

**International
Institute of
Social Studies**

Erasmus

What's mine is dine?

Investigating the relationship between Cultural identity and autonomy over food chains in Barbados

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List of Acronyms

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
FEED	Farmer's Empowerment and Enfranchisement Drive
WTO	World Trade Organization
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
BMC	Borrowing Member Countries
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
UWI	University of the West Indies
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank

Abstract

This research serves to investigate the link between cultural identity and securing autonomy over local food chains. It first documents the change in food consumption patterns in Barbados since the 1950s analyzing the geo-political climate that facilitated such a change. Secondly, it explores the link between food culture and development in the agriculture industry, presenting the tension between utilizing a concept such as culture which is constantly being defined and redefined by the individual and the collective. Lastly, it utilizes corporate food regime analysis as a lens to assess the structure of the agriculture industry in Barbados. It questions whether cultural identity shaped through food should be considered in the development of the agricultural industry, working from the premise that this consideration can ensure sustainability meaning that it caters to the economic, social and environmental needs of the country and its people. Presently, Barbados aims to reduce the food import bill by increasing local production and thus ensure national food and nutrition security therefore increasing ownership of the food supply chain. Using qualitative ethnographic methods, the paper follows three generations of the maternal line of a middle-class Barbadian family documenting their relationship with food from childhood to adulthood. It also draws upon the knowledge of key cultural figures in the form of structured interviews who discuss the Barbadian identity as it relates to food. Moreover, structured interviews were conducted with cultural academics, representatives from organizations such as Farmers' Empowerment and Enfranchisement Drive (F.E.E.D) spearheaded by Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation and Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd organizations tasked with the running of the agriculture sector.

Relevance to Development Studies

Culture has been viewed as the means to combat development solely based on economic goals, this approach is said to prioritize people. The current agricultural framework thrives off globalization and prioritizes agribusiness to feed the world causing the homogenization of food culture. This structure comes into direct conflict with the preservation of cultural identity defined through food. Culture is an elusive concept and thus issues of practicality in implementation arise nonetheless it is framed as necessary to ensure sustainability- economic, social and environmental. Development should foster many discourses and manifest itself in different ways rather than be forced upon "under-developed countries" by more "developed countries" (Escobar, 2007, pp. 20-21). This involves the recentering of development away from solely economically driven goals and thus not only through 'western eyes' (Mohanty 1991 quoted in Escobar, 2007, pp. 20-21). Food has become a political matter. Increasingly there has been a disconnection between people and the food they consume and the journey from farm to table has been significantly lengthened due to free trade and neoliberalist ideology. In the wake of enormous food import bills, shifting community values and failing health of the population in Barbados the role of cultural identity in the shaping and regaining autonomy of local food systems should be assessed. It is through the lens of cultural identity and vitality; development can be defined by those it is supposed to benefit.

Keywords

culture, identity, autonomy, agriculture, food security, food regime analysis, corporate food regime, foodways

Chapter 1 Framing the research question

1.1 Contextual Background

Discussing food culture in Barbados

First, it is believed that the Amerindians who fled Barbados upon the arrival of the English were responsible for the existence of cassava, scotch bonnet peppers, corn and sweet potato. Though the food culture has largely been influenced by English and African cuisine. The English came to the island as colonizers and the African population as slaves. Other major influences also come as a result of the arrival of other Caribbean people such as Guyanese and Trinidadians. The Indian population has expanded on the island and thus many traditional Indian cuisines have made their way into what is considered traditional Barbadian foods. There have therefore been many cultures that have influenced Barbadian diets.

The taste for foreign goods has deepened as the socio-economic standing of the citizens improved and is thus reflected in daily eating habits. As Beushausen et al states, “Non-perishable foods and products manufactured to be shipped to the Caribbean not only changed the diets of colonizers and colonized, but “became staples” (ibid.) and integral parts of their diets” (2014, p.15). This influx of manufactured goods has put a strain on the local manufacturing industry and the initiative referred to as “Buy Bajan” was birthed. Bajan is another term for Barbadian both referring to a native of Barbados. The ‘Buy Bajan’ initiative was established to combat the effects of trade liberalisation especially in the manufacturing industry by encouraging nationalistic buying (Knight, 2015, p.2). As Knight references, “The campaign message emphasised the ‘quality of Barbadian manufactures, the pride and dedication with which goods are made and the contribution of local manufacturing operations to employment in the country” (Barbados Private Sector Team, 2003, p.3 quotes in Knight, 2015, p. 4). Such an issue arises as through food Barbadians establish economic standing and foreign goods are sometimes deemed as better. Beushausen et al. reiterates this point quoting Halstead, “Both, in the Caribbean and abroad, branded goods that signify ‘the foreign’ are very popular and at times even demanded by the receivers. Through their consumption, a means to access distant places, oftentimes potential migration destinations, is created and social hierarchies are re/established on local and international levels” (cf. Halstead 2002 quoted in Beushausen et al., 2014, p.16). In essence, the buying preferences of locals were failing to support the industry. This government initiative came to an abrupt halt because, “At a 2008 World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting, the Colombian contingent raised an objection to the ‘Buy Bajan’ campaign on the grounds that it was ‘anti-competitive’ and in violation of Article III of the General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs (GATT)” (Knight, 2015, p. 4). The initiative was subsequently handed over to a Non-profit organization. Barbados has thus far failed in achieving autarchy in post-colonial times. This episode being an example of how free trade can impact local cultures and how resistance is quickly crushed by international treaties favouring powerful actors.

Day to day meals eating often varies depending on socioeconomic background. Women are traditionally the cooks in Barbadian households. Many of those in the upper class and middle class of the population have helpers and cooks which aid in at home cooking. There are many restaurants dotted around the island contributing to the island’s restaurant culture and thus the island is viewed as a culinary hub (Parkinson, 2011, p.18). The island being tourist destination is cognisant of tourist needs, thus this is reflected in the variety of restaurants on the island, “Tourism and a growing affluent society of locals have influenced the opening of a bevy of restaurants that are visited by all with gusto.” (Parkinson, 2011, p.27).

Cuisine of Japanese, Mediterranean, Thailand, Italian, Indian origin can all be found on the island. Also, the island has also been introduced to American fast food chains such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King, Subway and TGI Friday's, the last is no longer in operation. Another popular fast food option is Chefette which is a local company that dominates the market. Chefette has 15 outlets across the island. The food choices made by Barbadians have come into question since the health of the population has deteriorated. Parkinson states, "Barbadians have always been known for their centenarians coming from all walks of life and from all financial sectors. The problem now stands as to whether this reaching of such a ripe old age will continue" (2011, p.30). Parkinson notes that the prevalence of centenarians was due to food and diet. However, as the country has become more exposed to American cable television which advertises highly processed foods and fast food culture, things are now changing. The food culture in Barbados has been influenced and continues to be influenced by a plethora of external cultures.

Feeding Barbados: Discussing the island's dependency on food importation

The diversification of agricultural industry by the state is a relatively recent occurrence. The diversification of agricultural produce began 55 years ago with the decline of the sugar industry and after the country gained independence in 1966. Formally, because of Barbados' historical past of being a colony in the British Empire its agricultural sector was mainly based in the production of sugar and the main crop grown was therefore sugarcane. According to the ministry of agriculture web domain, "Until 1965, the Government's agricultural programmes were devoted almost exclusively to the challenges involved in producing and marketing sugar... In 1965, the post of Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer for Research was established with responsibilities for non-sugar crops and livestock production in support of the Government's policy to diversify agriculture." Since the 1980s, the contribution of sugar to GDP dropped by more than 50%, which provided the opportunity for diversification within the market, though competition for land with other non-agricultural sectors such as real-estate development was fierce (Richardson and Momsen, 2011, p.143). The agricultural sector has changed remarkable post-independence.

Currently, Barbados is an import-dependent country. According to the Forbes article, Agriculture Project Promises to Slash Barbados' Hefty Food Import Bill, "\$325 million in food imports accounts for approximately 90% of all domestically consumed food, with \$88 million of this expense being attributed to primary agricultural goods" (2019). Barbados is a water-scarce country. It is 431 km² in area. The percentage arable land was reported to be 16.28 % in 2016 by the World Bank collection of development indicators. Barbados heavily relies on the importation of fruits and vegetables. The country is mostly self-sufficient in tubers and roots. Food items that are currently heavily imported but are believed to be easily replaced by increased local production are onions, sweet peppers, carrots, cabbage, tomatoes and pumpkins. Presently, the agricultural industry faces challenges with quality and consistency (Ministry of food and Agriculture, 2018). The government of Barbados views the huge import bill to be a hindrance to progress. The sub-regional Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Dr Lystra Fletcher-Paul, who said Barbados' food import bill was simply too high. (2018). This huge import bill has been of great concern.

In response to its exorbitant import bill, The Barbados government is seeking to reduce food imports. To aid in achieving new goals set by the agricultural industry a program called The Farmers' Empowerment and Enfranchisement Drive (F.E.E.D) was established in April 2019. It is set to receive two million dollars in government funding to train participants and

initial infrastructural start-up cost. Also, additional funding is to be acquired through the Green Climate Fund in an effort to aid in the implementation of smart agriculture practices as stipulated under the programme (Ministry of food and Agriculture, 2018, p.22). Barbados' FEED program is tasked with increasing local agricultural production in an effort to reduce agricultural imports into the island. Amongst their main objectives are to increase the agricultural sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and to ensure long-term national food and nutrition security through improved access to safe and nutritious foods. The programme hopes to achieve targets such as, "enhanced food production, reduction in the cost of production, increased consumption and production of local agricultural produce and increased confidence in the agriculture sector as a viable source of employment" (Ministry of food and Agriculture, 2018, p. 10). In the policy framework for the F.E.E.D programme it is stated that, "Public procurement of locally produced food also provides an excellent opportunity for Government to promote and protect health, especially in light of widespread, chronic, nutrition-related illness such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, through the provision of fresh, local foods to public institutions such as schools, hospitals and prisons" Moreover, the program is expected to facilitate economic development, afford the government more purchasing power to further support the domestic agriculture sector, provide jobs and improve food security (2018, p.45). Amongst the programme's aims are to grow crops that is not traditionally produced on the island, to serve as suppliers for the tourism industry to lower the foreign expenditure on imported food needed and thus alliances are to be formed between the tourism and agriculture sectors. It is stated that, "the aggressive promotion of local cuisine in the hospitality sector will also be accorded priority" (2018, p.48). Furthermore, "an approach related to a production cooperative model involving shared resources and marketing efforts will allow participants to share in profits and will be more attractive, targeted at supplying large markets" (Ministry of food and Agriculture, 2018, p.20). In essence this programme intends to rejuvenate the agricultural industry in Barbados.

Aspects of the political economy concerning food culture in Barbados

In an effort to address the shifting food culture in Barbados, the economic and political atmosphere must be outlined to offer context. Culture does not exist in a vacuum but is influenced by the political and the economic. As Garth states that, "Because the caribbean was shaped economically, culturally and politically by the colonial plantation system, understanding the caribbean today requires a focus on political economy, national identity and resistance to hegemony" (2013, p.7). As mentioned above Barbados gained its independence in 1966 though independent many structural frameworks remained the same. In a report, "Study of the state of agriculture in the Caribbean" by the FAO and Caribbean Development Bank it is stated that, "In the years following independence, the Caribbean economies were still strongly influenced by institutional arrangements dating back to the pre-independence period. Agricultural development strategies and production would later be given preferential access to markets in the European Union. However, the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) ended the preferential access of Borrowing Member Countries (BMC) agricultural exports to markets in the European Union" (2019, p.xiv). Additionally, industrialization by invitation coined by economist Arthur Lewis in the 1950s was an operational mode of development implemented in Barbados and so, "in an effort to diversify the Barbadian economy, the post-Independence political directorate developed concessions to attract investment from First World industrial firms" (Madeley, 1999 quoted in knight, 2015).

Upon independence there had been a strengthening of the Caribbean community in efforts to strengthen their leverage. This birthed CARICOM, which operates in 15 member states and 5 associate members with the aim of promoting integration, innovation and resilience to foster “a Community where every citizen is secure and has the opportunity to realise his or her potential with guaranteed human rights and social justice; and contributes to, and shares in, its economic, social and cultural prosperity; a Community which is a unified and competitive force in the global arena” (caricom.org). Barbados is a founding member of CARICOM. Moreover, Barbados, “participates in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). Barbados has been a WTO member since 1995 and ratified the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in 2014 (to replace the ACP grouping and Cotonou Agreement)” (Shik et al., 2016, p.32). It is important to note the trade relationships present within the region as these agreements can be pertinent during the post-independence period (FAO AND CBD, 2019, p. xv). Barbados has bilateral CARICOM trade agreements with Colombia, Cuba, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela and must reciprocate the tariffs of those countries, with the exception of Venezuela (World Trade Organization, 2014)” (2016, p.32).

Additionally, because of the high food import bills the region is very susceptible to shifts in market prices. During the 2007-2008 global food crisis the food import dependent countries the price of products soared (FAO, 2019). Barbados is to become a republic denouncing the queen of England as its head of state, this is to be finalized by November 2021. As noted by Dame Sandra Mason, the United Kingdom governor general, “The time has come to fully leave our colonial past behind. Barbadians want a Barbadian head of state. This is the ultimate statement of confidence in who we are and what we are capable of achieving. Hence, Barbados will take the next logical step toward full sovereignty and become a republic by the time we celebrate our 55th anniversary of independence” (Dame Sandra Mason quoted in Wintour, 2020). The combination of these occurrences has played an integral role in shaping food culture.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

This research aims to explore the link between the evolution of foodways with external geopolitical forces in Barbados since the 1950s. It assesses the assertion that cultural consideration is essential to the development process via food practices. Culture has been situated as central to development by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the basis that development that pursues cultural consideration is perceived to be more suitable to cater to the distinctive needs of each country. This research also asks how external factors have shaped and continue to shape the island’s agricultural system by use of the food regime analysis, considering the link between culture and autonomy over food chains. This research is pertinent as the country evidently is making steps towards gaining more control over its food chains through increased agricultural production; in light of its exorbitant food bill.

1.3 Specific objectives

- a. To evaluate how food consumption patterns have changed in Barbados since the 1950s
- b. To evaluate the link between cultural identity and the development of the agricultural sector

- c. To assess the impact of globalization on changing food consumption practices and thus the nation's autonomy over its food chain

1.4 Main Research questions

To what extent are changes in food consumption in Barbados linked to broader political-economic forces, e.g. because of neoliberalism opening markets, GATT, corporate food regime, Western/US cultural imperialism? And what are the consequences in terms of cultural identity and autonomy over food chains?

1.5 Sub questions

- How has the food culture shifted in Barbados and what have been the major contributors to that shift?
- What is the relationship between cultural identity and the development of the agricultural sector?
- How can the corporate regime analysis be applied to Barbados?

1.6 Analytical Framework

1.6.1 Anthropology of food and identity politics

Food is inextricably linked to identity. Eating is an integral aspect of human life, the decisions made surrounding food are determined by geographic, social, economic and cosmological factors (Giovine and Brulotte, 2016,p.1). Food garners a feeling of belonging, as mentioned by Giovine and Brulotte, “Early in the development of the burgeoning discipline of food studies, social scientists have pointed to the importance of food in facilitating such dialectical constructions of categories of belonging and non-belonging” (2016, p.1). Giovine and Brulotte make mention of texts such as cookbooks, tourist guide books and outreach brochures which feature food traditions that aid in demarcating those who belong and do not belong to a particular cultural heritage. The practice of cultivating and eating food also fostered shared experiences amongst a community, “food...binds people together, not only through space but time as well, as individuals collectively remember past experiences with certain meals and imagine their ancestors having similar experiences. When this occurs, food is transformed into heritage” (Giovine and Brulotte, 2016, p.1). Once food is thought to be a characteristic of heritage then ethnic group identity is created and reinforced (Giovine and Brulotte, 2016, p.3).

Moreover, food has the ability to interact chemically with the human body and incite feelings of familiarity. In referencing the proverbial saying “you are what you eat” Giovine and Brulotte explain, “On the one hand, food biologically becomes part of us as we consume and digest it, breaking down into vitamins and minerals that are absorbed by, and circulate throughout, our bodies—catalyzing into the energy needed to live and carry out our individual lives. On the other hand, so-called ethnic food often has distinctive tastes, textures and smells that set it apart from that of the majority” (2016, p.5). They continue by referencing Bourdieu stating, “as Bourdieu famously revealed, the cultivation of preferences (or “taste”) is itself integral for denoting the “authenticity” of one’s membership in such groups” (1984: 68 quoted in Giovine and Brulotte, 2016, p.5).

The relationship between food, people and the land in which they inhabit cultivates conversation on food heritage and thus the choices people make concerning food. Giovine and Brulotte state, “It is this notion of being tied to the land in a sociobiological fashion, which manifests itself in one’s food preferences, that is at the heart of many food-based heritage claims. (2016, p.10)” Moreover, food heritage is deeply rooted in society and therefore manifests in numerous ways. The authors, Giovine and Brulotte continue by saying, “to see merely the commercial in both the heritage and food “industries,” particularly on the local scale, is to neglect to see how they act as mediators, bringing people together through economic exchange (Mauss, 2000), and how, as a foodstuff travels through foodways, and an object is transformed into heritage, it is used to indicate, explicate and replicate important ideological claims on identity, ownership, sovereignty, and value” (2016, p3). Food choice can be used as an ethnic marker, highlighting traditional culture and playing integral roles in constructing the identity of an individual and collective society.

1.6.2 Food regime approach

A food regime is a historical concept first conceptualized by Harriet Friedmann and Philip McMichael in the 1980s. The food regime is characterized by a stable set of relationships with periods of capital accumulation followed by periods of crisis. According to McMichael, “The ‘food regime’ concept historicized the global food system: problematizing linear representations of agricultural modernization, underlining the pivotal role of food in global political-economy, and conceptualizing key historical contradictions in particular food regimes that produce crisis, transformation and transition” (2009, p. 140). The food regime can be defined as, “a historical concept...it has demarcated stable periodic arrangements in the production and circulation of food on a world scale, associated with various forms of hegemony in the world economy. Subsequently, scholars have further specified and/or broadened the concept of the food regime to reinterpret its historical, social, ecological and nutritional dimensions” (McMichael, 2009, p. 281).

The food regime highlights the relationships within the global political economy. It analyzes the power dynamics present within it, power gained through industrial or technological control sometimes using development as a vehicle to gain and maintain power. In studying the international trade food relationships topics such as commodity chain analyses, fair trade studies and dependency analysis arise” (McMichael, 2009, p. 140). There have been two agreed upon food regimes namely the Settler-Colonial food regime and the Mercantile-industrial food regime. McMichael describes the first food regime (1870–1930s) as, “combined colonial tropical imports to Europe with basic grains and livestock imports from settler colonies, provisioning emerging European industrial classes, and underwriting the British ‘workshop of the world’” (2009, p. 141). This was a time of British hegemony; the British utilized the virgin soil of its colonies of settlement to produce its basic food needs. Along with its industrial sector, agriculture was used as a catalyst for development (McMichael, 2009, p. 141).” This was followed by a period of crisis at the start of World War I to the end of World War II. The wars interrupted trade and the world wheat market collapsed. Economic instability ensued and an ecological crisis manifested itself in the form of the Dust Bowl occurring in the United States (Schneider, 2019).

The first food regime as mentioned was marked by British hegemony and characterized by increased wheat production. McMichael defines the second food regime, (1950s–70s) based on, “re-routed flows of (surplus) food from the United States to its informal empire of postcolonial states on strategic perimeters of the Cold War” (2009, p. 141) The United States assumed control after the British offering surplus food produced as aid to secure loyalty against communism and to imperial markets” (McMichael, 2009, p. 141). The crisis

period after the second food regime was marked by debt and structural adjustment programs facilitated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These organizations have always been headed by countries of the Global North and the United States wields the most power within the organization (Schneider, 2019). The second food regime brought trade liberalization and tariff agreements.

The third possibly emerging food regime is a point of divergence for McMichael and Friedmann. McMichael postulates that the third regime has begun he coined it the 'corporate food regime' stating that it contains, "atavisms of the previous regime, and organised around a politically constructed division of agricultural labour between Northern staple grains traded for Southern high-value products" (McMichael, 2009, p.148). While Friedmann is not convinced that the third regime has emerged as yet, there has not been, "the full-scale (hegemonic) establishment of a food regime, with 'implicit rules' (framed by social forces) imprinted in the production and consumption of traded food" (McMichael, 2009, p.148). McMichael concludes his explanation of the concept of the food regime by stating, "In my view, the bottom line is that food regime analysis offers a historical method to examine the political and economic (and now ecological) relationships attending the production and circulation of food on a world scale" (2009, p. 140). Working within the perception that this is the third food regime, the characteristics of this time are concentrated land ownership, economies based on food and fuel, the emergence of large agribusiness corporations to name a few. McMichael states that, "the food regime under neoliberalism institutionalizes a hegemonic relation whereby states serve capital. This, to me, is the distinctive organizing principle, by which corporate rights have been elevated over the sovereign rights of states and their citizens" (2016, p.1).

1.7 Method and Methodology

The data was collected via an ethnography-oriented analysis, information was gathered from structured interviews with key cultural food activists, intergenerational life-history interviews, personal observations in grocery stores, textual documents, product wrappers, Barbadian cookbooks and advertisements. Life history interviews were conducted with a maternal lineage of a middle class family. This ethnographic method was chosen because of the personable approach that is needed to frame culture. To understand the intricacies of culture and social change though these accounts were not taken to apply to the whole of the country. The participants were chosen by sharing the research participants requirements on whatsapp by broadcast message which requested volunteers. This message was forwarded and added to whatsapp statuses to broaden the search. The chosen participants' ages were as follows, the grandmother being 73 years old, her daughter 50 years old and her daughter's daughter 21 years old. These ages were ideal to gather the generational information necessary. Women were chosen as my focus because in Barbados it is customary that women prepare meals in the household, though not always the case. The family in focus is of African descent, the largest ethnic group within the island accounting for about 92.4% of inhabitants (Barbados Integrated Government, 2018). The family could initially be considered working class but can now be categorized as middle class. This upward economic mobility is akin to the transition the island of Barbados as a whole has experienced in the past 70 years. The Life history interviews were conducted over four weeks, each session being an hour to an hour and a half where each participant recounted their eating habits from childhood, food choice and Barbadian food culture. It was important to speak to with participants in relaxed settings. I therefore met with each woman in the location of their choosing which was for two of them their homes and the other her hair salon located in front of her home. I made use of

recording instruments and the interviews were transcribed. Interviews were conducted with the manager of the Farmer’s Empowerment and Enfranchisement Drive programme, the head of the Barbados Manufacturing Association, cultural academics and activists. Cookbooks were used as they make available important information of what is deemed characteristically cultural food. Data Collection took place from August to early October though most information was collected predominantly in the month of August. Finally, the 1950s time period of focus was chosen because it coincides the end of World War II which saw the introduction of pertinent organizations which regulate food relations such as the Food and Agriculture organization, the establishment of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Moreover, it represents a time of transition for Barbados where a questioning of alliance with the British Empire would take place and subsequently independence followed in 1966. Also, during the 1950s and 1960s a growing concern towards the role of culture in development arose.

Table 1: List of interviewees

Name	Position	Date of interview
Monica	Life history interview participant (1st generation)	08/2020-09/2020
Liesa	Life history interview participant (2nd generation)	08/2020- 09/2020
Shaniah	Life history interview participant (3rd generation)	08/2020- 09/2020
Mr.Osmond Harewood	Manager – F.E.E.D. Programme	23/07/2020
Dr. Sonia Peter	Founder & executive director of biocultural education and research programme and Bioscience Barbados Ltd.	17/09/2020
Mr.Anderson Eversley	Agricultural Officer at Barbados Agricultural Management Company and practicing farmer	12/10/2020
Mr. Ron Hope	Local Farmer	18/09/2020
Dr. Marcia Burrowes	Lecturer in Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies	28/10/2020

1.8 Limitations & Ethical Risks

The ethical risk within this study was doing face-to-face interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic. All precautions were taken during the interview process, participants wore masks and each interview was socially distanced. During the time of the interviews there had been no local transmission or community spread within Barbados for weeks and so the risk level was low. Participants were made aware of their ability to opt out of the research should they feel discomfort of any kind, consent forms were also signed which provided them with relevant details about the study and what would be done with the information

thereafter. The limitations encountered were sourcing literature specific to Barbados as much literature speaks generally and the nation is grouped with the Caribbean and Latin America. Also, connecting with interview participants proved difficult. One participant became increasingly preoccupied with their response to COVID-19 at the UWI and thus found it difficult to correspond in a timely fashion. Attempts were made to interview members from the Barbados Manufacturing Association, however after much back and forth the head of the organization cited difficulty in making time to participate due to her increased workload. Additionally, I acquired the contacts of three cultural activists from the National Cultural Foundation however none of them responded to my emails or subsequent calls.

1.9 Structure of the Paper

The paper is separated into four chapters each answering the research questions in the order in which they appear. Each chapter begins with data collected from interviews or observations that link to findings. In chapter 1 titled, “Mine” I discuss my positionality, trace the shift in Barbadian food culture and establish food as central to identity formation. Chapter 2, “Ours” explores the circumstances under which culture matters for Barbadians while addressing the tensions between culture and development. Chapter 3 titled, “Theirs,” applies the food regime analysis to the current agricultural system in Barbados while using this analysis to assess the link between cultural identity and ownership over local food chains. The concluding chapter reflects on the prior chapters.

Chapter 2 : Mine

2.1 Positionality, Reflexivity & Situated Knowledge

Not only do researchers have to introspect, they are being called upon to highlight the specifics of their personal experiences to account for the particularities of their research findings. This is especially true when it comes to research conducted in the researcher's "home" (Wiederhold, 2015 quoted in Adu-Ampong and Adams, 2019, p.583)

Choosing to shop a little further away from my usual grocery store which is a large chain Trinidadian owned supermarket in an effort to support local farmers I excitedly arrived with the intent to make what I perceived to be responsible buying choices. I was made aware of this small shop in August the day I went to interview Mr. Osbourne of the Farmer's empowerment and enfranchisement drive (F.E.E.D), a program initiated by the government to encourage citizens to engage in farming. The shop was small and fully stocked. The freezers contained several meats and on the shelves were a proudly displayed array of locally produced seasonings, treats and their very own brand Carmeta's which offers gluten-free flours, cookies and cakes, desserts and seasoned meats. After greeting the sales attendants, I beelined to the frozen meats. The sliding cover on the freezer was difficult to open, one of the attendants came over to lift the glass cover stating it was tricky; access to the contents was difficult. I reached down into the freezer for the lamb. The local lamb chops were twice the price lamb chops imported from New Zealand which also contained double the amount of the local produce. I knew prices may have been higher, but the disparity took my pockets by surprise with the pressure from a stressed economy exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic locally reared lamb chops were out of my family's budget. Though I travelled to the small mini mart organized by the workers at the F.E.E.D program with the intent to buy local products armed with knowledge and the determination to buy local none made a difference. Attending the International institute Social Studies for my master's degree has made me even more attuned to the plight of my own people- Barbadians working within the agricultural sector constantly in competition with external markets. I have had a contentious relationship with what I considered Bajan food. This strained relationship was linked to my poor health, being denied as a child staple Bajan foods such as fishcakes, macaroni pie, sweet bread, bakes, pudding and souse and snacks like tea times or staple household juices produced by Pinehill, a local company that my mother deemed unhealthy because of its sugar content. Locally grown ground provisions such as cassava, eddoes and yams were not appetizing to me as a child and I was never forced to consume such produce. My identity came into question, jokingly being told by friends, "We should revoke your Bajan card!" I acquired a taste for foreign foods, deepened by being from a middle-class family that was able to travel often. It is because of this strained relationship with local Barbadian food that my interests peaked.

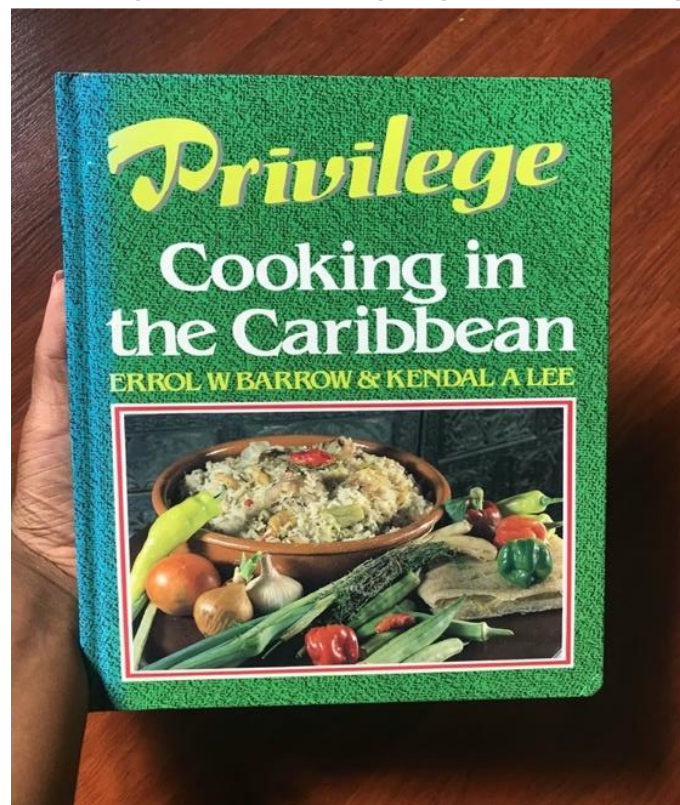
2.2 The role of food in the formation of the Barbadian identity

The politics of food consumption and eating are not reducible to contestations over nutrients and dietary recommendations, or even to material political economy, but are intimately entwined with questions of meaning, values, beliefs, and identity – what might broadly be termed 'food cultures' Leach et al (2020, p.11)

Through assessing the food consumed by Barbadians key aspects of cultural identity can be inferred. According to Raymond Williams culture can be defined in three different categories that of the ideal, documentary and the social. For the purposes of this work the social definition will be referenced. It states, “culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour” (1998, p.44). While identity is defined as, “who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others” (Cambridge dictionary). Food practices can reveal information about the history of Barbados, the economic atmosphere and social standing of inhabitants. Food practices create a sense of belongingness though intangible creates real lines of demarcation which in the long term creates cultures. To examine Barbadian food as a marker of identity I will discuss three commonly consumed foods on the island, these being Privilege, pudding and souse and Chefette. My intention is to focus on and use as a representation of cultural food (Privilege and Pudding and Souse) and foodways practices that have been passed down through generations stemming from West African countries because of Barbados’ ancestral history while also introducing food (Chefette) that has become prevalent in recent years.

Figure 2.1

Privilege cookbook featuring image of the dish Privilege



Source: Fieldwork

Privilege is a simple one-dish meal made of rice, okras, hot pepper, pigtail or salt beef, garlic, salted codfish or codfish, onions, margarine or butter or cooking oil. In conducting my research on Barbadian food, I stumbled across a cookbook co-authored by Errol Walton Barrow titled 'Privilege.'. As a child I had only heard great things about Mr. Barrow, first prime minister, national hero, known as the father of independence, his face forever imprinted on the 50-dollar bill. He was beloved by the people of Barbados. Being multifaceted just as the concept of culture Mr. Barrow decided to add cookbook author to his extensive list of accomplishments. My interest heightened and so I immediately sourced the book

which featured what at the time looked like some version of what I would call ‘cook up rice’ on the cover, I did not know what privilege was, even my mother questioned me about what dish the book cover showcased. Privilege is, “a Barbadian dish frequently cooked in agricultural areas...a meal of high nutritional value.” (Barrow and Lee, 1988, p.79). Similar to my own experience where friends have otherized me due to strained relationship with Barbadian food, Austin Clark advisor to Mr. Barrow at the time and author of ‘Pigtails and Breadfruit recounts and encounter between him and the Prime minister. Mr. Barrow of Mr. Clarke, ignorant to what Privilege was, “Look at the big professor from an Ivy League university up in Amurca, who doesn’t know what privilege is! You see what happens to our biggest brains when they leave here, to go away to North Amurca and learn a lot o’ foolishness? And then come back here and forget their roots?” (2000, p.59). These sentiments though said in jest resonated with my own experience having also studied abroad in North America and The Netherlands. Was I also a tree uprooted?

Dr. Marcia Burrowes, cultural lecturer at the University of the West Indies, also makes mention of the late Mr. Barrow saying, “he was unusual in a sense because we had a prime minister who could really cook. She then continues to speak to his encounters with the dish privilege saying, “In his campaigning in St. John the poorest of families would welcome him into his house and say Mr. Barrow would you like some privilege? and the privilege was if you were privileged enough to have salt fish. On the cover you see Privilege, he has elevated the working class and poor and nutrition we could question if it’s nutritious...” She described privilege as, “working class, poor people food.” Salt fish was food predominantly eaten by the enslaved; it was cheap and often the only source of protein available for slaves (Clarke, 2000, p.59). This encounter speaks to many aspects of cultural identity within Barbadian society. The consumption of salt fish is now a privilege for the working class. Moreover, the willingness of Barbadians to invite Mr. Barrow into their home, offering him a meal speaks to the importance of food to Barbadian hospitality and conviviality. This dish also speaks to past concepts of nutrition and the evolution of what is regarded as healthy. Salt fish is featured in a variety of traditional Bajan dishes such as fishcakes, Buljol and salt fish and Cou Cou. In paying close attention to the consumption of salt fish many aspects of identity are revealed.

Figure 2.2

pudding and Souse



Source: Visit Barbados (Facebook page)

Pudding and souse is steamed sweet potato and pickled pork respectively. This dish not surprisingly was featured in Privilege, Barrow and Lee say, “Pudding goes with souse like bacon goes with egg. Probably because of the amount of work involved, pudding and souse are usually eaten on Saturdays in Barbados. Traditionally made from pig’s head and trotters” ((Barrow and Lee, 1988, p.91). The souse is topped with pickle and often served with a side of breadfruit; pickle is cucumber based. Pickle consists of onions, hot peppers, cucumbers, limes, salt and sweet pepper. Barrow and Lee continue by saying, “People who sell this delicacy wake up very early on Saturday mornings, at four or five o’clock to be ready to sell by ten or eleven” (1988, p.90). I too have vivid memories of my late uncle, a chef by profession who served food from my grandmother’s home preparing for hours to sell this dish on Saturdays; on Friday evening he’d be surrounded by large bowls of grated sweet potato. Traditionally the Butcher would slaughter the animals on Saturdays (Clarke, 2000, p.25). These details though seemingly small shape cultural identity. The consumption of pudding and souse on a designated day is a cultural practice as well as the days in which animals are slaughtered, dictating actions that are repeated generationally. In his Barbadian Memoir Clarke describes the culture surrounding the purchase of pudding and souse stating, “Eating black pudding and souse on a Saturday is a social event, with certain protocols that go with it, certain rites and rituals. For example, if you buying the pudding and souse in a rum shop, you have to buy rum first. If you buying it from a pudding and souse woman, you first have to engage her in conversation. Axe she ‘bout her thildren (her children), or her boyfriend if you’s the same age as she.” (Clarke, 2000, p.149). As the story goes souse originated because slave owners would give the unwanted parts of the pig to their slaves, these unwanted parts were used to create a dish that would be eaten years later. Clarke describes this dish as, “the ultimate slave food. It is made from the parts of the pig that nobody else wanted or had the heart to eat” (Clarke, 2000, p.162). Colonialism has played a major role in shaping Barbadian

identity as Dietler states, “ it is reasonable to assert both that contemporary foodways and identities around the world are in large measure the product of a long history of colonial encounters and that, reciprocally, food has been a consistently prominent material medium for the enactment of colonialism” (2019, p.218-219). Though Barbados has seen the end of colonization these practices continue to permeate Barbadian food culture.

Figure 2.3
Chefette COVID-19 advertisement



Source: LoopNews

Chefette has arguably become a Barbadian staple. It was impossible to conduct any interview without mention of the fast food restaurant. Chefette is foreign-owned, the owners being from Trinidad. It is the largest restaurant chain in Barbados. On the company’s Instagram page its description reads, “An indigenous, family owned Restaurant chain in Barbados offering drive-thru, curb side pick-up, mobile order & pay and delivery services.” The restaurant is known for its fried chicken, rotis, burgers, pizza, ice cream amongst other common fast food meals. The ability to run a successful restaurant with such a meat-heavy menu reveals a shift in food culture from the days when the unwanted parts of the meat was what was served. It may also speak to the overall improvement in economic standing of the people. Reports by the FAO state that, “Meat consumption is clearly an important feature of the Barbadian diet: in Barbados the contribution of meats, poultry and offal to the energy supply is much higher than it is in either of its neighbours, and similar to that in the United Kingdom” (FAO, 2005). Liesa, 50-year-old mother of three stated, “when I had my children, I would carry my children to Chefette, but I won’t eat any. You know like occasionally I don’t believe in Chefette, sorry.” Chefette so central to Barbadian food practices when tasked with recounting Barbadian food practices. She felt the need to position herself and her family in relation to the fast-food restaurant albeit an outside positioning. The widespread acceptance of a restaurant like this showcases the assimilation to a once foreign culture. Dr. Burrowes mentions her mother’s willingness to eat Chefette and how there was a time when she would have refused. This rang true to me as I too have been raised with ideas on what should and

shouldn't be eaten on a Sunday, being hesitant to accept Chefette as appropriate Sunday food. These customs and beliefs are the practices that shape identity.

The food consumed and practices surrounding food can assist in tracing the shift in food culture; it thus serves as a marker of identity, culture and heritage. As evident by the aforementioned examples, details about the history of Barbadians can be gleaned through analysis of the food eaten, practices surrounding food reveal what is socially acceptable and cues about ethnic background of the consumer. Shifts in food culture reveal information about economic standing as evidenced by the ability of a fast-food restaurant to thrive within a community that may have otherwise rejected its existence previously under the guise of what is and is not culturally appropriate. The concept of culture is unstable but yet it has the power to drive decision making and form preferences.

2.3 Tracing the shift in Bajan food culture

Barbadian food culture as with any culture has undergone transformation overtime, being impacted by globalization, neoliberalization, unbalanced power relations and the political and economic environment. In this section I first address the broader political-economic forces that have influenced how local food practices have changed using information gathered from life histories interviews and structured qualitative interviews. Secondly, I explore my positionality and reflexivity within the socioeconomic structure discussed. Information acquired from the research revealed that most dominant political-economic forces that have permeated through the Barbadian society are US imperialism, neoliberalism and the general agreement on tariffs and trade. The 1950s, post world war II was a pivotal point in the history of Barbados and the world. For Barbados, it represented a time of transition where a questioning of alliance with the British Empire would take place and subsequently independence followed in 1966. Moreover, it marks the establishment of pertinent organizations which regulate food relations such as the Food and Agriculture organization, the establishment of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

In many interactions during this research the impact of US imperialism was alluded to or blatantly discussed as the fundamental reason for the change in Barbadian diets. When asked what has influenced the change in Barbadian food culture Dr. Peter answered, Well it's quite obvious, America she said and chuckled. She then continued by stating, "They fill our airways and they fill our visuals and our narratives and we throw away what is indigenous and we see the best of what is outside and not what is inside and that's such a big challenge that people want a Burger King burger as oppose to something you prepare at home- fishcakes, some salt fish and rice." As reiterated by Hanus, "One of the most important determinants is the development of the Internet, which is associated with better and easier communication among people from various places in the world, who can exchange experiences...consumers are manipulated by commercials, movies, electronic social networks, blogs and selected world information so they repeat presented patterns (Alden et al., 2006, Gulbicka & Kwasek, 2007 quoted in Hanus, 2018, p.171). Moreover, during the interview Dr. Peter continued to explain,

That was the culture feed yourself, everybody knew that they wanted to grow something in their backyard and also barter was healthy, and persons used to exchange what they had. My grandmother she had a number of friends from the more what we called rural districts and they would come down and bring what they had and she would give them what she had and there was never any big concern about payment, payment could be there or not there, it was

that healthy exchange of growing your own food, feeding yourself and also doing barter where possible. (17 September 2020, UWI Cave Hill campus)

The effect of US imperialism has been far-reaching as people begin to emulate images viewed through the media, the way they view themselves in relation to the food they eat begin to be modelled based on foreign ideals.

As people become more and more connected their diets have begun to share greater similarities as highlighted by Dr. Peter, this is a result of globalization. According to Masloch (2013), “globalization is a process integrating national and regional markets into one global market in which penetration and unification of economic, political and cultural spheres occurs” (Hanus, 2018, p.170). Hanus continues by saying of globalization, “...which integrate national and regional markets into one global market, which has been perceived as a main factor contributing to the homogenization of consumption and hence, the food behaviour of consumers” (Hanus, 2018, p.171). The arrival of fast food chains to the island has shifted the ways in which the people of Barbados particularly the youth interact with food and eating. Garth states that, “The rise of large transnational corporations and growth of individual and household purchasing has been associated with the erosion of tradition” (2013, p.2).

Neoliberalism has become a hegemonic force, assisted by increased interconnectivity amongst nations; it has been instrumental in the apparent stagnation of the agro-food system in Barbados and thus the diets of its people. Neoliberalism generally speaking is, “a pervasive and increasingly global ideology, associated with the favoring of free market competition and private property rights, reduction or abolishment of government intervention and expenditure, and valuation of individual “freedom of choice.” (Carlquist and Phelps, 2014). According to a report conducted by the Healthy Caribbean Coalition,

From a global perspective, developed countries’ heavy subsidisation of their agricultural sectors makes it challenging for local agricultural products (often healthier options) to compete. This is compounded by the fact that, although the WTO Agreement on Agriculture does provide some limited room for provision of subsidies to their agricultural sector to promote production of local, healthier food options, most developing countries, including those in CARICOM, do not have the financial resources to take advantage of this flexibility (38) (2017, p.18).

In 1975 the region’s first agricultural policy was introduced by CARICOM called the Regional Food Plan (RFP) aimed at ensuring basic needs were met and self-sufficiency improved (Axline, 1984 quotes in Thompson, p.93). These efforts heavily, steeped in the food security framework, never came to fruition due to lack of funding and political support. Moreover, structural and institutional hindrances played a role in its failure. Thompson states, “Multilateral trade instruments signed in the 1970s and 1980s, such as the Lomé Convention (1975) and the Caribbean Basin Initiative (1982), worked in opposition to many of the proposed objectives of the RFP, by encouraging the expansion and strengthening of traditional extra-regional agricultural export sectors, and reinforcing metropolitan links inherited from colonialism” (2019, p.93). These global interactions have indisputably affected Barbadian foodways and culture; “the changing consumption patterns and increasing health problems associated with the new diets are considered related to the recent trends in trade policy” (Dell’Aquila, 2007, p.32). In Barbados, trade liberalization has affected the diets because of increased availability, accessibility and affordability to foreign foods creating a shift from a more plant-based diet to a highly processed one (Healthy Caribbean Coalition, 2017, p.17). Neocolonialism and trade liberalization served to increase food insecurity as sovereign food networks were weakened (Thomas-Hope and Jardine-Comrie, 2007 quoted in Thompson, 2019, p.94).

The beginning of US imperialism, neoliberalist ideologies and free trade agreements precede me; these agendas were put into motion prior to my existence but they have had a marked influence on how my identity as a middle-class millennial black Barbadian woman has been shaped. Many food practices from cultures that I do not claim as my own do not feel alien to me. I have had many encounters afforded to me through development. The circumstances have changed. I belong to both the global market and the local market (Strizhakova and Coutler, 2019). Notably, because of the moment in which I came of age, my value as a woman was not tethered to my skills in the kitchen as my grandmother's would have been. I could be and consume anything. I was not required to take in rituals surrounding food as generations before me. I could resist learning how to prepare cultural meals without causing an uproar, in part because of my economic standing and the increased freedom women had. I am privy to many foreign foodways, weekly on the island I eat meals that find their origins in Asia, Europe and North America. The bombardment of foreign cultures is my everyday lived experience through media. As a child I watched American tv channels and as an adult I spend more time than I should on social media platforms. Neoliberalism has shaped me; I am a product of the increased interactions between the global and the local. I find conflict within myself because I believe I am not firmly rooted in my own country as my forefathers were. Though my nationality affords me insider status and authority to speak on local Barbadian foodways, I often have the feeling that I stand on the outside of my research because of my upbringing. I admittedly aspire to foreign ideals, foreign education, foreign food and foreign ways of life. Ergo, what I define as "mine" is constantly under a process of metamorphization.

Barbados being a small country there is great difficulty associated with combating the driving force that is neoliberalism. As I watch Barbadian food culture adjusts due to the interaction with the global market, I endeavour to question how this filters down into the relationship between cultural identity and development. Being cognisant that it is through food amongst other factors that collective identity is shaped.

Chapter 3 : Ours

3.1 The National Dish

Cou cou¹ and flying fish is the national dish of Barbados made of cornmeal and okra. The dish is said to gain its origins in West Africa. Flying fish was plentiful in Barbados waters thus giving Barbados the name, “The land of flying fish.’ The flying fish is an important emblem for the nation as it is featured on the Barbados Tourism Authority logo. It is referred to as the flying fish because, “it can glide considerable distances out of the water by using its four “wings” (pectoral and ventral fins)” (Elias et al., 2018, p.49). In the chapter, “Flying Fish ‘all-a-penny’: Representations of Barbadian culture Burrowes, lecturer in Cultural studies at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill campus states that there is evidence that indigenous populations consumed flying fish prior to the arrival of the English. She then makes mention of the origins of the fishing industry on the island referencing words by historian Pedro Welch that, “The evidence points to multi-sourced origin of the fishing industry in Barbados. Three strands of development rest in the possible convergence of the three contributors- the European, the Amerindian and the African” (Burrowes, 2016, p. 185). Burrowes states, “The flying fish has been elevated as very integral to Barbadian cultural identity. Caught and consumed by the inhabitants of the island, the fish that ‘flies’ became a principal indicator of identity (2016, p.184). Moreover she then reiterates the importance of the flying fish to Barbados by quoting Cumberbatch and Hinds, “While the flying fish is not unique to Barbados’ waters, it has nevertheless generated a sense of possessive national ownership as if to say it is only we own. So prized was the flying fish that it was named the national dish of Barbados, was incorporated into the national dish of cou-cou and flying fish, and its motif adorns the dollar coin and monetary bills as well as other national and commercial logos” (2016, p.119 quoted in Burrowes, 2016, p. 195). While discussing food culture with Dr. Burrowes she reiterates the importance of cornmeal to the people of Barbados and continues to trace the history of coucou saying,

Generationally there definitely was a tradition, a created, reenacted tradition of making coucou one of the centres of Barbadian identity possibly because out of necessity, these people did not have money, all you need for cou cou is cornmeal and water and a wooden spoon and nuff (a lot of) patience. Notice the elites aren’t taking part in cou cou and if they are their maids or servants are cooking it for them, the elites would have been white of European descent or persons of African descent who would have made it to the middle classes who may or may not choose to eat the food practices (28 October 2020, via Zoom).

¹ See recipe in appendix

Figure 3.1
Cou cou and flying fish



source: Pinterest.com

One afternoon I met with the youngest of the three women I was conducting a life history interview with, we sat on the floor of her living room by the door to feel the light breeze because of the sweltering heat as she was recounting her childhood memories. During the interview, her brother interjected confidently asking why I wasn't interviewing him, he then directed a question towards me Cara do you think our culture is being passed down? To which I shrugged being sure to not share my personal thoughts or feelings but hoping he would continue with his, then he looked to his sister and asked, "Shaniah, can you make cou cou?" to which she replied, "no" and he replied, "Exactly." So as to prove his point that what is deemed quintessentially cultural is not being effectively passed through generations. Though this one interaction does little to prove the erosion of culture. I too didn't know how to prepare cou cou, neither had I watched an older woman prepare cou cou. Once learning of this during our interview Dr. Burrowes readily began placing me within my own research stating, "The 50s, 60s, 70s cou cou would have been very prevalent, the 80s that is the time global food practices are showing up, the pizza, hamburgers, the hot dogs. When you come into your own you're born in 1995 so notice you've missed the entire 20th century, you're coming into your own in the 21st century by which time several food practices and ways have become part and parcel of the everyday, to become part of the everyday younger generations are moving away." The erosion of cultural practices has been a growing concern. However, it became clear that it is not as simple as renewing old foodways to secure the future, navigating identity to meet developmental needs can be challenging.

During the fourth and final interview conducted with Liesa, an older woman looking to be in her 70s entered the salon, there was a mix up in scheduling on the part of Liesa, we

had only been about 30 minutes into our session and so Liesa asked her client to wait for a little before starting on her hair. As Liesa continued giving detailed accounts of her family's eating habits and her opinions on Bajan food her outspoken client kept interjecting with her own opinions, I could see Liesa was visibly annoyed while I was slightly entertained by the interaction. Her client was strong minded even insisting that Liesa was giving me, “Wrong information” when she had opposing views. When the topic of macaroni pie, a baked dish made with macaroni, cheese, evaporated milk, ketchup, mustard, onion and egg though recipes vary from family to family strong feelings were expressed. Growing up I remember people jokingly saying macaroni pie and chicken was the unofficial national dish of Barbados because of the frequency in which it is eaten.

Figure 3.2
Macaroni pie and fried flying fish



Source: Barbados.org

While Liesa was expressing her thoughts she said, “Macaroni pie is not really Bajan you know.” The client said as she had said before to interject, “Not crossing you though, you kidding me!” To which Liesa replied, “Pasta is not Bajan. Pasta is not Bajan.” Her client swiftly replied, “Macaroni and cheese, macaroni pie is a Bajan dish. Macaroni is not Bajan but macaroni pie is a Bajan dish.” To strengthen her argument Liesa addresses the timeline for the introduction of pasta to the population saying, “Pasta come up here in the latter years.” The older lady makes reference to a similar American dish quickly differentiating between what she deemed ours and what was theirs saying, “Not crossing you but today de macaroni and cheese today, the macaroni pie today. I don’t eat it cause it is that mac and cheese from America!” Exacerbated by the disagreement Liesa says, “Alright Earnesta! Time going down here.” Her client persisted with her narrative firmly asserting, “But that is not a Bajan dish, Wuh they does do is not a Bajan macaroni pie.” Liesa then attributes the emergence of this dish to the increased ability of more Barbadians travelling to the United States, she says, “It’s not Bajan, I only learn about macaroni pie probably when I was a teenager, you hear about mac and cheese when de people go way, Bajans really start flying on a regular. Liesa’s client, determined to say the last words, exclaims, “You getting mix up mac and cheese is something different. My girl she giving you wrong advice mac and cheese is America mac and cheese in de box daz wuh i trying to tell you. Macaroni pie is when we get de pasta and de am New Zealand cheddar cheese and we make OUR macaroni.” This interaction highlights the tension between ideas of how cultural food should be defined. Liesa defines cultural

food as that which can be produced in Barbados and thus macaroni pie with its largely imported ingredients does not fit that definition while her client defines cultural food based on how key ingredients though not produced on the island can be transformed into something uniquely Bajan. This interaction served to showcase the challenge with defining cultural food, it is a subjective concept.

In an effort to ascertain greater clarity on what is to be included and characterizes Barbadian cuisine I took this tension with me and noted discrepancies in thought. During the interview conducted with Dr. Peter she referenced indigenous numerous times in relation to foods and plants. After she had finished her thoughts I asked, In What does indigenous mean? To which she replied,

There is evidence of our Native Americans and then the imported Africans and subsequent persons some Irish and then the indentured laborers after so it is a melting pot although the percentage of African influence is high in terms of what we do so when we say indigenous as it relates to people you know based on that population created back then we have to claim that as indigenous and when we speak of our plants and foods we have to make reference again to what was growing naturally here at that period and still is and not the recently brought in things that do not necessarily have the genetics for our environment but we bring them in and they still do well, so when I make reference to indigenous, what is now inherent to our space both in terms of our population and our foods. (17 September 2020, UWI Cave Hill campus)

What constitutes as “Ours” comes into question, the heterogeneity of Barbadians and thus their food culture is revealed readily in everyday conversation. The ambivalence on the matter on what cultural food is, how it should be defined and who should script its definition is amongst many other issues when delving into the discourse on culture and its role in development.

3.2 Tension: Culture & Development

Cultural identity has been deemed an important factor that should drive development to ensure its appropriateness for the lives of the people it intends to benefit, however this view is not shared by all. It is essential to note that, “the culture of a people is not static but constantly evolving under the influence of both internal and external elements” (Valdes and Stoller, 2002, p.35). Culture and identity are elusive concepts. As shown in the above excerpt what is believed to be ours as a culture is not fixed and etched in stone. What is determined to be ours speaks to the realization of a strong collective identity however identity is complex and multidimensional and thus using such a lens is fraught with execution challenges. Garth, a sociocultural and medical anthropologist specializing in the anthropology of food states that, “Not only is there heterogeneity within groups, but also individual identity is not fixed and can change over time and space. Individual identity may be fragmented, multi sided and present in different ways in different settings” (2013, p.7). Firstly, I will discuss the argument proposed by UNESCO for the importance of culture in the development process and thereafter I will seek to bring to light opposing views which highlight the dissension between culture and development.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been a driving force in the call for cultural consideration in development stating that, “Culture in all its dimensions, is a fundamental component of sustainable development...culture is a powerful contributor to economic development, social stability and environmental protection” (pg. 2, 2010). According to the text, *Problems of cultural values in the contemporary world* produced by UNESCO, culture and development should be intertwined and thus development must reflect the culture of the people. The conversation on culture as pertinent to development and its conception was formally introduced in 1982 of the first world conference on cultural policies by director at the time, Ahmadou Mahtar M'Bow, he stated,

If each society has particular dispositions and specific aspirations tied to its culture and history, in order for these to flourish the cultural wisdom inherited from the past must be brought to life. If nowadays things frequently escape human control, perhaps it is because we have let economic laws get away from cultural goals. Finally, if today's international relations seem so far from the demands of individuals and the collectivity, perhaps it is because the specifications on which these relations have been constituted-cultural homogenization and economic inequality-are no longer appropriate to the demands of multiple foci of cultural affirmation and of independent decision centers. (UNESCO, 1982)

Therefore, conceiving the idea that each country should develop plans that correspond to their cultural values and thus practice endogenous development (UNESCO, 1983, pg.6). In essence, development should cater not only to material advancement but to the spiritual and moral needs of communities to supply fulfilment of the self in its totality. Development should not come in the form of coaxing communities to conform to external ways of living but it should be an avenue through which freedom is found in protecting their dignity and way of life (UNESCO, 1983, pg. 6).

Additionally, Valdes and Stoller, economist and coordinator respectively state that, “...Culture is not, then, an instrument of material progress and objective of development, understood as the realization of human existence in all of its forms and extensions." Culture must be taken not as a complementary or ornamental component of development but as part of the essential fabric of society and therefore as its greatest internal force (2002, p. 34). Culture should therefore not be thought of as simply an added layer to consider because it is so tightly interwoven into the fabric of each society, meaning people cannot be separated from culture.

The consideration of culture is therefore a form of respect- respect for values, beliefs, experiences, attitudes and knowledge (Valdes and Stoller, 2002, p. 36). Moreover, Valdes and Stoller argue that, “Yet another flawed approach to the theme of the relationship between culture and development is that which limits the role of the explicitly cultural sectors (artisanry, fine arts, community culture, artistic training, cultural heritage, cultural tourism, etc.) in the processes and strategies of development” (p.35, 2002). Therefore, stating that a cultural lens should be utilized in all aspects of development so as to cater to the people of the nation and links between culture and development must be sought out. UNESCO makes the claim that development that engages with culture allows people to transverse the current system highly influenced by globalization on their own accord thus regaining some autonomy (2010, p. 9). Moreover, UNESCO addresses the move from the traditional to the modern, saying that though modernity may lead to improvements in daily life, it should be birthed through cultural consideration and not imported ideologies and frameworks (2019, pp. 5-6). In essence, boundaries should not be set for where culture can be applied, it permeates through every aspect of society. Through development positive change can be achieved but this only occurs once cultural consideration is a part of the process.

Conversely, using culture as a tool has been viewed as idealistic and its implementation difficult. The first problem arises in the defining process. Jamaican-born cultural theorist Stuart Hall proposes two definitions, the first, “in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (1990, p.223). The second definition he asserts is based on acknowledging difference and flexibility within groups and individuals in the present, past and future. Hall states, “We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness about one experience, one identity’, without acknowledging its other side- the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean’s uniqueness” (1990, p.225) Additionally he says of cultural identity that, “it is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous play of history, cultural and power” (1990, p.225). An issue so fundamental makes for an unstable foundation upon which to build development. Beek et al. state that, “The problem, however, is that cultural relativism is basically an abdication of ethical judgment: a negation of choice that fits well into a situation of non-intervention and existential distance. In as far as the focus on culture implies relativism, a conceptual and practical tension between culture and development arises” (1995, p.269). It is therefore difficult to separate oneself from your own cultural identity and to make judgment in the name of development. Despite challenges, “Caribbean scholars and food scholars alike have connected local foodways- the cultural, social and economic practices relating to food production and consumption- with efforts to define and mobilize national identity” (Derby 1998; Wilk 2006a quoted in Garth, p.7). This mobilization is utilized to catalyze development goals.

As it pertains to tensions between food culture and development within Barbados and the region, people are constantly being bombarded by external ways of life and living, this influence cultural norms. For example, the acquisition of foreign taste which influences local food culture presents issues for autonomy over food chains and deepens the need to continually import food (Thompson, 2019, p. 91). Specifically, culture within the Caribbean can be difficult to pinpoint because many islands such as Barbados lack an indigenous population as they had been wiped out by colonial invaders (Thompson, 2019, p.94). With a largely transplanted population and shifting ideas of what the term culture means problems arise, food pathways are intermixed. As mentioned by Leach et al., “Whereas early work might have reproduced views of culture which are static and a-political, and views of politics which are binary, pitting one culture against another (or local vs. global, traditional vs. modern), more recent work, informed by these approaches, emphasises the significance of people’s own agency in enacting and shaping cultural practices, as well as the politics of knowledge and of representation in delineating cultural boundaries” (2020, p.12). They then link the fluidity of culture to how the imbalance of power whether it be as a result of colonial legacies or neoliberal regimes aid in reducing the food pathways available to those subject to such relations and therefore new cultural preferences can be shaped by power (Leach et al., 2020, p.12). This restructuring of what culture means shakes the entire foundation upon which ideologies which suggest culture should play an essential role in development is built, it leaves countless questions unanswered as to practical implementation.

In an effort to make cultural considerations that would be appropriate to serve the economic, social and environmental needs of the nation the link between culture and development should be at the very least explored. I attempt to navigate this apparent essentializing of culture for economic gain, social flourishing and environmental protection while being weary of its challenges.

3.3 Why does culture matter to Barbados: Establishing the link between food, cultural identity autonomous development

A return to roots has been positioned as the way forward to build a healthier relationship with food in an effort to better the lives of Barbadians. Consumption practices are an indication about many aspects of our lives, cultural identity being one of them. Hanus states that, “Consumption is a process that items such as food, non-food items and services are consumed. Its main purpose is to meet human needs (Piekut, 2009), but it should be noted that nowadays it has also become an important manifestation of the standard of living, the criterion of structuring society, as well as the way of communicating the identity of consumers” (2018, p.171). Though not explicitly asked during the interview process there were a number of reasons why the preservation of what each participant defined as cultural food was positioned as necessary. The preservation of cultural identity was deemed imperative for conservation as it would improve the health of the population, foster greater community values and preserve local food culture critical for economic development and therefore sustainability. It is based on these reasons that I argue that though an intricate and herculean task cultural identity should be consulted in agricultural development while still being careful to avoid the romanticism of former cultural practices and being cognizant that the transformation of culture is inevitable.

Non-communicable diseases have been a growing concern for Barbados, returning to foods eaten by past generations is often positioned as the answer to restoring health. “NCD are estimated to account for 83% of all deaths” (World health organization, 2018). Dr. Dyer, Associate Professor in the Department of Clinical Foundations at Ross University states that “Childhood obesity is a challenge here in Barbados and across the world and is linked to diet and environment” (Barbados Today, 2020). When asked about the role of culture in agriculture Mr, Harewood, head of the F.E.E.D program made connections between culture, health and agriculture saying,

Those diseases (referencing Non-communicable diseases) those are the real negative aspects of the culture, those are something you'd think happen to you by a certain age, now we have children in primary school that are diabetics but what they need to eat the same local stuff that is going to keep them correct in terms of their diet and we're going to have to push more of our stuff and it's going to have to be a conversation with the farmers the nutritionists out there in relation to what we need to produce for our people and their survival and our food security...centurions, that's basic food that they lived off of. (23 July 2020, F.E.E.D Headquarters).

Meanwhile agricultural economist Anderson Eversley echoed these sentiments saying,

As you know we have a massive problem with culture and obesity with chronic disease where a lot of our population doesn't eat that well I believe that the ministry of culture should have a stake in that, we have to go back to our cultural roots, to where we came from and I believe that in the future we are going to see a more rebalancing of those three ministries (referencing the ministry of agriculture and food security, ministry of creative economy and culture and ministry of health and wellness) because ultimately all have to strive towards one goal and the goal is to make Barbados self-sufficient, make us eat our own foods, cut down our import

bills, also our ballooning health bill so I believe there must be a synergy between those three sectors (12 October 2020, Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. Office).

Additionally, trade policies have been associated with the declining health of the region, “In the Caribbean, half of CARICOM countries import more than 80% of what they consume, fuelling dramatic changes in diet towards greater consumption of processed foods (leading the top five food imports in the region contributing to an ‘epidemic’ of obesity and diet-related NCDs” (Healthy Caribbean Coalition, 2017, p.6). Trade Liberalization has caused the food that is acquired by Caribbean nations like Barbados changing diets from predominantly traditional plant-based and home-cooked meals to processed foods (Healthy Caribbean Coalition, 2017, p.6). The 2015 UNDP Investment Case for NCD Prevention and Control in Barbados found that while Bds\$64 million was spent on the treatment of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, the economy may be losing as much as Bds\$145 million annually due to missed work days, low productivity and reduced workforce participation (Healthy Caribbean Coalition, 2017, p.10). This not only is devastation for the population but comes at a great cost to the government. Amongst the list of sustainable development goals is goal number 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, the disconnection from cultural food and thus identity threatens that goal. Furthermore, the rise in NCDs present challenges to achieving sustainable development goal 1 which is no poverty. According to Healthy Caribbean Coalition, “from a human perspective, the decreased household income coupled with increased costs associated with the loss of breadwinners in households due to premature deaths or disabilities from NCDs increases the financial burden on households...Higher household health care expenditure also affects the ability of households to save and accumulate assets” (2017, p.11). The trickle-down effect of a move away from traditional eating has had grave consequences.

In reference to things of the past, changing culture around food in Barbados also meant a shift in community values in which sharing was commonplace. Mr. Eversley reflected on his youth saying,

I remember when I was a boy the neighbours used to share like if I grow a tomato and you grow a potato we would exchange and I think that is where we need to go back to so that under difficult circumstances which we are experiencing with Covid and also the decline in the economy and the loss of jobs we have to go back to what we did traditionally because it worked, neighbours looking out for one another, sharing and those simple concepts they can help us achieve food and nutrition security (12 October 2020, Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. Office).

Dr Peter also recalls similar practices saying, “Barter was healthy, persons used to exchange what they had again all these experiences as a child. My grandmother had a number of friends from what we would call the more rural districts and they would bring down what they had, and she would give them what she had and there was never any big concern about payment. It was that healthy exchange.” These practices signify community values facilitated by food and nourishes the social aspect of sustainability where people are more connected. Additionally, plants indigenous to the island can be considered a part of cultural heritage. In placing value in those plants and foods grown from the soils in Barbados the diversity of plant species are then better preserved and new pathways can be explored while conserving the biodiversity of the environment. Dr. Peter, a natural chemist and executive director of biocultural education and research program, stressed the importance of plants that are culturally important to Barbados during the interview.

The cultural identity cultivated by Barbadians is unique, it is part of what brings visitors to our shores. Tourism is the island’s main income earner. Tourism does present issues of

cultural erosion however as the current main income earner to a resource poor nation such as Barbados, the link between tourism, culture and advancing agriculture have been explored. In the policy framework it is shown that foods grown locally have a ready market. As noted by the F.E.E.D Policy Framework, “Locally produced fruits and vegetables have the greatest potential to replace imported produce because of high local demand, high perishability during imports, ability to be grown locally, competitive cost of production in some cases, and their suitability for production, even on small farms” (2018, p.48). Garth argues that “For the most part, tourism has done little to develop or improve the everyday lives and food consumption practices of those who must live and work in the Caribbean” (2013, p.7). While Richardsan-Ngweny and Momsen state that Caribbean tourism is based on unequal power relations that are manifested at several geographical scales. They continue by saying, “at the local level between largely poor, black, rural hosts and rich, white, urban guests. Such inequalities have encouraged a focus on studies of Caribbean tourism and its (often negative) impact on local cultures and socio-economic benefits” (Bryden 1974; Patullo 1996 quoted in Richardson-Ngwenya and Momsen, 2011, p.141). The negative implications of the tourists-hosts power imbalance have been studied however it is believed that positives can be derived stemming from pride in local cuisine being able to enhance the agricultural industry and protect indigenous ways of preparing and eating food. An example of this is seen in the Caribbean agro-industries where tourists are able to get acquainted with local dishes and thus a market is created for souvenirs in the form of food and beverages (Richardson-Ngwenya and Momsen, 2011, p. 143). Bond et al. reiterate similar thoughts stating that an appreciation for cultural goods has been instrumental in economic progress. They state, “The celebration of ‘difference’, which has been the counterbalancing obverse of the homogenising thrust of globalisation, has presented to smaller nations, as well as regions, the opportunity to incorporate their cultural distinctiveness as an important element in their economic development strategies (Keating and Loughlin 1997: 3). Hence, elements of cultural identity which may previously have been considered as brakes upon economic success are now consistent with socioeconomic vibrancy” (Keating 1997: 32; Ray 1998: 5 quoted in Bond et al., 2003, p.373). Culture is marketable relying on cultural markers especially food that can be grown or produced on the island aids in creating an economically sustainable market, this specialty of sorts provides greater opportunity for ownership and autonomous decision making.

In essence appealing to cultural identity through food it is possible for a more sustainable² agricultural industry to be cultivated. In recognizing the fundamental role, the practice of growing and the experience of eating plays in the daily lives of Barbadians. In eating what has been categorized as Barbadian cultural foods the threat of non-communicable diseases can be alleviated. Therefore, lessening the steep health care costs so that funds may be reallocated to other industries to further better the lives of Barbadians. Moreover, the culture that surrounds local food fosters community where people are more readily willing to share and appreciate the biodiversity present on the island. In times of crisis such as now during the COVID-19 pandemic, strong communities’ bonds are necessary for the collective society to thrive in the midst of economic downturn. In using food culture as the lens through which development is viewed there is possibility for progress that encompasses economic, social and environmental sustainability, the buzzword of development.

² See Herman Daly (2005) for discussion on sustainability

Chapter 4 : Theirs

4.1 Politicizing the Irish potato

The Irish potato is a foreign settler here, here in my home, Barbados. It has solidified its place in the diet of the people. As a child every week the Irish potato was allowed to showcase its versatility as mashed potato, shepherd's pie, scalloped potatoes, curried in roti, in bajan soup, as potato salad or as chips which are the same thing as fries which is the same thing as crisps, they're all called chips on this island. Every canteen at every school at every stage of my education featured the Irish potato, sometimes also referred to as the English potato but it is all the same.

Unprovoked, Ron Hope, as we sat beneath a large tree on a picnic table a few meters away from his office located on the farm he manages, discussed his opinions on the Irish potato, the settled foreigner. It was a hot sunny day, roosters and children alike coming close enough to cure their curiosity but never close enough to interrupt. During the conversation he gestured to the large expanse of land detailing all of what he grew on these lands. Mr. Hope, wearing the hat of both a consumer and a producer of food made reference to alternate locally grown produce that could act as replacements for Irish potatoes adding his disdain for the potato as a staple in his and his families' diet,

...Even our snacks, let our snacks be cassava snacks, let our chips, chafette is the biggest thing maybe on the island, they should be doing sweet potato wedges in my opinion, they should be doing breadfruit chips, cassava chips...why are we going all the time to English potatoes, Irish potatoes which are not produced on the island and making that a staple for our families, that's my personal opinion. I hate it, I don't buy English potatoes, I don't buy English potatoes. (18 September 2020)

He echoed similar sentiments of the current prime minister The Rt. Hon Mia Amor Mottley a few months prior as she urged Chafette, a Trinidadian owned fast food chain to introduce and a staple cuisine in Barbadian diets to introduce breadfruit. The company recently added sweet potato wedges to their menu seasonally. She states,

Part and parcel of being a successful global brand means that what you offer in addition to style of management and the family environment that you have created, that on the product offering it needs to reflect what can be grown in those lands out there....At this very time when those very items have proven to be critical for the healthier lifestyles of our people then we need to see how we can roast breadfruit chips instead of frying English potato chips alone (2020).

She continues being sure to not alienate the potato saying, "There is a place for English potato chips, but we need to find a place for breadfruit and sweet potato chips.... We need to continue that process of indigenisation." (Barbadostoday.bb, 2020). This appeal to consider homegrown, culturally specific food items was made on the basis of health, concerning what she refers to as "a crisis among the population with chronic NCDs" that is non-communicable diseases. However, Mr. Hope's battle with the Irish potato was on the premise of expense and sensibility, as a farmer keen on finding alternatives to the beloved Irish potato that could be grown on local soil he stated, "I tried about twenty different types of sweet potatoes here and I believe there is a sweet potato here that we could mesh or take it close

to an Irish potato right?...Jamaica is self-sufficient in Irish potatoes. Why haven't we decided to plant English potatoes?"

He then gestured to me saying, "You're studying in a place that sends us most of our Irish potatoes, a lot of the potatoes come out from the same Netherlands." Maybe they have a potato down there that we can grow here, force our farmers to grow it locally...they produce the seeds for Jamaica, they send seed and Jamaica purchases. He reiterates that Jamaica does not import any potatoes, only thing they import is seed material and they produce their own Irish potatoes, it's a different texture, a different quality because of the soil type." The population of Barbados demands the Irish potato, it seemingly belongs to Barbados as much as it belongs to the Irish. The "Irish" potato is as foreign to Ireland as it is to Barbados, it was "introduced to Europe from South America (Salaman 2000 quoted in Iomaire and Gallagher, 2009, p.6). It first made its arrival in the sixteenth century, at a time of famine caused by war. The climate had proven ideal for its reproduction (Iomaire and Gallagher, 2009, p.6).

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security policy framework for the establishment of F.E.E.D, Irish potatoes is among the top imported products, it is stated that during 2017 approximately 10,000 tonnes of potatoes valuing \$6.7 million dollars was imported (2018, p.15). In the policy framework it is stated that, "the analysis suggests that Irish potato is the crop with the greatest potential for growth, in terms of acreages in production. This is however a crop that is not presently produced in Barbados and agronomic research would therefore need to be conducted into the production of this crop" (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2018, pg. 5). The document also states, "In an effort to have the biggest impact on reducing the food import bill, efforts will be focused on promoting the production of the top crops currently imported, in terms of value and quantity. It is being proposed that emphasis will therefore be placed on producing a basket of commodities that include cabbage, carrots, onions, pumpkins, sweet peppers, tomatoes, watermelons, Irish Potatoes, zucchini, broccoli, kale, kohlrabi, and cauliflower" (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2018, pg. 5). The Irish potato is very important to the diet of Barbadians.

There is an external force that has seeped into the culture, the Irish potato has found a home here with the people of Barbados. Provisions are being made to make the Irish potato local. Indigenisation is used as a tool to combat globalization. It is with the lens of the corporate food regime that the atmosphere of global-political economy can be analyzed to discuss why the Irish potato thrives where it does not have the conditions to grow while the sweet potato, cassava and breadfruit though on fertile soil and categorized as cultural foods have not had similar success coming into the 21st century.

4.2 The corporate food regime- definition, critique, application

Food regime analysis serves the purpose of historicizing and placing food relations within the political and economic atmosphere of the world stage. McMichael states that, "The 'food regime' concept historicised the global food system: problematising linear representations of agricultural modernisation, underlining the pivotal role of food in global political-economy, and conceptualising key historical contradictions in particular food regimes that produce crisis, transformation and transition (2009, p.140). Moreover, the corporate food regime displaces subsistence ('peasant') agriculture by industrially-produced food imports and promotes industrially-produced agro-exports over local food production. (McMichael (2005, p. 265) quoted in Wilson, 2015, p.60). This section uses the food regime analysis as a lens through which Barbados' relationship with the global food system can be analyzed. Firstly, I

will characterize the corporate food regime as stipulated by Philip McMichael. Secondly, these characteristics will be applied to the current structuring of the agricultural industry in Barbados and lastly I will use the corporate food regime to discuss the impact of these political and economic dimensions on culture. Though the food regime perspective does not aim to dissect food culture as there are many variables that walk alongside cultural norms, shifts in food culture can be traced by means of food regime analysis as the political and economic circumstances shape culture.

Characterizing the corporate food regime

The corporate food regime is characterized by “the political reconstruction of agriculture as a world economic sector” (McMichael, 2013, p.269). This occurs through accumulation through dispossession, displacement of peasant cultures through provision through dumping, the supermarket revolution, unprecedented market power and profits for agribusiness corporation and resistant social movements in the form of food sovereignty³” (McMichael, 2013, p.269). The construction of world agriculture in this way stems from the vision of Ann Veneman who held the post of U.S Secretary of Agriculture in 2001, she postulated that agriculture should be integrated into the world economy and thus greater links between countries would be formed through economic liberalization and market-oriented agriculture policies (McMichael, 2013, p. 269-270). This served to deepen the role of the World Trade organization in agriculture and extend the far-reaching web that is globalization. One major critique relevant to this research is, “The tendency of food regimes thinking to write off the state as shrunken by neoliberal reforms, incapacitated by world trade rules, or captured by powerful agri-food interests has been challenged...” (Leach et al, 2020, p.6). Though using this analysis that focuses heavily on power relations between the state and neoliberal goals, the state should not be framed as totally powerless and neither should individual responsibility be rendered impotent. These interactions are however beyond the scope of this research.

Accumulation by dispossession

The term ‘accumulation by dispossession’ was popularized by economic geographer David Harvey, it refers to the transfer of public wealth into the private sector which have been facilitated by neoliberal governments with enacting capitalist policies (Caceres, 2015, p.116). According to McMichael, “In the context of corporate globalization, ‘accumulation by dispossession’ operates through general mechanisms of structural adjustment, which devalue and privatize assets across the global South, as well as through particular mechanisms of displacement of peasant agriculture, as a world of agriculture emerges. Here, local provisioning is subjected to the combined pressures of dumping of Northern food surpluses, an agro-industrial supermarket revolution, and the appropriation of land for agro-exporting” (2013, p.270). Mr. Eversley explains the power dynamics present within the world system and how such trade agreements can serve to enable accumulation through dispossession. He states,

Under the WTO regulations and also what is going on in the world the movement is towards free trade, free trade is not a panacea for everything, free trade also comes with its own set of problems because what occurs is that countries who are geographically and technologically more powerful than small countries such as ours they have the means to in some regards, I don’t want to say the word but dump excessive capacities into ours that also destroys or retards

³ Defined in appendix

what we are trying to do in terms of our domestic space so we have to be mindful of that (12 October 2020, Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. Office).

In the case of dumping, agribusinesses in more economically powerful are able to gain more wealth by expanding their markets while countries such as Barbados are disadvantaged by these actions.

The changing economy in Barbados away from agriculture-based to a more service-based economy has greatly affected peasant culture. According to Momsen, “In 1920, 65% of the working population of Barbados was employed in agriculture. By 1960, this proportion had fallen to 25% and by 1990 to a mere five percent as industry and tourism became the main drivers of the economy. The World Trade Organisation has mandated a phasing out of subsidies for Caribbean sugar, and liberalization allows imports of cheap food from the United States to increase” (2005, p.218). At the time of Momsen’s research one hundred and seventy years after emancipation there had been a gradual erasure of the peasant society and many small farmers who still work in agriculture only have access to marginal land (2005, p.218). Today, the Barbados government through the F.E.E.D program is aiming to encourage persons to get involved in the sector to revitalize the industry and see farming as a viable career option.

Supermarket culture

Barbadians have become increasingly dependent on supermarkets. According to McMichael, the supermarket revolution “intensifies the combination of food processing and retailing accumulation, incorporating small or independent producers and local markets and street vending into new corporate circuits and biopolitical relations” (2013, p. 288). During many of the interviews conducted participants made reference to the past culture of bartering where neighbors would share what they grew or had more readily. Dr. Peter commented on the shift in culture by underlying the dependence of people on supermarkets saying, “in terms of cultural trends I would have to say it was all about feeding yourself which unfortunately we have moved away from and we have become dependent on those cement buildings called supermarkets which we see what happened during Covid that we didn't think we could survive unless we stood up outside the supermarket. Persons have become dependent on supermarkets and supermarkets have become dependent on imports” (2020). Moreover, in the national agricultural policy “A Vision for the future of agriculture in Barbados” prepared by Dr. Chelston W.D Braithwaite, Chairman of the National Agricultural Commission it is stated that, “In addition, the supermarket has become the most common place for most consumers to purchase their food, therefore farmers and producers must be trained in how to produce for the supermarket” (Braithwaite, 2013, p. 50). This shift has influenced how farmers must react to meet the demands of supermarkets which involves changing the means of production.

Unprecedented market power and profits for agribusiness corporation

Under the corporate food regime Barbados has relinquished much of its power to agribusiness corporations. Barbados is directly affected by what happens in the external market. Mr Eversley stated of Barbados that, “We cannot resist what is happening internationally, we in most regards are a small open country, a price taker we cannot resist what is happening internationally” (2020). This speaks to the unprecedented power that agribusiness corporations hold afforded to them through organizations such the World Trade Organization. The dependency on foreign investment was deepened by industrialization by invitation.

Michael Howard of the Department of Economics at the UWI Cave Hill states, “Caribbean societies of the 1950s led to an over-emphasis on the role of settler-type foreign investment. Although some degree of direct foreign capital was necessary to finance imports and supplement domestic savings, the problem in the Caribbean became one of over-reliance on foreign capital” (1991, p.66). As a small open economy, the need to earn foreign exchange is pertinent however this move undermined the region’s ability to be self-sufficient (Howard, 1991, p.66). Barbados is entangled in the free market system trading predominantly with businesses from the United Kingdom, the United states of America and Trinidad and Tobago.

Social movement resistance

The shift in food culture that has stirred concerns about sustainability, health, cultural preservation and has thus faced resistance from peasant communities notably the food sovereignty movement. Resistance has been shaped in the form of a plea from some to return to indigenous eating and increased local production to solve such problems within the population serves as an indicator of what Phillip McMichael calls the corporate food regime. As expressed by McMichael, ‘the corporate food regime embodies the tensions between a trajectory of “world agriculture” and cultural survival, expressed in the politics of food sovereignty’. (McMichael, 2009, p.151). McMichael also expresses that, “the simplification of industrial agriculture that began with colonial monocultures, and has been universalised through successive food regime episodes, has now reached a fundamental crisis point” This crisis point is being met with movements by small actors which underpin the importance of biodiversity and sustainable agriculture as a prerequisite to future human survival (Desmarais 2007 quoted in McMichael, 2009, p.141). Moreover, there has been discussion on, “the question of stemming the ‘planet of slums’ phenomenon (Davis 2006, Araghi 1995, 2008), the question of human rights to culturally and nutritionally adequate food, and the reformulation of states, and development, around democratised food systems” (Patel 2006 quoted in McMichael, 2009, p.141).

Barbados though there have been no established food sovereignty movements established the goals of the F.E.E.D program align with those of the food sovereignty movement though not articulated as such, they include: To increase employment, particularly among vulnerable groups including women and the youth, to facilitate the sustainable development of the agricultural sector through improved access to land and inputs for agricultural production and development, to ensure long-term national food and nutrition security through improved access to safe and nutritious foods” (F.E.E.D Policy Framework, 2018, p.1). These objectives coincide with those stipulated by the food sovereignty movement which prioritize the rights of women in farming. Also, the use of local agricultural production to feed the people which also includes granting access to land, water and credit which is a major part of the execution of the F.E.E.D program. Like the food sovereignty movement, the F.E.E.D program is also particular on what types of food should be produced requesting safe and nutritious food while food sovereignty asks for culturally appropriate food. As discussed throughout, safe and nutritious food has become synonymous with foodways of the past, also referred to as traditional food for some Barbadians.

Contrary to the objectives of food sovereignty Barbados hopes to increase its agricultural exports stating in the F.E.E.D policy framework that one of the objectives are to increase net foreign exchange earnings through increased agricultural exports. Interview participant and agricultural economist Anderson Eversley states that “...the major factor of small open economies is that we have to earn foreign exchange so we have to export and move away from the traditional stuff and also the traditional practices which we have done over the past couple of centuries and try to go into new areas that will bring us certain advantages.” Additionally,

Eversley remarked, “We cannot resist what is happening internationally, we in most regards are a small open country, a price taker we cannot resist what is happening internationally but within our borders we can do some things to protect ourselves.” There has therefore been a soft resistance to the globalized food system where Barbados is tailoring its agricultural industry to be more beneficial to the country but still recognizes their place within the global food system.

Culture and the corporate food regime

The corporate food regime analyzes actions taken on the global scale that influence local behaviour that local decision making also affects food culture and identity. It provides a vital lens through which the relationship between the historical, economic and political influence culture. The interconnectivity of the world allows for the fostering of a global food culture. It is important to note that this does not negate the fact that individual differences will exist within countries. Countries of the Global North exert control, discourage self-sufficiency, dictate culture, transforming how we see ourselves by the food we eat. Cultural imperialism is the result brought about by the corporate food regime. I endeavour to make a connection between cultural identity and challenges in ownership over food chains arise while utilizing the characteristics of the corporate food regime.

This claim follows the argument proposed that global corporations, media and supermarket culture influence what is viewed as delicious and desirable creating a standard and well-known branded products (e.g. Burger king, subway, coca cola, etc.) that has been universalized while making these food items readily available (Ritzer, 1993 quoted in Leach et al., 2020, p.6). This then marginalizes other food cultures and livelihoods and obscures the place of origin of food, resulting in ‘food from nowhere’ (McMichael, 2009b quoted in Leach et al., 2020, p.6). As peasants become disempowered and governmental resistance impaired through trade liberalization, agrifood actors become more powerful aggressively penetrating local markets (Friedmann, 2009; McMichael, 2005 quoted in Leach et al., 2020, p.6).

It is evident that the corporate food regime affects culture as the social movement McMichael uses to aid in characterization of the regime underpins the importance of culturally appropriate food. Food sovereignty highlights, “the importance of local tradition and knowledge, or the autonomy and rights of indigenous or otherwise marginalised people (Borras et al., 2008; Edelman, 2003; Patel, 2009 quoted in Leach et al., 2020, p.6). This movement addresses current issues for peasants such as the right of consumers to be able to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced. These decisions are prefaced by the consideration of local culture.

The shift in food culture comes with little protection methods, economic development being at the forefront of development goals aids in minimizing cultural values. The erosion of local culture by more powerful groups of people has for centuries been a tactic to gain ownership over others. The gradual erosion of foodways can be viewed as yet another example. By negating local food pathways and thus identity, further destabilization of cultures and a vulnerable food system is the result. The corporate food regime marks the introduction of a global agricultural industry, its far-reaching roots continue to stifle the realization of Barbadian foodways and thus culture. The corporate food regime sees the introduction of organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund. It was therefore not too long after Barbados’ independence that these organizations would reinforce the power relations of colonialism. As long as this relationship exists indigenous cultures are side-lined. Richardson and Ngwenya continue to state that, plans to restructure the agricultural system lack an ideological landscape (2013, p.274). The agricultural sector never had a time where it blossomed based on inward influence which is in essence a

cultural consideration, Ideological landscape have been determined outside of the region and serve to reinforce neoliberal values.

Concluding thoughts

There is indication according to the characteristics of the corporate food regime postulated by McMichael that Barbados could be under this regime. Barbados as stated has experienced accumulation by dispossession, the supermarket revolution is apparent as people move away from growing their own foods and surpluses from countries in the global north are dumped on the island. There have not been social movements arising as a form of resistance however structures have been put in place to increase local food production to combat the need to import foreign goods. The relationship between the political, economic and cultural are very closely intertwined. As the food regime informs on the political and economic it can reveal shifts in global food culture. What remains clear is that under the corporate food regime Barbados has relinquished much of its power to agribusiness corporations and is directly affected by what happens in the external market. The process of regaining ownership concerned with the needs of its people is unequivocally political, though whether it should also be framed by culture is debatable, it is evident that western imposed ideas of development have impacted numerous cultural food practices.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Food has undoubtedly become a political matter rooted in economic goals, this leads to the manipulation of culture and henceforth identity. The shift in consumption patterns in Barbados can be linked to many causes both external and internal forces. This research has discussed the influence of US imperialism, globalization and free trade on the food culture within Barbados. It is clear that food plays an integral role in shaping identity, it is a pillar in which collective identity is formed while therefore also serving to otherize those that do not belong based on food practices. For Barbados, reflection on past diets have become increasingly important as the health of Barbadians dwindles as a result of non-communicable diseases which are largely linked to diet. Moreover, food cultures of times gone by are thought to have been more beneficial for community values where people were more likely to be interdependent thus ensuring the survival of the collective. These values become pertinent in times of crisis such as during the COVID-19 pandemic where food supply chains have been disrupted. Also, in defining and valuing Barbadian food culture it is hoped that through innovation economic benefits can be derived for farmers, local consumers, the tourism industry and thus the nation as a whole.

The separation of culture from development separates development from people. Being more carefully attuned to local food culture appears to be the approach framed as most suitable to counteracting the homogenization in food culture brought about by globalization. Cultural consideration has largely become pertinent only once it is valued economically and thus culture is seen as a commodity which can be sold to tourists and locals alike. Neglecting the intrinsic value of food culture and even devaluing indigenous ways of being has caused local culture to have to constantly adjust to external forces so that survival is the result.

In using the corporate food regime analysis as a tool to understand the political and economic playground in which the current food system is steeped cultural ramifications can also be observed. An environment has not been fostered globally in which food culture can flourish locally. This is evidenced by Barbados' newest agricultural program F.E.E.D where funds are being funnelled into cultivating artificial environments to meet the needs of foreign tastes. Development for Barbados has become a game of catch up, as the world's markets become more interconnected and value placement is dictated by the more economically powerful countries. Years after independence Barbados has not figured out how to feed itself. Uneven power relations still remain contributing to the crippling of internal efforts to propel the agricultural industry. The lines of ownership of food cultures have been blurred but not those of who benefit the most monetarily. The shifting of culture is not in itself problematic but actually expected however, this shift in foodways comes at an expense to public health, island community values and stifles local innovation that pursues the uniqueness in Barbadian culture as its bedrock.

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Appendices

Cou cou recipe:

Cook the okras in the boiling water for 8 to 10 minutes. While they are cooking, mix the corn meal and cold water to a smooth paste. When the okras are soft, lower the heat, add salt and wet corn meal, stirring continuously with a cou cou stick (or wooden spoon), until the mixture becomes fairly stiff. When mixture breaks away cleanly from the saucepan, the cou cou is ready. Butter a bowl, turn the mixture into it, shaking it into the shape of the bowl and then turn it out into a serving dish. With the back on the spoon, make an indentation in the top and place the knob of butter in it. (The Barbados cookbook, 2010, p. 79).

Guiding questions for structured interviews

Guiding questions for interviews with Cultural academics

1. What in your opinion have been the differences in the culture surrounding the practice of eating, growing and manufacturing food in Barbados since the 1950s to 2020?
2. How does food shape identity?
3. What are the major influences on the shifting food culture (food choice, food preparation) in Barbados? What are the consequences of this shift to cultural identity?
4. How should cultural food be defined? What is considered cultural food in Barbados?
5. Food sovereignty mandates that food be culturally appropriate. Who is most fitting to define what culturally appropriate food is for the collective Barbadian society?
6. To what extent do you consider the acquisition of taste for foreign goods a threat to the cultural identity of Barbadians? What can be done to maintain cultural identity in a globalized world with free trade especially in a country such as Barbados that is heavily dependent on food importation?
7. As the culture of a people is constantly transforming to what extent do you believe appealing to the cultural identity/national identity of Barbadians is a plausible way to influence personal food choice?
8. What role, if any, should the cultural identity of the people of Barbados play in the country's agricultural development?

Guiding questions for interview with the head of F.E.E.D program

- 1) What has the FEED program managed to accomplish thus far and what have been the challenges?
- 2) What are your most in demand products?
- 3) Do you believe there are any other considerations to be made outside of an increase in agricultural production to ensure food security? If so, what would these considerations include?
- 4) What role do you believe culture should play if any, in agricultural development strategies and therefore programmes such as FEED? Coordinated efforts
- 5) Has there been any consideration within the FEED organization for what culturally appropriate food means to the Barbadian population? To what extent does culture impact what is grown/produced and how it is grown?
- 6) What role does cultural heritage/identity play in appealing to potential customers in marketing strategies taught?

- 7) What are the attitudes towards a career in farming amongst the youth, especially young women? How does the program appeal to or garner participation from these groups?
- 8) What are your thoughts on community-based farming, do you believe frameworks such as this would work in Barbados?
- 9) Carmeta's is marketed as 100% Bajan, has that proven to be a catalyst for increased demand?

Guiding questions for Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd.

1. What are the main goals that BAMC are undertaking during this time period?
2. How has the nation's political and economic history affected the growth of the agricultural industry?
3. What influence has the introduction of free markets, trade liberalization, globalization had on Barbadian agriculture? Has there been any resistance?
4. What needs to be done for Barbados to maintain competitive prices on the global market?
5. Does the influence of the external market complicate problems of ownership over local food chains?
6. What role should consumer's play in the development of the agricultural industry?
7. What do you believe are the major influences on the shifting food consumption and practices in Barbados?
8. What role do you believe culture should play if any, in agricultural development strategies of Barbados?
9. Does the agriculture department partner with sectors such as culture and health to guide development? What type of partnerships do you believe should occur?
10. How does the country intend to introduce the Irish potato to produce that is locally grown on the island?

Definition of key terms

Foodways

Foodways refer to “all of the traditional activities, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors associated with the food in your daily life. Foodways include customs of food production, preservation, preparation, presentation, gathering, marketing (both buying and selling), uses of food products other than for eating and food folklore.” (Darton, 2012)

Food sovereignty

Food sovereignty is the peoples', Countries' or State Unions' RIGHT to define their agricultural and food policy, without any dumping vis-à-vis third countries. Food sovereignty includes: prioritizing local agricultural production in order to feed the people, access of peasants and landless people to land, water, seeds, and credit, the right of farmers, peasants to produce food and the right of consumers to be able to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced, the right of Countries to protect themselves from too low priced agricultural and food imports, agricultural prices linked to production, the populations taking part in the agricultural policy choices, the recognition of women farmers' rights, who play a major role in agricultural production and in food. (La Via Campesina, 2003)

