

Perception of Food Authenticity: An exploratory investigation into the influential aspects  
occurring in the perception of food authenticity

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### **Abstract**

Described as “the key to the development of the modern world” by MacCannell (1976) in his research about tourism behaviour, authenticity has gained importance in managerial strategies for companies. However, a reliable model on authenticity has not been clearly defined yet. Understanding how authenticity is ruled becomes the key to high managerial value.

This study is based on three level of analysis: An overview of the theories on authenticity, a literature review of food authenticity and a qualitative study aiming to understand individual's perception. The unique influential aspect that occurs in the perception of authenticity has been identified as the positioning of the individual that sees it. This positioning is related to the level of knowledge that an individual has in a specific context and the self-referential identification defined by appreciation and goals. Three major concepts of authenticity have been highlighted: Pure, approximate and moral. Authenticity being the reality seen through the vision of an individual, these three concepts represent different levels of importance given from an individual to the actual reality. Focusing the study to the context of food permitted to specify these constructs. Knowledge is reattached to the identification of natural purity and to the identification of social constructed standards. Appreciation is linked to the sensorial characteristics of a food item and the surrounding environment where this food experience happens. Goal dependence is divided in four major purposes that an individual search in the consumption of food: sought for nature, sought for health and nutrition, sought for social bounding and sought for nostalgic "reality". These aspects have been identified by individuals in the different interpretation of authenticity. Further quantitative studies need to be conducted in order to see more evidence of the identified constructs.

*Keywords:* Food, Authenticity, Influential aspects Perception

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## Foreword

Understanding the notion of authenticity is of high value to the food industry. Authenticity perception has become one of the major quest in the creation of new food products. My position as a Culinary Project Leader of the Research and Development at the Institute Paul Bocuse's Research Centre has offered me the opportunity to encounter the aspects linked to authenticity through diverse projects. It is a chance and a great value to have done this scientific work in order to innovate with pertinence.

I would like to thank all the people who guided me all along this study; starting with Kai Victor Hansen, my advisor, who took the time to give me the right advises on the first steps of my research, useful tools that helped me construct this work in the right manners. I will also thank my colleagues at Institute Paul Bocuse's Research Centre, who helped me all along my quantitative study and accepted to participate to this research. I would also thank the Institut Paul Bocuse, the University of Haaga-Helia and the University of Stavanger for providing through their courses the opportunity to enhance my knowledge and my reflexion of the culinary world.



Perception of Food Authenticity: an exploratory investigation into the influential aspects  
occurring in the perception of food authenticity

Described as “the key to the development of the modern world” by MacCannell (1976) in his research about tourism behaviour: understanding the rules of authenticity has become a priority in numerous managerial, social, psychosocial and scientific studies. Authenticity is however a notion that is interpreted through diverse theories. Following the researches of MacCannell (1973), numerous sociology, psychology and existentialist philosophy researcher have been focusing into defining it. Although a common model around authenticity is not established yet, shared constructs can be identified.

### **Concept of authenticity**

Etymologically, the word authenticity derives from the ancient Greek Authentikos meaning “original, genuine, principal”, which can be traced back to Authentes: “one acting on one’s own authority”(Cambridge University Press, 2017). It is associated with the notions of “genuineness”, “reality,” and “truth”. (Bendix, 1992, p. 104) (Costa & Bamossy, 1995, p. 300) (Goldman & Papson, 1996, p. 142) (Kennick, 1985, p. 4)(Phillips, 1997, p. 5). However, the meanings of the words “genuine” and “true” are shaped by individual interpretations and differ according to their context (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). The difficulty of defining authenticity is due to the fact that it is a socially constructed notion of the essence of what is observed rather than properties inherent in an object (Beverland, 2006) (Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink, 2008) (Grayson & Martinec, 2004) (Rose & Wood, 2005) (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006). In addition to that notion, Bruner (1994) and numerous other researcher (Arnould & Price, 2000)

(Chronis & Hampton, 2008)(Leigh, Peters, & Shelton, 34) (Postrel, 2003) (Rose & Wood, 2005) (Wang, 1999) describe authenticity as context and goal dependent.

Researchers have developed diverse theories and models in order to better understand the mechanism of authenticity:

- **Staged authenticity** (MacCannell 1973) illustrated by pseudo-events and artificial scenes constructed around a tourist journey, who himself considers the experience as real
- **Fabricated authenticity** (Belk and Costa 1998); consumers can consider something as real if it matches to their idea of what the reality is or was.
- **Objective, constructive and existential authenticity** (Wang 1999); *objective* is link to the genuineness of an object, *constructive* is perceived as an object that is constructed as real and *existential* is linked to an individual's search for experience and pleasure.
- **Iconic and indexical authenticity** (Grayson and Martinec 2004); iconic, referring to an authenticity that is perceived as real from an individual perspective and indexical is an authenticity that is proven reliable by spatio-temporal links and facts.
- **Self-referential hyperauthenticity** (Rose & Wood, 2005), arguing that consumers are relating indexical elements to their lived experience by adding fantastical elements in order to create their own interpretation of authenticity.
- **Pure, approximate and moral authenticity** (Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink, 2008); pure described as the genuineness of objects sought solely by consumers that have the knowledge to identify it, approximate as indexical authenticity mixed with iconical concepts and moral as self-referential act that are perceived mainly by its way of creation rather than by its link to spatio-temporal links and facts.

Although these theories are built in different spatio-temporal contexts, the concept of authenticity is always considered as a balance between an individual's interpretation and indexical facts.

### **Importance of authenticity**

A major trend of increasing demands for authenticity has been observed in a wide variety of modern market offerings, including travel souvenirs (Harkin, 1995), ethnic food (Lu & Fine, 1995), tickets to historical reconstructions (Handler & Gable, 1997), and original art (Bentor, 1993). The modern search of authenticity on a customer bases is explained by the need of an individual's social identification (MacCannell, 1976) in response to the standardization and homogenization of the global market (Thompson & al, 2006). In addition, the escalated facility of effective simulation due to the intensification of the technological advances (Benjamin, 2008; Orvell, 1989), creating tensions between authenticity and in-authenticity has become one of the market's central theme (Brown, 2001). However "all the attempts to fake it as a market ploy, the appeal of authenticity seems oddly undiminished" (Dolliver 2001) making it a primary source of profitability for both authenticity and in-authenticity sellers. Yet, consumer research has not given considerable focused attention to authenticity, and it explains the fact that authenticity is still "not well understood in its market manifestations" (Peñaloza, 2000, p. 113).

**Interpretation of the theories on authenticity and design of a primary model**

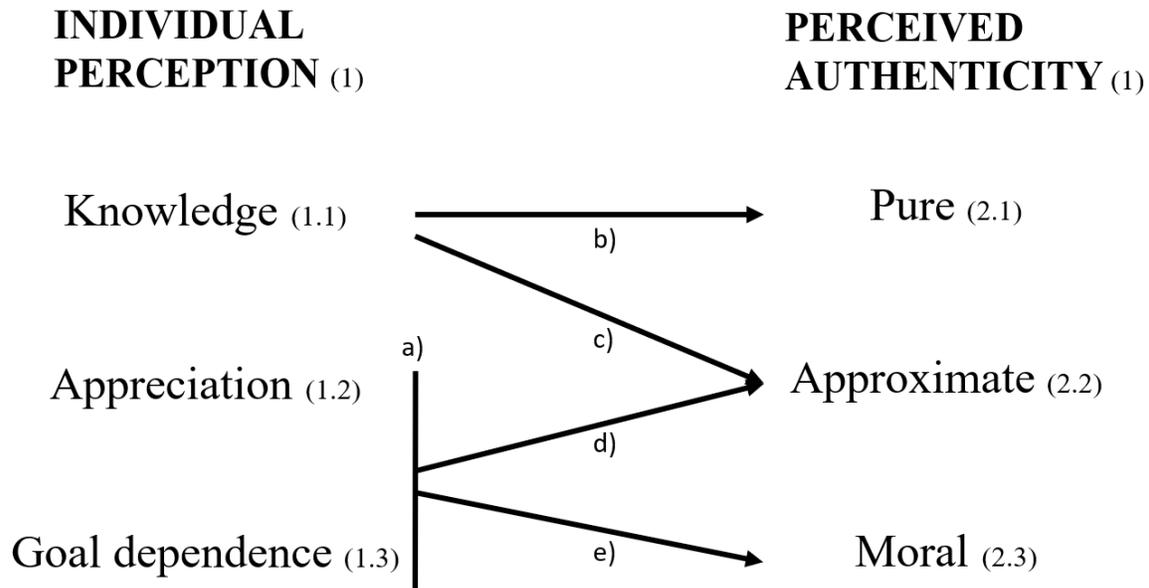
Reviewing the literature on authenticity brought guidance for the continuity of this study. The concept of authenticity being versatile and not clearly defined yet, it is very likely to get lost in theories if rules are not settled. As identified in the literature overview, authenticity is not a matter of fact; because it is completely depending on individual's perceptions, it is impossible to define what is genuineness, truth, authentic from what is not. The quest of seeking the truthfulness when speaking of authenticity is therefore an illusion. The only way to collect information on authenticity is by taking in consideration that everyone's truth is not identical but that constructs of its influential aspects can be shared and therefore classified into categories.

The perception of authenticity varying depending of individualities and contexts, this means that the influential aspects linked to it are also depending on these variables. In order to collect valuable information's on these aspects, the strategy is to collect a high variety of interpretations from individuals and group these data into categories.

The literature on authenticity highlighted points of attention that can be of value for the rest of the study. Authenticity is in all the theories reviewed as the balance between an individual's perceptions based on spatio-temporal facts. Individual's perception is either described as goal dependent (Arnould & Price, 2000) (Chronis & Hampton, 2008)(Leigh, Peters, & Shelton, 34) (Postrel, 2003) (Rose & Wood, 2005) (Wang, 1999) or driven by an act of experience and pleasure (Wang 1999).

**Development of a theoretical model on authenticity**

A primary model can be hypothetically constructed based on the literature review. The design of this model is solely based on existing reliable theories. It regroups constructs that have been determined through quantitative studies.



*Figure 1.* Hypothetical model of influential aspects occurring in the perception of authenticity. Model constructed based on the theories on authenticity

**INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTION POSITIONING (1)** refers to the capabilities and the intention of an individual in the process of authenticity perception according to a certain context (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). This process of perception is based on past experiences and can be levelled in three positioning. *Knowledge* related to the learning process or lived experience of spatio-temporal facts, *Goal dependent* referring to an individual’s intention to be valorised or to

valorise its assets and *Appreciation* based on the tendency of an individual to accept an item or a situation based on its own liking. The positioning of an individual in a context of authenticity perception cannot be resumed by a ternary equation; it is the level of these three influential variables that can influence the perception of an individual. These influential aspects can be hardly quantified with precision because every individual (Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink, 2008) has its own *knowledge* constellation, its own *goals* and its very unique *appreciation* based on its past experiences

***Knowledge (1.1)*** refers to the level of data related to spatio-temporal facts that an individual acquires during its past experiences and that can have an impact on the perception of pure authenticity. Knowledge is primarily based on facts and is therefore less linked to an individual perception but more likely to common interpretation of past events. This aspect is highlighted in the study of Beverland et al. (2008) on pure authenticity and explains the varying perception of authenticity based on the level of knowledge. The hypothesis can be established that an individual with unlimited spatio-temporal and omnipresent knowledge has the capabilities to identify the pure authenticity; as any individual does not have access to pure knowledge, it is the level of knowledge in a certain context that will define the closeness of its perception to pure authenticity.

***Appreciation (1.2)*** is based on an individual acceptance to identify an item partially linked to indexical facts as truth, if it is similar or identical to his notion of genuineness (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). The appreciation of an individual is directly linked to his five primary senses (Wang 1999). Depending on the context of authenticity perception, different senses can be involved in this process. The involvement of appreciation in the perception of authenticity can be

hypothetically linked to the level of knowledge of an individual. The lack of knowledge from an individual in a certain context is compensated by its self-referential appreciation leading to accept a situation or an item as truth.

*Goal dependent (1.3)* perception positioning refers to authenticity fabricated or interpreted in a certain way by an individual in order for him to enhance and valorize the perception of genuineness linked to an experience or an item. This perception of authenticity is partially linked to indexical facts self-referred by an individual to its own needs and experiences. This can be seen, as a self-convincing process responding to the need of an individual to consume and live the truth. The statement that authenticity is goal dependent has been demonstrated by numerous studies through different sciences and contexts (Arnould & Price, 2000) (Chronis & Hampton, 2008)(Leigh, Peters, & Shelton, 34) (Postrel, 2003) (Rose & Wood, 2005) (Wang, 1999).

*AUTHENTICITY PERCEPTION (3)* described by Beverland et al. (2008) distinguish three types of authenticity's that an individual perceives. This categorization is valuable as it incorporates the various existing theories on authenticity. Authenticity perception is presented as the image of truth through the prism of an individual.

*Pure (2.1)* authenticity is based solely on reliable indexical spatio-temporal facts (Grayson and Martinec 2004; Beverland et al., 2008) . It is the transcription of what is and what was the truth. The concept of pure authenticity comes directly from the etymological definition of authenticity: it is the original, the principal, the genuine, the reality, the truth (Cambridge University Press, 2017), highlighted in the modern literature by numerous authors (Bendix, 1992,

p. 104) (Costa & Bamossy, 1995, p. 300) (Goldman & Papson, 1996, p. 142) (Kennick, 1985, p. 4)(Phillips, 1997, p. 5). Grayson and Martinec (2004) illustrate that pure reality is a socially constructed concept although an individual's self-reference does not influence pure authenticity.

*Approximate (2.2)* authenticity relies partially on indexical facts, self-referred by an individual to its own perception of what is genuineness (Belk and Costa 1998; (Beverland et al., 2008). Approximate authenticity is joining the concept of staged authenticity described by MacCannell (1973): the tourist' journey constructed on embellished and hyperbolized facts, the tourists still perceived the experience as real, authentic and valuable.

*Moral (2.3)* authenticity refers to an individual's recognition and appreciation of value in the context of an experience or an item without relying on indexical facts (Beverland et al., 2008). A similar concept has been identified in Wang's (1999) study on existential authenticity: it is described as an individual search of pleasure and experience regardless to facts proving the genuineness of this situation or this item.

The connections between the constructs of this model are established based on the literature overview highlighting the theories on authenticity

- a. *Appreciation* and *goal dependence* are grouped together as they implement a self-referential perception, highlighted in the study of Rose and Wood (2005) on self-referential hyper authenticity. However, appreciation and goal dependence are identified as two different aspects: appreciation involving solely the primary senses as

judgmental tools to identify authenticity and goal dependence is a self-persuasion of truth perception leading to higher value while consuming an experience or an object.

- b. The link leading from *knowledge* to *pure authenticity perception* is demonstrated by Grayson & Martinec (2004) in the fact that authenticity emerges from a social interpretation of what is reality and supported by Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink (2008) describing that only an individual with knowledge can differentiate indexical from iconical authenticity.
- c. The link leading from *knowledge* to *approximate authenticity perception* is used described in the study on iconic authenticity by Grayson and Martinec (2004) and numerous others. *Knowledge* representing the capability of an individual to identify spatio-temporal facts and *Approximate authenticity* being the self-referred interpretation these facts; *knowledge* is therefore the origin of every *approximate authenticity perception*.
- d. The link leading from *self-referential* constructs: *appreciation and goal dependence*, to *approximate authenticity perception* is highlighted by Grayson and Martinec (2004) and numerous others. Indexical facts are self-interpreted to the reality of an individual in order that an experience or an object fit to their notion of reality.
- e. The link leading from *self-referential* constructs: *appreciation and goal dependence*, to *moral authenticity perception* is demonstrated by Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink (2008) and Wang (1999). Moral authenticity perception is described as the acceptance

of an individual to consider an experience or an item as real, solely based on its own appreciation and opinion.

The notion of authenticity being reviewed during this literature overview as context un-dependent; a further focus on the existing food-authenticity literature needs to be conducted in order to verify this primary hypothesis. Prior to the literature review, the notion of “food” needs to be framed in order to go through a selective process of existing scientific articles.

### **Framing the notion of food**

The notion of food in this study is considered as a context and not an aspect. Defining food is as complex as defining the notion of authenticity. It can be considered as our primary need to eat in order to survive or can involve cultural influences. Therefore, the notion of food will be not framed in this study. Each individual will be able through this liberty to identify authenticity in its own notion of what is food.

The input of a context in a study based on individual’s perception is however necessary in order to focus on similar aspects. The resulting data’s will be easier to identify and classify.

The context of food when looking at authenticity is furthermore interesting. The hypothesis can be established that a food item considered as being untruth is hardly interpreted as being consumable. This involves that the perception of authenticity is directly impacting the likability of a food item. Individuals will therefore easier perceive the strong duality between food and authenticity in their experiences and behaviour compared to other items.

The notion of food can be looked through two spatio-temporal interpretations. Food can be considered as a short-term perishable item that is less likely to get authentic value through

time compared to artwork or furniture for example. It is however the repetition of identical or slightly identical food items through time that builds its longevity and influences its authentic perception. Therefore, recreating a meal based on very specific spatio-temporal data's can be more likely interpreted as authentic than when reproducing the same process with other items.

Inputting the context of food when focusing on a study of influential aspects impacting the perception of authenticity is therefore beneficial for the overall study; focusing on similar aspect that can be specifically classified and enhance the perception of authenticity compared to other items.

## **LITTERARURE REVIEW**

### **Method**

The literature review about food authenticity is constructed on the Google Scholar database. The aim of classifying the existing researches about this specific topic is done in order to have a clear overview of the subject. Framing the notion of authenticity in the context of food offers a new point of view involving more specific influential aspects linked to the authenticity perception. Ongoing a stepped literature review is valuable in order to understand specifically the existing interpretation of food authenticity and its importance in the literature.

### **Framework of the research method**

A close attention on the reliability of the relevant paper will be conducted by verifying the numbers of citations and publisher journals. However, the classification of the existing literature will include every type of paper, regardless of neither their origin nor their impact. Citations will not be included during the research process.

### **Search terms and delimitations**

The search term used was “food authenticity”. This resulted in an amount of 366 000 hits on the google scholar database. All the search words were recognized by the used database. An advanced search has been done in order to reduce the number of hits by selecting the option that these two words have to occur in the title of the article. This brought the number of hits to 222 results.

**Selective exclusion process**

A further classification of the resulting papers was completed with the objective to visualize the repartition of the existing works involving food authenticity. A close overview of the top pages papers shows that the majority of the research done is based on food “traceability” and food “safety”. These two criteria’s having no direct influence on an individual’s perception of food authenticity, an advanced search without these two words was conducted. The numbers of hits ruled down to 212 excluding “safety” alone. Adding the exclusion of the word “traceability”, the search resulted to 200 hits.

**Further selective exclusion process**

A statement can be established by analysing the first resulting papers; the largest amounts of them are directly dedicated to the agribusiness or to the food security. Therefore, the same process of exclusion will be repeated. Irrelevant words showing up in the titles of the articles will be excluded one after the other in order to remove the maximum of irrelevant articles. The excluded words were: Enzyme (191 hits), Isotopes (184 hits), GMO (183 hits), Technological (182 hits), Spectroscopy (176 hits), DNA (168 hits), Isotopic (164 hits), Isotope (159 hits), Capillary (157 hits), Fraud (139 hits), Spectroscopic (138 hits), Electronic (135 hits), Forensics (134 hits), Prawn (133 hits), Chemometrics (132 hits), Molecular (130 hits), Technology (127 hits), PCR (125, Mass 120 hits), Virtual (119 hits), Analysis (113 hits), Chain (112 hits). This method permitted to exclude 94 irrelevant papers to this study, resulting with 112 hits.

**Classification process**

A classification process of the resulting 112 articles has been conducted. The classification of these articles has been conducted after an analysis of their content. Eight categories have been identified during this process: Food quality (29 hits), genetics (7 hits), traceability (27 hits), tourisms (7 hits), ethnic food (27 hits), branding (5 hits), and others (10 hits).

The category others have been used in order to group all the articles that could not be clearly classified in the seven other categories or being in-between two or more of these categories. A close attention of the articles inside this category has been conducted in order to identify the relevancy.

**Selection of relevant categories**

The categories: Food quality, genetics and traceability having no direct implication in the perception of food authenticity, the articles classified in these categories are considered as irrelevant to this topic. This resulted in the exclusion of 59 articles, resulting with 53 articles.

**Qualitative selection**

The 53 resulting articles classified under five categories: tourisms (7 hits), ethnic food (27 hits), branding (5 hits), authenticity perception (4 hits) and others (10 hits) have been selected or excluded after a review of their abstract. Qualitative and relevant information's have been searched during this process.

The study being exploratory, the qualitative selection has been firstly done on the relevance of the content before looking at the numbers of citations and the journals who published them. The exclusion of articles having no clear link to food authenticity; that used food authenticity only as a secondary aspect of their study; and that were not identified as coming from reliable sources were excluded.

Most articles used the notion of authenticity not as a social interpretation of indexical facts but as the statement that an experience, a culture or an object was true to a certain spatio-temporal context. This occurred principally in the studies on tourism and ethnic food where an foreign food experience is compared to the ethnic food tradition regardless to the individual interpretation of what is their genuineness.

This qualitative process of selection turned down the numbers of hits from 53 to 3. The total process of exclusion resulted in removing the majority of the existing papers. However, the classification of the literature on food authenticity reflects the influential aspects that are valued in the scientific works. Although the exclusion of these papers, the classification process will be valued in the interpretation of the literature review.

## Results

Each of the 3 articles identified as relevant to this study is presented briefly. The goal of these reviews is to identify similar and relevant aspects that occur in the perception of food authenticity compared to the perception of authenticity; identifying if the context of food influences the hypothetical theory developed. The collected information's from these reviews will be then used to orientate the expert interview.

*Developing an authenticity model of traditional food specialties: Does the self-concept of consumers matter?* by **Laura Sidali & Hemmerling (2014)** is a quantitative study published in in British Food Journal with twelves citations, realized on a panel of 138 participants focusing on developing “an authenticity model for niche products that relates food properties associated with the perceived origin of food (so-called object-based authenticity) to more intangible characteristics that derive from the mind-set of individuals (i.e. individually constructed authenticity and identity)” (p. 11). Perceived authenticity was determined to emerge from an individual passion and determination through its identification with a product. Both subjective and object base authenticity have been proven to have a high influence on purchase intention (p. 9). The following model was determined reliable:

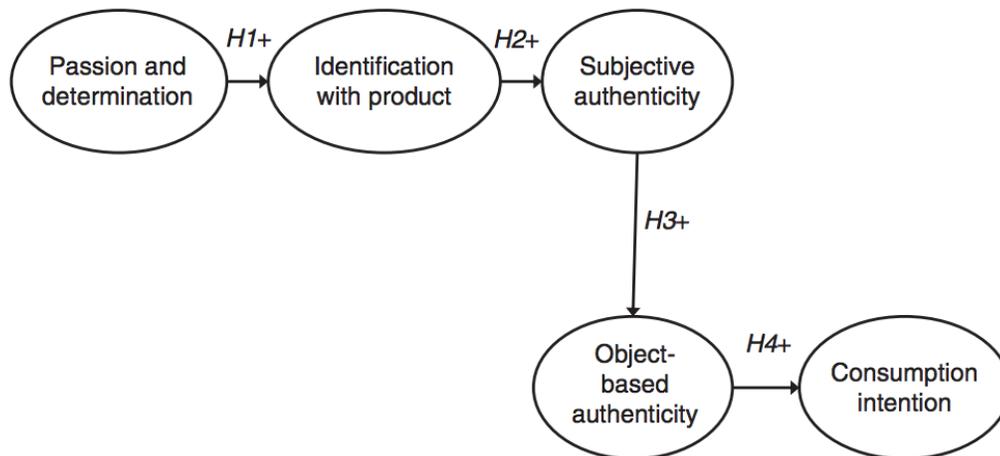


Figure 2. Model of authenticity by Laura Sidali & Hemmerling (2014)

***Consuming nostalgia? The appreciation of authenticity in local food production by Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila (2013)*** is a qualitative study, published in the International Journal of Consumer Studies with 59 citations, done with 22 interviews in the context of the finish population. The purpose of the study is to understand the motivation of individual to consume authentic local food products and what they understood by it. Two main aspects were identified: “Everything that is self-produced, self-processed, gathered, hunted, fished and home-grown is experienced as the most authentic local food” (p. 566) because the respondent had a higher knowledge on the origin, the method production and the method of transformation. Nostalgic food has been defined in part by its separation from the mass market by using ancient and sustainable method of production and is considered by the respondent as the closest to what is authentic food.

***The presentation of ethnic authenticity: Chinese Food as a Social Accomplishment by Lu & Fine (1995)*** is a qualitative study published in The Sociological Quarterly with 276

citations, based on interviews and focused on the presentation of ethnic food in the context of Chinese restaurants in the United States. They analysed two types of strategies used by Chinese restaurants in foreign countries: consumption oriented and connoisseur oriented. They highlight the point that “social construction of authentic ethnic food is bounded by social, cultural, and economic constraints” (p. 547). This makes it difficult to propose pure ethnical food in a foreign country. Consumption-oriented strategy is used by Chinese restaurant in order to please the American consumer by proposing highly adapted Chinese food. However, certain aspects of the authentic ethnical food need to be kept in order for the customer to consider the food as exotic and authentic. Connoisseur-oriented strategies respond to a type of clientele who understands the ethnical food and seeks for an authentic meal experience.

### **Interpretation of the selected papers**

The literature overview offered a first statement during the process of exclusion: most of the articles are concern by the reliability of authenticity, through traceability and quality control, regardless to the social aspect. The obsession of controlling food items illustrates the social need to access to pure authenticity acquiring and building knowledge through classification and control.

The further exclusion of articles, which mostly attached the notion of authenticity to a food culture defining it as a standard for comparison, validates the need for individual in a society to attach his ideas to a common interpretation of the reality.

### **Interpretation of Laura Sidali & Hemmerling's (2014) study**

The study Laura Sidali & Hemmerling (2014) offer a model that is similar to certain aspects highlighted in the primary hypothesis of this study. The concept of object-based authenticity is identical to the indexical authenticity illustrated by Grayson and Martinec (2004) and to pure authenticity (Beverland et al., 2008). Similarly the concept of subjective-based authenticity can be interpreted as iconic (Grayson and Martinec, 2004) and approximate (Beverland et al., 2008). However Laura Sidali & Hemmerling (2014) identify that an object based authenticity is emerging from an identification with an object leading to subjective authenticity. This process of identification is not similar to the one's argued by Beverland (2005), Grayson & Martinec (2004) and (Rose & Wood, 2005) highlighting the fact that spatiotemporal facts about an object combined to a process of self-interpretation of these facts will develop into perceived authenticity. These theoretical differences need to be taken in consideration in the way that approximate authenticity is defined. A focus on these aspects will be taken in consideration during the analysis of the qualitative interviews.

### **Interpretation of Lu & Fine's (1995) study**

Lu & Fine (1995) identify in their study on ethnical food in foreign contries the difficulty to reproduce genuineness in a different context due to social, cultural, and economic constraints: "As in all cases of cultural diffusion, adjustments are made to accommodate the values of the host society" (p. 538). The reproduction of ethnic food in a foreign country implies the modification or transformation of local and traditional characteristics attached to the indigenously prepared food. This implies that foreign ethnical food "does not deserve the label of being authentic" (p.539). Lu & Fine (1995) determine that the key aspects of "Authentic food implies that products are prepared using the same ingredients and processes as found in the homeland of the

ethnic, national, or regional group” (p. 539). Although the effort of adaptation of foreign restaurant owners to reproduce their ethnic food by adapting it to the home country “American customers did not complain about the lack of authenticity of the food and may have been unaware of alterations that would have been obvious to a Chinese diner” (p. 540). Two restaurant owner strategies emerge from this paradox: a consumer-oriented strategy, involving low efforts of sticking to the ethnical origins but a high adaptation to the countries cultural differences and a connoisseur-oriented strategy, involving high effort of reproducing the exact ethnic food despite the social, cultural, and economic constraints.

Shills (1981) determine that despite the strategy used by the restaurant owners to adapt their traditions to a foreign environment; “most are more concerned with their immediate satisfaction, and few see adherence to tradition as anything but secondary” (Lu & Fine, 1995, p. 547). The most important aspect for restaurant owners is to match the “primary sensory satisfaction” (p. 547) of their client; this explains that “chinese food served in foreign contries is a consequence of an adaptation to the demand of the market” (p. 547). During their field research, Lu & Fine (1995) identified that “when asked whether they (Americans) prefer authentic or Americanized Chinese food, the large majority of customers opted for authenticity, but when questioned further about how authentic they thought the food was at the Chinese restaurants they patronized, many were uncertain and claimed they did not pay much attention, and they rejected foods that were defined as “unpleasant” and well outside of their experience” (p. 544). This statement shows that despite the effort to reproduce authentic food, the appreciation of an individual will define its percieved authenticity. Sensory characteristics are defined in this study by taste, color, smell and texture but also by the surrounder environment the food is consumed; Yet, an emphasis on aesthetics does not require that customers care about the authenticity of the food (p. 544). This similarity aspect is found in the description of moral authenticity (Beverland,

Lindgreen, & Vink, 2008), describing that sensory appreciation by its own to the perception of authenticity.

Lu & Fine (1995) demonstrated also that food choices are goal dependent : “Through the consumption of ethnic cuisine we demonstrate to ourselves and others that we are cosmopolitan and tolerant: our character is expressed through our behaviour in the market” (p. 539). This statement is based on the study of Gergen (1991), how highlight that fact that “the construction of authentic food responds to American’s quest for authentic experience and identity transformation. Pillsbury (1990) determine that tourist is in search of exotic food experience through their journey in order to identify themselves with “the foreignness” of an ethnic group; eating becomes an experience for the “soul”. Fabricated authentic food experiences in witch characteristics of a culture are highlighted are therefore more appreciated by tourists than mundane food experiences. Lu & Fine (1995) study can be resumed in two valuable statements that “only a small proportion of customers are highly conscious of authenticity” (p. 544) and that authentic experiences are influenced by “aesthetic preference, economic status, and activity schedules” (p. 544).

### **Interpretation of Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila’s (2013) study**

Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila (2013) point the fact that authenticity is often linked to naturalness, where individuals identify the minimal transformation processes applied to a food item as valuable to their concept of genuineness. An increasingly “consumer interest in the origin of the food and the transparency of the food chain” (Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila, 2013, p. 564) is remarkable since the last 20 years; this event is described as “the result of a growing awareness of environmental and health-related problems” (p. 564). Seeking food authenticity can be also interpreted as a patriotic behaviour, related to the historical roots of an ethnical community (p. 566). In the context of a Finnish population, Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila

(2013) highlight the tendency of individual to grow, hunt or pick their own food regarding self-gathered food as the closest to reality. The goal for the consumer, growing his own food, is to know and understand what he is eating with the purpose of valorising his own link the nature.

Similar goals have been identified in Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila's (2013) study between an individual's act of growing his own food and an individual's consumption of sustainable local produced food. In addition of the purpose of being close to nature, being part of a social community and paying attention to health and nutrition; the connection with "a glorified past as a period in time when "real" food existed" (p. 568) is sought. This is described as the search for nostalgic authenticity.

### **Development of the hypothesis in the context of food**

Based on the literature review on food authenticity and the classification of the excluded articles, the primary hypothetical model constructed on the authenticity theories will be adapted to the context of food. This involves a deeper understanding of the influential aspects leading to the three types of perceived authenticity: pure, approximate and moral. These constructs and the links to the *individual perception positioning* proven as valuable based on the authenticity theories are considered as identical in the context of food. These are concepts based on general interpretation of perceived authenticity including the perception of authenticity in the context of food; no particular studies on food authenticity determined that these theories could not be applied to food. However, the literature review determined more specific constructs on the influential aspects based on an *individual perception positioning*; therefore these aspects will be specified in order to adapt specifically the model to a food context.

**Knowledge (1.1)** is linked to indexical facts identified by individuals in the origin, the production and the process of transformation (Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila; 2013). Authenticity being directly linked to spatio-temporal dispositions, the perceived reality is meant to evolve through time and space. It implicates that the perceived reality in one context can't be replicated at it's similar in another context. This reflection brings us to the point, that when looking at authenticity in the context of food, no item can be defined as a standard for comparison but it is the reproduction and evolution of this item through time that is perceived as authentic. For example, if a person perceives one of the traditional dishes from its culture as being the genuineness in the context of food; the perceived authenticity is not reattached to only one repetition but to the numerous repetitions through time. In comparison, the perceived authenticity of an artwork is attached to one single piece, the repetition of this artwork being identified as a reproduction and will have no value of authenticity added. This aspect puts in perspective the notion of pure authenticity when speaking of food cultures by the fact that a culture evolves through time.

Pure authenticity regarding food items is principally linked to the perceived naturalness. Items that are originating or identified as originating from natural origins will be perceived as truth; man interaction with natural items will influence the non-naturalness of these items. The specificities of a process of transformation or production are indexical facts that can be the base of authenticity perception. Therefore, pure authenticity when speaking of food items regroups two concepts of truthfulness: the natural origin and social constructed standards. These two aspects were the most studied in the literature on food authenticity: Traceability related to the natural origin and quality control to the control of production and transformation.

Knowledge about food is linked to the social construction of what is considered as genuineness determined by the spatio-temporal context in which these groups of individuals

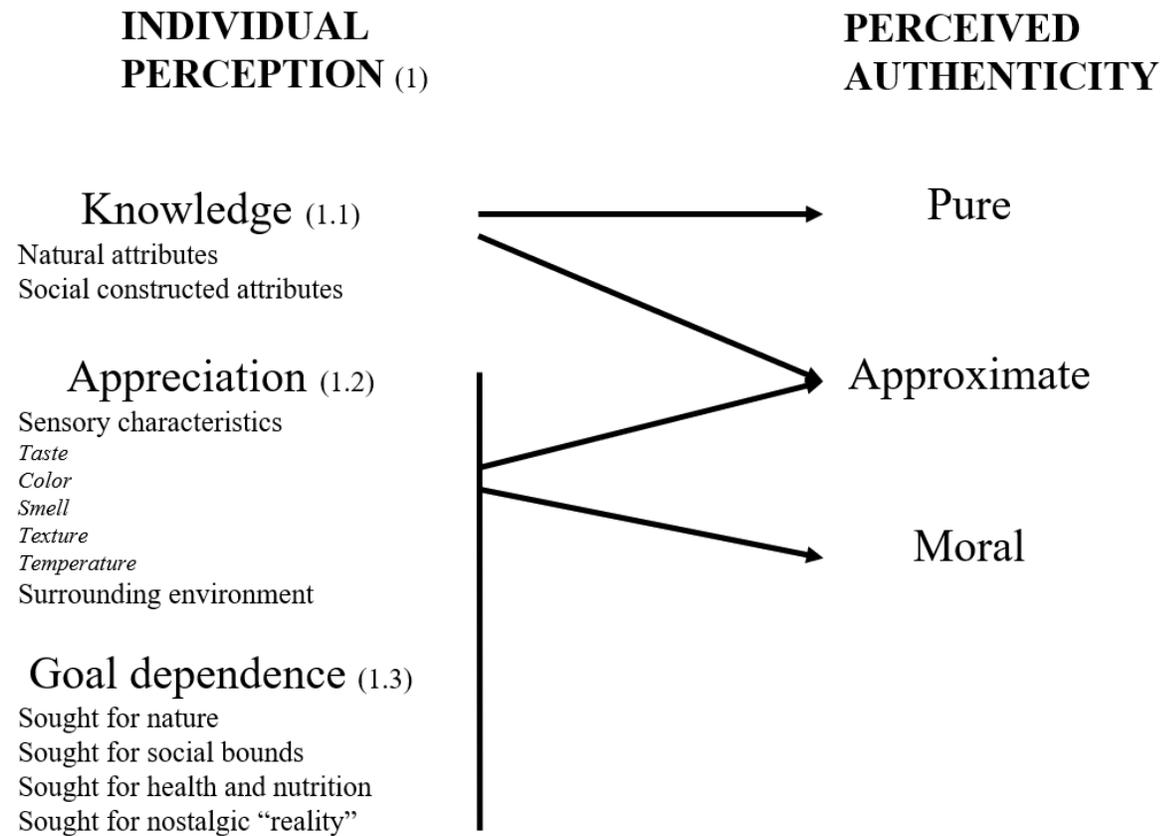
evolves. The context involves the construction of the naturalness perception based on the natural opportunities accessible in this environment and leads to the construction of specific methods of production and transformation. The construction of authenticity perception through time and space is traduced by a social shared culture based on traditions. This aspect is particularly identified in the context of food, as there are short-term perishable items that are constructed on the repeatability of identical or similar processes evolving through time and space along with individuals in social groups.

**Appreciation (1.2)**, as described in the work of Lu & Fine (1995), is the most significant aspect that comes into play in the perception of authenticity. Although the sought of a real experience, the consumer will perceive a food item as authentic solely if he is accepting it. Appreciation in the context of food experience involves two main aspects: the sensory characteristics that are define by taste, color, smell and texture and the surrounded environment the food is consumed. The surrounding environment can be related to the lived experience influencing the appreciation of food item.

**Goal dependent (1.3)** search for authenticity is described in the study of Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila (2013) as being categorized in four distinctive purposes: sought for nature, sought for social bounds, sought for health and nutrition and sought for nostalgic “reality”. The goals of an individual vary depending on the context a food item is consumed and takes an important place in the perception of authenticity.

**Specification of the hypothetical model to the context of food**

Based on the literature revue on food authenticity, the primary hypothetical model can be specified:



*Figure 3.* Hypothetical model of influential aspects occurring in the perception of food authenticity. Model constructed based on the theories on authenticity and the literature review on food authenticity.

This theoretical model is constructed only on existing reliable theories, in order to have an accurate base for future quantitative studies, a quantitative study is conducted. The aim is to define if the influential aspects occurring in the perception au food authenticity can be identified in a context.



## **QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS**

### **Method**

The qualitative study about influential aspects occurring in the perception of food authenticity is based on short interviews constructed in order to understand individual's interpretation of genuineness regarding food items. A attention has been taken into consideration during the design of the interview in order to have no influences on the individual's perception. Every participant has understood the questions and respected the procedure of the interview.

### **Context of the study**

The qualitative interviews have been conducted at the Institut Paul Bocuse's Research Center with PhD, PhD students studying food through four different sciences: economics, social sciences, nutrition, and anthropology. Some of the interviews have been conducted with regular employees of the research center working every day with food items; these interviewees will be grouped under the category "Conscious".

The interviewed group composed an international panel. The origins of the participant will be mentioned after each individual. Each of the individual interviewed is aware of the definition of authenticity and its ground theories. The names and position of the interviewee will not be specified in order to have equality regarding the value of everyone's perception. However, the interviews will be regrouped under the scientific specialization of each individual. This process of classification gives the opportunity to identify shared constructs of perception linked to knowledge acquired through specific sciences. The conduction of qualitative interviews in this very specific environment is valuable to the study because of the various points of views offered,

and the fact that the interviewees know that authenticity is a social constructed notion that can be influenced by a context.

A total of 12 qualitative interviews have been realized during this study.

### **Design of the qualitative interview**

The qualitative interview is constructed in two phases. First the interviewee is asked to write three food items that he or she considers as authentic on a blank paper. In the second phase, two questions are asked orally: “For each one of these food items, what makes you consider them as authentic?” and “How did you started to perceive this food item as authentic?”

The construction of the interview has been designed in order to have the interviewed first interpretation of food authenticity. This is realized by making him write primarily his vision of authentic food items, on which he or she can build his interpretations of authenticity on its. The interview is also intentionally designed to be short in order for the interviewee to construct responses on his own vision before having the time to shift on theoretical interpretation of authenticity. Writing the food items on a blank paper rather than telling them orally is done in order for the participant to build his responses for the open-ended question facing his primarily perceptions.

The two open-ended questions: “For each one of these food items, what makes you consider them as authentic?” and “How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?” are constructed in order for the interviewee to express his own perception through words. These questions are asked orally and recorded rather than written with the intention of collecting all interpretation that the interviewed person link to his own perceived authenticity rather than only the one’s he or she considered as relevant. The second question will lead to the repetition of

certain aspects, but it offers also the opportunity to develop the interviewee's perception rather than explaining only basic concepts. "How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?", is also a question that demands to the interviewee to express his own interpretation rather than giving overall descriptions. This method has been proven to be relevant during all the interviews.

The interviews are conducted in the interviewees mother language if it is French or English. For other foreign interviewees, the interviews are conducted in the language that is the more comfortable for the participant. This choice was done in order for all the interviewees to express their interpretations without being restricted by the language barrier. The translating of the interviews is realized by trying to conserve the original expression of an individual. Sentences have been slightly modified to correspond to the English syntax.

In order to facilitate the reference to interviews, the name of the discipline will be shorted to: COG (cognitive sciences), ECO (economics), NUT (nutrition), ANT (anthropology), CON (Food Conscious) followed by the number referring to an interview, for example: ECO 2.

### **Collection of data's**

Every interview is analysed in order to identify relevant information to this study. Common constructs are then regrouped. A further classification process of these data's enables to identify aspect of value. The different interpretation offered by the interviewees are then configured in order to construct a discussion a put in perspective the influential aspects that occurs in the perception of food authenticity. With the purpose to have a clear vision of aspects identified in the literature theory and in the qualitative study, the identified aspect is disposed in the same order that the hypothetical model.

## Results

Collecting data on numerous individual perception on the question of food authenticity enable to better understand the influential aspects influencing their perception. This information will be of use in the specification and development of the constructed hypothetical model. Every interviewee had a difficulty to develop a clear idea on authenticity leading to numerous hesitation. This proves that authenticity, even if it is a socially used notion, is not totally clear yet. This aspect proves that individuals are expressing their own thoughts about their authenticity perception rather than referring to common theories.

### Reference to natural attributes

Throughout the interviews a high tendency to refer authenticity to natural aspects can be identified. Natural elements considered as food items are described as the base of a human diet, allowing him to collect essential nutrients.

“For me those are authentic, because these are in their raw form, not transformed. You can find these food items in the nature, and that are part of the basic human diet, it gives the essential nutriment intake.” (COG 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

The identification of true natural aspect in a food item become an argument of selection. The closer an aliment is to its natural interpretation; the highest value of purity will be recognised in it.

“I imagine a representation of an animal eating grass for the beef, a chicken running in a field, [hesitation]for the egg and fruits on a tree ready to be picked. I believe that I link nature to authenticity.” (CON 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Human interaction is considered as responsible for the natural degradation of an element. Every different influences brought by humans is considered as a transformation.

“[Hesitation of two seconds] Milk it is because [hesitation]because it is a raw product, so [hesitation], for me there is nothing that can be more authentic that something that you get directly from an animal without [hesitation], let’s say, degree of transformation, human interaction.” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Acquiring information’s about a food item becomes part of the identification process of natural purity. A concern for the interviewee to justify their choices by indicating more specific aspect that they considered as natural has been identified.

“Bread, I actually thought specifically about sour bread, but I didn’t mention that.” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

In this interview, the selection of a very staple ingredient was corrected from the interviewee to specify the link from that product to natural purity. In another case, the natural aspect of a selected ingredient is questioned about its natural integrity:

“So, concerning ribs of beef, [hesitation]a priori it is not [hesitation]transformed it comes directly from the animal.” (CON 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

This uncertainty of the natural aspect of this food item shows that the natural aspects related to a food item are considered as unestablished and a hypothesis can be settled that an individual must identify and accept the natural attributes of an item. Some food items gathered in a natural environment are also identified by an interviewee as simple to consume, in the term that there is no need of human effort involved.

“It’s because it grows in the nature. You bite in it, you don’t necessarily have to cook it. I relate it to simplicity.” (ANT 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Authenticity is linked by the interviewees as close to natural purity. This concept of natural purity is described by the notion of naturalness:

“For me it is a natural product [hesitation], so I think that there are some link between authenticity and naturalness, at least I hope so [deep breath].” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Natural food elements are also distinguished to be the base of human transformation. Authenticity is seen as the opportunity to create and develop.

“I think that the potato is authentic because it is a staple ingredient [hesitation]that I can transform it [hesitation]in many ways.” (CON 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Natural food items become a tool used by human in the development of new dishes. The authenticity of those dishes is identified by interviewees as the characteristics offered by a natural element used in it.

“Garlic, it is ever since I started to cook by myself.” (NUT 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Human interaction mostly linked to the denaturation of an element considered as purely natural; one of the interviewee define the role of human essential to the creation of a natural element:

“[hesitation]For cheese it is the same, it is because I really like the process of bacteria proliferation, I find this sowing process fascinating, and it is a process that I associate to a very natural process. With the human help this time, but human interaction that is done in order to create the proliferation process of living substances, this is what gives the identity to [hesitation]those ingredients. [hesitation].” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Humans are described as intermediaries between two natural elements, creating by their action another natural aspect. Humans in this idea is one of the main actor of the creation of some natural elements. Authenticity is therefore identified as a human influenced natural creation.

### **Reference to social constructed attributes**

The identification of new products as authentic emerging from lived experience and learning process. The acquired knowledge becomes a tool of value in the identification of a food item's characteristics. This enables the interviewee to relate a particular food item or a particular way of preparation to a certain social cultural construction.

“Studying allowed me to learn new products, food preparations and other things, and [hesitation], and those are staple products but necessary for our culture [laugh].” (CON 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Experiences of life becomes a way of discovering new ranges of products bringing the interviewees to specify their choices by very specific experiences.

“But when I started to discover new food, when I began to be more interested by food, I experienced the tourtes a levain (sour bread loaf) in the Massif Central. Those are big loafs of rye. We usually cut big slices and we grilled them over the wood fire with small rocamadours (goat cheese).” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

This experience is described in a certain context in a particular way of preparation in order to access to a perceived authentic moment. It is of interest that this interviewee defines bread as an authentic food item and specify the very authentic experience of bread in a very specific context. The experience in this case of a very authentic moment related to bread is the origin of a general perception of authenticity of bread as a food item. A food item can be considered by an

individual as the summation of an experience. Even if the food item is not predominant in a food experience it becomes the center of remembrance of an complete experience.

“To me it is one of the first thing that I do remember when I started to discover molecular cuisine, the molecular gastronomy, which is for me something authentic, and that I had never seen before, it is very exceptional.” (ECO 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

In this case, the interviewee defines his choice (oil spherification) by focusing on the overall experience of a gastronomical dinner. The food item is not regarded as truth by itself, but it becomes the prism of an authentic perceived experience. A hypothesis that authenticity related to a food item is emerging from a specific experience that is searched continuously by an individual in the consumption of this element can be drawn.

The perception of authenticity is also related by an interviewee the multiple experiences related to a food item:

“And [hesitation] cheese [hesitation], I always was possessed by cheese and because we traveled a lot in all parts of France for holidays, I tasted all kind of cheeses. We went at the cheese producer, we looked at the different cheese crusts, and we tasted cheese with that much (3 centimeter) of crust that was not eatable any more, for example old cantal or artison with all kinds of bugs in that part of the cheese and that gives all the taste. [...] If you go to Bel (cheese industry), what is the variability between all their products [interrogation], while at the same time you can go from the cantal to the salers to the comté. It is incredible to consider that there are all done with the same raw material. For me there is an authenticity in the know-how and a notion of local products that is closely linked to cheese because it is very regionalized, very protected and that sticks to a concept of authenticity even if it is very naïve.” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Knowledge is acquired through the experience of the variation of a specific food item. Through the discovery of variations from a same food element, aspects of value can be identified and related to authenticity. In this case, the interviewee consider cheese as authentic but define his perception of authenticity to the particularities given by big crust on cheese. This point of view is acquired by the experience of multiple kinds of cheese that are de bases of his interpretation of what makes cheese authentic. In the same way, this experience enables the participant to exclude cheese product that is not constructed as authentic. The art of creation, conservation or creation becomes a specific aspect in the identification of a food item. Interviewee's specify their choices of authentic food items by these aspects:

“A cassoulet that is in a tin can can't be authentic [...] I perceive it as authentic if it is like in a big terracotta plate and served in big portions. I mean, not like a little thing in a plate for example. [...] It is really depending on the presentation; I can imagine two slices of tomato and two slices of mozzarella, it is really visual, I perceive it (as authentic) if it has this form. If it doesn't have this form, I think that I don't perceive it as authentic.” (COG 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Authenticity is therefor related to a specific food item not only by its composition but of all the settings linked to it.

You can really see, certainly for cheese it is a bit different, more closely to bread in the way that you find authenticity in the way of fabrication. (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

The way of fabrication becomes the source of authenticity in the same way that natural purity is perceived. Human knowhow become through this identification of authenticity a tool of value:

“A traditional dish that is not too much transformed and that is handmade. This is very authentic.” (COG 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

The construction of a dish is therefore defined by the authenticity brought by a human:

“Authentic, it is also the oil spherification. I associate it to Ferran Adrià, who is for me one of the best Chefs. He is Spanish.” (ECO 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Authenticity can therefore be related specifically to an individual creating a food item furthermore than the food item itself. The authenticity perception linked to a food item is explained by its creator : it is the oil spherification from Ferran Arià.

The art of fabricating authentic items is described by an interviewee as context dependent. Fabrication is related to social defined standards constructed by communities.

“Okay, for sushi I find it authentic because it combines rice, but rice is used everywhere, but the difference is the seaweed and it is representative of Japan as a culture. So, I think that it is very representative and authentic food item having the seaweed and the raw fish coming out as uniquely identified, I would say.” (NUT 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

In this case a very stable food item is perceived as authentic in the art of preparation defined by Japanese culture. The food item acquires its authenticity throughout the fabrication of a particular dish related to that culture.

“I combine the authenticity with uniqueness [...] to think about authenticity, it is now that I care to categorize them as that but having identified them, it comes with my background being to all these different countries and to be able to identify as a unique item.

Authenticity is something novel for me, something genuine, unique and novel.” (NUT 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

The specific art of fabrication defined by a culture is interpreted as unique. A process of acquiring knowledge of this particularities becomes essential to the perception of authenticity.

Food items fabricated by a region become by their unique art of preparation a transcription of a culture:

“And the last one kebab, again biased by the Greek culture. Kebab is a [hesitation] it expresses the Mediterranean plus the Arabic, Turkish culture as again a food item that could be linked to those countries, commonly consumed and that can be identified. So again, I can say that it is the authenticity of those regions. [...] The first time I experienced sushi, it was another way to see rice wrapped with raw fish.

I refer to that as authentic because of more like the [hesitation], the identity of the culture. So, like in a country, like Greece or even Turkey or even Lebanon. It is a trademark of a country, of what a country represents. [...] Or just like a stamp of the origin of the country or of the cuisine.” (NUT 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

As defined by this interviewee, authenticity acts like a stamp of a social defined and constructed food item. Consuming an authentic cultural food item can be referred as experiencing the aspects of this culture.

### **Reattachment to sensorial characteristics**

Another aspect that is identified throughout the interviews, is the interconnection of authenticity and sensorial experience:

“Because I love it, it is a unique food item and you can do so many things with it, salty, sweet and so many colours, forms, textures, taste, it is for me the best food ever.” (ECO 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Sensory characteristics are defined by the interviewees as the origin of authenticity. The setting of characteristics becomes the origin of the authenticity perception. Smell, taste, texture, temperature, colour and sound become part of the experience.

Sensory characteristics can be related directly to the natural ingredient and its proprieties when consumed raw or used in a dish:

“It has such a pronounced taste that when it is present in a dish, you can immediately taste it. [...] So now that I must do my shopping and that I must cook by myself, it changes its importance, it increases the taste (of a dish) immediately. [...] It gives for me a particular taste.” (NUT 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Sensorial particularities can also emerge from the art of preparation. The art of doing the food items becomes the origin of a unique sensory experience identified as authentic:

“The taste of these product with the taste of sour dough, the acidity of the rye [hesitation], the extremely thick crust. I don't know why but it brought me visions of authenticity. I had the impression to be in direct contact with the art of doing bread. Far away from the pale baguette, enriched in fat, without taste or flavors. For me it is a perfect product.” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Sensory characteristics becomes a tool of authenticity identification in the process of selection regarding items in the same category:

“So a lot of cheeses with a lot of improbable crusts and very intensive flavors and especially very, very specific while their where made with the same raw material.” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

A reattachment from the interviewees from the art of creation and the resulting sensory experience is made:

“The low temperature cooked eggs; it is something that I discovered, here, in France. I have never experienced it or tasted it before and I do think that it is something exceptional. I have an exceptional and authentic experience in terms of texture and cooking process. [...] I don't know if it is the food or the process which is authentic, but to me it is authentic.” (ECO 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Authenticity of a food item through sensory experience can be also related to a specific experience related to a food item:

“All the flavours of oil, I find it exceptional. [...] The fact that oil is contained in a sphere that explodes is another way of eating it, finding it, smelling it.” (ECO 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

This is the case, the interviewee considers olive oil as sensorially influenced by the way of experiencing it. Olive oil is defined as authentic on his one, but it is the art of preparation that gives his unique attribute to that experience

Sensorial experiences are related to specific environments that creates the overall experience:

“We took directly the milk from the cows and it came back home warm and the smell; the texture, the cream on the top and the taste it has. It is an experience that marked me and that I consider authentic.” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Authenticity is therefore related to the sensorial characteristic of a food item but also its surrounding environment. This interviewee makes the clear statement that it is the experience that shapes his perception of authenticity and not solely the sensorial aspects of the milk.

Authenticity in terms of sensorial characteristics and surrounding environment is a matter of acceptance. In the case of this interviewee, a food item considered as unconsumable becomes a perceived authentic food item after the liking of its sensory characteristics:

“Tongue and intestines, it was, I mean, the first time I tried tongue it was, I guess [hesitation]when I was a teenager, but I never thought that I will try tongue or that tongue is even edible. On the contrary when I tasted it, it is so tender and soft and that was like, whoa [exclamation], it is totally different from what I expected exactly, so it is a matter of expectation that you have.” (NUT 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

The liking of tongue in this case, acts like a trigger of acceptance. Therefore, a hypothesis can be settled: particular characteristics of a food item have to go through a process of acceptance by an individual in order to be identified as authentic.

### **Goal dependent consumption**

A specific concern to access to pure natural food can be identified in these interviews. This aspect differentiates itself from the identification of natural attributes by the fact that accessing to pure natural products becomes a motivation for individual:

“Concerning ratatouille; it is because it’s full of vegetables and I consider vegetables not too, quote unquote, transformed.” (COG 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

This brings to the identification of authentic food item based on the sought of natural characteristics:

“It’s because it grows in the nature. [...] I would say it is the, quote unquote, natural side. No needs of culinary preparation or whatever.” (ANT 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

This tendency to search for natural aspects when perceiving authenticity in a food item can bring to an auto-persuasion process:

“There was probably an industry behind it, but I did not have it with me when I came back to the country cottage.” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

In this case, the interviewee is referring to his experience of milk coming from the cow when he was young. He expresses that even if its experience could have been not fully natural, he still perceives it as so.

Along with the natural aspect sought through authentic food consumption, the benefits of these food item are also highlighted:

“Concerning ratatouille; it is because it’s full of vegetables and I consider vegetables not too, quote unquote, transformed. You tell yourself that it does not contain too much crap in it.” (COG 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

The selection of authentic food goes through the envy of an individual to consume items that are good for the health or that brings specific attributes:

“For me those are authentic, because these are in their raw form, not transformed. You can find these food items in the nature, and that are part of the basic human diet, it gives the essential nutriment intake.” (COG 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Natural items defined as the base of the human diet are specifically regarded as beneficial. Every human transformation impacts the pureness of these benefits raising the doubts on the impact on the health:

“I would say that eggs haven’t been transformed. But I don’t have the earlier stages of the production, how they have been raised, and how they have been feed.” (CON 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

This aspect different itself from the sough for natural aspect by the fact that the concern is related to the consumption of a food item by an individual and not its origins.

In an identical way that individuals search natural attributes, social constructed unique attributes are sought through the consumption of certain items seen as authentic. This is particularly the case for the interviewees to refer to their own culture as source of authenticity. This search for social bounds is not only liked to a culture but to every level of social group. This aspect can be identified in the following interview:

“So rechta [hesitation], which is not only typical from my country, but also from my city. it is very traditional [...] my grandmother used to cook it. And in fact, to me, my grandmother embodies authenticity.” (NUT 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

The Grandmother represents a level of social bounding that explains the perception of the food item for this interviewee. Social bounding’s to a culture can be hypothetically interpreted as more

intensive if an individual is away from his ethnic community. This aspect can be identified in the statement of the following interview:

“Rechta, I began to find it authentic ever since I moved to France because I don’t see it as often as I was used to.” (NUT 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Individuals identify food items as authentic based on the social bounding represented through it.

Social bounding’s are related to a culture at a present time. However cultural aspects are constructed through time and a tendency by interviewees to relate their perception of authenticity to the past aspects of a culture:

“And then, cheese and bread, it does have the little French-iest chauvinism side, a bit of Vielle France, kind of tradi (-tional).” (ANT 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

This aspect is observable also in the lived experience of individuals, relating authenticity to their younger self:

“Regarding milk, it is exactly the same, when I was young [hesitation]Basse Normandie, country cottage in Lorne [hesitation]milk can in my hands, we are going to the farm, it smells like dunk and for me this smell has a very positive connotation now because of this moment.” (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

Habits of the past become de norm of the present. Authenticity is related to an individual habit, perceived as innate:

“I used to eat it a lot when I was little [...] it’s rooted in me, in my family, in my habits.” (COG 1, Personal interview, May 15, 2018)

The qualitative interviews offered numerous interpretation of food authenticity. Everyone having its own constellation of what is makes a food item authentic regardless to the science their dedicated to. The classification of the interviewees by science will act solely as a way of classification as no common construct can be identified. The collection of these numerous aspects gives us an opportunity to better understand the influential aspect occurring in the perception of food authenticity.

## Discussion

The resulting data collected through the qualitative study go along with the constructed model. More specific interpretation has been developed by individuals that can be of value for the development of these theory.

A complex link has been defined between the interpretation of natural and social constructed facts. Natural element can be perceived as so even if it is the outcome of human transformation. Social constellation can be associated to a natural element that is interpreted as socially linked because it is commonly used in a certain culture. However, these two aspects have been identified as emerging of an acquired knowledge. Knowledge of natural origins and specific human transformation linked to social defined constructs are the source of genuine identification. These constructs go along with the reviewed theory, describing knowledge as one of the pillars of authenticity perception.

Appreciation is also one of the constructs identified in the literature review and found in the qualitative study. It is of described by the interviewee as a multisensorial experience involving taste, texture, temperature, visual characteristics and smell. It is interesting that interviewees when describing these aspects are involving many of these multisensorial aspects rather than relating it solely on one, taste for example. A more discrete aspect in these interviews but that can be identified in the overall experience lived by certain interviewees is the acceptance of the surrounding environment of the lived food experience. The multisensorial aspects related to the surrounding environment are an important influential aspect of the overall experience. For

example, the smell in a context of food experience can conduct to bad influence on the overall liking. In the same idea, the unique experience of the interviewee searching his milk at the farm (COG 3, Personal interview, May 15, 2018) has influenced his liking as cow dung generally considered as unpleasant. An aspect identified in the study of Lu & Fine (1995) can also be observed in this study: the appreciation or the disliking of a food item has a direct influence on the perception of authenticity. This is the case with the interviewee perceiving authenticity in tongue preparations ever since his appreciation of the sensorial experience (NUT 2, Personal interview, May 15, 2018).

Authenticity is defined by the envy from the interviewees to not only access to a true and pleasant experience but also for purposes. As defined in the literature about food authenticity, four major goals are defined as dependent to the perception of food authenticity. A search from natural purity is linked to the perception of natural characteristics but is differentiated by the purpose for individual to define food item as real because there are seen as natural. A better understanding of the natural characteristics of a food item will therefore lead to more specific search of these characteristics. A similar aspect is identified in the sought for social bounding. A better knowledge on the social defined standards will lead to a more accurate search for social bounding. An individual having the assets to understand the food construction of a social community will search more accurately the authenticity linked to this unique identity. This is observed in the case of foreign interviewees that refer authenticity to their ethnical culture as an appurtenance to their home community. Significant aspects that relates authenticity to health and nutritional benefits are identified throughout the interviews. Food items are identified as authentic due to their purity that often is linked to the natural aspects. A search of what is identified by

Autio, Collins, Wahlen, & Anttila (2013) as nostalgic reality is also founded in this study. Interviewees refer to past interpretation of what was the construction of a social community or the naturalness of an item in the past. These four different kinds of purposes identified in the perception of food authenticity by individual can be considered as influential aspects. Influencing positively the genuineness and the liking of food items.

The results of the qualitative study go along the construct identified in the hypothetical model on influential aspects occurring in the perception of food authenticity. This makes the interpretation as a reliable basis for further quantitative studies.

### **Limitations of the study**

A deeper research in literature on food authenticity could have brought a more accurate understanding on the different perception linked to food authenticity. Although the classification process has been essential to define the model to the context of food, the papers on the papers could have been analyzed closer to identify common constructs. The exclusion of relevant papers is probable if the title of the paper did not correspond to the process of selection. This brings to limitations regarding the literature review.

Concerning the qualitative study, the collected data are influenced by the selected sample. This makes it the primary limitation to this study. A larger sample can bring different aspects linked to food authenticity. Despite the narrow environment of the selected sample, the international origins of certain interviewees influence the generalization of the collected information.

**Future perspective of the study**

Defining authenticity is valuable to better understand the behavior of individual when identifying it. Focusing on the influential aspect that occurs in the perception of authenticity can be of great use in managerial purposes in order to pay a closer attention toward the natural gathering, fabrication, sensorial construction and related goals of an individual, and how to influence them in order to create authenticity. Authenticity being described as “the key to the development of the modern world” by MacCannell (1976), understand it will be of great value for the actors of tomorrow in numerous fields.

In order to verify the hypothetical model developed in this study, quantitative studies have to be conducted in order to make all the hypothesis reliable. The difficulty to conduct quantitative studies about individual’s perception makes it impossible to verify this model in one study. A deeper understanding through literature reviews of all the aspects identified needs to be done individually in order to specify or modify this model. The context of food in this study offers also a very unique interpretation of the influential aspect occurring in authenticity. In order to develop this model to other contexts, a total renewal of the literature review and the qualitative study has to be done.

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## Appendix

The interviews are conducted in the interviewees mother language if it is French or English. For other foreign interviewees, the interviews are conducted in the language that is the more comfortable for the participant. This choice was done in order for all the interviewees to express their interpretations without being restricted by the language barrier. The translating of the interviews is realized by trying to conserve the original expression of an individual. Sentences have been slightly modified to correspond to the English syntax.

In order to facilitate the reference to interviews, the name of the discipline will be shorted to: COG (cognitive sciences), ECO (economics), NUT (nutrition), ANT (anthropology), CON (Food Conscious) followed by the number referring to an interview, for example: ECO 2.

### **COG 1 – France (Toulouse) / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Tomato salad with mozzarella
- Cassoulet
- Ratatouille

#### **For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

“So [hesitation], I think that for tomato mozzarella salad, it is because I used to eat it a lot when I was little. It is a dish that came back every summer; it’s rooted in me, in my family, in my habits. (Deep breath). Cassoulet; ok first of all, I’m crazy about it; it’s like a big family dish. An item that you can find usually in the [hesitation] bouchons lyonnais but the one in Toulouse, it is

[hesitation] the typical city restaurant dish. It is often handmade, and this makes it kind of authentic. Concerning ratatouille; it is because it's full of vegetables and I consider vegetables not too, quote unquote, transformed. You tell yourself that it does not contain too much crap in it. Authentic (sigh) for me would be a thing that (two seconds hesitation) is traditional. A traditional dish that is not too much transformed and that is handmade. This is very authentic.”

*« Alors (hésitation), je pense que la salade de tomate mozzarella c'est parce j'en ai toujours mangées quand j'étais petite. C'est un plat qui revenais tout le temps l'été, tout ça, c'est plutôt ancré dans moi, dans ma famille et par mes habitudes. (Respiration profonde). Le cassoulet, bon d'une part j'adore ça, ça fait genre gros plat familial. Donc truc que tu vois un peu dans les (Hésitation) les bouchons lyonnais mais à Toulouse c'est (hésitation) les restaurants de la ville. Du coup c'est fait souvent, genre, maison et ce genre de choses, un peu authentique. Et la ratatouille c'est parce que plein de légumes et que les légumes ce n'est pas trop transformé entre guillemets, tu dis qu'il n'y a pas trop de saloperies dedans. Authentique (Soupir), moi ça serait un truc que (hésitation de deux secondes) traditionnel. Un plat traditionnel, pas trop transformé et maison. ça c'est très authentique. »*

*How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?*

And [hesitation]; when did I start to perceive these food items as authentic (interrogation). What was the moment where I realized the authenticity in those items (interrogation). (Four seconds hesitation). Honestly, (understandable) I don't know, I would say that it is how the food items are cut, it is like [hesitation] if I could see them in my head. [hesitation]. I don't really know if it does answer your question. For me cassoulet looks like [hesitation]; A cassoulet that is

in a tin can can't be authentic. So, cassoulet, I perceive it as authentic if it is like in a big terracotta plate and served in big portions. I mean, not like a little thing in a plate for example. Same for the ratatouille and the tomato salad, that's it, it is really depending on the presentation; I could imagine two slices of tomato and two slices of mozzarella, it is really visual, I perceive it (as authentic) if it has this form. If it doesn't have this form, I think that I don't perceive it as authentic. And when did I start perceiving it as authentic, well I couldn't tell you that.

*« Et (hésitation) quand est-ce que j'ai commencée à percevoir que ce plat était authentique (interrogation) à partir de quel moment j'ai trouvé ça authentique (interrogation). (Hésitation de 4 secondes) La franchement, (incompréhensible) je ne sais pas, je dirais que c'est comment les aliments sont coupés. Genre je les vois, genre, tout de suite dans ma tête. (Hésitation) Je sais pas trop si ça répond à ta question, genre le cassoulet ça me paraît, genre un cassoulet qui va être en boîte ne peut pas être authentique. Donc le cassoulet je le perçois comme authentique si c'est genre dans un gros plat en terre et vraiment une grosse part, genre pas un petit truc dans une assiette par exemple. Pareil pour la ratatouille, et la salade de tomate voilà c'est plus dans la présentation ou je verrais deux tranches de tomates, deux tranches de mozza, c'est vraiment du visuel, je le perçois si il a cette forme-là. S'il n'a pas cette forme-là, je pense que je ne le perçois pas comme authentique. Et quand est-ce que je l'ai perçu comme authentique, alors là je ne pourrais pas te dire. »*

**COG 2 – France / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Vegetable
- Meat
- Cheese

**For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

“[hesitation] Equally for those tree, vegetable, meat and cheese [hesitation], no first, vegetable and meat, sorry. For me those are authentic, because these are in their raw form, not transformed. You can find these food items in the nature, and that are part of the basic human diet, it gives the essential nutriment intake. Then, I thought about a third one and I thought that cheese is also for me a food item that I consider as authentic. And that is because even if it is a transformed product, it is generally made in the basis of milk, from cow or other. In addition, the transformation process is to me, authentic. Authentic can also mean that the food item is natural, or it can be link to the preparation process and to what it connotes in terms of culture, French culture.”

*« (Hésitation) Autant pour les trois, légume, viande et fromage (hésitation), non déjà, légume et viande, pardon. Pour moi ils sont authentiques, parce que qu'ils sont dans leur forme brute, non transformé. C'est des aliments que tu peux trouver dans la nature, et puis qui font partie de l'alimentation humaine de base, quoi, pour avoir des apports nutritifs essentiels. En suite j'ai réfléchi à un troisième et je me suis dit que le fromage pour moi c'était aussi un aliment que je considèrai comme authentique parce que même si c'est un produit transformé, il est fait en général juste à base de lait, que ça soit du lait de vache ou autre. En plus, le processus de transformation est, pour moi authentique. Authentique peut aussi dire que l'ingrédient est naturel*

*ou peut être aussi affilié au mode de préparation, et de ce que ça connote en termes de culture, la culture française quoi. »*

It is true that vegetable is what came first to my mind. And that is because for me, this one (vegetable) is between vegetable, meat and cheese the one that you can find in nature and eat without any transformation, even raw. Meat can also be eaten raw but that will be only for specific recipes like carpaccio or other ones, so there is still a transformation process because it has to be cut in fine slice. So finally, I went from the food item that needs the least transformation process to be eaten to the one who needs the most. That's it.

*« C'est vrai que légume c'est ce qui m'est venu en premier parce que pour moi c'est entre légume, viande et fromage celui que tu peux trouver dans la nature comme ça et que tu peux consommer sans aucune transformation, donc même en crudité quoi. La viande aussi on peut le manger cru mais après ça va plus être des recettes particulières comme le carpaccio ou autre, donc il y a quand même un processus de transformation parce qu'il faut couper en tranche fine et tout ça. Donc en fait au final je suis allé de l'aliment qui demande le moins de processus de consommation pour être consommé à celui qui en demande le plus. Et voilà. »*

**COG 3 – France / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Bread
- Milk
- Cheese

**For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

“Bread, I actually thought specifically about sour bread, but I didn’t mention that. For me it is a natural product [hesitation], so I think that there are some link between authenticity and naturalness, at least I hope so (deep breath). (Hesitation of two seconds) Milk it is because [hesitation]because it is a raw product, so [hesitation], for me there is nothing that can be more authentic than something that you get directly from an animal without [hesitation], let’s say, degree of transformation, human interaction. It is true that the milk that we usually drink is not the one that directly comes from the cow. [hesitation]For cheese it is the same, it is because I really like the process of bacteria proliferation, I find this sowing process absolutely fascinating, and it is a process that I associate to a very natural process. With the human help this time, but human interaction that is done in order to create the proliferation process of living substances, this is what gives the identity to [hesitation]those ingredients. [hesitation]. It is true that two of those products are the issue of a fermentation process. Well this was a spontaneous choice.”

*« Le pain, j’entendais pain au levain alors j’ai pas précisé mais voilà. Parce que pour moi c’est un produit naturel (hésitation), donc j’imagine qu’il y a des liens entre authenticité et naturalité, enfin, je l’espère (Profonde inspiration). (Hésitation de deux secondes), le lait c’est*

*[hesitation] parce que c'est un produit brut donc [hesitation], pour moi il ne peut pas y avoir quelque chose de plus authentique que quelque chose que tu tires directement de l'animal sans [hesitation], disons, degré de transformation, d'intervention humaine. Bien sur que le lait que le lait que nous consommons n'est pas celui qui sort directement du pis de la vache. [hesitation] et le fromage aussi, parce que j'aime bien le processus de prolifération de bactéries, d'ensemencement que je trouve tout à fait fascinant, et que j'associe aussi à un processus très naturel. Avec intervention humaine pour le coup, mais une intervention humaine qui faite pour créer des conditions de proliférations de substances vivantes, qui donnent l'identité à [hesitation] cet aliment la quoi. [hesitation] C'est vrai qu'il y a deux produits qui sont issus du processus de fermentation. Mais bon voila, c'était du choix spontané. »*

### **How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?**

“So bread [hesitation]. Bread, it is interesting because when I was young I was use to eat baguette, not so stimulating. But when I started to discover new food, when I began to be more interested by food, I experienced the tourtes a levain (sour bread loaf) in the Massif Central. Those are big loafs of rye. We usually cut big slices and we grilled them over the wood fire with small rocamadours (goat cheese). The taste of these product with the taste of sour dough, the acidity of the rye [hesitation], the extremely thick crust. I don't know why but it brought me visions of authenticity. I had the impression to be in direct contact with the art of doing bread. Far away from the pale baguette, enriched in fat, without taste or flavors. For me it is a perfect product. Regarding milk, it is exactly the same, when I was young [hesitation] Basse Normandie, country cottage in Lorne [hesitation] milk can in my hands, we are going to the farm, it smells like dunk and for me this smell has a very positive connotation now because of this moment. I

mean that I like the smell of cow dung. We took directly the milk from the cows and it came back home warm and the smell; the texture, the cream on the top and the taste it has. It is an experience that marked me and that I consider authentic because there were no industry behind it, well I do not know, there were probably an industry behind it but I did not have it with me when I came back to the country cottage at that time when I was young. And [hesitation] cheese [hesitation], I always was possessed by cheese and because we traveled a lot in all parts of France for holidays, I tasted all kind of cheeses. We went at the cheese producer, we looked at the different cheese crusts, and we tasted cheese with that much (3 centimeter) of crust that was not eatable any more, for example old cantal or artison with all kinds of bugs in that part of the cheese and that gives all the taste. So a lot of cheeses with a lot of improbable crusts and very intensive flavors and especially very, very specific while their where made with the same raw material. You can really see, certainly for cheese it is a bit different, more closely to bread in the way that you find authenticity in the way of fabrication. For me, what distinguishes an authentic cheese with a non-authentic cheese is the singularity of its aromatic profile and that is generally highly correlated with the art of doing it. If you go to Bel (cheese industry), what is the variability between all their products (interrogation), while at the same time you can go from the cantal to the salers to the comté. It is incredible to consider that there are all done with the same raw material. For me there is an authenticity in the know-how and a notion of local products that is closely linked to cheese because it is very regionalized, very protected and that sticks to a concept of authenticity even if it is very naïve.”

*« Le pain, alors (hésitation). Le pain c'est assez intéressant parce que quand j'étais petit on mangeait de la baguette, donc pas spécialement stimulant. Mais en élargissant mon répertoire alimentaire, en m'intéressant à l'alimentation, j'ai fais l'expérience dans le massif central des*

*tourtes au levain Qui sont de grosses tourtes de seigle. On coupait des tranches et on les faisait griller au feu de bois avec des petits rocamadours. Le goût de ce produit là avec le goût du levain, le côté très acide du seigle, (hésitation) la croute extrêmement épaisse. Je sais pas pourquoi mais ça m'a déclenché des représentations d'authenticités. J'avais l'impression d'être en contact direct avec ce qu'est l'art du pain au sens premier du terme. Loin d'une sorte de baguette un peu pâlichonne, enrichie avec des matières grasses, sans goût ni saveur. Pour moi c'est un produit parfait. Le lait, c'est pareil, c'est quand j'étais petit (hésitation) Basse Normandie, Gîte dans Lorne (hésitation) broc, on va à la ferme, ça sent un peu la bouse et pour moi c'est une odeur à valeur positive à cause de ce moment là maintenant. C'est à dire que j'aime bien l'odeur de la bouse de vache. Et on allez chercher le lait directement avec les vaches et il revenait chaud et l'odeur, la texture, la crème qui était dessus et le goût que ça avait. C'est une expérience qui m'a marquée et que je trouve authentique pareil parce qu'il n'y avait pas vraiment d'industrie derrière, j'en sais rien, il y avait surement une industrie derrière mais en tout cas je l'avais pas dans mon produit quand je le ramené dans mon petit gîte quand j'étais gosse. Et, (hésitation) le fromage (hésitation), j'ai toujours été possédé par les fromages et donc comme on voyageait pas mal en France, en vacance, goûter tous les fromages. On allait chez tous les producteurs, on voyait les différentes croutes, on goûtait les fromages ou tu as ça (3 centimètre environ) de croute qui n'est pas comestible comme les vieux cantal ou les artisons avec des espèces de bestioles qui vivent dans cette partie du fromage et qui donne le goût. Donc plein de fromage avec des croutes invraisemblables et des goûts extrêmement puissant et surtout très, très typé alors que c'est fait à partir de la même matière première. Tu vois vraiment, certainement pour le fromage c'est un peu plus différent, plus proche du pain dans le sens ou c'est l'authenticité que tu retrouve dans le processus de fabrication. C'est à dire que ce qui distingue selon moi un fromage authentique d'un fromage non authentique c'est sa singularité au niveau du profil aromatique et qui*

*généralement très fortement corrélé avec la manière dont c'est fait. Tu vas chez Bel, c'est quoi la variabilité dans leurs produits, alors que bon, tu passes du cantal au salers au comté. C'est quand même invraisemblable de considéré que c'est fait à partir de la même matière première. Pour moi il y a une authenticité du savoir faire et une notion de terroir qui est très attaché au fromage parce que c'est très régionalisé, très protégé, et qui me semble collé au concept d'authenticité même si c'est une version complètement naïve du truc. »*

**ECO 1 – Spain / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Chocolate
- Olive oil spherification
- “Perfect” eggs

**For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

“So, for me chocolate is authentic, because I love it. I think that it is a unique food item and you can do so many things with it, salty, sweet and so many colours, forms, textures, taste, it is for me the best food ever. Authentic, it is also the oil spherification. I associate it to Ferran Adrià, who is for me one of the best Chefs. He is Spanish. Oil is something [hesitation], to me it is one of the first thing that I do remember when I started to discover molecular cuisine, the molecular gastronomy, which is for me something authentic, and that I had never seen before. Oil as a product, first of all I think that it is very exceptional, like chocolate. And as a Spanish girl, I am very sensitive to food. The fact that oil is contained in a sphere that explodes is another way of eating it, finding it, smelling it. And it explodes in the mouth. All the flavours of oil, I find it exceptional. And then [hesitation] the low temperature cooked eggs; it is something that I discovered, here, in France. I have never experienced it or tasted it before and I do think that it is something exceptional. And I have an exceptional and authentic experience in terms of texture and cooking process. I don't know if it is the food or the process which is authentic, but to me it is authentic.”

*« Donc, pour moi le chocolat c'est authentique, par ce que je kiffe, je trouve qu'il y a qu'un aliment qui ressemble à ça et tu peux faire tellement de choses, salées, sucrées et pleins de*

*couleurs, de formes, de textures, d'arômes, c'est, pour moi c'est le meilleur aliment qui existe. Authentique, après c'est l'encapsulation de l'huile. J'associe ça à Ferran Adrià, qui pour moi est l'un des meilleurs chefs, il est espagnol. L'huile c'est quelque chose (hésitation), pour moi c'est l'une des premières choses dont je me souviens quand j'ai commencé à découvrir un peu plus la cuisine moléculaire, la gastronomie moléculaire, qui pour moi est quelque chose d'authentique, et que je n'avais jamais vue. L'huile comme produit, déjà je trouve que c'est exceptionnel, c'est comme le chocolat. Et en tant qu'espagnole, je suis sensible à la cuisine, et le fait de garder l'huile dans une sphère qui craque et donc une façon différente de le manger, de le trouver, de le sentir, et ça explose dans la bouche. Tous les arômes de l'huile, je trouve que c'est exceptionnel. Et après, (hésitation) les œufs à basse température, c'est quelque chose que j'ai connu ici en France. Je n'ai jamais connu ça ou testé ça et moi je trouve que c'est aussi quelque chose d'exceptionnel et moi j'ai une relation exceptionnelle et authentique en termes de texture, de procédé de cuisson. Je ne sais pas si c'est l'aliment ou le procédé qui est authentique, mais pour moi c'est quelque chose d'authentique. »*

### **How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?**

“For me chocolate it is since I was little. I have always loved chocolate, it is something I'm crazy about, and in everything. If I can add some chocolate in something, I just do it. Regarding oil spherification, it was at the time when, well, I discovered molecular gastronomy. Low temperature cooked egg, I do consider it as authentic because there is a lot of ways to cook eggs, but I never tried this one, and so to me it is superb. There is so many ways to eat it but this one is fantastic.”

*« Moi, le chocolat c'est depuis petit. Moi, j'ai toujours aimé le chocolat, c'est quelque chose que j'adore, mais dans tout. Si je peux ajouter du chocolat dans quelque chose, je le fais.*

*L'encapsulation de l'huile c'est au moment où voilà, j'ai découvert la gastronomie moléculaire. L'œuf à basse température, moi je considère ça comme authentique, parce qu'il y a plein de façons de cuisiner l'œuf, mais je n'avais jamais essayé cela, et pour moi c'est top. Il y a beaucoup de le manger mais celle-là est top. »*

**NUT 1 – Algeria / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Rechta
- Garlic
- Shorba

**For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

“So, well (two seconds hesitation) separately (interrogation). All right. So rechta [hesitation], which is not only typical from my country, but also from my city. And [hesitation] in fact it is very traditional, and [hesitation] my grandmother used to cook it. And in fact, to me, my grandmother embodies authenticity [laugh] . So, well, and regarding garlic, I find that it is used in a lot of dishes, and that is something quite indispensable. And, it has such a pronounced taste that when it is present in a dish, you can immediately taste it. And so, I consider it as authentic. Shorba is kind of a soup and I believe that soup, first of all, is the basis of alimentation, meaning that at a moment or another, we have to eat some soup. And because it is coming from my home, it is something that I eat quite often, it is authentic.”

*« D'accord, bein (hesitation deux secondes) séparément (interrogation). D'accord. Alors la rechta (hésitation) qui non seulement est typique de mon pays, et en plus de ma ville. Et (hésitation) et enfaite c'est vraiment traditionnel, et (hésitation) ma grand-mère le prépare. Et pour moi, ma grand-mère représente l'authenticité enfaite (rires). Donc voilà, et pour ce qui est de l'ail, je trouve que c'est utilisé dans pas mal de plats, que c'est quelque chose de plutôt indispensable. Et, ça un goût tellement prononcé, que dès qu'il est présent dans une assiette on le sent tout de suite. Et voilà, je considère que c'est authentique. La shorba, c'est une sorte de*

*soupe et je pense que la soupe, déjà c'est la base d'une alimentation, c'est à dire qu'un moment donné, il faut toujours manger de la soupe. Et comme ça vient de chez moi, c'est quelque chose que je mange assez souvent, c'est authentique. »*

### **How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?**

“[hesitation] I do not think it is something innate. Then [hesitation] is it possible to do it in the order? Richta, I began to find it authentic ever since I moved to France because I don't see it as often as I was used to. I think that's it [laugh] . Garlic, it is ever since I started to cook by myself, because before I used to live at my parent's place, so I didn't cook there. So now that I must do my shopping and that I must cook by myself, it changes its importance, it increases the taste (of a dish) immediately. For this reason, I use it (garlic) raw or in powder and it gives for me a particular taste. Shorba is rather innate; I always considered it as an authentic dish.”

*« (Hésitation) Je ne pense pas que c'est quelque chose d'inné. Alors (hésitation) je peux commencer dans l'ordre (interrogation). La richta, j'ai commencé à trouver cela authentique depuis que je vis en France et que je n'en vois plus aussi souvent, voilà (rires). L'ail c'est depuis que je me suis mise à la cuisine, parce que avant je vivais chez mes parents donc je ne cuisinais pas moi-même. Donc maintenant que je fais les courses et que je cuisine moi-même, ça change l'importance que ça a. ça relève le goût tout de suite. Du coup j'en met en entier, j'en met en poudre, ça m'apporte un goût particulier. La shorba c'est plutôt inné, je considère ça comme un plat authentique depuis toujours. »*

**NUT 2 – Greece / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Sushi
- Tongue and Intestines
- Kebab

**For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

Okay, for sushi I find it authentic because it combines rice, but rice is used everywhere, but the difference is the seaweed and it is representative of Japan as a culture. So, I think that it is very representative and authentic food item having the seaweed and the raw fish coming out as uniquely identified, I would say. Somehow, I combine the authenticity with uniqueness. For the tongue and intestines, again these are staple items, I think it is something that you cannot really see. Compared to the sushi who again is reflected to the Japanese culture, but rice is a staple food item that can be distributed all over the world and that is used throughout the world. But the intestines you can see in very special cuisine, like in French for example or even in Greek cuisine and it could be for instance atzar or mahereza. It is something that you usually eat after a night out but its authentic food because it comes a little bit not expected. And the last one kebab, again biased by the Greek culture. Kebab is a [hesitation] it expresses the Mediterranean plus the Arabic, Turkish culture as again a food item that could be linked to those countries, commonly consumed and that can be identified. So again, I can say that it is the authenticity of those regions. That's all (exclamation).

*How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?*

**How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?**

When was the moment (interrogation). Just now, that you ask me (laughs) to put out the food item. I think, to think about authenticity it is now that I care to categorize them as that but having identified them, it comes with my background being to all these different countries and to be able to identify as a unique item. Authenticity is something novel for me, something genuine, unique and novel. So the first time I experienced sushi, it was another way to see rice wrapped with raw fish. Tongue and intestines, it was, I mean, the first time I tried tongue it was, I guess [hesitation] when I was a teenager, but I never thought that I will try tongue or that tongue is even edible. On the contrary when I tasted it, it is so tender and soft and that was like, whoa (exclamation), it is totally different from what I expected exactly, so it is a matter of expectation that you have. And for the kebab, I think, I refer to that as authentic because of more like the [hesitation], the identity of the culture. So, like in a county, like Greece or even Turkey or even Lebanon. It is a trademark of a country, of what a country represents. I could say kebab and it could be so flaky, but these is what people think. Oh, Greek, oh, Greek food, oh, so flaky. Or just like a stamp of the origin of the country or of the cuisine.

**ANT 1 – France / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Tomato
- Bread
- Cheese

**For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

“[laugh] Why do I consider each one of those food items as authentic (interrogation) Can I go? Ok. [laugh] So, I don’t really know, it’s the first thing that came to my mind. Tomato (Two second hesitation), in fact, it is the first thing that came to my mind. It is, no, in fact I don’t know, it’s because it grows in the nature. You bite in it, you don’t necessarily have to cook it. And then, cheese and bread, it does have the little French-iest chauvinism side, a bit of Vielle France, kind of tradi (-tional). That’s it (exclamation). And also for the simplicity.”

« (rire) Pourquoi je considère que chacun de ces aliments est authentique (questionnement) J’y vais ? Ok. (Rires) Alors, je ne sais pas déjà, c’est le premier truc qui m’est venu à l’esprit, tomate, (Hésitation deux secondes), parce que c’est le premier truc qui m’est venu à l’esprit en fait. C’est, non enfaite je ne sais pas, c’est parce que ça pousse dans la nature. Tu croques dedans, tu n’as pas besoin de le cuisiner nécessairement. Et puis fromage et pain, ça un côté un peu franchouillard, un peu Vielle France, un peu tradi. Voilà (exclamation). Et puis pour la simplicité. »

**How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?**

“Well, tomato, I would say it is the, quote unquote, natural side. No needs of culinary preparation or whatever. Like I told you it is the first thing that came to me. And for the cheese and bread, authenticity is more (two second hesitation), a bit (two second hesitation), oh well I already did answer before. What do I link it to (interrogation) I relate it to simplicity, to (hesitation then laugh), I don’t know myself. What do I link it to (interrogation). Yeah, to the simplicity, quick, no preparation [laugh] and well I don’t know [laugh].”

*“Eh bien, Tomate, je dirais que c’est le côté naturel entre guillemet. Pas besoin de préparations culinaires ou quoi que ce soit. Comme je te dis, c’est le premier truc qui m’est venu. Et fromage et pain, l’authenticité c’est plus dans le côté (hésitation d’une seconde), un peu (hésitation d’une seconde), bah je t’ai déjà répondu avant. Je le rattache à quoi (questionnement), je le rattache à la simplicité, au côté (hésitation puis rire), je ne sais pas moi. Je le rattache à quoi (questionnement). Ouais, ouais, à la simplicité, rapide, pas de préparation (rires), et voilà je ne sais pas moi (rire).”*

**CON 1 – France / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Rib of beef
- Omelet
- Fruits

**For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

“So, concerning ribs of beef, [hesitation] a priori it is not [hesitation] transformed, I would say that it comes directly from the animal. Omelet is some beaten egg, so I would say that eggs haven’t been transformed. But I don’t have the earlier stages of the production, how they have been raised, and how they have been feed. Concerning fruits, one more time I cannot come back and know what was pulverized or not on these fruits but a raw fruit is a priori not transformed. But still, I do not know how these food items where raised or cultivated”

*« Alors la côte de bœuf, (hésitation) à priori elle n’est pas (hésitation) transformée, elle vient directement de la bête, j’allais dire. L’omelette c’est des œufs battus, donc on va dire que, les œufs n’ont pas été transformés. Mais je ne peux pas remonter en amont de ce qu’ils ont mangé et avec quoi ils ont été nourris. Et les fruits encore une fois je ne peux pas remonter, savoir ce qui à été pulvérisé ou pas sur ces fruits mais un fruit brut a priori n’est pas transformé. Mais je n’ai pas l’amont de comment ils ont été élevé ou comment ça été cultivé. »*

**How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?**

“In my head (exclamation) [hesitation], I imagine a representation of an animal eating grass for the beef, a chicken running in a field, [hesitation] for the egg and fruits on a tree ready to be picked. I believe that I link nature to authenticity.”

*« Dans ma tête? (Hésitation) Je me suis fait une représentation d'un animal mangeant de l'herbe pour le bœuf, d'une poule qui courrait dans un champ, (hésitation) pour l'œuf et de fruits sur un arbre prêts à être cueillis. Je crois que j'associe la nature à l'authenticité. »*

**CON 2 – French / Personal interview, May 15, 2018**

Three food items perceived as authentic by the participant:

- Potato
- Carrot
- Beef

**For each one of these food items: what makes you consider them as authentic?**

“I will start with the potato. I think that the potato is authentic because it is a staple ingredient [hesitation] that I can transform [hesitation] in many different ways. And that is, that I consider as typically French. Carrot, because since I am a little girl, I am used to eat carrots, so I consider it as authentic. Beef, I selected beef because I immediately thought about the boeuf bourguignon, a French dish.”

*« Alors je vais commencer par la pomme de terre. Je pense que la pomme de terre c'est authentique parce que, c'est un aliment (hésitation) que l'on peut transformer (hésitation) sous de nombreuses façons. Et qui est, que l'on va dire, typique français. La carotte parce que depuis que je suis toute petite je mange des carottes donc pour moi c'est authentique. Le bœuf, j'ai mis le bœuf parce que j'ai directement pensée au bœuf bourguignon, un plat français. »*

**How did you start to perceive this food item as authentic?**

“When I [hesitation], I don't know. When I started my culinary and hospitality learning, we, I [hesitation]. Yes, I think that is it. Studying allowed me to learn new products, food

preparations and other things, and [hesitation], and those are staple products but necessary for our culture [laugh] . Not only for culture but also for the culinary field.”

*« Quand j’ai (hésitation), je ne sais pas. Quand j’ai commencé mes études en restauration et en hôtellerie, on, je (hésitation). Oui je pense que c’est ça. Faire mes études m’a permis de connaître des produits, des aliments, découvrir des choses, et (hésitation), et ça c’est des aliments basiques, mais important en France pour notre culture (rires). Pas que pour la culture, mais aussi pour le marché de la restauration. »*