experience. Jarrod and Nadine both designate taste as a factor but admit an underlying reference to their state of mind that is more significant.

Those participants who answered “*no*” to the question went on to explain why taste was not the important factor for them. These participants confirm that their experience was more important and from the narratives, I can surmise that state of mind was a factor in the photo selection. Tarro encapsulated those who said no in his statement:

“I wouldn’t say it’s the critical factor. I mean I had good food there, but a bigger part of picking this photo was also the social experience surrounding”. (Tarro)

The statement by Tarro confirms the social ‘moment’ surrounding his photo is more important than the gastronomic attributes of food, service and atmosphere.

To conclude the enquiry surrounding the food in the photos I needed to know what was the role of the food in their gastronomic experience if it was not the lead attribute in

the photo selection process. Tarro again provided a short comprehensive answer to this question:

“Well the food was the catalyst for bringing people together in that respect” (Tarro)

Moreover, Martha who added:

“The food had to be good. That’s the bottom line” (Martha)

These comments suggest that food is an integral component in positive memorable gastronomic experiences...obviously ...but more importantly, the quality and taste of the food is not a deciding factor to determine success. This addresses the incidental finding of this thesis that the majority of commercial gastronomic experiences are banal, non-events soon forgotten by participants...restaurant food is a catalyst for sociality but does not necessarily deliver memorable gastronomic experiences.

5.6. Sociability of Memorable Gastronomic Experiences

Many participants spoke of the moment in the photo as emotional, they expressed enjoyment and reminisced on how they felt relaxed and part of a community with others in that specific moment. This common thread linked almost all the participants, the ‘sociality’ of their experience. As many of the participants were with people who were significant in their lives (spouse, partner, children, sibling, or friend.) at the time of the photo, I believe this was a major component to the contribution making the event joyful. The potential for anyone to have ‘special moments’ is always available, given the opportunity to be away from home which potentially is synonymous with routine, a restaurant is a breeding ground for memories.

The sociality of the participants’ experiences is definitely significant and was the ‘low hanging fruit’ presented at first analysis of my initial transcription read through. The fact that everyone other than three participants were with those significant in their lives

pointed to an initial theme of ‘who you were with’ more important than ‘what you ate’ as the driver in memorable gastronomic experiences.

The analysis of the people you were with at the time of the photo contributed to the gastronomic experience in the photo. Those that were with people stated “Yes”, only Mady said “*not so much. I just particularly thought it looked fantastic when it came out, and I had to take a picture*”. Mady was with her husband on holiday just having a lunch “*before our next adventure*” she added. (Many added to their “Yes” additional comments): “*Yeah but there are other photos that would have represented the people that I was with better probably*” (note: this participant photo only depicted a plate of food with no people in the shot), “*Yeah, I mean yeah, obviously sort of the individual personalities contributed to the atmosphere and I enjoyed the atmosphere*” This comment makes the connection of atmosphere with people as important in their experiences, so does this participant who said: “*I knew there was a story with it, I forget what other pictures I had*”. The reference to “*a story*” is significant because it confirms that a photo can stand out among others based on the context and not just the image.

A most interesting (funny too) answer was from Peter (in the tapas bar in Spain):

“Well, you kept saying it as I had a file of photos to choose from. I didn’t have that many. I had two or three that were taken in this restaurant. I had one of the women with her legs around me but I didn’t think that was appropriate but yes; I think having a companion there, because there were two couples. So it wasn’t just my wife and me. There were four of us. There’s more banter, there’s more chatter and try different things.” (Peter)

As mentioned earlier, Peter’s photo was one the duplicates; Barbara with the similar photo replied her answer to the same question: “*Yeah. And they would make observations that I found really humorous...and it was [Peter] who said ‘You know, if this was in North America, there’d be sneeze guards over here’*”. Peter’s reply to this question was interesting for two reasons; first, because he mentions the process he went through in the selection of his photo to submit to this research. In his statement, we can see that he has narrowed down the event he wants to share but has to decide on which photo portrays his

memorable gastronomic experience. The shot with the woman “...with her legs around me...” he deemed inappropriate but this event was part of his memorable gastronomic experience ‘front and centre’ as it came up more than once as the “*incident*” in our conversation. The second reason this was interesting was Peter’s insistence in all his gastronomic stories where he mentions in detail the people who are at the table with him. He includes them as leading actors in the experience and the restaurant staff and customers all played important supporting roles that ultimately back his memory. This would support an argument that to create prominent gastronomic memories require not only food and drink but also the sociability aspect of those within the event.

During the focus group, I asked specifically if the person or persons that you are with are an important factor in a memorable gastronomic experience. The group answer was “*absolutely*”, Peter emphasised this by stating: “*And you can say this for almost any peak experience is sharing it with someone*”. Katherine added a countering statement: “*I think that who you’re with can ruin a good. Like I had really great meals with new business associates and different things and because you’re so uptight*”. Here is an example of a memorable gastronomic experienced being overridden by ‘bad company’ to now become an undesirable event, a negative state of mind.

The consensus around the table was that people with you can either make the experience positive or uncomfortably negative, the outcome is based on the relationship at the time. In addition, the group also said that dining alone was not as bad as it looks, as most are foodies, the fact they were alone did not stop them from seeking unique gastronomic experiences. Margot argued:

“...I’m not going to order pizza in the hotel room. I’m going to go out and find somewhere to eat and I’m going to have whatever I want because there is no one there to say anything about it”. (Margot)

Janna said “...*And a quiet meal is just so luxurious sometimes when you’ve had a really hectic day*”. The most important quote from the focus came from Darin who said: “*There’s a pleasure in making decisions without guilt*”. It’s important because I feel that Darin’s comment contributes to the ‘state of mind’ as a driver of memory. To make a decision

without guilt implies self-confidence and self-confidence denotes a positive state of mind. This decision without guilt mentality would account for the series of events surrounding the three participants in this study who were alone during their memorable gastronomic experiences. This is evident in the following narratives from Violet and Maxine who were alone.

Most had deliberately chosen the photo for this research because of the people with them at the time of the photo. One participant Dicky stated: *“No, as I said the reason I picked it is because of your research”*, I expected Dicky to answer no; as he was the participant who took the photo specifically for this research interview

5.7. State of Mind in the Driver’s Seat (alone)

Those who were alone at the time provided the significant proof that pointed to ‘state of mind’ as the main finding in my research. The main finding in this thesis is that memorable gastronomic experiences are created by the state of mind one is in at the time of the event. The sociability aspect adds to influence a memorable gastronomic experience along with atmosphere and service, the food is the obvious catalyst (reason they are in one in the first place).

The following transcript statement is from Violet, one of the participants who was alone at the time of her gastronomic event. It was her narrative that led to this finding connecting (driving) all the participant’s experiences to the ‘state of mind’ concept.

“Oh, yeah, did it contribute? It was three week at the end – no you know what?... I can tell you why I picked it. I picked it ‘cause it was joyful. It feels good. Like some of the stuff that I take feel good. And others – I take pictures of everything like I have masses and masses of pictures simply because I think I want to try and recreate some of the stuff when I go home. I don’t take the pictures necessarily to show people. I take the pictures for me because it brings back a memory to me and then it make me say okay maybe I want to try and make this, right? I want to see if I want to try and make this.

This was just, you know, I'm going home; it's time to go home, it's been three weeks; I've been in Europe for three weeks and it just felt good. And it was funny and it also – Is that a photo about privilege? It totally is.” (Violet)

The fact that three participants, Violet, Maxine and Tylor were the only participants alone at the time of their gastronomic photo was perhaps the key factor that helped in the development of the ‘state of mind’. There was no other ‘personal’ human interaction during the time of the photo other than the servers. Specifically, the narratives from Violet and Maxine were important, as Tylor was the individual who took the photo after I invited him to participate in the research. The context of Violet’s photo helped me understand the state of mind she was in at the time of the photo. During our conversation, Violet took great pains to emphasise the conditions of conducting her work when travelling internationally on business and her photo was from one of these trips. As she stated in the above statement “..it was three weeks at the end...” meant that she had just completed a three week conference and now was on her way home to Canada from Europe. Her photo depicted a ‘split of Champagne’ and a ‘stale’ croissant (see image 7) she purchased in the Helsinki airport for breakfast on a lark. She had 40 Euro in cash left and thought to try the Moët and Chandon Champagne than buy something she did not need. She also liked the thought of “plugging in” and loved to watch people go by as she had time before her flight. Violet admitted that she was an avid social media user and thought her online friends would get a kick of this photo posted once on Facebook. But there was the issue of time zones, as breakfast time in Finland was the dead of night in central Canada therefore all her social media friends were fast asleep. This time factor had Violet in a personal state of limbo as she had just departed from three weeks of constant contact with her working colleagues and now no contact with her social media online friends back home. It was this chain of events that placed Violet in a position that allowed her to ‘take in’ the moment she created. The enjoyment of the Champagne and irony of the croissant being stale, she thought the whole event was funny, the satisfaction of knowing three weeks of hard work was behind her, and she was headed home. This series of events placed her in a state of mind to make the comment “Is that photo about privilege? It totally is.”

I would like to note that Violet considered herself a foodie and took many photos of food when out, not just for sharing, but for recreating dishes at home in her own kitchen. I found it strange that she has travelled extensively in Europe, South Africa, China, Singapore and Australia and a photo of Champagne with a stale croissant was her most memorable gastronomic experience? I asked, “*Specifically what comes to mind when you think of it, just the first thing, first thought?*” she replied “*Moment to myself, complete relaxation and just pleasure, it was total pleasure.*” After digesting this story how can anyone say this photo was chosen because of the food? This definitely was not the case; the photo was chosen because it had food and qualified as a gastronomic memory. Violet’s story could have made practical sense and support the theory that food is a driver of memorable gastronomic experiences if her photo was of an elaborate dinner at a top Helsinki restaurant after the conference. We could have perhaps drawn the same conclusion and say Violet was in a ‘good place’ in her life and the gastronomic experience was an occasion to remember, but this was not the case. Instead, it took a stale croissant and an indulgence in Champagne in solitude at a busy airport for her to enter a state of complete relaxation...total pleasure. This example of Violet’s story supports the theory that foodservice operations host memorable experiences, and food, service and atmosphere only play supporting a supporting role.



5.8. Image 7 – Violet’s Helsinki Airport Stale Breakfast Croissant

The narrative with Maxine's photo additionally supports the concept that 'state of mind' is the driver in the creation of memories in gastronomic experiences and foodservice operators only play a supporting role. Maxine was the only participant to download a photo from the internet (which was allowed) because she had no photo from the memorable event that she wanted to share with me. This memory was obviously important to her, as she could have easily selected another photo she had or taken one like two participants did but instead found an online photo of a dish she enjoyed at the restaurant she remembered. Her photo was that of a similar chicken liver mousse (pate) she enjoyed while away on business at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto. It was a dish she had made herself but enjoyed the experience of having it while away as she put it:

"It is about the experience, yeah. I wouldn't have a dish like that, you know, sitting around the deck at camp. That is my big-city getaway, kind of delusions of grandeur dish [Laughter]." (Maxine)

At this point, I need to reiterate that Maxine was also one of the three participants who experienced their gastronomic memory alone. Maxine enjoyed the time to herself where she would visit the posh restaurant (Café Boulud, in Four Seasons Hotel), sit with the elite crowd, and enjoy her favourite dish with a nice glass of chardonnay recommended by the sommelier. When asked if the atmosphere contributed to the experience she replied:

"It doesn't hurt, because the room reeks of money. [Laughter] And you know, I find that the particular time I'm thinking of when I was there, was wearing nice clothes cause I had just come from a meeting, and the diners around me were dressed nicely, and the old women had their Vuitton, and you know that kind of thing, you know?" (Maxine)

I can surmise from this that Maxine not only enjoyed the surroundings of the other patrons in the café and the food; she also relished the attention from the service staff...

"You know, that level of...that feeling of being taken care of, and that feeling that you are important. It is a bit of an ego boost, when you've got someone-" (Maxine)

What was the most important statement made was when I asked her if her experience like that at Café Boulud could be duplicated. At first, she said, “*Yeah, I would say so.*” Then said quickly:

“No, It’s just a matter of being careful of what you do. I mean, it’s not going to be exactly the same, but I’ve been there three or four times and the experience is never exactly the same at the same place. Right? ‘Cause you’re never the exact same person at the same time either.” (Maxine)

We can interpret this that Maxine’s experiences are select, driven by her state of mind, even though she can sit repeatedly at the same table in Café Boulud, indulge in the same Pâté and wine, pampered by the same waiters surrounded by Toronto elites. Perhaps the reason she has no photo of the experiences in Café Boulud is that it is not about the food, it is the other restaurant attributes that let her enjoy a select state of mind memorable moment. A single photo cannot capture the surrounding old women, the helpful sommelier, the taste of the chardonnay and the chicken liver Pâté but it does trigger a memory where the memory alone is worth more than the sum of the parts. Maxine’s narrative also supports the theory that the *state of mind* is the key driver of gastronomic memories and foodservice operators are the hosts.

Erik was discussing photo selection with his partner prior to the interview and noted that there is a trigger for memorable gastronomic experiences but never elaborated, only stated there was “*something else*” at play. Here are Erik’s thoughts on his photo:

“What was common when, what we started to talk about it. Because so we, we, to meet a deadline, the photos went in quickly. But then we discussed a lot. What we bought where, why, why’d you get this photo? And it, we had photos from that vacation what you have taken? And what would it have been from this location? And what common in that as I said earlier is the food was good but there was something else that made, triggered the positive memory” (Erik)

The food is a given commonality in all the participants experiences, service was downplayed by all and atmosphere was never identified as major contributor to positive memory either. Therefore, the key trigger in positive memory must be the existential aura from a photo connected to an individual. When the individual looks upon a connected photo, they are transported to the place and relive the moment, not necessarily to the original details of the attributes but more to their state of mind.

5.9. Collaborating Themes to Support “State of Mind” as a Concept

Participants were asked to identify the factors within their event during the time the photo was taken that made them select the photo for this research. This question led to rich data that provides value to this research and supports the state of mind concept as a memory trigger, presented here in a few examples that were unique along with analysis:

“Feeling... Well, it was my favourite photo, and it’s funny because it doesn’t show anything else except for [Allen] and the cocoa bean. But that was, I think, what I was most surprisingly excited during my whole trip” (Alison)

Alison was swept up with the uniqueness of her experience and spoke of her “*feeling*” which was the reason this photo was chosen for the interview. Her experience on the farm in the Dominican Republic where she saw cocoa beans in the raw, something totally new for her, she stated “*You’re going to remember things that are unique*”. The photo, which was her favourite, invoked a “*feeling*”, a critical highlight to her overall trip “*...I was most surprisingly excited during the whole trip*” she stated. I would interpret this “*feeling*” as her state of mind at the time of the photo that corresponds with Violet and Maxine’s narratives describing their surroundings during their memorable gastronomic experiences. Alison’s story also supports ‘state of mind’ in the creation of memorable gastronomic experiences. Jarrod adds his thoughts on selecting his photo:

“Well, I went back after talking to you about picking, getting that email about picking a photo, and I wanted to capture something that would draw out lots of

memories for me. And I thought that this represented a point in my life that I was looking for something interesting. And again I think food became a big part of that and the draw to why I came to make that [unintelligible [00, p.13:47] every year and look for similar kinds of..." (Jarrod)

Jarrold also points out that what prompted him to choose a specific photo was due to "a point in my life" moment he recognized as special. Jarrold admitted that he has been to this location in Mexico "A dozen times" and has learned to enjoy the food of the region over time and appreciates the freshness and quality of the food in general. Jarrold does not identify any particular tangible factor as the reason for picking the photo other than it represented a significant point in his life. This is a milestone for some to appreciate the things in life that were taken for granted; Jarrold learned to understand that choices can be made on what food to eat came while visiting Mexico. I found his choice of photo unique as it was that of a sushi dish; not a food associated with Mexican cuisine, but was prepared using the freshest seafood that is a distinguishing important factor to someone from a landlocked city in Canada like Jarrold. Jarrold never spoke of traditional (or authentic) Mexican food where other foodies perhaps would have immersed themselves into indigenous cuisine after twelve visits. Perhaps Jarrold will eventually test the local Mexican food but up until this point in his life, he noted memories captured in his photo that we can say also reflect his state of mind.

Tarro shares his feelings at the time of his photo:

"Again atmosphere was the prime; quality of food comes back to me. Just the feel of this guy being so satisfied after a good meal, those are sort of the big ones" (Tarro)

Tarro also contributes to the state of mind theory in the creation of gastronomic memories in his factors for selecting his photo. Tarro's photo depicted a lone elderly gentleman sitting at a very large table at the end of the meal; the man had a 'relaxed' body language and a 'satiated' look on his face. Tarro's photo captures this "satisfied" moment at the end of a "fine experience" which was a family dinner in a restaurant that was closed to the public to host the event. The "big ones" Tarro is referring to is the factor that the person

was “*so satisfied*” over the expected factors of food, service and atmosphere. Tarro’s capturing of the satisfied moment is another identified state of mind example of the importance this is to creating memorable gastronomic experiences. Tarro’s photo of the man perhaps represents how he himself felt at the time. Peter describes the process he went through:

“Well, I’ve had a couple of other photos with people who we were traveling with rather than myself sort of sitting at a table in a restaurant. They looked kind of static and boring. I thought this one showed more about the kind of food experience we were having in Spain. The other pictures that I looked at and considered were, okay we’re sitting at a table in a restaurant” (Peter)

Peter’s choice of photo captures a moment within the experience he had with his partner and another couple in the tapas bar in Spain. The great food and the excitement of the “*incident*” with the women mentioned earlier celebrating a birthday and a wine incident. As part of this experience, Peter’s narrative described that the wine he first received in the tapas bar was ‘corked’ (TCA – 2,4,6 –Trichloroanisole- a defect in wine), he detected this immediately from his experience as a wine aficionado. The process to replace the wine with the bartender also became a part of the story as they spoke little Spanish and the bartender limited English. Considering this incident along with the others, Peter’s recount presents multiple moving parts within his memorable gastronomic experience. The fact that Peter did not single out one significant factor as a reason he chose the photo leads me to believe that the more complex his experiences, the more potential to become memorable. Peter’s photo captured these ‘moving parts’, like a mechanical watch where many parts must move in coordination just to tell the time, a gastronomic experience also must have coordination among service aspects, food preparation in a conducive environment to make a customer satisfied. The failure(s) or success(s) in the ‘moving parts’ can affect the outcome of a culinary event to be positive or negative.

For anyone looking at Peter’s photo (Image 3) would see two bartenders and some platters of food. For Peter, this photo depicted a specific place, the events that occurred

there and the state of mind he was in during this memorable gastronomic experience. Darin's decision for his photo:

"Yeah, again, when I look at the picture I remember that this was an important trip. We flew to Montreal, my brother and my sister drove from Kitchener, we met in Montreal that was – it was an important coming together. It wasn't long, it was about a week. Yeah, and again my sister in law being on a mission for poutine, we were all sort of into that" (Darin)

I can only surmise that Darin chose this photo for one reason, because it was *"important"*, in fact he mentions this twice, *"important trip"* and *"an important coming together"*. During our conversation, Darin admitted that he had many meetings with family and friends over dinner in restaurants, this was common. I did not catch *"important"* in our interview and therefore did not ask what was so important. It would have been a prying question as 'important' meetings with family tend to be private in nature. I would like to think that we all remember important family meetings over the course of our lives and Darin's would be no different. I can only assume that his *"important coming together"* resulted in a positive outcome therefore this may have been the deciding factor in the selection of his photo. The photo of Darin's 'poutine' (French-Canadian signature dish) had a deeper meaning that only he understood, to anyone else they would see French fries cooked in duck fat, with cheese curds and beef gravy.

Nadine and Katherine's narrative:

"I think maybe partly that it kind of represented our whole trip to France in some ways that we were trying to choose places that were sort of – were not chain restaurants or anything, that were individual to whatever area that we were visiting at the same time"(Nadine)

"I think...you know this photo was the one that stood out for me the most. There were lots of other photos that I came across. I was like oh yeah, no, that could work, but knowing that I was going to have a conversation about this photo, I kind

of thought okay, like this was the one that I knew had the most connected to it, in terms of memory” (Katherine)

As mentioned earlier, Katherine’s photo was that of a soup (chowder) and her brother. In her statement above it is obvious she was “*most connected to*” her brother than over a food item like chowder. This five-year-old photo captured a reunion with her brother while over food they shared growing up on the east coast. The photo must have brought her back to her state of mind at the time, she admitted this photo was “*connected to*” in memory and knew it would provide plenty of conversation for our interview. A photo of a plate of food with no connection (i.e. brother) I think would not have “*stood out*”, especially from someone who was very familiar with Canadian east coast chowders.

Violet describes the process used to select her photo, rather than select some shot of a plate of exotic food from some far away country (which she had plenty) she chose the one that was a “*little different*”.

“I think that, you know, this speaks to – if I were looking at this picture as someone that was looking at this picture I’d say okay what the hell happened here? I would want to know right? So, part of it was I wanted to pick a picture that was not – didn’t strike me as the kind I always take, right? Which is sometimes the food and the placement of the food and how they plate stuff and what they do with it, like that’s all interesting. Sometimes I have pictures of the group ‘cause I’m happy with who I’m with. But I thought to myself those are all fairly – like this just felt a little more original. It just felt like something that might be a little different, right? And it was totally different, being a two bit café with expensive Champagne” (Violet)

Her photo of the Champagne and croissant (Image 7) came with the better story, one that ultimately delivered insight of her state of mind. Her narrative provided a key finding in this research.

A few of the photos admittedly were selected strictly based on the timeline of this research, Max explained:

“I think timeline probably because when I first entered into the, you know, study it was one of the recent experiences that I had had. Of course, you know, I would totally love to give you a photo of like one of the times where I was with my cousins in Italy, you know, making a fresh pizza with fresh ingredients in a brick oven, you know, right downtown in Calabria. But for me to dig up a picture of that would have been a little harder, if I even had one it would have been difficult. But definitely I would say the reason I chose this was timeline” (Max)

Maxine’s transcript presented addresses her feelings during the time of her memorable gastronomic experience:

“A couple of trips ago I was at Café Boulud Toronto, and the server, when I asked for this dish, or a version of it anyway, he asked me what wine I would like with it, and I said “I don’t really know, what can you recommend?” and he actually brought the sommelier over, and the sommelier and I had good fifteen minute conversation about the glass, the one single glass I ordered by myself. It was quiet in the place and that probably helped, because he had nothing better to do than chat with me, but it was still very nice conversation. Yes they made an effort to... To connect... To make sure I was really, really happy, which is a nice feeling.”
(Maxine)

As mentioned earlier, Maxine experienced her ‘state of mind’ moment in creating her memorable gastronomic experience at this restaurant. It is obvious in this scenario that the service staff played key roles by leaving her with a *“nice feeling”*. In this case, service was a major contributing factor even though Maxine stated *“food”* is the major driver in creating her memorable gastronomic experiences. Maxine was a realist in her observation that the restaurant was *“quiet”* and the staff had *“nothing better to do”* but still accepted the gesture and cherished the moment.

5.10. We Got Lucky....It Rained!

The common denominator of the five stories (six if you include mine added at the end of this section) presented here is the element of surprise, fate or luck that factored into making these gastronomic experiences memorable. When placed in a situation that is new, strange or ‘out of our comfort zone’ we become susceptible to intense experiences.

Katherine did not expect to have the best sandwich of her life that day in Capri:

“Ah, the sandwich. There was this sandwich...we took a side trip to the island of Capri, from Sorrento, and....I can’t remember where it was or what it was called, and we were so tired at that point, and we stopped and they just, kind of, kicked us all off the bus and said go up to that deli. Go up to that deli by the church, they’ll give you something to eat, you know? We walked in and they didn’t speak a lick of English, and they just, kind of, looked at us and somebody said hungry and we said yes. They say okay and they made this sandwich, it was the type of sandwich where, you know, I wound up eating sitting on a little stone ledge, just outside the deli, in front of the church, with a big hill down below, and it was this big fresh roll that they had made that morning. These beautiful tomatoes, prosciutto and buffalo mozzarella, and there was so much juice running out of this thing. You had to, eat it, sort of leaning over...and it was gigantic, but it was the best dam sandwich I’ve ever had” (Katherine)

Being away from home and familiar food can be stressful, so when Katherine was directed toward a deli with a communication problem little did she know she would enjoy the “best dam sandwich” of her life...what makes it special is there was no preconception as to what she was about to receive in addition to the surroundings (atmosphere) which must have been quite scenic. Darin discovered pastries as a bonus amenity with his apartment rental in Paris:

“So Paris we had an apartment that we rented an apartment through airbnb, we were in a neighbourhood and we discovered a little boulangerie patisserie just

around the corner. I would go down and check out the pastries, the chocolate croissants and a couple of other things I didn't know what they were. So that was a great morning experience for about three days. A new pastry every day. When you're in Paris – it was great” (Darin)

Amenities are the things usually checked in advance when booking a hotel room and then expected on arrival, who does not like surprise amenities. The next three stories involve people ducking out of the rain and had food they never experienced. Here are their narratives, beginning with Janna's:

“...we got to go to a Michelin rated restaurant, and that was gorgeous, but probably my best experience was going to the following year and I found a restaurant almost serendipitously, and it was just a little hole in the wall. It had started to rain, we went in, and we were hungry, and it was just amazing. It was just perfect. And it wasn't by design, it was just a fluke” (Janna)

Another gastronomic story in great detail from Peter that also involves rain:

“In Paris, we have a couple of favourite restaurants. We have one call [Le Mosta Jeanette] and because we found it by accident, we were walking down the street and suddenly it started to rain. So we saw an awning down the side street. We ran to get under the awning and we were standing under the awning while it was raining and said, oh there's a restaurant there. There's kind of a French sausage that's called Andouille from parts of the beast that don't get into the food chain on this side of the ocean. So health officials even over there are saying you shouldn't be serving this stuff. The French responded and they formed this five a, society of the preservation of authentic old style Andouille. We saw this little sign on the window, and five an Andouille and we saw it and ordered it. [Patsy] didn't order it. I ordered it. She said, what is this made from? She said it was rank. Anyway we loved the little place. There were working men in there, men by themselves having dinner and reading their newspaper. They had their bottle of wine on pigeon holes

on the wall and so if you come in and have some wine and don't finish it, they put the tag on it and you can come in tomorrow and have the rest of it" (Peter)

Finally there is Barbara's gastronomic story that involves rain, here is a short clip from a detailed story:

"Yeah, it was just the four of us. And so, we ordered spiced wine before dinner and then we had our appetizers, then he brought out us out a tureen to try that he'd made that day. We didn't order it, you know? And it was delicious. And then the power went out because the thunderstorm hit. So he whipped out candles"
(Barbara)

Janna, Barbara and Peter's rain story were all very lengthy and detailed; I only presented a 'clip' of each narrative. I think what makes these stories unique (including mine) is a manifestation of a 'fourth' attribute, one that overrides the three mainly discussed in this thesis, food, service and atmosphere. The fourth attribute is 'nature', a force that is out of the control of participants and foodservice operators. Physiological requirements and shelter are basic needs and when we get both in a pleasant comfortable affordable environment we relish the moment perhaps more than others because we 'beat nature' one more day and feel safe.

Perhaps the 'candles' may have played a part in this memory as well as the rainstorm. For the record I could insert my own personal gastronomic experience here... the time on holiday in Barcelona my wife and I stumbled across a busy little restaurant as it started to rain...we managed to get a table and had probably the best meal of the trip...my wife's favourite story. I think that Mother Nature is a powerful force to be reckoned and when we have the opportunity for shelter in a comfortable environment such as a restaurant full of good food and drink we savour the moment. Luck may play a role in memorable gastronomic experiences; these were the shared stories from participants' other events in their travels. Based on these stories, luck was a factor... all had similar experiences where the restaurant was 'discovered'; therefore, a memory was born based on unexpected

factors. There is a connection between our experiences and how far we venture out of our comfort zone, this is tourism at work.

5.11. Duplicated?

Looking at whether the gastronomic experience portrayed in the photos were potentially repeatable because if they were, then what are the factors required. If their experiences were not repeatable, then an explanation as to why this was not possible would reveal crucial attributes. As a result, the participants were split on the idea that their experience could be duplicated, Jarrod thought it is possible but was looking at the context of the food to be replicated...

“I thought about it. I’ve been at other places that are even higher end in farmer’s fields that are doing the farm to table thing. Yeah, it can be duplicated. Can I duplicate it in Canada successfully? Quite difficult I think with our limited season?” (Jarrod)

Max also was only looking at the food attribute in his experience...

“Yeah, I think it can be cause I’ve been to other Japanese restaurants where it’s similar, however, I specifically prefer Wasabi because I feel that their experience is the best. I felt that their food is the freshest, they have good service. Pretty much their food is the freshest in my taste bud’s opinion” (Max)

Martha was only looking at replicating the ‘tropical setting’ as a factor...

“Duplicated in a tropical setting, possibly. There the location is so unique and just so – it’s quirky, but it’s quaint at the same time. Without putting in plastic trees in Canada – you know, you get the whole Mall of America experiences, right?” (Martha)

Eric is saying yes to the food ingredients but questions the “*nuance*” in the atmosphere...

“The answer would be yes. But it is a little different now I’m in France and its Dijon mustard which is...100 kilometres away...And there’s the caraway which is the way Alsatians do it as opposed to the Germans as opposed to somebody else. So if they can be replicated if it’s some local nuance that now compliments the atmosphere”
(Erik)

Pamela spoke frequently about how “history” was a part of her experience on two fronts, first as the actual history surrounding the restaurant she dined in and second, her personal history (events) leading up to the dining experience. The history of surroundings is not transportable and neither are events within the surroundings.

“I’m going to say no because the experience after leaving the restaurant changed my perception of the dining experience as well. Having that walk through history as we were and then reminiscing about the fact that if everything hadn’t occurred in exactly the right order and as it had, it wouldn’t have been the experience that we had” (Pamela)

Barbara identified that it was the exact locale that provided the experience...

“Maybe if I went back to this particular tapas bar. I don’t think so [here]”
(Barbara)

Dicky did identify that to repeat his experience would take more than a plate of food...

“ That would be harder, because for one thing it’s so steeped in a very particular culture, and if you don’t have the sort of critical mass of people to support it...you’ve got six Chinese men that are...the atmosphere is not going to be same as this place where everyone goes for lunch in that particular neighbourhood. It’s in Chinatown” (Dicky)

In summary there were no similar answers, the factors varied from each participant. Because there was no recipe to duplicate a memorable gastronomic experience only strengthens the fact these events are truly unique to the individual. Due to the number of ‘moving parts’ in a gastronomic experience it would suggest repeating series of events (with tangibles) to obtaining the same result would be difficult. The biggest factor is our ‘state of mind’, how to return to a feeling. Maxine said it best describing her visits to Café Boloud:

“...I’ve been there three or four times and the experience is never exactly the same at the same place. Right? ‘Cause you’re never the same exact same person at the same time either.” (Maxine)

She was the only participant who attempted to repeat memorable gastronomic experiences by dining in the same restaurant and ordering similar food and drink, she had synced the ‘moving parts’ but admittedly could not control her state of mind. With this being said, we cannot then force a creation of a memorable gastronomic experience and neither can the foodservice operatives, it is up to our current state of mind. Just like we cannot guarantee a moment to laugh uncontrollably if we want to, we can be receptive (state of mind) and exposed to potential opportunities (environment) but the moment may not arise.

5.12. Picking a Photo was the Problem

A commonality among many participants was the issue of picking only one photo for this research, Margot emailed six photos; I had to get her to pick only one for the interview. Others like Eric spent days reviewing photos with his partner before sending in the photo of the hot dog. A photo of a hot dog from someone who has travelled the world seems at first strange until you unpack the story behind it. Picking a favourite travel destination was a common theme among participants, many had a hard time to pick just one, Pamela said:

“I see it more as a collection of experiences versus a favourite per se. Whether affirming that pizza in Naples is as Elizabeth Gilbert said in Eat, Pray, Love that there is fantastic pizza in Naples, that to finding a fantastic find in France or baking bread at a winery with people from all across the world and doing a wine tasting, it’s all become a collection of experiences versus a favourite per se” (Pamela)

But when pressured to pick one specifically Pamela came up with this:

“I think one of the most unique experiences that I had was in Turkey dining at a local establishment and open air, there were felines [cats] all around and it was a collection of local cuisine, from seaweed to fish to local veg” (Pamela)

Peter, another experienced traveller had the same problem picking just one favourite but eventually did pick one:

“I don’t know if I can say one place is favourite. That’s always a trouble when you ask that kind of a question. There’s a whole world out there and you want to experience it. In terms of gastronomic terms, Paris comes close to the top. One thing we enjoy in France particularly is not seeking out the three star restaurants. I’ve been to the three star restaurants. They’re very fancy and very expensive but in France, like I was telling you in the town square in [unintelligible 00, p.21, p.35] we were having this incredible meal and it was just like, over here it would have been a hamburger or maybe a club sandwich. Over there is was eggplant cannelloni and pork tenderloin, you know? So France is the top. We have sometimes sought out high-end experiences. Like for our 25th anniversary we went to France and went to LaTour D’Argent, okay? We spent a ridiculous amount of money. You know, the wine list looks like the Manhattan hotel phonebook” (Peter)

Barbara, another frequent traveller confessed:

“I would have to say France is my favourite. Although, that’s a tough question to answer, because I really like Croatia...Croatia was - the scenery is the best....and it’s along the Adriatic...the food there was really fantastic. Again, it’s always fresh and it’s local and it’s not frozen. And what you might get in Dubrovnik, you can’t get 30 miles down the coast because it’s not local” (Barbara)

Because of this line of questioning, I have concluded that the participants have vast memories of gastronomic experiences but many are *only* about the individual attributes, the food, the service or the atmosphere of a particular experience. Food is the obvious most common factor and relevant to this study, but I feel these one-off experiences are not in the same category as the experiences shared in the photos. There is a difference between a ‘memory of a gastronomic experience’ and a ‘memorable gastronomic experience’, as the latter regards the state of mind in context and other is food related.

5.13. Chapter Summary

Christine’s photo was that of a plate of food, specifically a vegetarian open face sandwich, she was in Sweden at the time with her now ex-boyfriend. Christine’s photo not only had a detailed account of the unique ingredients that comprised the ‘plate’ but plenty of backstory describing the context surrounding her memorable gastronomic experience. Christine herself a vegetarian, emphatically praised the uniqueness of the open face sandwich but reading through the transcript an image of a woman appears that perhaps is holding on to that photo as remembrance of a love lost. Just what was it they spoke of that day that made the photo special? I know the context of the photo but not conversation.

“Well, for the picture I guess the food. But I will remember that the day because of some things that [John] and I had talked about” (Christine)

The context of the photos were delivered through the stories from the participants who gave an understanding of why they were special and selected for sharing. These stories led to the discovery of a trigger point in memory creation, 'state of mind', what the stories did not tell us was the intimate feelings from the conversations and deeper memories.

The importance of those 'at the table' with the participant cannot be ignored, this was at first the obvious trigger for the creation of a memorable gastronomic experience until I explored the stories of those who were alone. Those 'at the table' could be included as an attribute based on the findings that recognized the importance in the success of the overall experience. *Who* is at the table was a factor that contributed to the 'state of mind' in certain participants such as Katherine's narrative that featured her brother.

This chapter addressed the first of two research questions asked in this research "How do the tangible and intangible attributes (food, service, and atmosphere) in a gastronomic experience affect the creation of positive memories?" State of mind was identified as a major contributing factor to the creation of memories in gastronomic experiences. Sociability, food, service or atmosphere was deemed important in the participants' experience, but not one specifically was identified as a major factor in the creation of memory. For me Darin's comment during the focus group sums up this chapter when he said *"Sometimes the best meals you don't remember the food at all, you remember the experience"*. Chapter six presents the analysis on the role of authenticity in the food, service and atmosphere attributes.

Chapter 6 – The Search for Authenticity

6.1. Authenticity in a Gastronomic Experience

This chapter is about authenticity, beginning with analysis of the findings regarding the line of questioning that investigated authenticity within the participants' memorable gastronomic experiences in the interviews as well as in the focus group. The mode of analysis was the interviews with auto-driven photo-elicitation and the focus group (dinner party) session. Specifically, the attributes, food, service and atmosphere were separately examined with special focus to explore or see whether and how authenticity is present (presents itself) in the memory creation. There is a section that presents analysis with participants' interpretations on 'authentic restaurant experiences' and what makes food 'authentic' to them. Next is a discussion surrounding a specific ethnic chain restaurant that portrays itself as authentic; a few participants spoke of this restaurant in their narratives in the interview and focus group. The specific discussion surrounding an ethnic chain restaurant was important to this thesis as it coincides with my finding along from the literature (review) and opens a wider discussion on the foodservice industry image in today's society.

6.1. Authenticity within the Restaurant Experience – The Service

Service scripted? This is a giveaway that the service in an establishment is typically insincere and the server is fulfilling a required 'service step' usually part of a 'best practice' initiative sent down from the management. For example, the Culinary Institute of America (2014, p.142) recommends "*The Steps of Service*" that could be applied to most restaurants. 'Inauthenticity' is when service personnel (waiters/waitresses) appear as order takers – i.e. "*Hello, my name is Bill I will be your server tonight, can I start you with a cocktail this evening...*" This thesis made inquiry into this topic and looked at the individuals who provided the service during the memorable gastronomic experiences but also sought if any other contacts were made, with the chef, cook, manager/owner of the restaurant and other patrons.

Throughout the inquiry, no one thought that their event was the least bit scripted; three detailed answers are presented here:

“There was a service element to it, there would have been some scripting to it I would imagine, playing to us as tourists a little bit. But there was a lot of generosity with is as well unscripted. The cook would come out and sit at a table next to you and chat with you. It was an informal environment.” (Jarrod)

Jarrod speaks about the cook sitting at the table and having a “*chat*” is definitely not a normal part of restaurant service experiences, as a chef I can say this is an abnormality! Meeting the person who cooked your food is a treat especially for a ‘foodie’ as it gives opportunity to talk food with a professional. I can vouch for this from my personal experience as a chef...foodies want your recipes...so they can entertain at home and boast to guests their source. I noted customers enjoyed making the contact, also another status point for customers to say, “*I not only had dinner at _____ but I met the chef too*”. The celebrity status of chefs in the past years has made it acceptable for chefs and cooks to journey out into their dining rooms and connect with their guests (Barnes 2014). This special contact is an educational moment of the guest, an experience that adds to their gastronomic knowledge as well as the event memory. A restaurant customer who has contact with the chef who cooked their meal perhaps adds a seal of authenticity to the experience. The meal is now ‘truly’ authentic because they can look into the eyes of the cook and know the food consumed was not the result of modern technology or factory processed. The more ‘food’ education they gain prepares them to quantify future gastronomic experiences as positive or negative.

“No, I mean I’ve been an actor off and on for years and I’ve been on the media on and off for years and I think I’m pretty good at figuring out when someone is acting or reading from a script, and no, I mean, the best experiences are when it seems to come from a genuine place of caring about a customer’s experience.” (Maxine)

Maxine is describing what appears as the emotional intelligence within a service encounter. A qualifying characteristic of her “*best experiences*”, perhaps is the subtlety of a Duchenne (authentic) smile which can make the event a success over the inauthentic ones. Peter speaks about the European service he found unique:

“No, not that. The Europeans have a different attitude. They’re formal but friendly and the same time. They don’t try to pretend I’m your best buddy. I’ve never met you before and I’m here in a professional capacity. They managed to be friendly but there’s still little reserve. I’m professional. I’m doing my job here and they never crossed that line.” (Peter)

Peter’s comment speaks to the service differences he has noticed between European service staff and North American servers, the comments are from a well-travelled person who considers himself a ‘foodie’. Even though Peter’s answer was “*no*” he thinks that professionalism is not considered scripted “*...formal but friendly...*” Obviously, a line walked carefully by European servers where Peter thinks formal is not scripted. To Peter this must be an authentic encounter because anything scripted would appear ‘inauthentic’ and someone trying to be a “*best buddy*” would come across as suspicious, again, ‘inauthentic’.

In this section, participants recalled specific conversations and interactions with anyone from their restaurant gastronomic experience other than the obvious server. This would have included other restaurant staff (chef, management, owner, other servers) and patrons of the restaurant. Making social connections with those indirectly responsible for the service aspect of their memorable gastronomic experience would demonstrate multiple aspects of service influence within the event other than the obvious waiter or waitress.

Some of the participants could not recall any specific conversations, the few that did recall narratives provide a detailed account of their experience of how ‘others’ affected their overall impression and contributed to their memory. Here Tarro implies the age of the event yet still offers a detailed account from memory:

“Yeah, yeah. One of the interesting exchanges. I was there with my sweetie, this was during one of our first trips to Italy, so she wasn’t really strong in Italian. So I was sitting here, then she was sitting next to me and next to her was a gentleman. She spoke a little Italian so he thought that she knew a lot of Italian. So he starts chatting, chatting and she says, [‘Tarro, Tarro, Tarro’] and the one line that sticks out for me was, ‘Good afternoon Ma’am, my name is Giancarlo, I hope you like to drink because I drink’. That’s sort of – if I had to pick out a line or anecdote from here, that’s what jumps out at me. And she proceeded to out drink him so it was quite funny in the end” (Tarro)

The detail Tarro provides here is a significant as part of his experience, he mentions it was his first trip with “my sweetie” therefore this implies the reason for the detail, Tarro does go on to elaborate just how special the trip to Italy was in other narratives. This was a real moment in Tarro’s life with his “sweetie” that was captured in the story surrounding his photo. This existential moment is authentic to Tarro; he can look at his photo and ‘relive’ the event.

Margot remembers the detail but never tells us if she made specific conversations with those in service, she does speak of table conversations with other ‘pilgrims’ especially those of her daughter.

“Yes, the people that I didn’t know, on so many levels – the people that I didn’t know and yet I enjoyed their company very much for those few hours that we had the time. The people that I sat with that I could talk to and then people at the far end of the table that I either knew very well, because I’d been hiking with them for 300 kilometres, and the people at the other end of the table I didn’t know but they were still part of the group. And then my daughter of course, because I was admiring that she was doing this all by herself and it was – you know she was...it was amazing watching her and it was cool because every once in a while she’d look up at me and check if I was okay...” (Margot)

Margot proudly mentions how her daughter held her own conversations with other pilgrims around the evening dinner table in the hostel. There was nothing inauthentic about dinner in a hostel in Spain with strangers, Margot was happy to be with her daughter on this adventure as she stated, *“I made lots of great memories on that trip...”* Historically a pilgrim was the ‘first tourist’ therefore the experience of Margot and her daughter would have been similar to our ancestors back in another time, including the communal evening meal. The pilgrimage provided opportunity for Margot to see her daughter in a new light that was removed from all the inauthenticity of everyday life. Margot admitted that this trip was an opportunity for her to connect with her daughter away from home. Because of this trip with her daughter, Margot had positioned herself in a situation that was ripe to breed a gastronomic memory for her. However, could she have gathered a similar gastronomic memory enjoying high tea with her daughter at the Ritz Hotel in London or fish and chips in a Scottish Pub? I see the link between the escape from inauthenticity of daily life being an incubator for memories but the event itself could be of an iconic authentic nature not necessarily indexical as defined by Grayson and Martinec (2004). A gastronomic event provides opportunity for positive memories, whether it is authentic is only a question that can be answered by the participant.

In Erik’s example, the only social interaction he remembers is of his partner mocking his choice of food for his gastronomic experience:

“And then there’s [Barbara] giggling. She’s just saying, oh, of course you’re going to have one of those at 9:00 in the morning. You’re not, never walking by those.”
(Erik)

Erik did make reference to the fact he felt the hot dog in the city square in Strasbourg was *“authentic”* and a *“European thing”* even when I questioned that he could get a similar hot dog on a street corner in Chicago or Manhattan. In addition, he admitted spending a great deal of time sorting through his photo collection to arrive at the hot dog photo, other contenders were also images of street food in Shanghai. Erik was of German descent; his last name was very common and he was proud of his background that influenced his decision to pick this specific photo over others. The fact his partner was there to share the

moment was important to him as well. With this being said, I can say that Erik's 'state of mind' triggered a memory while dining on an "authentic" hot dog with sauerkraut at 9am in the morning in a Strasbourg town square. In addition, a factor was that he was on holiday with his partner, and spent a moment savouring his German heritage. It is this alignment of exterior forces of being in Germany with his partner and having the opportunity to sample his local "authentic" food, an existential authentic moment. His experience, internal and disposition for the love of street food, knowledge of culture and his German roots combined to create the memory trigger.

Violet's Champagne and stale croissant experience of the service in Helsinki Airport was described:

"Oh yeah there were two young students behind the counter who were pleasant as hell...they debated how to open it, right? Like how do we open it so the cork doesn't go flying everywhere?"

Violet's service encounter showed no signs of a 'scripted' inauthentic nature and Pamela noted from her experience a similar casual service theme:

"The service was very interactive...she shared information about the history of the restaurant itself....let us dine at our leisure and there wasn't a rush or, the service complimented our experience...The initial introduction was and once she sensed our purpose in being there, then she relaxed it up and changed her approach."
(Pamela)

Jarrold had a similar story to Pamela about his service, as both narratives mention that service has a prescribed scripted connotation but drifts towards unscripted informality:

"There was a service element to it, there would have been some scripting to it I would imagine, playing to us as tourists a little bit. But there was a lot of generosity with it as well unscripted. The cook would come out and sit at the table next to you and chat with you. It was an informal environment" (Jarrod)

In reference to the earlier conversation with the street vendor who sold the memorable hot dog to Erik added:

“No. And often those guys can be very funny...And charming and I don’t recall anything about what...or I was drooling. I don’t know” (Erik)

Erik was no beginner at dealing with street food vendors; he enjoyed the banter with the ‘guys’ as he confided many of his best gastronomic moments were on the street. Martha also spoke of her service encounter with regard to being ‘scripted’ she stated:

“Not at all. They are totally personalized and in the moment, so even if they’re really busy, they still take the time....just a lot of really great characters” (Martha)

Based on the narratives I can say that the participant’s common theme was that they felt their social interaction (communication) with restaurant staff was never ‘scripted’. This common finding demonstrates an authentic sociality between the customer and staff. None of the participants felt that their service interactions were scripted by ‘actor’ therefore authenticity in service was prevalent. There were a few cases where the participants could not recall the details of the verbal transaction, Violet, purchased her Champagne and stale croissant from a cashier at a kiosk in the airport and Erik bought his hot dog from a street vendor. Taking this into account I would add that any service that was not negative is a common denominator among all participants and this would account for the fact not one participant mentioned service as a driver of their positive memorable gastronomic experience. Service of some sort is an obvious necessity in a positive gastronomic experience but the least important attribute in comparison with food and atmosphere. The goal here was to determine if authenticity within the service attribute was a factor in memorable gastronomic experiences. The findings appear to present that participants interpreted the service and interactions in their experience as genuine therefore authenticity is a factor in the creation of a memorable gastronomic experience.

6.2. Authenticity within the Restaurant Experience – The Food

The authenticity of the food, specifically the way it was presented in the experience of the photo, was it ‘staged’ or ‘fiddled with too much’, or was any of the food overtly doctored creating an inauthentic presentation? Again all felt the food (plate) that was presented was not ‘staged’, in fact many said their presentation was “*It was just natural*” (Mady) and “*looked [like a] fresh...*” (Nadine). Alternatively, it was mentioned that there must have been some “*thought to it*” (Tylor) regarding the plating in the kitchen. Some of the descriptors used in the participants’ answers were; “*...it wasn’t pretentious*” (Pamela) therefore not fake, “*To me this is a very, very simple presentation*” (Maxine) not complicated, which is what you pay for in a first growth Bordeaux wine experience.

Another descriptor was “*...a very rustic sort of experience...*” (Janna)... rustic is the opposite of urban where the participants resided. Pamela also stated, “*The presentation was articulated with purpose...*” which she later elaborated on the distinct flavours and how the food tasted. This (Pamela’s food) is staged but with purpose. Shaun provides a purpose for staging “*...for me, I like the staging...we hear the phrase ‘eating with our eyes’...*”; chefs are taught to ‘compose’ plates for service like an artist. Margot insisted “*...No, not at all. It was authentic food...*” her statement to describe the paella in the church basement kitchen. Finally, Katherine added “*No fuss, no muss, it speaks for itself.*” (Katherine) which may denote that simple is a good thing at times with food.

Finally, an interesting answer to the staged question was from Peter, it was a notable because as a chef, my job was to create complications in food to impress customers and now as a researcher, I am taught to seek simplifications from complexity. Peter’s answer was “*No, no. It looked like food*”, simple.

Overall, what this tells me as a chef is the food in the photographs chosen by the participants were uncomplicated in presentation and composition, the opposite of something you want (and get) on the plate from a high-end Michelin rated restaurant. The memories of the participants were not primarily influenced by high-end cuisine presentations. Moreover, what this also tells me as a researcher is that findings will always surprise when unexpected. Interestingly none of the restaurants of the participants were Michelin rated or highly rated on social media food sites (i.e. TripAdvisor). The status of

the restaurant food does not influence memory therefore unpretentious (natural) food is considered authentic and an external driver in memory creation.

6.3. Was it Genuine?

Most people can differentiate the taste difference between fresh squeezed orange juice and the powdered instant ‘add water’ orange juice, where one is ‘authentic and the other is definitely ‘fake’. In this day, there are many variations of orange juice that fall between the authentic and fake with the consumer as the ultimate judge at the end of the day. Taste was measured as an indication of authenticity within the memorable gastronomic experiences of the participant in this research. Some participants struggled with the word ‘genuine’ especially in the context with the food itself, Christine said:

“Well, I’m not sure exactly what you mean by genuine, but this is an alternative take on a traditional meal because you have the...vegan pate and vegan cheese and pomegranate seeds are kind of new” (Christine)

Christine who was a vegan looked at her meal as a vegan alternative of the classic Scandinavian open face sandwich featuring gravlax and felt the restaurant appeased her with their version therefore it was genuine to her. Max who experienced local (Canadian-made) sushi when confronted whether his experience was genuine argued:

“Yeah, I think it was all genuine, you know, a genuine, you know, Japanese scene. The food is a genuine, you know, traditional in my knowledge, Japanese food prepared in the traditional way so it seems pretty genuine. I mean, if you walked into something like maybe McDonald’s I could say maybe it’s not genuine because it’s all kinds of like pre-prepped and it doesn’t have that genuine feel to me. Whereas something like this is fresh, they cut it right in front of you, you see the guys making it. It is definitely genuine” (Max)

Here is an example where the participant Max admits making a judgment call on a cuisine based on his previous knowledge and experience. This appears as the root of all opinions toward the authenticity of cuisine. Max's statement "*in my knowledge*" is an honest straightforward qualifier to make his opinion because without it he could be challenged. Where it gets complicated with regard to genuine is the specifics, what exactly *is* genuine in the gastronomic experience – the physical product (food), the physical surroundings (atmosphere) or the feeling one gets after the experience. Many offered details on the physical components like Max, Jarrod agreed that his event was genuine but with respect to the people:

"Yeah, I think the people were really genuinely wanting to look after their clients, us at the time. Not any other opportunity for them in the area. If they didn't succeed with this, they could have been working in farmer's fields for their next gig or not working in the community. So, they were genuine for wanting to make a go of it and wanting to provide us with what we were looking for as North American tourists"
(Jarrod)

Jarrod took this as 'effort' offered by the locals in operating a foodservice outlet in Mexico and provided no detail in the actual product being served, which was sushi, not even close to Mexican food other than the fact the seafood used was good quality. Janna was quick to answer "*yeah*" the food was genuine and "*yeah*" the atmosphere was genuine, she covered both the tangible aspect of the food and the semi-intangible atmosphere. The place was recommended to her therefore she would have had some feeling of what to expect, as opposed to a complete surprise. The restaurant must have met her standards for her to claim a genuine rating. Darin with the same line of thought stated:

"Well certainly the experience seemed very genuine, very natural. The interaction with the four of us and the server and the people around us, everyone was biking, so there was sort of banter amongst tables and back and forth" (Darin)

Darin looked at his experience as genuine ‘as a whole’ leaning toward the environment surrounding him, he noted nothing specific in the food or drink. Shaun makes another profound statement that leads toward authenticity as a state of mind within the moment presented as the time when he said:

“It’s genuine in the sense –to me, what that says to me is it’s, in a sense, unique and natural, it’s –I can go this is different than any other place I can go to. If I can go to any restaurant and come out of it going that there’s a lasting memory of that experience – as a whole” (Shaun)

Shaun’s statement “...genuine in a sense – to me” demonstrates that ‘genuine’ is determined by knowledge; his knowledge at that moment he determined authenticity. Peter called it straightforward and argued: *“Yeah. I called it authentic but genuine is the same thing”*

In summary, positive memorable gastronomic experiences are genuine in the eyes of the participant whether they are looking at specific physical attributes or at the event as a whole. In addition all of the participants agreed that their experience took place in a natural setting, some elaborated and stated; *“hyper-natural”, “better than natural”, “natural and I would say uplifting”*. These answers demonstrate that even when we know that experiences are “Staged” according to Gilmore and Pine (1999) consumers are unaware therefore natural can be authentic.

6.4. Define an Authentic Restaurant Experience

As the second research question of this thesis was to determine how authenticity plays a role in the creation of memorable gastronomic experiences therefore I needed to explore how the participants interpreted authenticity within their own gastronomic experiences. This inquiry was outside of the experience of their photo where I asked how they would define an authentic restaurant experience. It was at this point the participant answers became complex and began to build unique themes. This question delved into how

the participants feel themselves to be in touch with their world; here are the detailed answers with analysis from this inquiry:

Margot: *When I feel like the restaurant is authentic. When I'm not made to feel like I'm not properly dressed enough or I'm not the right kind of person, like if it's a bar or whatever, like I don't appreciate when I'm made to feel I'm not young enough or hip enough or whatever to be eating there because it's for like the young cool crowd, I don't belong there. When we were in Ireland, there were people, like young people, right, to old people and they're all sitting around having a pint of Guinness and playing musical instruments and that's –*

Interviewer: *So it's a state of mind to you?*

Margot: *Well, yeah, because I think if the restaurant is not out to impress anybody or not out to preserve some kind of artificial image and only looking at – having approval on the right kind of people going there, when everyone's welcome, or the food stands on its own or the restaurant is all, like whatever, not even necessarily a restaurant, like even if it's a cart on the street – when the food stands on its own then that's all – there shouldn't be any pressure to feel like I'm dressed a certain way or not, I can't – my credits cards are not the right colour or whatever. I have no – that pretentiousness, I have no patience for it"*

Margot looks at an 'authentic' experience being the responsibility of the restaurant in how it welcomes its clientele and has nothing to do with the physical surroundings or the offerings. This presentation of an authentic reception regardless of potential superficial window dressing and without a qualifier on the food is at first puzzling. She paints the picture that an authentic restaurant experience is more about the feeling or state of mind during the event and minimal input from the attributes of food, service and atmosphere. If her state of mind is considered the judge of an authentic restaurant experience (or

gastronomic experience) then authenticity does play a role in her memories but not directly from authenticity of the attributes. (Note: that at the time of Margot's interview the 'state of mind' as a finding had not been determined yet) Maxine adds to this state of mind to define an authentic experience when asked about repeating ethnic food gastronomic events (meals). The question posed to her asked if it was necessary for her to travel for unique ethnic experiences when we have the same ingredients at home. She contended:

"You can get good food. Will it be the exact same? No. But that's okay. It doesn't have to be for me – It doesn't have to be the exact same, cause nothing is ever the exact same. You never step in the same river twice, you know? [Laughter]"

(Maxine)

Maxine's reference to Heraclitus (535-475 BCE) *"No man ever steps into the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man"* best describes the state of mind participants are in describing authenticity and memory triggers from each of their memorable gastronomic experience. Interestingly, Maxine and Margot were both relating their feelings towards what is authentic in a restaurant experience; they reference their state of mind as the judging factor. A gastronomic situation (event) is evaluated as authentic or inauthentic only at the time regardless of preconceptions, outside influence and direct contacts.

The participants who were admitted foodies and well-travelled had differing thoughts about authentic restaurant experiences.

"True to the culture. If it is an ethnic restaurant; the Burmese restaurant actually is quite good. I'm surprised actually but they move away from their authentic dishes and go more into sushi, the sushi is terrible there but the soups are fantastic and they're served in the traditional dishes....(Pamela)

Pamela is referring to a local ethnic restaurant that should 'stick to their Burmese dishes' that are *"True to the culture"* as the ones they attempt out of their culture she does not like.

Like the sushi really is “terrible” or is perceived terrible because it is not served in the appropriate setting?

It’s like ordering a hamburger in a Chinese restaurant and complaining that it doesn’t taste as good as the one at McDonald’s. According to Pamela’s application to participate in this research, she does not mention that she has been in Burma or Japan but offers critique on the food from both cultures. Peter offers his take on an authentic restaurant experience:

“Like, not a specific example to me but to me what makes it authentic? First of all, the cuisine is local or regional cuisine. When you get on menu, there will be items there which you recognize that would be part of something you wouldn’t get at home. Like goat, for example in Spain, I had goat several times in Spain. The service helps you understand what they’re doing and there’s local wine” (Peter)

Peter makes the connection that to be authentic the food needs to match where it is being served, how it is being served, and what is being prepared; to him the food is the qualifier. Pamela also referred to the food as the qualifier for her authentic restaurant experience which then leads me to believe that food if deemed authentic to the establishment, it could play an important role in the creation of memorable gastronomic experiences. Nadine echoes Peter’s viewpoint by stating, *“I guess authentic I think of as being authentic to the area where you are living or visiting”*. Nadine makes a direct connection that to be authentic it must relate to the locale, for example restaurants serving Italian food are authentic if in Italy, and Mexican restaurants should be located in Mexico.

However, not all participants felt this way; there are other narratives that show the complexity of authenticity, and how it is a personal construct:

“Probably at least four people, so, me, my partner, and two good friends and going somewhere – again it would have to be good food, good service, good atmosphere. Probably a nice bottle of wine, or two, good conversation, sort of laughing probably and maybe a great dessert in there. Walking out feeling just right, not like you ate too much, sometimes that’s hard” (Darin)

Darin offers a ‘grocery list’ of criteria for his authentic restaurant experience that culminates with a ‘feeling’ achieved on completion and adds the sociability factor. Darin demonstrates existential authenticity, the effects of the external tangible and intangible ‘moving parts’ of a gastronomic experience offers a “*feeling just right*”. Katherine echoes this existential authenticity as well:

“That is tough. I suppose it depends on your definition of authentic. However...how would I describe an authentic restaurant experience? I think I would describe it as how in terms of how I feel when I leave. So when I leave a restaurant, if I kind of, have that...kind of the warm and fuzzy feeling...”

(Katherine)

Darin and Katherine make their determination of authenticity based on how they ‘feel’ *after* their restaurant experience not during as Margot did. They both (Darin and Katherine) feel like the restaurant must deliver on the attributes of food, service and atmosphere to register the event as authentic. What is interesting is that it appears that Darin and Katherine’s experience could be ruined at any time during the event and therefore they would not get “*the warm and fuzzy feeling*” or “*walking out feeling just right*”. This demonstrates that the attributes food, service and atmosphere play a major role for some to create the authentic experience regardless of the detail in the context. These ‘feelings’ experienced by Darin and Katherine are ‘hedonic’ experiences as argued by Josiam and Henry (2014) where fun characteristics available in restaurant dining overrides functionality and utilitarian motives. A hedonic feeling is an existential emotion, not object authenticity that cannot be evaluated with objective and rational measures by the customer. A hedonic activity is the escape to Heidegger’s (1962) “*spielraum*” (playroom), an “*escape from everydayness*” for a quick shot of authenticity in one’s life.

Mady and Christine lean to the atmosphere as the major factor in *their* qualifier of an authentic restaurant experience:

“An authentic – okay. Just the mood when you come in, the ambiance. And then the look of the place, the furnishings, if it meets - if it syncs up with that kind of

environment that you would see in that particular country if you were there. And for me, the smell” (Mady)

“Well, I guess it would be a sit-down would be more authentic than a grab and go or...when I eat in restaurants - eat from restaurants. I guess all of these things you mentioned, having a nice atmosphere, not too noisy...and a bit of sunshine or candlelight, something cheerful...and also friendly service” (Christine)

These comments by Mady and Christine are a specific reference to the attribute ‘atmosphere ‘and deemed authentic could play a significant role in the potential creation of memorable gastronomic experiences.

In the focus group Darin made a comment that is relevant here, he said that after our interview he thought about the word authentic, particularly in his *“own sort of search for food when I go places”*. He made a comment that when he was in Mexico he was on *“this ceviche kick”* and said:

“Well, I don’t think I ever thought I wanted some authentic ceviche...I wanted to see how they do ceviche here. I was in someplace else and I wanted to try it there and it was all different...But I never thought is one more authentic than the other. The word authentic just never popped into my head.” (Darin)

Peter added to the statement by Darin: *“Authentic is one of those things you recognize when you have it but it’s pretty hard to define”*. Defining traits that delineate authenticity in food has been discussed in previous literature; Johnston and Baumann (2014, p.70) state, *“authenticity is not inherent, but is constructed through the perceptions of food producers and consumers.”* Tam (2017) looks deeper to identify markers and argues, *“Authenticity becomes a powerful means by which worthy and unworthy food is demarcated, beyond a seemingly obvious sense of quality.”* Darin simply wanted to try the ceviche because he was curious; this was not an educational exercise to learn more about ceviche. As a result Darin *did* add to his repertoire of ceviche tastes which he could then use to compare against others. The question of what is authentic ceviche is irrelevant at this point as Darin

measured the ceviche on the ‘taste’ he liked best. Should Darin be asked regarding the authenticity of ceviche he could be the “*single authority*” that Cobb (2014) mentions as the person to accept or reject authenticity.

Maxine questions her answer and implicates geography as a criteria “*Is authenticity the way they would have done it back in the old country, because it’s not possible to do things the way they did them back in the old country, for the most part, right?*” Pamela makes a direct point “*True to the culture*”. Jarrod justified the sushi from his experience while in Mexico by stating that the food was “*authentic to the people*” the people who prepared it, and recognized sushi was not authentic to the region. With many comments like those of Peter, Maxine, Pamela and Jarrod my study looks to add to the existing complex definitions in the literature regarding authentic experiences. The stories about authenticity were complex. They varied on the essence of the actual event itself; the ‘sense of feel’ the experience provided or the physical attributes such as the location and food/beverages being offered.

Authenticity (experiential) is created from the perceptions on how the ‘moving parts’ within an experience negotiates a set of standards and values set by the individual participant, therefore leading to infinite constructs. Authenticity continues to be an elusive (and interesting) target to pin down with regard to the context of a restaurant experience due to the evolution of the foodservice industry and the consumer.

6.5. Authentic Food

One of the research goals was to discover how authenticity was perceived by the participants regarding their interaction with restaurants and food in general. The previous section provided no specific direction to build a substantive theory on authenticity within a restaurant gastronomic experience or linkage to the attributes of food, service and atmosphere. The analysis on authentic ‘food’ did offer the chance to build a matrix from my coding that shows five repeating themes and interrelationships. The five themes arose from the narratives where participants depicted their interpretations on authentic food.

The definitions of the five themes begins with “true” because it is the most complex as true is not a standard descriptor of a food item. From the narratives of the interviews,

true is a descriptor used of a food that the participant felt they knew but had no specific characteristic. It is similar to Cobb's (2014) reference to Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's statement regarding obscenity in films who stated "*I know it when I see it*". Some participants' just gave a statement that if food reflected the essential or genuine character it was "true" (authentic). The second theme, "place", denoted that to be authentic the food came from a specific geographic locale. The third theme, "history" is derived from the presentation format representative of the way it has been done for years therefore ensuring authenticity. The fourth, "preparation" is about the physical steps involved to making a food item authentic. Finally, fifth, is the "ingredients" which comprise the authentic food item, they must meet a determined standard to be judged authentic.

The participant's source for the interrelationships is depicted below (table 11) from their narratives with varying responses regarding their feeling towards authentic food. These narratives (table 11) were collected from the stories within the interviews and the food-elicitation focus group.

To make sense of this data I present an example using Symons' (1999) argument presented on authenticity with Bolognese cooking that required strict "*obedience*" to tradition. Recipes must be adhered to from Bologna, change is not allowed, the dish must be prepared to the way it has always been done and can never be precisely replicated elsewhere (Symons, 1999). Based on this argument a Bolognese dish (i.e. Bolognese Pasta from Tuscany) can never be authentic outside of the geography of Bologna yet it is available at your corner Italian restaurant all over the globe.

Participant's Definition of Authentic Food	Theme(s)
<i>"Legitimate, Valid"</i> (Margot)	True
<i>"It tastes good"</i> (Katherine)	
<i>"...I think of being authentic to the area where you are living or visiting"</i> (Nadine)	Place
<i>"it's not precise at all...I think food that is true to a time and place"</i> (Dicky)	True, History and Place
<i>"True to its roots"</i> (Jarrod)	
<i>"...the person preparing it has some background and experience in that culture"</i> (Shaun)	History, Place and Preparation
<i>"...somebody has put some thought into how to prepare it, right?"</i> (Violet)	Preparation
<i>"Knowledge and preparation"</i> (Pamela)	
<i>"Probably something that was ...maybe true to the menu"</i> (Darin)	True and Place
<i>"Authentic food? Just the real ingredients. Going back to the source"</i> (Mady)	Place, Ingredients and True
<i>"the staff delivering what they're promising"</i> (Erik)	True and Preparation
<i>"...treated the ingredients simply and it led to a great result...good quality ingredients treated with respect..."</i> (Tarro)	Ingredients and True
<i>"...real ingredients in the main dish..."</i> (Martha)	
<i>"...prepared the way it's supposed to be...fresh not processed kind of stuff like that."</i> (Max)	Ingredients and Preparation

6.6. Table 11. Narratives that form the interrelationships.

Sokolov (1991) addresses this by saying anything authentic must have *"some rough sense of where we have been"* before we can *"embrace the new or reject the bogus"*. With all this being said can a Bolognese Pasta be accepted as authentic anywhere outside Bologna's rule of law? To put this into perspective, an example is presented in table 12 of a "Bolognese" pasta sauce. Based on the themes of the narrative from the participants table

12 demonstrates criteria using the same constructs they used in the answering ‘what is authentic food?’

Theme	Criteria to Qualify as Authentic
Preparation	To be authentic, the ‘Bolognese’ the sauce would have to be prepared using an explicit cooking method to qualify.
Ingredients	To be authentic, the ‘Bolognese’ can only be made with specific ingredients.
History	To be authentic, the ‘Bolognese’ would have to be presented in a format representative of the way it has been done for years.
Place	To be authentic, the ‘Bolognese’ can only be served in a specific geographic region.
True	To be authentic, the ‘Bolognese’ needs to taste good and/or satisfy the preconception of their interpretation of a ‘Bolognese’.

6.7. Table 12 - Authentic Bolognese Sauce Themes

Based on the narratives presented addressing authentic food, the authenticity of food is constructed using one or more of the five themes presented from table 12 – true, ingredients, history, place, and preparation. Wang (1999) confirms this in a definition of constructive authenticity “*There are various versions of authenticities regarding the same object*”. To add to this constructive nature of authenticity, Getz, Robinson et al. 2014 make the statement “*Exactly what is ‘authentic’ is almost always open to interpretation*”

Figure 4 (below) illustrates the interrelationships between the themes presented derived from this analysis.

Figure 4. What is authentic food?

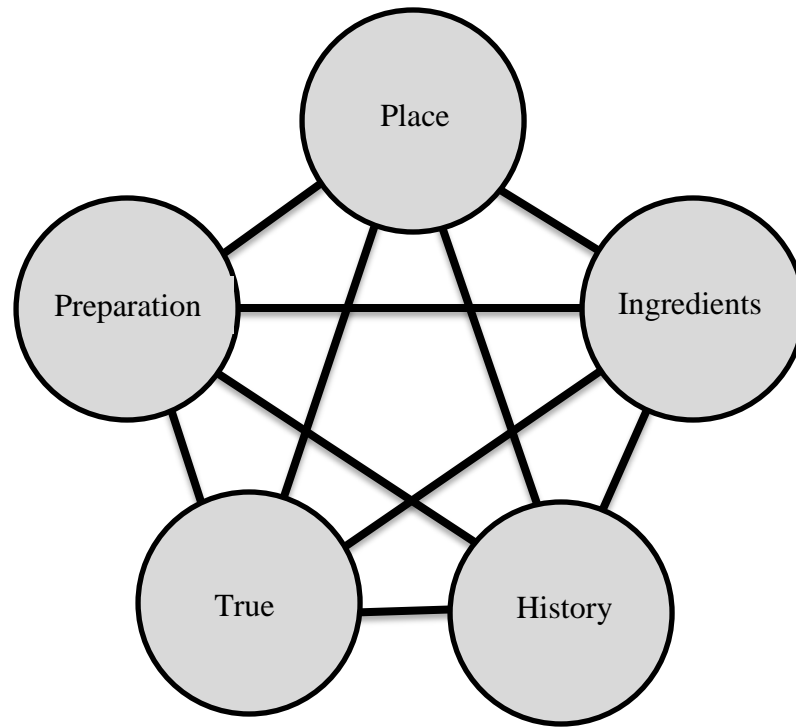


Figure 4. A depiction of the five themes and interrelationships compiled from the answers of the participants when asked to define authentic food.

6.8. Figure 4. Five Theme Matrix - The interrelationships in authentic food definitions

To demonstrate the complex and detailed narratives among some participants I present a few direct conversations, I felt this was necessary to demonstrate the theme that authenticity is constructed. Barbara, a Group A participant traveller and foodie, I began discussing the definition of authentic Italian food (tomato sauce) it began with the ‘ingredient’ theme - *“Well, to me it’s all about the tomatoes. I guess”* Then she added detail - *“I think authentic Italian has to be not from a jar”* Then she eliminated ‘place’ by saying *“... use what we have here, it’s locally authentic”*. ‘Locally authentic?’ is a new confusing term (antonym: locally inauthentic?), perhaps her vision of local products. Barbara then further elaborated by saying *“As authentic as it can be. It can’t be—you know, you can’t time travel from Italy to Canada”*, here she is saying Canadian product is acceptable. Barbara then brings in ‘preparation’ to the conversation *“Well, you need to do—whatever is*

involved in the preparation to make that sauce has to be duplicated to make it authentic". When asked where she would get 'preparation' advice she first said "*I'd Google it*" then when challenged with accuracy of the results she said "*No. You know what? I'd probably ask my girlfriend to ask her mother-in-law...she's going to tell me how to make authentic Italian*". Here Barbara recognizes authentic Italian tomato sauce requires a specific 'preparation' therefore knowledge is needed. Barbara then brings in 'history', the third theme by saying "*...she used to make authentic Italian sauce in Italy...she learned it from her mom in Italy*". After much bantering on the defining factors of Italian cooking I mention to her that defining authenticity "*gets ugly*" when you start dissecting the components she replied:

"It does, yeah. Because you really—at the end of the day, you can only do as authentic as you are able to in the situation that you're in" (Barbara)

This moment in time for Barbara is the crossover from constructive authenticity to existential authenticity as Brown (1996) refers to this moment as an "authentically good time".

Regardless of specific source, truth in the product or history and preparation, authentic food can be deemed authentic at the moment using any criteria. Barbara had in her mind her definition of authentic Italian tomato sauce until I asked her of the ingredients, preparation, history and place. Without the question, Barbara knew what Italian tomato sauce is which brings the question posed by Appadurai (1986) on whether authenticity is an immanent norm that emerges from the cuisine or an external norm reflecting on some gastronomic standard. He asks:

"...who is the authoritative voice: the professional cook. The average consumer? The gourmand? The housewife? If it is an imposed norm, who is its privileged voice: the connoisseur of exotic food? The tourist? The ordinary participants in a neighboring cuisine? The cultivated eater from a distant one (p.25)."

Authenticity in food for Barbara is a ‘sliding scale’, an objective that can be obtained if desired or a determined value based on the circumstance at the time. It looks like the level of authenticity in food can be determined if chosen or ignored, Barbara knows the difference and can decide on her acceptance.

The five themes in figure 4 are linked by the common denominator of *knowledge*; all the participants bring their previous knowledge to the table when they sit at the table. From this knowledge, a determination is made on whether the experience in front of them is authentic, it could be any of the five themes or combinations that ‘ring the bell’ signalling a real moment in time. This ‘knowledge’ is what Wang (1999) refers to with existential authenticity, the determination made by the participants at the time; it has nothing to do with the objects (food) in front of them. This ‘moment in time’ is not necessarily a ‘state of mind’ moment that creates a positive gastronomic memory because a participant may lack personal feelings at the time. At worst, a ‘moment in time’ when someone is experiencing existential authenticity in front of plate of food can create a “*food centred*” gastronomic memory, but not necessarily the ‘state of mind’ gastronomic memory.

In the focus group, there were no photos presented to the participants directly and the stories told were only ‘food centred’. Focus participants went into great detail of the food served during these events in fact in far greater detail than in their stories in context with their photos (Photo-elicitation). It took the personally selected “gathered” photos from the participant interviews to extract narratives that could only be traced to ‘state of mind’ as the trigger. Asking someone for a memorable gastronomic experience without the gathered photo only brings ‘food centred’ stories; the photos brought more personal meaning from an event.

In the focus group the connection between knowledge and authenticity was made by Janna who approached Peter after he stated he had “*authentic Italian food*” while in Italy. Janna then replied with the statement, “*Is it authentic because you learned something?*” This is the connection; Janna was implying that Peter now had gained knowledge of what authentic Italian food looks and tastes. Therefore Peter would from this point on use his experience to ‘qualify’ the authenticity of future Italian food offerings. The knowledge and experience gained in gastronomic experiences form our perceptions for future food events

with regard to authenticity. It is difficult to define authenticity in food because everyone does not get the same education in gastronomic offerings which itself is a moving target.

6.9. The Olive Garden Restaurant – The Common Denominator

The Olive Garden Restaurant chain was in the narratives; I can only deduce that it came up because the talks were on restaurant food, ethnic food and authenticity. In the interviews and focus group it was first brought up by participants to make a point with respect to authentic experiences. The discussion of this restaurant is valuable to my research for a number of reasons. First it is a popular North American restaurant chain that many of the participants have visited therefore they are familiar with the concept. Second, it is an ethnic restaurant that presents itself as a purveyor of ‘tradition Italian’ cuisine that is not based out of Italy but the USA therefore making its authenticity questionable. Third, the restaurant chain’s credibility is challenged (and praised) on many fronts, from academia (i.e. Albrecht 2011), from foodservice trade sources, and foodies through food blogs.

There is a paper titled ‘When You’re Here, You’re Family: Culinary Tourism and the Olive Garden Restaurant’ by Albrecht (2011) that addresses domestic culinary tourism by focusing on the ethnic cuisine of this restaurant. This paper addresses authenticity in the foodservice industry relevant to my study. Albrecht (2011) argues that this restaurant positions itself as offering real Italian food and a real Italian experience, the author then produces cultural texts that rebukes and condemns the chain and supporters. It is a restaurant that foodies seem to love to hate; the Albrecht paper offers many examples of the restaurant chain getting criticized by a ‘specific cultural group’ (the snobbish blue-staters’ a.k.a. liberals/democrats), even on popular North American television shows like *Weeds* (comedy) and *The Bachelor* (reality show) the restaurant is ‘trash talked’.

Here is a part of the conversation with Maxine who has never been to Italy but has a feeling about the Olive Garden Restaurant when I asked if *that* is authentic food. Immediately she shouted:

“Fuck no....Because it’s poorly prepared. Because it came from a bag. You know? If the dishes themselves were concocted by someone at a corporate kitchen, based on

cost effectiveness, as opposed to, is this something that you would eat in your kitchen at home? The bread sticks are flabby and disgusting. The food is bad. Yes, can you get bad food in Italy? I'm sure you can. You can get bad food everywhere" (Maxine)

Maxine was adamant that the food at the Olive Garden Restaurant was not fresh; *"they're full of shit"* she said! She insisted there were frozen bags of pasta sauce and microwave ovens played a major role in the kitchen. Despite the fact Olive Garden advertises that their chefs train in Italy she did not believe this either *"People say a lot of things. Marketers say a lot of things"* was her argument. She has been to an Olive Garden Restaurant and said:

"Because it's not real food. I don't even care if it's not real Italian food, it's just not good food period... SO I cannot believe that Olive Garden is authentic Italian food, because I've had good Italian food. Whether or not they claim to be authentic, I don't care." (Maxine)

Here Maxine questions claims of authenticity from restaurants and at home and argues: *"Authenticity matters less than whether its good"*.

Maxine rates food based on quality over any implied authenticity as in the case of the Olive Garden Restaurant. Maxine does have a perception of how Italian food *should* taste even though she has never been to Italy, I can assume her sources of Italian 'authenticity' is also local. She rejects the food at the Olive Garden Restaurant in spite of the marketing that says their food is 'authentic' and is cooked by their chefs that were trained in Italy. There seems to be an underground revolution aimed at big box (popular) chain restaurants by 'foodies' who love to hate these corporate establishments that market unabashed claims of authenticity that are absorbed (and admired) by the masses. Forbes rates the Olive Garden Restaurant chain at number three in "America's Best Chain Restaurants" and states in their review: "A high scorer in the atmosphere, green/sustainable practices, and healthy choice categories...It did quite well across the board on food quality, service and cleanliness..." (Forbes, 2011). Albrecht (2011) claims "the Olive Garden

offers the promise of the touristic experience without the danger or surprises that are the characteristics of tourist experiences”.

Alison who also has never visited Italy and her feelings regarding the Oliver Garden Restaurant:

“But I don't think Olive Garden holds a candle to real Italian food, you know what I mean? And my great aunt who's come to visit here from Italy has also cooked for me, so ...I'd go on taste. But taste is most important.” (Alison)

Here Alison suspects that the Olive Garden Restaurant is not authentic Italian food and also relies on taste as the final judge to determine her version of authenticity.

In this interview, I challenged Tarro who I knew has been to Italy many times on the differences in atmosphere between a restaurant in Italy and the Olive Garden Restaurant:

“Well some people might think it's being in Italy. But having been to Italy I'm not as convinced. I mean Olive Garden has good food for what it does. I would not go to an Olive Garden for the atmosphere....The people and the interactions with people because you can duplicate ... You can duplicate down to the last screw in my opinion, a venue from Europe and maybe even do better because they might be better quality say hardware or fixtures or whatever. But just because the place, the space looks like X, there's no guarantee that it's going to feel like X.” (Tarro)

As discussed previously, the tangibles of an experience can be duplicated as in the case of Maxine's experience in the Four Season's Hotel restaurant in Toronto. And like Maxine, Tarro also identifies a 'feeling' that is constructed in the state of mind at the time. Tarro also brings up an important theme valuable to this study when he adds this:

“It also depends on you know the food, the quality of the food and sort of the interaction with people, the social side, sort of where the people interface with the

food. And to me an Olive Garden, it's an okay chain but that's what it is, a chain. It's like a McDonalds. If you want predictability, if you want something you can count on even if it's not great, I would go to a chain. If I want a unique experience an Olive Garden is not my first choice” (Tarro).

The “predictability” that Tarro speaks to is the key in supporting the theory that most North American restaurant experiences are banal, non-events that result in consumers having limited recollection of their experience. Those like Tarro seeking “a unique experience” have eliminated the chain restaurants as options for gastronomic experiences leaving only the independent operators. The issue as mentioned much earlier is the trend for independent restaurants adopting ‘best practices’ tools from the chains to help compete. Ritzer’s (2010) McDonaldisation of businesses is not a contributing factor in creating memorable gastronomic experiences. Tarro spoke about authentic restaurant experiences, which backs a theory that authentic experiences do not come from chain restaurants:

“I know people that swear by the Olive Garden, they love it, they love it to bits. They have as much sort of positive emotional memory from going to the Olive Garden as I get from going to here. But that’s not the atmosphere I seek...It wouldn’t be as authentic because I mean it’s not black and white, to me it’s a continuum and yeah sort of fake plastic and you know cooked by the grandma at home, sort of the Olive Garden would be more this way. Yeah maybe if I had a checklist I could pick a scale out of 10, but it’s more to that end, whereas these places are closer to that end.” (Tarro)

Tarro was referring to the little mom and pop operation (restaurants) that he considered to be more authentic, they have a personality as opposed to the corporate image presented by chain restaurants.

Participants stated how they felt about the possibility of creating new gastronomic memories; they expressed the desire to continue the quest for more experiences, all looked forward to more travel. Violet said that, “being out of your comfort zone, I think it’s a

fabulous thing”. The narrative that led to this thought is presented here; you can see the progression of experiences leading to this mantra:

“Oh totally good, it's an experience that will be there forever. And somebody, I mean I'm not kidding, I was totally vanilla in my gastronomic experiences growing up, like that's what we had, right? We had what we had but I can say that we probably had about 10 meals that we rotated all the time. Pork chops, the very odd time you'd have steak, but you'd have pork chops, chicken, shepherd's pie, you'd have this, so you could totally look at those meals - and when I first moved out with my first partner what do you think I made? Those damn meals, I made those because I knew them, right? Or he brought his meals, I had my meals and so maybe we had 20 meals. Holy crap look at us, 20 meals, look at us living on the edge. So, it was totally there 'cause it was comfortable and you understood it. So, when I went to do grocery shopping I knew I needed to get pork chops, I needed to get this, I needed to get that, I needed to get this because those were the meals we make. And then I'm trying to think when it started, that one day I just - oh it was when I moved to Montreal, I was when I lived in Montreal. I was in university and suddenly it was like I didn't have a lot of money but you could still eat well in Montreal. So, I think that it's just built and then with the international travel though totally takes you out of your comfort zone with that, right? And that's been really cool.” (Violet)

Violet reminds me that cooking does not come easily for most people and experimentation with food is costly. I think most chefs and seasoned cooks are not afraid of trying new foods in their own kitchens and therefore they are mostly adventurous out of the home as well. I believe chefs and cooks make a commitment to do this naturally. With this being said, Violet's venture out of her comfort zone opens opportunities for new and potentially memorable positive gastronomic experiences. Violet's new found motivation to distance herself from comfortable situations is comparable to Tarro's search for authenticity in the mom and pop restaurants...both reject the ordinary with respect to foodservice out of the home.

Reisinger and Steiner (2006, p.66) argue, “...*authenticity is irrelevant to many tourists, who either do not value it, are suspicious of it, are complicit in its cynical construction for commercial purposes*” which could explain the success of the Olive Garden Restaurant chain discussed in this chapter. The quote from Albrecht (2011) “*I wouldn’t take a dump in the Olive Garden*” came from a popular TV show character; this statement sums up feelings of many foodies out there. The distrust of this *inauthentic* Italian eatery was evident in the narratives presented here, and what was interesting was how the participants ‘called bullshit’ on its Italian authenticity even by those who have never been to Italy. We each have created our own interpretation of authenticity and go about our lives confident in our actions.

With regard to tourism, Cohen (1995) proposes that in the ‘search for enjoyment’, tourists may accept ‘staged authenticity’ and atmospherics as a protective substitute for the ‘original’. This analysis from this chapter seems to confirm this statement by Cohen but what is exposed is the discussion on what exactly is the ‘original’ in the gastronomic context. All through this chapter, the participants have given definitions of their versions of authentic restaurant experiences and then characterizations of authentic food. So when Barbara stated “*you can only do as authentic as you are able to in the situation that you’re in*” translates to me as authenticity is created at a moment in time built from the knowledge of our experiences, perhaps a ‘state of mind’...we can then accept or reject.

6.10. Putting it all together - New Model

The new conceptual model after research (figure 5), demonstrates the relationships interpreted from the findings of the three attributes food, service, and atmosphere. Attributes only determine the quality of a gastronomic experience, not specifically to the memory. Findings also indicate that the authenticity of the attributes offer a genuine experience but not the trigger in the creation of memories. A new attribute could be added to the model, the findings demonstrate that ‘people’ are a common factor in creating memorable gastronomic experiences but not necessary. Most important is their ‘state of mind’ within the experience that creates the memory which occurs with other people at the table or alone. The food, service and atmosphere attributes only support memory creation;

people themselves are the driver of their own gastronomic memories based on what they bring to the table. If the participant does not develop the “state of mind” required, the pyramid only ‘constructs’ up to the bottom three levels and the gastronomic experience and leans toward becoming another banal non-event. Many experiences only reach the first level due to physiological needs taking priority over emotional needs i.e. drive-through fast food lunch.

The hierarchal design is best to represent the model in layers starting with a wide base because the attributes of food, service and atmosphere are the most complex with regard to being unique from restaurant to restaurant and event to event. The base represents the ‘moving parts’ of a gastronomic experience, a starting point to build the event into something more than a physiological necessity if desired. The next level is evaluation of the authenticity in the event by the participant. My research demonstrated that ‘all’ memorable gastronomic experiences are deemed ‘genuine’ therefore the authenticity layer is a prerequisite to moving higher in the model to create a memory. Whether or not the food, service or atmosphere in the experience is authentic, it is the subjective evaluation given by the participant based on their knowledge and experiences in gastronomy. There are no right and wrong evaluations judged by an external authority that is why a stale croissant or a hot dog can qualify as a memorable gastronomic experience.

‘People’ is the next layer in the model that is labelled as ‘optional’ because my research has demonstrated that memorable gastronomic experiences can occur when one is alone. The ‘people’ level is the highest achievement for ‘food related’ memorable gastronomic experiences which this research confirmed are more plentiful than those created by ‘state of mind’. It is the ‘state of mind’ level brought only by the participant that triggers the jump to the peak to the creation of a special memory over and above the attributes of food, service and atmosphere. The memory is at the ‘peak’ of the model because my research has established that these ‘special memories’ are not frequent among participants when compared to their ‘food related’ memories. My research exposed that many of these ‘special memories’ contained little detail of food, service or atmosphere from the stories gathered using photo-elicitation which is why ‘memories’ is at the top.

The design does resemble Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Needs” (1943) that demonstrates self-actualization is the peak, a goal obtained in life upon acquiring/conquering the

objectives beneath. A gastronomic memory is a potential goal obtained after successful negotiation of the base levels and a receptive ‘state of mind’.

Figure 5. New Conceptual Model – Creating Gastronomic Memories in Commercial Context

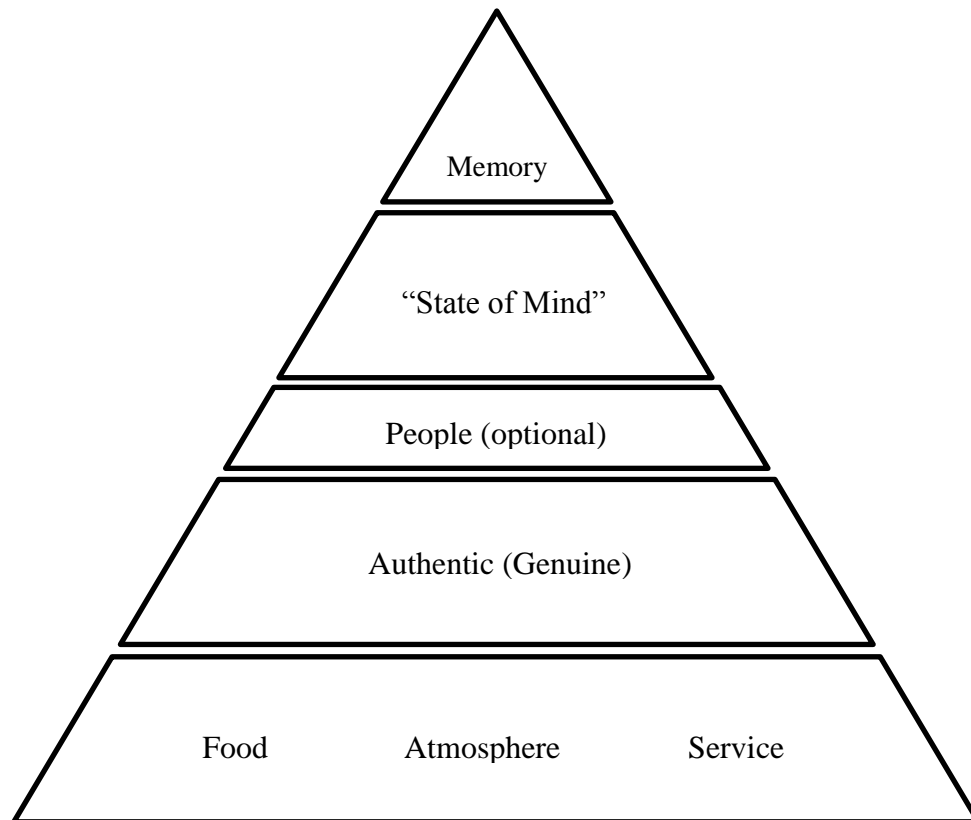


Figure 5. The new model is a pyramid with a base of attributes rather than independent variable attributes because the research finding present attributes that are ‘built’ upon each other to create a memory.

6.11. Figure 5 – New Conceptual Model (After Research)

6.12. Chapter Summary

Throughout this analysis the theme repeated by the participants was their ability to construct authenticity within a gastronomic experience. The participants’ spoke of authentic service connections with restaurant staff, at no time were the interactions deemed

‘fake’ or ‘scripted’. Even though service was the least important attribute (food and atmosphere) it could not be ‘bad’ within a memorable gastronomic experience, the service encounters demonstrated ‘authentic sociability’.

In discussing the food within their gastronomic experiences, the participants also felt that what was put in front of them was overall ‘uncomplicated’ and unpretentious. None of the participants were in restaurants of high distinction – Top TripAdvisor or Michelin rated. In fact, almost the opposite as many were casual dining spots, outdoor patios, an airport kiosk and a street food cart. As a result the status of a restaurant’s food does not influence memory therefore unpretentious (natural) food is considered authentic and an external driver in memory creation.

Clearly from the interviews, the memorable gastronomic experiences were noted as genuine by the participants. This is where the participants began to speak of their constructed authenticity within their experience by how they defined ‘genuine’. Also, the beginning of differing definitions, as it got complex with regard to genuine in the specifics, what exactly *is* genuine in the gastronomic experience – the physical product (food), the physical surroundings (atmosphere) or the feeling one gets after the experience. They demonstrated that positive memorable gastronomic experiences *are* genuine in the eyes of the participant whether they are looking at specific physical attributes, environment or the event as a whole.

The second question of this research was to determine if and how authenticity played a role in the creation of memorable gastronomic experiences, it was at this point the participant answers became complex and began to point in different directions and themes. The participants, while varied in their definition of an ‘authentic restaurant experience’, were united by continuing to construct what authentic meant to them. They also add to the existing complex definitions in the literature regarding authentic experiences. Infinite constructs of experiential authenticity were demonstrated with the participants’ perceptions on how the ‘moving parts’ within an experience negotiated their individual set of standards and values. Authenticity with regard to the context of a restaurant experience is still a difficult target due to the evolution of the foodservice industry and the consumer.

From the definitions of the participants on authentic food, the results led to the presentation of a five-theme matrix (p.210) where it demonstrates that authenticity of food

is constructed using one or more of the five themes – true, ingredients, history, place, and preparation. One of the emerging themes to come out of my study is the common denominator of *knowledge*; all the participants bring their previous knowledge to the table when they sit at the table. It could be any of the five themes or combinations that define whether the experience in front of them is authentic. In essence, the knowledge and experience gained in gastronomic experiences form our perceptions for future food events with regard to authenticity.

The discussion on the Olive Garden Restaurant that people ‘love to hate’ brought forward the conversation started by Cohen (1995) in the ‘search for enjoyment’ and ‘staged authenticity’ demonstrating an example that authenticity is in the eyes of the beholder. The participants who discussed their feeling towards the Olive Garden Restaurant were keen to reject the faux Italian product despite their knowledge (or lack of) real Italian restaurants. The fact that it turned off so many participants, and the word ‘authentic’ could not be associated in any description of the chain restaurant, demonstrated how the authenticity is not taken lightly by foodies. In summary, authenticity is in the minds of the beholder.

The next chapter is the final one of the thesis and summarises the key findings from my research and the analysis of my participants’ gastronomic experiences. The research questions will be reviewed and addressed in brief before reflecting on the key findings of this study and major contribution to the field. The thesis will end with a discussion on potential directions for future work in this area of study.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

7.1. Summary of the Findings

The analysis conducted as part of this research revealed that gastronomic memories are created primarily from an individual's state of mind at the time of the event. The food, service and atmosphere attributes play a supporting role in that they need to be satisfactory in meeting the requisite needs of the participant experience. One's memorable gastronomic experience may have nothing to do with the uniqueness or quality of the food consumed because many participants fail to recall details of quality and taste of their food. Atmosphere alone did not contribute to the building of the memorable gastronomic experience as details were lacking from the narratives and service too was not a contributing attribute, as participants described their service least.

The analysis also revealed a discussion on purported authenticity of the food consumed, everyone experienced a 'genuine' event but never used object authenticity as a qualifier. As mentioned in the 'New Conceptual Model' (fig. 5) discussion, the participants deemed their memorable gastronomic experience as 'genuine' which demonstrates this is a prerequisite to 'state of mind' induced memorable gastronomic experiences. The authenticity within the attributes is determined at the time by standards carried with the participant.

Existential authenticity is determined as an individual construct of those within gastronomic experiences. According to Wang (2000) existential authenticity is the internal feeling related to the potential existential state of being triggered by the participants of extraordinary actions outside their routine lives. A gastronomic event would qualify as extraordinary actions, as mentioned in chapter six; participants enter the experience with knowledge unique to themselves and potentially construct a distinct memory.

This diversity of interpretations was most clear in the participants' discussions of authenticity of a restaurant experience and authentic food. They offered a variety of explanations of factors that qualify as an authentic restaurant experience. The answers became complex when they touched on objective and experiential form of authenticity –

the food and beverage, the servicescape or the emotional state were measured to determine success.

Regarding the authenticity in food, the participants exhibited differing opinions in the definitions that hovered over five interrelating themes. The participants' descriptions of *'what is authentic food'* led to the creation of a five theme matrix (fig.4) based on if the food item was 1) **true** to its identity in name (or taste), 2) made with specific **ingredients** that comprised the food item, 3) representative of the items' **historical** background, 4) in the geographical **place** where the food item was sampled and 5) **prepared** following a strict methodology for the food.

One theme brought to light from the participants' narratives was the common denominator of preexisting 'knowledge' that is associated with the five in the matrix. It was found that authenticity in food is determined by participants using their knowledge gained from previous gastronomic experiences, education formal and informal from social and other media. Consumers seeking education in eating experiences was identified by Kivela and Crofts (2009) who stated that culinary tourists "*...seek food combinations and eating experiences that foster (culinary) learning*". Each culinary participant forms a perception of authenticity in their food based on their knowledge as Darin stated in the focus group "*We move-up – evolve – educate ourselves*" (talking about new food adventures). Maxine agreed with Darin then she insisted "*We are not snobs – feel sorry for people missing out*". This line of conversation presents an argument that consumers are 'educated' in today's foodservice environment.

The 'New Conceptual Model' (fig. 5) proposes a construct that demonstrates a potential memory creation in gastronomic experiences. Starting with the requisite attributes – food, service and atmosphere, a participant then determines authenticity, evaluates if the people in the event are a positive or negative factor, then their 'state of mind' makes the determination on further memory. The five-theme matrix along the new conceptual model puts the process of gastronomic memory creation into light and identifies 'state of mind' as the key trigger point.

Finally, the Olive Garden Restaurant discussion demonstrated reinforcement that authenticity is in the 'eyes of the beholder' and authenticity is not taken lightly with respect to food experiences. In addition, the Olive Garden narrative supports the incidental finding

of this study regarding the discussion of banal, non-events in foodservice confirming Urry's (2002) "*post-tourists*", who find pleasure in the multiplicity of tourism products and come to the realization there is no authentic tourist experience...merely a series of games or texts that can be played (p.11). Non-events in the foodservice industry are those where no memory is created due to lack of enablement on behalf of the participant.

Boorstin (2012) offers an "*new age of contrivance*" argument that easily applies to the foodservice industry in what Boorstin referred to as the "*mirror effect*" where "*everything we do to enlarge our world, to make life more interesting, more varied, more exciting, more vivid, more interesting, more varied, more 'fabulous', more promising, in the long run has an opposite effect*" (p.255). This advancement in the foodservice industry to accommodate the modern 'foodie' is creating a saturation of banal, non-events based on the stories told in the focus group. Taking it one-step further, non-events therefore related to non-places, Auge (1995) refers to a non-place as a space that cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity. Ultimately, only the restaurant consumer can construct a memorable gastronomic experience, the foodservice operator can only host it.

7.2. Review of the Research Questions

The thesis began with two questions designed to explore the complexities within a gastronomic experience, an examination of the 'moving parts' to determine trigger points responsible for positive memory creation. The research question sought to understand:

- 1. How do the tangible and intangible attributes (food, service and atmosphere) in a gastronomic experience affect the creation of positive memories?*

As argued in chapter two a gastronomic experience is comprised of many determinants that can make the event positive or negative, this study uses three attributes listed in the question. Each attribute was examined individually for trigger points on positive memory creation because the foodservice industry is driven to create consumer satisfaction.

The experiences of the participants in this study highlighted that authenticity had symbolic meaning in their overall satisfaction. It was this authenticity that was under investigation which led to comprehend:

2. *How does authenticity play a role in all the memories within gastronomic attributes (food, service and atmosphere)?*

This question builds on question one addressing the criteria of the food, service and atmosphere attributes but focusing on how authenticity is determined by the participants. The experiences of my participants showed that authenticity was constructed individually based on previous knowledge and experiences.

The following section in this chapter (section 7.3) reflects on the contributions of this thesis then a reflection of the study. There is a discussion on the effectiveness of the adopted research method of auto-driven photo-elicitation interview and its effectiveness in achieving the research aims and objectives. The section will then reflect on the state of the foodservice industry discussing the immanent direction operators are headed versus the role of consumers seeking gastronomic experiences. Finally, the section will reflect on the key element of this study, consumer state of mind including the key debate around authenticity in the foodservice industry.

7.3. Contribution of the Research to the Field

“So what”...

The contribution to knowledge is the ‘state of mind’ of participants as a ‘trigger’ to create memorable gastronomic experiences over the assumed ‘best practices’ of the attributes food, service, and atmosphere. The use of photo-elicitation in this study specifically adopting a ‘**gathered** by the participant photos’ methodology resulted in the determination that there are the two forms of gastronomic memories. The photos ‘**produced** by the participant’ would have resulted in a different finding that would have been **food centered memories** rather than what this study achieved which were **state of**

mind memories. This was the case with two participants Dicky and Tylor who took their photos *after* being chosen for the research. The photos by Dicky and Tylor were of plates of food without much context surrounding their experiences, the food on the plate was the memory and their ‘state of mind’ was not a factor in their stories.

A question arose as to whether a ‘state of mind’ memorable gastronomic memory is susceptible to creation due only from the influence provided by a foodservice operator rather than the predisposition of the participant. The answer to this could be derived from Maxine’s narrative when asked specifically if *her* memorable gastronomic experience presented in her photo could be duplicated. Maxine’s specific statement of reply was:

“No, It’s just a matter of being careful of what you do. I mean, it’s not going to be exactly the same, but I’ve been there three or four times and the experience is never exactly the same at the same place. Right? ‘Cause you’re never the exact same person at the same time either.” (Maxine)

This account from Maxine was presented earlier to pin point that state of mind was the key driver of her memorable gastronomic experience. In addition, Maxine presents evidence that her state of mind was carried into the restaurant and not developed as a result of attributes provided by the restaurant. Violet’s story echo’s that of Maxine as the circumstance surrounding her memorable gastronomic had minimal influence from the foodservice operator in creating a state of mind. Violet, an admitted ‘foodie’ and world traveler, described her experience within her photo with a “*stale*” croissant (food), self-serve kiosk cashier (service) in an airport ‘on-the-go’ café (atmosphere). Violet herself admitted that her photo “*was funny*” and it was primarily “*a photo about privilege*” and had nothing to do with fine food, outstanding service or unique atmosphere. Maxine and Violet’s narratives confirm that state of mind is carried into the gastronomic experience in order to create a memory; the foodservice operator is the enabler.

Photo-elicitation *was* a key factor in determining the ‘state of mind’ as an important piece of the puzzle within the continual augmentation of ‘moving parts’ in the foodservice industry. A simple hot dog and stale croissant from world travelers in a photo represented frame of mind at the time, as the priority in the photo context, the food in the photo was an

important qualifier for this thesis. The question is how can the industry trigger the ‘state of mind’ with new ‘best practices’ to create a better experience?

The conceptual contributions of this study support the existing literature in a number of ways. First, by focusing on the experiential nature of gastronomic experiences (Getz, Robinson et al. 2014), it explores a unique facet of the hospitality industry and identifies the effects of authenticity within consumer experiences (Robinson, Clifford, 2012). This study identified how experiences are constructed by consumers using preexisting knowledge of authenticity within gastronomic events (Johnston and Baumann (2007). In addition, gastronomic experiences were aligned with existential authenticity relationships in tourism, a framework presented by Wang (1999).

Second, by using photo-elicitation in the methodology it supported hermeneutic phenomenology seeking situated accounts in the field of gastronomy (Pernecky, 2012). Research using photos in gastronomy should become more popular with the rise of social media and growth of smart phones, *“Technology in all its forms is one of the most powerful drivers of food and tourism growth and development”* (Everett 2016).

Third, the new conceptual model (fig.5) aligns with other iterations of hospitality encounters that identify experiential factors. Lugosi (2008) refers to *“forms and manifestations of hospitality”* the measuring of emotional and instrumental transactions distinguishing between mundane (food, drink and shelter), functional and emotional aspects. The model developed by Lugosi (2008) demonstrates *“meta-hospitality”* as these moments of short-lived emotional bonds that perhaps are constructed or experienced through transactions within hospitality. This meta-hospitality is this short-lived, emotional state of being created when the participants are in a shared existential space where differences are temporarily renegotiated or tempered (Lugosi, 2008, p.147). The state of mind concept in my thesis is distinguished in the new conceptual model; it is created at a moment in time built from the knowledge of our experiences.

Finally, the conceptual contributions from this thesis challenges the literature as I offer examples of solitary memorable gastronomic experiences obtained without the company of others (Maxine and Violet). Kauppinen-Raisanen, Gummerus and Lehtola (2013) reported none of their participants recalled a food or eating (enduring) memory referred to in a solitary context. In addition, my study adds a new ‘determinant’ to be used

in the evaluation of ‘dining experiences’ as my study factors ‘state of mind’ which can override the attributes (food, service and atmosphere) used in many studies.

Practical implications from this study illustrate the ‘moving parts’ within a memorable gastronomic experience. The takeaway (bad pun) for foodservice operators from this study demonstrates that there are more than the tangibles of gastronomic experience to make it memorable. The food, service and atmosphere are still important; customers want to be waited on in a reasonable timeframe, presented with appetizing tasty plates of food while relaxing in a comfortable environment. This study drilled down into the attributes and can share with restaurant operators what consumers really think about their experience as a ‘total product’.

This study *does* critique the current model by bringing awareness that industry best practices could be challenged to curtail banality across the foodservice industry. I believe that if restaurant operators listen to the stories of memorable gastronomic experiences it will help them understand their role in the big picture. To make a difference in someone’s gastronomic experience, first, understand that everyone is unique.

7.4. Reflections on the Study

Looking back over the process from developing the research questions to conducting the actual interviews, I found that taking notes during the process helped move the analysis to a point where theories emerged. Having a background in the practical side of the foodservice industry my expectation (bias?) was that something tangible was the obvious missing link to creating gastronomic memories. Conversations with colleagues and friends prior to conducting the interviews led me to note in my journal that there was a potential connection to authenticity. This is the point in which I created the Conceptual Model (before research) (fig.3) that shows a relationship between authenticity and the three gastronomic attributes – food, service and atmosphere. The Conceptual Model (fig.3) is connected to the literature and takes into consideration the ‘moving parts’ of the foodservice industry and positions authenticity as an encompassing factor and identifies a goal (memories).

Once the interviews launched, I began to note in my journal that the answer I thought obvious was not presented in the first few interviews. In fact, I could not readily see any of the attribute connections to authenticity or any common themes developing amongst my participants. It was not until after I began to review transcripts and note highlights in my journal did the data present findings that formed my first theme. The common thread discovered among most of the participants was the fact their memorable experience from their photo was about the relationship of people they were with at the time. After all the interviews were conducted, I made a list in my journal of all the participants and who they were with at the time of the photo and then made the discovery that this original theory could not be right. I identified three participants who were alone in the photo of their gastronomic experience, which therefore led me to the new theme. Finally, I need to admit that at one point with all the data in front of me I could not see any obvious overarching theoretical viewpoint for many days; I even referred to my data as an “Ikea” disassembled kit with no instruction manual. Only after looking at the data as a whole did I realize that the answer was not in the data, it was that that was not in the data that made sense...this ‘bracketing’ as mentioned earlier led me to my incidental findings regarding hospitality non-events.

Using photo-elicitation and food-elicitation in this study was a valuable tool in the discovery that food, service and atmosphere are not as important in the creation of memorable experiences as assumed. The findings demonstrated that ‘state of mind’ was a key discovery in this study over the assumed obvious attributes food, service and atmosphere. This comes against a background where hospitality ‘producers’ of gastronomic experiences believe they are in the business of creating ‘memorable experiences’ for ‘consumers’. These producers focus on constructing differentiating attributes from research on determinants with food, servicescape and perceptions. In reality, the consumers are co-constructing their memories from within hospitality experiences built on what they bring to the event, that is, their previous experience and current ‘state-of-mind’ influencing their existential authenticity. My study also argues that the majority of consumer experiences in gastronomy are overall banal events, but on occasion, a memorable event will occur as a result of experiencing this moment of existential authenticity.

What is important to note is that the quality and identity of the attributes (food, service and atmosphere) are constructed individually based on previous life experiences that obviously vary between individuals. This self-fulfillment through food in a commercial context is in contrast with other theories that look at consumer experiences from perceptions based only on the quality of the event and attributing factors (i.e. food, service and atmosphere). In addition, the evidence that encountering one's authentic self within a gastronomic experience does not depend on current 'best practices' in hospitality.

The restaurant meal has become an opportunity for people to immerse themselves into a special world where time and the stresses of the day are suspended. The concept of 'Spielrum' (playroom) imagined by Heidegger (discussed earlier) was presented by Brown as a parallel of the 'space for reflection' offered by tourism (2013, p.183). Brown's (2013) comparison of Spielraum and tourism is profound and an important link to the research presented in my thesis. I feel the differences between tourism events and gastronomic events are few, in fact gastronomic events are a major role in tourism events, and can become the focal point of a tourism event depending on the participant's psychographic profile (culinary tourist/foodie). The major differentiating factor between the two is the time period, specifically the duration of the event. A gastronomic event time-period can be as short as the time it takes one to consume a bite of food (or drink) to an indefinite span of time as in a gourmet three star Michelin tasting dinner.

A positive culinary experience is the goal for diners, and can be created regardless of the food, service and atmosphere because the success of a gastronomic experience is based on the state of mind of those participating. As for authenticity, there was one common trait where all participants felt that their memorable experience *was* genuine, but opinions swung widely when asked for their definition of authentic experiences and what authentic food is. This was the reasoning behind the Five Theme Matrix (fig.4). The findings do show that perceived authenticity in gastronomic experiences is in the 'eyes of the beholder'.

The incidental finding of my study was where the direction the hospitality industry (foodservice) is heading and how millions of dollars are spent by operators on superfluous amenities which are only momentarily enjoyed. An underlying movement not only in small independent operators, but also in national chains embraces the farm-to-table method for

restaurants similar to the movement in support of recycling years ago. People are seriously curious about *where* their food comes from and hungrier than ever for experiences whether they are authentic or not. This hunger supports Freedman's (2014) statement regarding the "*rash of gentrified urban marketplaces*" where:

"...the commodification of terroir, the taste of place and tradition that however invented and vague, adds considerable value for its savvy purveyors, who have significant political clout, especially in Europe, where the sale of historical 'authenticity' has long been a major industry" (p.7)

Reisinger and Steiner (2006, p.66) argue, "*...authenticity is irrelevant to many tourists, who either do not value it, are suspicious of it, are complicit in its cynical construction for commercial purposes*" which could explain the success of restaurants like the Olive Garden, a restaurant that portrays itself as an authentic Italian eatery. There are those who accept the Olive Garden Restaurant as a mini food tourist holiday and then those who say "*I wouldn't take a dump in the Olive Garden*" (Albrecht, 2011), a statement that sums up feelings of many foodies out there. The distrust of this *inauthentic* Italian eatery was evident in many of the narratives in my study. What was interesting was how the participants '*called bullshit*' on the Olive Garden Restaurant's Italian authenticity even by those who have never been to Italy. We each have created our own interpretation of authenticity and go about our lives confidently in our actions.

With regard to authenticity in tourism, Cohen (1995) proposes that in the 'search for enjoyment', tourists may accept "*staged authenticity*" and atmospherics as a protective substitute for the 'original'. This analysis from my study seems to confirm this statement by Cohen but what is exposed is the discussion on what exactly is the 'original' in the gastronomic context. Urry (2011) also argues that there is no authentic (tourist) experience, just "*a series of games or texts that can be played*". Those involved within an experience of gastronomy have the control to either accept or reject any of the attributes surrounding them.

All through my study, the participants had given definitions of their versions of authentic restaurant experiences and then characterizations of authentic food. The

interpretation of ‘what is authentic’ from figure 4 of the five themes *and* the interrelationships in authentic food definitions offer some new themes. At the end of the day, this thesis argues authenticity is in the minds of the beholder (existential). So when Barbara stated “*you can only do as authentic as you are able to in the situation that you’re in*” translates to me as authenticity is created at a moment in time built from the knowledge of our experiences, perhaps a ‘state of mind’...we can then accept or reject. Another observation by Tam (2017) is where authenticity in food can be transformed from its origins:

“This entails that the food we eat today is different from the past, even though tradition and nostalgia are key markers of authenticity. With time, what is authentic – or more profoundly, what authenticity is – will continue to morph and transmute.”(p.52-53)

So history, place, ingredients and preparation in authentic food can be transformational based on the audience, Appaduri (1986) recognized authenticity as a standard that “*measures the degree to which something is more or less what it ought to be*” a benchmark applied by the consumer.

Had I not asked the participants for a photo of their ‘memorable gastronomic experience’ (photo-elicitation) and instead sat down in regular interview fashion, I would not have gained the insight regarding state of mind as that I did. I would have listened to stories that focused only on the attributes as I did in the focus group; the participants would have fixated only on narrative surrounding food, service and atmosphere. Because of my study, there are two types of ‘memorable gastronomic experience’ that people have. The first, a detached event; they can recollect the food, service, atmosphere, where they were, and who they were with during the event. The second, ‘memorable gastronomic experiences’, is idiosyncratic, one that primarily depicts the moment in their life, and most important their ‘state of mind’, and the food, service, and atmosphere would be secondary. The first experience relies only on recollection, whereas the second uses a photo to capture the ‘complete story’ behind the image.....and the acquisition of stories is an end of tourism (and life?).

7.5. State of the Foodservice Industry

As our modern society frequently dines away from home in commercial establishments, we will continue to grow numb to these experiences due to regularity and low expectations. This perhaps could be construed as an elitist statement but really, if we examine the levels of foodservice available there is not much difference in actual experiences. The fast food and ‘ma and pa’ neighborhood diners in the working class neighborhoods that cater to low income groups are no different with regard to “experiences” as those who ‘hang out’ at the Michelin star restaurants in Paris. What is interesting to note is the increasing awareness of these neighborhood ‘ma and pa’ restaurants among the affluent urbanites who want to return to their parents/grandparents ‘roots’ and eat what they did. They seek out the small ethnic grocery store/restaurants, sit amongst the locals, and learn a new definition of authenticity within food. This would explain the growing popularity in semi-adventure travel like the “coast to coast walk” across the skinny part of England from St. Bees to Hoods Bay and the resurgence of the “Camino de Santiago” pilgrimage in Spain (as Margot did). Both excursions offer participants opportunity to return to the past, travel on foot and view the landscape at a slow pace, meet locals and dine in small inns, hostels, pubs and restaurants. These experiences can be extraordinary moments in tourism and gastronomy due to the uniqueness and simple product. Success of the adventure begins with the willingness of participants to step out of their comfort zone and journey into the unfamiliar. Being open to new adventures also means meeting new people along the way, those participating in the walk beside you plus those you meet at every step along the journey. Adventures like this provide opportunity for “*hospitable experiences*” as presented in the case study by Lugosi (2008).

If the hospitable service “*communitasque moments*” that Lugosi (2008) states as factors experienced within hospitality to build meta-hospitality moments they were not identified in this study as primary motives in memory creation, in fact, service was rated as the least important attribute within a gastronomic experience. Some did recant stories of the

conversations and interactions within their gastronomic events but none stated that service was the significant ‘driver’ of their gastronomic experiences.

This meta-hospitality as argued by Lugosi (2008) is this short-lived, emotional state of being created when the participants are in a shared existential space where differences are temporarily renegotiated or tempered (p.147). This at first could appear as a similar finding to my research, but the major difference is in ‘building the memory of the experience’ by the participant. I do agree that positive consumer experiences can be created through interactions between service staff and other customers and perhaps a memory is created as a result. This emotional/existential discontinuous essence is carried by participants as individuals the same way we each have values and ideological thoughts regarding what we enjoy. Hospitable encounters (meta-hospitality of Lugosi) that are existential and discontinuous and deemed ‘emotional transactions’ are different from ‘state of mind’ as depicted in my study. The difference is that ‘state of mind’ in the hospitality context, as within my study, is that a memory was created in a personal event that required no exterior trigger. Participants created memories from their existential experiences without hospitality-hospitable influences...Lugosi’s “*hospitable moment*” is not connected to memories.

Frost and Laing (2016) present two trends in dining they admit are polarizing; the first is the concern for authenticity, argued as one of the hallmarks of the food explorer (Frost and Laing 2015). They offer an interesting theoretical concept by Tresidder (2015) which is the “*terroir restaurant*”. The restaurant provides a space in which the diner can consume tangible elements of both landscape and culture, involving entry into a visceral “*scensescape*” where the dining experience becomes elevated to a higher level. It would be similar to sampling wine from within the vineyard where the grapes were grown. This concept is a ripe environment for those looking for that authentic spot as a place to share with a partner, friends or family to breed memories.

The second trend by Frost and Laing (2016) “*Is for fast food to be repositioned as a premium niche in the market*”. In Canada, McDonald’s currently is promoting “*Create your taste*”, an opportunity to enter the restaurant and by using a touch screen a customer can build a burger from top to bottom; selecting the bun, type of cheese, and toppings (30 quality ingredients) (McDonald’s, 2016). As an early adopter in technology (and food) I

sampled this service and found the on screen prompts a bit sketchy but did complete my order which was served to me as take-out (as requested) only to get home and find out I screwed up as I didn't have a bun! I guess they (McDonald's) thought it was not unusual...a prime example how technology in food service is not in the best interest of the consumer, it did though create a memory. (Note: this product/service is discontinued as of 2017). To further the trend of fast food becoming a premium niche (Frost and Laing 2016), all one has to do is look at the expansion of the food truck operations, in Canada; many food trucks have adopted artisanal fare or fringe items not available in traditional fast food operations (i.e. fish tacos). Some food trucks have designations like "*Feast On*" a designation awarded by the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance to foodservice operators that purchase 25% of their food and beverages from Ontario producers (Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance 2015). Authenticity of local foodservice is not only widely available around the corner, it is on the corner.

The evolution of the foodservice industry and advancement of food education in society has made defining authenticity in a restaurant context a moving target. Parasecoli (2009) summarizes:

"Food and eating provide a particularly effective field for reflection as they are aspects of the human experience that everybody shares, and precisely because of their apparent normality and banality they can create, reinforce, hide, or question ideas, norms, and values that characterize present and past societies"

This statement applies to all food but can represent the context of the foodservice industry's *raison d'être*, feeding people away from home. In summary, his study is about those who 'want to' dine out, not those who 'have to' therefore banality is a factor in the experiences. Banal experiences were an incidental finding in this study, the fact that restaurants focus on creating memorable experiences by differentiating their attributes comes up empty (blandables?). Experiences soon forgotten from food trucks to Michelin star fine dining houses where both are equal due to the non-event status or as Lugosi (2008) describes as "*instrumental transactions, mundane and ubiquitous*". Does a restaurant operator adopt Pine and Gilmore's (1998) "*five key points*" in experience design that create themes,

complement with positive cues, abolish negative cues, add memorabilia and engage the senses to create memorable experiences or challenge it? The “*five key points*” appear as ‘best practices’ which are the building blocks of Ritzer’s (1996) “*McDonaldization of society*” that lead to “*superficiality*” and “*waning of emotion or affect*”. As the food service industry bombards society with slick offerings consumers memorable events are few and far between.

“A two dimensional photo can capture a gastronomic experience, it brings us back to that special time, but if we look carefully, we can build another dimension, ‘the state of mind’ why we formed the memory”

Bill J Gregorash

Appendices

1. Web Page Application Process – Qualifying Questions

- 1.1. In the past 10 years, list which countries you have visited?
- 1.2. When (or if) choosing a location/place/country/city to visit for pleasure, pick a factor important in your decision making process. (required answer, pick one)
 - New sightseeing opportunities
 - New experiences in food
 - Leisure activities (beach, spa, etc.)
- 1.3. When dining away from home, how important are food ‘experiences’ in your life?
(dropdown menu) (pick one)
 - Not Important
 - Somewhat Important
 - Important
 - Very Important
- 1.4. Do you currently work in the food service industry?
 - Yes
 - No
- 1.5. If you are selected to take part in this research study would you be willing to submit and share a photo depicting a past personal gastronomic/food/beverage experience in a commercial context (i.e. restaurant, hotel, report, club, winery, market, farm, artisanal shop)?
 - Yes
 - No

The photograph requirements:

- a. A photo depicting a **past** personal gastronomic/food/beverage experience in a commercial context (i.e. restaurant, hotel, resort, club, winery, market, farm, artisanal shop). The photo has to be of a past event/experience, a photo depicting a future ‘place to visit’ by a participant will not be acceptable.
- b. Photo can show people/place or thing. The photo can be of a ‘plate of food’, common with today’s smart phone technology. Photos may also include people associated with the gastronomic experience for example restaurant staff, customers, table guests, celebrities, or family.
- c. Participant does not have to appear in photo. The photo may be that of an exterior of a restaurant or marketplace which would be acceptable.
- d. Photo could have been taken by other than participant (known or anonymous).
- e. Does not have to show a specific food/beverage.
- f. In good taste (figuratively).
- g. Standard digital JPEG format which will allow ease of use to display on a tablet (for interview) or in a PowerPoint presentation (for focus group).

2. Auto-Driven Photo-Elicitation Questioning - Part 1 (all interview participants)

Opening Remarks: Thank you for allowing me to interview you, as per the consent form, this conversation will be recorded but your data will be de-identified to respect your privacy. Any quotations from transcripts used in future publications will be assigned a pseudo name to protect identities of all participants.

Begin Recording: This is participant _____ (number)

- 2.1. What interested you about this research project to apply?
- 2.2. You have chosen a (this) photo for this session (interview), tell me the story behind why you choose it.
- 2.3. What does it mean to you?
- 2.4. What is it like as a memory?
- 2.5. Specifically...What is the first thing that comes to mind when you look at it?
- 2.6. What else does the photo remind you of?
- 2.7. How far away from home were you when this photo was taken?
- 2.8. Tell me about the food in that photo?
- 2.9. Was it the first time you tasted this type of cuisine?
- 2.10. Do you feel that the presentation of the food was staged...fiddled with too much?
- 2.11. Do you remember the tastes from that experience?
 - 2.11.1. Follow up: If so describe them?
 - 2.11.2. Follow up: Were these tastes unique?
 - 2.11.3. Follow up: Was the memory of taste an important factor in you selecting this photo?
 - 2.11.4. Follow up: If not then, what role did the food play in this experience?
- 2.12. How would you describe the service aspect surrounding that photo?
- 2.13. What do you remember about your server or any restaurant staff that played a significant role in this experience?
- 2.14. Did you sense the server's conversation to you was scripted?

- 2.15. Do you recall any specific conversations or interactions with anyone else from the restaurant during that experience?
- 2.16. What was the atmosphere like surrounding the photo?
- 2.17. Did it contribute to the event?
- 2.18. Was the atmosphere of that experience a reason you picked this photo?
- 2.19. Would you describe the atmosphere as “natural”?
- 2.20. Who were you with at the time of the photo?
- 2.20.1. Follow up: Elaborate on their relationship with you?
- 2.21. Did these people who were with you at the time of the photo contribute to the experience in the photo?
- 2.21.1. Follow up: Was it the reason you picked this photo, because of them?
- 2.22. Did the atmosphere match the food and service?... Tell me about the combination?
- 2.23. Do you think that this experience can be duplicated? If so how?
- 2.23.1. Follow up question: Why not?
- 2.24. What factors (within the event during the time the photo was taken) do you think made you pick this photo?
- 2.25. Are these factors a commonality in your memorable gastronomic experiences?
- 2.26. The food, the service or the atmosphere....which one was the significant ‘driver’ that made this experience memorable?
- 2.27. Would you use the word “genuine” to perhaps describe any part of your experience in that photo?

2.28. What is a “Foodie”?

2.28.1. Follow up: Do you think you are one?

2.28.2. Why or why not?

3. Part 2 - Interview questions for those categorized in Group A and B

3.1. How experienced are you as a traveler...in your opinion?

3.2. According to the application process questions you have been to

(I would confirm here the travel activities, places they listed that they visited)

3.3. Which place was a favorite?

3.3.1. Follow up: Why was it a favorite?

3.4. Tell me about the overall food experiences there?

3.5. Can you tell me of a specific experience that first comes to mind?

3.5.1. Follow up: How did you find the place?

3.6. What made you think of that story?

3.7. Is this something you thought about before??

3.8. Specifically, how was the food?

3.8.1. Follow up: Do you (not) remember what you ate?

3.9. Do you believe it is genuine relative to the location? Explain?

3.10. How about the service?

3.11. Anything specific about the service, your server, the staff, or the cook you remember?

3.12. Tell me about the atmosphere that surrounded that experience?

- 3.13. Why do you think this experience was memorable?
- 3.14. What about the other places you have been?
- 3.15. Any other Food stories during your travels you care to share?
- 3.16. Is the success of a trip determined by the quality of your gastronomic experiences?
- 3.17. Tell me about a restaurant experience here at home?
- 3.18. Do you think that they the same at home as those when you are away?
- 3.19. What are the differences from those experiences here and those away?
- 3.20. Describe the differences?

Note: If a participant reveals that they have traveled to a country where that country's food is available locally as 'ethnic' cuisine (i.e. China, Italy, India, Mexico) I would then ask for comparisons between the local experiences and those at the cuisine's original source.

Example: Having pasta in a restaurant in Italy and one close to home...what is the difference?

- 3.21. In today's food scene we have access to global cuisine offerings here at home, local ethnic restaurants are operated by those from their respective countries, and therefore the food they offer is true to the source. With this being said, do we need to travel for ethnic food experiences when they are right here at home?
 - 3.21.1. Follow up: Why or why not?
- 3.22. What is that is important to you when seeking a gastronomic experience, the food, the service or the atmosphere?

- 3.23. Is one of these attributes more important than the others?
- 3.24. What are the critical success factors that can affect these attributes?
- 3.25. Do you follow these same criteria in selecting a gastronomic experience when at home as well as when you travel?
 - 3.25.1. Follow up: Why the difference?
- 3.26. What was your first memory of a restaurant experience? Tell me the story?
- 3.27. How would you describe the cuisine that is offered today in restaurants compared to those experiences you have had in your past years?
- 3.28. Are these changes for the good or bad? Explain?
- 3.29. Are you happy with the current local food scene?
- 3.30. How would you describe an authentic restaurant experience?
- 3.31. How would you define authentic food?
- 3.32. Based on your comments, how do feel about your possibilities in creating new gastronomic memories?
 - 3.32.1. Follow up: What are you doing about it?

Thank you for speaking with me today.

4. Part 2 - Interview questions for those categorized in Group C

- 4.1. According to your application you haven't travelled very much, what holds you back?
- 4.2. Where would you like to travel to if you could?
- 4.3. Why those places?
- 4.4. Do you think that the gastronomic experiences in _____ would be different than those here serving the same type of food?
- 4.5. Does the food of certain countries influence where you would like to travel?
- 4.6. Tell me about a specific restaurant experience that first comes to mind?
- 4.7. What made you think of that story?
- 4.8. What is it like as a memory?
- 4.9. How was the food within that experience?
- 4.10. Was it genuine relative to the cuisine as you expected?
- 4.11. How about the service?
- 4.12. Anything specific about the service, your server, the staff, or the cook you remember?
- 4.13. Tell me about the atmosphere that surrounded that experience?
- 4.14. Why do you think this experience was memorable?
- 4.15. Do you think that this experience can be duplicated? If so how?
- 4.16. Any other gastronomic experiences locally you care to share?

- 4.17. In today's food scene we have access to global cuisine offerings here at home; local ethnic restaurants are operated by those from their respective countries, therefore the food they offer is true to the source. With this being said, do we need to travel for ethnic food experiences when they are right here at home?
- 4.17.1. Follow up: Why or why not?
- 4.18. What is that is important to you when seeking a gastronomic experience, the food, the service or the atmosphere?
- 4.19. Is one of these attributes more important than the others?
- 4.20. What are the critical success factors you think can affect these attributes?
- 4.21. Do you follow these same criteria in selecting a gastronomic experience when at home as well as when you travel?
- 4.21.1. Follow up: Why the difference?
- 4.22. What was your first memory of a restaurant experience? Tell me the story?
- 4.23. How would you describe the cuisine that is offered today in restaurants compared to those experiences you have had in your past years?
- 4.24. Are these changes for the good or bad? Explain?
- 4.25. Are you happy with the current local food scene?
- 4.26. How would you describe an authentic restaurant experience?
- 4.27. How would you define authentic food?
- 4.28. Based on your comments, how do feel about your possibilities in creating new gastronomic memories?
- 4.28.1. Follow up: What are you doing about it?

Thank you for speaking with me today.

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