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A mass-produced yet "authentic" food: a transatlantic history of pasta, identity, and national values in Italy and the US, 1890 to 1974

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A Mass-Produced yet “Authentic” Food: 
A Transatlantic History of Pasta, Identity, and National Values in Italy and the 
US, 
1890 to 1974

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Pasta gained international popularity simultaneously as both a banal and a culturally symbolic food in the 20th century. This dissertation contends that as pasta emerged in US and Italian consumer culture, negotiation of its dual meanings unfolded in the market as discourses of national and regional identity. This study tracks the role of governments, science professionals, cultural elites, manufacturers, and advertisers in articulating the meaning of commodities and juxtaposes these voices to the experience and contributions of consumers.

Between 1900 and 1930, US Government officials, home economists, and advertisers recast pasta from a food synonymous with negative stereotypes of an immigrant population, into a commodity of no definite ethnicity. Its raw ingredient, durum wheat, promised growth for the Depression’s flagging agriculture and deprived diets. Cookbooks and marketing for national, American-owned pasta brands disassociated the food from Italians in the minds of consumers and linked it to an American way of eating. After World War II, advertising reintroduced pasta to the American public as Italian, an old-world dish evoking cosmopolitan living for postwar modernity. The commodity appeared to democratize cultural capital but devalued the culinary creativity of immigrants.

Italian businesses felt the postwar pressures of adapting to a consumer economy as US economic aid and competition legislated reforms in pasta manufacture. The goals of high volume and uniformity clashed with residual modes of production that supported a highly stratified market and artisanal variety. Under the banner of ending fraud and improving quality pasta for all Italians, large firms gained market dominance by offering a limited range of products. After 1950, private culinary organizations used tourism to resist the onslaught of homogenized taste they saw as resulting from American-style business models. Through guidebooks, events celebrating “traditional” local foods, and sanctioned recipes, they countered Italians’ weakened grasp of their own food culture while educating foreigners on the deep varieties of the country’s region’s food. Rather than simply limiting “American” influence, government and private authorities promoting a multi-regional Italian identity through food, I contend, revealed their endorsement of one of consumer culture’s ideological pillars: the market served as a prime site for negotiating ethno-national identity.

Pasta emerged from the 1970s a food of contrasting identities, a pantry staple and a vessel of local identity representing a critique of standardizing consumer culture. Tracing the source and evolution of each of these discourses reveals the potential of consumer culture to support diverse identities but circumscribe the ability of consumers to control them.
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Introduction
From Health Food to Community Symbol: The Many Meanings of Pasta

*Faust Brand Spaghetti is made in America by the most approved methods, and from the American variety of Durum Wheat, the finest grown anywhere in the world. All the advantages to be derived from the world's experience in making Spaghetti—all the scientific suggestions of the US Government are utilized in the making of Faust Brand, with the result that no better Spaghetti can be found in Europe or America.*

Advertisement for Faust Spaghetti, 1906

*We have always been of the opinion (and we still are) that the tourist attractions of Bologna are many but that the tortellino in particular can constitute an extremely useful avenue of publicity to remind foreigners of its touristic merits.*

Giorgio Vacchi, board member of the Dotta Confraternità del Tortellino, 1971

Milled wheat plus water or eggs, kneaded well, rolled or shaped by dies; boiled. Briefly, this is the basic formula for pasta. However, a diner sitting down to a meal of Faust spaghetti in 1906 and another ordering a bowl of tortellini in 1971 consumed foods with vastly different meanings. Certainly, comparing spaghetti to tortellino reminds us that certain foods are highly versatile. Pasta variations abound according to the type or portion of wheat used, its final shape, and method of cooking; still, the fundamentals remain the same.

Beyond demonstrating pasta’s adaptability, a comparison of Faust spaghetti and the Bologna tortellino enables us to understand how food materializes sometimes contradictory discourses of identity. Consuming either pasta immersed the eater in broader conversations that used food to enhance definitions of nationality, ethnicity, and italianness in Italy and the US. As in the

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2 Giorgio Vacchi (boardmember of the Dotta Confraternità del Tortellino or the Learned Confraternity of the Tortellino) to Renzo Renzi, January 18, 1971, Bologna, Epistolario, Archivio Renzo Renzi, Renzo Renzi Library, Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna.
case of ethnicity, articulating a sense of belonging was a dialogical process in which, as historian of immigrant life Elizabeth Pleck notes, a “group of people… see themselves, and are seen by others, as having a shared history and culture.” Pleck’s definition refers to the experiences of immigrant communities in the US in the twentieth century, but is useful for understanding the two-way process involved in configuring any collective identity. Did eating pasta affirm one’s subscription to the tenets of scientific eating and the American way of life? Or did consuming it mean defying the mainstream, indicating one’s membership in a community of fellow consumers who rejected the homogenizing forces of mass culture by celebrating (and thus preserving) the distinctive cuisine of Bologna? Clearly, two people eating the same category of food could express wildly different messages, but the participation of each was predicated on consumer culture and the politics of controlling meaning that it entailed.

This study uses pasta as a vantage point from which to explore how discourses that framed the significance of consumer goods gave substance to and centered on the market larger conversations about what defined American and Italian identities, nationality, and ethnicity. It focuses on formative periods in American consumer culture, from the development of a mass market at the turn-of-the-century to the ascendency of the nation’s postwar consumer economy as a measure of national wellbeing, at home and in other Western democracies. In postwar Italy, where the country’s consumer culture experienced deep shifts

under pressure from America’s Cold War economic policies, resistance to and acceptance of these changes played out in struggles to define Italians’ relationship to food from the 1950s to the 1970s. In the process, I show how these discourses relied on the ostensibly empowering themes of twentieth-century consumer culture, including the potential of goods to democratize an improved quality of life and open new avenues of self-expression, even as they critiqued it. The result was a marketplace of identities that appeared neutral, but reproduced and even accentuated inequalities.

The Meaning of Goods (and Food) in Consumer Culture: Theory and History

Choice makes consumers active participants in consumer societies. Theories of consumption laid out by anthropologists and sociologists appreciate how society establishes authoritative modes of communication that influence the meanings of goods, but also allow individuals a limited agency in the form of consumer choice in which they exercise their own system of reason. Still, as Arjun Appadurai notes, demand is not a free expression of individual desire, since it “is a socially regulated and generated impulse.” The potential of consumers to express their sense of belonging through goods, therefore, must account for the important social and institutional constrains upon choice,

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5Appadurai, The Social Life of Things, 32;
including how meanings are attached to goods.

Pasta, a food that is globally popular but evocative of specific cultural identities, speaks to the multivalence of consumer goods. In considering by whom and for what purpose the meanings were controlled, it is possible to understand an important way in which consumption compromises consumer sovereignty. The extent to which pasta has been integrated into discourses that seemed neutral (scientific) or empowering (the democratization of cosmopolitan lifestyle, a statement of local pride), further indicates how consumer culture occludes critiques of its own inequality.

Building on theories of consumption in consumer culture, food scholars have attempted to reconcile the intimacy of eating with discourses of publicly-defined meanings. Pierre Bourdieu’s larger observations about the role of consumption in sustaining class distinctions highlight the importance of food choices in sustaining social hierarchies and identities.⁶ Theories of food informed by Bourdieu query whether true individual expression is even possible when the meaning of food in consumer culture is outside the control of private individuals or groups. Analyses of these external pressures that shape personal and collective values and influence eating habits point to family histories and the processes by which meanings are assigned in modern consumer culture. The results are food choices that reject or accept dominant standards of cleanliness,

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beauty, expression, and even mass production and consumption. Theories that relate food consumption and identity in consumer culture point to a process simultaneously empowering and confining, despite the apparently democratizing transformation of identity into an edible commodity.

The ability of consumer culture to accommodate statements critical of it, or rather the inability of critics to express their ideas without relying on its communicative standards, points to a totalizing aspect of modern consumer culture that theorists and historians agree is distinctive. The treatment of food as a commodity, reproducible, sellable, and imbued with meaning by a rationalized culture, is part of this all-encompassing trend. It has concentrated the power of articulating identity, but also diffused the potential for staking one’s claim to it.

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7 Scholars debate the extent of consumer agency exercised through food choice and whether the rationalization of consumption through advertising, chain restaurants, packaged foods, and representations of food in the media negates the ability of food to serve as an avenue of self-definition. Essays in the edited volumes by Peter Naccarato, Kathleen LeBesco, Ron Schapp, and Brian Seitz are cautious if not doubtful about the potential of food to be a meaningful medium of individuality in the context of mass culture. Deborah Lupton sounds a more hopeful note by noting the ways mass culture and personal biographies intersect in food choices, making eating an opportunity for self-discovery and expression. See Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco, eds., Culinary Capital (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012); Ron Schapp and Brian Seitz, eds., Eating Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); Deborah Lupton, Food, the Body and the Self (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996).

8 The works of some of the theorists mentioned above touch on this topic, especially Slater who argues that modern consumer culture is distinguished from previous “consumerisms” by virtue of being the only available way of seeing or operating within the world. Similarly, ways of knowing the private self, according to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, rely on the language and meanings controlled by the culture industry (including advertising), leaving the consumers only able to define themselves according to the commodified language of consumer culture. Social theorist Frederic Jameson attributes the hegemony of commodity culture to the breakdown in the duality between mass culture and commercial culture; culture itself is a commodity. While Jameson declares this a defining characteristic of postmodernity which he dates to roughly the 1950s and 60s, historians of consumer culture have traced examples of the commodification of culture to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Slater, Consumer Culture and Modernity, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments, trans. Edmund Jephcott, 94-136 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002); Frederic Jameson, Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).
Historical studies have endeavored to explain how consumer culture defined both goods and desires. Much of this work focuses on the history of capitalisms in the US. From the mid-nineteenth century, greater efficiencies in farming and manufacturing, combined with the related increase in Americans leaving the countryside and growth of a permanent wage-earning population, reoriented the relationship between production and consumption and how either determined the value of goods. Rationalized production of agricultural and factory products that reduced the skill and amount of labor required challenged assumptions that these were key factors in determining a product’s value. By the early 1900s, it was clear that the surplus goods produced by capitalists on farms or in the cities acquired their meaning and worth as the subjects of consumption.\(^9\)

As part of this shift, American business cemented its role as a cultural arbiter through advertising and collaborative and legitimizing support from educational and cultural institutions, such as universities, museums, art schools, and influential economic actors, including the US Chamber of Commerce and banks. Together, they cultivated a culture of mass consumption where sophisticated marketing techniques managed by professionals stimulated desires upheld as integral to an American standard of living. Audiences identified with marketing appeals while the content of popular culture and the ability to control taste and the public meanings of goods became concentrated, as Jackson Lears

\[^9\] James Livingston covers this historical transition and much more as it relates to intellectuals’ (including his own) struggle to reimagine the subjectivity of individuals as consumers (as opposed to producers) according to postmodern thought. See James Livingston, *Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Political Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).
argues, in the hands of middle-class business professionals.\textsuperscript{10}

At the same time, the US transitioned from an agricultural economy to one of mass production, distribution, and consumption. As food production centralized and expanded, it placed pressure on manufacturers to not merely meet demand, but increase consumption. Conditions in the turn-of-the-century food market compelled large, distant producers, as Susan Strasser shows, to develop methods of communicating directly with consumers in ways that would become standard for promoting household commodities, including brand names, packaging, and advertising. Throughout the 1900s and 1930s, advertisers and marketers defended their reputations against critiques leveled at them by consumer movements who collectively accused the new selling professionals and businesses generally of deception and the promotion of unnecessary consumption. In their defense, ad men and public relations managers highlighted their academic qualifications and equated the growth of the consumer economy with national well-being, a claim that clashed with the logic of business regulations proposed under the New Deal. They countered the assertions of the consumer movement through public relations campaigns that took advantage of their access to mass media outlets and made the consumption of certain goods symbolic of an American way of life and corporations the guarantors of its survival. The corporate interpretation of American political economy emerged

\textsuperscript{10} Jackson Lears and William Leach describe the rationalization of American popular culture through advertising and the collaborative efforts of cultural institutions and business interests, respectively. In both cases, mass culture was predicated on predictable and manageable consumer desire. See Jackson Lears, \textit{Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America} (New York: Basic Books, 1994); William Leach, \textit{Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture} (New York: Vintage Press, 1993).
dominant after World War II, informing government policies and consumer activism that abandoned fighting for collective consumer protections in favor of broadening access to mass consumer society’s “American way of life.”

Conversations between elites, including business interests, activists, and government leaders that understood citizenship in relation to consumption were premised on the assumption that the market was the primary and unavoidable site for forging and maintaining identities. This was also true for ethnic groups who appeared to unite around Old-World traditions to preserve existing affiliations. Histories of Italian immigrants in the US have worked to dismantle notions of an essentialized national identity expressed through immutable cultural

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11 A number of studies in the history of consumer culture have looked closely at the struggles between consumer advocates and business over government regulations from the 1920s to 1960s during which business interests took advantage of their dominance of mass media outlets to deploy public relations campaigns that located corporations at the heart of American life. In the 1920s and 30s, debates that set admen and their business clients against professionals and intellectuals equated “consumers” with “Americans”; but there their common ground ended, according to Charles McGovern. While neither side spoke with one voice, at the center of their ongoing contention were conflicting visions of citizenship. Lizabeth Cohen has described these as the *citizen consumer* and the *purchaser consumer*. Were Americans *citizen consumers*, political actors with definable interests deserving of government protection who made purchasing choices for the greater good, as portrayed by leaders of the consumer movement? Or was consumption an individual act where citizenship was measured, not by political activism but by one’s access to the products of mass consumption made available by an unregulated market? After a temporary deferment to the citizen consumer that supported wartime rationing and price controls, Cohen argues that the purchaser consumer definition of citizenship prevailed after World War II. Historian Lawrence Glickman describes this shift as the demise of the consumer movement, but indicates that the use of purchasing power to effect change continued, as in the case of civil rights boycotts, boycotts, and sit-ins. The latter examples of activism affirm the predominance of the purchaser consumer as African Americans protested unequal citizenship by drawing attention to unequal access to the offerings of the consumer economy. Glickman credits postwar conservative attacks for stigmatizing the consumer movement for its connections with liberalism, while other historians have pointed to the damage caused by internal divisions along race and class lines that fractured support for a movement led by a coterie of middle class experts or how its proposed policies promised to raise prices and the cost of living, as argued by Meg Jacobs. See Charles McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003); Lawrence Glickman, *Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
forms (like food) by illustrating how Italians of diverse regional and cultural backgrounds subscribed to a unified national identity only after emigration. In the market, Italian immigrants elaborated traditional Italian foodways to create and affirm new identities that encompassed all Italians, in contrast to regional and local identifications that divided Italians in the home country. Italians played a critical role in commodifying their own identity for consumption by a diasporic Italian community and this may be interpreted as an empowering dynamic of consumer society for members of minority groups. In this sense Italian migrants followed a pattern of commodifying extra-market folkways used by other cultural and racial minorities in the US to create both business opportunity and a

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12 Recent work by historian Simone Cinotto describes the evolution of Italian food within the Italian immigrant community in the US. Food played an important role in building solidarity within the group as it responded to its cultural and political marginalization. This is largely a parallel story to the one I seek to tell of mainstream perceptions of Italian food and Italians, particularly after World War II. See Simone Cinotto, *The Italian American Table: Food, Family, and Community in New York City* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Simone Cinotto, *Soft Soil, Black Grapes: The Birth of Italian Winemaking in California* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

13 Not only Italian, but Mexican, Chinese, and African American communities in the US have cultivated a shared sense of history and culture through consumer goods as described by Elizabeth Pleck and others. Italians stand out for the centrality of food as a marker of national and ethnic identities, a role Donna Gabaccia attributes to its figurative portability, along with ideas about the importance of family and the home; other historians of Italian-Americans take a more materialist approach and trace the articulation of a unified Italian identity to commercial interests trying to promote, in particular, food. Italian food producers in the US and in Italy, as well as the Italian government; the latter had a vested interest between 1900 and the 1930s in convincing the diasporic Italian community that affirming their identity meant eating “Italian” foods whether imported from the home country or made by fellow members of the ethnic community. For studies covering the role of the market in ethnic and racial identity formation, see Pleck, *Celebrating the Family*; Adam Green, *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940-1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); for Italian examples, see Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Cinotto, *Italian American Table*, Donna Gabaccia, *Italy’s Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). Food further codified an Italian ethnic identity that was racially distinct from Mexicans, African Americans, and Chinese, but did not necessarily elevate Italians to parity with white, Anglo-Americans. See Thomas Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
framework of common experience.

**A Transnational History of Meaning**

Change in the meaning of pasta as a food hailed for its cleanliness and healthfulness to one that stood for authenticity, despite its ubiquity, was a dialogical process in Italy and the US, framed by transatlantic exchanges of people and ideas. Studies of consumer society that consider consumer culture in an international context must contend with historical and sociological scholarship that cast consumer culture as fundamentally American and conflate Americanization with globalization. These are often narratives in which America’s economic and cultural expansion beyond national boundaries in the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries were alternatives to traditional imperialism. However, America’s “soft imperialism” remained a force of domination. As in Mona Domosh’s study, American companies at the turn of the century that exported agricultural machinery, sewing machines, packaged and branded foods, and other consumer products across Europe, Asia, and South America, described themselves as agents of civilization. The adoption of American products abroad lightened the white man’s burden, they claimed, uplifting nations through technology, industrial economies, and conferring “whiteness.”

The global circulation of American commodities continued to grow in the twentieth century and by midcentury formed the basis of an American vision of a new world order. Articulated by *Life* magazine editor Henry Luce in 1941, the “American Century” would see the world’s consumption of American goods, from

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movies and slang to machines and music. Luce encouraged Americans to leverage the country’s international economic presence as a vehicle for spreading American democratic values, including through an economic system of free enterprise.\textsuperscript{15} Writing in the midst of World War II, Luce described the postwar triumph of American ideals over fascist ideology, but the Cold War would give the US another foil against which to compare the abundance of its way of life as material proof of a superior civilization.

What distinguished American imperialism from the earlier practices of European rivals was not the use of military might but its attempt to combine or distract from this hard reality with a congenial informality. The amiable face America put on the expansion of its self-styled consumer culture belied a global network of military bases, allies, nuclear weapons, intelligence-gatherers, and covert operations that asserted its anti-communist doctrine. Markets peddling consumer goods were a conduit of US influence, making opposition, historian Victoria De Grazia observes, appear mean-spirited and economically narrow-minded. The acceptance of American market values across the fields of business, government bureaucracy, and civic organizations gave the market empire a “norms-making” quality that added to the difficulty of contesting its spread. American methods of production, promotion, and distribution were not only taken for granted as “best-practice,” according to De Grazia, but effectively shifted the center of public life to the market and upheld consumer choice as the

medium of popular sovereignty.  

My study builds on De Grazia’s observation that with the market empire came ideological pillars on which the supporters of American-style consumer society and its critics built their discourses, meting out value to foods through the market and crafting a national identity consummated by commercial transactions.

Critics of De Grazia’s narrative of an informal American imperialism in Europe are quick to point out that often the empire failed to live up to its “irresistible” epithet, in some instances opening the way for Europeans to influence American culture. The persistent diversity in consumption habits and identities in Europe, they contend, are evidence of successful struggles against the homogenizing logic of American-style consumerism. As Roberta Sassatelli and Emanuela Scarpellini point out, Europeans never behaved as the single market American government and business interests envisioned. Spending habits varied according to country, chain stores adapted products to regional preferences, and local enterprises thrived in coops and regional markets.

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17 Studies of consumerism have also worked to de-centralize American-style consumerism in the history of consumption. Frank Trentmann argues that a linear history of consumer society that begins in eighteenth-century Holland and England (considered the ancestral home of American consumerism) overlooks the high consumption rates in contemporary China. As Lisa Tiersten shows, in turn-of-the-century France, middle-class women fashioned identities through “tasteful” consumption that harmonized the values of civic virtue touted by leaders of the Third Republic and the individualism of the market. My study makes no claim about the uniqueness of the separate factors that characterize an American-style consumer society. See Frank Trentmann, “Crossing Divides: Consumption and globalization in history,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* vol. 9, 2 (July 2009): 187-220; Lisa Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

Pragmatism extended even to the offices of European advertising firms on the front lines of the advancing edge of the market empire.  

The American market empire did not overwhelm national, regional, or local identities, but it made the market a key site where they would be negotiated. In her study of consumer culture that attempts to bring American and European consumers cultures into focus side-by-side, Sassatelli acknowledges the role commodities play in forming identities for both groups. However, contexts of consumption, including those influenced by advertisers, she argues, plays a critical role in shaping the ultimate meaning of product. In the case of Italy, consumer goods and practices served as a battlefield where new visions of nationhood could emerge. Food habits united tastes and created a new sense of belonging to the nation.

As Italy adjusted to the new realities of the postwar world, food commodities in particular became touchstones of national identity. The transition

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relied on the merging of Italians’ cultural, national, and consumer identities. Local and regional products and eating habits populated the map of the Italian peninsula that collectively stood for the nation’s cuisine. The portrayal of local specialties as national variety began in 1891 with the printing of Science in the Kitchen by Pellegrino Artusi. The cookbook, popular with urban, middle-class Italians, compiled recipes from the length and breadth of the country in a single volume (though northern regions were overrepresented relative to areas south of Naples, including the islands). However, the effect of Artusi’s book on Italians generally, to see their foodways as part of a national whole, was likely limited. Despite improvements, contemporary literacy rates remained low (fifty percent over all in 1901 and a mere thirty percent in the southern regions).21 A combination of wartime shortages and later government policies to encourage national self-sufficiency kept the average Italian diet limited in terms of volume and variety. Subsistence farming (or nearly so) described the livelihood of up to half of Italian households until the 1950s, making the consumption of more than what one managed to produce at home rare and typically unaffordable. As De Grazia notes, the limited access to discretionary spending in Europe until the 1950s affected both the rural and urban poor, making consumption for self-

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expression a middle-class phenomenon until after World War II. My study of Italian food culture begins after the war when the majority of Italians moved beyond subsistence living and the Italian market modernized as the US had decades before. These years coincided with a push by the US government, advertising agencies, and private individuals and institutions to develop American models of mass production and consumption in Italy, as elsewhere in Europe. Much like other histories of postwar “Americanization” conclude, the result was not a straightforward homogenization of food culture. Local realities helped shape the meaning of commodities and, I argue, reinforced the market as the site of mean-making. The consumers’ control over local contexts of consumption and marketers’ development of niche markets encouraged variety as much as homogenization. To illustrate this point, my study follows the efforts by local branches of national culinary organizations to reframe the meaning of food commodities from the standpoint of the “local” to contest what they saw as the homogenization of culture by American-style consumerism. They did this through tourism that equated food with local

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22 Much has been written to explain the conservative nature of Italian eating throughout the twentieth century, but particularly through World War II. Whatever their focus, scholars agree that persistent, largely rural, poverty and government policies combined to keep most Italians from starvation, but in perpetual hunger. For an economic survey of the Italian food industry and consumers’ access to food, see Francesco Chiapparino and Renato Covino, *Consumi e industria alimentare in Italia dall’unita’ a oggi* (Perugia: Giada, 2002); Chiapparino and Covino’s observations about Italians’ monotonous diet echo those of De Grazia who extends the description to all of Europe before the 1950s; Italian food historian Carol Helstosky attributes the relative monotony of modern Italian eating habits to a history of government policies, particularly fascist, that compelled the vast majority of Italians to rely on a minimum of limited foodstuffs while praising “patriotic” thrift; see Victoria De Grazia and Ellen Furlough, “Changing Consumption Regimes,” in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, eds. Victoria De Grazia and Ellen Furlough (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 18-19; Carol Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil: Politics and Food in Italy* (New York: Berg, 2004).

traditions, culminating in a multifaceted, national identity that was consumable, not just for foreigners but Italians, as well.

**Refocusing Transnational Consumer Culture**

A history of consumer culture from an international perspective also challenges the uni-directional flow of American values and products by describing their role in transnational dialogs. Kristin Hoganson’s account of American consumers at the turn-of-the-century describes how consuming foreign products became part of a (largely female) middle-class identity while asserting racial and cultural superiority in relation to immigrants.24

Non-American actors have also used mass culture in international contexts to produce meanings. The French film industry fashioned a national identity through internationally-consumed cinema and through its contribution recast the field as cosmopolitan.25 As producers and consumers, Italian-Americans created an identity that appropriated aspects of northern and southern Italian culture, the former associated with opera, fine art, and luxury foods like coffee, and the latter with a romanticized peasant culture of rural bounty. This process began during the first decades of Italian immigration to the US in the 1900s, but by the 1970s and 80s, third and fourth generation Italians embraced a composite Italian-American identity that was highly visible and commodified for Italian-American and Anglo-American consumption. Indeed, as historian of

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Italian-America Cinotto notes, the popularity of Italian mass culture and food among middle-class Americans in the 1960s “repositioned Italy at a high rank in the international market [of] cultural difference, [and] offered Italian-Americans exciting opportunities of investment and pleasure in ethnicity-making.” The expanding tastes of Americans, prompted by cultural shifts of the civil rights and counterculture movements, enlarged the toolkit for constructing an Italian-American identity that drew heavily on transatlantic connections and responded to mainstream American tastes.²⁶

Studies that redirect our attention to the role of minority groups and cultural outsiders in articulating identity through commodities do not recount democratic processes. As ethnicity becomes closely tied to commodities, either as identities are fashioned through consumption or through goods that are assigned symbolic value as expressions of identity, the power to define it is vested in the hands of powerful individuals and groups in a position to define (and profit from) “difference.”²⁷ In the case described above, Italian-Americans crafting their identities through consumption, the key mediators in this process included the Italian Trade Commission aiming to develop an American market for made-in-Italy branded products from northern industrial centers, as well as individuals who claimed cultural authority based on transatlantic links, having


²⁷ John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff lay out a theory of ethnicity in which commodification is an unavoidable condition of engaging in the modern world and a conversion that privileges the perspectives and identities of some over less powerful groups. John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
been born in Italy or spent critical periods of their professional lives there. These included celebrity chefs and cookbook authors who sold Italian-Americans notions of “authentic” food. An Italian-American identity that drew heavily on its immigrant past used terms defined by a select few that ignored or implicitly devalued the southern origins of most Italian immigrants and their New-World innovations. Mexican elites attempting to attract American tourists occupied a similar position of power through which they defined “true” Mexican cuisine as pre-Hispanic and against the culinary traditions developed by Mexican immigrants and peasants.

**Inequality and the Market**

This project builds on studies that acknowledge the potential of consumer society to make diversity part of popular culture, but also to disguise economic and social inequality. In other words, inclusion in the mass market could be invoked as evidence of citizenship, but not a society of equals. Restaurant culture, tourism, and food writing in cookbooks, guidebooks, and magazines, complemented the efforts of advertisers and businesses to assign meanings to certain foods that equated them with Italian national, ethnic, and regional identities and values. In doing so, consumer culture reinforced the marginalization of a group that had a history of struggling with racial and cultural discrimination.

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stereotypes.

The popularity of pasta and other “Italian” foods did not indicate Italians’ acceptance as equals by Anglo-Americans, even as the latter enjoyed Italian and other “ethnic” foods. Whether out of necessity or curiosity, Americans and their colonial predecessors have long incorporated new foods into their diet, but doing so did not challenge racial and ethnic hierarchies, a conclusion Gabaccia reaches in her survey of Americans’ long history of culinary diversity.31 A revealing gap of roughly sixty-years separated the arrival of most Italian immigrants to the US at the turn of the century and the popularity of Italian food as such. As historians of Chinese and Italian foodways in the US observe, the presence of minority groups was unrelated or inversely related to the popularity of their food. Americans developed a taste for Chinese food in the 1920s and Italian food only in the 1960s, long after immigration of either group had stopped and initially in areas where few immigrants lived.32

Nor were exceptional communities in which Americans enjoyed the food of immigrants alongside immigrants themselves during the Progressive Era examples of egalitarian multiculturalism. In her study of the international tastes of

31 In her study of Americans’ cosmopolitan eating habits, Gabaccia challenges the assumption that American experimentation with “foreign” food is a postwar, counter-culture phenomenon by arguing that British colonists in North America borrowed from their indigenous neighbors in the 1600s. See Gabaccia, We Are What We Eat.

middle-class American women at the turn-of-the-century, Kristin Hoganson notes that the consumption and promotion of immigrant crafts or foods served to assert the superiority of American civilization and the privileged position of its cosmopolitan consumers.\textsuperscript{33} Still, participation in the mass market has been touted as an effective and unthreatening method of engaging ethnic groups in American society and encouraging solidarity amongst ethnic groups and a more pluralistic definition of American citizenship.\textsuperscript{34} Nevertheless, mass markets that offer diverse groups a shared experience do not in themselves make consumers cum citizens equal without, as McGovern argues, "a commitment to direct communication among people and not just through possessions."\textsuperscript{35}

Histories of ethnic food reveal how outsider struggles to define boundaries and meaning of citizenship in the market produce undemocratic results, reinforcing social and class boundaries. Whether in the 1900s or 1960s, most Americans encountered “Italian” food in restaurants as exchanges between consumers and ethnic producers. The few diners in the early twentieth-century who ate at a foreign restaurant as middle-class urban workers on a quick lunch break, or as tourists exploring the city slums, came to consume the food as much

\textsuperscript{33} Hoganson, \textit{Consumers’ Imperium}, 240.


\textsuperscript{35} McGovern, \textit{Sold American}, 19.
as the immigrant staff that completed the picturesque vignette. Even as Americans’ enjoyment of Italian foods could be described as mainstream in the 1960s and 70s, ethnic restaurants represented Italians as Americans imagined them, primitive, sensual, and more at home in the Renaissance than in modern postwar America. In ethnic restaurants, Anglo-American consumers encountered commodities, not fellow citizens.

The market was integral in sustaining a racialized unequal national identity. Neither the market’s democratic tenor nor supply and demand’s perceived neutrality ensured outsiders that market participation brought equality.

In 1900 Theodore Roosevelt put forward a more open form of nationalism that

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36 Ethnic food consumption played into efforts by urban middle-classes to assert a distinctive identity through a cosmopolitan palate, according to restaurant historian Andrew Haley. Haley’s research concentrates on middle-class Americans in cities like New York and San Francisco where elite, French restaurant dining alienated the middle-class consumer with its elaborateness, price, and potential for exposing the cultural ignorance of diners unable to navigate foreign-language menus. In response, middle-class patrons “colonized the foreign restaurant” where fixed menus, low prices, and a casual dining atmosphere appealed to patrons, many eating during the limited time of a workday lunch break. Their collective rejection of elite restaurants and embrace of the foreign table d’hote restaurant amounted to, Haley claims, a statement of middle-class taste with consequences for defining American cooking as multicultural. Haley’s argument is strongest for large cities, namely New York and San Francisco, but less so for other population centers, or small and mid-sized towns, in which the majority of Americans in the early twentieth century lived. My interest here is to attempt to look broadly, geographically speaking, at American consumption patterns, by considering mass publications with national distribution, but, more importantly, comparing their “message” about the role of pasta to those in privately published cookbooks with local distribution in small and large towns. See Andrew Peter Haley, Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the Middle Class, 1880–1920 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 105.

37 See Catherine Cocks, Doing the Town: The Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States, 1850-1915 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Haley, Turning the Tables; Cinotto, Italian American Table. 181, 205; the effects of ethnic stereotypes cut both ways, according to a 1980s studying of “assimilated” third and fourth generation European immigrants by Mary Waters. The individuals in her study defined their ethnicity through their rejection or embrace of popular stereotypes. See Mary Waters, Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); assumptions about Mexican-Americans were also based on stereotypes circulated by the market and influenced by the food industry where ethnic identities were conflated with certain foods. See Pilcher, Planet Taco and Arlene Dávila, Latinos Inc. The Marketing and Making of a People (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
promised to incorporate into American society those European immigrants who adopted American culture and shed the values and habits of their homeland. Citizenship came at the expense of free expression of non-Anglo identities. Over the next two decades, advertisers implemented sales strategies and described their efforts to sell to immigrant groups as *americanization*. The immigrant-consumer was “a modern, assimilated, and unthreatening American.”

Post World War II Italian-Americans experienced the cost of assimilation and the legacy of racialized nationalism negotiated in the market. Even as immigrant descendants appeared integrated into American culture, they found themselves constrained in expressing their ethnicities. Americans appeared to welcome Italians and Italian-American culture as part of the nation’s popular culture in the form of Italian pop stars such as Louis Prima, Frank Sinatra, and Joe DiMaggio, as well as Americanized Italian dishes on the menus of suburban diners. However, Prima’s stage identity reflected back to audiences their stereotypes of Italian identity, and Italian foods were modified to suit the tastes of the “average” consumer. DiMaggio, described in a 1939 *Life* article as one who “never reeks of garlic and prefers chicken chow mien to spaghetti,” became publicly associated after the war with the pasta-producing Buitoni Foods Corporation, appearing in the company’s commercials and eventually joining its

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public relations department in 1953. Collectively, Italian Americans could express their Italianness, but they were not able to dictate the terms of their ethnic identity in mainstream American culture as it was represented in the market. As sociologist Mary Waters argues, ethnic stereotypes popularized by the media continued to constrain the ability of third and fourth generation Italians to express their ethnic identity into the 1980s.

Tourism: The Identity Market

The commercialization of travel in the twentieth century commodified identities, as well as experiences. Early twentieth-century tourism was made up of, in the words of historians Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, “heterogenous elements amalgamated by advertising and marketing, the emergent tourism industry, and later the mass media.” Mass-printed guidebooks, package tours, and souvenirs were promoted together as parts of the travel experience ready for consumption.

By midcentury, what had once been a cobbled-together collection of consumer products and excursions were linked by notions of identity. Identity rationalize the links between commodities of various degrees of tangibility (i.e.}

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42 See Waters *Ethnic Options*.

landscape, heritage, and food). National and local bodies recognized the potential of tourism to assert an “authoritative representation of ‘ourselves,’ ‘our landscape,’ and ‘our cultural ways and traditions’.”

John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff describe a similar commodification of ethnicity in the international marketplace, in which certain aspects of culture are sold as representative of a collective identity. Like Comaroff and Comaroff, I contend that the process of defining a commodified identity privileged some voices over others.

Actual and virtual, tourism framed and set the terms for postwar international dialogs of Italian identity.

Postwar mobility and the desire to travel influenced how business interests and culinary organizations connected pasta to Italian identity with consequences

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45 Comaroff and Comaroff, 1.
for locals and foreigners alike. The presentation of pasta as an Italian food for mainstream consumption in postwar America relied on assumptions about the democratization of tourism that both increased Americans’ willingness to consume and confirmed the superiority of American-style consumer culture.

While some historians downplay the role of actual travel in encouraging Anglo-Americans to consume Italian food, Chapter 3 shows how the media facilitated virtual international culinary experiences that popularized visions of foreign

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cultures that imbued foods with symbolic meaning. In postwar ad campaigns designed by American firms promoting pasta in the US, advertisers drew a connection between travel and the sensory experience of food. The more authentic the product, the more “transporting” eating became; when working with the Buitoni Foods Corporation, the J. Walter Thompson Company used their client’s Italian background to strengthen claims of authenticity in the eyes of American consumers.

In Italy, local and national tourism promoters also used claims of authenticity to re-imagine the Italian landscape as a mosaic of clearly-defined eating cultures in Chapter 5. They contrasted the variety of Italian eating habits with the standardizing pressures that American-style business models put on the Italian pasta industry in Chapter 4. In protest, culinary organizations joined forces with tourism bodies to codify a collection of dishes and cuisines safeguarded against homogenizing tendencies through food-themed fairs, guidebooks, and approved recipes. Their concepts of food and identity responded to and relied on the market created by mass tourism. As in the preceding chapters, relating foods and ways of eating with Italian identity revealed unequal cultural power.

47 Food historian Harvey Levenstein contrasts Americans’ postwar taste for Italian food to its renewed interest in French cuisine, the first having no connection to American travel habits, since few made the journey to Italy. France, however, was the most popular European destination after Britain and so explains its revival in American eating habits. While I agree that most Americans’ preference for Italian food was not a result of actually visiting Italy, I also recognize how tourism provided a discourse through which advertisers positioned American consumers in relation to pasta and pasta in relation to Italian identity. See Levenstein, Paradox, 215-19. For a discussion of the power of “virtual travel” on food meanings, see Liz Wilson, “Pass the Tofu, Please: Asian Food for Aging Baby Boomers,” in Culinary Tourism, ed. Lucy Long, 245-67 (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2004).
Organization

This dissertation is divided into four chapters that offer four distinct, but connected accounts of changes in the meaning of pasta in the context of consumer cultures. The first two chapters follow pasta in the US from its Americanization in the early twentieth century to its postwar hype as a desirable Italian food for cosmopolitan consumers. As Chapter 2 shows, the language of science and public health in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries defined American values in opposition to those of immigrants labeled as unhygienic and backward.\textsuperscript{48} The promotion of packaged, American-made pasta as a clean, protein-filled food set it apart from its Italian competition. Food science and advertising professionals played key roles transforming a foreign food into an American staple by the 1930s. This story is an example of the popular embrace of an Italian food in spite of Italian immigrants. Chapter 3 traces the reevaluation of pasta in the US after World War II as an Italian food defined against the “bastardized” cuisine of Italian-Americans. Food writers, business

\textsuperscript{48} Historians of immigration have demonstrated the ways matters of public health informed notions of \textit{racial} fitness for membership in American civic and cultural societies. The precise language of arguments for limiting the admission of immigrant groups, as well as their ability to move and do business freely, shifted between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as scientific knowledge about the affects of one’s environment on the body (including nutrition, working conditions, and contagions) grew. A wide range of practices, such as traditions of housekeeping and medicine, scrutinized through the lens of science, became further indications of the great divide between native-born Americans and Asian, Mexican, and southern and eastern European immigrants. The accretion of cultural habits to racial categories (both white and non-white) further naturalized notions of racial American citizenship, but also prompted debates about whether negative racial qualities, and thus the potential for assimilation, could be address with education. For studies that investigate the relationship between public health and contemporary struggles over definitions of cultural and political citizenship, see Alan Kraut, \textit{Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the “Immigrant Menace”} (New York: Basic Books, 1994), Nayan Shah, \textit{Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), and Natalia Molina, \textit{Fit to be Citizens? Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
leaders, advertising and marketing professionals, and local governments set the terms for evaluating pasta, and Italian food in general, as an *authentic* food whose consumption affirmed the ability of the American democratic capitalism to spread “the good life” and the necessary role admen played in this. Public input came in the form of market research and the financial success of certain products, but that influence was constrained by the goals of advertising and marketing professionals.

From the late 1940s, US government, businesses, and advertising professionals, as well as many of their Italian counterparts applied themselves to bringing the American standard of living to Italy. The influence of the transatlantic relationship between America and Italy shaped the meaning of pasta in apparently contradictory ways. Chapter 4 shows how the application of American business models to the Italian pasta industry after World War II demanded a reconsideration of what made “good” pasta and what consuming it meant. Leaders in Italian pasta manufacturing, much like American producers fifty years earlier, touted the hygiene of mass-produced pasta, as well as its uniformity and nutritive value, all qualities average consumers needed to learn to appreciate. In the case of one of the largest Italian pasta manufacturers, Buitoni, the US-supported formation of a common European wheat market and conversion to mass production, enabled it to sell high quality pasta at a low price. A food whose quality had once divided Italians along social and economic lines was now accessible to all, clear evidence of the democratizing potential of the new consumer economy.
Not everyone in Italy was convinced by the merits of an economy based on mass production and mass consumption, especially as it related to food. In Chapter 5, I show how culinary societies made up of middle- and upper-class professionals critiqued the postwar Italian food landscape that seemed to be succumbing to the same forces of standardization that characterized American culture. The Italian Academy of Cuisine or l’Accademia Italiana della Cucina, like-minded food writers, their allies in government, and the travel industry boosters responded to the homogenizing effects of American-style consumer society by promoting local and regional cuisines and, with them, authentic pastas. Ordinary Italians contributed to the process of codifying definitions of “genuine” foods that would commodify regional identities by completing restaurant surveys and sending recipes to culinary societies, but they had no control over the final choice about which foods would be come part of local identity. Despite their rejection of an American-style consumer society, the gourmands’ efforts, centered on tourism, revealed that they accepted a basic provision of the American model that located negotiations of cultural identities in the market.

Note on Language and Terminology

Unless noted, all translations are my own. In instances where there is no exact translation into English, I have offered a close approximation in the spirit of the original text and included the Italian terms in brackets.

The ubiquity and specificity of pasta demands special consideration in terms of terminology. I use “pasta” and “macaroni” interchangeably for the sake of simplicity as a generic word referring to the category of food that is cut, dried,
wheat-based and cooked by boiling, regardless of shape. Admittedly, in Italy the terms are not synonymous. However, when the shape and cultural connotations of a particular form of pasta are germane to my argument, I refer to it by name. Additionally, in cases where Italian forms of pasta were or are currently well known beyond Italy by their Italian names (for example, tortellino), I refer to these in the original language.
A 1906 ad for Missouri-made Faust Spaghetti urged American housewives to rethink their view of pasta as the abundant centerpiece of Italian dinners that stimulated the palate and satisfied white, middle-class curiosity about the dark corners of urban neighborhoods, but which were wholly unadvisable as a daily repast. Faust brand macaroni was for sweet, buttery cakes (1906), layering in a cream and chicken casserole (1906), or a complement to an elegant lobster luncheon dish (1910).^{49} In other words, macaroni was food for every day American cooking and the base for multiple kinds of dishes, from the main course to dessert and not just the mainstay of Italian immigrants or Italian restaurants.

Officials in the US Department of Agriculture and home economists concurred with Faust Spaghetti’s vision of pasta as a multi-purpose food, but it was not clear that white, middle-class Americans shared their conviction until the late 1920s when macaroni in privately-compiled cookbooks functioned less as a foreign novelty than as a staple of the American kitchen. For middle-class American women putting together community cookbooks in the 1890s, pasta, was the rare addition to soups or the base for French interpretations of Italian dishes, such as “Maccaroni with Sauce a la Milanese.” Over the next thirty years, the food would become a common ingredient in recipes shared amongst American women, such as “Macaroni Salad,” “Macaroni and Peanuts,” or

^{49} Approved advertising proofs for Faust Spaghetti, 1906 and 1910, Box 50, Folder 1, NWAA.
“American Chop Suey.”

Many histories of Italian food and immigration fail to discuss the place of Italian food in American culture generally. Instead, their studies demonstrate the role of food in cultivating solidarity amongst Italians of diverse regional backgrounds or used food to make claims about the stability of Italian traditions in diasporic communities. This chapter builds on observations about Italian immigrants and how food factored into their identity by considering the larger context against which the marginalized group was defined. It shows the disconnect between Americans’ acceptance of Italian food and Italians themselves as pasta was adopted by Americans as an everyday ingredient by

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50 For examples of early, conservative uses of macaroni, see Delicate Dishes (Chicago, IL: St. Paul’s Church, 1896), 56-57; Women of the Carpinteria Valley California, A cook book of home tried recipes (Carpinteria, California: [Carpinteria Town Hall Association], 1917); Ladies of San Rafael, San Rafael Cook Book (San Rafael: [San Rafael First Presbyterian Church], 1906); Fruit and Flower Mission, Choice Recipes (Seattle, WA: Lowman and Hanford, 1930); Woman’s Federation, Cook Book of Tested Recipes (Minneapolis, MN: Lynnhurst Congregational Church, 1920).

51 Recent work by historian Simone Cinotto of Italian immigrant communities in the US is an important exception, though his focus in on discourses of identity amongst Italian immigrants while mine seeks to explore mainstream perceptions of Italians through their food. See Simone Cinotto, Italian American Table and Cinotto, Soft Soil, Black Grapes.

52 In his study of the modern development and worldwide popularity of pizza and pasta, Italian anthropologists Franco LaCecla claims that Italian immigrants (particularly those in the US) were able to dictate the contours of Italian identity through outsiders’ perception of these two foods. Historians Cinotto and Diner are more sensitive to contexts of marginalization in which Italian immigrants found themselves in America. Consequently, the discourses of Italian food and identity they controlled were broadcast within their community. On the other hand, most food historians, such as Levenstein and Conlin equate the popularity of traditional (southern) Italian staples, pasta and pizza, to after World War II, coincident, if not a byproduct of assimilation. See Franco LaCecla, Pasta and Pizza, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007), 53, Cinotto, Italian American Table, Diner, Hungering for America, and Harvey Leventsein and Joseph Conlin, “The Food Habits of Italian Immigrants to America: An Examination of the Persistence of a Food Culture and the Rise of ‘Fast Food’ in America,” in Dominant Symbols in Popular Culture, eds. Ray Browne, Marshall Fishwick and Kevin Browne, 231-46 (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1990).
the 1920s, decades before large-scale and meaningful integration of Italians.53

The control of food meanings in consumer culture by a professional, Anglo-American elite and advertisers in particular uncoupled pasta as a category of food from Italians and instead associated the immigrant group with certain methods of buying and consuming pasta. The American interest in macaroni from the 1900s to 1920s did not accompany welcoming Italian immigrants as equal citizens but quite the opposite.

**Public Health and “American” Values**

Turn-of-the-century Americans were not unfamiliar with pasta, but their understanding of the food was shaped by discourses that precluded its status as a staple food. Despite conservative use of macaroni in French cuisine, much admired by American elites and their European counterparts, pasta was more notably the food of southern European immigrants. As such, it bore the stigma of uncleanness that public health officials, journalists, and state and local governments associated with Italian immigrants. Their claims, drawing on an expanding body of scientific knowledge of hygiene, justified policies that were often obtrusive, alienating, and worked to limit Italians’ eligibility for political citizenship and social membership.54 City governments and public health officials who addressed the early twentieth-century spread of polio and typhoid in New

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53 “Contingent” and “guarded” describe the acceptance of Italians into postwar America as full citizens. Gary Gerstle distinguishes the assimilation of Italians into American society as individuals, rather than as a group. Nancy Carnevale refers to the example of pop star Louis Prima to demonstrate how integration required Italians to limit ethnic expressions in popular culture to those stereotypes held by the American public, a conclusion also echoed by Gerstle. See Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 264-66 and Carnevale, *A New Language*, 177-78.

54Kraut, *Silent Travelers*; Shah, *Contagious Divides*; Molina, *Fit to be Citizens*. 

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York and Philadelphia, respectively, scrutinized local Italian communities as the culprits for spreading disease. In the case of Philadelphia’s typhoid outbreak, a disease that appeared to be brought from Italy by immigrants found its way into more prosperous, white neighborhoods through the food sold by Italian farmworkers in urban markets. The health campaigns that followed in each city condemned Italian hygiene, housekeeping, and childrearing habits. In New York, pamphlets instructing Italian housewives on how to care for children and keep house, as well as home nurse visits that often preceded the quarantine of entire families, fostered resentment and resistance to adopting the “enlightened” practices public health boards and local governments advised. While some considered the hygienic shortcomings of the slums the result of immigrants’ lack of knowledge or the reprehensible negligence on the part of the local Board of Health, both of which could be positively addressed, the municipal policies that were enacted projected a message to the public that the latest waves of newcomers were unfit for life in the America, either as a matter of biology or a refusal to adopt “American” values.55

Multi-Cultural Consumers: Anglo-Americans, Ethnic Food, and Tourism

Public health policies that stigmatized immigrant eating habits did not dissuade all white, middle-class Americans from trying immigrant foods, including macaroni. The perception of danger in urban slums where immigrants lived and consequently the food they prepared, heightened the sense of “safe” danger that

55 Kraut, “‘That is the American Way. And in America You Should Do as Americans Do’: Italian Customs, American Standards,” in Silent Travelers, 105-134.
city touring offered. However, the context in which consumption took place, urban tourism, precluded acts of cultural curiosity from evolving into gestures of cultural understanding or civic egalitarianism.

While a small, but growing, number of Americans were familiar with Italian food at the beginning of the twentieth century, it would be an exaggeration to claim that the trend was fostered by or encouraged the assimilation of immigrants. Historians of the early popularity of ethnic food link their studies to narratives of colonialism and tourism where the consumption of foreign food by white, middle-class Americans served to reinforce rather than dismantle racial and ethnic hierarchies. Middle class women in the US participated in a national imperial agenda in which racial difference naturalized American domination in the Americas and Pacific and domestic policies towards immigrants, observes Kristin Hoganson, by making the home a center of cosmopolitan consumption. By bringing foreign foods and styles into the home and selectively encouraging immigrants to express themselves through their foods and crafts, American women asserted the superiority of American culture as the recipient and curator of the world’s cultural bounty. Much like their more xenophobic counterparts who bemoaned the “pollution” of America by recent immigrants, they believed in the superiority of American civilization.56

Studies about the American acceptance of foreign food through tourism have focused on urban spaces where the ethnic restaurant was a focus of middle-class tourism. Here, too, Americans appropriated ethnic expression in

56 See Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium.*
ways that reproduced ethnic and racial disparities. Defined by tourism historian Catherine Cocks, “ethnic slumming” was a largely middle-class form of domestic tourism popular between 1890 and the 1910s in which visitors ventured into immigrant enclaves where they witnessed “urban social divisions as evidence of unchanging and unthreatening cultural differences.” Because these experiences were enjoyed as a tourist, largely steered by means of a guidebook or tour operator, the result was a “temporary, stylized quality of the contact between tourists and the peoples on display.” This meant cultural differences, including food and souvenirs, but also race and culture, could be enjoyed as commodities. The commercial nature of the tourist experience that included eating at ethnic restaurants juxtaposed the consumer and consumed, codifying racial and ethnic divisions.57

Nor did “bohemians,” considered to be on the culinary vanguard in the late nineteenth century by eating in ethnic restaurants, challenge social conventions. Instead, the young artists and writers, once defined according to a 1868 journalist by a shared “‘freedom from all conventional restraints’,” were indistinguishable from middle-class tourists who visited city ethnic enclaves in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.58 As more Americans self-identified as “bohemian” and as the title was increasingly associated with a cosmopolitan taste in food, the difference between the middle-class urban sightseer and bohemian seemed to fade. Addressing the San Francisco tourist in 1914, the self-declared “bohemian"

57 Cocks, Doing the Town, 174-76, 200.
58 Rast, "Tourist Town."
and guidebook writer of *Bohemian San Francisco*, Clarence Edwords, advised visitors to seek “distinctively Italian” food in the Latin Quarter. There they would find restaurants like Sanguinetti’s where one might observe interracial conviviality and chaotic celebration among Italian factory and cannery workers after a long week of work.\(^{59}\) At an eatery like Sanguinetti’s one would surely find Spaghetti Italienne, described in a cookbook published by a San Francisco newspaper as the equivalent of a bohemian litmus test. “An intense love of this dish is one of the necessary ingredients that go to make up a regular Bohemian; it is almost as necessary as dislike for work,” added the editor with a pinch of sarcasm.\(^{60}\) The cosmopolitan restaurant scene in New York was also described by observers as local centers of bohemian life. Writers regarded an interest in foreign food as a defining characteristic of what it meant to be bohemian; this was also, consequently, a quality that described many urban travelers in the 1910s.\(^{61}\) Cosmopolitan eating, even as a bohemian affectation, was a tourist experience.

Through the lens of tourism, foreign foods were a prominent commodity of ethnic difference. While tourism and assumptions of imperial privilege invited consumers to try novel foods, it did so without challenging ethnic stereotypes prevalent in the popular press. Indeed, for urban tourism in particular, the “danger” associated with immigrant groups and their cooking could heighten the

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\(^{61}\) For discussions about “bohemianism,” middle-class urban tourism, and the role of ethnic dining in each, especially in New York and San Francisco, see Haley, *Turning the Tables*, 115; Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 99-101; Cocks, *Doing the Town*, 201.
attraction. In the context of growing interest in foreign food at the beginning of the twentieth century, Americans were more familiar with pasta as an Italian food and likely ate more of it than generations before them had. However, the growing interest was not an indication that the food was on its way to becoming an American staple.

Despite most Anglo-Americans’ reservations about Italians and their food, middle-class American consumers embraced industrially-produced, domestic pasta with increasing enthusiasm by 1930. Their attitude towards pasta had little to do with an acceptance of Italians themselves. Instead, the food’s consumption by Americans represented the assertion of American exceptionalism and culinary principles that conflicted with those of immigrants. The complementary efforts of government officials, home economists and, most importantly, manufacturers and advertisers, brought values of science to bear on American-made pasta by emphasizing hygiene and nutrition. Anglo-Americans’ changing uses for macaroni between 1890 and 1930 in community cookbooks indicate how the joint efforts of professionals and businesses shaped discourses about the Italian food’s culinary applications, making it more flexible and ultimately disconnected from any singular cultural association.

The establishment of a domestic pasta industry between 1900 and 1930 alone did not itself normalize pasta in American diets, but its leaders, government professionals, and home economists taught consumers to think of pasta as part of a progressive diet. Through branding, packaging and advertising, manufacturers and professional advertisers brought ideas about nutrition and
hygiene to bear on macaroni while simultaneously defining the American industry against its foreign competition. Cooperative promotional campaigns and individual manufacturers’ efforts used the new marketplace tools to influence popular understanding.

**Turn-of-the-Century Household Commodities Marketing**

The more successful producers relied on advertising firms like N. W. Ayer & Son and the J. Walter Thompson Company (JWT), organizations that specialized in selling staple commodities through sophisticated marketing strategies. Just ten years after its founding in 1869, the Ayer ad agency conducted the first marketing survey comparing data on crop production and newspaper circulation for a client who manufactured agricultural equipment. The research services offered by the agency marked a new role for the company, and soon many others in the industry. Between the 1880s and 1890s, Ayer and other large agencies shifted from selling space to advertisers on behalf of publishers to working directly for businesses and assuming responsibility for devising and organizing marketing campaigns. Ayer, a full-service agency by the turn-of-the-century and credited with bringing science to advertising, concentrated its efforts on contracts with establishments sustaining national distribution.62

The slightly younger rival of N. W. Ayer & Son, JWT, also made much of its

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extensive research techniques to successfully increase consumption of household goods. Its strategies drew on the results of door-to-door surveys and consumer panels to divide consumers according to income, the value of their homes, tastes, and whether they rented or had domestic help. These data provided insights that influenced the wording and placement of ads, as well as packaging design. A partner since 1908 and later co-owner of the firm, Stanley Resor, touted his own Ivy League background and the academic credentials of staff members to emphasize the professional acumen guiding Thompson methods. The success of their strategies and their adoption by other agencies helped to establish consumer research, branding, packaging, and advertising as forces that ensured the dominance of national brands in the consumer economy of the early twentieth century. JWT prided itself on leading the industry in innovative approaches to better understand and sell to consumers.

Both companies, however, staked the reputation of their respective agencies and of advertising generally on the “science” behind their methods and relied on selling household commodities. Ayer methods, combined with a refusal to advertise alcohol after 1899 and most patent medicines after 1900, earned the company an industrywide reputation of being eminently trustworthy, if, as

63 The JWT website and logo dates the beginning of the company to 1864 when J. Walter Thompson’s future employer, Carlton & Smith, opened its doors. The ad agency that would give James Walter Thompson his start and he would later buy it out and rename it J. Walter Thompson Company in 1878. I have chosen the later year as the founding date of the agency because it marks the year Thompson took control. See https://www.jwt.com/history/ and De Grazia, Irresistible Empire, 234-35.


65 De Grazia, Irresistible Empire, 236
contemporaries might argue, excessively conservative. To make up for the considerable loss of business (in the 1870s, patent medicines had accounted for twenty-five percent of all the agency's advertisements), the agency pursued contracts for selling common household goods, like soap and sugar. By the time the Ayer agency ventured into selling macaroni, food accounts were its top source of revenue.

As in the case of N. W. Ayer & Son, many of the national brands Thompson promoted were staple, low-cost commodities that included cosmetics and food products. The common knowledge amongst ad men, though likely exaggerated, was that eighty-five percent of all purchasing decisions were made by women. To study and sell to this key demographic, Thompson created a Women's Editorial Department under the direction of co-owner Helen Resor that was staffed by women, many college-educated, who put their feminine point of view to work for the agency, selling small, relatively inexpensive products to “the average woman.” The goods sold by the department would become the agency's bread and butter and accounted for nearly sixty percent of the company's profits in 1918.

The women who ran the J. Walter Thompson Women's Editorial


67 Ibid., 94, 211; food products would remain the largest single source of revenue from 1900 until the late 1920s when tobacco and automotive products pushed them to third place.

68 McGovern, Sold American, 40n78.

Department, like their male counterparts elsewhere in the agency and in others, were overwhelmingly, if not all, white, native-born, and middle and upper class. Despite the unusual presence of women in creative posts at Thompson, the method and message of copy they produced was in line with that of the wider industry that presumed consumers, in other words women, responded best to suggestion and emotion, rather than reason. Even ads that appeared to appeal to women's logical capacities, were careful to mix emotional appeals with facts, a simple argument, and no nuance. According to a study of ads placed in the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1914 and 1924, advertising historian Jennifer Scanlon identifies the sales methods aimed at the female readership. Besides repetition of brand name and emphasis of repeated use, copywriters presented products as solutions to subjective, human problems. The message of the *Journal*'s ads, Scanlon observes, was that "household products would ensure social progress, facial soaps would solve loneliness, and breakfast foods would solidify family relationships." “Reason-why” advertising structured rather than discredited the emotional appeal. Copywriting techniques for household products played out the perceived contrast in intelligence and taste that separated ad men from the masses of consuming women.

Most Italian immigrants, including those most likely involved in the production and consumption of macaroni, did not enjoy the greatest influence on

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71 Ibid, 40.
how Americans understood its qualities and uses. Government officials concerned with the twinned objectives of ensuring the success of the western agricultural economy with durum wheat and the adequate, affordable alimentation of Americans were doubly motivated to convince Americans to eat more macaroni. Popular cookbook writers at the turn of the century, hailing from New England or Mid-Atlantic metropolitan centers, echoed their claims. Large advertising firms, such as N. W. Ayer & Son and the J. Walter Thompson Company, whose success was dependent on pushing branded household goods, also situated macaroni in advice about scientific housekeeping. Those best positioned to influence general public opinion about pasta were not the primary consumers, sellers or producers of pasta in the US, but those recognized in native-born, Anglo-American circles for their professional authority in science, government, and in understanding the consumer marketplace.

In this sense, the most influential manufacturers of pasta, including those who took advantage of the selling strategies of Ayer and Thompson, were not Italian immigrants or of Italian decent. Leadership of the industry’s national trade organization, the National Macaroni Manufacturers Association (NMMA; founded in 1903), was dominated by non-Italian producers. In total, however, membership in the NMMA, which nevertheless included many producers of Italian background, represented a mere six percent of the entire American pasta industry in the late 1910s. As the organization’s leaders carried out their mission of promoting macaroni in the American market through cooperative advertising and pressuring government officials to pass laws in support of the industry, they

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also set the tone for the marketing strategies of national macaroni brands despite
their relatively small numbers.\textsuperscript{74} The organization’s officers who had no apparent
Italian links included many of the industry’s most active advertisers of exclusively
branded and packaged products.\textsuperscript{75} Italian pastamakers producing in the US
undoubtedly benefited in some ways from the promotional efforts of their largely
non-Italian counterparts to attract American consumers, but the non-Italians held
greater influence over the methods and message of the industry.

The USDA and “Macaroni Wheat”

The transformation of pasta from an ethnic food to a fixture in American
homes began on the Great Plains, far from the Italian communities in the urban
centers of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, or San Francisco. There, the
founding objective of the US Department of Agriculture to “ensure a sufficient
and reliable food supply” depended on the land’s sustained \textit{settlement} and
\textit{profitability}.\textsuperscript{76} As far as the USDA was concerned, convincing Americans to
consume pasta—and with it, wheat—would help to make the dry swaths of land
west of the Missouri and east of Montana profitable agricultural land. For current
and would-be macaroni manufacturers, cultivating a market for the food amongst
native-born Americans was an attractive venture with the promise of cheap, raw

\textsuperscript{74} The official title of the trade organization evolved since its 1903 founding. Titles used by
members and other contemporaries also vary. For the sake of clarity and consistency, I refer to
the trade organization as the National Macaroni Manufacturers Association from its beginning
through the 1950s.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Tariff Schedules. Vol. 3: Schedules D, E, F, G, and H, Before the Committee on Ways and
Means, 62\textsuperscript{nd}-63\textsuperscript{rd} Cong. 1704-8 (1913) (statement by B. R. Jacobs, Washington, representing the
NMMA and the Alimentary Pastes Manufacturers Association); “List of Subscriptions,” \textit{New
Macaroni Journal} 1, no. 2 (June 1919): 15-16; Cinotto, \textit{Italian American Table}, 50-51.

\textsuperscript{76} Quoted in Marion Nestle, \textit{Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health}
Between 1875 and 1900 when the first agriculture experiment station opened in Connecticut under the direction of the Department of Agriculture with the aim to identify false fertilizers, the objective of the department and its regional laboratories and associated colleges had evolved to address matters of public health and food security. The Hatch Act of 1887 made scientific research into farm products as important as increasing farming acreage to the goals of the USDA. A chemist with an interest in human nutrition, Wilber Atwater, headed the network of institutions and outlined objectives that reflected convictions formed during his time researching in Europe. Americans, he determined, ate a nutritionally inefficient and economically wasteful diet compared to their European counterparts and should seek out more and cheaper forms of protein, as opposed to carbohydrates. Atwater’s conclusions that the poor could survive on low-cost food responded to recent concerns of government officials about the growing ranks of urban poor and their threat to public health.

Durum wheat promised to satisfy Atwater’s search for an affordable, protein-rich food, but also the need to encourage agricultural production. In the case of the Great Plains, there were obvious economic benefits to the USDA’s apparent altruistic motives to help ensure the health of the masses. As food writer Marion Nestle explains, the policies of the USDA to address issues of

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proper nutrition were heavily influenced by matters of profit.\textsuperscript{79} On the Great Plains, agricultural yields had proved uncertain since the late 1880s, thus jeopardizing not only national food security, but the regional economy.

Farming between the 98th and 100th parallels in states extending south from North and South Dakota, and from Montana to Texas, enjoyed a brief, but promising, decade of prosperity beginning in the late 1870s. The one hundred to one hundred and fifty-mile wide swath of land had been referred to as the “American Desert” until the 1870s when a series of unusually wet seasons temporarily made the region hospitable to farming techniques practiced in wetter, eastern regions. In some areas, summer rains were double normal levels.\textsuperscript{80} Years of unusually high rainfall convinced settlers to establish their homesteads on what had been considered forbiddingly dry land. There they cultivated the soft wheat that thrived in relatively wet climates and renamed the area the “Garden” of America.\textsuperscript{81} After a handful of prosperous years, dry weather patterns returned in 1888 and devastated farms. Homesteaders responded by turning to other, less profitable, forms of agriculture, such as cattle and sheep raising. However, low rainfall undercut the profitability of livestock further. Other settlers left entirely.\textsuperscript{82} Faced with the prospect of a reversal in the tide of American settlement of

\textsuperscript{79} For a critical assessment of the relationship between the food industry and government food policy, see Nestle, *Food Politics*.


\textsuperscript{82} White, “It’s Your Misfortune,” 230.
western lands and their economic viability, USDA researchers worked to find a crop less dependent on rain.

The agricultural research stations and the Department of Agriculture bureaus took into account the regional climates of the Great Plains in their search for a wheat variety that would prove profitable. Even in the best years, subregional weather patterns meant that rainfall was neither abundant nor evenly distributed, revealing a variable landscape that would complicate the USDA's future efforts to find wheat varieties that would thrive its microclimates.\(^{83}\)

Soft wheat (used in baked goods) typically filled silos *outside* of the Great Plains where rainfall was relatively plentiful and dependable, such as Ohio and Illinois. Unfortunately, when the weather pattern of low rainfall returned to the Great Plains in 1888, it yielded poor harvests of soft wheat. In response, the USDA and associated experiment stations and universities conducted research to identify and introduce different crops in order to secure the industry against such shortages.\(^{84}\)

For the assistant head of cereal research at the agricultural research station in South Dakota, Mark Carleton, the answer was durum wheat, a crop that grew well in dryer climates. Coarsely milled, the protein-rich wheat became “semolina,” ready to be worked with water to form macaroni. It contrasted favorably with soft wheat which typically produced unappetizing pasta that


dissolved during cooking.

Under Carleton’s direction, researchers identified hard wheat varieties from Italy, southern Argentina, Algeria, and France, but the most promising wheat Carleton found in Russia in 1900 where durum wheat cultivation was a success in arid environments similar to the dryer areas of the Great Plains. Durum’s apparent similarities to its profitable, soft wheat cousin made it an obvious crop to investigate. Experiment stations began testing Russian varieties of the wheat in 1901. With durum, the crop scientists argued, farmers could follow largely the same cultivation techniques they were already familiar with for the soft, spring wheat. And, like soft wheat, it would presumably also bring higher prices on the market than corn and complement the bread-based diets of Europeans and EuroAmericans.

However, it was not durum’s drought-resistance that won farmers over, but its ability to resist disease. Periodic scourges of rust, an airborne, fungal disease, devastated farmers’ crops and reduced yields at least as much as lack of water. Early experiments demonstrating durum’s high yields using familiar cultivation techniques convinced some farmers to give it a try. The results were positive, but not enough to convince growers to switch entirely to the new grain. Few millers would purchase the hard wheat, and most farmers grew durum alongside less hardy, older varieties of softer wheat that enjoyed a surer market.

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rainfall patterns in the Plains that continued to favor some areas during certain months with more rain seemed to support farmers' incomplete conversion to the new varieties.

Resistance to the "macaroni wheat" crumbled in 1904 when a blight of rust left farmers with stark evidence that durum was, in fact, a safer bet. That year the fungal disease wiped out the old varieties of wheat while its durum neighbor pulled through. Despite its poor demand, farmers turned their fields over to durum as a rust-resister, that, fortunately, did not require much water. 88

Maintaining high yields in the face of poor precipitation and blight guided the choices of farmers and agricultural researchers toward durum. What then to do with the resulting grain was a separate and secondary challenge. A map of durum wheat cultivation on the Great Plains revealed the uneasy relationship between the priorities of growing and marketing the crop. Far from consisting of a uniform climate, the Great Plains was divided between areas of relative low and high levels of rainfall and extremes in seasonal temperatures and altitude. These variables combined to create combinations of conditions that made certain areas suitable for one variety of durum and not for another. For example, the durum wheat Peliss offered high yields in the less high and dry areas of eastern Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana, while some North and South Dakota farmers preferred the Acme strain. 89 By 1906 American farmers from the Dakotas to Texas had planted three million acres of the Russian grain and sent twenty

88 De Kruif, Hunger Fighters, 23.
million bushels to millers.\footnote{US Department of Agriculture, “Review of Production: Durum Wheat,” 9-10.} However, without a market for American semolina, the cultivation of an American durum crop would fast build up a surplus and undermine the very profitability of farming in arid northwest states that the experiment stations and the USDA worked to ensure.

Faced with durum overproduction, USDA researchers considered multiple options to make the case that conversion to the new wheat would pay. Officials concurred with Carleton by encouraging the use of durum in the manufacture of macaroni, being the “first and most obvious” application. Carleton indicated in 1904 that this was a strategic choice to establish the crop’s commercial viability when the production was just starting, but that durum for bread was the real goal if the crop was to succeed in the American market and European countries already acquainted with durum bread.\footnote{Mark Alfred Carleton and Joseph Scudder Chamberlain, \textit{The commercial status of durum wheat}, US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, Bulletin No. 70 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1904), 13.}

Contrary to Carleton’s and the USDA’s hopes, the prospect of finding a profitable market for the short term seemed unlikely. After initial enthusiasm between 1900 and 1904, farmers remained unconvinced that durum was the answer to their crisis even as the USDA and Carleton personally continued to push its cultivation. Lack of interest in the pasta wheat set off a chain reaction of resistance to durum. Weak consumer demand for durum food products discouraged millers from investing in the new machinery necessary to process durum because; the “bastard wheat” was too hard for their existing equipment to
grind.\textsuperscript{92} Even with the new machinery, the resulting product, semolina, yielded less flour per volume of raw grain than soft wheat.\textsuperscript{93} Scientists from the Department of Agriculture tried to convince millers that the superiority of the end product compared to conventional flour compensated for any decrease in volume, but this argument depended on a ready demand for American semolina, that seemed anything but sure, at home or abroad. Even though durum was relatively easy to grow, it was a hard sell.

USDA officials and American consular representatives urged exportation to pasta-making countries as a way to move surplus production of the durum crop. In 1905, European countries imported nearly half of the entire American crop (about ten million bushels) and a further twenty million in 1906.\textsuperscript{94} However, the patchwork of durum wheat varieties that grew on the Great Plains sacrificed the characteristics of wheat good for making macaroni to those able to withstand rust. Research aimed at high yields instead of quality put the immediate interests of farmers against would-be importers. The harder and more prolific the wheat, the poorer quality macaroni it made. As a result, pasta made from American wheat acquired a reputation for producing gray or light-colored macaroni that dissolved during cooking. According to the largest importers, France and Italy, American wheat was second rate compared to durum from their preferred sources in Algeria and Russia. This rendered the export market for American

\textsuperscript{92} De Kruif, \textit{Hunger Fighters}, 21.


\textsuperscript{94} US Department of Agriculture, “Review of Production: Durum Wheat,” 10.
semolina unreliable: only a poor harvest in Russia could induce European
macaroni manufacturers to seek out lesser American products.\footnote{“New Market for Durum,” The Minneapolis Journal, October 17, 1906, 14, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov (Sn 83045366).} Although its
cheaper prices gained American semolina a competitive edge, the low returns

To prop up the weak durum market, government officials eyed another
outlet, the baking industry, that enjoyed a sure and existing domestic market.
Experts expressed doubt that durum bread would sell among American
consumers, despite Carleton’s insistence. He claimed that the best bread he
tasted had been in Russia and made with durum. To promote his findings and to
establish a public consensus about durum, Carleton organized a taste test. He
mailed questionnaires with pairs of loaves, one made from conventional bread
flour, and another from durum wheat flour, to two hundred bakers, millers, flour
inspectors, chemists, and domestic science teachers.

Durum as bread was not a runaway success. A strong majority of
domestic scientists preferred the durum loaf over the conventional bread, but
millers and bakers, whose livelihoods depended on selling to a consumer market,
voted for the standard loaf. They conceded that the loaves made with durum
seemed “very palatable and nutritious,” but that they felt traditional loaves of soft
wheat were still the more marketable, if only for their lighter color, texture, and
relatively larger size.\textsuperscript{97} Further studies found that pure durum wheat flour produced sticky dough that was difficult to work while consumers disliked the yellow color and sweeter taste of durum bread.\textsuperscript{98} The USDA recommended blending durum flours with conventional varieties, a practice that would remain a significant outlet for American durum production, but not as important as the macaroni industry that would be credited with helping to shore up the price of durum.\textsuperscript{99}

Meanwhile, the demand for American macaroni at home remained feeble. When it came to native-born Americans, the USDA’s Carleton, was convinced ordinary people did not eat much macaroni because they did not know how to prepare it. Moreover, when Americans attempted to, they used imported varieties, which was of no use from the government agency’s standpoint.\textsuperscript{100} Carleton’s colleague, James Shepard, optimistically concluded that “a little time and some education” on the part of American housewives was all that was needed to cultivate a domestic market for durum wheat.

**Early Nutritional Science, Home Economists, and the USDA: Feeding the Poor**

For his bread survey, Carleton approached twenty home economists, a

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\textsuperscript{100} Carleton and Chamberlain, *The commercial status of durum wheat*, 21, 67-68; Clark and Martin, “The Durum Wheats,” 3.
choice that reflected the scientific and social priorities of the USDA and drew on the department’s earlier, fruitful collaboration with chemist and expert in food adulteration Ellen Richards and her colleagues. Richards’ initial interest in food purity grew to include the ways food nourished the body through its different components and, like Atwater, she believed the poor in America could enjoy better health through a scientifically-informed approach to food. Atwater and Richards became acquainted through a mutual friend and businessman, Edward Atkinson, who also hoped to teach American workers thrift in food consumption. After Atwater took control of the scientific research of the USDA and made nutritional studies a primary focus, he collaborated with Richards by supplying research data that Richards and her assistants used to create recipes and informational pamphlets, an important outlet for conveying scientific principles to the masses.  

Richards was part of a larger network of professionals who aimed to apply the insights of science to American housekeeping. These “domestic scientists” included settlement house workers, public school administrators, representatives from government and city commissions, as well as those politically active in the women’s suffrage movement and temperance efforts, who shared a progressive agenda. Many, including Richards, had come to the field of what would become Home Economics through their work in the 1880 and


1890s with working-class and largely foreign-born families to teach the principles of sanitary science in housekeeping and how to prepare meals that accommodated the tight budgets of urban workers. In these ways, domestic scientists hoped to smooth the transition of immigrants to American life, which in their case often meant living in city slums and on low wages from physically demanding work. The group conferred at annual meetings beginning in 1899 in Lake Placid, New York, and in 1906 Richards articulated what had become their collective goals, “the ideal home life unhampered by the traditions of the past. The utilization of all the resources of modern science to improve the home life’.”

In 1908, the founding of the Home Economics Association (HEA) marked a key step in the professional identification of members, largely women, who aimed to use science in the name of social progress, as well as a re-naming of their roles as “home economists.” Under Richards’ leadership and the cooperation of fellow home economists, the HEA disseminated the principles of rational housekeeping by designing curricula, teaching, and writing instructive literature, including cookbooks, for a general audience. Richards and her peers made the home the ultimate target of their progressive educational agenda in the belief that it was the best place to influence the lives of the country’s new citizens.

When Carleton reached out to prominent home economists to assess the merits of durum bread in 1904, the collaborative relationship between them and the USDA was already established and would continue to strengthen. This was

103 Ellen Richards, quoted in Strasser, Never Done, 210.

104 Goldstein, Creating Consumers, 23.
due in part to the shifting emphasis of home economists themselves. While many had begun their work in spreading the science of housekeeping as a way to uplift the poor, by 1900 they also were beginning to bring their message to middle-class women. The emphasis with regard to middle- and upper-class Americans was not how to make-do, notes home economics historian Carolyn Goldstein. Instead, it was how to be a rational consumer in an economy dominated by branded and packaged goods of distant manufacturers and where misleading advertising and adulterated food threatened to turn consumer abundance into a trap. Home economists praised “labor-saving” products and habits that improved home “efficiency,” assessing domestic life according to the values of business. In their emphasis on rational consumption, home economists expanded cooking schools for middle- and upper-class women and their servants, published cookbooks, and, in the mid-1910s, created educational opportunities for women at land grant colleges with the support of the USDA.

During World War I, the US Food Administration also enlisted the assistance of home economists in reaching out on a national level to American homemakers to encourage voluntary conservation. In recognition of the ways home economists effectively translated the findings of government scientists on behalf of federal policies during wartime, the USDA established the Bureau of Home Economics in 1923 to institutionalize their mediating role, this time by encouraging greater

105 Ibid., 2-3
106 Strassser, *Never Done*, 203.
107 Ibid., 203-206.
consumption of surplus farm products by Americans and the modernization of rural homes through rational housekeeping.\textsuperscript{108}

Home economists played an increasingly important role for the USDA in their ability to reach out to middle- and upper-class women as consumers, so it is no surprise that Carleton included domestic scientists and cooking school administrators in his 1904 taste test of durum bread.\textsuperscript{109} Two of the respondents were among the most prominent in their field, as educators and cookbook-writers, Fannie Merritt Farmer of the Boston Cooking School and Sarah Tyson Rorer of the Philadelphia Cooking School.\textsuperscript{110} Through their popular recipe books, Farmer and Rorer had become well-known figures in efforts to apply scientific knowledge to housework, particularly in the kitchen. Farmer, Rorer, and other women who aspired to elevate housework to a profession also aimed to claim a prestige usually reserved for masculine work, while not challenging norms that limited women’s sphere to the home.\textsuperscript{111} These home economists collaborated with and borrowed from male professionals, such as food chemists at the USDA and increasingly food manufacturers in the 1920s who also valued the connection domestic scientists had with consumers.\textsuperscript{112} By embracing their role as consumer liaisons, home economists further inserted themselves in commerce

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{108} Goldstein, \textit{Creating Consumers}, 46-58, 65, 92.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Strassser, \textit{Never Done}, 206.
\item \textsuperscript{110} De Kruif, \textit{Hunger Fighters}, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Laura Shapiro, \textit{Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century} (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), 45.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Goldstein, \textit{Creating Consumers}, 191.
\end{enumerate}
and science, areas from which women were normally excluded.

Domestic scientists’ work complemented that of government officials in food-related matters, helping to publicize a scientific understanding of eating that appealed to middle- and upper-class consumers. Through charitable social work among a largely immigrant poor, the campaign for the Pure Food Act and widely published cookbooks, home economists drew on the expertise of government scientists while establishing themselves as authorities on food. The discourse of scientific eating they disseminated established the language that American manufacturers used to concurrently vilify macaroni’s Italian associations and welcome the food as a staple of a progressive, American diet.

The imperative to instruct Americans in their eating habits was not just the ambitious rhetoric of mid-western cereal researchers like Carleton and Shepard. At the turn of the century, fears that an inadequately fed urban poor threatened social, economic, and political harmony motivated government officials and home economists to encourage a scientific understanding of food by Americans and their immigrant neighbors. Scientific eating was an emphasis on the chemistry of eating, on the one hand sorting out what components and preparation techniques benefited the body most and, on the other, understanding the potential of food to convey nefarious microscopic organisms between food workers, distributors, and consumers. Nutritional studies revealed that diet deficiencies compromised health in poor and financially secure homes while germ theory blamed food handling and preparation for the spread of diseases that haunted urban centers. Science simultaneously exposed the intimate relationship of everyone linked by
modern food chains while encouraging dispassionate, rational food consumption
for fuel, as opposed to pleasure.

Macaroni for the Poor and Middle Class: A Cheap Eat and a Wise Buy

Home economists’ dual aims of assimilating the nation’s immigrant poor
and teaching rational consumption to middle-class consumers converged on the
subject of pasta. Concerns over the cleanliness of the product, usually produced
in Italy or domestic slums and sold in bulk competed with and, according to some
social workers, overrode the positive, nutritional attributes of pasta. Those who
judged Italian immigrants on the basis of American standards of cleanliness and
scientific eating found fault in their consumption of large amounts of pasta.
Widely publicized accounts of Italians that connected poor hygiene and macaroni
reinforced the image of immigrant pasta-eaters as those who resisted pressure to
adopt American habits. However, scientific eating also offered an attractive
ing language with which to sell macaroni to American consumers. What separated
pasta as representative of the problematic eating habits of Italian immigrants
from an example of progressive eating recommended to middle-class consumers
was that the latter was sold in packages, branded, and made in sanitary
American factories.

From a nutritional standpoint, government officials and home economists
agreed that pasta was an economical food. In his pioneering 1895 work
comparing the value of various foods, USDA food chemist Atwater favorably
compared macaroni to bread, the foundation of American diets. Atwater was able
to compare the foods by quantifying the amount of calories and other food
components they contained. Calories were the numerical expression of energy, either contained in food or required by the human body to perform various tasks. Atwater began research into food as fuel under the guidance of chemists and physiologists in Munich and Paris in the 1880s. Back in the US, government and business leaders were receptive to Atwater’s findings and supported over five hundred studies by nutritionists in which they calculated the human energy requirements of laborers in Chinese railroad camps, prisons, slums, boarding houses, and schools. The groundbreaking insight of studies by Atwater and fellow researchers was not necessarily how much food was needed to sustain a railroad worker for a day. Instead, they pointed to the way translating a food’s value into energy (calories) permitted one, in this case policymakers and business leaders, to make broad comparisons between diverse populations. Food policy historian Nick Cullather observes how “the calorie represented food as uniform, composed of interchangeable parts, and comparable across time and between nations and races.”

Atwater’s food comparisons went beyond calories to include food components, including protein, fats, water, and carbohydrates. Like his German colleagues, Atwater believed protein-rich foods were more beneficial than others, especially for workers. In explaining his findings to Congress, Atwater described the hierarchy, despite the fact that all imparted energy to the body: “The protein compounds can do the work of the carbohydrates and fats in being consumed for


114 Ibid., 18.
fuel, but the carbohydrates and fats can not do the work of protein in building and repairing the tissues of the body." Atwater conceded that minerals also factored into the body’s ability to restore tissue, but protein, he pointed out, in additional to calories, remained a key measure of a food’s value.\textsuperscript{115} The nutritionists' conclusion for the USDA was that cheap products rich in proteins like grain, meat, and dairy were superior to fish, fruits, or vegetables.\textsuperscript{116}

When measured by Atwater’s standards, foods made from durum semolina were exceptional. By separating out the proportion of proteins, carbohydrates, fat, and water in a list of common foods, Atwater clearly juxtaposed the semolina-derived food to conventional, flour-based foods. His analysis indicated that the body utilized protein from macaroni more efficiently than that from other bread flours. Atwater tested the degree of nutrient absorption for different foods, showing that the body used eighty-five percent of pasta’s protein, the same proportion as expensive, refined bread flour. The body digested other flours less efficiently with medium- and course-ground bread flours at absorption rates of eighty-one and seventy-five percent respectively. This explained why the Italian peasants referred to in his study enjoyed an adequate, albeit vegetarian diet. Atwater’s conclusion drew on revelations about the body’s


\textsuperscript{116} Cullather, \textit{Hungry World}, 18; between 1907 and 1916, further research by USDA chemists identified additional important components in food necessary for an adequate diet, including the minerals iron, phosphorous, and calcium and the vitamins B and A. These findings countered Atwater’s earlier dismissal of fruits and vegetables as nutritionally, and therefore economically, wasteful foods. For a history of the early evolution of nutritional science in the US, see Richard Osborn Cummings, “The Concept of ‘Scientific’ Eating,” in \textit{The American and His Food: A History of Food Habits in the United States}, 122-38 (Chicago: University of of Chicago Press, 1941).
ability to derive energy from economical foods to state that adequate nutrition, even for protein-hungry Americans, need not be prohibitively expensive. 117

In this way, a scientific approach to eating offered a conservative solution to urban poverty. Social workers and nutritionists such as Atwater, Richards, and their followers believed that altering diets to be more efficient and economical was the key to sustaining a peaceable industrial workforce squeezed by a rising cost of living. Instead of demanding higher wages, reformers and scientists admonished, workers needed to embrace standards of science and economy. 118

For social workers, changing how the foreign-born ate could not only reduce living expenses but also usher them more fully into American life by leaving behind Old-World habits. Following his study of the physical traits of the urban poor in New York, the anthropologist Franz Boas concluded that assimilation depended on the physical transformation of immigrants, in part, he surmised, through food. 119 The connection between food and assimilation alluded to by Boas and Atwater’s conclusions about the affordability of a sufficient diet came together in the efforts of reformers in urban immigrant communities. At settlement houses and kitchen clinics, such as Hull House in Chicago and Ellen Richards’ Boston-based New England Kitchen, reformers trained in home economics taught immigrants the principles of “American” cooking that was

117 Atwater, Economy of Food, 70.

118 Aaron Bobrow-Strain, White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf (Boston: Beacon, 2012), 34-37; Cullather, Hungry World, 16; Strasser, Never Done, 212.

hygienic and nutritious. 120

At least one social worker, Jewish midwife Emma Goldman, who worked with immigrant women in New York, criticized reformers’ focus on food as superficial and largely ineffectual in assuring their well-being. Educating immigrants to eat like Americans, she remarked, was as transformative as instructing the poor in table manners. 121 Also a radical feminist and anarchist who compared marriage to prostitution, Goldman did not share the conservative convictions of most reformers who stood by their narrowly-focused approach to immigrant uplift. For the latter, rational diets was a way to ease financial hardship among industrial workers, as opposed to, for example, demanding higher wages for workers or protecting their right to organize. 122 Immigrants who resisted their recommendations willingly accepted lives of poverty and ill health, they inferred. Such resignation confirmed in the eyes of their native-born teachers that some


121 Ibid., 89.

122 Much work as been done to explore the role of consumption in struggles for workers’ rights; historians Lawrence Glickman and Nan Enstad have argued that consumption habits were a divisive topic, creating friction between races, ethnicities, the rank-and-file, and labor organizers. According to Glickman, ethnic groups that survived on low wages or blacks accused of spending indiscriminately were condemned by (male) white, native-born labor leaders who argued for higher wages to support an “American Standard of Living” that would uphold the interests of the entire economy. Female garment workers in Enstad’s study also faced criticism from labor organizers for their embrace of consumer culture. They feared that picketers who appeared in fashionable albeit cheap clothing, undermined the credibility of claims that they required better wages. Enstad’s work also points to the ways consumer culture engendered solidarity amongst ethnic groups, a perspective echoed by Lizabeth Cohen who credits a shared consumer culture with paving the way for a pan-ethnic working class identity and solidarity in the 1930s. See Lawrence Glickman, A Living Wage: American Workers and the Making of Consumer Society (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), Nan Enstad, Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics in the Turn of the Twentieth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), and Cohen, Making a New Deal.
immigrants were not capable of being American citizens.\textsuperscript{123}

Based on the nutritional content of pasta, Italian immigrants' preference for the food should have pleased promoters of progressive eating. For matters of cleanliness, however, many social workers, reformers, and the general public condemned it. Pasta was one of many symbols of poor immigrant hygiene that indicated Italians' inability to assimilate.

A series of urban epidemics in the nineteenth century linked to immigrants convinced local and national officials that addressing living conditions within immigrant communities was a matter of public health. Scientific discoveries in bacteriology and germ theory beginning in the 1870s that attributed the spread of disease to hygiene informed the stigmatization by middle- and upper-class city-dwellers, as well as public officials, of entire immigrant groups whose habits were deemed unclean.\textsuperscript{124} Historians of immigration show how city governments, social workers, and public health departments used scientific findings to argue contrasting views on the potential of immigrants to be part of the larger society, politically and culturally. At times, the presence of communicable disease justified the quarantine, stigmatization, and segregation of entire immigrant communities, as in 1900 when San Francisco officials closed off Chinatown to prevent bubonic plague from spreading to other districts. The physical separation of Chinese immigrants from the rest of the city and the limitations put on their movement and livelihoods added to existing legislation barring their immigration, and evinced the

\textsuperscript{123} Bobrow-Strain, \textit{White Bread}, 37.

conviction of native-born Americans that the Chinese were racially unfit. 125

Alternatively, some used science to express the need for educating immigrants and envisioned the adoption of “American” standards of cleanliness as a key to assimilation. In settlement homes, social workers taught immigrants “the American way,” linking cleanliness to citizenship. Whether policy makers and reformers believed Asian or southern and eastern European immigrants could be assimilated, studies show they agreed that science was central to their understanding of the American way of life.126

Couched in scientific discourse about nutrition and contagion, food figured into debates about the place of immigrants in American society. A microscopic analysis of food revealed its potential to spread diseases between workers and consumers. As a whole, medical professionals were slow to embrace the new theory that attributed disease to living organisms. Individually, researchers had popularized “proof” of germs in popular magazines since the 1870s, so that by the 1890s when the medical establishment endorsed germ theory, middle- and upper-class Americans were already familiar with it. According to the theory, Americans did well to avoid food that had been unnecessarily touched, especially by producers or shopkeepers, or exposed to flies and dust. As home economists

125 For a history of the role of public health in influencing discourses of race and citizenship for Chinese in San Francisco’s Chinatown, see Shah, Contagious Divides.

126 Many studies have been written about the equation of adopting hygienic habits and Americanization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Suellen Hoy, Chasing Dirt: The American Pursuit of Cleanliness (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) and Tomes, The Gospel of Germs; equating cleanliness with citizenship could also have broad implications for immigrant groups whose practices contrasted with those prescribed by public health officials and social workers, resulting in social, cultural, as well as political, exclusion. For examples, see works by Nayan Shah on the history of Chinatown in San Francisco and Natalia Molina on the the Japanese and Mexican communities of Los Angeles; Shah, Contagious Divides and Molina, Fit to be Citizens.
warned consumers, packaged food offered the best bet to avoiding contaminated food.\textsuperscript{127}

Germ theory lent credence to accusations that Italian immigrants themselves and their eating habits were a threat to public health. Scientists studying the conditions of urban immigrant communities blamed eating habits for high mortality rates and weakness that made entire populations vulnerable to disease.\textsuperscript{128} A 1915 typhoid outbreak in Philadelphia was traced to Italians who were infected on farms outside the city and spread it among the city’s population through the produce they touched. Italians’ preference for fresh vegetables and fruit also made them more susceptible as victims and vectors of disease.\textsuperscript{129}

Existing awareness of germ theory helps to explain the public’s ready reception of alarming exposés on the unhygienic and previously undisclosed production practices by food makers. The informational campaign to garner public support for food legislation followed efforts by public health boards in the 1890s to raise awareness among city residents about contagious diseases and how they spread. Government educational literature distributed to health professionals and the general public had used bacteriology to explain the spread of dreaded diseases like tuberculosis and diphtheria.\textsuperscript{130} Germ theory invited public scrutiny of personal habits, especially in communities that seemed to

\textsuperscript{127} Tomes, \textit{Gospel of Germs}, 9, 38, 153.


\textsuperscript{129} Kraut, \textit{Silent Travelers}, 105.

suffer most from diseases. Newspaper reports in the 1890s attributed high infant mortality rates in New York slums to tenement mothers who dressed their children in the wrong clothes, fed them the wrong foods, and made no effort to keep sanitary homes.\footnote{Duffy, Sanitarians, 206-207.}

Public acceptance of germ theory, combined with a high volume of immigration from southern and eastern Europe, convinced reform-minded Americans to put pressure on city and national government to play a greater role in protecting populations. In 1891, the Public Health Service began screening immigrants for mental and physical conditions at ports of entry.\footnote{Kraut, Silent Travelers, 50-51, 77.} Research into a 1902 cholera outbreak in Chicago attributed the disease to a water supply contaminated by a sewer line in the city’s slum.\footnote{Hoy, Chasing Dirt, 105-106.} Preserving public health demanded government action.

As a matter of public health that related to immigration, as well as trade laws, reformers were convinced that protecting the nation’s food supply also required government intervention on a national level. Food scares in the early 1890s prompted manufacturers to organize pure food exhibits to defend their reputations to consumers. Despite their efforts, by the end of the decade the Pure Food Congresses, managed by the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists, publicized findings that provided momentum for legislative action to regulate the food industry. Frustrated with the federal government’s failed...
attempts to pass pure food bills, a coalition of journalists, temperance unions, women’s clubs, religious groups, public health workers, and state and federal chemists, including USDA head chemist Harvey Wiley, joined forces under the National Consumers League in 1905. Together they published articles, organized inspections of food production facilities, as well as public lectures and traveling exhibits to bring the message to the public about the need for legal action in protecting the nation’s food supply.\textsuperscript{134}

Public events and published accounts of poor food safety standards raised public awareness about the hygiene of food produced by cheap, foreign labor and the cleanliness of food manufacture in immigrant-dominated, inner cities. Fear of food-borne illnesses and the presumed ignorance of hygienic food preparation by a largely foreign-born poor combined to stigmatize the food manufactured by immigrants, in ethnic- and American-owned operations and by fellow ethnics in their homelands. Pure food promoters, including some businesses, praised the cleanliness of foods prepared in sterile, factory settings and packaged in individual, sealed containers. The effect of the Pure Food campaigns was an affirmation of large, American food producers. Foreign-born businessmen rarely had the capital to invest in adhering to the new standards of sanitary food production and storage, as in the case of Italian grocers in New York who failed to install refrigeration in 1919.\textsuperscript{135} Even Mexican-American entrepreneurs with the resources to produce “sanitary” chili at the turn of the


\textsuperscript{135} Gabaccia, \textit{We Are What We Eat}, 132.
century faced public discrimination that doubted the food’s hygiene.\textsuperscript{136}

**Pasta: A Symbol of unAmerican Values**

As an immigrant food, pasta suffered a similar fate. Even as scientific cooking came to terms with pasta as an Italian staple based on its nutritive qualities and in moderation, social workers, government officials, and publicity for pure food legislation condemned its status in the eyes of consumers as a unhygienic food. Not only did macaroni symbolize immigrants’ resistance to assimilation, it also revealed a menacing disregard for public health.

Damning government and Consumers League inspection reports of the small pasta-making establishments patronized and run by Italian families offered sensational fodder for newspapers from Chicago and Lexington, Kentucky, and from Springfield, Massachusetts, to Olympia, Washington. The most troublesome observations stemmed from the fact that few of the pasta factories in American cities were dedicated establishments. Looking around the Italian community of New York, social worker Sophonisba Breckenridge noted macaroni being made “on every block” with the workshops in the front rooms and families living in the rear.\textsuperscript{137} Health inspectors were wary of the shared space as they described macaroni being made and dried in the rooms and cellars of tenements with residents sick from contagious diseases or enduring insect infestations. Writing in her capacity as a head of food inspections for the Consumers League, Mary Sherman described the manufacture of macaroni in a New York tenement where

\textsuperscript{136} Pilcher, *Planet Taco*, 118.

\textsuperscript{137} Ewen, *Immigrant Women*, 171.
the pasta maker went between working in his shop to tending his son suffering from diphtheria in the adjoining room. 138 The findings of Sherman and her fellow New York City Consumers League inspectors were summarized for the *Lexington Herald* of Kentucky. 139 Health inspections similar to the New York City Consumers’ League were also made by government officials and paraphrased in news stories, including a report by government health inspector that conveyed a nightmarish scene of macaroni manufacture to the readers of the *Chicago Herald* in 1891. In a six-room tenement housing one hundred and twenty-four immigrants, one room was dedicated to drying macaroni next to filthy rags and residents who picked insects from their bodies. 140 In 1907, reports of kittens used in chop suey and crowded rooms in a district with backed up sewers, also in Chicago, appeared in condensed form for readers of the *Olympia Daily Record*. 141 The efforts of Public Board of Health officers to chase down newly-arrived typhus sufferers in the Italian tenements of Chicago in 1891 were reported in the *New York Tribune*. They had taken refuge in the home of an immigrant family that had also contracted typhus and operated a small pasta business out of their home. 142

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139 “Beef Scandal Not the Only One: Conditions under Which other Food Products Are Handled,” *The Lexington Herald* (Lexington, KY), June 24, 1906, Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers.

140 “Disgrace to the City Where Vice and Filth Flourish,” *Chicago Herald* (Chicago, IL), June 22, 1891, Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers.

141 “Awful Filth in Chicago Bakeries,” *Olympia Daily Recorder* (Olympia, WA), September 16, 1907, Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers.

While many immigrants made do with locally-made pasta, most preferred to purchase it from Italy. There, a healthy export market supplying the needs of Italian immigrants in America, as well as Australia and South America, enabled pasta manufacturers to run dedicated factories. American observers still found fault. Descriptions focused on Italian establishments and their characteristic, outdoor curing. In an 1890 *Good Housekeeping* article about macaroni, the author describes the scene familiar “to any one who has visited Southern Italy.” There “it gets not only plenty of sun and air, but also a good modicum of the thick, white dust that rises in clouds whenever a carriage passes.” Other accounts indulged in graphic detail. In a collection of educational stereographs, the “Underwood Travel System” introduced viewers (often school children) to images of renowned art, architecture, and everyday life in Italy. In Naples, the stereographs took “travelers” down narrow alleys to see long strings of pasta drying on unprotected racks outside a pastamaker’s shop. The caption read: “Our wholesome macaroni drying in the dirty streets of Naples.”

Pauline Periwinkle’s 1903 newspaper article in the *Dallas Morning News* also revealed in the unsanitary conditions of macaroni manufacture in southern Italy where she recalled seeing sun-dried macaroni that “was fairly gray on top

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with street dust. Flies were as thick as bees around a hive.”145 Dirt and flies, the indiscriminate agents of contagion, enjoyed free-reign amongst the curing macaroni. “See Naples and Die,” the article’s title warned. As another first hand account of Italian pasta manufacture (printed in the New York Sun and then The State of Columbia, South Carolina) promised, the sight of macaroni factories in Naples would “cure” anyone from a desire to purchase Italian-made macaroni.146 Transportation was another opportunity for contamination, as readers in Biloxi, Mississippi were reminded in a story of a Neopolitan stowaway who survived the transatlantic passage in a ship’s cargo hold with rats and boxes of pasta destined for the US market.147

Few could have argued with Periwinkle’s title, including the leading pure food crusader, Harvey Wiley. The USDA chief of the Bureau of Chemistry spoke at public lectures and published and offered materials for food exhibits organized by the National Consumers League and based on his research. Displays drawing on his work offered audiences graphic evidence of his investigation into the use of coal tar dye to give lower grade macaroni (not made from pure semolina) a

145 Pauline Periwinkle, “See Naples and Die,” Dallas Morning News (Dallas, TX), April 22, 1903, Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers; according to Ed Howe, a contemporary travel writer published in the Morning Oregonian, Kansas City Star, Duluth Tribune, and Gulfport Daily Herald, the phrase “See Naples and die” is an English play-on-words coined by tourists to the Bay of Naples; its original meaning refers to a Neapolitan island whose local name (Morreai) sounds like “you will die” in Italian. For an example of Howe’s article published in 1913, see Ed W. Howe, “‘See Naples and Die’,” Morning Oregonian (Portland, OR), August 23, 1913, Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers.

146 “Facts About Macaroni,” The State (Columbia, South Carolina) March 7, 1892, Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers.

147 “Seven Days in a Ship’s Hold Dry Macaroni the Food and Rats the Companions of Neapolitan Stowaway,” The Biloxi Daily Herald (Biloxi, MI), April 7, 1906, Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers.
more appetizing, yellow hue.¹⁴⁸ In his own publication, *Foods and their adulteration*, intended to educate consumers and fellow concerned chemists, Wiley offered a detailed account of macaroni manufacture and the stages at which adulteration was most likely. His description detailed problematic practices common in Italian manufacture, such as artificial coloring using martius yellow. The colorant, “one of the most poisonous coal-tar dyes known” (according to a later 1926 USDA study), government chemists deemed unsafe in amounts “more than a small trace.”¹⁴⁹ Wiley also warned that the famed texture of dried Italian macaroni derived from its complicated curing process involving a combination of drying outdoors and in “dungeon-like underground vaults” that introduced the product to bacteria.¹⁵⁰ Imported pasta was also invariably sold in bulk, increasing its chance of contamination beyond the factory.

Wiley’s observations informed future regulations regarding macaroni, ten years after congress passed the 1906 Pure Food Act. Under Wiley’s direction, the USDA’s Bureau of Chemistry was tasked with inspections and other investigations critical to carrying out the law protecting the public from harmful and mislabeled foods, including issuing product standards. In 1916, the Bureau of Chemistry acquired approval from department secretaries in commerce,

¹⁴⁸ Goodwin, *Pure Food*, 164.


treasury, and agriculture for a legal definition of macaroni.\textsuperscript{151} No macaroni could contain dye of any kind FDA officials deemed were intended to disguise inferior products, such as those containing flour. Further specifications in production included the prohibition of curing macaroni in the sun and the requirement that it be kept free of the flies and dust that plagued the drying process in Italian establishments.\textsuperscript{152} Dyeing and sun-drying were key aspects of the imported Italian product and those deemed most harmful. Wiley’s critiques regarding macaroni manufacture and the new rules for coloring and curing that ensued publicly targeted the methods used by foreign competition.\textsuperscript{153} New rules wielding scientific authority stigmatized the immigrant food on legal grounds and publicity that helped foster public support for legislation condemned Italian pasta in the eyes of Anglo-American consumers.

Scientists and progressive leaders defended the food as an example of scientifically proven, affordable nutrition, but condemned it as a symbol of Italian immigrants’ cultural intransigence. Atwater’s 1895 study that noted the high

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protein content of Italian peasants’ largely vegetarian diet and subsequent publications by home economists may have condoned macaroni as an affordable source of protein, but cooking by Italian immigrants continued to be problematic according to the scientific standards. Italian families in particular disregarded the food advice of reformers. Women shunned cooking classes and persisted in feeding families according to their cultural preferences. As food historian Harvey Levenstein found, female Irish immigrants filled kitchen classes in the Boston’s South End House in the 1890s when the Irish were the predominant immigrant group. However, by 1900 when the largest foreign-born population was Italian, Italian women were conspicuously absent from the courses.154

At home, Italian resistance to reformers’ advice took the form of “incorrect” preparation and the purchasing of imported or fresh foods. According to nutrition experts in a 1914 pamphlet printed for Italian readers in New York, Italians’ tendency to serve meat, vegetables, and other foods in the same dish with the wheat-based staple rendered the foods’ individual ingredients indigestible.155 Commonplace ingredients in Italian cooking, like tomatoes, struck reformers and the food chemists they looked to for direction, as expensive given their lack of protein, fats, or starches. They were also a health hazard, as many Italians preferred to purchase fresh foods from purportedly unsanitary, outdoor markets, instead of as packaged goods from American factories.156

155 Ibid., 10.
156 Ewen, Immigrant Women, 171.
The knowledge of nutritional needs and properties of certain foods continued to evolve in the early twentieth century, as did social workers’ criticisms of Italian eating habits. Initially, the “balance” nutritionists urged in their immigrant pupils meant a combination of protein, fats, and carbohydrates, at the expense of vegetables. Further food studies by chemists revealed the presence and importance of minerals in the first years of the century and, by 1917, vitamins.\textsuperscript{157} After 1920, a growing appreciation of the vitamins and minerals present in everyday Italian ingredients, such as cheese and vegetables, convinced a few social workers to concede some of the benefits of the immigrants’ diet.

The ubiquity of pasta was not one of them. According to nutrition experts and their advocates in immigrant communities, Italians ate too much of the protein-laden food and, worse, purchased it from unsanitary sources, such as the Italian grocer who sold in bulk, the local pasta maker who worked out of the tenements, or as imported varieties that contained dyes and were contaminated by outdoor drying or both. Social workers who urged the poor to eat balanced diets taught moderate consumption of rich foods alongside less energy laden ones containing minerals and vitamins.\textsuperscript{158} Unfortunately, the tendency of Italians was to over-indulge, social workers concluded.\textsuperscript{159}

Immigrant families’ preference for pasta stood as a reminder of their resistance to acculturation. As one social worker noted after visiting an Italian

\textsuperscript{157} Cummings, \textit{The American and His Food}, 127-37.

\textsuperscript{158} Levenstein, “American Response,” 14.

\textsuperscript{159} Ewen, \textit{Immigrant Women}, 175-76.
family, their preference for spaghetti indicated they were not yet Americanized. Collectively, the components of Italian cooking received a boost by the scientific understanding of food, but reformers’ critiques of Italian traditional cuisine bemoaned the centrality of pasta that was typically made by Italians in American slums or under the dubious conditions of an Italian factory.

Accounts of immigrants’ eating habits and food production that disregarded science seemed to confirm fears that southern European immigrants posed a threat to the nation’s welfare and its consumers. As long as consumers evaluated macaroni as an Italian food, it would remain at best a novelty for adventurous and cosmopolitan eaters or, at worst, a health hazard. Either perspective rendered the market for macaroni too narrow to buoy the fortunes of American durum farmers or marginal domestic pasta makers who bought their wheat for cheap.

**Pasta: A Progressive Food**

In the late 1890s, immigrant resistance to efforts to instill American housekeeping values convinced some home economists to shift their focus to a more receptive audience, middle- and upper-class women. Home economists, such as Ellen Richards, justified their new focus as the need to help women navigate the myriad of branded, advertised, and packaged goods produced outside of their communities, of which they knew little about but on which they nevertheless relied. Educating women to be intelligent consumers fit with the

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160 Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 123.

161 Goldstein, *Creating Consumers*, 27.
expansive educational goals of home economists, particularly alongside the USDA, as they set up home economics courses aimed at female students attending land grand colleges.

Home economics in higher education spoke to the field's leaders' efforts to elevate housework to a profession. Instructors taught the application of science to domestic life as a way to save labor and efficiently “manage” the middle-class home. Home economist Florence Nesbitt even applied the principles of scientific management described by industrial engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor for use in factories to the home.\(^\text{162}\) An important way to streamline the labor of the housekeeping professional was through the purchase of modern appliances, cleaning products, and foods. In the dilemma of what to buy from the confusion of new products, the home economist aimed to make herself indispensable to the middle-class homemaker.\(^\text{163}\) Unlike the home economist’s immigrant pupils, middle-class American women readily adopted scientific housekeeping, especially as it applied to eating, as historians of the social reform movement and immigrant food cultures agree. They enthusiastically embraced the “rational” diet by turning to the advice of experts in the science of cooking like Fannie Farmer and Sarah Tyson Rorer to help plan meals and bring industrial reason into the

\(^{162}\) Strasser, *Never Done*, 9, 212-213;  
\(^{163}\) Goldstein, *Creating Consumers*, 45, 133.
When addressing consumers, home economists defended the food value of pasta using the same rational perspective of Atwater and referred to the chemist's research data. In her popular cookery handbook, Fannie Farmer of the Boston Cooking School introduced her recipes by expressing hope that readers would share her interest in using “scientific knowledge” for “deeper thought and broader study of what we eat.” Each chapter focused on a food type and included a table attributed to Atwater that showed the relative amounts of protein, fat, starch, minerals, and water for specific foods. Most cookbooks that nodded to the technical aspects of food were not so thorough, but encouraged readers all the same to eat nourishing foods to meet the fuel needs of the body and brain.

Using a scientific view of food, home economists re-imagined macaroni as a healthful food whose positive nutritional quality overshadowed its foreign associations. Mrs. Lincoln of the Philadelphia Cooking School began her discussion of macaroni’s merits in her 1902 cookbook by taking readers on a guided tour of its digestion. The mouth, stomach, and finally the intestines converted macaroni’s nitrogenous and starchy components so advantageously that it should be compared in nutritional value to the more commonly revered

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165 Fannie Merritt Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co.: 1911), [i].
white bread, a comparison Atwater’s earlier chart had made readily apparent.\textsuperscript{166} Fannie Farmer used a more empirical approach that directly linked her authority to that of government officials by using a table attributed to the USDA that compared the protein, starch, fat, mineral, and water content of various cereals, including macaroni. She supplemented her quantitative analysis of macaroni explaining that it was “a valuable food” because “it is very cheap and nutritious.”\textsuperscript{167} Based on its food value for money, home economists reasoned that Americans, especially its working classes, ought to eat more of it.\textsuperscript{168} In Rorer’s reasoning, if the Italian laborer who relied on macaroni for his “meat” and “cheese” enjoyed “a satisfying and perfect diet,” macaroni could do the same for “all our people.”\textsuperscript{169}

Likely, “all our people” Rorer referred to in 1902 were not fellow middling and well-to-do Americans who purchased her cookbooks, as they typically had access to a varied diet of fuel-rich and less “economic” but flavorful foods, such as vegetables and cheeses.\textsuperscript{170} The proposal by the head of the Philadelphia Cooking School, however, would have appealed to her readers, suggesting that the Italians were proof that purchasing pasta could be a form of intelligent consumption.

\textsuperscript{166} Sarah Tyson Rorer, \textit{Mrs. Rorer’s New Cook Book} (Philadelphia: Arnold, 1902), 300.

\textsuperscript{167} Farmer, \textit{The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book}, 85-6.

\textsuperscript{168} Mrs. Mary Lincoln, \textit{Lincoln’s Boston Cook Book. What to do and What not to do in Cooking} (Boston: Little, Brown, 1916), 308.

\textsuperscript{169} Rorer, \textit{Mrs. Rorer’s New Cook Book}, 300.

\textsuperscript{170} Cummings, \textit{The American and His Food}, 118.
Selling Macaroni with Science

Manufacturers and advertisers of pasta drew on the same discourse of modern science that elevated the status of modern housekeeping but condemned macaroni as an Italian food. Through advertisements and packaging they linked the food commodity to the insights of experts to reassess pasta’s benefits in ways middle- and upper-class Anglo-Americans were eager to embrace. To do this, they downplayed the food’s Italian roots, paving the way for its multi-purpose reputation with nods to the nutritional insights of Atwater and his disciples in home economics. Their claims relied on and reinforced consumers’ assumptions about cleanliness and nutrition as a hallmark of American progress that was both objective and universal. From this alternative perspective, consumers could view the foreign food as a staple in the American pantry while still affirming a national superiority to which middle-class values were central.

According to manufacturers, the first step in selling more macaroni to Americans was obvious. "Make them try to forget the idea that [macaroni] is a foreign dish," urged J. Perkins in the industry serial, *The New Macaroni Journal*.171 Perkins’ suggestion was hardly innovative in 1921 when the editorial appeared. Staff at N. W. Ayer & Son had developed a similar strategy as early as 1905 that related commodities to consumers’ perceived needs and aspirations. Equally important to an industry tainted by association with immigrants that practiced poor hygiene and eating habits was that Ayer had built a reputation for

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cultivating positive corporate images through extended public relation campaigns, as it had on behalf of the Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1905 and American Telephone and Telegraph in 1908. Focusing on the readers of the *Ladies Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping*, among other national periodicals, Ayer pursued the same middling, Anglo-American consumers who aimed to rationalize their home life.

Applying their pioneering skill in advertising behind American macaroni brands meant channeling the message of experts in rational eating, enough to deemphasize macaroni’s Italian pedigree and highlight its nutritional advantages. Their clients included brands Anger’s, Foulds’, Faust, and Yando (at least since 1905) and eventually Muellers and the NMMA, of which C. Frederick Mueller Jr. and his father were executive members. Rival manufacturers repeated the themes and tactics developed by the agency through the 1920s, including clients of the largest ad agency, J. Walter Thompson. Many would, like Perkins, take credit after reinventing the wheel.

In 1924, C. Frederick Mueller Jr. presented his company’s marketing

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173 Hower, *History of an Advertising Agency*, 95; Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 7; market research at J. Walter Thompson Company estimated that 74.1% of all households with subscriptions to *Good Housekeeping* in 1921 belonged to the top category of earners, “Group I,” who were employed in managerial or professional work and earned at least $5000 per year. See Coleman Harwell Wells, “Remapping America: Market research and American society, 1900-1940,” PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1999, ProQuest (9916354), 186; Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, 32.

strategy designed by Ayer to fellow NMMA members. Mueller developed the American macaroni industry’s model marketing strategy, or so he claimed. It relied less on asserting the food’s actual American origins, than on connecting it to supposedly nationally and culturally neutral qualities that appealed to Americans’ scientific approach to evaluating food. As a head of the leading domestic manufacturer by the 1920s, Mueller’s tactics commanded attention. Since the late nineteenth century, his company had worked to win the American market from European manufacturers. Mueller’s product, like other American-made macaroni, faced an unreceptive American public. Of the few who were inclined to eat pasta, they assumed the foreign item was superior. The company’s response, dubbed by an admirer as the "Mueller Company Method," was novel as a coherent strategy, if not in its individual components. “Winning the market against a foreign product” involved setting it apart from the Italian competition through packaging and advertising.

Packaging was the most tangible difference between American- and foreign-made macaroni and, eventually, between the preferences of Anglo- and foreign-born customers. Publicity of unsanitary food production and sales before and after the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act singled out the grocer who sold his products in bulk as purveyors of fraudulent and unsanitary foods. In this environment, more manufacturers began selling their products in packages.

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175 Mueller did not give credit to the ad agency, a likely deliberate omission made on behalf of smaller manufacturers who were known to consider advertising as a net cost, rather than an investment, much less a service by a large outside agency worth paying for.

identified by brand names. Packaging also commanded higher prices, but, ironically, also made consumers wary of purchasing a product they could neither smell nor see. Manufacturers responded by hosting in-store cooking demonstrations and arguing that packaging added to a food’s quality by guaranteeing that it was clean and that the grocer was honest. Home economists agreed and encouraged consumers to embrace the sealed food products.¹⁷⁷

American macaroni producers were part of the process that furthered Americans’ partiality to packaged foods. Packaging allowed American manufactures to not only distinguish their products visually, but claim a scientific approach to food that stigmatized their Italian competition that still favored “backward” distribution in bulk. A journalist recounting the experience of a Boston health inspector described his visit to a grocer (presumably Italian) where he “found a fat gray tabby buried snugly in the macaroni.” The proprietor conceded that it was a strange place to find the cat. “‘She usually likes to lie on the spaghetti!’”¹⁷⁸ This was not the only story to circulate about the danger of unpackaged foods and felines.¹⁷⁹ The oft repeated formula suggests that the stories blended fact and fiction. If not an honest account, it affirmed what readers already suspected and what American manufacturers hoped to remind them of: sellers of loose macaroni were oblivious to modern science.

Some Ayer ads dwelt on the packaging itself, as “air-tight” and “triple-


¹⁷⁸ “Filth and the Food Supply Women’s War for Cleaner Markets,” Lexington Herald (Lexington, KY), June 21, 1914, Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers.

sealed” cartons. Others emphasized what their boxes kept out, as in Faust Macaroni ads that referred to “odor proof, moisture proof, dust-proof packages” that kept its product “free from every taint,” including the “straying odor” of the grocery store. So convinced were manufacturers that the hygiene of retail packages “sold” their macaroni at home, they asserted that the small boxes would endear consumers around the world with their American standard of cleanliness. And they were partly right. A 1930 meeting of pasta manufacturers in Italy resolved to consider lowering the costs of packaging materials in order to recapture such international trade.

Equally important and more valuable in the long term, was the promotional potential of packaging. The boxes in which macaroni entered American homes stood alongside traditional print ads in newspapers and magazines and industry-printed cookbooks as vehicles for “consumer education.” Through these media, manufacturers and advertisers made their case for macaroni’s expanded use beyond strictly Italian cooking. In this sense the potential of packaging to sell the product was not only its role as a barrier against nefarious germs, but as an extension of educational media into private homes.

To a large extent, packaging divided the domestic macaroni market for

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180 Advertisement, Marvelli Macaroni, *Ladies Home Journal* 19 (October 1902): 30; Approved Advertising Proof for Faust Spaghetti, 1905, Box 50, Folder 1, NWAA.

181 Approved Advertising Proof for Foulds’ Macaroni, 1908, Box 35, Folder 2, NWAA; Approved Advertising Proof for Faust Spaghetti, 1910, Box 50, Folder 1, NWAA.


Anglo-American consumers from its Italian competition for Italian immigrants. The American housewife asked her grocer for macaroni in boxes containing enough for a single-family meal. Her Italian counterpart purchased the food, either made in her community or imported from the home country, as a loose product that her grocer would weigh out and wrap in paper. Not only did she appreciate the savings of not paying for the manufacture’s packaging, but being able to see what she was purchasing assured her she was not buying an inferior product.\textsuperscript{184}

Carleton of the USDA put Americans’ reluctance to eat pasta down to their unfamiliarity with how to cook it. Mueller of Mueller’s Products and many of his American rivals agreed. Introducing consumers to new ways of preparing may not have succeeded in actually increasing the amount each household consumed. It could, however, alter the image of pasta. In industry-sponsored recipes macaroni was a versatile staple ingredient, rather than the foundation of a foreign dish. Their mission went beyond Americanizing pasta to normalizing it.

Manufacturers readily adopted the language of nutrition used by home economists to usher macaroni into the modern age of American eating without distinct cultural baggage. Doing so required re-imagining the Italian food, not as a form of cultural expression, but a beneficial collection of food chemicals, essentially de-nationalizing it. Using the language of domestic science, advertisements referred to macaroni as a conveyor of carbohydrates, fats, and

proteins. Anger’s Macaroni, the Ayer agency assured readers, was a food “rich in ‘gluten,’—the body-building element…for blood, bone, brawn—and sinew…” Experts tell us that it serves both as food and fuel.”¹⁸⁵ Reduced to its chemical components, it was interchangeable with myriad foods similarly deconstructed. In line with home economists’ tendency to insert macaroni into the vegetable family and the typical American diet, domestic manufacturers held out macaroni as a potato substitute. Using vaguely scientific terms, a 1905 Ayer advertisement for Foulds’ advised readers that “the potato is a fat and heat-former; Foulds’ Macaroni is a strength giver.”¹⁸⁶ The comparison was even more tantalizing when simplified to calories: macaroni offered 1660 calories per pound, compared to potato’s four hundred and forty-four.¹⁸⁷

Nutritional statistics that broke down pasta into nutrients like protein, fat, and carbohydrates or calories, like in the cookbooks by Farmer and Rorer, enabled manufacturers to highlight only the most advantageous attributes of macaroni to make their case for its versatility beyond Italian cooking.¹⁸⁸ In a comparison of calories or protein, macaroni clearly beat out the potato and most starches.

Manufacturers set their sights even higher than making macaroni a potato stand-in. Its real rival was not found in the vegetable isle, but behind the butcher’s counter. Macaroni was the new meat. Individual manufacturers touted

¹⁸⁵ Approved Advertising Proof for Anger’s Macaroni, 1919, Box 35, Folder 2, NWAA.
¹⁸⁶ Approved Advertising Proof for Foulds’ Macaroni, 1905, Box 35, Folder 2, NWAA.
¹⁸⁸ Farmer, Boston Cooking School Cookbook, 85; Rorer, Mrs. Rorer’s New Cook Book, 300.
pasta as a suitable “relief from the old familiar meat and potatoes,” citing that it "possess[ed] the strengthening qualities of ordinary meat." A 1914 box for Caruso Brand spaghetti condensed a report on the nutritional advantages of macaroni by the New York Health Department to a single headline: “Macaroni and Cheese in Place of Meat.”

Through the language of nutrition, manufacturers revised macaroni’s place in food taxonomy as well as its place on the menu. Efforts to re-categorize macaroni by manufacturers amounted to shifting the food from the status of a side dish to a main course, as in the case of comparing macaroni to meat, or a food for every course. For example, in recipes promoted by producers, macaroni could appear at the table in soup, later as a salad, a base for a pot roast, or even as the pudding. The move suggested that more of one’s plate might be dedicated to the durum wheat product, if the food was understood according to its chemical components.

Even in this ambitious re-categorization of pasta, manufacturers found support among professionals. The director of the Home Institute at the New York Herald Tribune could easily have been reading from an advertisement when he announced on the radio in 1924 that macaroni was a credible meat substitute due to the presence of protein, fat, and vitamins. The cooperation between

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189 Approved Advertising Proof for Foulds’ Macaroni, 1905, Box 35, Folder 2, NWAA.


manufacturers and nutrition professionals was more apparent in the
endorsement of macaroni as a meat rival by C. Houston Goudiss, domestic
scientist and co-founder (along with Mrs. Alberta Goudiss) of New York’s School
of Modern Cookery. Following a tour of the largest domestic macaroni factories,
Goudiss announced that the tendency of American and English cooks to look on
macaroni as a mere vegetable underestimated its flesh-building qualities
comparable to that of meat. He completed his endorsement in *The Macaroni
Journal* with a list of recipes for manufacturers to include in their advertising.\(^\text{192}\)

When Goudiss published his macaroni recipes, he was sure to include
one for “Italian Spaghetti,” but he also proposed “Mexican Spaghetti,” “French
Spaghetti,” and “American Spaghetti.” Recipes like these appeared on packages
or promotional booklets written and distributed by manufacturers and in
advertisements. Just as the industry used the language of nutrition to argue that
macaroni defied categorization amongst the basic food groups, it also cultivated
an image of macaroni as a food that resisted hard and fast cultural designations.

By reducing pasta to a collection of chemicals with myriad applications,
advertisements, challenged its exclusively Italian cultural associations. With
packaging, recipe books, and advertisements, advertisers and manufacturers
shared basic cooking instructions that blended macaroni’s multicultural and
multipurpose qualities. Macaroni was not just the base for “Spaghetti a l’Italienne”
or “Spaghetti au Gratin” as recipes on a spaghetti box designed by J. Walter

\(^{192}\) “The Real Staff of Life,” *New Macaroni Journal* 1, no. 5 (September 1919): 12-14.
According to a Muellers 1914 cookbook featuring recipes by the *Ladies Home Journal* cookery editor, pasta could be made “Mexican Style” with Hamburg steak or with an English accent as “Spaghetti Rarebit.” Well-boiled and pushed through a sieve, it could be folded into a savory soufflé or baked in a sweet pudding. American manufacturers acknowledged macaroni’s use in Italian cooking with recipes such as “Spaghetti a la Neapolitan” or “Sicilienne,” notably using the French versions of regional Italian names. However, manufacturers generally proposed using macaroni in dishes that implied non-Italian roots or none at all.

Suggestions to serve macaroni with peanut butter or in the form of macaroni puffs were the outcomes of undoubtedly wishful thinking among enterprising manufacturers and their promotional advisors. However, prefaced with discussions of macaroni’s nutritional qualities, they hoped such serving suggestions would come across as good advice, much like swapping a plate of less nutritious potatoes for a bowl of protein rich spaghetti. By focusing on the chemical components of pasta and, ironically, using the very scientific standards by which Italian immigrants’ foods were critiqued, American manufacturers encouraged consumers to think of the food as a positive element of a diet that was not necessarily Italian.

That pasta was and had historically been exclusive to Italian cuisine was a

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194 Marion Harris Neil, *Delicious recipes made with Mueller’s products* (Jersey City, NJ: C.F. Mueller Co., 1914), 3-16.
truism pasta makers in America did well to downplay if they aimed to tout either its cleanliness or its nutritional qualities. Instead, pasta was “not a food of any one locality, country, time, or season,” a 1905 ad for Faust Macaroni announced. “It is a world food—good anywhere, at any time, with any meal.”\(^{195}\) The Ayer ad made on behalf of the St. Louis-based company read more like the dream of an ambitious manufacturer than the present-day reality of macaroni’s reputation.

While Faust’s semolina and water macaroni was the food of no population, place or time in particular, its macaroni line containing eggs (“noodles”), in contrast, was “genuine German.”\(^{196}\) Both Italians and Germans claimed traditions of egg pasta, but advertisements dwelt explicitly on its Teutonic origins and ignored its Italian ones. Significantly, unlike Italians, German immigrants assimilated more into American society because more were middle-class and Protestant, and, by the early twentieth-century, they were indisputably white.\(^{197}\)

Other manufacturers followed a similar tactic, obfuscating the Italian history of their product. Some exposed macaroni’s pedigree as a matter of debate or at least more complicated than popular assumptions allowed.

\(^{195}\) Approved Advertising Proof for Faust Macaroni, 1905, Box 50, Book 172(B), N. W. Ayer Collection.

\(^{196}\) Approved Advertising Proof for Faust Macaroni, 1908, Box 50, Book 172 (B), N. W. Ayer Collection.

\(^{197}\) One of the largest immigrant groups, Germans, claimed the “old stock” identity of Anglo-Americans during the early decades of the twentieth century, despite heighten tensions of nativism. Immigration historian Russell Kazal attributes the relatively smooth transition of Germans to the large proportion that were middle-class and Protestant. In the 1920s, Catholic, working class Germans also claimed American identity on the basis of race. In contrast, Italians could not claim racial parity with whites, despite distinguishing themselves from African Americans, Mexicans, and Chinese immigrants. They remain nominally white and only in a relative sense. See Guglielmo, \textit{White on Arrival}, 60, 128.
contributor to the industry trade journal announced that there was no consensus about who first made macaroni: the Germans, Chinese, Japanese, and Italians all vied for the title of inventors. However, such vagueness would not translate into a compelling ad copy. As early as 1924, an anonymous article in the same journal set the record straight in the interests of selling more macaroni, if not spreading a historically sound account of origins. He (or she) asserted that Italians knew how to make macaroni courtesy of the Chinese via the famous medieval explorer, Marco Polo. The writer followed up the suggestion that Italians were indebted to the Chinese for their signature food with the candid admission that such anecdotes served the needs of advertisers, “the whole being a double action affair,” akin to baking powder, “first arousing the woman’s curiosity about macaroni and spaghetti and then teaching her how to prepare it.” The article appeared the same year the US Congress responded to popular pressure by approving the last in a series of legislative measures aimed at curtailing immigration from southern Europe. In light of the mistrust of immigrants from outside northern and western Europe, Anglo-Americans were no more inclined to embrace Chinese food than Italian. However, by locating

198 “Origin of Macaroni,” *New Macaroni Journal* 1, no. 9 (January 1920): 42.

199 “Another Macaroni ‘Columbus’,” *New Macaroni Journal* 2, no. 12 (April 1921): 16.

200 “Another Macaroni ‘Columbus’,” *New Macaroni Journal* 2, no. 12 (April 1921): 16; since the success of this marketing pitch, efforts to disprove the account have been tantamount to reclaiming national patrimony for Italians. In the end, researchers discovered historical evidence putting macaroni in Genoa before Marco Polo’s journey. Unfortunately, this piece of corrective scholarship did not lend itself to selling pasta and many still regard its Chinese origins as a curious fact. See Vincenzo Buonassi, *Il Codice Della Pasta: 1001 Ricetta Per Preparare Spaghetti, Maccheroni, Tagliatelle, Gnocchi, Tortellini* (Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1973), 21.

macaroni in the cargo of a legendary, thirteenth-century explorer, the myth offered a more romantic image of the food than its reputation as the staple of “unclean” immigrant communities.

By recasting Italians as one of the many guardians of the pasta-making art, US manufacturers could add Americans to the list with little qualification. Newsprint-style ads for Cincinnati’s Foulds’ Macaroni headlined with claims of Macaroni’s new, national identity: “American Macaroni” and “A New American Dish.” Clearly, Foulds’ Macaroni was “patriotic Yankee Doodle,” a title rival brands like Yando, made by the United States Macaroni Company, would have claimed as well.202

The ads of Foulds’ competitors (also by Ayer) echoed the emphasis on “American,” even situating macaroni in the proverbial heart of the American landscape. Above an idyllic image of the American countryside of gently rolling hills and single-family homes, Anger’s brand macaroni reassured readers with the title “American-Made Foods for American Homes.”203 Faust Macaroni also conjured images of the American countryside and its productivity made possible only by a characteristically American ingenuity. “Originally at its best on the banks of the Black Sea, Durum Wheat now attains its most perfect development in American soil,” Ayer’s copywriters claimed in a 1905 Faust ad.204 Whether or not American consumers were aware of the efforts of the USDA to make macaroni

202 Approved advertising proofs for Faust Macaroni, 1905, Box 35, Folder 2, NWAA; Approved advertising proofs for Foulds’ Macaroni, 1905, Box 35, Folder 2, NWAA.

203 Approved advertising proofs for Anger Brand Macaroni, 1915, Box 35, Folder 2, NWAA.

204 Approved advertising proofs for Faust Macaroni, 1905, Box 35, Folder 2, NWAA.
wheat a cash crop of the dry Great Plains, advertisements encouraged them to connect the grain and the pasta it produced to a vague sense of the American frontier and the “civilizing” force American agriculture brought to it. The contrast between this picture and the infamously crowded immigrant tenements, although unspoken, was stark.

American manufacturers and their packaged products enjoyed a decided advantage over their primary, Italian competition after 1914. Macaroni imports had been steadily increasing with the growing Italian population in the US, peaking in 1914 at 126 million pounds. However, in the following years, the US severely reduced its trade with Europe in its effort to stay neutral during World War I. Pasta imports from Italy in 1917 were below 3.5 million pounds, a ninety percent decrease. After renewed trade with Italy in 1929, the average yearly imports remained at 32.6 million pounds, far below the 126 million fifteen years earlier.

When the domestic pasta market found its feet in the first decades of the twentieth century, advertisers continued to reference the standards of scientific eating. Between 1926 and 1928, JWT ran a promotional campaign on behalf of AC Krumm Macaroni, which had recently lost sales of its product in Philadelphia to rival manufacturer, Muellers Products. The Thompson approach renewed older pitches with important differences that suggest how successful earlier tactics had

206 Ibid.
207 US Department of Commerce, International Trade in Macaroni Products, 3.
been. Being “rich in protein” and “as nourishing as beef,” Krumm’s macaroni was not unusual. Nor was it “merely an economy,” but “the weekly treat.” “High quality, durum wheat” ads claimed, helped to set Krumm’s macaroni apart, contributing to its sensory pleasures, such as texture and flavor. That copywriters assured readers that AC Krumm did not produce “simply” cheap nourishment indicated that consumers took for granted the link between macaroni and rational, thrifty eating. Even as ad makers argued that the product appealed based on taste, they did not lose sight of macaroni as a food reducible to its nutritive elements.

Consumers and the Pasta Market: The View from Community Cookbooks

Consumers did not ignore the rhetoric of manufacturers and advertisers to affirm macaroni’s dignified place in the discourse of scientific eating. Acknowledging the power national advertisements had in directing consumers towards commodities, it was also an imperative of turn-of-the-century advertisers to address the real physical and emotional needs of consumers. A writer for the Women’s Editorial Department at J. Walter Thompson, Mildred Holmes, described a meeting between a market researchers and the typical reader of the firm’s advertisements in 1923. When it came to telling the investigator what she desired, the woman was at a loss for words. It was the responsibility of the agency “to discern her ‘motivating preferences.’”

\[208\] J. Walter Thompson Co., Approved advertising proofs for AC Krumm’s Macaroni, 1926-28, Reel 15, 35 mm Collection, J. Walter Thompson Company Archives; “AC Krumm and Son Macaroni Company Account History 1926,” Box 1, Account Files, 1885-2006, JHC.

of large, statistical surveys in which advertisers felt the distance between them and their subjects enhanced the objectivity of their scientific approach. Responding to consumer wants did not necessarily mean speaking directly with consumers, but estimating their desires from afar. The imbalance of power was not that advertisers excluded consumers from the advertising process and the discourse it helped to construct, but that consumers had, in the words of Ohmann, “no answering voice.”

While consumers may not have engaged directly with advertisers in deciding how discourses of scientific eating applied to macaroni, many accepted the views of experts conveyed through advertising. Using community cookbooks, it is clear that middle-class Anglo-American women used, or at least claimed to use, macaroni increasingly as a multi-purpose ingredient between 1890 and 1930. Desires to fundraise and connect with others in their peer group undoubtedly motivated the assembly of recipe collections and to that extent they drew on advertising’s discourse in order to support their own efforts to engage in their communities.

Community cookbooks reflected and spread the tastes of white native-born women within usually small groups that formed around common interests in local, often religious, communities, charitable work, and leisure pursuits. Locally printed and distributed, the cookbooks often professed to contain only recipes tested at home by their contributors. Whether or not this was true, women


\[211\] Ohmann, *Selling Culture*, 215.
submitted recipes knowing that they would represent the habits and preferences of themselves and their families to their communities. Recipe collections from private associations, such as sororities, church groups, charity organizations, and civic clubs, indicate that American consumers came to see macaroni as not simply an ethnic food, but a versatile staple by 1930.

Beyond the occasional foreign-inspired dish, American cooks had limited use for macaroni until the 1910s. If not baked in layers with butter and cheese it added interest to soups and garnished meat-heavy dishes, such as the recipe for steamed turkey submitted to the Thought and Work Club of Salem, Massachusetts in 1897.\textsuperscript{212} Usually, macaroni was relegated to sections titled “Soups” or “Vegetables.” However it was used, macaroni rarely took center-stage at mealtime. This conservative use of pasta by Americans was the kind that, according to home economists like Fannie Farmer, durum wheat’s primary booster, Carleton, and manufacturers like Mueller, proved consumers required “a little education.”

Over the next twenty years recipe contributors identified more uses for pasta that did not limit it to a specific course or ethnic category. American housewives moved beyond equating pasta with Italian or Continental food. Macaroni could be prepared as Mexican, Spanish, and Chinese dishes, not to

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\textsuperscript{212} Thought and Work Club, \textit{The Up-to-Date Cook Book} (Salem, MA: Thought and Work Club, 1897), 41.
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mention American as “Yankee Doodle” macaroni. It also lent itself to dishes firmly within traditional Anglo-American cooking, such as Spaghetti Rarebit, or others with no distinct ethnic links, such as Lillian Kidder’s Spaghetti Luncheon Dish or Oysters and Macaroni from a contributor in Xenia, Ohio. Some women were more creative in their use of pasta, as in the case of one California contributor’s Noodle Ring recipe. Directions called for a buttered mold lined with macaroni and filled with brown sauce. Unmolded, it held a mixture of creamed asparagus, chicken, and mushrooms in the center. Housewives continued to use macaroni in main dishes designated “Italian,” but such recipes were in the minority as suggestions for using pasta in non-Italian and non-ethnic main courses.


courses grew substantially.\textsuperscript{215} Changing patterns in recipes calling for pasta and their categorization strongly suggest consumers considered the food through the lens of nutrition. Initially, dishes requiring macaroni were largely in the “vegetable” or “soup” sections of cookbooks. Its later use in recipes labeled “vegetarian” or to extend or accompany meat indicate that writers acknowledged the food’s nutritional value as comparable or complementary to substantial, protein-rich meat. One contributor to the Friday Morning Club of Los Angeles offered her macaroni recipe under the section “Meat Substitutes.”\textsuperscript{216} Whether or not she took her


\textsuperscript{216} \textit{The Friday Morning Club Cook Book} (Los Angeles, CA: Friday Morning Club, 1924), 20.
inspiration from a manufacturer’s recipe book, the scientific appreciation of macaroni, like that promoted by advertising and home economists, made the equation of wheat with meat make sense.

Since 1903, initially reluctant farmers had watched the price of durum rise and then exceed that of traditional spring wheat, which many had abandoned even as production of the new crop grew. While the American macaroni industry gained ground, the Italian share of the American pasta market fell drastically, inspiring a reaction in marketing by Italian industry that differed tellingly from American manufacturers. Italians concentrated on selling their pasta to Americans, not as a cheap, staple, but as a luxury import. This contrasted with domestic manufacturers, who utilized the marketing expertise of professional advertisers used to pushing low-cost household goods. Instead of drawing attention to pasta’s Italian associations, American manufacturers appealed to middle-class concern for scientific eating, articulating the merits of pasta using the language of domestic science. The food they sold was not “Italian” per se, but a source of fuel with no particular cultural association. When consumers sat down to their dinners of, for example, “Macaroni with Peanuts” in the 1920s they were not affirming their acceptance of Italian immigrant culture but their own adherence to a scientific understanding of food that emanated from American professionals and industry.


Chapter 3

From Pantry Staple to Vessels of Authenticity: Postwar Advertising Makes Pasta a Democratized Luxury, 1930 to 1960

By the 1930s, the confluent messages of government agencies, home economists, and business succeeded in adapting pasta’s image to the recommended Anglo-American diet, high in nutrients, if not in flavor. Macaroni consumption as a source of cheap, versatile, and affordable nutrients continued through the 1930s and 40s as consumers altered their diets to accommodate financial and wartime restrictions. However, in the 1950s the food’s image underwent yet another shift as it was reintroduced as an Italian food, this time in a positive way.

For historians of American food habits, the popularity of foreign food in the postwar US has ambiguous roots and consumers' motives for venturing into unfamiliar foodways were diverse. For second generation immigrants, it was a matter of self-discovery. In their nostalgic embrace of foods that had once represented their parents’ resistance to assimilate into American society, they celebrated ethnic identities in a less hostile America. For some, a preference for “foreign” food was also part of a larger critique of American society and the power large businesses exercised within it selling homogenized products devoid of cultural value. Still others ate exotic foods in ways that affirmed a privileged status vis-à-vis ethnic producers, especially in venues like restaurants where

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In the 1950s, there was nothing novel about pasta. Having grown in popularity as a thrifty dish for Anglo-Americans and Italian Americans alike, it did not need to be “rediscovered.” A product of mass production and an industry dominated by major food corporations, pasta’s consumption, even as a praiseworthy Italian food, did not necessarily communicate a rejection of American consumerism and business culture.

Instead of signaling Americans’ embrace of multiculturalism or a desire to check the homogenizing force of mass culture, the ethnicization of pasta’s popular imagery sheds light on the growing influence of big business in postwar America and its success in making consumer goods the building blocks of individual expression, for Italians and middle-class Anglo-Americans. The number of macaroni manufacturers had dwindled in the twenty years since the 1930s, while production volume rose. Those that remained were invariably large with access to financial resources that enabled them to meet competition with the methods and talents of marketing professionals. As industry dynamics changed, so too did the values associated with the food. Advertisers were instrumental in implementing these shifts in pasta’s image over national media in the 1950s and 60s while they worked to assert their own relevancy to national welfare and postwar governance.

**The “Science” in Marketing: Restoring the Public Image of Business**

In the 1930s, businesses and their advertising allies confronted strong

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critiques in the media and politics that challenged the assumption that an economy based on mass production and consumption upheld national wellbeing. Business responded to popular and political critiques over the following decades by embracing subtler and new “scientific” methods of selling to consumers.

Consumer sentiment regarding business, and advertising in particular, reached a critical juncture following the publication of popular exposes on advertising and subsequent calls for greater government regulation of the industry at the national level. Publications such as *Ballyhoo*, a periodical first printed in 1931, accused the advertising industry of selling to consumers useless and inferior products. The sharp critique of American consumer culture expressed in *Ballyhoo* was supplemented by stand-alone advertising exposés. Published in 1933 and 1934, respectively, *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs* and *Skin Deep* focused the spotlight on the deception of American consumers by the food, drug, and cosmetics industries and their advertisers. In the case of *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs*, historian Charles McGovern contends that public library records, the eighteen printings of the book released by publishers Vanguard Press, and even the brief interest in transforming the work into a film, attest to the fact that the book struck a chord with Americans across classes.²²¹

Popular response to literary critiques manifested itself politically in a...
consumer movement whose primary political presence was the team behind Consumers’ Research, Inc. (CR). The group’s founders, F.J. Schlink and Arthur Kallet, along with Schlink’s wife, M. C. Phillips, performed the laboratory tests and described the results that featured in *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs* and *Skin Deep*. The organization, concerned with testing consumer products and disseminating their findings amongst consumers, began as a newsletter distributed to club members in White Plains, New York. In 1929, Schlink started Consumers’ Research, Inc., for which he soon became a full-time products tester. By 1932, what had started as a local club newsletter was distributed to 42,000 paid subscribers nationwide as the *Consumers’ Research Bulletin* featuring the product recommendations and assessments made by Schlink and his team of assistants.²²² As the organization grew, it pressed for effective government protection for consumers, convinced as its leaders were that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), charged with maintaining fair business practices, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), wielding powers afforded under the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, failed to protect consumers from hazardous products and misleading advertising.²²³

The legislative result of pressure by CR and its allies to strengthen government oversight of advertising and increase consumers’ access to information was mixed. According to advertising historian Inger Stole, in response to the 1938 Wheeler-Lea Act that intended to further the goals of CR,

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promotional strategies became more indirect, abstracted, subjective, and, thus, difficult to challenge in a court of law. While more stringent advertising regulations stipulated in the 1938 law banned false or misleading advertisements, advertisers’ new reluctance to verbalize claims about products made unlawful advertising difficult for government regulators to identify and prosecute. By softening their sales pitches, advertisers skirted new regulations and dodged accusations of fraud leveled at them and their clients.

With the assistance of public relations firms, large companies distributed free educational materials to teachers and community groups that improved their image without appearing to sell particular brand of product. For example, when Sunkist sent the film, *Golden Orange*, as well as textbooks, charts, and bulletins to educators and private organizations, it simply promoted “the health benefits of eating citrus fruits,” not Sunkist branded products per se. While informative campaigns like that backed by Sunkist promoted the consumption of entire product categories on the basis of rational qualities, like nutrients, the brands associated with the free material enjoyed the prospect of cultivating goodwill amongst consumers, on behalf of a brand and business in general.

These changes, according to advertising historians, were as much about seeking profits amidst economic hard times as shoring up industry’s and advertising’s public image. Between 1936 to 1938, amidst the debates leading up to the Wheeler Act, however, industry’s response was already years in the

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225 Ibid.
making, drawing on the market research methods used by J. Walter Thompson and N. W. Ayer & Son decades earlier. Like Thompson and Ayer, other advertising firms were now eager to apply “scientific” techniques to their craft, first in the late 1930s by adopting strategies of public relations and again in the late 1950s with the application of consumer psychology that informed market segmentation.

Confronted with the prospect of greater government control of advertising in the late 1930s through the Wheeler-Lea Act, more agencies publicly subscribed to research-driven methods. Advertising was not, they asserted, merely a parasitic industry tricking the public into buying things they did not need. Instead, advertisers claimed to be experts in public opinion, able to measure and manipulate it. Far from the metier of charlatan patent medicine sellers of the turn-of-the-century, reputable advertising of the late 1930s rested on sound scientific bases, including opinion polling, demographic studies, and field testing. Such a nuanced understanding of public perception empowered advertisers, they claimed, to influence consumers’ attitudes for the benefit of businesses, government, and the image of the advertising industry itself.226

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226 Historians of American advertising describe the efforts by the industry to defend itself against critiques in the 1930s, coming from a consumer movement with roots before the Great Depression, culminating in the passage of the Wheeler-Lea Amendment, a pointed critique, but ultimately ineffective corrective to misleading ads and “wasteful” consumer spending. While scholars differ on the extent to which the industry mounted a coordinated and organized self-defense, they agree that the strategies of leading firms and the rhetoric of their spokespeople expressed a common message, that good advertising was informed by science and that, together with American business and the cooperation of the US Government, it could best uphold the common good. See McGovern, Sold American; Hower, History of An Advertising Agency, 151-54, 287; Stole, Advertising on Trial, 152-57; “Trauma, Denial, Recovery,” in Lears, Fables of Abundance, 235-58.
From Mass Marketing to Segmentation

As business professed a more reasoned approach to selling, its appreciation of consumption devolved into an irrational act. Heavily researched and abstract ad copy did not anticipate thinking consumers, but instead purchasers who acted impulsively for emotional fulfillment. As early as the 1910s, the largely female staff at JWT held up products like soap and food commodities as guarantors of family harmony and companionship following extensive research into the location, race, income, and occupation of readers’ households. The appeals helped to ameliorate the image of advertisers as professionals and, with the pressure of stricter ad regulations in the late 1930s, the approach afforded the kind of imprecise claims that were difficult to challenge in a court of law, encouraging manufacturers and ad agencies besides JWT to adopt a similar scientific and emotional bent.227

The JWT method attempted to pinpoint the desires of and sell to the “average” American woman, a target that nevertheless excluded the majority of Americans.228 Targeted female buyers belonged to a “middle class” defined largely by race, income, and literacy. In the 1940s, wartime restrictions on consumer spending, high employment and postwar government aid for housing and higher education for veterans grew the pool of target consumers, many

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227 Ibid., 45, 221.

228 What proportion of consumers was excluded depended on the measures used to identify “worthwhile” advertising audiences. Those targeted by the Journal were most certainly white, literate, native-born, and enjoyed a comfortable household income. According to Roland Marchand’s study of the US advertising industry, between thirty and sixty-five percent of Americans were “disenfranchised.” See Scanlon, Inarticulate Longings, 221 and Marchand, Advertising the American Dream, 64-77.
moving into homes in newly-built suburbs. If products succeeded with the “typical” American, businesses could be assured they had captured the widest swath of the market.\textsuperscript{229}

The business model built on producing for and selling to the center of the market assumed American tastes were more or less uniform. When planning production and sales pitches, manufacturers and advertisers arranged consumers along a spectrum according to their levels of disposable income, after accounting for factors like race and education. All consumers may not have enjoyed the same financial means, according to the advertisers’ classifications, but they shared the same preferences in what they chose to purchase when they could. In her account of the postwar economy, historian Lizabeth Cohen observes how this expectation motivated businesses to grow by investing in producing high volumes of goods and reducing costs to attract customers away from the competition, growing their share of the “middle of the market.” To keep sales up and increasing, manufacturers made only superficial changes to mass-produced goods, like shape and color. Similarly, advertisers focused their campaigns on appealing to values they believed middle-class consumers shared. Advertising developed methods of mass distribution that drew on the same logic of predictability as mass production.\textsuperscript{230}

By the early 1950s, advertisers’ faith in the strategy of addressing a largely homogenous consumer market was shaken. Professional studies on

\textsuperscript{229} Cohen, \textit{A Consumer’s Republic}, 294-95.

\textsuperscript{230} Cohen, \textit{Consumer’s Republic}, 295.
consumption patterns, as well as the fear that the middle of the market was reaching its limit in its ability to absorb the products of an ever more efficient economy, challenged the philosophy behind conventional sales pitches. Psychological research into consumer decision-making upturned the belief that people made purchases based on the same reasoning. While not popular among advertising circles until the 1950s, consumer psychology had its roots in earlier Freudian psychoanalysis that assumed people’s behavior was determined by subconscious motivations. Academically-trained Austrian psychologists brought these assumptions to their analyses of American markets in the 1930s. By the 1950s, interest in “motivational research” convinced leading practitioners to set up research establishments in the US, including Pierre Martineau’s department of marketing with the Chicago Tribune, Luis Cheskin’s Colour Research Institute, and Ernest Dichter’s Institute for Motivational Research, the latter two based in New York.  

The work of behavioral psychologists did not support the idea that consumers purchased for the same reasons, much less according to universally-shared tastes. According to Dichter and his colleagues, the American consumer, still envisioned as female, made purchasing choices less based on promises of cause and effect or product characteristics than according to emotional drives of which she was unaware. What did not determine consumer behavior were “technical factors,” remarked Dichter to a contemporary copywriter, like the

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chemistry behind a stain-fighting laundry detergent. The factors influencing consumer behavior were more complex, behavior psychologists cautioned, being determined most by consumers’ visceral reactions to products. Emotional responses were so diverse that Dichter and his fellow researchers discouraged the promotion of goods for general audiences organized by blunt analytical categories of income, education, race, and location (urban, rural). Consumers and their reasons for buying were not homogenous enough to constitute a single audience for advertising nor was a reason-based sales pitch the best way to sway them. 232

Market researchers, themselves largely academically-trained professionals by the mid-twentieth century, including psychologists and sociologists, combined the convictions of Dichter and others with developments in data collecting and organization to categorize consumers according to their many subjective priorities. The result was entirely new or refined definitions of existing groups in which members shared lifestyles, interests, and purchasing habits. According to a 1949 Life Magazine article, a “high brow” American who preferred to dress in a Harris tweed suit was also more likely to enjoy ballet than his “lower middle-brow” counterpart in a “splashy neck-tie, double-breasted suit” who went in for “musical extravaganza films.” The piece charted these tell-tale tastes and more of “a new US social structure.” High, middle, and low brows were divided by their preferences in alcohol, music, art, entertainment, clothing,

and food, as well as their support for civic causes, like art (high-brow) or fraternal organizations (low-brow).\textsuperscript{233} The editors of the mass-circulating weekly were eager to let their own “high-brow” member of the writing staff point out the classification’s shortcomings, even as they invited readers to use the chart to “find their places” in the social hierarchy of taste.

A source of light-hearted social commentary and self-regarding social satire in the late 40s, the ranking of Americans according to income- and occupation-independent measures was not a laughing matter for advertisers by the end of the 1950s. Although \textit{Life} downplayed the evidence of diverse spending habits according to income levels in its own study sampling the spending habits of its six million readers between 1957 and 1960, its leaders of market research acknowledged that groups sharing a given age, income, or education level tended to make similar purchases. By then, marketers at \textit{Life} and elsewhere, as well as advertisers, took the message of sociologists and consumer psychologists seriously, promoting media’s potential to reach defined groups of consumers and creating emotionally-driven advertising with narrower, taste-

defined audiences in mind.\textsuperscript{234}

The conclusions of a handful of transplanted, foreign psychologists would not likely have caught the attention of the advertising world had not a confluence of economics, technology, and criticism made dividing the consumer market beneficial for both the profession and profits. In 1950s, the current business model of mass production and consumption began to show its limits. The market teemed with new goods that were admittedly little different from each other, and the prospect of overproduction and ensuing price wars indicated that Americans in the so-called middle of the market could no longer purchase enough products to sustain a growing economy. The only real avenues for growth, indicated marketing leaders, were in selling to markets beyond the mainstream. To do this, production efficiency developed to manufacture high volumes of similar goods should be redirected to create smaller and more varied product lines.\textsuperscript{235} The growing popularity of televisions in American homes also made targeting

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\textsuperscript{234} The \textit{segmentation} of Americans resulted in more than a consumption-based understanding of class in America. Researchers identified patterns in consumer behavior that linked members of certain age groups, such as seniors and teenagers. One’s identification with certain causes, like feminism or Black Power in the 1960s could also link one to a set of tastes and purchasing habits. While critics regarded the psychological bent of this new phase of advertising as alarmingly manipulative, historians disagree about the extent of advertisers’ and marketers’ control over consumers. Defining new markets, according to Cohen, was often a two-way conversation between commercial interests and groups that were in the process of defining themselves and their causes. For example, African Americans’ civil rights demonstrations that unfolded “at the point of consumption—through sit-ins, selective buying campaigns, and boycotts” amounted to an “assertiveness by this racial subculture [that] fueled marketers’ willingness to treat [supporters] as a viable market segment.” On the other hand, many historians describe a consumer economy in which advertisers and marketers exercised a disproportionate amount of control over Americans’ culture of consumption, through the sheer ubiquity of promotional material distributed through mass media or through the attempts by business to rationalize and manage consumer desires in ways that blurred the lines between cultural and commercial institutions. Though not the inventors of new consumer categories, marketers and advertisers enjoyed a privileged position in their ability to classify the average American consumer. See Cohen, \textit{Consumer’s Republic}, 324; Lears, \textit{Fables of Abundance}; Leach, \textit{Land of Desire}.

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narrower groups of consumers with specific ads and viewing habits feasible.

Adopting purportedly science-supported advertising methods was also a boon to the industry’s public image. The prospect of creating copy informed by the expertise of academic professionals lent respectability to a craft that continued to face de-legitimizing accusations, the most recent being wasteful and manipulative. By drawing on psychology to persuade consumers, Vance Packard charged in his popular 1958 book, *The Hidden Persuaders*, that modern advertising amounted to mass-manipulation. In another critical text published the same year, John Galbraith pointed to advertisers as the architects of misleading economic growth who created the demands and invented needs upon which Fordist mass production depended.236 Others took issue with the self-destructiveness of ever-increasing consumption as American society, prompted by ever more effective advertising, consumed sugars, cigarettes, and dangerous automobiles in excess.237 Even in the world of business, some discounted advertising as an added cost that did little to raise revenues.238

What critics called undue influence on consumers and unproductive work, advertisers and their allies in consumer research praised as education that sustained the national economy. In this two-way, but hardly equal, discourse with consumers, advertisers and marketers made the consumption of certain goods,


including foods, a marker of group membership. At JWT, the agency was proud of its history of a “scientific” approach to defining consumer markets, which included understanding the consumer behavior behind segmentation’s rationale. The advertising that resulted helped to distribute the goods of the modern economy with better precision and involved the company in what it saw as a form of cultural uplift. Addressing fellow advertising leaders at an international conference in 1959, JWT’s vice president and senior economist, Arno Johnson, described their common craft as a “powerful educational and activating force that stimulates improvements in living standards.” Johnson’s reference to living standards spoke to the challenge faced by his audience gathered in Austria to encourage the economic integration of Europe and the greater consumption of goods across the unified market. He continued, describing the challenges in the US market that obtained to Europe, as well. Despite a general increase in income, Americans’ spending on markers of living standards, like food, housing, and travel had not increased to the same degree. “Changes of people’s habits or desires,” Johnson advised, “must be overcome by education and promotional efforts.” Advertising had a key role to play in speeding up consumers’ transition to new tastes. The delay or “Habit Lag,” as Johnson referred to it, was “an important retarding factor which must be shortened by advertising.”

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239 McGovern, Sold American, 31.


241 Johnson, “How Advertising Stimulates Improvement of Living Standards and Expansion of Trade.”
To accelerate the evolution of consumer demand, advertisers in the US needed to guide consumers in achieving different lifestyles. At the end of the 1950s and into the next decade, business shifted to heed a vision of American consumers divided by lifestyles and what this meant for a new definition of effective promotions. Instead of producing for a unified market revolving around the “average consumer,” business manufactured for smaller groups of consumers. Teaching potential consumers how these goods related to each other, observed University of Chicago Sociologist Nelson Foote in 1954, was the collaborative task of marketers and advertisers curating and creating promotional content for media.\footnote{Richard Popp, \textit{The Holiday Makers: Magazines, Advertising, and Mass Tourism in Postwar America} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 54.} Even as business shifted away from selling to the “middle” of the market, advertisers’ goal remained one of mass enlightenment through increasing consumption.

In the postwar era, when advertisers claimed a decisive role in growing consumption and improving standards of living, they contributed to the debate about the compatibility of national welfare and business interests that had animated regulatory debates in the 1930s but never reached a definitive resolution, despite new legislation. The national economy would not function, writers in JWT’s own public relations division warned, without the talent of advertisers who inspired consumers to purchase, a transaction that gave production any monetary value at all.\footnote{“‘Wall Street Looks at Advertising: ‘Advertising More Essential Now than Ever Before to Economic Growth,’” news and editorial proof issued by JWT for release after 6 July 1961. “Articles 1961-62 (4 of 4)”, Box 3, Denis Lanigan Papers.} Since the end of the war, business
leaders spoke out against efforts by consumer activists, including the revived efforts of the Consumers’ Union, to press for greater government regulation. In doing so, businesses equated consumption with Americans’ exercise of individual freedom, casting doubt on the legitimacy of government involvement in the market on behalf of consumers and instead upholding the role of business in preserving individual liberty.\textsuperscript{244} Business leaders and large advertising and marketing organizations like the National Sales Executives applied this logic to an international context, echoing the sentiment of Johnson. To the extent that American capitalism relied on high levels of consumption, the American economic model was more accurately labeled “consumerism,” a term coined by the president of the International Distribution Congress in 1955, Robert Whitney, to express how the country’s embrace of free enterprise that went hand in hand with a high standard of living.\textsuperscript{245} Ad men like Johnson understood themselves as indispensable functions in the equation of American capitalism and freedom in the Cold War. By greasing the wheels of the American economy, advertising also fostered a spirit of acquisitiveness that supported jobs and peoples’ willingness to work, he asserted in his speech to European colleagues. The promise of employment and compensation would, in the words of Johnson speaking as JWT’s vice president in 1959, “be a decisive factor in our world defense against Communist Forces.”\textsuperscript{246} The pivotal role advertising played in the national

\textsuperscript{244} Glickman, \textit{Buying Power}, 263-64.

\textsuperscript{245} Ibid., 264.

economy was further evidenced by the $11 billion it added to national income, tripling profits in the fourteen years since the end of World War II, all the while helping industries sell consumer goods and benefit from a peaceable workforce. In an answer to industry critics about the place of advertising, a 1961 article issued by JWT added a confident final word to the debate: “If [advertising] is controversial, then it is so only in the sense that the free enterprise system of free choice in the market place is controversial.” In the shadow of Cold War politics, dividing the market and encouraging consumption according to lifestyle was both a civic duty and a matter of self-preservation for advertising.

**Segmented Markets and the Promise of Postwar Consumerism: The Case of Pasta**

Accusations of fraud and damaging price wars took its toll on the macaroni industry in the 1930s, with some producers substituting cheaper, spring wheat for the semolina of hard, durum varieties or using less egg than claimed; both were money-saving shortcuts disguised with dyes adding a yellowish color. Even manufacturers who followed FDA rules about pasta ingredients felt pressure to add “natural” coloring to compete with the exaggerated hues of fraudulent pasta. After all, “what does she know about noodles,” asked a 1937 ad for Cloverbloom Special Color Frozen Yolks about its imagined female consumer. Regardless

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247 Cohen, *Consumer’s Republic*, 301.


of whether they made good or poor quality pasta, manufacturers did not count on nor trust consumers with limited food budgets to be able to tell the difference or care.

The adoption of new, efficient machinery by some producers added to the pressure to sell pasta at the lowest possible cost, a trend that continued after the war and contributed to the industry’s consolidation. Wartime price controls and lucrative government contracts gave some companies critical breathing space and capital to purchase struggling competitors and invest in labor-saving machinery that would give them an edge in the coming years. In the immediate postwar economy, only mass production guaranteed, albeit slim, profits, a balance fewer companies were able to achieve. Between 1929 and 1950, the number of individual firms decreased from 353 to 226, while production doubled to reach 1.1 billion pounds. Even as the numbers of producers fell, production grew, which made expanding macaroni consumption as pressing a goal as ever.

Taking its cue from the coordinated promotional efforts of other food industry organizations, the NMMA applied the insights of public relations professionals to the macaroni industry to grow consumption rates. However, as the organization reached out to these masters of public opinion, including Edward Bernays, the message of its 1951-52 campaign, designed by Theodore Sills, Inc., repeated old sales pitches about the food’s versatility, affordability, and

nutritional value. Only by the end of the decade would individual manufacturers promote pasta as an *Italian* food. The reduced numbers of manufacturers that remained in the 1950s were more likely to be owned by larger corporations, managed by boards of directors, and, with access to their own extensive financial resources, had little incentive to contribute to cooperative advertising campaigns.

Working independently, large companies promoted pasta as Italian in ways that drew on the theories of market segmentation with the help of marketing and advertising professionals. As in other areas of the economy, advertisers accepted responsibility for ensuring that the food industry remained profitable. When it came to selling foods, contributor to *Printer’s Ink* Russ Carpenter recommended, promotions in the claustrophobic market needed to be tailored to topic and season and rely more on images than text.\(^{251}\) Calls like Carpenter’s for more sophisticated advertising required a “scientific” understanding of consumer behavior.

Through his Institute for Motivational Research, Dichter advised food manufacturers and advertisers on how to apply consumer psychology to promoting their products. Drawing on data from extensive interviews, Dichter’s team concluded that modern female consumers believed consuming packaged foods, much of the new food products available, was “lazy,” despite embracing labor-saving technology in other areas of housekeeping. To overcome this prejudice, Dichter suggested that promotions should show consumers how to “manipulate” packaged foods, to make them tools for personal expression

enhanced with symbolic value and prestige.\textsuperscript{252} By appealing to consumers’ “creativeness,” advertisers could upgrade the image of foods and assert diversity in a market that seemed monotonous.

From the perspective of consumer psychology, apparent uniformity, once a positive hallmark of nutritional and hygienically-produced, domestic macaroni, was an obstacle to growth. In applying their methods to the macaroni industry on behalf of New York-based Vincent La Rosa and Sons, Dichter’s Institute found that consumers also were not swayed by nutritional arguments since they had come to assume that “all ‘good’ companies” could be trusted to make wholesome macaroni.\textsuperscript{253} In the end, the difference between brand X and Y came down to price. Interviews with “housewives” revealed that not only pasta brands, but pasta as a category of food, lacked “personality.” It was also “old fashioned,” “low status,” “boring,” and for the “lazy housewife.” To counter these negative impressions the research team proposed that the food’s indeterminate character opened the way for appealing to the home cook’s creativity. A recipe booklet that combined macaroni with gourmet ingredients like lobster might also “represent a prestige association which might rub off on the low status of macaroni as it appears today,” much like the Ford’s Thunderbird model, the group observed, elevated the status of the entire automaker’s line.\textsuperscript{254} As for the nutritional value of

\textsuperscript{252} Arvidsson, “Discovery of Subjectivity,” 280; Laura Shapiro, \textit{Something from the Oven: Reinventing Dinner in 1950s America} (New York: Penguin, 2004), 65.

\textsuperscript{253} Institute for Motivational Research, “Creative Memorandum on the Consumer Motivations at Work in the Purchase of Macaroni,” 1959, Box 53, Ernest Dichter Papers, 1936-1991, Soda House, Hagley Special Collections, Wilmington, DE.

\textsuperscript{254} Ibid., 11.
pasta, interviewees did not care much. The “so-called ‘nuts and bolts’ story” made for less compelling copy than the “emotional appeal which a particular product has for them.”

If uniformity and taken-for-granted nutritional value convinced consumers to choose between pasta brands solely based on price, what companies faced was another period of damaging price wars. Manufacturers, however, could avert this worst-case scenario with the insights of consumer psychology that held that purchases were best motivated when they were shown to fulfill abstract desires, such as a way to affirm or live out lifestyles or interests. The obligation for advertisers and marketers was to associate actual products with the images and values they wanted them to evoke. In the case of pasta, some advertisers recast a food considered ordinary and a pantry staple, using, in the words of the spokesman for Mueller Macaroni in 1955, the “‘reason why’ of taste.”

Travel Narratives: Postwar Food Writing and the Value of Authenticity

When manufacturers and copywriters recast pasta as an Italian food in a positive sense, they linked the product to food values articulated in conversations that circulated between dining clubs, food-themed travel memoirs, guidebooks, magazine articles, and restaurant reviews since the 1930s. Since then, interest in

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255 Institute for Motivational Research, “Creative Memorandum on the Consumer Motivations at Work in the Purchase of Macaroni,” 14-15; in a further testament to the importance Dichter’s researchers placed on consumer impressions, the institute’s London office advised a pasta manufacturer to rethink ad photos after six out of eighty-four members of a consumer panel associated a plate of macaroni with “maggots and worms” in 1962. “Summary of Findings on the Comparison of the Two Advertisements for Quaker Macaroni and Campbell’s Condensed Soups,” 1962, Box 73, Ernest Dichter Papers, 1936-1991.

and accessibility of so-called gourmet cooking and dining had grown but remained restricted. Along the way, taste leaders defined a food’s quality as a measure of its authenticity and affirmed tropes that asserted travel as the best way to enjoy so-called genuine foods. Advertisers would use both of these ideas to remake the image of pasta.

Unlike home economists, this collection of gourmet food writers were not inclined to praise a food based on claims of its chemical or body-building components. Historians of American cooking and food sensibilities date the beginning of changing attitudes demonstrated and promoted by these food writers to the 1930s when their calls to eat food for pleasure, as opposed to nutrition, attracted a limited, but identifiable following. Signs of changing attitudes included reaction to the end of Prohibition in 1934 and the reception in 1937 of published essays by food writer MFK Fisher about her life, travels, and food-centered experiences in France. Additional early milestones indicating Americans’ interest and openness to new approaches to eating include the establishment of a monthly magazine in 1941, Gourmet, dedicated to fine food. Gourmet food culture crossed a further threshold in 1961 with the publication of the widely popular cookbook, Mastering the Art of French Cooking by Julia Child, and the start of Child’s successful television cooking show based on the same
theme in 1962.257

Between the 1930s and early 1960s, historians trace the growth of Americans’ interest in gourmet food, dubbing it a “gourmet food movement.” However, “gourmets,” defined by historian David Strauss as typically male individuals “who know fine food and wines, even when they have lusty appetites,” remained an exclusive set, socially and in terms of gender, into the 1950s; as a food adjective, “gourmet” continued to refer to French food.258

“Fine” food remained a social indicator as Americans’ interest in it grew, despite its so-called simple manifestations. For Fisher and her like-minded writers, the goal of eating was enjoyment over nourishment. Between cooking instructions and accounts of her time in Europe, especially France, Fisher laid out her own philosophy of eating. She called on Americans to engage with food for pleasure, leaving behind the dry and rational view of food as a source of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. Fisher and her fellow literary gourmands

257 Food historians Laura Shapiro, Jessamyn Neuhaus, and David Strauss, as well as sociologists Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann date the beginning of an identifiable trend in Americans’ interest in gourmet and particularly French food to the 1930s and 40s, citing the early publications by MFK Fisher in 1937, 1941, and 1942 and the founding of *Gourmet* in 1941. While Strauss credits *Gourmet* with modest challenges to long-standing elitism in definitions of fine food, Shapiro and Neuhaus look to more popular media to explain the broadening appeal of gourmet food in cooking shows and mass media cookbooks in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including Julia Child’s cookbook and television show on French cooking. Historians and sociologists concur, however, on the link between Americans’ embrace of so-called gourmet food and ethnic food with the latter entering popular culture as a form of fine food. See David Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia: Gourmet Dining in America, 1934 to 1961* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, Jessamyn Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2003), and Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

258 Strauss, *Setting the Table*, 2-9; Shapiro notes how (Mary Frances Kennedy) Fisher chose to write under the more gender neutral pen name MFK Fisher, to improve her credibility the strongly male gourmet literary world. See Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, 198.
encouraged their readers to appreciate food for its own sake, to seek out ingredients that were fresh, and to prepare them simply. The emphasis of the new gourmands’ appeared to democratize fine food by rejecting its equation with haute cuisine and elevating simple cooking techniques and ingredients.

The first magazine dedicated to food, *Gourmet*, also professed an egalitarian approach to who qualified as a gourmand and what could be called gourmet food. Editor Earle MacAusland summarized the publication’s tenets in its namesake cookbook printed first in 1950. In it, he echoed the admonitions of Fisher by emphasizing the sensual experience of food and showing an apparent disregard for social or professional status. MacAusland asked that diners “take pleasure in [their] food artistically, emotionally, imaginatively” and went on to place his periodical in the tradition of revered French nineteenth-century food writer, Jean Brillat-Savarin. A giant of the literary gourmet world, MacAusland pointed out, Brillat-Savarin shared the title “gourmet” with “his peasant countrymen and women, whose names will never be known...for they appreciated good food and made the delectable most out of amazingly little.”

Not having an open mind, rather than lack of training and resources, was the true barrier to fine dining.

*Gourmet’s* understanding of its readership, its celebration of French food,

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as well as its emphasis on travel as a source of “true” knowledge about fine food, revealed the persistence of taste-driven eating as a status-conferring practice. As Strauss demonstrates in his critical study of *Gourmet*, its letters to the editor, and its most famous travel author, Samuel Chamberlain, in the 1940s and 50s, the magazine connected with its readers on the basis of shared, elite values. The periodical’s content, including its gourmet travel guides that first appeared in installments as articles, was dedicated overwhelmingly to French cuisine; the bias reflected the conventions of elite dining in the US since the late nineteenth century when socially self-conscious industrialists sought to adopt European culture to supplement and legitimize their new-found economic status.²⁶¹ Chamberlain’s first guide, *Bouquet de France*, printed in 1949, included the largest recipe collection of any of the two subsequent guides to Italy and Britain. The latter cuisines he assessed according to the extent they incorporated French culinary standards or were approved of by French food authorities. While never mentioning price, Chamberlain addressed readers as fellow, well-educated and well-traveled lovers of food with the time and resources for leisured, automobile excursions through provincial European towns. Chamberlain shunned the structure and itineraries of more economical, packaged tours that funneled crowds of visitors into capital cities. Tourists to these destinations were sure to find only bland dishes in generic locales and return home not knowing the real country or its people; the latter, he indicated, were most accessible by automobile

²⁶¹ Strauss, *Setting the Table*, 3-4, 167-68.
touring in the countryside. Like the distinction between independent travelers and the package-tour tourists, Chamberlain addressed his readers (like himself) as a cut above the rest, those "‘endowed with aesthetic sensibilities, educated taste buds and a normal joie de vivre (and that without any apple-polishing is my idea of a Gourmet reader).’"

Readers reciprocated with praise. Some wrote to the magazine lauding Chamberlain for his advice and transporting, evocative prose that made him seem a real traveling companion. Others called the guides their "bible," referring to its usefulness on trips actually taken. An indispensable guide and "one of the group," Chamberlain was trusted by Gourmet readers to further refine their food education.

Child, credited with challenging the exclusivity of gourmet eating by demystifying French cooking, recognized the elitism Chamberlain and fellow self-proclaimed fine-food enthusiasts upheld. The artistry and rare ingredients lauded as essential to gourmet food made it inaccessible to most. It permitted Gourmet to print recipes without clear directions, especially in its series of articles

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262 Ibid., 164.

263 Samuel Chamberlain, quoted in Strauss, Setting the Table, 169.

264 Strauss, Setting the Table, 169-70.

265 Ibid.

266 Shapiro quotes a letter by Child in which she expresses her dismissal of French cooking as a rarified practice: After listening to “a circle of Frenchmen discussing food,” Child wrote to a friend about how “‘They were talking about Buerre Blanc, and how it was a mystery, and only a few people could do it, and how it could only be made with white shallots from Lorraine and over a wood fire. Phoo.’” Child to DeVoto, March 6, 1953. Quoted in Shapiro, Something from the Oven, 209.
(also by Chamberlain) that recounted the experiences of a fictional French cook, Clementine, who recreated the country cooking of her homeland in America. As food historian Laura Shapiro notes, when similarly unspecific recipes appeared in *Bouquet de France*, Child complained that they were not well-tested nor easy to follow. MacAusland disregarded Child’s criticism, Shapiro suggests, as a way to ensure the magazine and travel guide readership would remain within the ranks of a skilled and knowledgable few. To support this claim, Shapiro also points out how *Gourmet* restricted distribution of its travel guides to subscribers and select bookstores.²⁶⁷

Despite the exclusivity of *Gourmet*’s intended audience in the 1950s, the magazine was at the leading edge of America’s changing food culture and its connection to travel narratives during and after World War II.²⁶⁸ Cookbook writers reiterated themes of travel and authenticity widely in the 1950s. Collectively, they affirmed themes of travel and authentic experiences through eating that also served to elevate non-French foods to the status of “gourmet.” Despite the growing audiences reached by *Gourmet* and other cookbooks that connected food with authentic experiences, gourmet eating maintained an air of exclusivity by making travel, in this case transatlantic, a source of specialized knowledge for

²⁶⁷ Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, 205-208.

²⁶⁸ Strauss’s study claims that *Gourmet* was one of a few key institutions, though elite, that modestly pushed the boundaries of who and what qualified as gourmet and gourmet food. The result, Strauss contends, was an audience primed to accept Julia Child when she made her public television debut in 1962. What remains unclear is how a publication with narrow appeal and circulation wetted the appetites of Child’s mainstream audiences. This is where I argue that advertising helped bring more Americans into the conversation about fine food. See Strauss, *Setting the Table.*
themselves and their readers.

In the mid to late 1950s, the treatment of Italian food in travel narratives by Chamberlain for *Gourmet* challenged the centrality of French food to fine dining but not the limited appeal of fine dining to a cultural elite. Before Chamberlain’s culinary itinerary of Italy was published as *Italian Bouquet*, a stand-alone guidebook in 1958, it appeared in 1955 as a series of articles in *Gourmet* titled “A Gastronomic Tour of Italy.” As in his French travel guides, Chamberlain put food at the center of the travel experience in Italy, rivaling, for example, the art, history, or landscape foreign travelers historically sought in Italy. While the region of Emilia Romagna offered an array of medieval city centers, Chamberlain admitted in the March 1955 issue, the truly observant traveler was one who made a point of seeing the area through the lens of epicures by punctuating their journey with stops to try the famous pastas of the area: *pappardelle*, *tortellini*, *tagliatelle*, *cappellini*, and *lasagne*.269 In Veneto, as Chamberlain observed in the August issue, where most tourists were distracted by the romantic architecture of palaces, piazzas, and churches of cities like Venice and Verona, “landmark” restaurants and cafes also vied for the visitor’s attention.270

The association between Italian food and travel and the related connection between food and authentic experiences was reiterated in cookbooks beyond *Gourmet*. By the mid-1950s, while mainstream publications on food, including the


cookbook “bibles” by *Good Housekeeping* and *The Joy of Cooking*, had only hinted at valuing Italian food for its authenticity, they nevertheless helped to popularize the notion of travel experiences through food or the importance of assessing food according to standards of genuineness. In 1955, the same year Chamberlain’s travel articles about Italy appeared in *Gourmet*, a cookbook compiled by the publishers of *Good Housekeeping*, a woman’s monthly with a broader focus and audience, encouraged readers to “‘visit’” other countries through its indexed Foreign Flavor section.271 With updated editions published every decade since 1920, the 1955 version was the first to relate food consumption or preparation with travel and signaled a new theme in the way large publishers directed consumers to relate to food with foreign provenance. “If You’re Interested in Foreign Recipes,” its editor Dorothy Marsh advised in the introduction, “don’t travel any farther than Foreign Flavor [recipes] in the Index.” There, the cook afflicted with wanderlust would “find the country you’d like to ‘visit’.”272 Accordingly, unlike previous editions of the cookbook, the 1955 version included “Italian” as a distinct category in its index that listed pasta-based dishes, among others.273 Significantly, the readership of *Good Housekeeping* magazine dwarfed that of *Gourmet* with over four million subscribers in 1958, compared to


272 See Ibid.

Postwar editions of another popular culinary reference book, *Joy of Cooking*, showed a similar, albeit small, shift in drawing attention to Italian cooking as a window into real Italian life. In 1946, author Irma Rombauer introduced her collection as a product of her life experiences, including foreign travel and the foods she encountered along the way. However, such dishes that appeared in the volume, she assured readers, were “given an acceptable Americanization.”

Buried in the section Starchy Foods, Rombauer briefly described the Italian custom of serving pasta separate from the sauce. However, the 1953 edition, compiled with the help of Rombauer’s daughter, Marion Rombauer Becker, went further, suggesting readers might want to adopt Italian standards when deciding if pasta is adequately cooked:

You ask what is ‘until done’? This is a matter of taste… An Italian may think 8 to 10 minutes to a point he calls ‘al dente,’ so the pasta still resists the teeth is ideal. My preference is 10 to 15 minutes, according to the thickness of the pasta used.

Significantly, in the 1962 edition the editor’s personal preference was omitted,

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274 The total subscribers listed in *Business Week* for 1958 cited by Strauss is 130,000, while a 1958 JWT survey puts the figure at 114,513. Either way, the readership was very limited compared to that of other national monthlies with food features, including *Better Homes and Gardens* (4,379,237) and *Good Housekeeping* (4,233,252). See Strauss, *Setting the Table*, 193n1; J. Walter Thompson Company, “Olive Advisory Board: 1958-59 Advertising Plans as Presented to the Board, July 11, 1958,” Box 3, File “Articles 1958 and n.d.” Denis Lanigan Papers.


letting the Italian standard of doneness stand authoritatively on its own. Additionally, to justify the inclusion in the 1962 edition of an apparently banal recipe, Spaghetti with Egg and Cheese, the editor explained how it is made with “not the usual cheese sauce, but an Italian version.”277 Further recipes and references to Rombauer’s travel experiences in Italy reinforced the editors’ emphasis on food as an objective and medium of travel. Anecdotes combined with notes on the ways Italians (in Italy) prepared pasta, implied the value of remaining faithful to Italian cooking.278

In the mid-1950s, writers in exclusive Gourmet, but also in mass-printed cookbooks, described Italian food, similar to French food, as worthy of being celebrated for its authenticity and even a substitute for or the main attraction of travel. Like Rombauer and Rombauer Becker’s Joy of Cooking, cookbooks published by other major publishers through the following decade, including Life, echoed the connection between international travel or adventure and food.279

However, by locating worthwhile Italian foods in Italy, food writers withheld assigning prestige to Italian fare most readily available in America, that is food made in Italian-American communities. While some cookbook authors did so by equating authentic Italian foods with those consumed in Italy (as opposed to the US), others were more pointed in drawing distinctions between true and false

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278 See entries on “Gnocchi,” “Polenta” and “About Spaghetti, Macaroni and Noodles” in Rombauer and Rombauer Becker, Joy of Cooking (1962), 179, 186.

Italian food. This took the form of singling out the Italian foods most Americans knew as bastardized examples that threatened the integrity of the sensory experience of food. To remedy this, writers insisted that real and virtual travelers needed guidance in identifying genuine dishes, lest the untutored be misguided.

The distinction sometimes came in the form of negative critiques of the cooking traditions developed by Italian immigrants in the US, most of whom hailed from the southern regions of the Italian peninsula and emigrated in the first two decades of the twentieth century. One such culinary innovation of Italian Americans included meatballs served in a tomato sauce over spaghetti. The meaty addition, warned Italian native and cookbook author Nika Standen in her 1946 cookbook, *Reminiscence and Ravioli*, should “never, never” be put in an Italian tomato sauce. Spaghetti and meatballs was just one example of “the horrible messes of pseudo-Italian cuisine” Standen found in the US.

Other authors assumed the role of authoritative culinary tour guide when introducing Americans to “true” Italian cooking. A 1955 cookbook, *The Italian Cookbook: An Italian Expert’s Collection of more than 420 Authentic Recipes for the American Homemaker and Hostess*, published by Random House and written by Maria Luisa Taglienti, introduced the author by laying out her Italy-based credentials. The publisher’s author biography on the cookbook cover boasted how Taglienti hailed from a cosmopolitan and noble background. Furthermore, Taglienti’s claim to provide readers with “authentic recipes” was supported by

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280 Myra Waldo, *Cook as the Romans do; recipes of Rome and northern Italy* [sic] (New York: Collier, 1961), 10-12.

describing “a special three-months trip to all parts of Italy in the summer of 1952 [that] enabled Miss Taglienti to complete her basic research” by consulting friends and family, visiting libraries, consulting manuscripts, and visiting country’s best restaurants. In Taglienti’s own words, the preparation would “insure the authenticity of every regional specialty” presented in the collection. She went on to warn readers that they “will find less of a taste of garlic in most of these recipes than they are accustomed to find in most Italian-American restaurants.” Taglienti’s message was clear: understanding real Italian cooking required international experience and connections, not one’s being a regular at the neighborhood “Italian” restaurant.282

Some critiques of Italian-American cuisine were more direct. According to Myra Waldo’s introduction to her 1961 recipe collection, Cook as the Romans do; recipies of Rome and northern Italy [sic], Americans’ assumption about the heavy use of garlic in Italian cooking was another “gross misunderstanding.” Waldo promised to share with readers her knowledge of the country’s cooking beyond its southern climes. As it was, the food served by Italian restaurants in the US was “compromised.” Americans’ misconception about Italian food, she surmised, may have been due to the fact that the regions of Napoli and Sicily sent more “aggressive” Italians to live in the US whose distinctive eating habits had come to represent all of Italian cooking in the eyes of Americans.283 The lingering


283 Waldo, Cook as the Romans do, 11-12.
influence on Waldo’s tone of a long history of prejudice against southern Italians whose cooking was held up as evidence of racial and cultural backwardness is unmistakable. Besides these examples of overtly critical references to Italian-American cooking, the premise of cookbooks that promised to educate white-Americans in “true” Italian cooking implied that Italian cuisine developed by immigrants was less genuine.

Despite signs of growing interest in consuming gourmet food and expanding the list of cuisines that met the high standards of fine food as evident in *Gourmet*, popular, mass-distributed cookbooks, and recipe collections focused on Italian cooking, changes were modest. The elevation of authenticity as a means to evaluate Italian food, measured by how closely it resembled dishes prepared in the old country, as well as literary conventions that associated non-Anglo-American foods, including Italian, with travel, upheld the potential of foreign food to divide Americans, even as it appeared more frequently in printed media.

**Pasta, “Italian-Style”: Authenticity Meets Nutrition and Frugality**

When the NMMA solicited a proposal for a publicity campaign from Edward Bernays in 1949, the public relations leader envisioned a campaign that associated pasta with new trends in food writing. He suggested a strategy centered on the expertise and reputation of Crosby Gaige, a cookbook author and food writer for *Country Life*, a national magazine about leisure and rural
living. Gaige identified his approach to food with that of MFK Fisher and spoke disapprovingly of Fannie Farmer and her disciples who put the principles of scientific eating first.

The national organization rejected Bernays' proposal that would have recast pasta as a fine food. Instead, it would be large, individual companies, with the expertise of advertising firms, who would apply the values of gourmet food through national campaigns. Ad campaigns combined established values of efficiency, thrift, and nutrition with claims of authenticity that drew attention to macaroni's Italian origins.

In 1954, advertising for dry and prepared pasta and pasta sauces showed signs of change as some of the handful of firms that dominated the market added "Italian" to cheap and nutritious on the list of pasta's appealing qualities. The foreign touch could be as subtle as emphasizing the use of certain ingredients like Heinz canned spaghetti in sauce that used "real Romano cheese" or by claiming that their product was made in "real, Italian-style." The latter phrase usually implied that the recipe was too time-consuming to be conveniently made at home, as in the Franco-American ad for its spaghetti sauce with meat whose recipe was "quite complicated and 'Italian.'" "Why cook all day when you can

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285 Neuhaus, Manly Meals, 106.


get real Italian-style Spaghetti Sauce like this,” asked another Franco-American ad. Ads that mentioned Italian cooking methods did so to highlight the efficiency of purchasing ready-made items, a new twist on the theme of time-saving macaroni dinners. Drawing attention to the Italianness of products, however construed, did not preclude references to thrift, nutrition, and ease, which persisted.

With the assistance of ad agencies, a few manufacturers went further to situate their products in the hierarchy of taste that drove postwar market segmentation. These producers linked pasta to sophisticated taste through promises of travel and authentic experiences. With these new standards, pasta’s Italian associations played a central role in connecting it to the themes of the gourmet movement. Selling culturally uplifting products to consumers appealed to postwar advertisers’ own sense of professionalism and affirmed their and their clients’ roles as cultural arbiters.

**Buitoni Foods Corporation, Makers of *Authentic* Italian Foods**

Before the mid-1950s, the largest, national advertisers or producers of “real” Italian pasta and related products in the US were not Italian or Italian American firms. In 1955, the smaller and regional Buitoni Foods Corporation, the American branch of the Italian company, International Buitoni Organization, took advantage of this discrepancy by commodifying their own identity. With the help of the J. Walter Thompson Company, Buitoni presented itself to Americans as

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pursuers of “true” Italian products, promising the thrill of travel and to be proof of consumers’ refined taste. A strategic marketing choice for a company facing strong competition from American conglomerates, Buitoni’s claims to authenticity reinforced the standards of Italian cooking in America as superior and the innovations of Italian Americans as less valuable.

The Buitoni Foods Corporation, manufacturers of canned and dry pastas, as well as prepared pasta sauces, worked with the JWT between 1955 and 1957 to reintroduce their products to American consumers as foods for cosmopolitan eaters. This marked a stark contrast to the company’s earlier appeals and business model. Since 1939, the American seat of the much larger International Buitoni Organization had established its reputation in line with the prevailing image of pasta as a progressive food, cheap and nutritious.

The branch’s founder, Giovanni Buitoni, promoted his products, at first, like other American firms: economical and energy-filled. His first venture, a concession stand serving spaghetti at the World’s Fair in New York City in 1940, relied heavily on the assistance of other Italian immigrants, as investors and suppliers of the pasta and sauce that filled fairgoers plates.289 Fair organizers expedited the application approval of Buitoni Spaghetti, Inc. to serve “a genuine Italian Spaghetti plate dinner” for twenty-five cents. While some Buitoni competitors had begun the process at least two years before the fair opened in 1939, Giovanni Buitoni negotiated for a space almost a year into the exposition.

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and was selling spaghetti topped with his Italian cousin’s imported sauce within a month of his initial request. For the remaining four and a half months of the fair, Buitoni Spaghetti, Inc. fed thirty thousand hungry fair visitors a day, earning its backers a six percent return on their investment. Encouraged by this success, most of the founders of Buitoni Spaghetti, Inc. reinvested in the new Buitoni Corporation to manufacture pasta and supply a new, less ephemeral, pasta-centric eatery in Times Square. Within a month of the fair’s conclusion in October 1940, Buitoni welcomed guests to the Spaghetti Bar.

Despite strong Italian connections, both in terms of brand and familial ties, the early Buitoni Corporation did not publicize its European connections when it came to selling its products. Instead, the temporary Buitoni Spaghetti, Inc. stall and Spaghetti Bar sold its products as value for money, but in ways that challenged the food’s humdrum reputation. At the World’s Fair, Buitoni sold its spaghetti Italian dinners for twenty-five cents, considerably less than the competing Roman Spaghetti House with meals from thirty-five to fifty-five cents. At the Times Square location, value for money continued as a prevailing theme. There, after entering through the location’s revolving door, customers paid twenty-five cents for as much spaghetti as they wanted, conveyed to the futuristically-styled dining room on a conveyor belt. In some ways, the Spaghetti

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290 George Smith Jr. (Co-Dir. of Amusements) to Chairman of the Board, 15 April 1940, 13 May 1940, Box 579, New York World’s Fair 1939-40, Central Files, Pl. 680 Buitoni Spaghetti, Inc., New York Public Library.

291 Giovanni Buitoni later admitted that during the fair he had a recurring nightmare that he was drowning in a sea of spaghetti; perhaps even he was struck by Americans’ appetite for spaghetti and the volume his operation sold! See Buitoni, Storia di un imprenditore, 88-89.

292 Smith Jr. to Chairman of the Board, 15 April 15 1940.
Bar not only carried over its principle of low prices established at the fair, but reproduced the fair’s larger theme of the world of the future in its aesthetics and operations.  

As pasta manufacturers in the 1940s and early 50s, the Buitoni Corporation appealed to values of nutrition through its new so-called starchless macaroni line. Dubbed the “non-fattening pasta,” Minusamid contained double the proportion of protein compared to the official definition of macaroni laid out by the US Government. The discrepancy threatened to doom Buitoni’s efforts and left the immigrant businessman feeling marginalized for his Italian background. Despite sharing Italian roots with many Italian-American members of the NMMA, Giovanni Buitoni faced solid resistance from the organization to his proposal to sell pasta with twenty percent protein (instead of the usual ten percent). In 1943, NMMA members voted to oust him from the organization, but Buitoni commenced producing the rejected pasta for four more years. In the mean time, the conflict dragged on as a legal battle until the FDA ruled against Buitoni. Large and small pasta manufacturers in the US, Buitoni concluded, cooperated in limiting his company’s success. Giovanni Buitoni’s long push to have his high-protein pasta approved by the FDA was evidence of his conviction that Americans valued products according to their nutritional value and would willingly purchase Minusamid, despite the higher price tag.

After World War II, the Buitoni family in the US and Italy took steps to

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reverse the isolation of Buitoni’s American branch. Ironically, the strengthened influence of family members still based in Italy pushed the American company to adopt the modern marketing techniques that used the logic of segmentation. In Italy, many advertising agencies were founded by individuals with experience in the US industry or were international branches of American firms whose presence and influence grew steadily from 1948. The J. Walter Thompson Company that would work with the Buitoni firms in the US and Italy opened its Milan office in 1951. Businesses that did not hire out their marketing tended to also be those who refused to adopt American methods, which they dismissed as a waste of money. Such companies, in turn, were labeled “old-fashioned” by those who did.  

This was the forefront of advertising that Giovanni Buitoni’s nephew, Bruno, was exposed to while working for the family firm in Italy. In 1954, Bruno took a break from his role at the family’s Italian headquarters to oversee the US factories; to the younger Buitoni, his uncle’s sales methods seem outdated. Bruno was convinced that his uncle’s refusal to change tactics and hire an outside advertising agency was limiting the firm’s growth in America.  

Bruno succeeded in convincing his uncle when the American firm agreed to hire JWT to promote its expanded product line of prepared sauces and canned and dry pastas between 1955 and 1957. The ad campaign the company designed for Buitoni focused attention on the firm’s products as Italian food and

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296 Buitoni, Pasta e cioccolato, 116-18.
downplayed themes of pasta's affordability or nutritional benefits. In the end, JWT only held the Buitoni Corporation's account for a little over two years, but the advertising emphases continued as the firm transferred its account to other professional ad agencies; considering the brevity of Buitoni's relationship with JWT, but the endurance of the themes the campaign highlighted, underscores the contribution the agency's copywriters made in shaping postwar discourses of ethnic food and authenticity for pasta.

At one million dollars, the cost of the campaign pushed the company into the category of "a major national advertiser," according to a contributor to Advertising Age. Buitoni's JWT-designed campaign mobilized conventional print media outlets, like national magazines and newspapers, but also those new to the firm, including radio and television, the latter recognized for its ability to convey advertisers' messages directly to defined groups of consumers. The message, "Close your eyes and you're eating in Italy," reached consumers through regional newspapers, live demonstrations, and prizes, as well as magazines and radio and television networks across the country. Over half of the total cost of the campaign paid for television ads.

The ad campaign managed by JWT beginning in 1955 consisted of images of elegantly dressed women savoring the taste and smells of their products with vistas of Italian landmarks in the background. The campaign

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theme, “Close your eyes and you’re eating in Italy,” was repeated with little variation in most print ads. Collectively, the ads urged consumers to change their view of the firm’s products and to situate it in discourses of middle- and upper-middle-class taste for gourmet foods. In doing so, the Buitoni Foods Corporation and JWT joined other American manufacturers of pasta and related products in selling “real” Italian food. However, the campaign designed and implemented by JWT set the Buitoni brand apart from its competition with claims of authenticity that centered on the firm’s Italian connections, which competing Heinz, Ann Page, Campbell’s Franco-American, and other large brands could not match.

Under the JWT campaign, the Buitoni Corporation became purveyors of Continental authenticity, despite manufacturing their products in the US. The promotions cultivated the sense that the Buitoni brand and its products were unique in their strong Italian ties. Ad copy referred to the Italian pedigree of the firm’s recipes, crediting Signora Giulia Buitoni, Giovanni’s grandmother, with formulating the “original Buitoni family recipe” over one hundred years ago. The current creators were only two generations removed. By describing the company history, referring to the family matriarch by name, and drawing a direct link from her to the present Buitonis, ads attempted to establish the company’s credibility as it offered “authentic flavor” meat sauce that, together with Buitoni spaghetti made “a completely authentic Italian dinner.”

The message of authenticity served dual claims of credibility for the

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Thompson agency and the American branch of an Italian company. For JWT, the campaign brought together trends in food and tourism advertising in ways that affirmed the role of professional advertisers in upgrading popular taste. Image-dominated tourism ads in the 1950s and 60s paid heed to, in the words of its most famous practitioner, David Ogilvy, of Ogilvy, Benson & Mather, the traveler’s impulse to “‘collect cliches’” for self-aggrandizement.\textsuperscript{300} Travel narratives in books and magazine articles about gourmet food had already begun to establish tourism as a source of genuine culinary experiences, another kind of cliche. “Close your eyes and you’re eating in Italy” combined these trends of business (tourism) and culture (food literature), adding the function of cultural broker to advertising and advertisers. The visions of Italian scenery presented Buitoni products as gourmet food worthy of its own travel narrative and entrees to well-known Italian scenery.\textsuperscript{301}

Being a cultural authority also carried educational responsibilities, since JWT was selling food described as authentic to readers of popular dailies, as well as audiences of television and radio, many of whom were unlikely to be experts themselves. Some copy addressed supposedly knowledgable consumers, suggesting that “if you really know Italian food, you’ll recognize its real Italian flavor.” Instead, lines like this ultimately helped demonstrate the special knowledge of the manufacturers (and copywriters) without sounding overly didactic. Lists of the ingredients that made sauces or raviolis “truly” Italian and

\textsuperscript{300} Popp, \textit{Holiday Makers}, 118.

\textsuperscript{301} Ibid., 118.
translations of Italian pasta terms, like “al dente, tender yet firm,” describing fully-cooked Buitoni spaghetti, taught consumers the characteristics of genuine Italian foods.

Stressing the company’s Italian connections made sense for an advertising agency whose professional self-perception spurred it to elevate consumption, in terms of quantity and quality. For the Buitoni Corporation, there was a trade-off; appearing Italian came at the expense of its American or Italian-American reality. Ads that included a map of the Buitoni family factories indicated only those in Italy, ignoring the facility founded by Giovanni Buitoni in Hackensack, New Jersey, where the products advertised were in fact produced. As early as 1951, the Buitoni Corporation found that introducing American consumers to its American-made products had to be done through the company’s Italian reputation. The “Italian Fair” organized by New York’s Macy’s department store refused to feature products from the Hackensack factory in its foreign food display. Still hopeful of promoting the Buitoni name at such a well-publicized event, the in-house director of marketing at the plant improvised by displaying empty boxes of pasta from Buitoni Italy accompanied by a sign that advised shoppers that similar, American-made products were available from the Buitoni Corporation in another section of the store. The exclusion of Buitoni’s American products from the fair suggested that the understanding of “Italian” food by the heads of a major retailer like Macy’s did not include the products of

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Italian-Americans. The exclusion of American-made products seems all the more notable given that Macy’s representatives prepared for the event by visiting Italian artisans to encourage the production of “Americanized” goods by a “‘toning-down’ of the ornateness and florid-finishing” they associated with Italian crafts. Like the tourist perspective addressed in later Buitoni promotions, marketers presented “Italy” based on assumptions about consumers’ points of view.

Authenticity was an admittedly flexible quality, a fact exploited by the Buitoni Corporation and the Thompson agency to sell pasta and related products in a market dominated by large and well-known domestic manufacturers. As the Buitoni Corporation based its claims to value on its nearness to Italy, it deemphasized its American context and disassociated authentic Italian foods with Italian-American cooking. When a younger member of the Buitoni family, Marco Buitoni, explained the success of the Buitoni brand in America in 1968, he revealed that the company won over consumers not by selling “‘what we think is the right sauce.’” Instead, “we must give them what they think is the right sauce’” (emphasis my own). What Marco failed to acknowledge was how much consumers’ expectations of “the right sauce” were influenced by earlier efforts by ad agencies like JWT and producers like Buitoni to sell a their sauce.

**Buitoni and the Prepared Pasta and Sauces Market**

It is not clear whether Buitoni’s and JWT’s choice to celebrate the firm’s

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303 E. de Lancellotti (NJ, USA) to Gio. & Fili Buitoni (San Sepolcro), June 6, 1951, Direzione Generale Amministrative Delegato-Buitoni, Box 35, AIBP.
Italian connections initiated a new trend in advertising national brands of pasta and pasta sauces. From the mid-1950s, positive references to pasta’s *Italian* roots in the advertisements was common, but not universal. How Buitoni ads described its Italianness, however, was unique among national brands. The value of Buitoni’s products depended on authenticity, which their ads suggested should be measured according to the products’ closeness to Italy. By those standards, even the firm’s direct competitor, Chef Boy-Ar-Dee, could not claim the same level of authenticity, despite also having an Italian founder.

Within a year of running the first ads for the Buitoni’s JWT campaign, rivals in the prepared pasta and pasta sauce market appeared with similar claims about making “true” Italian foods. In 1955, Heinz owed “that real Italian accent” of its canned spaghetti to "real" Romano Cheese. By offering a regional Italian cookbook to *Life* readers in 1957, advertisers associated Anne Page’s macaroni products with old world traditions. In late 1956, Campbell’s Soup’s Franco-American brand insisted that its products were not only affordable, nutritious, and easy-to-make, but that they also “speak Italian.” Images of Italian locations, such as a Roman piazza or a rustic kitchen scene devoid of modern conveniences, set off the slogan. For large companies like Campbell’s, Heinz, and Ann Page, for whom pasta and sauces were part of a much longer list of prepared food products that were not considered Italian, it did not make sense to dwell on their products’ Italian origins, much less back them up by stressing their companies’

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Italian connections. The Buitoni efforts to connect its products to Italy were not unusual, but the campaign stood out for the lengths it went to claim and set the standard for authenticity in Italian cuisine for the American market.

Buitoni’s greatest competitor, Chef Boy-Ar-Dee, developed a campaign with another major ad agency using themes that echoed its rival, reinforcing some standards and indicating how effectively the Buitoni Corporation had created a niche for itself as an "Italian" company. Unlike other major producers of spaghetti and prepared sauces, Buitoni and Boy-Ar-Dee could both claim Italian roots, despite the latter’s acquisition by a US conglomerate in 1946. The company’s founder, Italian Ettore Boiardi, was a professional chef working in Piacenza, a city in Northern Italy, before emigrating to New York. Once there, he continued to work as a chef in large hotel restaurants before selling his sauces and pasta dishes directly to consumers. As an American Home Foods brand in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the “Chef Boy-Ar-Dee” line retained some connection to the real Chef Boiardi, who remained involved as an occasional advisor. In print ads, his image appeared as a reassuring reference to the professional expertise behind the canned pasta that eased family meal preparation with an affordable, “Delicious, ‘No-Work’ Meal.”


Gabaccia, We are What we Eat, 150; La Cecla, Pasta and Pizza, 59; “Success Despite Depression: Chef Hector Boiardi, Commercial Packer of Spaghetti and Italian Sausage, Opens Modern Plant in Pennsylvania,” Macaroni Journal 22, no. 9 (January 1939): [13].

Cinotto, Italian American Table, 153.

Ad for Chef Boy-Ar-Dee Spaghetti Dinner, Good Housekeeping (October 1947), 23; Ad for Chef Boy-Ar-Dee Meatballs and Gravy, Life, June 21, 1954, 114.
Home Foods, Boy-Ar-Dee ads did not draw attention to the chef’s Italian origins and instead emphasized conventional themes in macaroni publicity.

The founding chef’s prominence in the brand’s public image was tempered in 1958 at the same time the product’s Italian connections received special attention when the conglomerate hired an external ad agency, Young & Rubicam, to manage its promotion. Under their direction, ads for the prepared pasta dishes and sauces sold under the Boy-Ar-Dee brand invited consumers to experience Italy through its products like the ads of its competitor, Buitoni Foods Corporation, whose products cost almost twice as much. Margaret Fishback, a free-lance copywriter working for the firm, used a standard format for the ads that echoed the images of Buitoni ads; feminine, manicured hands proffering bowls of ravioli or other sauced macaroni dishes in front of iconic Italian scenes. One ad featuring a market stall in a cobble-stoned, urban piazza promised the reader that they would “fancy you’re in Florence when you taste Chef’s tender spaghetti and plump, juicy meat balls.” Window-framed glimpses of Liguria’s Portofino, the Amalfi Coast, or Lake Como set off similar claims about canned spaghetti dinners, ravioli, lasagna (“LA-SAN-YA”), and “Beefaroni” (macaroni in a beef and tomato sauce).

Although Buitoni’s competitors used similar textual and visual references to travel, they could not claim or did not exploit the Italian backgrounds of their

309 Memorandum, Dewey Yeager to [staff list], 29 March 1956,”Grocery Merchandising Committee 1955-1957,” Information Center Records, Box 12, J. Walter Thompson Company Archives, JHC.

310 Margaret Fishback, “Advertising Client Files Chef Boy-Ar-Dee,” 1959, Box OV11, Margaret Fishback Collection, JHC.
founders. While JWT used the Buitoni Foods Corporation’s immediate connection with related Buitoni branded companies in Italy to describe its privileged connection to “true” Italian food, Young & Rubicam did not draw on the immigration story of Ettore Bioardi. Instead, what Boy-Ar-Dee ads lacked in family history, it made up for with large, richly-colored images that evoked the vistas of travel postcards, each one with captions references in the ad copy linking it to a specific location on the imaginary traveler’s itinerary. With ads like the traveler’s scrapbook or a travel brochure highlighting recognizable Italian scenery, Fishback and Young & Rubicam connected the potential of “being there” to eating prepared, canned pasta dishes.

By giving Boy-Ar-Dee- and Buitoni-branded products a sense of place to support claims of authenticity, Young & Rubicam and JWT aligned their campaigns with the narratives of gourmet food writers that used food to evoke the experiences of landscapes and belonging. At the same time, they helped to deploy through media the notion that being “truly” or valuably Italian was about purity. A direct connection to the old country, whether familial, a matter of ingredients, or implied through touristic cliches, described an Italian essence in ways advantageous to an Italian industrial elite like Giovanni Buitoni and an American conglomerate like American Home Foods, both of whose products were manufactured on American soil.
Chapter 4
The Italian Pasta Industry Before and After World War II

In July 1952, the national trade journal of millers and pasta makers, *I Molini d’Italia*, reprinted an article from its French counterpart, *La Meunerie Française*, describing “the reasons for American productivity.” It was not just a matter of natural resources, like vast amounts of land and a dispersed population, but an American mindset that embraced standardization to mean “better quality, lowering the cost.” Europe, where “the ability to choose an article from a large number of types or to have ‘custom made’ an object that then only you alone possess,” was, by contrast, “aristocratically oriented.” Such “individualist sentiment” stood in the way of “rapid and profitable progress for everyone.”

The anonymous author concluded that achieving national wellbeing depended as much on material changes to European economies as on an ideological shift that exchanged the choice of quality for its guarantee.

Through the government-sponsored trade journal, *I Molini d’Italia*, circulated beginning in April 1950, pasta makers discussed the challenges and advantages of adopting the American business model. The debate about how to make and sell pasta became more than a disagreement on technicalities between craftsmen. Applying the principles of American productivity to manufacturing pasta would require the acceptance of a new culture of consumption that valued uniformity over diversity and the stratified culture of consumption that variety had upheld. As influential members of the field made

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the case to each other and consumers that an industry of homogenized products was superior to the one that preceded it, their debate played out in the pages of *Molini* and in advertisements that aligned consumer interests with the industrial values of hygiene, nutrition, and uniformity. Others resisted under the banner of consumer *choice*, the freedom to express one’s taste, however influenced by matters of financial necessity, regional traditions, or the learned sensibilities of elite, gastronomic culture. Records of conventions, instructional business literature, and professional advertising journals beyond the field of pasta-making show that their challenges reflected those confronting the larger Italian economy.

**The “Old Regime” of Consumption Confronts Mass Production and Consumption**

That the editor of the national journal of Italian pasta making thought a French author offered insights worth passing on to his subscribers spoke to his conviction that pasta makers, as much as other producers of consumer goods, such as automobile manufacturers, found themselves choosing sides in a larger contest embroiling Europe, between “aristocratic” and ostensibly democratic economic models. In the former, consumption affirmed one’s rank, while the latter depended on broader, more equitable access to goods. According to historian Victoria De Grazia, the tug of war between the values of American mass consumer society and what she labels the “old regime” of consumption began in the first decades of the twentieth century, but reached a turning point in the years
immediately after World War II.\textsuperscript{312} Goods, much like education, lent distinction through restricted access. Professionals, educators, writers, as well as artisans, all had an interest in upholding the system from which they derived their status and a guaranteed standard of living, regardless of productivity, all of which was distributed according to rank. Because this system relied on face-to-face interactions, the communities it fostered remained geographically limited.\textsuperscript{313}

Consuming in such societies was entangled in the same effort to allot or claim distinction in which shopkeepers played a mediating role by facilitating purchasing behavior that corresponded with one’s social status. De Grazia describes a food store operating in 1930s Europe according to the old regime of consumption as one where shopkeepers and customers knew each other and the former tailored prices according to the customer and his own needs, rather than the market. The consumer’s choices in such a store were influenced by the knowledge that the shopkeeper would recognize and likely tell neighbors of significant changes in spending habits. Consumer habits also heeded assumptions about rank as the shopkeeper guided consumers in purchasing products according to their status, thus reinforcing the connection between class and taste. In the old regime of consumption, the shopkeeper was an economic


\textsuperscript{313} De Grazia provides an indirect definition of the “old regime of consumption” by describing how taste and market exchanges operate in societies under its influence. Although De Grazia does not spell out a tangible definition per se, she nevertheless pinpoints the instances in which the values of the old regime of consumption clash with the “democratic ethos” of twentieth-century American consumer culture. De Grazia, \textit{Irresistible Empire}, 8, 106-109.
agent and a cultural broker that upheld social distinctions.\textsuperscript{314}

The role of consumption in underpinning the social hierarchy made the conventions of American-style consumption portentous. The prospect of standardized goods, promoted to the population at large through brands and advertisements and later sold for uniform and largely lower prices, undermined the power of shopkeepers and the potential of goods to confer distinction. Mass production and consumption threatened to undermine stratified access to goods and the social hierarchy it helped to affirm.

Before and during the war, resistance to the American model was firm. The strength of European consumer culture in the 1920s and 30s, as well as wartime shortages, prevented businessmen and governments from applying American economic know-how or other policies that advocated higher “American” living standards in any meaningful way. In Italy, the high volume of small shops, which historian of Italian consumer culture Emanuele Scarpellini defines as stores with two or fewer employees, was a legacy of two decades of fascist rule.

Since the 1920s, the government tightly controlled economic life in Italy, discouraging investment in larger stores and generally away from those industries that would have supported increased private consumption.\textsuperscript{315}

Persistent poverty also played a role in keeping consumption low. Farming,

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plagued by low production and an oversupply of labor, employed forty-four percent of the workforce until 1951. As Italian economic historian Vera Zamagni notes, the Italian government brought to light the extent of poverty in the Parliamentary Inquest on Poverty, a study carried out on living conditions between 1951 and 1954. It found that most Italians endured very low living standards, particularly in rural areas; in total, half of apartments had no indoor toilets, while less than half of all dwellings enjoyed running water. The low standard of living that such conditions pointed to, Zamagni argues, meant that, while mass production was not an unknown concept in Italy before World War II, no market large enough existed to justify it.316

Before the 1950s, individual Europeans with experience in the American world of business, as well as American companies and businessmen, conveyed ideas about expanding production and consumption to Continental markets that were ill-prepared to make them succeed and often uninterested in doing so. In the years following World War II, however, the US government made selling the American business models and the culture of consumption that made it possible a formal policy goal. The physical destruction of European economies left governments either more open to or less able to resist the aims of their wartime ally to enhance economic ties and, more importantly, foster a common culture of consumption to unite more closely than ever the economies of the democratic West against those of the communist East.317

317 De Grazia, Irresistible Empire, 355
Pasta Production under the “Old Regime” of Consumption

For Italian pasta makers, embracing American production methods, as well as the culture of consumption they depended on, challenged existing discourses that linked food and identity, both socioeconomic and geographic. Pasta was a product linked at home and abroad to the country’s regional and national identities while its history of consumption in noble households and, since the nineteenth century, in urban middle-class homes, had made eating pasta an indicator of status.

Despite its reputation for producing food for the masses and its history of technological advances, the Italian pasta industry was part of Europe’s “aristocratic” consumer culture described in *La Meunerie Française* and subsequently in *I Molini d’Italia*. From the political union of the Italian peninsula in 1861 to the early twentieth century, a family’s standard of living depended on class, making what one ate play an important symbolic role that located one in the social hierarchy.\(^{318}\) Throughout the nineteenth century, Italian consumers regarded eating pasta, particularly on a regular basis, as mark of status. This held even in the most productive pasta-producing areas in the southern provinces of Calabria, Basilicata, and Campania.\(^ {319}\) Contributing to the food’s enduring reputation of luxury was the fact that the most prized versions were factory-made, and, unless one was directly involved in producing the food and

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\(^{318}\) Diner, *Hungering for America*, 27.

paid in kind, obtaining it required cash, a significant obstacle for the country’s many subsistence farmers.\textsuperscript{320} Home cooks attempted to replicate industrial forms in private kitchens, but the results were often disappointing.\textsuperscript{321} Purchased pasta, usually of poor quality, remained reserved for holidays and those fortunate enough to have access to cash; towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, this included Italians laboring abroad, particularly in America, as well as their family members who remained in Italy and received remittances.\textsuperscript{322}

As the pasta industry grew in the early twentieth century, manufacturers followed a business model that heeded the old regime of consumption, maintaining the food’s luxury standing, despite its growing market. A succession of technological advancements from water to steam-powered presses, and, finally, machine-controlled indoor drying reduced the skills and time required to turn out cured, factory-made pasta at the turn of the twentieth century. By then, observed engineer Renato Rovetta writing in 1929, consumption was growing among less well-to-do Italians as it declined among the more affluent.\textsuperscript{323}

Nevertheless, producers took steps to keep pasta’s popularity from excluding the food from a consumer culture of distinction. The Giovanni e Fratelli

\textsuperscript{320}Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti. 10 vols ([Rome]: Instituto Giovanni Treccani, 1929-1939), s.v. “Pasta Alimentare.”


\textsuperscript{322} Helstosky, Garlic and Oil, 28; Renato Rovetta, preface to Industria del pastificio (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1929), vii; Teti, “Le culture alimentari,” 97.

\textsuperscript{323}Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti,” Pasta Alimentare.”
Buitoni pasta factory in central Italy increased its selection with luxury products that appealed to well-to-do consumers. The company issued a separate catalog for its "luxury pastas" including pastas with added gluten.\(^{324}\) Publicly introduced by the firm in the mid-1880s, the Buitoni line of gluten-enriched pastas appealed to a limited urban middle class with a new scientific understanding about the relationship between food, nutrition, and health.\(^{325}\) Included in the company’s specialty line were “extraordinary” shapes, like ridged shells and fusili that required sophisticated dies. At the Buitoni factory and elsewhere, finer pastas were also set apart in that they were sold almost exclusively in packaging.\(^{326}\) Such extras made the distinction between common and luxury pastas clear, and themselves could constitute a significant cost of the final product. For example, a specialty shape by Buitoni sold in a two hundred and fifty gram box cost seventy-five percent more per kilogram than the same product in bulk.\(^{327}\) At the high end of the pasta hierarchy, royal testimonials helped to solidify the company’s claims of producing a status-conscious product.\(^{328}\)

Most offerings, however, were “common” pasta, made from lower quality ingredients and sold to ordinary Italians. The Buitoni factory, specializing in

\(^{324}\) “Catalogo Specialità” [ca. 1907], Box 1, File 1, “Cataloghi, campionari, depliant di campagne pubblicitarie,” Fondo Buitoni, Sezione Pubblicità, AIBP.


\(^{327}\) “Catalogo Specialità” [ca. 1907], Box 1, File 1, “Cataloghi, campionari, depliant di campagne pubblicitarie,” Fondo Buitoni, Sezione Pubblicità, AIBP.

\(^{328}\) Masia, *Buitoni: la famiglia, gli uomini, le imprese*, 66.
products for well-to-do Italians, used semolina, considered by manufacturers to turn out the best quality pasta. Millers produced semolina from durum wheat, a more expensive raw material than the more abundant, soft wheat that went into lower grades of pasta in increasing proportions. Other examples of inexpensive pasta used exclusively hard wheat, but not refined enough to be semolina. Manufacturers produced these more affordable pastas for Italian markets, both in the north and in the south where pasta consumption was highest.\(^\text{329}\)

Credit for the prevalence of so-called inferior pasta formulas was due in part to manufacturers’ efforts to comply with government decrees and trade restrictions that put pressure on the industry in the 1910s through the 1930s to meet demand with limited raw materials. In an effort to control rising food prices during World War I, the government subsidized the price of bread, a staple of the Italian diet, north and south, keeping its price artificially low. As Italian consumers spent less on bread, they chose to purchase more of typically expensive foods, including pasta.\(^\text{330}\) However, political upheaval in the Ukraine and Russia in 1917 cut Italian millers off from their most important source of hard durum wheat, the primary raw material for pasta, just as consumption by ordinary Italians was growing. To supplement low domestic hard grain production, manufacturers turned to more readily available and cheaper soft wheat flour, which had the added benefit of keeping prices lower.\(^\text{331}\) As a result, despite the shortage of

\[^{329}\text{Rovetta, } Industria del pastificio (1929), 101-3.}\]

\[^{330}\text{Helstosky, } Garlic and Oil, 40.}\]

\[^{331}\text{Carroll, } “War Macaroni as Made in Naples District,” 16-18.}\]
durum wheat, an American consular representative estimated that production increased thirty percent because of wartime demand and manufacturers’ use of soft flour. In the next decade, import restrictions on all wheat imposed by the fascist government in the hope of fostering Italy’s own grain industry further compelled pasta makers to reformulate their pasta recipes to use soft wheat in order to meet demand. While Rovetta described six grades of pasta in 1929, the fascist government officially recognized only three in 1933, including pure semolina pasta, pasta with eggs and common pasta (pasta commune), made with any significant proportion of soft wheat. The prevalence of soft wheat flour in pasta making contributed to a hierarchy within pasta production and consumption.

A proliferation of new shapes and the use of dyes, added another dimension to the variety and status of products pasta makers offered. Reporting on the manufacture of macaroni in the province of Naples in 1918, US Consul Harvey Carroll described one of the most technologically advanced pasta plants in Italy in Castellamare di Stabia. Their state-of-the-art presses produced two hundred shapes of pasta and perhaps more, as Carroll indicated that the plant’s catalog featured three hundred and sixty-eight shapes. Considering the entire

332 Carroll, “War Macaroni as Made in Naples District.”


334 “Le relazioni dell’On. Barrotolomei e del Senatore Poggi al disegno di legge sulla disciplina della vendita delle paste alimentari,” Le industrie dei cereali: organo ufficiale della federazione nazionale fascista. Industriali Mugnai, pastai e risieri 5 (May 1933), 139-41; In addition to these, the government approved formulas with non-wheat products to improve nutritional value, such as lentils, peas or beans.

335 Carroll, “War Macaroni as Made in Naples District.”
industry in 1929, Rovetta estimated that manufacturers were capable of producing up to six hundred shapes. Most referred to differing sizes of the same general format, but some were “luxury shapes,” including curls, shells, and twists. For the last shape, producers preferred pure semolina dough that withstood cooking more reliably than soft wheat blends, but also required more care and time in the drying process to avoid cracking. Coloring pasta with vegetables or chemical dyes made certain products stand out as “gastronomic specialties,” but could also open up manufacturers to accusations of fraud for disguising naturally paler, inferior ingredients.

As the Italian pasta industry expanded in the early twentieth century, its members competed for consumers by multiplying their selection of products. The trend had the added effect of maintaining the product’s elite associations, despite its less exclusive consumption. While an American observer remarked that in US companies "the tendency has been to eliminate as many of the various styles and forms of alimentary pastes [pasta] as the public will quietly stand for," the business model of Italian pasta makers in the early twentieth-century ensured that the market for pasta remained stratified.

Pasta manufacturers made choices to adapt the expansion of the Italian pasta to the principles of the old regime of consumption leading up to and in the context of wartime trade restrictions, grain shortages, and subsequent decades...

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of efforts by the fascist government to foster a self-sufficient Italian economy. Before domestic consumption grew during World War I, international demand for the Italian product sustained manufacturers producing the best qualities, including those in Sicily and towns in and around Naples that produced semolina pasta for export, especially to America where southern Italian emigrants enjoyed imported foods they could not afford while living at home. However, as limits on trade during wartime closed Italian manufacturers off from their most profitable markets, international competitors took advantage of reduced competition and gained a foothold in their domestic markets. This was true in the US where Italian pasta imports in 1923 had recovered less than three percent of prewar levels, which at the time had accounted for almost three-quarters of all Italian pasta exports. The following years of fascist economic policy and wartime shortages did not reverse the trend.

**Reforming Italian Industry and Consumers under the Marshall Plan**

With the re-opening of international trade after World War II and the prospect of rejuvenating the war-damaged Italian economy, Italian pasta manufacturers took stock of the industry. The high cost of raw ingredients and production combined with the continued production of pasta with soft wheat and colorings took its toll on the international reputation of the country’s most famous food. In 1953, North American imports were less than one percent of what they

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had been between 1910 and 1919.\textsuperscript{341} An article in \textit{I Molini} cited its sister American trade journal, \textit{The Macaroni Journal}, citing health concerns as the reasons for this long-term fall in exports. American Food and Drug Administration inspectors had recently been forced to reject up to eighty percent of Italian pasta shipments to the US. French consumers, making up the second largest export market, were also passing over Italy’s signature food, citing poor quality and the use of colorings.\textsuperscript{342} With the end of fascist rule and economic isolation after World War II, industry leaders looked for ways to revive the long-lagging industry.

Searching for solutions, many were receptive to American efforts to entice western European countries to rebuild their economies to better reflect and complement that of their transatlantic trading partner. However, adopting the American recipe for high productivity and living standards in Europe was more than a matter of restructuring industries or overhauling national economic policies. It became clear that such a transition could only be successful in a consumer society that embraced uniformity, in its standard of living and the goods that supported it. The mandates of mass production and distribution of the American market would make pasta makers themselves the arbiters of a less stratifying culture of consumption, with standardized, branded, and packaged products.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the US government, translated American


business manuals, and Italian professionals familiar with American business promoted the Yankee recipe for productivity by offering solutions to what they saw as the root problem of the stagnant Italian economy. These obstacles, they argued, included the high costs of production and the conservative spending habits of Italian consumers. What was missing was standardization and, equally important, an appreciation by Italian consumers of its benefits.

A visible force behind transferring the American business model to Europe was the US government. In 1948, with an aim to boost American and European economic outlooks, Congress approved thirteen billion dollars in goods and loans to support European infrastructure projects and the purchase of new machinery by European industries. The US government hoped these supports would enable European industry to transition out of a wartime economy and into an international exchange of consumer goods.\textsuperscript{343} To distribute American aid according to the goals of the Economic Recovery Program (ERP), Congress simultaneously formed the European Cooperation Administration, made up of American businessmen, civil servants, and economists charged with administering the thirteen billion dollars of the ERP.\textsuperscript{344} The American body worked with the newly-formed Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) in Europe, to distribute aid to specific, approved projects and, later,


\textsuperscript{344} Djelic, \textit{Exporting the American Model}, 111.
autonomous regional chapters.\textsuperscript{345} As the OEEC’s name indicated, Americans envisioned the future of its trading partner as many nations operating as an integrated single market.\textsuperscript{346}

To supplement material assistance, the US government also sponsored educational efforts through its Technical Assistance Program beginning in 1949. Some took place on European soil, including displays of American machines and consumer products. While this approach was informative to the extent that it promoted the lifestyle benefits of American productivity to ordinary Europeans, the wage workers of the rebuilding economies, excursions to the US and select European countries for the leaders of European business and governments were more formally instructional. In the US, focus of these six-week study trips was American agriculture and factories where representatives from European businesses and labor unions, as well as civil servants and industry leaders, could witness American productivity first hand.\textsuperscript{347}

Participants in the ERP Mission trips were ambivalent about the US government’s promotion of American productivity. Many admired what they saw on their trips, but doubted whether American officials fully appreciated the European context where they felt diverse cultures, as well as economic and social circumstances, precluded implementing American techniques for the


\textsuperscript{346} Ibid., 40.

foreseeable future. They were reticent about the willingness of European countries to respond to American pressure and act collectively on economic matters as through the OEEC and or to accept the greater government involvement in private businesses that the American model demanded in the short term. Those individuals and industries already in the process of modernizing, however, embraced the American route to productivity.

Instituting the American model in Italy would be uniquely challenging. Even before the recent war, the country produced only 2.7% of the world’s industrial output, the lowest in western Europe and significantly behind the next lowest, France (4.5%), as well as Germany and Britain (both ten percent). Italy’s comparatively low industrial production levels owed much to peculiarities of its economy that distinguished it from its European neighbors. It was dominated by small and medium-sized family firms that were only loosely organized. Italy also stood out for its lopsided economic development that favored its northern region over the southern and the extent to which efforts to modernize since the mid nineteenth century had come either from foreign capital or government intervention through state-owned industries and banks. While the established pattern of government involvement in the economy might have paved the way for Italian industry to accept a top-down implementation of the American model that

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350 Ibid., 38.

351 Djelic, Exporting the American Model, 59.
other European nations resisted, the strong communist presence in the Italian government discouraged cooperation with the aims of the ERP. This was true in regional governments like Emilia Romagna where the Italian Communist Party (PCI), hostile to the capitalist ethos of the US government and its Marshall Plan, dominated. ³⁵²

Potential for disconnect, if not active resistance, highlighted and incited by efforts to implement the ERP, made the role of Italian mediators especially important. Their sales pitches for the American model had to appreciate the real differences between the realities of the domestic economy and the requirements of American productivity. As historians have shifted their attention away from the all-or-nothing accounts of the triumph or rejection of American capitalism in postwar European economies, their focus on the adaptation of the American model to the diverse European economy has likewise brought the role of Italian intermediaries, as individuals and associations, to the fore. In the case of advertising, Simona De Iulio and Carlo Vinti point out how in-house advertising departments in Italian companies and the annual national advertising association’s (Società Italiana Pubblicità) prize, the La Palma d’Oro, upheld existing standards of artistic quality alongside the scientifically-informed designs of American publicity.³⁵³


As agents of hybridizing the American model, Italian professionals used their backgrounds in American business methods to diagnose the “problems” of the Italian economy, its consumers, and producers. The June 1958 issue of the Italian advertising journal, *Panorama di pubblicità*, opened with a pointed condemnation of the national economy and the habits of the Italian consumer that supported it. Italy possessed “a national flaw,” or, more precisely, “an addiction to selection,” according to the journal’s editor, Mario Bellavista.\(^{354}\) As founder of one of the few Italian-owned marketing firms ranked alongside American agencies operating in Italy, Bellavista belonged to a group of advocates for applying the American model of mass production. As long as the Italian economy remained in the thrall of the “prejudices” of the Italian public, Bellavista warned, the country would remain among the poorest in Europe. It was up to businesses to convince consumers to embrace quality, mass-produced products. In the process, Italy would wean itself off of a preference for myriad choices in consumer goods, an “uneconomical” inclination those in the United States, Bellavista assured readers, never possessed.\(^{355}\)

What exactly this meant in practice for manufacturers Bellavista laid out three years earlier in a pamphlet published by his own Studio Siglia, *Maggiori serie, maggiore pubblicità, maggior consumi* (More production, more advertising, 

\(^{354}\) De Iulio and Vinti, “The Americanization of Italian advertising,” 275; Mario Bellavista, “Un difetto nazionale da correggere: la mania degli assortimenti,” *Panorama* 43 (June 1958): 17; original text: “Un difetto nazionale...la mania degli assortimenti.”

\(^{355}\) Bellavista, “Un difetto nazionale,” 17.
more consumption). The title made his point in brief, but Bellavista went on to outline what ought to be the three guiding principles of progressive Italian business practices. When it came to products, manufacturers should aim for "semplificazione, standardizzazione, specializzazione" (simplification, standardization, specialization). Instead of competing with each other by seeing who could offer consumers the greatest selection or lower prices by decreasing product quality, manufacturers should concentrate on offering fewer, largely identical products produced on a greater scale. Was not the spread of women’s nylons and “their suggestive transparency and beauty” or the improvement of Italians’ daily nutrition by consuming canned goods both the result of mass production, Bellavista reasoned? The national “flaw” was as much the result of producers’ insistence on creating luxury goods for a small market rather than devoting their resources towards making better products for a much larger market as it was Italians’ taste for variety. There was no reason, he argued, why nylons and canned food should be the only Italian success stories of mass production.

Supporters of the American business model also argued that overcoming the “national flaw,” or Italians’ preference for diversity, was only the first step in a much larger transformation needed in the Italian market. Sustaining a mass production economy required a constellation of supporting technologies and methods to convey mass-produced goods from factories to willing consumers.

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Domestic organizations, professional publications by Italians and by Americans and translated into Italian, as well as American-sponsored educational trips for Italian industry leaders to the US, disseminated the message that American productivity was as much about selling as producing. While hosting the first national packaging convention in Padua, the president of the city’s international fair, Mario Saggin, introduced the topic of the gathering as a means of advertising that would expand the geographical reach of Italian businesses and increase the nation’s average level of consumption, both necessary conditions for mass production. Through economies of scale, Saggin argued, packaging could be made economically and become more than a hallmark of luxury products, but a means to convey products to ordinary consumers. Additional speakers featured at the conference highlighted the ability of packaging to reinforce a brand’s image and also challenged producers’ assumptions that packaging was only for luxury products and that it did not help to preserve foods or increase sales. After all, packaging was the linchpin of a “revolutionary” form of sales in the US, a phenomenon the Institute of Italian Packaging announced that it hoped to learn more about first hand by sending representatives to the US to glean valuable technical information. Translated publications by American business professionals, as well as original books by Italian professionals affirmed how packaging and mass production reinforced each other.


360 Ibid., 42.
Making good on its mission to spread knowledge of American packaging in Italy, the Italian Institute of Packaging published a translation of an American collection of essays titled *Manuale dell’imballaggio: Tecnologie e legislazione* (*The Fundamentals of Packaging: Technologies and Legislation*). In its introduction, Saggin re-iterated the need to inform Italian professionals about American methods of packaging that had until recently been the “Cinderella” of the Italian economy.\(^{361}\) John Hanworth’s essay, “Imballaggio, marketing e pubblicità” (Packaging, marketing and advertising), affirmed Saggin’s packaging zeal, asserting that “mass production can only exist in a competitive economic system in which advertising exists; and advertising, like packaging, is also part of marketing.”\(^{362}\) For the American model of business to achieve its promised high productivity, standardization had to be met by complementary methods of selling and distribution. Addressing those skeptical of how ordinary Italians could benefit from the reduced labor needs of automation and standardization inherent to the new model, Italian expert on American advertising Felice Cùnsolo laid out the chain reaction that packaging, as a part of advertising, set off. It helped to “stimulate demand, bring about an increase in production and consequently greater employment.”\(^{363}\) According to the most enthusiastic proponents of bringing American-style productivity to Italy, the transfer could not be piecemeal if it was to succeed. Automation, standardization, packaging, and advertising were

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\(^{361}\) Mario Saggin, preface to *Manuale dell’imballaggio: Tecnologie e legislazione* (Milan: Kompass, 1964), xi-xii.


As members of the Italian pasta industry looked to the postwar economy with its severely curtailed international sales and high production costs, the field’s most prominent figures agreed that the sector, not unlike the Italian economy as a whole, required significant changes to regain lost ground and become a competitive economic force amongst the integrating economies of western Europe. What on the surface were discussions about whether to adopt cost-saving production and revenue-increasing distribution methods, such as mass production, publicity, and packaging, were also contests of American industrial values of uniformity and the primacy of science against the importance of taste and the wide selection that gave discernment its meaning. As an industry so defined by variety, debates between pasta industry leaders about embracing the homogeneity inherent to the American business model juxtaposed basic differences between American and Italian consumer cultures.

For those who supported a more American approach to making pasta, they highlighted the fact that standardization should begin in the wheat field, as it did in the US. Contributors to *I Molini* pointed out how government regulation in America harmonized the operation of wheat farming and food manufacturing industries. Government standards of quality and inspections made wheat quality predictable for all six of the common varieties grown in American soil, observed one author reporting on the work of US Department of Agriculture inspectors. Such uniformity facilitated sales of the raw material across long distances and

Following a US visit by Italian pasta technicians in 1957, \textit{I Molini}’s editor, Pasquale Barracano, dedicated an entire issue to describing the mission. In his introduction to the dedicated issue, Barracano attributed the success of the American agriculture system, in terms of its geographic scope and specialized varieties, to the USDA’s scientific approach to developing wheat varieties that thrived in diverse conditions.\footnote{\textit{I Molini d’Italia} (February 1957): [86-7].} All this diversity, however, was contained by methods of standardization that categorized wheat according to its properties and, thus, uses laid out by the federal government. Soft wheats had been developed and graded for use in baked goods like cookies. Hard wheat, was adapted for industrial bread manufacture. Some hard wheats, namely amber durum, was bred specifically for pasta manufacture as semolina. These categories, engineer Vincenzo Agnesi pointed out, discouraged ambiguity in the production process and in selling. And even though American wheat suitable for pasta made an unappetizing, gray-colored product, the universal enrichment of the food with riboflavin gave it a more pleasing lemon-yellow color. Should this last part of the America production process be mistaken for fraud, Agnesi stressed how government rules ensured that this addition was clearly stated on equally ubiquitous packaging.\footnote{Agnesi, “Spaghetti americani,” \textit{I Molini d’Italia} (February 1957): 142-43.} By working to make wheat qualities predictable,
the US government, according to Barracano, “tamed” nature for an economy of mass production.\footnote{I Molini d’Italia (February 1957): [86-7].}

Homogenization continued through the production and packaging phases of American pasta making, which observers like Agnesi also admired, especially as it made it easier to leave work to machines. This included reducing the number of shapes and formulas. Agnesi held up the operation of Giovanni Buitoni’s American establishment as a model for Italian producers. In his New Jersey factory, Buitoni made only one type of pasta in twelve shapes. To package these products, the factory required only three types of containers, one for long pastas and two for short, cut versions, all of which were filled by machines, save for the long pastas that had to be briefly weighed by hand. Machines applied labels as a stamp that could be easily changed depending on the shape. “Such simplicity of packaging supplies and in all the factory’s operations!”\footnote{Agnesi, “Spaghetti americani,” 143-44.}

Contributors to I Molini encouraged Italian manufacturers to follow the lead of American-based factories, like Buitoni’s American factory. A. Martinetti described the key contributors to American productivity in 1954 as “standardization, simplification and specialization.”\footnote{A. Martinetti, “Il problema della riduzione dei costi di produzione nella industria delle paste alimentari,” I Molini d’Italia (February 1954): 57.} These three guiding principles were identical to those identified by Panorama’s editor, Bellavista, who hoped to rally Italian businesses around the same goals.\footnote{Bellavista, Maggiori serie, 29.} For pasta makers,
this meant reducing the variety of shapes they produced, enabling manufacturers
to invest in advanced machines and reduce the number of separate machines for
drying and storage procedures. These changes would cut the costs of production
and, at the same time, minimizing the waste inherent in creating a multitude of
“superfluous” pastas of different quality, shape, and size. Streamlined production
would also result in greater quality consistency and reduce the costs of
packaging by permitting producers to buy materials in bulk. Both
characteristics, Marinetti contended, would make pasta easier to sell.

Martinetti’s optimism, however, overlooked the extent to which postwar
consumers’ view of the food remained influenced by pasta’s history as a luxury
product; Italians’ conservative spending habits, learned during decades of
shortages and restrictions under fascism, made the challenge of expanding the
market even greater. In his 1950 assessment of recent, failed government efforts
to encourage manufacturers to produce pasta using more hard wheat,
Barracano, concluded that manufacturers persisted in producing inferior pastas
because consumers refused to purchase better. The predominance of soft wheat
pasta in the past decade disposed ordinary Italians to think pure semolina pasta
was a food only for “refined” consumers and, except for cost, consumers could
not tell the difference. Other explanations for consumers’ continued preference
for lower quality pasta referenced a lack of discernment on the part of ordinary
Italians. In a speech delivered in 1956 and transcribed in I Molini, Vincenzo

372 Pasquale Barracano, “Il grano duro e la produzione delle paste alimentari,” I Molini d’Italia
(May 1950): 42.
Carrante accounted for pasta makers’ refusal to use more hard wheat by citing claims that, as with cheeses, wines, or other fine foods, the average Italian lacked the ability to distinguish quality. Carrante and Barracano agreed that the multiple types of pasta made matters worse, confusing consumers with too many choices.

Pasta manufacturers who supported adopting an American business model argued that consumers could learn to embrace homogenization through a scientific appreciation of food at the legislative level. As one researcher reasoned, if producers adopted a standardized formulas approved by the government that required all pasta be made of semolina, the resulting, natural yellow color would remove manufacturers’ reasons for adding artificial colorings and result in making it illegal to blend soft and hard wheat flours. The final product would also be more nutritious. Standardization could be a boon to consumers, making the process of evaluating quality, as well as an informed sense of taste, a moot point.

Other benefits, such as the nutritional and hygienic advantages of the standardized and packaged pasta, would not be immediately apparent but had to be learned by the consuming public. Making food choices according to scientific criteria, such as nutritive value and cleanliness, was not new to well-to-do Italians in the mid-twentieth century, as the success of Italy-based Buitoni’s gluten-

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enriched, luxury pastas in the late nineteenth century suggests. However, industry leaders aimed to introduce ordinary Italians to a scientific way of eating. At the first national exhibition for pasta in 1954, organizers drew the public’s attention to pasta as a source of protein and carbohydrates, summarizing the average needs of an individual and how pasta could contribute to them. The display initiated an ongoing effort by industry leaders to address Italians’ lack of a “food conscience,” a concern echoed by a speaker at the Convegno Nazionale delle Paste Alimentari (National Food Pastes Conference) three years later. Such awareness would teach consumers to appreciate pasta through nutrition and assess its hygiene standards, a perspective that I Molini’s editor and others who advocated American business methods agreed could be cultivated through advertising. Furthermore, if Italians appreciated their food in scientific terms, they would be more likely to reject pastas sold loose and made with soft wheat flour that appeared the same but indicated lower nutritional content.

Consumers with a chemical appreciation of pasta would embrace a more American-style industry for its automation, use of packaging, and standardized pasta formulas.

No style of pasta manifested the positives of mass production and the high level of automation it was based on more than Bologna pasta, often made with eggs in addition to wheat. This, combined with the long history of Bologna pasta.

379 “Il grano duro e la produzione delle paste alimentari,” I Molini d’Italia (July/August 1950): 142.
as a product of the home kitchen or the small, urban workshop, created the ideal scenario for assessing the benefits of the new pasta industry. When the standards of comparison were nutrition, hygiene, and uniformity, the “winning” side was all but decided at the outset. Engineers of new machines for Bologna-style pastas concentrated on replicating and easing the transitions between all the stages of making handmade pasta including mixing, kneading, laminating, cutting, folding, and finally drying.\(^{380}\) In addition to efficiency, industrial Bologna pasta also won over the fresh products of small business or homemade versions in terms of hygiene and nutrition. While factory-made Bologna pasta may not have used the exact ingredients of older versions, the result was a “better” food. The industrial process forced manufacturers to use semolina, as opposed to the typical soft wheat flour, rendering a product richer in gluten and nitrogen.\(^ {381}\) The finished product was also thinner than homemade versions, speeding the cooking process and challenging any counterargument that fresh versions preserved their food value better due to short cooking times. When it came to comparing the sanitary standards of the factory to the home kitchen, “it did not even bear mentioning.”\(^ {382}\) The scientific approach to eating such a comparison highlighted was best supported by the American model of manufacturing.

**Barilla and Buitoni Adopt the American Model**

Beyond the pages of *I Molini*, the Italian pasta-making firms Barilla and

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Buitoni made rationalized, mass production, and American-style marketing key features of their businesses beginning in the early 1950s. The actions of Barilla and Buitoni that readily embraced mass-production and American-style distribution methods in the 1950s were relatively singular but nevertheless relevant for understanding the evolution of the entire Italian pasta industry. Few pasta companies matched their scale even before they adopted new strategies. By the end of the 1960s, the companies' combined pasta sales would account for fifty-one percent of the entire Italian market. Both companies featured prominently at the annual national pasta conventions where industry leaders pushed for greater standardization in production and greater popular awareness of nutrition to boost pasta consumption beginning in 1954. From the late 1950s, Bruno Buitoni, then head of the company’s pasta division, directed the Associazione dei fabbricanti di pasta italiani del nord (Association of Northern Pasta Manufacturers) among whose accomplishments included helping to get government approval for laws requiring pasta be made exclusively with hard wheat and sold in packaging in the interests of cleanliness. In terms of size and leadership, both companies occupied dominant and influential positions in the Italian pasta industry.

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383 In 1992, Bruno Buitoni estimated that Buitoni and Barilla were among up to six companies with greater than regional distribution; See Buitoni, *Pasta e Cioccolato*, 183.

384 “Test di Degustazione Pasta di Semola Buitoni—De Cecco” (1968), Box 47 File 513, pp. 3, Direzione commerciale, Buitoni, Direzione e amministrazione, AIBP.


Barilla company president Pietro Barilla traveled to the US in 1951 “to study issues of packaging, advertising and to visit some new machinery before arranging to purchase them.” He returned home eager to streamline his factory’s production processes and focus on new packaging, branding, and advertising techniques. Leading members of the Buitoni factory took advantage of existing American connections in 1953 when Bruno Buitoni visited his uncle’s factory in New Jersey, as well as other food production facilities nearby. Speaking forty years later, Buitoni recalled being impressed by their “rational production cycle,” as well as sales campaigns designed according to extensive market research. Representatives of the Buitoni company made additional study trips to the US, including a one in 1958 under the auspices of the ERP for European businesses to learn how to develop and utilize data from marketing studies.

Once home, representatives and leaders from both firms put what they learned into practice, emphasizing mass production. At Barilla, Pietro installed new machines, including a dryer, that increased automation and production volume. Buitoni directors reduced the number of pasta formats they made in

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388 Buitoni, Pasta e cioccolato, 122, 138.

389 Confederazione Generale dell’Industria Italiana to Associazioni Territoriali e Nazionali di Categoría, 24 February 1958, Box 64, File 786, Amministratore delegato, Direzione generale, AIBP.

the early 1950s by roughly half, compared to offerings in the 1900s and 1930s.\footnote{Product catalogs, Box 1 and 2, “Cataloghi, campionari, depliant di campagne pubblicitarie,” Buitoni, Sezione Pubblicità, AIBP.}

Further reductions over the next fifteen years came after market studies. The company left open the possibility of adding new shapes, as long as this was done with a mind towards achieving adequate sales volumes, in other words, if they could be profitably mass produced.\footnote{Verbale della Riunione (Meeting Minutes) del 10/6, Box 50 Folder 543, pp. 168, 174, Direzione commerciale, Buitoni, Direzione e amministrazione, AIBP.}

The companies complemented increased production with further changes in packaging and advertising that followed the lead of American businesses in emphasizing the product brand. While both factories had previously sold some of their products in cellophane bags, they converted exclusively to cardboard packages by the early 1960s that were better able to display company trademarks and additional information, elements that in turn connected products to organized advertising campaigns.\footnote{“Nuove confezioni per: Serie cereali, serie nipiol, pastina glutinata, pasta si semola,” [c. 1963?], Box 9 Folder 100, p. 7, Direzione commerciale, Buitoni, Direzione e amministrazione, AIBP; Saguatti, “New technologies, new company,” 178.} Similar changes in marketing occurred in the US in the 1920s and 30s, when most food retailing shifted to self-service markets. Italians, however, did not switch to self-service shopping so readily outside of major northern urban centers in the 1960s and 70s.\footnote{Even in 1971, purchases at self-service supermarkets accounted for merely 3.7% of total food sales in Italy. Emanuela Scarpellini, “Shopping American-Style,” 658, 660.} Nevertheless, new marketing techniques based on brands, emphasized through packaging and advertising, brought significant changes by enabling manufacturers to sell standardized products at uniform prices directly to consumers and not through
shopkeepers who adjusted prices and guided consumer choices.\textsuperscript{395} Buitoni’s plan for new packaging was part of a larger shift to American-style marketing techniques that anticipated a reduced role for shopkeepers who once, the company admitted, “had a decisive impact in directing the consumer to their purchase.”\textsuperscript{396}

As the pasta manufacturers rationalized their factories, they made concepts of hygiene and nutrition, the “benefits” of the new production methods and packaging, a key part of their efforts to sell directly to consumers. Ads assured consumers that the appetizing yellow color of Barilla pasta was due to the pure semolina processed with the company’s new machines, as opposed to artificial coloring.\textsuperscript{397} Other ads drew attention to the company’s new boxes as a means of protecting consumer health from the dangers of pasta purchased in bulk: “Like armor the newest packaging of Barilla pasta protects your health from the dangers of loose pasta.” Ads also made direct comparisons between semolina pasta and pasta comune, claiming that seventy grams of Barilla pasta offered as much nutrients as one hundred grams of common pasta, that is, with blended flour. The company also connected consuming pure semolina pasta of hard wheat to “rational eating” and cited “famous physiologists” who praised it as a balanced food containing high levels of protein, minerals, and vitamins.\textsuperscript{398}


\textsuperscript{396}“Nuove confezioni per: Serie cereali, serie nipiol, pastina glutinata, pasta si semola,” [c. 1963?], Box 9 Folder 100, p. 7, Direzione commerciale, Buitoni, Direzione e amministrazione, AIBP.

\textsuperscript{397}Erberto Carboni, \textit{Venticinque campagne pubblicitarie} (Milan: Silvana editoriale d’arte, 1961), 103.

\textsuperscript{398}Ibid., 100, 108, 109.
theme of Barilla pasta as a scientifically sound food, in terms of cleanliness and food value, appeared in ads in 1952, shortly after Pietro returned from his grand tour of American factories, and continued through the decade.

As a company noted for selling protein-enriched, luxury pasta since the late nineteenth century, the Buitoni pasta company could not follow the same tactics as Barilla. Instead, the firm wrestled with its existing reputation for producing the pasta of the bourgeoisie as it set its eyes on capturing a larger share of the Italian pasta market. At the end of the 1950s, its advertising aimed to shift the firm’s image from a manufacturer of exclusive products to a purveyor of affordable, mass-produced luxuries, while linking the history of the firm more closely with the nutritional awareness of all Italians. In 1959, Mario Bellavista’s advertising firm, Studio Sigla, prepared “An extremely important message for all mothers,” as an editorial to appear in newspapers as part of a stealth advertising campaign to reconfigure the Buitoni brand. In the article, the pasta makers took credit for guiding Italians toward “rational eating” with its specialty pastas as early as 1859. One hundred years later they continued in the same vein, the editorial went on, “creating the Buitoni Center of Dietetic Research [il Centro Buitoni di Ricerche Dietetiche], under the scientific guidance of renowned dietitians.” The success of their efforts could be seen in “all of you, consumers, with your demand, with your taste, with your desire to eat ever more rationally.” If Italians knew the science of eating, it was surely the result of the Buitoni’s efforts.

399 Giovanni & F.lli Buitoni Sansepolcro to Studio Sigla, 24 February 1959, Box 121 File 1193, pp. 28, Direzione commerciale, Buitoni, Direzione e amministrazione, AIBP.

400 Ibid.
The company’s educating mission towards Italians extended to economics, at least to the extent it could explain the principles of their American-inspired business model. As the company aimed to become a brand for all Italians, it also began lowering prices on its pasta products, while hoping to enlarge its market beyond urban upper- and middle-class consumers. This required justifying the lower prices of its specialty pasta to consumers accustomed to passing over it as a luxury item. The firm’s advertising office described the development as the result of a larger reorientation among businesses to produce “‘quality in quantity’.”

Explaining the resulting lower prices would furthermore give the company’s vendors an “opportunity” to explain to retailers and, by extension, consumers, how they managed the lower prices, “commercially, technically.”

Through ads, the company could communicate directly with consumers as it instructed ordinary Italians on the economics of the mass market where cost no longer seemed linked to quality. As part of the 1959 marketing campaign that its advertising department described as promoting “quality in quantity,” Buitoni printed ads to justify to consumers the decreased prices on two of its egg and extra-refined pastas. The notices with headlines claiming “The first benefits of the Common European Market on the price of pasta” appeared in regional newspapers. Below, an image of boxes of egg and extra-refined pasta

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401 Ufficio Pubblicità to personale di Vendita e Sigg. Propagandisti, 28 September 1959, Box 64 File 786, pp. 9, Amministratore delegato, Direzione generale, Buitoni, Direzione e amministrazione, AIBP.

402 Ufficio Pubblicità to personale di Vendita e Sigg. Propagandisti, 28 September 1959, Box 64 File 786, pp. 9-10, AIBP.
“outweighing” three hundred lira (the new, combined, lower price of the pastas) drew readers attention to the idea that price was no longer a reliable guide to quality. Beside the graphic, the ad explained how the firm’s state of the art factories and increased production, a direct response “to the demand of consumers in the Common European Market, allowed Buitoni to reduce the price on two traditional high quality products.”403 A larger market coupled with more efficient production explained the disjuncture between price and quality. Whatever the Italians may have assumed about the affordability of fine pasta, “today in every family there is the best quality Buitoni pasta.”404 Buitoni’s new marketing campaign claimed to dispel the mystery of how luxury or highly nutritious pasta could achieve a democratic distribution.

The perspectives of figures like those heading Barilla and Buitoni found support in the postwar Italian government that approved proposals in 1967 which would push Italian pasta making to reflect American industry models and American interests. The new laws required the exclusive use of hard wheat for dry pastas and the universal sale of pasta in packaging. By promoting such a shift in the Italian industry, the government pleased both large pasta manufacturers and the US government. In 1947, the US government threatened to withhold economic assistance to Italy if its new national government was not amendable to the American economic model that the ERP sought to establish in

403 Ufficio Pubblicità to personale di Vendita e Sigg. Propagandisti, 28 September 1959, Box 64 File 786, pp. 10, AIBP.

404 Il Resto del Carlino, October 18, 1959.
The new laws would integrate Italy into a common grain market with other European Economic Community countries who produced larger amounts of the commodity more efficiently, effectively reducing the price of durum wheat for Italian manufacturers. The current US administration condoned the creation of a common agricultural market within the six-member European Economic Community as the first step in coordinating and reducing trade barriers with the US whose farmers relied on European consumption. Within a month, legislators also passed a law requiring producers to abandon soft wheat, except in the production of fresh pasta and to sell all dried pasta in packaging.

By introducing standardized pasta formulas and mandating the use of packaging, the Italian government affirmed a trend in the industry instigated by manufacturers like Barilla and Buitoni that put the Italian pasta industry on a clear path to adopting American-style productivity. New production methods, however, were not enough. Leading pasta makers and industry commentators recognized the need to convince Italian consumers to purchase the products of the new business model by emphasizing the benefits of standardization, a quality that opposed the existing, stratified culture of consumption.

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405 Djelic, *Exporting the American Model*, 87.


In 1968, ten years after he praised the efficient invariability of pasta made at the New Jersey Buitoni factory, Vincenzo Agnesi wondered if the Italian government’s new regulations intended to achieve similar standardization in the Italian pasta industry were too rigid. He observed that new laws made illegal pasta made in areas where hard, durum wheat was not historically plentiful. In Rome and the northwestern province of Liguria millers used to leave a greater percentage of ash or bran in the ground wheat destined for pasta than the new laws allowed. As he recalled these methods of pasta production, Agnesi challenged fellow industry members to reconsider their assumption that the standards of purity that they admired in American food production and enforced by the new legislation constituted best practices for Italian pastamakers. The soft pillows of gnocchi alla Romana, made from working a mixture of flour, eggs, and butter, spread out into a thin layer, and cut into small squares or circles, required such “impurities” as ash to give it its delicate flavor. The same was true of cappelli d’angelo. Pure semolina dough could not easily pass through the dies that transformed it into the characteristically fine-stranded pasta. The bran content of the pasta for Ligurian dishes tossed with basil pesto also exceeded the new legal maximum for dried pasta, by far the largest segment of the market.\footnote{Vincenzo Agnesi, “La pasta di fronte alla Legge,” I Molini d’Italia (May 1968): 182-83.}

Once an admirer of the American production model, Agnesi feared the results if the industry strictly applied these standards to the Italian pasta industry. What the
sector gained in efficiency, the country would lose in culture.

His message to fellow industry members may not have fallen on deaf ears, but manufacturers also could not ignore the pressure of competition as some, like Barilla and Buitoni, invested in the machines and methods to reduce production time and cost while increasing volume. The number of manufacturers and dry pasta varieties dwindled while production expanded between the end of the 1960s and the 1970s. Agnesi’s pessimism seemed justified; the industry streamlined with bigger firms producing fewer varieties.

The principles of mass production appeared triumphant in the dry pasta industry, but it was not the only discourse of food sustained in postwar Italy. With tourism, gastronomic societies, government agencies, and local business associations offered an alternative system of values through which to appreciate food. The culinary society, the Accademia Italiana della Cucina collaborated with publishers of travel literature as well as local governments and private tourism bodies to inculcate an appreciation for food according to authenticity. They encouraged consumers (tourists and locals) to do the same. Collectively, they shared Agnesi’s concern about the rationalization of food production. The uniform foods with which it flooded the market, they warned, would weaken food’s ability to be a meaningful cultural expression for a country of diverse regions and cuisines. They all agreed that the culinary value of pasta was central to Italian national culture, a critical element of Italianness. Instead of praising food for its factory-derived uniformity, cleanliness, and scientifically-verified nutritional properties, a food’s value was its “genuineness” that was visually evident in its
irregularity and linked it to an earlier era. Though not a quality controlled by centralized production facilities (as was uniformity), authenticity was no less a value controlled by a privileged circle of cultural elites and subject to the logic of standardization.

Although these enthusiasts defined authenticity against mass-produced food that was both homogeneous and peddled as hygienically superior, their reliance on tourism as the medium through which to advance definitions of authentic food indicates that their rejection of American consumer culture model had its limits. Their promotion of authentic food through tourism took advantage of the commercialized leisure activities that the US government and its western European counterparts argued legitimated American-style consumer culture and that was an integral part of rebuilding the Italian economy in the image of American consumer culture. By focusing on tourism as a way to define and affirm food values through consumption, from the 1950s to 1970s, gastronomic societies, government agencies, and business organizations embraced the role of the consumer market as a place of cultural production by using food to symbolize cultural distinction. Singling out foods, recipes, and restaurants to represent local and regional cuisine, the Accademia and its allies articulated standards of Italian food and linked regional and local ways of eating to the multiplicity of Italian identity. Their message was aimed at foreigners and, perhaps more importantly, Italians at home who had “forgotten” their food culture.

It is hardly surprising that discourses of authenticity used pasta as a sounding board. With the food’s production undergoing a transformation in the
postwar economy and its existing international association with Italian national identity, it was a category of food already laden with meaning in the eyes of foreigners and Italians alike. Some agreed that the connection in tourists’ minds between Italy and pasta was banal while the popular image lent itself to stereotyping Italians and Italian eating; these factors also made pasta a strategic food category to assess according to new terms.

Postwar Tourism: A Transatlantic Dimension of American Consumer Culture

Promoters of authenticity worked in a tourism market that welcomed the homogenizing and democratizing tendency of the American business model. Postwar tourism in Italy, historically exceptional in its social diversity and scale, grew through American-led efforts to revive western European economies while integrating them into a common culture of consumption. These factors encouraged the standardization of tourists’ experiences and raised the importance of attracting tourists for government and businesses.

By the early twentieth century, leisure travel in western societies was no longer an exclusive pastime of the wealthy. The middle classes embraced travel as an affirmation of their status. Easing the challenges of travel, tour organizers like Thomas Cook in the mid-nineteenth century conveyed middle-class tourers with no existing international connections to scenic, artistic, and historical sites in Europe, particularly in the south, organizing accommodation and travel along the way. The organized tour for well-to-do middling travelers was part of a larger

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trend towards the commercialization of foreign travel marked by the publishing of reliable guidebooks and more affordable, long-distance transportation. Despite commercial conveniences that made international touring feasible for less wealthy and connected travelers, the journey retained its elite associations.411

In the subsequent decades, democratic and fascist governments challenged tourism’s status-conveying potential in efforts to secure their own legitimacy. In the US, private organizations, businesses, and the federal government encouraged ordinary Americans to tour national parks during World War I. Traveling to various domestic sites, officials hoped, would bring Americans, divided by ethnic backgrounds and recent labor resistance, together under a unified national consciousness.412 In Italy, the fascist government raised the expectation of tourism for would-be working-class travelers in 1930s Italy by promising that Italians, as opposed to wealthy foreigners, “would fill Italian tourist resorts.” The same Italians who bore the brunt of the regime’s oppressive and ambitious social and economic policies could take heart in the government’s assurance that the fruits of their efforts, including the potential for leisure, would be equally enjoyed in the Italy of the future.413

Government-sponsored tourism aimed to do the opposite of middle- and upper-class travel. Instead of setting travelers apart, governments hoped to


413 Baranowski, Being Elsewhere, 14-17.
foster a unifying national identity that also affirmed their own legitimacy. Wartime disruption, however, thwarted the fascist government’s goals for popular domestic tourism.

The greatest shift in the character of tourism and of tourists themselves came after World War II when the US government made encouraging European tourism by Americans and Europeans a matter of official policy. Through the Travel Development Section of the Marshall Plan, the US government promoted the growth of European tourism, catering to both Americans and Europeans. It promoted investment in the travel industry by European governments and businesses, lowered duties, recruited the cooperation of travel companies, and publicized tourism generally.\textsuperscript{414} Through tourism, private funds supplemented the government’s financial support of European economies, which pleased the current conservative US administration wary of an economic recovery dependent on heavy government intervention.\textsuperscript{415}

International cooperation and rising incomes in western economies made leisure travel a socially diverse, but also commercialized, pastime as local communities, hospitality businesses, guidebooks, and tour companies standardized consumer experiences. Unlike the traveller of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the average traveller of the postwar era had no private international connections or skills, such as knowing a foreign language, to rely on

\textsuperscript{414} Endy, \textit{Cold War Holidays}, 45-54.

\textsuperscript{415} Ibid., 8.
as she or he navigated unknown lands.\textsuperscript{416} Instead, the commercialization of guided, packaged tours, as well as local infrastructure to accommodate large numbers of visitors, paralleled and facilitated the increasing diversity of travelers.\textsuperscript{417} According to historians of postwar tourism, these changes were responses to the dual pressures of government policy and of tourists themselves.

After going on multiple excursions, tourists anticipated finding the same amenities wherever they went. The Marshall Plan in turn encouraged hotels to respond to consumer expectations by updating facilities.\textsuperscript{418} Tourists also came with expectations about travel as a cultural experience, including what food they would eat and what they would see. Packaged tours responded with standard, organized excursions, while local communities anticipated consumer demands by assembling “missing” attractions.\textsuperscript{419} Guidebooks also narrowed the postwar consumer experiences by directing travelers to only the best preserved historic and artistic sites as they assisted government tourist organizations in “selling” a locality by highlighting its most aesthetic qualities.\textsuperscript{420} Despite the pre-war efforts of governments to democratize travel, only after World War II did the scale and character of the industry prompt organizers to reflect, often with disdain, on “mass tourism,” a label that spoke to its place in an economy of mass production.

\textsuperscript{416} Löfgren, \textit{On Holiday}, 205.

\textsuperscript{417} Ibid., 161.


\textsuperscript{419} Löfgren, \textit{On Holiday}, 194.

and consumption, where culture was for sale.

Even as the commodification of tourist experiences decreased the obstacles of travel for ordinary people, touring remained a socially defining activity for visitors, as well as local communities. The US government promoted broad access to leisure travel as evidence of the superior material benefits of Western, capitalist economies in contrast to communist regimes of the East. Participation in postwar tourism meant one had arrived, but to a different plane of distinction than those attained through earlier elite or bourgeois excursions. Rather than assert one’s class identity, postwar travel encouraged social cohesion through common access to the material benefits of mass production at every income level, offering all a commodified history, culture, and memory.\(^{421}\)

Democratized tourism affirmed the benefits of consumerism.

**Resisting the Standardization of Italian Food through Tourism**

Organizations like the Accademia feared that the mass-produced products and experiences that encouraged solidarity in consumer culture came at the expense of Italians’ existing cultural diversity, particularly in the area of food. They perceived the principles of American-style productivity unfolding in the factories and restaurants, wherever food was produced or consumed, as threatening the existence of the peninsula’s varied cuisines. The president and founder of the gourmet food society, Orio Vergani, lamented in the group’s self-titled journal how “the world is going towards a *standard* cuisine, towards

\(^{421}\) Baranowski, *Being Elsewhere*, 17; Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 47. 

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standard wines, towards standard cheeses.\footnote{Orio Vergani, \textit{L'Accademia italiana della cucina} 4 (Fall 1955): [1] (hereafter cited as AIC). The frequency of the AIC publication varied over time, so the dates do not reflect standardized issue dates and some span two seasons. In the interests of consistency, I have converted all dates to seasons and indicated when the winter season carried over into the following year.} According to a published summary of a “Gastronomic October” in the town of Belluna in 1964, sponsored by the Accademia and the tourism board of the northeastern Italian town, so much uniformity had left its mark on how Italians chose to eat. The program introduction specified how organizers intended it to familiarize young, Italian people, used to “foods of homogenized tastes, standardized, and packaged,” to local dishes.\footnote{Gian Battista Bovio, introduction to \textit{Ottobre gastronomico bellunese, 13-25 ottobre 1964: prima rassegna della selvaggina in cucina} (Belluno: Tipografia Benetta, 1964), [i].} The gourmand community agreed with industrial engineer Agnesi that the process of attaining high national productivity came at an untenable price; ordinary Italians had lost a “sense of the genuine, of the real, that requires patience, dedication, and personal taste.” The general unfamiliarity with the diversity of Italian cooking, claimed a book on Genovese cooking, was due to the new consumer society where Italians pushed aside traditional cooking as unhygienic or too complicated. They reached instead for commercialized, manufactured foods.\footnote{Tremezzina Gastronomica: settembre 1966 ([Como]: Ente Provinciale per il Turismo di Como and L'Accademia Italiana della Cucina, 1966), 8; Paolo Biggio, “Difesa e valorizzazione della cucina italiana attraverso il rilancio delle ricette regionali,” \textit{AIC} (Winter/Spring 1961/62): 8.} By promoting regional recipes and restaurants that offered locally distinctive foods, the Accademia defended “the good taste of Italians” that standardized foods eroded.\footnote{L'Opera “A. Bareli” di Rovereto, ed., \textit{Ricettario della cucina tipica trentina} (Rovereto: Tipografico Mercurio, 1970), 3.}
Nowhere was the decadence of taste more apparent than in tourism. As the Accademia commemorated ten years of promoting Italian cooking, it reflected on the circumstances of its founding; the increase in tourism between 1953 and 1963 had brought greater attention to the natural beauty of the country, its history, and art, but not its food. As a result, small eating establishments that served local dishes were being replaced, the organization warned, with restaurants illuminated by “fluorescent lights” that served “amorphous foods without heritage or traditions.” Such places “abuse[d]” even the most fundamental Italian dishes, like spaghetti. “Pre-emptive partial cooking and plunging in boiling water just before serving” yielded “a disgusting paste with no gastronomic quality.” Just as disappointing was the habit of chefs to ignore Italian cooking altogether; many returned home from stints abroad and proceeded to prepare for tourists the same dishes available in a London or New York hotel.426

The Italian hospitality industry responded to mass tourism and tourists’ disinterestedness in the variety of Italian cuisine, the Accademia charged, with monotonous and poor quality food. The remedy that the organization hoped to administer was a renewed “gastronomic conscience” amongst Italians “who lost it or are losing it.”427

In an effort to resist the trend towards culinary homogenization, the organization concentrated its efforts on defining and publicizing local and regional specialties in support of tourism, the site of the worst offenses. There,

426 “Un’accademia per difendere la cucina italiana,” introduction to AIC, vol. 1 ([1962?]): [i-iii].

427 Ibid., [iii].
their interests allied them with local governments and travel literature publishers as they measured food value according to whether culinary professionals made it using specific techniques and ingredients. These factors constituted a food’s authenticity and were the standards by which the groups assessed foods and encouraged travelers to seek them out. Together, by promoting Italy as a culinary destination, they positioned foods as central features of local identities that relied on the market as the forum for cultural discourse.

**The Accademia Italiana della Cucina: Well-Connected Gourmands**

Mass tourism promoted democratized leisure, but defining authenticity was largely an undemocratic process. Regional tourism bodies and elite gastronomic societies like the Accademia and its delegations controlled the food-themed guidebooks that promoted purely local specialties. With the help of national, regional, and local tourism bodies and the well-respected Touring Club Italiano (TCI), the Accademia assumed a prominent role in creating guidebooks that simultaneously aimed to attract tourists and define local and regional cuisines for the benefit of Italians.⁴²⁸

From its earliest years, the Accademia enjoyed the support of the Italian government’s tourism branches at the highest levels and benefitted from its nationwide network of regional offices. In 1954, within a year of the Accademia’s founding, members planned their first nationwide, collective effort, the *Guida*...
*della Cucina Regionale Italiana* (Guide to Regional Italian Cooking). It would include ten to fifteen regional recipes selected and edited by members, but most space would be devoted to associates’ restaurant recommendations.\(^{429}\) As the Accademia was still assembling the guide, the High Commissioner of Tourism (*Alto Commissariato del Turismo*), the government body responsible for directing and coordinating the efforts of regional tourism entities, announced that its various offices would support the project. The director of Italy’s national tourism body (*L’Ente nazionale per il turismo* or ENIT), charged with reporting on, promoting, and advising the government on matters of tourism, also agreed to oversee the distribution and sale of the Accademia’s national guide through ENIT’s regional offices. The Accademia’s publication would complement ENIT’s own restaurant guide published in 1957 and be translated into English, French, and German.\(^{430}\)

The cooperation evolved and strengthened over the next two decades. In 1971, leaders of ENIT, the national Tourism Commission, and Accademia president Michele Guido Franci agreed to formalize and make permanent the collaboration between the organizations. Solidifying the relationship, an Accademia representative joined the Minister of Tourism’s board of advisors. The

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\(^{429}\) Orio Vergani, *AIC* (Summer/Fall 1954): 1.

\(^{430}\) For concise, contemporary descriptions of the various national offices and organizations concerned with tourism in Italy, see Giovanni Mariotti, *Manuale del Turismo: in Uso nelle scuole e nei corse turistici e alberghieri* (Rome: Saturnia, 1952), 30-39; Italian tourism historian Annunziata Berrino describes the evolution of national and government tourism bodies in Italy as they transitioned from a model of state-sponsored leisure under fascism to a tourism industry that doubled as a vehicle for economic development as early as 1946; see Annunzia Berrino, *Storia del turismo in Italia* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2011), 239-75.
Accademia affected national tourism promotion further as its members researched Italian cuisine on behalf of the General Director of Tourism and prepared promotional publications to be used by ENIT for domestic and international publications.\textsuperscript{431}

A founding member of the Accademia and TCI president Cesare Chiodi also promised to promote the work of the new organization.\textsuperscript{432} As one of Italy’s most influential touring organizations, the TCI promised to be an effective and authoritative outlet for the Accademia’s ideas. Since its founding in 1894, the TCI’s leadership sought out members from the Italian middle-class, concluding that, through tourism, they would help to unite the young country as Italians. National unity, it felt, was essential to Italy’s status as a powerful European nation-state.\textsuperscript{433} Membership in the organization grew from fifty thousand households in 1911 to over 450,000 in the 1920s and 30s, with its publications likely reaching millions of Italians.\textsuperscript{434} In 1955, the TCI announced that it would reprint the Accademia’s restaurant recommendations in its monthly magazine.\textsuperscript{435}

Within a decade of the Accademia’s foundation, its collaboration with other national organizations and government bodies concerned with promoting tourism

\textsuperscript{431} “Il Ministero per il Turismo riceve il nostro Presidente e un gruppo di Consiglieri,” \textit{AIC} (Fall/Winter 1970/71): 1-2.

\textsuperscript{432} “Il Touring Club Italiano e l’Accademia,” \textit{AIC} (Fall/Winter 1955/56): 3.


\textsuperscript{434} Ibid., 372, 383.

\textsuperscript{435} “Il Touring Club Italiano e l’Accademia,” \textit{A/C}: [3].
expanded the reach of the group's message of authenticity, domestically and internationally.

**Creating Guides to Authentic Food**

While regional Accademia delegations organized local cooking contests and fairs, the capstone of the organization's early activities was its restaurant guides, both national and regional. Founding president Vergani reminded members to seek out, in particular, unknown eateries in small towns and to ask servers for regional dishes, even "the most simple, local specialties" (*specialità paesane*).[436] The first national restaurant guide appeared in 1961, with updates printed yearly between 1966 and 1973. In the mean time, delegations issued smaller volumes of regional dining advice. The guidebooks' authors aimed both to draw the attention of foreign visitors to Italy's many cuisines and to introduce Italians to the cooking Accademia members determined was local and praiseworthy.

Attracting visitors was an important incentive for the Provincial Tourism Department of Vicenza and the Accademia when they compiled a list of restaurants in 1959 that served regional foods (*piatti tipichi*). As a destination known for accommodating winter sports lovers, the area's culinary attributes could extend its appeal and its tourist season.[437] In the northwestern region of Liguria, the "gastronomic itinerary" designed by the Accademia's Genoa

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delegation also promised to expand the tourists’ horizons by listing trattorias and restaurants “not yet discovered by mass tourism” that served local “masterpieces.” However, the guidebook’s editor, Accademia member Massimo Alberini, noted its dual purpose in advertising the area as a tourist destination. The guide also would familiarize locals, accustomed to foods produced in distant factories, with their surroundings. The fact that the guidebooks created in collaboration between the Accademia and regional tourism agencies were published in Italian, affirms that they were intended for Italian readers. Mass tourism provided in an international frame of reference for domestic discourses of food and identity.

The Politics of Authenticity

Despite being a primary audience for early guidebooks to genuine foods, the Italian public had a limited role in compiling them. With its bourgeois roots as a society of gourmands, the Accademia struggled to reconcile its aim to influence popular notions of Italian food with the accusations from outsiders, and even some of its own members, that theirs was an elitist enterprise. The reality that mass tourism involved the participation of ordinary travelers, both Italian and foreign, prompted members to question the social equity of their efforts. Earlier gastronomic guides were written for a leisured middle-class, such as that published by the TCI in 1931. The close relationship between the organization

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and larger entities promoting mass tourism made making the guide relevant to more than a select group of travelers even more pressing.

The locations and prices of restaurants featured in the Accademia guide revealed how challenging spreading values of authenticity in food to a socially and economically diverse audience could be. Delegates disagreed whether the eateries that appeared in the first 1961 guide were accessible, in terms of location and price, and whether there was a fair balance between exclusive restaurants and casual, affordable destinations. Former Accademia representative from Venice, Raffaello Levi, critiqued the organization’s first guide publicly in a Venice newspaper. He reproached the delegates for filling their publication with expensive restaurants and for not finding “more democratic criteria in regard to social justice for hosts [restauranteurs] and customers’ pockets.”

The guidebook recast foods of elite, expensive tastes as authentic; the inference was that affordable foods were banal.

The delegate responsible for editing the guidebook defended the guide’s contents, pointing out how the publication tried to offer consumers as many options as was feasible given the physical limitations of the publication. Any guidebook could only include a limited number of places, but over eighty restaurants were listed for Rome alone and therefore, as a whole, the recommendations were not overly restrictive. However, Levi pointed out that,

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despite the seemingly ample numbers of restaurants, expensive locations were overrepresented. Out of three hundred and seventy-eight eateries in Venice, the Accademia’s guide included twenty-three; of those, Levi noted, over one-fifth were luxury hotels.\footnote{Raffaello Levi to “Illustre Direttore,” September 30, 1961, reprinted in “La nostra ‘guida’ fa parlare di sé,” AIC (Fall/Winter 1961/62): 6.}

Levi was not alone in his disapproval. Other members of the Accademia responded to the prospect of the organization’s mission becoming limited by elitism. Even as the contents of the first guide were being edited in 1956, delegates debated how to make future guides more useful to the ordinary traveler. Delegate from Vicenza Antonio Roi argued that the goal of attracting ordinary tourists through food dictated that delegates should concentrate on reviewing restaurants along the main tourist thoroughfares, especially those able to accommodate large groups.\footnote{“Verbale,(Minutes)” AIC (Winter/Spring 1955/56): 2.} President Vergani doubted whether such a tactic would help their cause, arguing that the places most frequented by tourists showed “truly bad taste,” especially with their “false folklore.” It might be reasonable, he added, to convince “refined people” (persone raffinate) of this, but not the general public.\footnote{Ibid.} But, in considering the Accademia’s “social and national obligation to tourism, including both common tourists and special tourists,” (\textit{turisti comuni e turisti di eccezione}) the president and other members agreed to a compromise. Future guides would include three sections, one for general restaurants, followed by highly recommended local restaurants and, finally,
specially-selected locations that would appeal to fellow gourmands.445

Establishing Standards of Authenticity

Before the 1970s, the Accademia’s criteria for genuine cuisine were not clearly defined. In his 1961 critique of the organization’s first restaurant guide, Levi had admonished delegates to justify their descriptions of foods as “typical” (caratteristico), a word with no definite meaning.446 Although Levi questioned why reviewers did not defend the authenticity of a restaurant’s pesto alla genovese, for example, elsewhere delegates took pains to outline the general characteristics of regional foods by gathering, approving, and printing recipes for the sake of ensuring tourists’ own authentic experiences. The organization was at its most assertive in articulating regional identities through food when it came to establishing standards for regional specialties.

The Accademia set out general guidelines for identifying traditional recipes to appear in guidebooks and printed in an annual yearbook, but the process was heavily subjective. While it was not essential that delegates be born in the area from which they gathered recipes, advised an article on compiling a national cookbook of traditional foods, they “need to have lived there at least a number of years in order to understand the foundation and smells of the cuisine, or of that dish.”447 At a 1956 meeting in Milan, delegates discussed the selection of recipes that would appear in the guidebook interspersed with restaurant reviews. They

445 Ibid.


should be old and, in the words of the president, “by now forgotten.” TCI president and Accademia delegate Cesare Chiodi agreed that they should focus on old recipes that were “out of use” and certainly not those of cruise ships or large restaurants.\textsuperscript{448} Recorded recipes would be reviewed by local delegations and finally the entire organization would decide which recipes would be included in any final publication.\textsuperscript{449} From such a national collection of recipes, noted one member in describing the importance of the organization’s upcoming cookbook, members would be able to determine regional and even national cuisines through patterns in cooking methods.\textsuperscript{450} What qualified as authentic and how such recipes related to each other on a regional and national level was determined by delegates. Dishes with ingredients and preparation methods that predated recent economic transformations were the most likely candidates. Authenticity, as opposed to taste, should be consumers’ compass as they navigated the dining possibilities of postwar abundance.

Still, authenticity remained an elusive quality that Accademia members took pride in singling out from amongst imposter “recipes that are anything but correspondent to the genuine cuisines originating from the various [Italian] zones.” Such “knocked together” dishes, warned one delegate, involved using local ingredients but according to the recipes of other countries or regions.\textsuperscript{451}

\textsuperscript{449} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{450} Biggio, “Difesa e valorizzazione della cucina italiana,” 9.
\textsuperscript{451} Ibid., 8.
Accommodating Mass Tourism, 1971 to 1975

Despite the proposal to help travelers locate restaurants serving local specialties at less expensive prices, the exclusivity of the Accademia and its guides continued to challenge its goal in promoting regional foods to consumers of mass tourism. Closer cooperation with government and private tourism bodies, however, compelled the Accademia to reconsider its tactics, while remaining focused on authenticity. From 1971, the Accademia and its partners shifted their emphasis to focus on those who traveled in large groups along predictable itineraries and often under the supervision of professional agencies and guides.

The Accademia’s efforts, which remained intent on resisting homogenization in Italian cuisine, appealed to tourism promoters like ENIT who aimed to accommodate mass tourism without resorting to standardized experiences. Despite the doubling of tourists in Italy after World War II, the director of ENIT insisted that the scale should not lead to the “industrialization” of Italian tourism. Doing so would reduce the variety of the average tourist’s experience, he warned, leading to a class division, with the experience of difference restricted to elite travel. In 1971, the organization agreed to closer and permanent cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and its regional offices, as well as ENIT, whose supporting offices were also spread throughout the country. The Accademia’s experience and knowledge about Italian food made it

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452 Ente Nazionale per il Turismo, Programma di attività pubblicitaria e promozionale sul mercato internazionale (Rome: Ente Nazionale per il Turismo, 1972), 33. (hereafter cited as ENIT); Augusto Premoli, Il turismo nello sviluppo delle relazioni internazionali (Rome: Banco di Roma, [1965]), 17.
an obvious ally for government agencies and private organizations hoping to attract tourists the length and breadth of the peninsula.453

In 1971, the partnership renewed calls for Accademia members to carry out its work with the general public in mind. Drawing attention to a few “illustrious examples” of restaurants, President Michele Guido Franci made clear, was counter-productive to the organization’s mission of increasing the appreciation of Italian cooking. The typically small restaurants of Italy were losing to large venues designed to accommodate entire tour groups. So far, Franci warned, the Accademia had done nothing to respond. “Confronted with the invasion of these masses, almost always hungry only for spaghetti and pizza, us academics withdraw in good order,” admitted Franci to readers of the Accademia newsletter, “taking refuge in the trattorias that ‘they’ are not familiar with, and where they will never enter.”454 The Accademia’s actions to date associated the masses with what was not Italian. As long as the activities of the Accademia remained centered on small, exclusive eateries, they would not be able to convince ordinary tourists to understand Italian cooking as anything more than pasta and pizza. The prospect of working with the Ministry of Tourism, ENIT and their local branches, Franci argued, would change Accademia goals for the better. Instead of grudgingly accommodating the needs of mass tourism, the organization should make the ordinary traveler the focus of its work. This re-orientation would not threaten the group’s mission, Franci assured members, but would prove an

454 Ibid., 2.
opportunity to get many more people to appreciate Italian food.

Franci described a more didactic role for the organization as advisors to the Ministry of Tourism and ENIT. It would work to define local food traditions, rather than publish restaurant reviews. The Accademia would indicate to the tourism bodies “which are true typical dishes [piatti tipici] that can and should be offered, which are authentic traditions…of regional Italian cuisines.” Its delegates would also be in a position to indicate which food-related traditions (mangiata collettiva) deserved their own festival, combatting the misleading claims of “ignorant innkeepers.”

By focusing on creating rules governing authenticity of regional cuisines and designating the contents of public events, the Accademia would be better able to influence the impression of Italian cooking that the consumers of mass tourism received. Even as the Accademia and its collaborators reached out to a more democratic audience, the process of defining authenticity remained restricted.

**The Bologna Tortellino: A Case in Standardizing Authenticity for Tourism**

Efforts by the Accademia and other bodies concerned with promoting Italian tourism through foods unfolded in the central Italian city of Bologna. This particular experience is revealing, not only as an illustrative example of postwar Italian tourism, but because the method that the Accademia used to define authenticity in Bolognese food informed the methods of other regional delegations after 1974. In Bologna, as elsewhere, the Accademia and its allies in government and the hospitality industry, used the market as a forum for

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articulating cultural identity. However, even as cultural groups and government agencies aimed to democratize the experience of “genuine” food in the context of mass tourism, the process of defining authenticity was not.

Here it is critical to note that the perceptions of foreigners and commercial networks were not new forces in the evolution of the city’s food culture and civic reputation. The seat of a renowned university since 1088 that attracted students and faculty from all over Europe, Bologna had a long history of accommodating international visitors. Indeed, as historian of pre-modern Italy and Italian food culture Massimo Montanari argues, the city’s gastronomic identity and its cuisine was a direct result of its international educational connections and the local government’s efforts to maintain the city’s attractiveness to students and faculty and thus its academic prestige.456 As early as the 1200s, a Frenchman favorably compared Bologna, a university town, to Paris, a rival city of education with the epithet “la Grassa” (the Fat). The nickname based the distinction on the Italian city’s opulence and security, both characteristics in which food played a central role in medieval Italy. Solidifying the city’s international food reputation in the seventeenth century, the local government issued rules stipulating food quality, as well as what should be served on which day, thereby creating minimum standards for eateries to accommodate the largely German student population.457

As a site of exchange for foodstuffs, the market also had a long and


transformative relationship with food production and consumption in Bologna. Like other cities on the Italian peninsula that grew in wealth and influence after 1200, with the revival in international trade that had once linked cities in the Roman Empire, Bologna’s concentration of elites and financial resources made it a center of exchange for goods from the surrounding countryside and beyond. In such urban centers, as Montanari and fellow Italian historian John Dickie point out, residents selectively combined and prepared the products of different regions. Over time, the foods they produced came to typify the cuisines of entire regions. Given the geography and financial resources required to support such culinary creativity, these gastronomic repertoires were necessarily elite fare. Bologna was no exception. Here, as elsewhere, commercial and cultural crossroads instigated the accumulation of ingredients and expertise.

In the newly-united Italy, Bologna’s image as a culinary capital persisted. Its reputation was helped along in part by Pellegrino Artusi’s 1891 cookbook, The Science of Eating and the Art of Eating Well, that brought together recipes from across the country and arranged them according to region. However, writing in 1900 and 1913, respectively, Artusi and fellow food writer Alfredo Panzini noted with regret that the quality of the city’s food had noticeably declined. The same could be said for the food passing as “Bolognese” in the average Italian kitchen. “Everyone knows [the specialties of Bolognese cuisine], even without having been to Bologna,” noted a 1939 guide to Italian restaurants. But housewives “too

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often interpret it in their own way.” The criticism overlooked what was a matter of necessity. An embargo placed on the Italian economy in retaliation for the fascist government’s 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, combined with government policies to encourage national self-sufficiency, made shortages a daily reality for most Italians. Given the centrality of scarce meats and cheeses to Bolognese cooking, reproducing it in the average Italian kitchen would have been difficult for practical and financial reasons and required a measure of ingenuity by the housewife, regardless. Wherever one tasted Bologna’s cuisine, the consensus among a small group of food writers was that it was not like it used to be.

When Accademia and others linked food to the city’s international image in postwar Bologna, to an extent, they continued a tradition that went back at least seven hundred years and had continued into the twentieth century. It goes without saying that the outsider’s gaze and international identity do not exist without each other. Postwar activities also affirmed the relationship between food culture and commerce documented by food historians of other Italian cities (and presumably elsewhere) and during other periods. The market in postwar Bologna and the system of mass tourism that fixed an international gaze on Bologna made the food-based, local identity cultivated between the 1950s and 70s different from the city’s previous culinary reputation. Travel guides published by the TCI increasingly focused on food as a primary attraction of the region and the city, while efforts by the Accademia, the local government, and business

459 Capatti, “Prima e dopo Artusi,” 98-100.
460 Helstosky, Garlic and Oil, 91-114.
organizations after 1970 aimed to make the culinary draw a standard and predictable product for tourists. Efforts to sell Bologna as a travel destination through its food revealed how proponents defined authentic food at the same time they took advantage of American-style consumerism, including its value of standardization.

In discourses of Bolognese identity, the definitions of pasta dishes, tagliatelle and tortellino, were not only demonstrative but central to conversations of authenticity. As tourism promoters and literature brought the city and its surrounding province into focus as a gastronomic destination, culinary groups, like the Accademia, also discarded imprecise interpretations of the city’s cuisine and its tagliatelle and tortellino in favor of specific descriptions and recipes.

Between 1935 and 1957, TCI guides for Emilia Romagna, increasingly highlighted food as an attraction of the region and its capital, Bologna. The first regionally focused guide series, published in 1935, described Emilia Romagna and its principal cities, each through the area’s geography, history, art, natural environment, its settlements, and industry. While introduced by its food-inspired nickname, La Grassa, the description of Bologna only briefly mentioned the area’s food culture and culinary specialties. The guide restricted all references to foods from other major cities to discussions of products in the local economies.

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462 Ibid., 131, 177, 204-6.
Readers would have noticed a new emphasis on food when the guide was updated twenty-seven years later and under the direction of the TCI’s new president and Accademia founder, Cesare Chiodi. In the new guide, food products continued to be listed as products of local industry, but, more importantly, food was covered extensively in its own section titled “Cucina” (Cooking) and featured prominently under the later descriptions of each of the major cities. The general description of Emilia Romagna cooking also offered guidelines for identifying the region’s cooking. Various local cuisines belonged to a larger group, dominated by cured meats, rich sauces, and hard cheese that “offer the gourmand a considerable number of renown, authentic specialties.”463 After laying out the general contours of Emilia Romagna foods, the guide offered a detailed list of the ingredients and dishes that filled it, with a paragraph each dedicated to pasta, meats, cured meats and fowl, fish, cheese, and sweets. The region’s pasta, for example, was made from soft wheat flour and eggs, rolled out into sheets (pasta sfoglia) and cut to form long strips as in the cases of tagliatelle, lasagne, or papparelle. Circles, triangles, or squares of the same dough could be folded around combinations of the area’s meats and cheeses to form anolini, tortelloni, tortellino, and tortelli and be served in a broth or “dry” in a meat sauce, or with butter, cheese, and tomato.464

In the following pages, the guide listed restaurants, cafes, and pastry


464 Ibid., 72.
shops under descriptions of each of the major cities, including Bologna, Modena, Reggio, Parma, Piacenza, Ferrara, and Ravenna. Most references contained only the name of the establishment, but many noted whether they concentrated in regional specialties and occasionally mentioned specific dishes. The 1957 itinerary for Emilia Romagna introduced food as a primary attraction and characteristic of the region and its cities. When the TCI updated the guide in 1971, it retained the emphasis on the area’s cuisine and the primary dishes that constituted it.

In the 1970s, Bologna’s regional tourism body also put food at the center of its promotional activities. Like individuals in other popular Italian destinations since the late 1960s, Bologna’s restauranteurs and hoteliers struggled to succeed in the unpredictable tourism trade. An uncertain market and increasing food prices, combined with the long hours inherent to the hospitality business convinced many cooks and hotel-owners to leave or change professions. As a result, family and other small-scale businesses that produced and served Bolognese food closed.

To bring tourists back, the new president of the Bologna tourism body proposed that the city tap into the flow of mass tourism to nearby seaside resorts.

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465 Ibid., 79-80, 179, 250, 286, 361, 608, 664.


468 Ortolani, “Troppo Blasonata la Nostra Cucina.”
By offering short excursions to holiday-makers on the Adriatic coast desiring day-long visits to inland cultural centers like Bologna, the city would revive its number of visitors by attracting consumers of package holidays for short stays. The plan’s “cornerstone” was that it offered tourists, whether traveling individually or as part of an organized group, a fixed-price menu of Bologna food. By ensuring a stream of hungry visitors to the city, the local tourism board aimed to guarantee small food businesses a market for their products.

Reactions to the tourism body’s efforts highlighted the challenge of preserving local cuisine in the context of consumer culture that relied on affordable, mass-produced goods. According to an article that appeared in the Bologna’s Il Resto del Carlino newspaper, local businesses feared that making Bologna’s food more accessible would “deprive it of its centuries-old prestige.” Growing food costs that increased the price of staple foods, including, most controversially, pasta, added to their misgivings the prospect that they might be forced to sell “our highly prized cuisine below cost” and harm its image. Adapting Bologna food culture, historically that of a well-to-do, urban population, to the demands of mass tourism, and by extension, the consumer culture that supported it, threatened to alter the city’s food identity that had been based on exclusivity.

While tourism promoters worked to make food an affordable and

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469 Ibid.

470 Ibid.

established component of the tourist experience of Bologna in the interests of preserving the city’s culinary culture, the area’s gastronomic societies took steps to codify definitions of local cuisine. Initiatives by the local Accademia delegation, the city’s *Dotta Confraternità del Tortellino* (Learned Brotherhood of the Tortellino) complemented the shifted focus of TCI guides and later national and regional tourism board efforts to attract mass tourism. By publishing restaurant guides that evaluated restaurants according to their preparation of specific, regional foods and by compiling authentic recipes, these groups helped to define the characteristics of Bologna cooking and its contents for the tourist market.

When the regional Accademia delegation and Bologna’s tourism body jointly solicited the public’s reviews of restaurants serving the city’s specialties in 1961, they involved the public in a discourse of “typical” Bolognese foods that was rooted in the market. Organizers described the program as a way to simultaneously preserve local cooking whose international fame inspired so-called unsuccessful imitations and experimentations by chefs in other Italian cities and abroad. The brochure describing the initiative directed customers to visit establishments that displayed signs outside indicating that they participated in the scheme. The Accademia and Bologna’s tourism body ensured that the eateries involved were the “most qualified” with “master cooks” who prepared the “old and unsurpassed recipes of purely Bolognese dishes.”

At these pre-selected restaurants ordinary consumers could fill out forms in which they

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472 “Perché questa rassegna?” in *Bologna: rassegna gastronomica della cucina bolognese: 19 novembre-10 dicembre 1961*, Ente Provinciale per il Turismo [Bologna] and AIC. (Bologna: Ente Provinciale per il Turismo [Bologna], 1961), [ii].
anonymously shared their opinions of establishments’ atmosphere, services, and, most importantly, food. By specifying which restaurants clients should review, those promoting the activity played an essential role in exposing consumers to menus they contended summarized Bologna cuisine. While the public’s engagement was important in that their reviews would contribute to a printed guide to the area’s restaurants serving authentic Bologna foods, they acted within a prescribed rubric. The published overview of the week-long review spree underlined the need for consumers to visit only indicated restaurants, which would serve as a “true and useful guide and guarantee for those who intended to eat genuinely Bolognese.” In other words, left to its own devices, the public could not identify real, local cooking. By inviting public reviews of a list of approved local restaurants (and their menus), the Accademia and the local tourism board set a standard for the city’s cuisine, in terms of what foods it contained and, with the input of ordinary consumers, its quality. The site of this somewhat lopsided dialog about what constituted authentic Bologna cooking was the market; the public participated as consumers of designated restaurants, contributing to a larger effort to promote the area’s cuisine as, in the words of Accademia delegate Luigi Deserti, an “extremely effective and compelling tourist attraction.” (elemento estremamente efficace e convincente di richiamo turistico).

By directing diners, both local or visiting, to selected restaurants that

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473 Ibid.

offered customers specific dishes, in particular pastas such as tortellino and tagliatelle, the Accademia reinforced a codified Bologna cuisine, standardized to attract the very tourists that were the new demographic sought by all. The attempt to reach consumers became a heated contest for their business that enforced a standardized behavior.

Consensus about what should be listed on a menu of traditional Bolognese foods did not resolve all the ambiguities of the city's cuisine. In the 1970s, the Accademia and its local allies turned their attention to defining the requirements of the dishes themselves, specifically pasta dishes linked to local identity. What qualified as a Bologna tortellino or tagliatelle, like most forms of pasta, was a matter of debate, according to the Accademia. While manufacturers of Genovese trenette pasta could not agree on whether the product should have a rectangular cross-section or lenticular, for example, the Accademia aimed to settle such “controversies” as they applied to Bologna's pastas once and for all.475

The postwar efforts of the Accademia contrasted with earlier discourses that addressed the tortellino and tagliatelle as ambiguous categories, defined, if anything, by their flavor. In 1931, the inaugural food-themed guidebook by the culturally authoritative TCI described Bologna specialties in ways that noticeably lacked the urgency of specificity in later efforts to define its authentic foods. The width of Bologna tagliatelle, as described by the guide, “varied according taste,”

being “‘thin’...‘wide’...or ‘medium.’”476 The tortellino, the guide suggested, was a shape of pasta which residents in Bologna, but also in neighboring areas filled according to their own traditions:

The tortellini figures as an unequivocally Bolognese specialty, but extended to the whole of Emilia and featured also in those other areas where the form is typical of the local custom, even under another name.477

The tagliatelle and tortellino described in the 1931 TCI guide, while noted Bolognese foods, were not rigidly defined by dimensions or, in the case of the tortellino, as the exclusive patrimony of one city. The foods, the guidebook authors acknowledged, were ambiguous categories.

What controversy did exist surrounding tagliatelle was not over the matter of authenticity but whether it deserved a place in the Italian diet. According to gourmands, it did, by merit of the food’s flavor. Prompting their defense was the publishing of a “Manifesto of Futurist Cooking” in 1930 by the leader of the Futurist Movement. Its members pushed for the unification of all lands inhabited by Italian-speakers and for an Italian race adapted to “modern civilization [that] tends toward elimination of weight, and increased speed” and that made the utmost use of technology.478 The manifesto author and Futurist founder Filippo Tommaso Marinetti criticized Italians’ pasta consumption as incompatible with the

476 TCI, Guida gastronomica d’Italia (Milano: TCI, 1931), 205.
477 Ibid., 13.
movement's nationalist, utopian vision.\textsuperscript{479} Pasta, he argued, led to an unhealthy body and mind. Eaten most famously and in large quantities by the Neapolitans, he contended, it “develops a kind of ironic skepticism and maudlin, that cuts off their enthusiasm.” The food was liable to make all Italians “cubic, solid, and leaden,” physiologically unsuited to a future of aerodynamic machines that the Futurists intended Italians to dominate. That pasta consumption made the nation reliant on foreign grain only made it more at odds with their vision of an internationally dominant and technologically superior Italy.\textsuperscript{480} Although Marinetti supplemented his manifesto with recipes of acceptable dishes that were calorically spare and minimally cooked and even hosted a Futurist dinner in March 1931, Futurist cooking remained a culinary movement only in theory.\textsuperscript{481}

Marinetti, with his extreme recommendations and condemnation of a staple Italian food, nevertheless caught the public’s attention, including that of Bologna foodlovers. Less than three months after the first Futurist dinner, \textit{tagliatelle} lovers met in Bologna to discuss, rather playfully, whether pasta damaged Italy’s national character. The debate that followed was not really one at all. The attendees dined on \textit{tagliatelle} while taking turns offering speeches defending the dish and pasta in general. Marinetti, seated at the head table, was

\textsuperscript{479} \textit{Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti}. 10 vols. ([Rome]: Instituto Giovanni Treccani, 1929-1939), s.v. “Futuristi.”


the lone opposing voice.\textsuperscript{482}

As evidenced by the reactions to Futurist cooking in the 1930s, postwar tourism was not the first time Bologna’s cultural elite felt compelled to defend the city’s foods. However, unlike later discourses of tagliatelle and the tortellino that focused on the foods’ authenticity, the speeches delivered at the 1931 banquet described the food and its qualities in terms of its flavor that was far superior, speakers contended, to the foods prescribed by Marinetti. By praising the food based on sensory experiences, the anti-Futurists expressed a subjective understanding of tagliatelle. The food’s quality, as well as its proper width, as per the TCI’s 1931 guide, was a matter of taste.\textsuperscript{483}

In contrast, gourmands’ postwar discourses of Bolognese pastas increasingly rejected the ambiguity encouraged by taste-based appreciations of the city’s foods, just as leaders of the area’s tourism worked to attract a more socially diverse clientele. Their conversations about tagliatelle and tortellino refocused on the food’s authenticity as measured against standards laid out by the Accademia. Even as the organization sought out individual interpretations of the foods to help in the process of codifying standards, their final evaluation transformed public discourses of the dishes from personalized expressions of taste to matters of accuracy. In this context, conversations about tagliatelle and tortellino emanating from elite foodlovers took on an aura of objectivity as the

\textsuperscript{482} I cinque secoli delle tagliatelle celebrati dalla Fameja Bulgneisa (Bologna: Poligrafici Riuniti, 1931), 4-13.

\textsuperscript{483} Ibid.
foods increasingly became an important part of the mass tourism experience.

In 1972 and 1974, the Bologna delegation of the Accademia selected and certified recipes for tagliatelle and tortellino to be made official versions of the area’s cuisine with the legal authority of the local Chamber of Commerce. The first initiative, indeed the first of its kind carried out by the Accademia anywhere in Italy, established the official measurements for Bologna tagliatelle, a thin, flat egg pasta, according to the rules of the regional cuisine, to be served with a meat-based sauce. The notarized recipe referenced the TCI guide for Emilia Romagna in determining that the width of a cooked strand of tagliatella should be one-12270th the height of the Asinelli Towers, a landmark in the heart of the city, or eight millimeters.484 The delegates finished the ceremony for depositing the recipe at the chamber of commerce with a sense of lighthearted bravado when they presented a gold prototype of the pasta, a literal representation of the “golden rule,” to be kept in the city offices.485 In a gesture that aimed to elevate the unprecedented event into a local tradition, the delegation declared that every anniversary of the date, April sixteenth, should be dedicated to the noodle in the restaurants of Bologna and the entire province.486

The same delegates gathered again, along with the Dotta Confraternità


485 The notarized minutes of Accademia meeting that include the dimensions for tagliatella are kept in the in the Bologna Chamber of Commerce. Ufficio del Registro per gli Atti Pubblici in the Camera di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura di Bologna. Atto Pubblico n. 5838 (April 19, 1972), Ufficio del Registro per gli Atti Pubblici in the Camera di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura di Bologna, Bologna.

del Tortellino, two years later to sign their names on the official recipe for the
tortellino, also destined to reside in the Bologna Chamber of Commerce. More
apparent than in 1972 was how the process of defining authenticity engaged the
public in a limited sense. In early 1974, the Accademia and the Confraternità
printed a notice in the local newspaper, Il Resto del Carlino, requesting family
recipes for tortellino from the residents of Bologna. The article acknowledged that
the variations in the hundred recipes the organizations already had were “a
testimony to the Bolognese imagination.” When it came to determining which was
“the classic recipe,” the article assured readers that “experts from the Accademia
della Cucina and the Dotta Confraternità will decide.⁴⁸⁷ In the hands of the
Accademia and Confraternità, recipes reflecting personal taste were sources for
an empirical study that nevertheless entailed taste-tests for determining the
recipe for the “true” tortellino.

The desire to sell Bologna as a tourist destination lay behind initiatives to
define authenticity. The Accademia, who since its inception made emphasizing
regional foods for tourism its central objective, turned to compiling authentic
recipes starting in 1972 as part of the same effort. As described in the
introduction of the tagliatelle recipe notarized in 1971, making the authentic
recipe a matter of legal, public record coincided with the Accademia’s larger
objective “to promote Italian gastronomy,” which it had always carried out in the
field of Italian tourism through its history of collaboration with national and
regional tourism councils. An Accademia account published twenty-six years after

the certification of the tortellino recipe also described the delegation’s action as a response to the pressure of tourism. The tortellino filling, “being made up of few principal ingredients, lends itself to more variations in preparation.” This, presumably, was the habit of chefs seeking to please tourists, whom, the account goes on to lament, were unable to pick out such “‘degeneration’” as tortellino served in a cream sauce. The Accademia intervened on behalf of hapless consumers, offering the guidance of gourmands to help them discern such “strange elaborations” from classic versions.488

Fellow sponsors of the effort to certify the tortellino recipe, the Dotta Confraternità del Tortellino, also understood their efforts to “protect” the Bologna food specialty as a way to encourage tourists to visit the area. Established ten years before the recipe was notarized, the Confraternità described its mission to “improve the prestige of the city’s culture and in particular to revive interest in Bologna cuisine, spreading and defending the most authentic gastronomic recipes of Bologna in particular and of Emilia and Romagna in general.”489

Confraternità meetings, unsurprisingly, convened around meals to which the organization invited guests who might help them further their culinary mission. At a dinner hosted in 1965, this included the current president of the Bologna  


tourism council, Giancarlo Pascale. Pascale’s presence was not merely due to being in a prominent local position. As the leaders of the Confraternità indicated privately, they understood their mission of “saving” the tortellino to be fundamentally linked to the promotion of Bologna as a tourist destination. Writing to fellow founder and locally famous journalist Renzo Renzi in 1971, Confraternità leader Giorgio Vacchi responded to Renzi’s misgivings about the organization’s objectives. While Renzi rued the reduction of Bologna’s international image to that of food and, more specifically, the tortellino, Vacchi defended the stereotype, insisting that “we have always been of the opinion (and we still are) that the touristic merits of Bologna are many but that the tortellino in particular can constitute an extremely useful avenue of publicity to bring to the mind of foreigners its tourist attractions.” The organization’s leader saw no contradiction between the group’s larger mission of “spreading and defending the most authentic recipes of Bologna” and promoting food as a selling point of the city to tourists. This may explain why the Confraternità and the local Accademia delegation found common cause as they jointly worked to codify the recipe of the tortellino.

**Local Foods and Postwar Tourism**

Tourism was more than a means to an end for preserving authentic food when it came to the Accademia’s activities with the Confraternità and in general.

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490 Il Comitato to Renzo Renzi, October 20, 1965, Epistolario, ARR.

491 Giorgio Vacchi to Renzi, January 18, 1971, Epistolario, ARR.

492 Dotta Confraternità del Tortellino, “Statuto.”
Certainly, as some historians of the relationship between food and leisure, as well as observers of successful contemporary food movements, have noted, tourism has represented an economic model with the potential of sustaining small-scale industries; niche markets of international consumers support enterprises that would otherwise not be able to survive on commerce from local populations alone. Without discounting what has been a successful business model for many small businesses and farming communities, local Italian cuisines did not merely benefit from efforts to take advantage of international flows of consumers but owed their existence as identifiable and predictable categories of food to Italy’s place within an international network of consumer societies.

In this context, mass tourism created the markets in which groups like the Accademia felt compelled to act and in which definitions of regional foods made sense. At the international level, policy makers saw tourism as a way to revitalize war-devastated, western European economies, as well as offer evidence of an equitable society sustained by American-style consumerism. National, regional, and community-based bodies responded to such initiatives and subsequently worked to sustain the economies and infrastructures postwar tourism required.

From the perspective of associations like the Accademia, mass tourism, as much as Italians’ gravitation towards the goods of mass production, represented a threat to the survival of what they considered the country’s traditional food culture. Their response was to respond to the tourist market by taking advantage of it, harnessing it to encourage the consumption of “threatened” foods. In this sense, selling food and food identities to tourists was a
means to an end. However, as discussed above, the process also involved
promoting a new level of specificity about which foods belonged to which culinary
traditions, as well as what ingredients and methods of preparation should be
involved. These definitions the Accademia disseminated with the help of other
private organizations and government bodies, often under the pretense of
guaranteeing product quality, that is, of the tourist’s experience. Italian cultural
elites responded to mass tourism by discouraging variation and creating rules of
Italian cuisine that they nevertheless aimed to ensure remained at least as varied
as the country’s provinces. With these priorities in place, the measure of a food’s
value was its authenticity, rather than, as in the earlier appreciation of tagliatelle,
its taste, much less its uniformity or cleanliness.
Chapter 6
Conclusion: Food, Authenticity, and Recent Contours of Class and Nationhood in the Market

Cooked or raw pork? Questions over whether the ingredients of the recipe for authentic tortellino filling should change prompted local restaurant owners, chefs, and a TV personality to weigh in. The 2013 debate was prompted by a blind taste-test organized by the Confraternità at the same restaurant where they convened to mark their certification of the first authentic tortellino recipe in 1974. In 2013, the vast majority of diners preferred the uncertified version prepared with raw pork, garnering forty out of fifty votes. Using their senses to evaluate the dish signaled a break with past methods where judgements were legitimated with claims to historical precedents. Still, prominent voices of the city’s food culture who disagreed with the current official formula continued to affirm the role of authenticated recipes. All of the four authorities on Bologna cooking interviewed by Il Resto del Carlino agreed that both versions of the filling were legitimate, despite having their own preferences. The solution, they concurred, was to amend the original recipe deposited at the city’s chamber of commerce.493 Whether an official recipe was necessary at all did not appear to be a factor in their reasoning.

Today there are over two thousand authenticated recipes submitted by 217 Italian delegations of the Accademia Italian della Cucina. An updated, official list is maintained on the organization’s website, comprising a publicly-accessible

493 Benedetta Cucci, “Cambiera’ la ricetta del re tortellino?” (Will the recipe for the king tortellino change?) Il Resto del Carlino (Bologna), September 24, 2013.
database of authentic Italian cooking searchable by region and ingredients.

Another section of the site offers a directory of restaurants that stand out for producing local or faithfully “traditional” dishes. A network of sixty-eight sister delegations, concentrated outside of Italy elsewhere in Europe and on the coasts of North America, and smattered along the coasts of Australia, South America, and even Japan and China, have added to the register additional worthy establishments preparing Italian food across the globe.\textsuperscript{494} Preserving genuine Italian cooking, whether at home or abroad and in response to the global mobility of Italians and consumers, remains the objective of the association.

The Accademia’s continued engagement in asserting standards of food value according to authenticity enmesh it in the elite conversations about identity that have made its relationship to food and its salability taken for granted in western cultures. Other important actors in the process include gourmet food writers in the US and institutions including the European Union, Slow Food, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Acceptance of food as integral to the vocabulary of identity has empowered some groups and disenfranchised others by mapping onto existing discourses with divisive results, in some cases engendering divides along class and racial lines. The presumed equality of the consumer marketplace where these conversations manifest disguise or distract from the ways value is meted out from centralized institutions or the ways they marginalize certain groups.

\textsuperscript{494} 2,093 recipes, to be exact. L’Accademia Italiana della Cucina, “Le Ricette” (The Recipes), Le Delegazioni, accessed October 20, 2016, \url{http://www.accademialitalianacucina.it/it}. 228
Foreign Food in the US: Inclusion and Inequality

Interest in international foods since the 1980s, particularly in North America, and the related, significant growth in food-centered tourism in Italy, has attracted the scholarly attention of sociologists and anthropologists who themselves acknowledge their participation in these trends as “foodies.” Both scenarios deal in commodified identities. As in the evolving discourses of pasta in the US and Italy traced in this study, they have uncovered an uneasy relationship between the democratic values of diversity and equal access to the fruits of consumer culture on the one hand, and the contradictory results of preserving (and even enhancing) the texture of local communities expressed through foods in an international market.

Sociologists and historians trace current popular interest in international foods in America to the 1960s. The shift in attention coincides with a demystification of haute (French) cuisine, changes in government policies allowing for more diverse immigration, and a counter-culture movement that inspired young people to seek alternatives to an elite culinary canon, a food system they contended was damaging to the environment and supported by and profiting large businesses. The counter-culture spirit informed new organizing philosophies about what to eat, how, and even when. Speaking to the desire to articulate an alternative system of values regarding food, Alice Waters rejected a

495 Sociologists Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann describe a “foodies” as someone who rejects the snobbery of elite food culture and is theoretically open to eating anything (“omnivorous”); a foodie uses standards of authenticity and exoticness to carefully select foods, thus making specialized knowledge and access to foods new forms of cultural capital that involve foodies in a culture that combines democratic values and class distinction. See Johnston and Baumann, *Foodies*. 

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rigid adherence to French cooking by using local, seasonal ingredients, and employed informally-trained chefs in her California restaurant that opened in 1971. Others demonstrated their disregard for convention by eating ethnic foods, challenging a reverence for French foods and a Euro-centric cultural hierarchy while embracing the diverse cultures of recent immigrants. This, too, became a marker of status for university-educated, counter-culture adherents cum urban professionals. Guiding this transition were food columnists, restaurant reviewers, and magazines who helped to make consumption and awareness of and knowledgeability about international foods a source of cultural capital in the 1970s and 80s. As I have argued, the themes of authenticity and cosmopolitan living that came to dominate discourses of international food were already in place by the 1950s as major advertising firms and producers worked to elevate the status of pasta-centered, Italian food while re-introducing Americans to a pantry staple.

Consuming international foods continues to sustain class hierarchies, while appearing to dismiss it. While sociologists Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann argue that exploring “foreign” foods is not limited to well-heeled middle- and upper-middle-class individuals, their participation and preferences are most

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496 Johnston and Baumann, *Foodies*, 5-11; Consumer culture historian Warren Belasco uses the term “counter-cuisine” to describe those (largely young people who saw themselves as belonging to a counter-culture) who rejected foods from the industrial system for their “fakeness” and for being products of a centralized system that put profits above environmental or labor concerns. For many, consuming outside the industrial establishment also promised freedom from monotony with hand-crafted, ethnic, and regional American foods; Harvey Levenstein describes Americans’ taste for foreign foods since the 1960s as coming from many sources, including status associated with Old-World foods considered distinct from immigrants from those areas and larger interests in personal growth, new experiences, and “a turn toward sensuality.” See Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, 4; Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 216-19. 

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heavily influenced by authoritative voices reaching them through guidebooks, cookbooks, and other mass media. The latter use adjectives “authentic” and “exotic” to judge foods as “good” or “bad” that structure discourses of cosmopolitan eating. Taste leaders, such as gourmet food writers and instructors in cooking classes and tasting workshops aim to help their audiences identify superior authentic and exotic foods. They acknowledge that tastes can be learned, thus the ability to choose the right foods becomes an expression of cultural capital. In turn, the capability of eating the correct food becomes evidence of time, and invariably money, spent acquiring specialized knowledge and (typically) rare foods, both resources that restrict the potential of most to partake in a culture of authentic food consumption.

Even as consuming foreign food appears to reach new levels of popularity, critics attest that the role of lifestyle and commodification undermine its ability to challenge a normative American identity that is white and ostensibly middle-class. As noted by Johnston and Baumann, foodies as internet bloggers accuse the Food Network, a symbol of the growing curiosity about food generally, of only featuring ethnic or non-white chefs as they prepare dishes associated with popular assumptions about their backgrounds. For example, a Japanese chef would only be shown preparing sushi or other recognizably Japanese specialties.


while a white chef could be broadcast making tamales as well as ethnically-neutral brownies. Johnston and Baumann’s own fieldwork investigating food discourse amongst self-professed “foodies” supports bloggers’ observations of ethnic cooking in popular media as often evidence of racial bias.\textsuperscript{499} Not only do such depictions deny the creativity of non-white chefs, but they reinforce the representation of racial and ethnic minorities as limited to foods whose purpose is to delight the bored taste buds of white viewers.\textsuperscript{500}

**Europe: The Contradictions of Branding Authenticity**

Today, other international organizations, including the European Union (through its administrative body the European Commission) and Slow Food share the Accademia’s objectives as part of a much larger focus on preserving cultures in ways that double as economic boosts to local communities. Authentic and traditional remain salient, if not the principal, qualities through which they deem foods, locations, and even ways of preparing and consuming food, worthy of acknowledgement and protection. Besides practical assistance in preserving a given area, food, or method of production, such as financial and technical, approval by these organizations translates into privileged access to international markets, especially of tourists. Slow Food and the European Union argue that their assistance is meant to empower consumers to recognize and purchase superior foods, as well as enable small producers to tap into geographically-distant markets under the auspices of internationally-recognized guarantors of

\textsuperscript{499} Ibid., 16.

quality. In many ways, these institutions have aimed to democratize claims to authenticity (for consumers and producers) and at times the process of demarcating authenticity. The results, however, to the extent that they rely on the market, remain ambivalent.

The Slow Food and EU labeling schemes that centralize efforts to define authentic foods also reveal the challenges faced by international entities in meting out equitable access to viable markets for producers. Born of intentions to connect rural areas in danger of job loss and depopulation to a geographically broad consumer base, the labeling program initiated by the European Union in 1992 is credited by supporters with empowering consumers to identify quality food products and marginal agricultural communities to develop sustainable local economies. Depending on ingredients and production methods and location, qualified foods can be promoted and packaged using recognizable logos indicating their approval by the European Union. The most prestigious and difficult category to enter is the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) in which producers have proven their use of ingredients and processing methods in a given area according to “recognised know-how of local producers.” Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) distinguishes foods made using methods strongly associated with a location, but not necessarily local ingredients, while Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) spotlights traditional foods, distinguished by ingredients or production techniques, regardless of where they are made.501 The

intent of protected status dovetails with that of EU financial incentives to encourage historical methods of agricultural production facing uncertain futures for lack of economic sustainability; entire communities that can prove their preservation and continued use of historical farming methods may also apply to be registered as an ecomuseum, a designation that clears the way for funneling EU rural development funds to local and regional governments, as well as attracting tourists interested in observing and supporting rural diversity and, of course, sampling internationally-certified foods. The effect of linking the fate of rural development to the market through food labelling and tourism has benefitted some communities and producers able to meet EU standards and publicize their status.\textsuperscript{502}

It has also had unintended consequences. To become and remain beneficiaries of EU food certifications, producers must provide documentation of nutritional properties and continuity with historical methods, follow hygienic processing standards, and navigate the legal process involved in applying. These, contend anthropologist Cristina Grasseni, are obstacles that require significant resources out of reach of most small producers.\textsuperscript{503} Rural development funds directed toward certain agricultural practices can incentivize agriculture and also fuel competition, especially for use of specified land areas, raising the


cost of farming them.\textsuperscript{504} The results have been unequal access to funding, tourists dollars, and, some critics argue, a standardization of food products as producers alter practices to comply with EU certification protocol or, unable to do so, abandonment food production entirely.\textsuperscript{505}

The private organization and self-proclaimed “movement,” Slow Food, build its reputation on its ability to connect small producers and consumers skeptical of the mass-produced foods; results here, too, are mixed. The roots of Slow Food can be traced, in a general sense, to a desire to uplift the image and fortunes of small Italian producers. Slow Food was conceived in the wake of a breakdown in solidarity amongst classes and within political parties in Italy in the 1970s and 80s, fueled by political violence and failed initiatives by organized labor to secure wages and improve working conditions. The earliest leaders of Slow Food, including Carlo Petrini, were members of the Communist Party who aimed to recast their political philosophy in the wake of internal discord in the early 1980s. They advocated the pursuit of pleasure as a force for good, as opposed to being the failing of the decadent bourgeois. The pursuit of pleasure

\textsuperscript{504} This was the case of farming in the Valtaleggio Region of the Italian Alps documented by Grasseni. In order to encourage a form of traditional agriculture, the EU paid farmers to take cattle to mountain meadows during the summer to graze. Financial incentives convinced more farmers to take up the practice. Owners of alpine meadows responded to competition by raising the rents charged to farmers that had previously been token amounts. This raised tensions in the community, for obvious reasons, and newcomers soon found themselves unwelcome. An application to certify a cheese produced in Valtaleggio using milk from mountain-pastured cattle as PDO has only increased local tensions and threaten to create new hierarchies in the valley. See Grasseni, “Conservation, development and self-commodification.”

\textsuperscript{505} Grasseni, “Of Cheese and Ecomuseums,” 55-57.
transformed into a moral agent was through consumption.\textsuperscript{506}

More specifically, Slow Food’s beginnings can be traced to publications that provided the models of informed consumption and the philosophical need for consumers to reacquaint themselves with where their food came from, as opposed to passively accepting the products of the impersonal industrial food system. The literary outlet for non-yet-formalized Slow Food movement, \emph{il Gambero Rosso}, was a supplement to the Communist daily, \emph{Il Manifesto}, beginning in 1986. The publication took its name from the tavern in the Italian folktale, Pinnochio, where the puppet was tricked by the cat and the fox who made off with his money. As Italian historian Fabio Parasecoli notes, \emph{il Gambero Rosso} aimed to “protect Pinocchio’s real-life counterparts...from padded hospitality bills, lumpy beds, gruff service, watery wine, and mediocre food.”\textsuperscript{507} In 1988, the creators of \emph{il Gambero Rosso} cooperated with Agricola or the Recreation Association of Italian Communists, an organization founded by Petrini, to publish \emph{Wine Guide}. Its aim answered the political concerns of Petrini and fellow Italian Communists to marry pleasure and activism through the market by drawing attention to diverse Italian wines and small winemakers whose futures were threatened by, not just a transatlantic, but a now globalized economy in which industrially-produced wines had an advantage. Not only did

\textsuperscript{506} For a detailed account of the political genealogy of Slow Food and its founders, see Fabio Parasecoli, “Postrevolutionary Chowhounds: Food, Globalization, and the Italian Left,” \emph{Gastronomica} 3, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 29-39. Kenneth Iain MacDonald also offers a brief critical discussion that points out the incongruity between Slow Food’s communist political origins and its role in sustaining elite discourse on food. See Kenneth Iain MacDonald, “The morality of cheese: A paradox of defensive localism in a transnational cultural economy,” \emph{Geoforum} 44 (2013): 93-102, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.03.011.

\textsuperscript{507} Parasecoli, “Postrevolutionary Chowhounds,” 33.
compilers of the guide hope information would link consumers with small producers for economic reasons, but they regarded it as a way to foster the social connections between them, which intellectuals behind the guide, including Petrini, believed was otherwise lost in a global economy dominated by mass-produced goods.508

These goals were at the core of a manifesto signed by the leaders of Agricola and writers of Il Gambero Rosso, as well as representatives from various countries, who met in Paris in 1989 and declared themselves champions of the Slow Food Movement. The statement expounded on the ways Slow Food would use the market to support livelihoods marginalized by globalization that supplied the foods integral to the “flavors and savors of regional cooking.”509 The success of multinational European firms using the model of mass production and consumption by the late 1980s meant that signatories’ opposition could not easily be read as anti-Americanism. This is despite supporters’ famous protest in 1986 against the opening of a McDonald’s, an icon of American food culture, in the heart of Rome that was emblematic of the problems the movement identified with the industrial food economy.510 Instead, the group describes its international network, events, and assistance in promoting restaurants and travel to food-producing destinations as cultivating preindustrial social ties between consumers and producers. Rediscovering and preserving foods deemed traditional and

509 Slow Food Manifesto quoted in Parasecoli, “Postrevolutionary Chowhounds,” 34.
510 De Grazia, Irresistible Empire, 459, 468.
unique to certain areas and ways of life have added to the organization’s reputation for restoring “lost” connections.

The movement made democratizing the consumption of so-called good food and the relationship between producers and consumers a prominent theme of its initiatives.\textsuperscript{511} Despite a similar goal of recognizing regional or authentic foods, Petrini draws a stark contrast between the membership and goals of the Accademia and Slow Food. Petrini dismisses the Accademia as “for VIPs and their substitutes, welcoming only people of the right sort and putting on show the appetites of people who had never been hungry in their lives.” It was a “gastronomic fellowship,” he continues, “with a strongly marked social identity and cultural ambitions.”\textsuperscript{512} It is a sharp critique that helps Petrini claim a measure of egalitarianism for Slow Food, despite the fact that its actions and that of the

\textsuperscript{511} My focus here is on the extent to which Slow Food’s philosophy and functions have revolved around consumers, their connection to food and its producers. Recent additions to the activities of Slow Food members have been more producer-oriented, but often still tethered to the consumer market. This includes its involvement in rural communities in the developing world. The movement’s leaders have collaborated with the United Nation’s International Fund for Agricultural Development since 2010 and shortly after to work jointly in support of programs that help marginalized communities, especially women, young people, and indigenous people, in rural areas preserve local knowledge about farming practices and unique foods by collaborating in efforts to develop small-scale agriculture to make communities self-sufficient and a viable livelihood for future generations. Integral to this system is the establishment of local producer organizations (presidia) and the identification of certain food products that adhere to Slow Food’s criteria for being included in the “Ark of Taste.” Established in 1996, it consists of a list of food products having “cultural, historical, and physical” links to an area, including being a part of locals’ collective memory. Foods must be facing “real” or “potential” extinction due to legal restrictions or diminished governmental support, the existence of few with knowledge needed to produce it, or, for demographic or environmental reasons, a reduction in the areas able to produce it. A leader of a recipient group, chief of the Sateré the Mawè Nation in the Amazon, acknowledges the assistance Slow Food afforded his community through exchanging ideas and developing international markets for the tribe’s products. See Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, “The Ark of Taste,” “Slow Food Presidia,” and “IFAD and Slow Food,” Publications, accessed October 20, 2016, \url{http://www.fondazioneslowfood.com/en/publications/}; Kelly Donati, “The Pleasure of Diversity in Slow Food’s Ethics of Taste,” \textit{Food, Culture, & Society} 8, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 238-39, \url{http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/15528010578055263}.

Accademia overlap. Since its founding, Slow Food has published restaurant
guides, organized food-themed events, including the biennial cheese fair and the
Salone del Gusto (Hall of Taste) exhibition (both in Italy), and headed workshops
to advise the public on how to eat, programs referred to as “taste education.”
Similarly, it has set about defining traditional foods enshrined in the “Ark of
Taste,” a list begun in 1996 of foods at risk of disappearing. Consumer education,
which Petrini describes as a matter of individual responsibility, acquaints
individuals with many of these unique foods by teaching consumers, whose
sensibilities have been dulled by bland, monotonous industrial food, how to
appreciate the myriad flavors offered by celebrated Slow Food producers
supported by their local Slow Food organizations called presidia.513

The movement is open about its reliance on the market. Large, niche
markets of informed consumers made even larger by connections and
exchanges facilitated by the internet, the foundation contends, have the potential
to make previously unsustainable production practices profitable.514 Branding is
also key. Unlike EU-certified food labels, the Slow Food trademark may not be
used on product packaging. However, the organization grants the use of its logo
to draw attention to food producers and to promote events, restaurants, and
tourist attractions that showcase relationships between food production,
 producers, and the environment. Ark of Taste products supported by a local

513 Julie Labelle, “A Recipe for Connectedness: Bridging Production and Consumption with Slow
Food,” Food, Culture, & Society 7, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 90, http://dx.doi.org/
10.2752/155280104786577879.

514 Ibid., 92.

Slow Food is also unique in its moral designation of certain foods as good or bad, depending on whether the conditions of production uphold the movement’s expanding commitments, not just to supporting small producers of traditional foods, but to encouraging environmental sustainability through approved cultivation and processing practices. This is the kind of information about foods and producers that the organization spreads through dining and travel guides, international fairs, and a worldwide network of convivia, groups through which consumers share local foods, learn about producers, and organize trips to restaurants and food-themed events and tours.\footnote{Slow Food International, “Codes for Use of Slow Food Trademarks,” Key Documents, accessed October 14, 2016, http://www.slowfood.com/about-us/key-documents/; Slow Food International, “Slow Food International Statute,” Key Documents, accessed October 14, 2016, http://www.slowfood.com/about-us/key-documents/; Bruce Pietrykowski, “Your Are What You Eat: The Social Economy of the Slow Food Movement,” Review of Social Economy 62, no. 3 (September 2004): 307-21, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29770263; MacDonald, “Morality of cheese,” 95.}

Slow Food’s claims to being a democratizing force in the economy of good food have exposed it to criticisms that its efforts undermine this goal. Scholars studying Slow Food from the perspective of consumers and producers argue that, in practice, the movement’s initiatives reinforce social divides between consumers. This is especially true in the way the organization maintains a list of rare, authentic, foreign, and expensive foods that cement the association of
cosmopolitan eating with privileges of race and class. Sociologists point to the way the educational mission of the movement, carried out through workshops on taste, publications, *convivia*, and at festivals has made good consumption a matter of education or status-affirming cultural capital. The prized products of small producers also cost more and are more difficult to find than industrially-produced foods. The obstacles of education and access are insurmountable or do not seem worth the sacrifice of time or finances for most consumers.

Neither does the way the movement operates put it in a position to effectively address the larger problems that restrict consumers’ choices. This comes despite Slow Food leadership’s acknowledgment and its efforts to lower barriers to the connections that are vehicles of food education, such as sponsoring gardens in schools, a film festival, appearing at local farmers markets, and financing the participation of small producers from developing countries at its international producers’ conference, Terra Madre. In the current iteration of Slow Food’s manifesto, consumers and consumption remain at the center of the movement: “the consumer orients the market and production with

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519 Donati and Labelle, *A Recipe for Connectedness.* Other programs aimed at further spreading Slow Food’s information about food, its flavor, production, and diversity, are ambitious, but still exclusive, like the large biennial international food fair, Salone del Gusto (held in Turin, Italy), and intellectual, as in founding the University of Gastronomic Sciences in 2004, which, by the way, vets applications for inclusion in the Ark of Taste that must prove a food’s connection to local environments and tradition. Whether these initiatives prove key to spreading the philosophy of Slow Food through publicity and critical studies about food and society is a question to be answered in the long term.
his or her choices." The implied consumer agency, of course, in one that must contend with the organization’s own role and other factors in shaping choice.

The Kebab in the Piazza: Food, Heritage, and the Language of Parochialism

Hailing foods as unique and central to local communities and landscapes, as do the Accademia, EU labeling, and Slow Food programs, adds authority to the conflation of food, identity, and landscape as a marketable product. The strength of the connection continues to be recognized and advocated by local governments in Italy, at times with results that appear to simultaneously embrace and reject the values of the former Market Empire, that is of open borders and democracy. Rhetoric that uses local and traditional foods to cultivate a sense of belonging can be used to stigmatize and define “ethnic” food in Italy, as well as minority groups associated with them. As anthropologist Micheal Di Giovine argues, efforts to identify typical or traditional foods as focal points for local identity cast Italian food as normative (including in its regional iterations) and


521 Of the 1374 products certified by the EU as of fall 2016, five Italian pastas have qualified under Protected Geographical Origin (PGI). In every application, arguments put forward to justify the pasta’s connection to local culture its list being featured in tourist literature and the subject of local festivals. Four Italian pastas are enshrined in the Slow Food Foundation’s Ark of Taste. They are made in very small quantities in domestic settings by hand or in a single pasta factory. Some do not transport well and acquiring any of them would be difficult for the average consumer and likely involve travel to Sardinia or Sicily where they are made. One exception is Sardinian filindeu that is made by one woman and is not available for sale at all. See “Culurgionis d’Ogliastra,” “Pizzoccheri della Valtellina,” “Cappellacci di zucca ferraresi,” “Maccheroncini di Campofilone,” and “Pasta di Gargnano,” European Union Commission, “Denomination Information,” official website for Agriculture and Rural Development, accessed October 26, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/list.html; see Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, “Filindeu,” “Adarinos,” and “Spiraled Pasta from Felito,” Ark of Taste Products, Italy, accessed October 21, 2016, http://www.fondazioneslowfood.com/en. Currently, the description of “Lorighittas” is only available on the Italian version of the website; see Fondazione Slow Food per la Biodiversità Onlus, “Lorighittas,” Arca del Gusto, Italia. Fondazione Slow Food per la Biodiversità Onlus, accessed October 21, 2016, http://www.fondazioneslowfood.com/it.
Non-Italian food, or food not strictly associated with a given area according to standards of authenticity, has come under fire in locations economically dependent on tourism. In some instances, local Italian officials invoke authenticity to legitimize efforts that effectively limit or eliminate the presence of establishments selling foods associated with minorities, including African and Chinese immigrants. For example, the cities of Florence and Pisa, locations UNESCO has deemed exceptional in their representation of Italian culture and connection to world history, have become sites where discourses of an exclusionary Italian identity materialize in the marketplace. Referring to the special status granted by UNESCO, the local governments have approved codes restricting or banning the opening of businesses, particularly food-sellers, whose presence is “at odds” with the historical integrity of the area. While in the case of Florence, the measures were described as keeping food of “low quality,” such as pizzerias, minimarts, and kebab shops, out of its tourist thoroughfares, some (including the European Union) recognize the regulations for disproportionately targeting ethnic food stores and other businesses typically run by ethnic minorities. Similar actions

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523 Similar codes in another popular tourist town, Lucca, were approved in 2009 but struck down by the European Union as discriminatory. In response, town officials amended the rules, banning future businesses, including ethnic food shops, in the heart of the city considered “incompatible with the need to protect traditional, cultural, and environmental characteristics.” See Massimo Vanni, “Firenze, le regole Unesco mettono fuori legge 200 negozi in centro,” (Florence, UNESCO rules outlaw 200 shops in the city center) *La Repubblica*, January 18, 2016, larepubblica.it; Luca Centini, “Il Comune vieta kebab e cibo etnico nel centro storico,” (City government bans kebab and ethnic food in historic city center) *Il Tirreno* (Tuscany), September 10, 2016; “Market etnici e kebab, le regole in Toscana per salvare l’identità dei centri storici,” (Ethnic markets and kebabs, the rules in Tuscany to save the identity of historic city centers) *Il Tirreno*, January 19, 2016; Di Giovine and Brulotte, *Edible Identities*, 9.
by local governments in Venice (at the time controlled by the far-right political
party Lega Nord), Lucca, and Forte dei Marmi, to name a few examples, take aim
at a list of establishments, including pizzerias, fastfood joints, and ethnic food
establishments considered incompatible with an area’s history.524

Discourses and legal codes, couched in the language of preserving a
shared heritage, appeal to a “common sense” of authenticity codified by
institutions like the Accademia, UNESCO, the European Union, and Slow Food.
While likely far from the intentions of taste leaders, food is deployed in
discourses that align race and national identity. That these ideas acquire
substance in the apparently neutral ground of market make them all the more
difficult to contest.525 If the beloved cuisine of Bologna was the result of
“contamination,” as Massimo Montanari suggests, the lingua franca of
authenticity would deem it an aberration.526

524 Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, “Dopo stop a kebab Forte dei Marmi vieta anche
volantinaggio,” (After putting a stop to Kebabs Forte dei Marmi also bans leafletting) Ansa.it,
February 23, 2012, Factiva (ANSARE0020120223e82n003k8); Fabbio Tonacci, “La battaglia del
Kebab,” (The battle of the Kebab) La Repubblica, October 20, 2011, larepubblica.it; F. Cut.,
“Locali No a nuove aperture di pizzeria al taglio, il kebab vietato a Venezia ‘Deturpa il centro
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Venice ‘It defaces historic center’)Corriere della Sera, December 5, 2009, Factiva
(CORDES0020091205e5c50004c); “Niente kebab, siamo genovesi,” (No kebabs, we are
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e cous cous,” (And Lucca bans kebab and couscous) Corriere della Sera, January 27, 2009,
Factiva (CORDES0020090127e51r0005c).

525 I borrow here from Micheal Herzefeld who argues that international markets and institutions,
like UNESCO, have helped to create a “sense of globally shared knowledge.” That common
understanding, in turn, is used to legitimize “aggressive uses of localism as a form of exclusivism"
that run counter to the “cultural coexistence” globalization is meant to encourage. See Michael
Of Ethnic & Migration Studies 33, no. 2 (March 2007): 255-274, doi:
10.1080/13691830601154237.

526 Montanari, Bologna la Grassa, 7.
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**Abbreviations**


AIC Accademia italiana della cucina (AIC journal)

ARR Archivio Renzo Renzi, Renzo Renzi Library, Fondazione Cineteca
<table>
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<th>Code</th>
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<td>Ente nazionale italiano per il turismo</td>
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