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# Masculinity In The Kitchen: Gender Performance In The Culinary Arts Industry

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MASCULINITY IN THE KITCHEN: GENDER PERFORMANCE  
IN THE CULINARY ARTS INDUSTRY

MARIEL CANO

Master's Program in Sociology

APPROVED:

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Charles Ambler, Ph.D.  
Dean of the Graduate School

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Maribel Cano

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate all efforts to complete this thesis to my entire family: Luis, Melinda, Luis Jr., Melissa and Mauricio. Thank you for supporting me and encouraging me throughout my entire academic and professional career. Especially to my parents, Luis and Melinda, who have loved me unconditionally and who were always there willing to listen to my ideas and my desires to pursue a higher degree in my education. I want to thank Mauricio for having the time to read my drafts and for always pushing me to move forward in life. Lastly, I also wish to dedicate this thesis to my mentor Dr. Carina Heckert for all the time she has given me, for her true mentorship despite the distance during the last stage of my thesis, and for her exceptional guidance as she assisted me on this long process.

MASCULINITY IN THE KITCHEN: GENDER PERFORMANCE  
IN THE CULINARY ARTS INDUSTRY

by

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THESIS

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# **Introduction**

## **Background and Overview**

Men are still far more likely than women to occupy top positions in corporations, governments, agencies, and organizations. Furthermore, when women do occupy a top position they tend to feel uncomfortable with doing or saying anything that may impose on the dominant male culture. An interesting window into understanding gender inequality in the labor force and the issues brought by it is the culinary world. This is because it has become a masculine trait to show authority in all areas of the kitchen and to show a need for creative culinary potential. Despite the traditional role of women in household kitchens, men are constantly seen as the authority and some are even perceived to be a type of dictators. Although it's difficult to determine the number of female chefs recognized by the American Culinary Association, Fred Decker (n.d.) suggests that male chefs overshadow women in the culinary world, as just 16% of female respondents in his study were executive chefs (compared to 38% of male respondents).

Stereotypes representing the kitchen usually portray femininity at home, but there are some symbols related to food employment and masculinity that allow male chefs to become immune to the femininity this space represents. Nonetheless, two major themes tend to pop up the most. One theme is the role of the media in reproducing social expectations related to cooking. The second theme is the dichotomy of food as care vs. food as employment and how gender has become embedded within this dichotomy.

## **Research Questions**

This study includes four central research questions (RQ) to answer throughout the research:

RQ1: How is gender performed in professional kitchens?

RQ2: How do men and women chefs perceive the role of gender as a part of their labor?

RQ3: Are there any aspects of this performance that reinforce gender inequalities?

RQ4: Do any of these aspects challenge gender inequalities?

The intent of these questions is to understand and explore the main issues of gender inequality inside the culinary field in the El Paso region, the Southwestern border of Texas with Mexico.

### **Significance**

This thesis contributes to the research related to gender and masculine domination in El Paso, Texas. This study is important as it dissects gender performativity as a symbolic system within the culinary industry following a social hierarchy in a minority-majority city, with the Hispanic/Latino population comprising the majority of the population. I present data collected through interviews with male and female laborers in the culinary field in El Paso. A feminist lens allows me to make gendered comparisons in exploring my research questions and developing my analyses and conclusions. It primarily concentrates on presenting and analyzing data collected through interviews with male and female chefs and cooks within the culinary industry. The focus of this investigation addresses three specific research areas, primarily through the eyes of Latinos in El Paso: 1) gender performance in the kitchen; 2) the gendered perceptions among those who labor within the culinary world; and lastly, 3) the aspects of performance that reinforce gender inequality or that challenge it.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Framing

This research draws on gender performativity in the workforce, particularly in public kitchens. It follows Judith Butler's views on predisposed gender performativity and Pierre Bourdieu's work on masculine domination through the socialization of gender. The main focus for this section is to discuss the foundations of gender inequality reflected in gender performativity in the kitchen, drawing on Butler and Bourdieu's frameworks.

Butler (1990) argues that certain individual behaviors are perceived of as natural, arguing that the ways that one's learned performance of gendered behavior (what we tend to associate with femininity and masculinity) become an act and performance that has been imposed upon us by normative heterosexuality. For example, individuals learn from normative expectations of western society that females are nurturers and that they "belong" in the kitchen because they take care of the family, whereas males become the providers and eventually the chefs because they are taught to dominate whatever field they wish to conquer - in this case, the culinary arts and gastronomical field. Because gender itself is fundamentally a performance that involves imitation, enculturation, impersonation and approximation, men's performance of masculinity in the kitchen includes behaviors such as attaching their knives to their belt, and they are doing so as a result of making a "female" realm more "male" with those type of masculine behaviors. Women's gendered performance at times involves performing masculinity, which includes trying to prove that they are tough in the kitchen. Ultimately, femininity becomes a mask that resolves the masculine identification, like Butler (1990) suggests, and this is how women are able to perform masculinity in the professional kitchen, but femininity in the home kitchen.

Joy and Bhardwaj (2015) mention Butler's ideology of how gender becomes a performance. Gender is built throughout the social norms and rituals of the day-to-day routine. McLeod (2008) describes social norms as unwritten rules about how to behave, and these rules provide an expectation of how to behave in a particular setting and culture. Gender identities are simple cultural performances, and one's beliefs and actions originate not from one's precondition

but rather from one's individuality. Joy and Bhardwaj draw on Butler's argument on how performativity indeed provides instances for the remaking of a successful and more independent gendered identity. For example, individuals can create their very own identity by rebelling against the predisposed social norms and as a consequence these rebellious individuals have become unique and independent from their expected gendered identity.

Bourdieu (2001) analyzes masculine domination as a major type of symbolic violence - one that is gentle, almost invisible, yet pervasive and it is exercised through everyday activities. Masculine domination is a type of violence exercised principally via channels of communication and through the recognition and analysis of feelings. Bourdieu also describes masculine domination as a product of the everyday life practices, and in line with Butler, he supports the idea that genders are not simple 'roles' that can be easily played. In other words, society would assume that if females become successful in the gastronomical area, or in any other field, they probably failed at femininity. As per Bourdieu's recognition of male domination, males get to be privileged at gaining some type of immunity to losing their masculinity as long as they show off their triumphant status of leadership and success as professional chefs, creating a brand out of their names. Thus, gender performativity and male domination proceed to the internalizing of gender inequality and how men and women identify within the kitchen arena, while having one's gender exercising control over the other, subsequently reinforcing social hierarchies.

### **Gender Performativity in the Kitchen**

Society, media, pop culture, and the way we handle impressions define a social role for men and women who learn how to follow certain rules and duties attached to the roles ascribed by their gender. Further, these male and female gender roles become differentially valued. The ways this plays out in the kitchen reflects a broader pattern in the devaluing of women's roles. Abarca (2006) explores a woman's limitations in domestic kitchens and how women usually feel like the domestic tasks represent unskilled and uncreative tasks due to the socialization of gender in our Westernized culture. Abarca states "if a kitchen is a woman's place, its walls limit her social, economic, and personal mobility, which derives from conceptualizing place as a fixed, un-

changing, and nostalgic location” (p. 20). This underlines the gender complexities within a place and defines a woman’s social role in our Westernized culture, as the “place” becomes “stable” and seen as a “comfort of being” instead of a “project of becoming.” The domestic kitchen becomes a woman’s place and all of her activities, such as cooking, are often not taken as meaningful and important. Furthermore, Abarca describes how “women are in a constant state of simply ‘Being’ while men are in a constant state of creating, of changing, of ‘Becoming.’” This happens as men are ultimately not limited to domestic cooking in our Westernized culture.

Moreover, Cairns and Johnston (2015) explain how there is some gendered care-work that is demanded, and women are usually responsible for food planning and shopping. Without a doubt, caring through food is primarily considered feminine and making “ethical” food choices usually falls on women’s shoulders. Related to this process, Cairns and Johnston highlight how most food security projects are seen as a feminine realm and food policy projects are seen as a masculine realm. This division of the realms delineates what is acceptable in our current Westernized society and shows how most progressive efforts are still dominated by male leaders and male policy makers.

Portrayals of chefs in the U.S. pop culture, such as Anthony Bourdain, shed light on the social roles for men and women. Herkes and Redden (2017) show how men tend to be at greater liberty to pick and choose how to be a foodie while women tended to juggle pleasure and care. When women are presenting dishes, the foods are often arranged ready for others to eat in domestic dining settings. Women are more often seen literally serving food, or dressing it for visual appeal. An example for these presiding images of male cooks’ performance being authoritative and powerful, as well as controlling is *Chopped*. The Food Network owns this American reality-based cooking show, based on a game series that pits four chefs against each other as they compete for a chance to win \$10,000. On a general basis, women tend to be disqualified earlier than men, and male cooks constantly win the money. Rebecca Swenson (cited in Counihan & Van Esterik, 2012) explains how the Food Network reflects important beliefs about audiences and about gender, food, and the rewards of labor. Although men typically win cooking shows, a step closer

to gender equality inside the culinary world was finally achieved in 2017, when there were two females fighting for first place in the finale of *Top Chef*. This reflects that while gender inequalities persist in the realm of cooking, female cooks are still able to challenge those inequalities.

The media has created many cooking rules that serve as a signal to delineate hierarchy and power, like men being the decision makers and women trying to fit in with the rules of a male-centric professional culinary world. Shows such as *MasterChef* and *Top Chef* are framed in a hypermasculinized and industrialized way. As seen in most seasons of those shows, it has become a masculine trait to show authority in all areas of the kitchen and to show a need for creative culinary potential. For example, after viewing several episodes of *MasterChef* I noticed how Gordon Ramsay (celebrity chef and head judge at the *MasterChef* series) said to a female participant in the first episode ever produced of *MasterChef*, “One strong piece of advice, your enthusiasm for flirting put into your cooking. You’ll be a thousand times better.” A gendered power dynamic delineates who gets on top and who remains low in the hierarchy. Banerjee-Dube (2016, p. 7-10) goes further into the topic and explains:

The intimacy and intensity of food and feeling find daily expression in innumerable cooking and baking competitions, television shows and a profusion of recipes in magazines, newspapers and journal columns, and a surge in signature restaurants of male chefs registering class, race, gender and power.

Consequently, as seen on most TV competition shows and as suggested by Herkes and Redden (2017), the authority is performed by more male chefs, and if a female chef comes on board, she is usually a professional baker. This happens because we tend to associate baking with goodies meant to be comforting, and we see baked goods as food for the soul. Plus, Fishel (2016) mentions a common saying that separates cooks from bakers: baking is a science, while cooking is an art; discussing baking as more measured and cooking more as a creative art. Reinforcing the notion that cooking is more highly valued than baking.

Noticeably, food has clearly become a part of how the U.S. represents itself in the media proving that power is attainable through the expected behaviors and ideas sold by the media.

*The New York Times* wrote in 2009 that America is “in the midst of a feeding frenzy... the Food Network holds 65 million monthly viewers in its thrall, and sales of gourmet foods and beverages are expected to top \$53 billion next year” (Lindenfeld & Parasecoli, 2016, p. 3). Therefore, the market for food constitutes a highly contested arena where many cultural and social groups contribute to the market’s growing economy controlled by a patriarchal system where men hold major top positions in kitchens and even have decision making powers for the well-known restaurants, making decisions for all genders.

Bourdieu (1996) explains how when we think of masculine domination, we stand in danger of submitting to the attitudes and ways of reproducing masculine domination. In this case, we assume male chefs are at the top of the hierarchy in the kitchen. Whether we like it or not, the masculinity in the kitchen analysis allows us to give attention to both privileges and sources of oppression and how they intersect. For example, immigrant chefs may have male privilege but still have other sources of oppression. Consequently, we find ourselves uncovering the structures of an unconscious socialization where segregation becomes interconnected with gender and the pay gap becomes a normalized issue.

Masculinizing food is also a constant variable across all media channels. The foodies — people with a passion for eating and learning about food — use their bodies as human canvases to glamorize and to evoke sophistication and cosmopolitanism. Reflecting this is that, “Inked chefs embody creativity; their tattooed bodies have become normalized and aspirational. Anthony Bourdain had matching knives-with-blood tattoos with his wife Ottavia Busia” (Arvela, 2017, p. 4). Male chefs have used tattoos to mark nonconformity, self-promotion, and to show toughness. Arvela (2017) also explains that women use tattoos to replace the jewelry that chefs are not allowed to wear in the kitchen, and also because it has become a resilient attribute in a male-dominated industry. No doubt this tattoo culture has created a redefinition of the tenets of masculinization as it has women performing masculinity. Women are currently accepting the tattoo needles and the discomfort caused by them to balance the gender scale and to fit in with the mas-

culinization standards in a kitchen. It is almost routine for men and women to show off their toughness by getting their bodies marked and inked.

Bradley (2016) highlights the role of food and eating as a basic instinct and need. However, in recent years, the widespread proliferation of a variety of cooking shows has turned the television schedule into a kind of menu with so many options to choose from. Davies and O'-Callaghan (2016) talk about how food has come to take center stage in popular culture, and male chefs take the lead in this field. They also describe how popular culture is structured by the attempt of the ruling class to win hegemony. It consists simply of an imposed mass culture that is confident with dominant ideology. Sutton (cited in Counihan & Van Esterik, 2012) also talks about cultural elaborations, sensory experiences, and the processes of teaching skills. Sutton mainly describes an approach that transmits skills through the sensory engagement, what we tend to call "enculturation" and is also known as "education of attention." For example, this enculturation involves learning about cooking skills by identifying through close attention the sights, smells and tastes, as well as attitudes, produced and performed by a more experienced chef/cook. Consequently, viewers have several options to choose from in regards to TV competition shows, and most of these shows present gender stereotypes such as men being the authority and women being submissive. Unfortunately, most audiences accept and perceive the stereotypes created as natural, and they also copy the behaviors from the imposed dominant masculine performers.

As a symbolic system, food provides the observable portion of socialization and the stigmas attached to it. Cairns and Johnston (2015) acknowledge the gender expectations and differences between men and women in the kitchen; femininity in food challenges other feminine goals such as: ethical responsibility and caring for others (which are usually linked to cultural representations of food and femininity). For example, everyday domestic cooking is taken for granted as a woman's daily obligation but not as a man's responsibility. This tends to happen as men are granted with the liberty to do leisure cooking in more professional settings, and as a consequence they are "freed" from the ordinary everyday domestic cooking and domestic responsibilities. Additionally, Abarca (cited in Forson & Counihan, 2012) also describes women's

connections with food (and how these connections are usually framed as a part of their responsibilities in the household), however she also recounts “familial wealth” and how this type of wealth takes into consideration women’s ability to take into account their own social and cultural implications as women and their attributes as entrepreneurs.

Swift and Wilk (2016) also explain how celebrations, gatherings around the table for a meal, and speaking about food are culturally and contextually specific social activities attached to the representations of what is masculine and feminine in popular culture cooking. Social events and holiday dinners, like Thanksgiving, contribute to cultural traditions by inculcating symbols of masculinity and femininity. For example, men will cut the turkey in front of the guests, but women are more likely to have been the ones who prepared and cooked it (for many hours before) behind the scenes. Just like popular culture indicates, the norms attached to everyday activities (such as food and the roles attached to it), TV competition shows indicate the rules for all genders to follow if they wish to become successful, dominant and authoritative chefs.

Constantly, women depicted by popular culture as professional chefs in food media typically fail at femininity if they prioritize their role as experts over their role as nurturers. For example, they are considered rude and immodest as they adapt to a male-dominated arena where they do not allow themselves to show off their femininity as they want to belong. Vester (2015) presents domestic cooking as a firm association with women in American culture that for a long time has been central to the performance of femininity. Being able to cook has traditionally stood for a mother’s love and a woman’s competence to be a wife (Vester, 2015). For men, the reverse tends to happen: “To function effectively as men, they must maintain their expert role and negotiate their positions as nurturers” (Lindenfeld & Parasecoli, 2016, p. 123). This implies that men shall not show emotions nor shall they present any feelings that relate to caring. Expertise and determination in exploring the culinary field is what turns a chef into a respectable one, and a female chef is able to earn some respect in a masculine occupation by accurately positioning herself as a talented, accomplished and determined individual. Gender performativity becomes

without doubt the answer, as men perform masculinity to continue to dominate the kitchen, and women tend to adopt masculine traits to succeed in the male-dominated culinary world.

### **Leadership Styles**

Despite women's competence, most male-dominated environments – like the culinary field – are extremely difficult for women. Female employees and authorities tend to receive lower evaluations. Eagly and Carli (2003) show how women usually encounter more dislike and rejection, and if they express any disagreement, they are depicted as too masculine and insufficiently feminine. For example, a female chef would not be taken seriously if she presented herself as a sweet and smiley person, but if she presented herself as an authoritative and strong-minded person she would receive lower evaluations from the subordinates and would be considered a difficult and stubborn nightmare.

Eagly and Carli (2003) explain how discrimination in male-dominated organizations happens through blatant and subtle stereotyping, questioning of women's competence, sexual harassment, and social isolation. Nonetheless, it is women who possess higher disadvantages than men do in the roles that are male-dominated or otherwise defined in masculine ways. Sadly, this dilemma harms women tremendously, as again stated by Eagly and Carli (2003), by making them victims and survivors of negatively biased judgements that stop and restrict them from accessing any leadership roles, or reaching higher in the hierarchy within the culinary field and other realms of employment. For example, a pioneering study by sociologists Don Zimmerman and Candace West (1975) documents gender inequalities reproduced in communication. The study by the sociologists included recording different conversations and found that in 11 conversations between men and women studied, men were behind all but one interruption recorded. Unfortunately, “maninterrupting” is a real issue, and women have stayed quiet for a long time because they have been taught to be modest and respectful, whereas men in the culinary field often feel empowered to interrupt women and to lead with hypermasculinized strength and authoritative power, as seen in *MasterChef* and *Top Chef*.

Leadership is without a doubt gendered, and gender inequality is frequently reinforced by the leadership roles portrayed by men. The current ways of understanding masculinity and femininity have revolutionized the ways we interact within society. Contemporary views of leadership encourage collaboration and stress the importance of teamwork. Eagly and Carli (2003) emphasize the importance of female leaders and recommend the reduction of hierarchies to place more coaches and team leaders as role models. Furthermore, Jones and Swiss (2014) note the differences between female leaders and male leaders. Women employ a more feminine leadership style than men by giving greater attention to women's issues and creating a more participatory and less hierarchical work environment. The effects of this type of leadership may also be the reason for male leaders (and chefs) to stop women from reaching higher on the ladder. For example, if women were to be allowed to support the line cook by engaging them in a more safe and charismatic environment, the line's mood will be positively influenced by their leader. The positive leader will then become a preferred role model over the clear-cut male leader.

Emotions and leadership feed off from each other. The truth is that leadership theory and research have not properly considered how a leader's mood and emotions influence their effectiveness as leaders. George (2000) suggests that when leaders are in positive moods — like female leaders tend to be more frequently — they may be more creative and, surely, “more likely to come up with a compelling vision that contrasts with existing conditions” (George, 2000, p. 1040). Thus, remaining in a positive mood becomes an answer for all chefs who lead as most food preparation is linked to creativity. The menu decision, the ingredients chosen, the appropriate temperatures, the mix of desired flavors, and the design of the plate presentation all have to do with positive moods, creativity and thinking outside the box. One has to wonder what would happen if chefs could follow a more charismatic, distributing, collaborative, positive and feminine leadership style.

Leaders with frequent anger episodes tend to build poor relationships with their followers. As seen on *MasterChef* and *Top Chef*, most male chefs tend to exploit the anger management and emotions associated with hostility and irritation in peak episodes. George (2000, p. 1029)

explains how moods and emotions can affect others and how these episodes play a central role in cognitive processes and behavior:

What distinguishes moods from emotions is their intensity. Moods are relatively low intensity feelings which do not interrupt ongoing activities. Emotions are high intensity feelings that are triggered by specific stimuli (either internal or external of the individual), demand attention, and interrupt cognitive processes and behaviors.

An example of the previous statement is the intense anger that a chef might experience upon learning that he or she lost a Michelin star (a hallmark of fine dining quality and restaurant excellence) by a lost opportunity from his line. The lost opportunity eases once the chef has recovered from the shock and decides how to deal with the situation. However, the anger lives on throughout the day in the form of a negative mood that influences the chef's interactions with his subordinates. For example, this anger can result in a person communicating rudely and expressing themselves in a hostile manner with the subordinates. Harming the natural state of the working flow in a kitchen area makes it uncomfortable for all of those in the space to work in a cohesive and effective way.

The idea that low-quality leadership has negative effects on employees is not new. The negative and unfair treatment of the line (cooks usually in charge of prepping ingredients and assembling dishes in a restaurant) by its chef should not be new either. Research conducted by Kelloway, et al. (2012) to connect leadership and employee psychological well-being, has repeatedly focused on the damaging effects of poor leadership. Increased levels of employee stress and distress, anxiety, depression, and psychosomatic symptoms are just a few of the consequences brought on by negative leadership. Kelloway, et al. (2012) also describe the effects of poor leadership on physical disturbances such as increased blood pressure, as well as sickness, absenteeism and presenteeism, forcing individuals into an unsafe - both emotionally and physically - workplace. For instance, low levels of trust will continuously create harsh behaviors from the chef and the cooks, and the psychological well-being of all participants within the kitchen

will be put at serious risk. With this in mind, there is a suggestion being brought up: interventions to achieve high quality leadership in the workplace need to be associated not only with enhanced work performance and occupational safety, but also with enhanced psychological well-being on and off the job brought by a charismatic and positive leadership style that includes equal treatment for men and women. Consequently, creating a more accepting environment where work performance is improved due to good treatment of the employees, provides more quality in the food preparation and in the service provided.

Given that chefs tend to become the core source for a balanced or unbalanced environment across the kitchen area, emotional intelligence essentially encompasses one's ability to accurately reflect on moods and manage them. George (2000) describes how emotional intelligence entails being able to manage one's own feelings, as well as managing the moods and emotions of others. This leads to having a hostile environment at work, or an inviting one where a creative brainstorm can occur to collaboratively raise a chef and their kitchen's culinary excellence. It is best for women to continue leading in a positive manner, and men must stop the authoritarian (almost tyrant) leadership style to stimulate a cohesive and less masculinized environment. One of the major issues noted by Bailey (2014) is that men have an over-inflated view of their own ability and women really do make better leaders. Interesting enough, Bailey's participants described men as experts and women as more inclusive leaders.

### **Gender, Labor Rights and the Culinary Field**

It is nothing new to understand how systems of power impact those who are most marginalized in society. Intersectionality, as per Collins (2016), considers how various aspects of humanity such as class, race, sexual orientation, disability and gender, do not exist separately from each other but are dependent on each other. Social institutions, just like the culinary industry and any high class kitchen, perpetuate social injustice by violating the basic rights of those who are located lower in the hierarchy of the kitchen due to their race, gender, immigration status, class and disabilities.

Bernhardt, et al. (2009), produced an interesting report that exposes how core protections in the work place in the U.S. are violated. The right to be paid the minimum wage, the overtime hours, the meal breaks, access to workers' compensation, and better working conditions are not a reality for every American worker. In 2008, the authors conducted a survey of 4,387 workers in low-wage industries (like the kitchen and restaurant area) in the three largest U.S. cities: Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City. They found:

There are significant, pervasive violations. Workers are being paid less than the minimum wage and not receiving overtime pay. They are working off the clock without pay, and not getting meal breaks. When injured, they are not receiving workers' compensation. And they are retaliated against when they try to assert their rights or attempt to organize (Bernhardt, et al., 2009, p.4).

Eventually, workers in low-wage industries (cooks included) experience serious violations to their primary rights. The report explains how violation rates are especially high for workers in care-giving occupations and restaurants. But why do these low-wage workers underreport the violations? And are there gendered patterns involved? To answer this question, it is important to note that foreign-born Latino workers have the highest minimum wage violation rates and the highest meal break violations, and there are a high number of Latinos working inside the kitchen.

Krogstad, et al. (2018) reported that 7 million unauthorized immigrants worked in the U.S., and currently the U.S. workforce includes an estimated 7.8 million unauthorized immigrants. The workforce is distinct from the total estimated population of 11 million unauthorized immigrants, since some of those 11 million are not a part of the workforce. Michael Nicholson (2017) explains how the immigrants represented 4.9 percent of the U.S. labor force in low-wage jobs (although they comprised only 3.5 percent of the U.S. population), and because they are immigrants, they often do not report any violations. They prefer to remain silent to avoid being in the spotlight and getting their immigration status questioned. Moreover, if a worker gets injured in the workplace, most of them have to pay out of pocket and still continue to underreport

the incidents because they fear deportation. Sadly, only six percent of all low-wage workers get medical bills covered by their employer (Bernhardt, et al., 2009, p. 34). Therefore, the line cooks/chefs/dishwashers, and others in the hierarchy are probably getting their core protections severely violated and their hard work, long hours standing, the cuts and burns, plus the physical and psychological distress are not being properly treated nor remunerated.

Fred Decker (n.d.), a trained chef and certified food-safety trainer, writes about the gender gap for chef's salaries. Decker found females on average earn \$16,000 less than their male counterparts. A restaurant cook's salary is pretty low compared to other jobs in the social services industry. According to US News & World Report (2016) a restaurant cook's average salary was \$25,430, while chefs and head cooks made an average salary of \$47,390. So the gap would reflect higher status positions given to men — No doubt men, like in almost every other profession, lead the culinary world too.

Moreover, there is what is considered protection for the chefs and those who invest in the chef: the entrepreneurs. Protecting the cuisine under intellectual property was the most talked about subject throughout the work by Cunningham (2009). This culture of secrecy can also lead to the protection of the chef's actions, including workplace abuses. High profile chefs, such as Gordon Ramsay, Bobby Flay, Anthony Bourdain, Jamie Oliver and Wolfgang Puck, all became brands. Consequently, these chefs represent a significant value that is generated by successful male chefs and whatever they produce in public kitchens/businesses becomes a part of their brand. As a result, many investors want to demand intellectual property protections. Simply because the name of a male chef and its creations become a brand, there is no reason why those beneath that name (like women laborers or male subordinates) should not be protected against the violations of their individual basic rights. Although this may be true, copyright laws traditionally have not protected individual recipes. The U.S. Register of Copyrights notes that:

Mere listings of ingredients as in recipes, formulas, compounds or prescriptions are not subject to copyright protection [unless] [they are] accompanied by sub-

stantial literally expression in the form of an explanation or directions, or when there is a combination of recipes, as in a cookbook (Cunningham, 2009, p. 27).

Regardless of the fear for a growing culinary trend to be copied by others, chefs in the culinary world consider cooking as an artistic process and mentoring process. Those working in the culinary field allow this because they are hoping that cooks can eventually recreate the technique to successfully allow the culinary arts to reinvent itself over and over again. The American Culinary Federation describes the goals of apprenticeship as gaining knowledge of the history and evolution of the culinary arts to pay it forward and spread the word (Cunningham, 2009, p.25). Therefore apprenticeships become a major key for enculturation, learning and teaching the roles, norms, and expectations of performing in the kitchen.

Audre Lorde (cited in Kolmar & Bartkowski, 2013) recognizes sexism as the belief of superiority of one sex over the other and how this superiority inevitably permits the dominance of the inferior sex. Lorde also explains how our Westernized culture has had to learn to coexist with men, and how we have been taught to recognize the differences between genders continuing with the old dominant relationship where the oppressed must adapt to the differences in order to survive. Moreover, the masculine domination structure seen at professional kitchens usually harms women, and consequently sexual inappropriate abusive behaviors tend to affect women (and sadly those behaviors remain covered up through the culinary structure of secrecy). Tracie McMillan (2017), a female considering culinary school, describes her experience as a victim of sexual violence and gender inequality in the kitchen. She wrote for the *New York Times* about how harassment in restaurants is nearly universal. Two-thirds of female restaurant workers reported experiencing sexual harassment from management in a 2014 survey, and 80 percent reported it from co-workers. According to McMillan, the most common abuse reported was the kind of sexual teasing and jokes that preceded her assault. Most women responded the same way: they ignored it. As a further matter, most recently, Chef Mario Batali sold his stocks and ownership to his restaurants a year after reports of sexually assaulting and harassing women emerged.

Just like McMillan, Julia Moskin (2019) also wrote for the *New York Times*, and reported how Batali will no longer profit from the restaurants because of the sexual harassment accusations.

Not only is abuse sexual, but also verbal. Amanda Bootes (2017), a food, fitness and lifestyle blogger, stresses how each kitchen that she has worked in has reflected a wider culture of institutionalized racism, sexism and homophobia, where insults or putdowns are used daily and actively encouraged. Unethically, men portray expertise and hide their weaknesses through this trade secret law, and through this same law they manage to manipulate and control the system to keep women marginalized. Unfairly, the trade secret law oppresses women by protecting and privileging the men on top of the culinary ladder: chefs, restaurateurs, managers, investors and entrepreneurs.

The uncomfortable truth is that you do not need to find a secret text from a chef to read a more specific and colorful version of that. It is in Anthony Bourdain's best-selling book, *Kitchen Confidential* (2000), in which the author/chef reveals the standards of male domination and toughness in the culinary field. Bourdain pinpointed kitchen inequalities and macho attitudes in the food industry. Related to the sexism and abuse, Bootes also explains how Gordon Ramsay's, or even Anthony Bourdain's, images help build the idea that abusive behavior is normal, and therefore, constantly adopted by many chefs. Sadly, for most male chefs, a razor-sharp tongue is as much an essential part of their kit as their knives. For example, male chefs use abusive words to delineate hierarchy and marginalize women, who are usually at a lower level in the hierarchy culinary structure.

In a nutshell, gendered norms attached to everyday activities, such the roles attached to cooking, are constantly evolving, yet clear patterns of gender inequality remain. Constantly, women represented in popular culture as professional chefs in food media typically fail at femininity if they prioritize their role as experts over their role as nurturers. For men, the reverse tends to happen. To function effectively as men, they often must show expertise in professional kitchens and they shall not show any feelings that relate to caring. Moreover, cooking competition TV shows, such as *MasterChef* and *Top Chef*, are structured in a hypermasculinized way,

and as a consequence, reinforce a hierarchy and power structure where men are usually positioned in top positions and women in lower positions. Furthermore, leadership is without doubt gendered. Some scholars argue that women employ a more feminine leadership style than men that involves giving greater attention to women's issues and creating a less hierarchical, more participatory work environment. Research emphasizes the importance of female leaders and recommends the reduction of hierarchies to place more coaches and team leaders as role models. Unfortunately, most male-dominated environments, like professional kitchens, are extremely difficult for women, and female authorities tend to encounter more dislike and rejection from their male counterparts. Also, workers in the kitchen and restaurant industry are having their core protections significantly violated. My research explores the reproduction of male domination in the culinary industry through the eyes of minorities in a minority-majority city. By conducting the research in a minority-majority city often led gender to feel more central to participants' identities. This made El Paso an ideal context for understanding gender relations and gender inequality within the culinary industry, contributing primarily to the bodies of literature related to sociology of gender and food studies.

## **Data and Methods**

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

Jankowski and Wester (2015) describe how interpretive social inquiry has been successfully practiced in many social sciences and is very prominent in the field of sociology. The essence of interpretive sociology is the analysis of interpretation through the understanding and the meaning that people give to their actions. Jankowski and Wester (2015) explain how this interpretation of social action can be achieved through in-depth interviews that can serve as the primary medium to learn more about the everyday interaction in the absence of participant observation. Therefore, this research is primarily qualitative and consists of 12 in-depth semi-structured interviews with men and women in the culinary labor field in the Southwest border of the U.S. in the city of El Paso, Texas. It consists of interviews as the primary method because, absent the opportunity to observe behaviors, interviews allowed me to discover via the participants' personal stories the daily experiences of those who labor within the kitchen industry in a minority-majority city. The stories note broader patterns by gender and respond to my research questions with details and information that support my analysis.

I conducted 12 interviews, since this is considered an appropriate sample size for achieving data saturation for qualitative analysis (Corbin and Strauss 1990). Corbin and Strauss (1990) have defined the concept data saturation as the point at which no new insights, themes, or issues are identified for a particular data category. To recruit participants, I contacted individuals who identified as chefs and cooks living in El Paso via social media (such as Facebook and Instagram), and I also visited local restaurants in the El Paso area to introduce myself and invite chefs to participate. Participants did not receive any monetary incentives. I simply paid for the coffee and pastries at the coffee/tea shop where we agreed to meet.

A semi-structured interview format was used to guide the interview. The interview guide covered questions about 1) how individuals have experienced their work in relation to their gender; 2) how they think gender shapes their interactions with co-workers, subordinates, and superiors; 3) the patterns of how men and women are treated; 4) how gender contributes to reprimand

and discipline; 5) and lastly, managerial approaches in the kitchen. The full interview guide is attached as Appendix I. The average length of the 12 interviews was 60 minutes, with the minimum being 45 minutes and the maximum being 1 hour and 34 minutes. The interviews were conducted between July and November 2018 at a mutually agreed time and coffee/tea shop around the West and Central El Paso area with the participant.

All research materials were available in both English and Spanish so that the interview could be conducted in the language of preference of the participant (3 in English and 9 in Spanish). With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and manually transcribed and coded by myself.

### **Statement of Positionality**

I was born in Mexico and lived there until I was 18 years old before I migrated with a student visa to attend school and start my graduate studies at the University of Texas at El Paso, leaving behind my family, my community, my country and my culture. El Paso is a bilingual community and I am a Mexican woman who identifies as a bilingual individual who felt very comfortable with interviewing participants that physically and emotionally relate to my physical features and identity as a minority. It was a real honor to learn about the participant's experiences in the culinary arts industry through their own words and stories to analyze performativity in the absence of observing behaviors.

### **Participants**

This research involved men and women, all above the age of eighteen, who worked in professional kitchens in the El Paso region as either chefs or line cooks. None of them were owners (even though some restaurants were family owned, the owners were a parent and not the participants). The average age was 29, with an age range of 21 - 44, and the average time in profession which was 7.3 years, with the minimum being 4 months and the maximum being 18 years. Also important to note is that I was able to stratify the sample by gender and conduct half of the interviews with men (6) and half with women (6). The purpose of this was so that gender

could become a central analytical variable to my research, and to ensure that I could capture the experiences of both men and women through the interview process. It was also important to consider one's status in the culinary hierarchy (usually male chefs are higher in the ladder, and women and minority groups are at the lower levels of the hierarchy), as this can shape power dynamics and how participants relate to gender performativity and gender inequality. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the participants.

**Table 1: Demographics of 12 Interview Participants**

Participant's Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Type of Restaurant	Time in Profession
Maria	Female	23	Bistro	4 Months
Javier	Male	26	Upscale	2 Years
Andrew	Male	34	Family Owned	14 Years
Brenda	Female	21	Upscale	1 Year
Carolina	Female	23	Upscale	5 Years
Enrique	Male	41	Bistro	18 Years
James	Male	30	Bistro	10 Years
Elisa	Female	28	Upscale	1 Year
Sebastian	Male	44	Family Owned	15 Years
Denisse	Female	27	Bakery	10 Years
Isabel	Female	25	Upscale	7 Years
Felipe	Male	26	Bistro	5 Years

**Location and Demographics**

This research was conducted with men and women in the El Paso, TX area. The area neighbors the southeastern corner of the state of New Mexico (about 45 minutes away from the city of Las Cruces) and the northeastern portion of the state of Chihuahua, with the city of Ciudad Juarez directly across from the El Paso border. The city of El Paso has an estimated population of 683,080, while the county has a population estimate of 837,918 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). U.S. Census Bureau (2016) data identifies El Paso as a minority-majority city, with the Hispanic/Latino population comprising 82.2% of the population. El Paso is an interesting place

to conduct this research as it offers a wide variety of cuisines and a wide range of foods from different cultures such as Mexican, Mediterranean, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Argentinian, Colombian, Puerto Rican, among others. Moreover, conducting this research in a minority-majority city was incredibly important as it highlights how racial dynamics were not a central part of most participants' experiences, as restaurant workers in El Paso were mostly Latino. This is likely distinct from the experiences of Latino workers in other parts of the country.

### **Data Analysis**

Several key themes and categories emerged from the data and were manually coded; the major themes included: 1) female and male role models; 2) paternalistic and maternalistic actions; 3) sense of belongingness; 4) sense of alienation; 5) values and attitudes by gender; 6) comfort zones and performativity; 7) oppression, domination and sexism; 8) social hierarchies; lastly, 9) financial and emotional insecurities. I focused on these key themes as they helped me answer my initial research questions by providing descriptive experiences related to gender perception within the culinary industry. The reality is that those experiences serve as a constant reminder of gender performativity, and also as examples of the issues brought by gender inequality inside the culinary field. These themes relate to my research questions also in a way that they allow me to evaluate if any of the aspects of gender performance reinforce or challenge gender inequalities.

The data was analyzed in three stages using narrative analysis and inductive reasoning (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The initial stage consisted of exploring seemingly relevant issues that emerged from the interviews and observations. I did this by locating those examples given by participants that seemed to repeat over and over again, in a different setting but with a similar storyline. In other words, the experiences and words used by the participants that became constant became relevant as an issue and as a probable category to be further analyzed. During the second stage, I was able to refer back to my codebook for the categories as well as for the sub-categories. After locating the repetitive words and the similarities I was able to come up with the main key themes, and also with the sub-themes as they related to the key theme. I used different

color highlighters and numbers to manually code the salient themes based on the codebook and its categories, as well as subcategories. The stories told by the chefs supplied evidence for the themes related to gender performativity and the gender inequalities found in the culinary industry as a labor field through the eyes of a majority Hispanic/Latino population. In the third and final stage, I used selective coding in order to compare the similarities and differences that could confirm my initial codes. I analytically went through all of my data collection and decided upon those themes and categories that answered to my research questions.

## Results

### Key Themes

The interviews with 12 participants provided 9 major key themes and the data within each interview is useful in order to offer an analysis of gender performativity and gender inequality inside the culinary industry. The following themes were salient: 1) female and male role models; 2) paternalistic and maternalistic actions; 3) sense of belongingness; 4) sense of alienation; 5) values and attitudes by gender; 6) comfort zones and performativity; 7) oppression, domination and sexism; 8) social hierarchies; and 9) financial and emotional insecurities. Looking at these issues through the eyes of minorities in a minority-majority city often led gender to feel more central to participants' identities than other axes of identity, and it also allowed me to examine the role of paternalism and the latent ways inequalities are reproduced in the culinary arts industry.

### *1. Female and Male Role Models*

Across the interviews, I noticed that most of the participating chefs had a female role model. Those female role models included a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and even a female successful TV personality and chef (Julia Child). Maria, Andrew, Brenda, Carolina, Enrique, Sebastian, Denisse, Isabel and Felipe (9 out of 12 participants, 4 males and 5 females) shared a personal connection with a female role model. Having a female role model was a main contributor to their decision in becoming a laborer within the culinary industry, marking a new perspective to how gender is described in the literature on leadership being without a doubt gendered, and how gender inequality is frequently reinforced by the leadership roles portrayed by men. It is important to consider it as a new point of view because as a Western society we tend to glorify males, and only males, as superheroes. Sadly, we tend to forget about women and we usually do not discuss the possibility of women as empowering positive leaders. Unconsciously (because we have been taught by our Westernized culture) we tend to accept the reproduction of gender inequality and reflect gender ideologies that inevitably produce inequalities. In specific

situations, such as the kitchen, we tend to have a perception of what a female role model is (a caring and comforting housewife) compared to what a male role model ideally represents (a hyper-masculine, extra popular and economically successful leader). The perception of female role models in the culinary field is slowly shifting and currently pushing for a more inclusive view of females in the field. This is how Carolina remembers her female role models:

Todo lo aprendí por mis abuelitas, con mi mamá... O sea de que yo empecé a cocinar sola... O sea de que ahí estaba paradilla viéndolas como hacían todo. Ya me metí yo un día, la verdad. Si nomas, fui nomas de yo brincar y lo voy a hacer.

I learned everything from my grandmothers, my mom... That's how I started cooking on my own... There I was standing, near the grill, watching them as they did everything. I got myself ready one day, really. That simple, I jumped and went for it.

Brenda and Sebastian talk about more than one role model. During their interviews, apart from the female role models, they also describe a male role model. The male role model becomes different than the female role model. This happens because the male role model was presented by the participants as a kitchen superhero, a professional teaching its skills to an apprentice. The male role model is seen as an idol and an art ambassador, and he is definitely not tied to a strong emotional bond (as it happened with the female role models). Brenda talks about an executive male chef she worked with as a major role model and a major contributor to her culinary career:

Más que en la escuela, el chef de ahí de Craftsmen. Y mmm... Pues mi mamá, sí. Me enseñó mucho a cocinar, pero eran más cosas así como caseras. No eran tantas cosas así como lo que me enseñó el, así más determinado, más profesional, más como arte como quien dice. Con mi mamá era más como que lo que haría tu abuelita, cosas así.

Even more than at school, the chef from Craftsmen. And hmm ... Well, my mom, yes. She taught me a lot, but they were more simple homemade things. There were not so determined nor professional, like the ones he taught me, more professional, more like art. With my mom it was more like what your grandma would do, things like that.

Sebastian relates to two major male TV personalities and chefs: Martin Yan, from the TV show “If Yan Can Cook”, and Enrique Olvera, executive chef and kitchen leader behind the world famous restaurant “Pujol” in Mexico City. Even though his main role models were men, Sebastian describes a short connection to Julia Child from when he was a kid and how he believes it all started at a very young age for him:

Entonces los sábados te levantabas temprano para ver las caricaturas en las mañanas en la tres diferentes principales - ABC, CBS, NBC - este... Pero después que se acababan las caricaturas, justo después yo le cambiaba al PBS. Este... Porque en PBS empezaban los programas de cocina. Entonces salía Julia Child, salía... A mí el que más me gustaba era un Chinito que se llamaba... Me acuerdo que se llamaba “If Yan can Cook”, y era un Chinito que era un maestro picando, y yo lo veía y decía ¿cómo le hace? Me llamaba mucho la atención. Y entonces ¿cómo empiezo? Pues yo creo que empiezo de niño.

So on Saturdays you would get up early to see the cartoons during the mornings at the three different main - ABC, CBS, NBC - ehm... But when the cartoons were over, right after I would switch to PBS.. Because it was at PBS where the cooking shows would began to air. Then Julia Child would come on, another one was... The one I liked the most was the one about a Chinese called... I remember that it was called "If Yan can Cook", and it was about a Chinese chopping master, and I saw it and said to myself ‘how does he do it?’ It really caught my attention. So how do I start? Well, I think I started when I was a child.

Javier is the only one who shared a few personal stories about male role models, and he mainly described a male friend that knew how to create dough and bake artisanal breads as the main contributor for him to want to venture into the culinary arts world:

Y haz de cuenta que ahí estuvo mi introducción, porque el chavo yo lo conocí mientras yo estaba en la universidad, y el es panadero. Él estudió gastronomía en Puebla. Y de repente, cuando venía a la ciudad de vacaciones, me juntaba con él en su casa y me enseñó a hacer pan. Muy básico, un pan artesanal. Y ya era de que ‘ay que padre, algún día voy a estudiar, algún día.’

And that’s how I got introduced, because the guy, whom I met while I was in college, was a baker. He studied gastronomy in Puebla. And suddenly, when he came into the city on vacation, I would join him at his house and he would teach

me to make bread. Very basic, an artisanal bread. From that time on I was like 'oh that's cool, someday I will study it too, someday.'

Although, James and Elisa are the only two participants who do not mention any role models throughout their interviews, 10 out of 12 participants described how a role model marked the initial point of curiosity to join the culinary arts industry. The participating chefs highlighted U.S. and Mexican role models, and I believe this happened because of the major Mexican culture influence and the strong Latin connections people living at the Southern border of the U.S. experience. Role models in their early and even late life stages pinpointed how gender performativity is challenged and also reinforced. It is challenged in a way that most role models were women and that these kitchen laborers mostly looked up to a maternal female figure as a symbol of empowerment compared to the invisible male role model (as the male role model was not even really described by the participants). Therefore, women are seen as a strong role model in the kitchen, yet when women are employed in the kitchen in a professional capacity, they are often hired in subordinate positions to men. Moreover, gender inequality is here being reinforced by the idea that male cooks are more professional and determined than women in the kitchen arena, and as a consequence, there are more men than women in higher positions.

## ***2. Paternalistic and Maternalistic Actions***

Male participants embrace a paternalistic attitude of protecting the female laborers in the kitchen. As per their participation on this research, the male chefs and cooks currently understand the new anti-sexual assault and women's empowerment movements, such as the #MeToo and Time's Up movements. Therefore, the men within the study have shifted their controlling ways into more protective and inclusive ways. They consider themselves supporters of the new movements by being more cautious of the ways they offer some help in the kitchen. They tend to avoid insensitive comments about their female coworkers, sexual impertinent attitudes toward women in the kitchen, and treating women as an inferior, submissive and sexual element in the culinary industry. However, the support provided is sometimes done in a paternalistic way, which

reinforces gender inequalities in more subtle ways. Javier and Andrew provide examples of this. Javier shares how he needs to be more careful in the way he speaks to women compared to men:

Debo de tener cuidado de como decir las cosas y debo entender algunas cosas. Hay que tener otro tipo de pláticas con ellas. Con un poco mas de tacto, diferente a como es con los hombres.

I must be careful about how I say things and I must understand certain things. You have to have another type of conversations with them. A little more finesse, different from how it is with men.

And Andrew recognizes the slow progress for women's rights and respect inside the kitchen:

Guys to females... The guy will hold back because of... Again... Most will hold back because they don't want to get in trouble for something they say. Either they don't want to get in trouble for assaulting them, or saying something that can be like sexual harassment, or something like that. I think most guys, these days, are more careful. Which is a good thing, I mean it should've been a long time ago but... The kitchen is just one of those areas, that I feel like it's one of the last places to see any progress.

Men in this research employ paternalistic attitudes, like those described by Andrew where he understands the effect of abusive behaviors and prefers not to participate in those actions. Being somewhat protective reinforces gender inequalities as the paternalistic attitudes hide actions that could be confusing to the other gender and minorities. It is because of a major fear of being accused of perpetrators of any type of violence that men these days act in paternalistic and protective ways to safeguard minorities, and women mainly, but not other men in the industry.

Women in the kitchen employ a trustworthy and very devoted character, as per the stories told by the participants. They perform their maternalistic side by protecting the entire team and maintaining a caring attitude. The female kitchen laborer will go above and beyond her responsibilities by showing she is devoted to the cause. As shown through the interviews, female chefs with maternalistic qualities tend to cover all of the essentials of a professional kitchen and make sure that everything is kept under control. Felipe expresses how he does not consider himself a

supporter of the hyper-masculine chef and how he even enjoys having more women than men in his kitchen. He describes women as hard workers and outstandingly loyal in the culinary industry:

Por el hecho de que tengo preferencia de que haya mujeres en mi cocina. Se oye muy machista ¿no? Pero no... Yo mas bien lo digo por el hecho de que veo que trabajan mejor, me dan mas confianza, me han demostrado más lealtad. Hasta menos volatilidad en el hecho de que al principio he tenido chavos que empiezan a trabajar y estoy impresionado con ellos. Pasan unos meses y 'él' pasó de ser de mi confianza y ya solo quiero que se vaya. Y las mujeres al contrario. Osea empiezan y... Tengo una chavita que empezó trabajando en barra y así como muy calladita... Y dije "esta me cae muy bien, y es muy linda, y sonriente, y siento que me va a ayudar con el servicio al cliente..." Cuando me fui a España y regrese, o sea ella ya tenía todo controlado. En vez de estar enfrente, estaba en cocina. Ella sabía todo. Me estuvo ayudando mi familia con el negocio y ella también ayudaba con facturas y todo. Ella puede todo. No se le cae el mundo.

Because of the fact that I have a preference for women in my kitchen. It might seem very macho, right? But not really... I actually say it because of the fact that I see how they work better, I trust them more, they've shown me more loyalty. They're even less volatile. I've had young males that start working with me and I'm impressed by them. A few months pass by, and 'he' happens to shift from being my most trusted cook to someone I just want out of my kitchen. And the contrary happens with women. So they start and... I have a girl who started working at the bar and she was very quiet ... And I said to myself 'I like her, and she's very nice, and smiley, and I feel she's going to help me with customer service...' When I went to Spain and returned, she already had everything under control. Instead of being in the front she was already back in the kitchen. She knew everything. My family helped me with the business and she also helped with bills and everything. She could do everything. The world doesn't fall apart for her.

Three women in the research were already mothers: Carolina, Denisse and Isabel. They had gone through a pregnancy already and therefore have experienced the biological/hormonal changes and processes tied to maternal physiological and emotional behaviors. They already know about what motherhood really means, and in a way, they have transferred their maternal instincts and attitudes into the kitchen. For example, Isabel does not feel very comfortable at be-

ing strict but she understands that it is necessary for the team and its members' sake. Women typically view constructive criticism as a necessary process of offering valid and well-reasoned opinions about the work of others. Just like mothers do with their children, they provide feedback for their well-being and for a larger benefit in the long run. The opinions made by Isabel usually involve both positive and negative comments, in an empathetic manner rather than a defensive one.

Tienes que entender que uno para sobrepasar sus metas y límites, tiene que aceptar críticas. Aceptarlas y empezar a darlas. Aunque yo soy malísima en darlas. Porque no quiero hacer a alguien sentirse mal por lo que yo tenga que decir. Pero al mismo tiempo es crecimiento. O sea de que... Eventualmente, la crítica va formándonos y nos ayuda a entender como funcionamos mejor.

You have to understand that in order to surpass your own goals and limits, you need to learn how to accept constructive criticism. Accept criticism and learn how to give it out as well. Although I'm very bad at providing it. Because I do not want to make anyone feel bad for what I have to say. But at the same time I understand that it serves as a learning experience. So... Eventually, the criticism is training us and helping ourselves to understand how we work better.

The patterns of women leading in a kitchen with a sense of acceptance and the need to provide constructive criticism relates back to the ways gender is performed in the kitchen. As reflected in the interviews, women tend to employ a supportive, helpful, welcoming and understanding character as team members in the industry, whereas male participants in the study often portrayed paternalistic approaches towards other women, and women only. The men in this study try to protect themselves from being accused of being perpetrators by offering protection (showing some type of extra care with females in the kitchen) and reinforcing gender inequality in more subtle ways so they tend to enact "fatherly" roles, not realizing that by doing so they are setting limitations to women.

### ***3. Sense of Belongingness***

Throughout the comments and experiences of most participants, the idea that the kitchen staff functions as a family became more and more relevant. The day-to-day interactions and rou-

tine increases the connections of laborers in the culinary field and builds strong relationships between themselves. For those who take a part in the back of restaurant, their job space and their co-workers become a second family.

Gender roles are significant to how families function. The socio-cultural norms of the Westernized society we live in have pre-designed gender roles that help members of a family to run the family with specific responsibilities. The roles inherited by gender in a way favor the functioning of a family, and in this case, the kitchen. Powerful bonding opportunities in the field seemingly form strong relationships that hereafter allows for almost all cooks and chefs to feel as a part of a second family with their kitchen mates.

Even though the kitchen is considered to be extremely demanding, the participants enjoy the dynamics of the everyday tests and threats the culinary industry represents. The interviewees all talked about the scars they have thanks to the dangers of cooking at a daring fast pace and with a constant feeling of urgency. It is firing hot and then it is intrepidly cold in the kitchen, and they frequently cannot have a seat or even a proper meal. However, all of them (regardless of gender) feel good about the dynamics of the kitchen, and they also feel grateful about the people they meet as a second family and the professional experience they earn with time. Brenda expresses how enriching it was for her to be a part of the culinary industry and how the people in the industry have allowed her to understand other countries through the art of cooking, like when a sibling goes overseas and comes back to teach what he or she learned at other countries:

Aunque era una chinga como quien dice, estaba muy, muy padre. Conocí a muchas personas, muchas diferentes maneras de pensar, muchas maneras de ver, gente de... No de todo el mundo, pero gente de muchas partes de Latinoamérica que venía a trabajar acá con nosotros y pues conocí varias partes del mundo a través de lo que ellos cocinaban.

Although it was a real pain, it was really, really cool. I met a lot of people, very different ways of thinking, many ways of seeing, people from... Not from all around the world, but people from many parts of Latin America who came to work here with us, so I learned about various parts of the world through what they cooked.

Moreover, even when the comments and the criticism were harsh, the sense of belonging to a disciplined community makes them feel accepted and acknowledged for their hard work. Similarly to the way anyone feels when a parent disciplines us when we have committed an error, we may feel annoyed at the beginning but we eventually accept the reprimand as we know it's for our well-being and convenience. The bonds and friendships nurtured in a kitchen create a welcoming environment for colleagues to maintain their true self, as it tends to happen in any family. For kitchen laborers it feels like a second family, and because they are usually all under the same rough circumstances, this is where gendered expectations may go unnoticed. Participants had a supportive spirit due to the satisfaction and convenience of standing together as a team to get the job done successfully. It is through this spirit that kitchen laborers forget gender divisions and push each other the same way family members are supposed to do. Carolina mostly describes it this way:

Si pasé por muchas cosas de que comentarios y así, pero ya nomas es crecer y sobrepasarlos. Y con los otros empleados, está super raro porque te haces una familia, pasas más tiempo en la cocina con tus compañeros que con tu familia. Entonces al final de todo te haces una familia, entonces no hay división en el contacto, en la conexión con tus empleados o con los otros trabajadores. O sea como que al final estás con familia y es trabajo en equipo. Es levantarnos el uno al otro, apoyo del uno al otro. Osea que no, con el género no creo que me traten distinto por ser mujer.

Yes I indeed went through many things and comments, but it is just a matter of growing and surpassing them. And with the other employees, it's super weird because you create a family, you spend more time in the kitchen with your colleagues than you do with your family. Then, by the end you become a family, so there is no division in the contact, in the connection with your employees or with the other workers. I mean, like in the end you're with family and it's all about teamwork. It is about lifting each other up, supporting each other. So no, on regards to gender, I don't think they treat me differently because I'm a woman.

Along these line of community and the sense of belonging to a second family, James feels like the relationships he has built in the kitchen are stronger and even more real than other

friendships outside the field. He says that no matter how he is doing mentally, his kitchen friends have truly been there for him and have shown that they care for him under all circumstances, similar to the ways a sibling, parent, cousin or grandparent will comfort with compassion:

I've made a lot of friends: chefs, owners, fellow chefs, people to whom to this day I can call and still have respect for me, no matter what my mental state is. They have been there for me even after a lot of things going wrong, like failed relationships, homelessness... And they have helped me more, even more than my "close" friends for the past decade or so. So yeah, it's nice.

Sebastian even describes himself and others in the field as some sort of socially unadapted human beings that can really relate to each other. This relation between themselves is what allows them to open up to each other and build a strong brotherhood connection. The different personalities add up to a whole, balancing the qualities and imperfections. It creates a counterbalance like with the members in a family. And not only between men, but even with women, where all members open up to each other and even learn about the intimacy of their lives. It becomes natural for laborers in the culinary industry to consider their kitchen mates to be members of a brotherhood or sisterhood; they all become a part of a subculture of affiliation and comradeship, as Sebastian describes it:

Y este de una manera bien extraña, yo creo que todos los que nos gusta la cocina tenemos algo de inadaptados sociales. Entonces, este... Porque no es muy normal, es muy diferente que te guste en tu casa pero ya en un restaurante no es muy normal. Hay una subcultura interesante y una camaradería muy fuerte en las cocinas. Convives mucho tiempo. El... No se como te ire a decir... Todos sabemos la broncas de todos... Osea es como una familia, no es broma. Es extraño eh... Por ejemplo, para la pareja de una cocinera es un shock, "o sea, ¿cómo saben ustedes tanto de mi morra?" Tantos detalles íntimos. Es un shock. O sea hay una camaradería fuertísima. Y como cuates. Este... Eso está bien, es algo extraño. Para uno no porque está dentro, pero para la pareja de uno es "que?! Les platicaste que?!"

And in a very strange way, I think that all of us who like cooking may be some sort of social misfits... Because it's not very normal, it's very different that you enjoy it at home, but that you enjoy doing it at a restaurant it's not very normal.

There is an interesting subculture and a very strong comradeship in the kitchens. You spend a long time in there. I don't know how to say it... We all know about everyone's conflicts... It's like a family, it's not a joke. It's strange... For example, for a cook's partner it's a shock, "I mean, how do you know so much about my girl?" So many intimate details. It's a shock. There is a very strong comradeship. And as friends. It's fine. It's kind of strange. For those in the inside it's not strange, but for one's partner it's like "what?! You told them what?!"

The role of fictive kinship reinforces the roles that men and women portray as a paternal or maternal figure, inevitably shaping gender performativity in the kitchen and highlighting the roles for men and for women working in the field. What's expected and how to reproduce gender is well understood by the participants and they understand that performativity in the culinary field is naturally divided by gender.

#### ***4. Sense of Alienation***

Gendered patterns without a doubt create a division and alienation. A condition of feeling isolated by a low degree of interaction with those who are outside of the culinary industry is common for those who labor in a kitchen. Four women and three men (58.3% of the participants) talked about feeling alienated from their families, friends and other important relationships. The time they are required to spend in a kitchen (while doing their jobs the best way possible) on every single shift restricts these individuals from spending quality time with those who are outside the kitchen.

Carolina, Denisse, and Isabel (all working mothers) feel consumed by the amount of time they spend at their jobs, and even though they feel passionate about food and their jobs, they resent missing time away from their children. In a way, they feel like they are being estranged from their performative role as mothers. This is how Denisse expresses her frustration about being away from her three children:

Some days is a little difficult... Because I have 3 kids at home. I haven't seen them in like two weeks. And they like live with me, but it's like I leave before they wake up and then they have kind of an early sleep. So some days it's like I'm sitting here and I'm like dang I really want to see my kids, you know? But

they know, and they understand like the sacrifice. And I mean, when people tell me like “I want to be a chef”, I’m like “don’t do it” and I’m like “if you’re gonna do it don’t get married, don’t have kids... Because it’s not a conducive lifestyle.”

The long working and standing hours causes a low degree of integration and a high degree of isolation from those who are not in the kitchen. The individual working in a kitchen usually finishes a shift feeling exhausted and with a real emotional and physiological need for recovery. Therefore, most of an individual’s social interaction occurs with those inside the kitchen. Sebastian explains what working and belonging to a restaurant’s kitchen feels like:

Se demanda mucho tiempo. Todas las jornadas son de 14 horas. Seis días a la semana. Métele una hora, ida y vuelta de ir al trabajo. Te queda horario para una cosa. Pa’ dormir. Toda tu interacción social está en el restauaran. Todo. Tu co-torreo, tu platicar, tus emociones, todo está ahí.

It takes a lot of time. All shifts are 14 hours long. Six days a week. Add an hour, round trip to work. You have time for one thing. Sleep. All of your social interaction is in the restaurant. All of your chatting, your conversations, your emotions, everything is there.

As per the experiences told, a strong sense of isolation and alienation from those outside the kitchen would also result from a sense of being controlled and dominated by those inside the kitchen. Elisa would sometimes feel exploited by the long working shifts, causing her to lie about her availability to work on certain days to simply spend at least a day of the week with her friends and family:

Eso si es horrible. Horrible. No tienes vida... O sea el restaurante proporcionar el mejor servicio, a fuerzas siempre va a ser el fin de semana y en las noches. Entonces tu lo que quieres, como persona normal, es disfrutar tu fin de semana... Libre, fuera... Con tus amigos y con la familia... Y... Yo siempre conté mentiras (*risas*), para salirme con la mía los domingos... “Saben que es que, yo los domingos, yo no puedo.”

That really is horrible. Horrible. You have no life. I mean, a restaurant wishes to provide the best service possible, and that will always happen during the week-ends and evenings. So like any other normal person, you really want to enjoy

your weekend... Free, out... With your friends and family... And... I had to tell some lies (*laughs*) to get out with a free day on Sundays... “You know what, the thing is that I can’t on Sundays.”

Therefore, Enrique and James acknowledge feeling alienated from their families and losing relationships due to their job as chefs. They have missed out on important days and special occasions, and because of the commitment it represents to belong to a restaurant’s kitchen, many of the laborers in a kitchen usually sacrifice family time. Regrettably, most of their personal interests and relationships have to be set aside, or they will get fired for a lack of commitment to the restaurant’s interests. James seriously mourns having to work on certain special occasions, as he has had to give up significant dates and time with his family:

Perdí mucho tiempo con la familia. No puedo estar ahí los birthdays, los holidays, los aniversarios, los días de las madres, san Valentín igual porque pues hay que trabajar... Mi cumpleaños, la última vez que lo celebré hace como unos 10 años... Mi aniversario también porque no hay chanza, lo celebramos either una semana antes o unas semanas después. Eso no me ha gustado, pero se adapta uno y se acostumbra... Esas son las cosas que uno tiene que sacrificar por el trabajo.

I lost a lot of time with my family. I can’t be there on birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, mother’s day, valentine’s day because I have to work. My birthday, the last time I celebrated was about 10 years ago. My anniversary too because there really is no way to celebrate it, we have to celebrate a week earlier or a week later. That I have not enjoyed, but you must adapt and get used to it... Those are the things one must sacrifice for the sake of keeping a job.

Lastly, this is how James described feeling isolated and losing relationships for his love of food and his passion for the industry:

So I love the kitchen, I love food, more than anything. I've actually given up everything to do this. I've lost relationships.. Uhm... But I love it.

This sense of isolation further emphasizes the importance of the bonds created within the kitchen. There is a natural human need to belong and to socialize within a system that accepts the

individual regardless of their qualities and imperfections. Therefore, if gendered hierarchies exist in the kitchen, then that experience really permeates the everyday lives of the workers.

### ***5. Values and Attitudes by Gender***

Female participants in the field value organization, aesthetics and portray an attitude of responsibility and being grateful. They tend to show a higher respect for the elements and the cooking processes of those elements. Male participants highly value their self-confidence and approve of being direct, firm, controlling, and even sometimes angry. Although later in this section more gendered patterns are described and highlighted, it is important to understand how the values and attitudes by gender reinforce gender performativity and the division of labor, setting men in higher positions with more authority and women in lower positions with less power control.

Regardless of gender, participants expressed how much they value and enjoy seeing clients happy. Getting things done in a way that consumers can really savor the plate presented to them and smile about the pleasure of eating it is what cooks and chefs really value. The smiles caused by a good meal are what keeps most of the interviewees in this field. The participants exhibited attitudes of gratification when they described how much they appreciated making their customers smile. Here is how Isabel, Enrique and James talked about it:

Isabel: Ya cuando llega el mesero y te dice “a la persona le encantó el plato que sacaste”, eso es como que “¡ah! gracias”, y con eso tienes a veces. O que llega el mesero y te enseña el plato que está limpio, esos son como que beneficios.

Then when the waiter comes and tells you “the client loved the plate you created”, that’s like “oh! thanks”, and that’s all you need. Or when the waiter comes and shows you an empty plate, those are the benefits.

Enrique: Cuando veo a los clientes sonreír y salir contentos. Que me llaman a las mesas a agradecerme, o que los meseros entran a la cocina y me dicen que tal mesa, o esto o lo otro. Con el ver el cliente contento.

When I see the clients smile and all content. When they call me to the table to thank me, or when the waiters come into the kitchen and tell me that this table, and this and that. With looking at the client all happy.

James: And whenever I see someone biting a piece of food and then they stop, that is the perfect point. Cuz they know they're in heaven. They love it. They're ecstatic. Perfect. Done. You feel good. At the end there's nothing like having a flawless service. Nothing sent back. Everyone's happy. You get happy, you get the smiles.

The women interviewed tended to value organization, aesthetic details and the agricultural efforts for food processes. They tend to show a constant preference for maintaining an organized attitude, and they feel like by being organized they can accomplish more and avoid being reprimanded. Paying close attention to the details and aesthetics of a plate is also another constant attitude portrayed by women in the kitchen. The way a plate is presented introduces the customer to the initial stage of admiring the entire creation of what they are about to introduce into their bodies. Therefore, having a mentality of responsibility and respect towards nature and those who work the land is another attitude in females. There is also a respect towards animals and all of nature's products. Maria, Brenda, Carolina, Elisa, and Denisse all shared an example of this:

Maria: Soy muy responsable. Me gusta que las cosas se hagan como yo las hago. Se trabaja más agusto organizado. Y me gusta que me corrijan. Aprendo, creo mucho en eso de que de lo errores se aprende. Y yo trato de que solo me corrijan una vez y ya no me vuelvan a corregir.

I'm very responsible. I like things to be done in the same way I do them. You can work better when you're organized. And I like to be corrected when I'm wrong. I learn, I strongly believe that we learn from our mistakes. And I try to be corrected once and only once.

Brenda: Porque tengo medio OCD con las cosas. Entonces si tenía que tener todo muy limpio, aunque estuviera ahogada en tickets, porque obviamente si no tienes todo limpio no puedes sacar las cosas rápido. Te beneficia a ti tener organizadas las cosas.

Because I have some sort of OCD with things. So I really had to have everything clean, even if I was full of tickets, because you obviously can't get things done faster if it's not clean. It really benefits you having things organized.

Carolina: Que todo se vea bonito. Que el plato de hoy sepa igual que el de ayer, o sea la consistencia. Eso es lo que estoy buscando. Y ya al final de todo es organización.

That everything looks pretty. That today's plate tastes the same as it did yesterday, so consistency. That's what I'm looking for. And at the end, it's all about organization.

Elisa: Pues organizada. Limpio. Osea si me trababa en muchas cosas, entonces me considero una persona muy lenta, porque me gusta que se vea espectacular, entonces detallista.

Well organized. Clean. Yes, I would consider myself one who takes some time to get things ready, but I would take my time because I wanted it to look spectacular, so I'm very detailed oriented.

Denisse: I like to instill in people passion for food. Uhm... The respect that you should have... You know especially when you are doing your proteins and meats, and things like that. Like it took a farmer in, I don't know, somewhere, and it took time, and effort and energy to grow this cow, that herb, those vegetables and all that like coming down to us. So always respect what you have in front of you, always respect employees in front of you.

The men interviewed are more self-confident, and sometimes even more rigid and confident about themselves than females are in the industry. They tend to portray a rough and even sometimes arrogant character as they tend to value attitudes that go in hand with being direct, assertive, firm, controlling, and even sometimes angry. The truth is that most of the male participants knew about the 'angry chef' term, and because they know what it entitles, they rather avoid being one. They for sure maintain their macho and bold persona; they present themselves as fearless and some sort of Mr. Right. Admitting the consequences of the hyper-masculine chef is nothing new to them, and therefore Enrique, James and Sebastian describe themselves the following way:

Enrique: So pretty much sería, no estricto pero... Este... Mmm... Estoy tratando de hacerme describe. Firm, assertive and to the point. Así. Si, eso, así.

So pretty much I'm, not strict but.. Um... I'm trying to describe myself... Firm, assertive and to the point. Yes. That's who I am.

James: But I love it, there's so much that food can speak about, so much that I can talk about, and once you lose the "I'm better than everyone, I'm cocky, I'm the shit, I'm the best, I'm el jefe." Once you lose that it's all fun. There's a term called the 'angry chef', and it's the chef that yells and throws, slams things, gets mad at clients, and pretty simple, an angry chef. Once I got rid of that, I'm easy. I'm the trouble maker. But not to cause problems, it's always just... If I see food is not done the right way, I'll do it the right way, or my way. Not saying my way is the right way, but my way through my extensive training...

Sebastian: Cuando recién empecé a tomar el control así de las cocinas y esto, como que de repente si me creí que tenía que gritar. Y este... Cuando abro Rosa Clara acá en El Paso, este... Hubo una vez que me quedé afónico... Y me dice mi hermano "güey, estás gritando un chingo. ¿Estás seguro de que esto es lo que te gusta?" Porque a todo mundo lo andaba pendejeando y a todo mundo gritando... Y este al quedarme afónico "¿qué me está pasando?" Este... No se, me ha tocado aprender a conocerme a mí mismo.

When I first started to take over the control of the kitchens I did feel like I had to scream. And... When I opened Rosa Clara (made up name) here in El Paso, um... There was a time when I lost my voice... And my brother told me "dude, you're screaming a lot. Are you sure that this is what you like?" Because I was making everyone feel stupid and I was yelling at everyone... So when I lost my voice, "what's wrong with me?" Um... I don't know, I've learned to know myself. self.

In comparison to women (who never expressed anything in regards to this), men show a more comfortable attitude when standing up for themselves and fighting for an equally respectful treatment from other men in the kitchen, no matter if it is a superior. They tend to value men in the kitchen and do not fear treating each other equally. Enrique, an executive chef, stood up for himself and requested respect from the restaurant's owner once:

Y le dije "sabe qué señor, yo a usted lo respeto como patrón y lo respeto como hombre, pero si me vuelve a levantar la palabra así como me la esta levantando

yo me voy a salir. Usted arreglárselas.” Ya de entonces me dio mucho más respeto él a mi.

So I told him “you know what sir, I respect you as my boss and I respect you as a man, but if you raise your voice again the same way you’re doing it, I will leave. You’ll have to manage it yourself.” Then, from that day on, he respected me as well.

On the other hand, it is especially important to notice how women in the research adopt a comfortable, supportive and peaceful attitude with new employees, and apparently men tend to feel disturbed with new people coming in. For women, it is even a relief to work with new employees as it allows them to influence the fresh cooks with more inclusivity and less gender bias in the industry. Denisse, like all other female participants, does not believe that one gender is intrinsically superior to another. She even embraces an attitude of acceptance and comfort regardless of gender with those new members. Denisse explains how she feels good about her actions and attitudes by teaching her co-workers what she’s learned in the past and how, compared to men, she does not fear her own job getting taken away by the newest addition to the kitchen team:

Because I’ve been at jobs where I’ve seen the new hiree come in, and like “ooh she’s coming after me” and then I’m just like “no, don’t be that way, like calm down. You need to be able to teach people what you learn.” I think that’s what it’s on the male side. I haven’t had any problems like with any female co-workers, they’ve always been the most driven actually to become better at their jobs.

These gendered patterns and values reflect a constant profile for men and an expected profile for women laboring in the kitchen. Women portray a more accepting character and men maintain most of the control over the decisions and the processes. The female cook represents inclusivity compared to the excessively dominant and self-confident male cook. In a subtle, but still noticeable, way these attitudes and values reinforce gender inequalities in the field inevitably setting men and women apart.

## **6. Comfort Zones and Performativity**

In a state of comfort, an individual feels at ease to express and be themselves in any environment. The truth is that nobody is perfect, but by feeling accepted anyone may feel empowered to act regardless of the gender expectations. Those traits that allow any person to get along with others are fully expressed in the kitchen, a well-known environment for its high pressures. James identifies how a kitchen correlates to the behind the scenes of any theatre performance, and in this case, the kitchen becomes the backstage of a restaurant. The kitchen represents one of the very few spaces where anyone is allowed, by feeling comfortable, to present their truest self. This is how James presents it:

Experience has taught me a lot. It made me realize what's going on behind the scenes. How people are acting, because obviously in the kitchen you act different than how you act in real life. You let your inner sinner come out. You're yourself in the kitchen, everyone's accepted. Like convicted felons, for one reason that's the only place where they're hired. You can be whoever you wanna be.

Women, like Maria, feel a certain sense of comfort by virtue of being the only woman in an all-male kitchen. It makes a woman feel especially talented because she has been accepted into the field and has broken the gender stereotypes. Maria, like many other women in this research, is a an empowered woman who has shown through her talent that she is deserving of her position and that she is not inferior to any of her male co-workers:

Por ser la única mujer ahí en Entreat me tratan como una princesa, yo creo. Eh... Pues ven al sexo de la mujer como el sexo débil. Entonces si se ve eso mucho. Que te digo, ya últimamente hemos cambiado mucho en el modo en el que ven eso de que yo no soy tan débil y... Pero, aún así se dio ese cariño de la única mujer en la cocina.

By being the only woman there in Entreat they treat me like a princess, I think. Uhm... Well they usually see women as the weak gender. So yes you do see that a lot. What can I say, lately we've changed the way they perceive that and that I'm no longer weak and... But even after that, I'm cared for by the fact that I'm the only woman in the kitchen.

In a state of discomfort, an individual feels uncomfortable and an urgent need to change things to find a sense of calm. By feeling discomfort, an individual notices how a certain situation or a specific attitude restricts them from performing well and to their fullest potential. When identifying a dissatisfying experience, a few of the participants feel naturally pressured by realizing that control, change and all extra efforts must be done and permitted to achieve equal treatment in the kitchen. Javier shares an experience where he felt uncomfortable about how males usually mistreat women:

A mí me toco mucho que a esta chava nueva se le acercaban - más uno que era como el más corriente de todos... De que llegaba y se metía al congelador y le apagaba la luz y se metía... Cositas así... Como incómodo... O sea, un aspecto como de acoso con esa chava... Pero o sea a que tiene que llegar para que... Se marque un límite cuando todos somos compañeros de trabajo.

To me it was very touching that this new girl was usually bothered - by one specifically, the most ordinary of all... Like he would come and get into the freezer and turn the lights off and get in... Things like that... Like uncomfortable... Like in an aspect of harassment with that girl... But what needs to happen for it to... For a limit to be set when we are all colleagues.

Subsequently, gender performativity and the expectations become challenged by the comfort zones. A sense of comfort allows an individual inside a kitchen to present their truest identity and self, whereas a sense of discomfort restricts the individual's performativity and pressures them into gender inequalities.

### ***7. Oppression, Domination and Sexism***

Unfortunately, there is a strong belief without any basis or proper information that oppresses, dominates and discriminates laborers in a kitchen based on a person's gender. There are plenty of sexist characteristics that consistently fall into sexism practices inside the culinary field in El Paso. Furthermore, the secrecy structure in the industry can also lead to the protection of men's actions, and without doubt, to reinforcing gender inequality. Masculine domination over women is not a new topic, and consequently, sexually inappropriate and abusive behaviors re-

main covered up by the people in the field. Sexual inappropriate behaviors largely affect women, as it is women who are predominantly linked to the idea that they are intrinsically inferior to men and boys. The following example by Denisse presents one of the most disturbing encounters that the participants have had throughout their professional careers in the field. Denisse herself went through a horrid moment of unwanted touching and nobody acted to protect her from the domination, oppression and sexist actions of a man in the kitchen:

I remember one time I walked into a freezer and a cook walked right behind me, and he like held the door. I'm trying to like walk out and he's like holding the door so I can't walk out, and he starts to grab me. And I'm like "what the fuck is this? What are you doing?" And he's like "well isn't that why you're here?" It's like "EXCUSE ME, I'm here to work. Who are you?" So I had to report him and even when I did report him, nothing happened.

Above all, many of the participants reported that there are more abusive practices, while others are more latent. Sadly, an attitude of excessive flirting, dirty jokes, and unwanted touching is described as a consistent action portrayed by males in the field in the minority-majority city of El Paso. Female and male participants shared a few stories of the ways males impersonate attitudes that denigrate other men and women in the kitchen. The sexist and oppressive actions represented by men may be a reaction to their masculinity being threatened by the minority groups' presence in a place men dominate and usually control. The following examples by Maria, Andrew, and Carolina allow me to believe that the derogatory flirting, joking and touching by males are simply a response to how men feel their masculinity is being challenged by the increasing presence of females and other minority groups being accepted into the kitchen:

Maria: Entre los hombres todos se tratan igual. Juegan mucho, se alburean mucho.

Between men they all treat each other the same way. The joke around a lot, they make disparaging jokes.

Andrew: As far as guys, they play jokes with each other all the time. The kitchen staff is usually the dirtiest... They make the worse jokes. Yeah, all my experi-

ences have cooks telling the dirtiest jokes. But when things get tough they will insult each other and they will call each other names.

Carolina: En la cocina los hombres les gusta manosearse, y a las mujeres no nos gusta. Las mujeres no nos lo hacemos... Para trabajar en una cocina necesitas estar como que zafado naturalmente algo, para poder aguantar toda esa presión, además de que estás poniendo tu cuerpo bajo mucha presión. Si se están pasando contigo, ya dices tu “no me gusta” o le sigues la corriente. Al final de todo es cuánto te dejes tú. Pero si, no... Nunca van a ir a manosearte sin tu permiso. Bueno... Hay gente que si lo hace.

At the kitchen men like to grope each other, and as a woman we don't like it. Between women we don't do it. For you to work in a kitchen you need to be naturally a little crazy, to be able to handle all the pressure, plus you are already putting your body under a lot of pressure. If someone is making a pass, you then say “I don't want it” or you can also go with the flow. At the end is how much you allow it. But yeah... They're never going to grope you without your permission... Well... There's people that still do it.

The environment in a kitchen is very rude and impolite. Not only is abuse sexual, but also verbal. Pop culture, media and the society we live in have taught us about the stormy, barbarian and rough practices in the field. Elisa describes the culinary field as an atmosphere with zero respect due to the intense stress everyone is under. She says that between males there is a lot of oppressive confrontation - mostly verbal and even sometimes physical:

Y los hombres entre hombres, había siempre muchos pleitos. Siempre. Pleitos por cuestiones de platillos, horarios, carácter... Eso fue lo que yo vi aquí. Eran pleitos verbales y muchas veces un empujón.

And between men, there's always a lot of discussion. Always. Fights over the plates, time schedule, personalities... That's what I saw here. It could be verbal altercations and many other times there was a physical push.

Andrew also recognizes how males at fine dining restaurants do better in terms of accepting the adversities of the environment. Men naturally dominate the field with a major presence, and at the end of the day, women must acclimatize by performing a masculine toughness in order

to confront the male oppression and domination, eventually giving women an opportunity to succeed in the industry:

My understanding is like, it's a very stressful environment... And people can get mean, and I mean you've seen Gordon Ramsay yelling at people and stuff like that. Like, that's a reality in a lot of those high end kitchens, like they're so stressful that... Yeah, it seems to me that it could be pretty hostile. It is not really an environment that most females would want to work in, but there are some females that are hardened and they're tough, and they can do it just as easily as any other guy could, and they're the ones that succeed in this industry.

Along with Andrew's previous recognition, Brenda identifies how having mostly men dominating the kitchen perpetuates an oppressive and abusive environment of communication due to the excessive yelling and screaming within the field:

Y claro, ya así creando mi estómago más para los gritos. En ningún trabajo me habían hablado así, no que me hablaran así horrible, pero si es muy... Muy pesado. Más porque son puros hombres los que trabajan en la cocina, entonces a ellos les vale madres si les gritan. Y a una mujer, pues obviamente somos mujeres, no quiere decir que seamos menos o que seamos mejores que ellos, pero si nos calan mas las palabras que a lo hombres.

And for sure, I had to build my stomach for all the screaming. I had never experienced that type of yelling, not that they would talk to me horribly, but yes it was... Very rough. More because it's just men who work in a kitchen, so they really don't give a damn if they get yelled at. And to a woman, well of course we are women, it doesn't mean that we are less or that we are better than men, but yes we get hurt by words more than men do.

Participants' experiences show that cooks experience serious violations to their primary rights and safety. An experience about oppression and real abusive language is shared by James, and it is important to notice the brutality of the words used, and how (between men) they can also oppress each other. Men verbally mock and eventually intimidate each other. James felt attacked and threatened, and that he could go missing and nobody would care:

That dude treated me like absolute garbage. He wanted my job. I remember that cook that was badging me, the 40 year old, gave me shit about some mushrooms

I was sautéing, and I look over and my nerves are wrecking - he's huge and massive, and I want no conflict, I'm a hermit... I remember I looked over and go "your pork tenderloins look undercooked." Nerves going wild. He looks at me "I will kill you! I will murder you! I will hunt you down!" I'm just looking at my boss, he's sitting at the house table with the front of the house manager, both on their computers, and I'm just thinking "nobody's gonna defend me?" It seriously made me, seriously, give up everything on this career. Nobody intervened.

Men and women experienced abuse, domination, discrimination, and sexism, with some experiences being more prominent and others more subtle. Without a doubt, masculine domination affects women and minorities in El Paso, and unfortunately (regardless of the large damaging effects to the primary rights of any individual), the dominating actions are largely covered up or ignored mostly by other powerful men in the field.

### **8. Social Hierarchies**

The hierarchy detected in the culinary field involves differences between gender and labor rights. After listening to various stories and experiences, it is clear male chefs are at the top of the hierarchy in the culinary industry of El Paso. Men have been privileged and made it into top positions, and women have been unconsciously mistreated with fewer opportunities and lower positions. Along these lines, the participating male chefs have adopted a paternalistic and helpful character with women, and women only. The reality is that this type of extra help discriminates women in a way, not that they would rather not have help, but female participants feel like if there is some extra support offered it should be offered to every gender and not only to women. Consequently, this extra help and support with women uncovers the structures of an unconscious socialization where segregation becomes interconnected with gender and the extra support gap becomes a normalized issue. Carolina shares an example of this:

La persona que estaba encargada en Tavern con nosotros, si nos gritaba a las mujeres pero les gritaba peor a los hombres. Así que el sí comprendía acá de que, vamos a separar. O había muchas veces de que me veían cargando algo pesado y me iban y me decían "¿te ayudo?" y yo de que "no, está bien, yo puedo",

y ellos se quedaban que “ah no, nomas te quería ayudar.” Pero a ningún otro hombre le preguntarían “¿te ayudo?”

The person who was in charge at Tavern, shouted at women but shouted worse at men. So yes, he understood that he had to separate. Or there were also many times that they saw me carrying something heavy and they would go to me and ask “may I help you?” And I would say “no, it's okay, I can do it.” And they would just say “oh no, I just wanted to help you.” But no other man would be asked “can I help you?”

Unfairly, the institutionalized masculine domination manages to reinforce hierarchies in the kitchen. The comradeship between men and the secrecy handled in the culinary field oppresses women by protecting and privileging men. Male chefs, restaurateurs, managers, investors and entrepreneurs are protected because they're on top of the culinary ladder. As per the data retrieved, they have not experienced oppression like females and other minority groups have. Men in this industry at El Paso feel like the pop culture images help build the idea that abusive behavior is normal, and therefore, constantly adopted by many chefs. Sadly, when a woman occupies a higher level in the culinary industry hierarchy, she is perceived as an individual with a lack of authority and as an extremely bossy person. This is how Javier presents a female who found it very hard to lead and control the stations at a kitchen where he was an apprentice:

Y entro una chava, que iba a ser la nueva encargada. El punto es que ella como que quiso poner mucha... Hay veces que tienes autoridad pero no respeto... Hay veces que tienes la posición pero no te puedes dar a respetar... Y a ella le fallaba mucho poder controlar la partida y su manera de decir “soy fuerte”, era regañando. Y si había días que ya no quería regresar, y no era el trabajo, era ella. Se volvió muy tensa y pesada la relación. Y a veces esa misma falta de oportunidad, hablan mas feo y especialmente más a las mujeres.

And a woman comes in, she was going to be the new leader. The point is that she wanted to put a lot of... There's times that you've got the authority but not the respect... There's times where you've got the position but you just can't get anyone to respect you... And she failed to control the line and her way of saying “I'm strong” was by scolding. And of course there were days where I didn't wanna go back, and it wasn't because of the job, but because of her. The situation became very tense and rough. And sometimes that same lack of opportunity,

is what makes the language in the kitchen so ugly and especially more with women.

On the other hand, Enrique and Felipe describe what being a head chef feels like. It definitely brings privileges for them. They have not experienced oppression, and many male chefs understand the benefits brought by their position. The ego brought by their profession delineates a certain power structure and sets a higher level for them compared to other workers in the kitchen. Having a male chef usually reinforces conformity and the gendered structure of authority line at a restaurant.

Enrique: Beneficios... De ser head chef, es de que presentarse uno con el cliente de que "hola, soy Enrique Zamudio. Soy el head chef de la cocina. ¿Como estamos? ¿En qué le puedo ayudar?" Salir a hablar con ellos.

Benefits... About being a head chef, the benefit is being able to present oneself with the client like "Hi, I'm Enrique Zamudio. I'm the head chef in this kitchen. How are we doing? How can I help?" To get out and speak to them.

Felipe: Para muchas personas el tema de abrir un restaurante es algo... Principalmente creo que hay algo de ego... En querer abrir un restaurante... También hay algo como de querer servir y presentar algo que sea agradable a la gente. Pero muchas veces estás fuera de contexto. De que tu público no es al que tu quisieras llegar, porque probablemente te está ganando más el ego en hacer cosas que quieres para ti.

For a lot of the people the reality about opening a restaurant is... Mainly I think it has to do with some ego... In wanting to open a restaurant... There's also something about wanting to serve and present something nice to the people. But a lot of the times you're out of the context. Your audience is probably not the people you wish to target, because probably your ego is making you do things that you want for yourself.

Lastly, there is another incident of power impact that needs serious attention. The social institution of the culinary industry perpetuates social injustice by violating the basic rights of those who are located on the lower end of the hierarchy of the kitchen due to their race, gender, class and disabilities. An authoritarian act by a dominating male is described by Enrique. A male

chef physically hurt an individual putting him into a life-threatening situation. The masculinity in the kitchen analysis allows me to give attention to both privileges and sources of oppression and how they intersect. For example, a male cook may have male privileges but still have other sources of oppression due to his abilities, or (in this specific case) his disabilities. This is the story told by Enrique:

There was a man, named Tommy, of about fifty and something years old. And he was a whitey, he could speak Spanish very well. He was born here in El Paso and all that. But what happened to him is that he got hit in the head when he was young and in the aftermath he was left with long-term mental damage. So he was impaired. And then.. The executive chef, who was currently there, would treat him badly. “Hey crappy Tommy do this” and this and that. And one time... Poor Tommy... The chef thought it would be funny to leave a pot in the stove, it was hot, hot, hot.... He heated it on purpose... And he told Tommy “hey, grab that pot and wash it.” And by that time I had been working there for a while now. And so the poor man went and grabbed it, he got seriously injured on his hand. The man is obviously not well and the chef broke out laughing. Poor Tommy dropped the pot, he had to go to the hospital and all that... The chef and I ended up in a physical altercation.

The social hierarchy and the control over the levels in the hierarchy within the culinary field results in a violation of workers’ rights in El Paso. The masculine domination has been implanted as an institutionalized control over the entire functioning system of a kitchen. Men are usually privileged and minorities (including women and people with disabilities) tend to feel unfairly treated becoming submissive to the hyper-masculine authority.

### ***9. Financial and Emotional Insecurities***

A few of the participants felt financially insecure sometimes. Constantly worrying about the bills to pay and the money needed to survive is the kind of economic pressure they primarily suffered. Past experiences of financial instability can create a sense of not belonging, or believing one is not good enough to be properly paid for the job. The worry about the financial instability can lead to emotional distress, and eventually to depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and even certain addictions. For example, James (who is visibly covered with tattoos and piercings)

was living homeless and was self-conscious about how his appearance would feed a sense of not feeling important or not being good enough:

I was homeless, living in my car for about 9 months. I didn't have a job, no one hired me - I look a little bit different so people don't really want to give me a chance... I just went in for an interview at a place called Frankenstein's. Uhm... And I went in for a bartender job. And then... I get a phone call from the kitchen manager, and says, "Hey we're looking for a cook", cool - never cooked in my life. "Cool, I'll come in."

Brenda expresses that as a result of the constant stress in the kitchen, she developed an addiction to smoking. The fear of being constantly evaluated by others (all men), and her being the only woman, led her to emotional distress and anxiety:

Cuando me sentía de más de estresada. Yo odio fumar, no me gusta fumar para nada. Y empecé a fumar cuando trabajé en la cocina. Como los últimos dos meses, porque pues todos los hombres en la cocina se salían en el break que no teníamos tickets y pues se salían a fumar. Y pues no inventes, traes el estrés a más no poder, y una vez una nomás, y luego dos, y luego ya pues me fumaba una entera.

When I would feel overstressed. I hate smoking, I don't like smoking at all. And I started to smoke when I was working at the kitchen. Like for the last two months, well because all the men in the kitchen would go out on their breaks when there weren't any tickets and would go out and smoke. So not kidding, you have a terrible stress, and one day it was just once, and then twice, and then I would smoke one full pack.

The truth is that many of the participants felt emotionally insecure. A feeling of nervousness and past trauma triggers a perception of vulnerability or inability, as if one is inferior to those men already working in the kitchen. Self-image and self-perception is threatened by the experiences of inadequacy or rejection in the kitchen. Emotional insecurity in the field is described by Denisse, who found herself constantly rejected and evaluated from a very young age by males in the industry. The fear and past experiences made her feel weak and deserted. Her emotional stability and sense of belonging was threatened as she felt bullied and excluded from the rest of the cooks:

They hired me as a dishwasher first. And I mean I was like okay I'll take it and I'm 14 years old, gotta work and do something else with my life, you know. And then I slowly like started talking to the line cooks there, but like I don't know... One, being a little girl in the kitchen, two, being a female in the kitchen is so difficult. So they looked at me like I'm nothing, you know like trash, I'm the dishwasher. So it took a lot of, I guess, earning my bone. And then once I was able to get into that role I was able to move on to like a line cook, and then from there I was like "I'm gonna keep going, keep pushing forward."

Denisse also shares how she, like many other women in the field, constantly feel powerless, vulnerable and hopeless because of the male domination and hierarchy in the kitchen. The emotions related to feeling endangered and unsafe are exposed, and women on the line feel jeopardized by those sexualized attitudes that make them uncomfortable.

It's really gross. And some nights, like that night he grabbed me in the freezer I felt helpless. Like how do I go back to keep cooking you know? And I did scare up a little bit, and I was like "no, you're stronger, you're better than this. You just keep doing your job." And you feel like powerless, you can't change it. All you can do is pack up your shit and like move on. But because you're so passionate about like that place and what you're currently doing that you're not willing to do that. You know? Like you will fight nail and bone to stay there and to continue to prove a point to yourself that you can do this.

Finally, financial instability inevitably leads to emotional distress, and even to mental disorders and certain addictions. Insecurities make people feel defenseless and this of course endangers the stability of any kitchen laborer. Women may feel rejected and evaluated on a day-to-day basis, and males fear the simple idea of rejection. Nonetheless, the financial and emotional insecurities make anyone feel threatened and vulnerable.

## Discussion

### Gender Performativity in the Kitchen

Results show how role models in early and even late life stages of the participants influence how gender performativity is challenged and also reinforced within the culinary industry. It is challenged in a way that most role models were women; 75% of the participants had a female role model, and these kitchen laborers looked up to a maternalistic female figure as a symbol of empowerment compared to the invisible male role model (who was not even described by the participants). Therefore, women are seen as a strong role model in the kitchen, yet when women are employed in the kitchen in a professional capacity, they are often hired in subordinate positions to men. Moreover, gender performativity is here being reinforced by the idea that male cooks are more professional and determined than females in the culinary field, and as a consequence, men have been privileged and made it into top positions in El Paso, and women have been mistreated with fewer opportunities and lower positions.

Female participants employ a trustworthy and very devoted character in the kitchen. They usually perform a caring character with maternalistic qualities. As per the data I collected, the female kitchen laborer will go above and beyond of her responsibilities to show she is devoted to the cause. In a way, women transfer their maternal instincts and attitudes into the kitchen. Female participants typically consider giving out constructive criticism to be a necessary process of offering valid and well-reasoned opinions about the work of others. The opinions made by women usually involve both positive and negative comments, in an empathetic manner rather than a defensive one. Although men dominate the field, at the end of the day, women must respond by performing a masculine toughness in order to confront the male oppression and domination; the performance of masculinity by women will eventually give them an opportunity to succeed in the industry.

The patterns of women leading in a kitchen with a sense of accepting and providing constructive criticism relates back to the ways gender is performed in the kitchen. Women employ a supportive, caring, helpful, welcoming and understanding character as team members in the in-

dustry. Male participants in the study portray a paternalistic character with women, and women only. The men in El Paso try to protect themselves from being accused of perpetrators by offering support (showing some type of extra care with females in the kitchen) and reinforcing gender inequality in more subtle ways. The reality is that this type of support discriminates women in a way, not that they rather not have it, but women feel like if there is some extra support offered it should be offered to every gender and not only to women.

The role of fictive kinship emphasizes the roles that men and women portray as a paternal or maternal figure. The socio-cultural norms of the Westernized society we live in have pre-designed gender roles that help members of a family or an institution to run the family/organization with specific responsibilities. This inevitably shapes gender performativity in the kitchen and highlights the roles for men and women working in the field in a minority-majority city. What is expected of the performance is well understood by the participants as they accept that performativity in the culinary field is divided by gender. All of the participants (regardless of gender) felt good about some of the dynamics of the kitchen and the professional experience they earn with time. They also generally felt grateful for their kitchen mates who eventually become like a second family

Gendered patterns create a division and a sense of alienation. A condition of feeling isolated by a low degree of interaction with those who are outside of the culinary industry is common for the participants. More than 50% of the participants talked about feeling alienated from their families, friends and other important relationships. The time they are required to spend in the kitchen restricts these individuals from spending quality time with those who are outside the kitchen. The individual working in a kitchen usually finishes a shift feeling exhausted and with an emotional and physiological need for recovery. Therefore, most of an individual's social interaction occurs with those inside the kitchen, leaving a sense of isolation from those who do not participate within the kitchen's social sphere.

Despite the positive experiences I have noted, the social institution of the culinary industry perpetuates social injustice and inequality by violating the basic rights of those who are lower

in the hierarchy of the kitchen due to their race, gender, class and disabilities. As gendered hierarchies exist in the kitchens of El Paso, that experience permeates the everyday lives of the workers. The truth is that instabilities inevitably lead to emotional distress, mental disorders, and addictions. Results show how a feeling of nervousness and past trauma due to past experiences in the kitchen triggers a perception of vulnerability. Women feel rejected and evaluated on a day-to-day basis, and men fear the simple idea of rejection.

### **Ways Gender Inequality is Reproduced**

Results show how the gendered patterns and values previously mentioned reflect a constant performativity for men and an expected performativity for women laboring in professional kitchens in a minority-majority city. Women portray a more accepting character and men maintain most of the control over the decisions and the processes. The female cook represents inclusivity compared to the excessively dominant and self-righteous male cook. In a subtle, but still noticeable, way there are several attitudes and values that reinforce gender inequalities in the field inevitably setting men and women apart.

Kitchen laborers experience gender inequality, such as male cooks being somewhat protective of women through paternalistic attitudes hiding actions that could be confusing to women and minorities. The men I interviewed in the culinary industry do not believe that one gender is intrinsically superior to another, therefore they show a strong commitment to supporting women in the industry. However, men show attitudes of special treatment and extra care with women, and women only, reinforcing gender inequalities in more subtle ways. During this period, a major fear of being accused of perpetrators of any type of violence is what contributes to men acting in paternalistic and protective ways to safeguard women, but not other men in the industry. Consequently, this extra help and support by male cooks reveals the structures of an unconscious socialization where segregation becomes interconnected with gender and the extra support gap becomes a normalized issue.

Results also show how women in the field feel a certain sense of comfort by being the only woman in mostly all-male kitchens, making a woman feel especially talented because she has been accepted into the field and has broken gender stereotypes. Female participants show a significant amount of responsibility and an attitude of being grateful. They tend to show a higher respect for the elements and the cooking processes of those elements, whereas men highly value their self-confidence and approve of being rigid, direct, firm, and controlling. Men are more self-confident than women are in the industry. The relevant truth is that gendered performativity is commonly highlighted throughout the actions by gender, and it's extremely important to understand how the values and attitudes by gender reinforce gender performativity and labor division, placing men in higher positions with more authority and women in lower positions with less power and control.

Gender inequality is unfortunately experienced mostly by women as per the stories told by participants. There is a strong belief system without any basis that oppresses, dominates and discriminates female laborers in a kitchen. There are plenty of sexist behaviors that consistently fall into sexism practices inside the culinary field. Above all, many of the participants reported that there are more abusive practices, while others are more latent. Sadly, an attitude of excessive flirting, dirty jokes, and unwanted touching is described as a consistent action portrayed by men in the industry. Female and male participants shared a few stories of the ways men impersonate attitudes that denigrate women and marginalized men in the kitchen through inappropriate jokes and verbal taunting.

As per the experiences described by the participants, sexual inappropriate behaviors largely affect women, as it is women who are predominantly linked to the idea that they are intrinsically inferior to men. Furthermore, the secrecy structure in the industry can also lead to the protection of men's actions, and without doubt, to the reproduction of gender inequalities. This leads to the conclusion that all sexist and oppressive actions represented by men can only be a reaction to their masculinity being threatened by the minority group's presence in a place where men dominate and usually take over the control: the kitchen as a professional environment.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

This study was limited in that I interviewed a younger sample with an age range of 21 - 44, and an average time in profession of 7.3 years (the minimum being 4 months and the maximum being 18 years). Therefore, I do not have a comparison with older age groups and a possible “old-school” culinary mentality, which could reflect a different experience with gender performativity and inequality. Having these comparisons with a more mature group of cooks and chefs would be useful in order to better elaborate on the challenges, gendered patterns and sense of inequality that laborers in the culinary industry in a minority-majority community face. Another limitation includes interviewing a few participants who had been working in the field for 4 months to a year, a relatively short amount of time. Although this amount of time allowed the participants some perspective and reflection on their experiences, participants with a larger amount of time in the field often had more to share. Given the concerns about gender performativity and the ways gender inequality is reinforced, it would be important to follow these participants and their careers long-term, but this was beyond what was feasible for this study. Doing so would help inform labor regulators and institutions to help alleviate some of the problems that people in the culinary field talk about (such as sexism and harassment). A long-term study would be valuable to help determine whether programs like bystander intervention initiatives should be implemented, and also providing feedback in improving the structure of the culinary hierarchy. My study suggests that future research compare the experiences of young and mature kitchen laborers, and especially to consider the challenges they face when questioning gender performativity, the gender hierarchy and the gender inequality within the institution in order to improve every single experience of those who decide to work within professional kitchens.

## Conclusion

Nine major key themes emerged from the interview data from the participating chefs and cooks of El Paso, a minority-majority city where the Hispanic/Latino population comprises 82.2% of the population. Looking at these issues through the eyes of minorities often led gender to feel more central to participants' identities than other axes of identity, such as ethnicity. This is important as it contributes to the research related to gender and masculine domination, and also as it dissects gender performativity as a symbolic system within the culinary industry following a social hierarchy. It presents data collected through interviews with male and female laborers in the culinary industry in El Paso. A feminist lens enabled a gendered analysis of data collected through interviews with 12 participants (6 men and 6 women) within the culinary industry in the El Paso region. The focus of this investigation addressed three specific research areas: 1) gender performance in the kitchen; 2) the perceptions among those who labor within the culinary world; and lastly, 3) the aspects of performance that reinforce gender inequality or that challenge it.

In conclusion, the social institution of the culinary industry perpetuates gender performativity roles among men and women. The role of paternalism and the latent ways inequalities are reproduced in the culinary arts industry are some of the major contributions of my research to the sociology of gender. My research also emphasizes the rampant sexual harassment in the restaurant industry, which is distinct from sexual harassment from other sectors of the labor force. While such stories have recently appeared in news outlets, my research offers insights into how and why these stories have become so common. As gendered hierarchies with prominent social inequalities exist in the kitchen, gendered patterns create a division and gender inequality is unfortunately experienced mostly by women in El Paso. Without a doubt, there is a strong system that oppresses, dominates and discriminates female laborers in a kitchen. There are also plenty of sexist behaviors that consistently fall into sexism practices inside the culinary field in El Paso. Above all, many of the participants reported that there are more abusive practices, while others are more latent.

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## Appendix I

### Interview Guide

1. Can you please share your age?
2. Can you please share your gender identity?
3. Can you please share your ethnicity?
4. How long have you been working in the culinary field?
  - a. Tell me about the places where you have worked.
  - b. What positions did you have there?
  - c. Can you share some of the reasons for switching jobs?
5. Tell me about the first time you had an interaction with the culinary arts
  - a. Who taught you to cook?
  - b. How did you learn the kitchen skills?
6. What stood out to you as the defining point to make you decide to work within the culinary field?
7. Tell me about your experiences working in the culinary field
  - a. Tell me about the first time you worked at a kitchen?
  - b. Do you still work there?
  - c. What made you want to stay/quit?
  - d. What have you enjoyed from past and current working experiences within the culinary field?
  - e. What have you NOT enjoyed from past and current working experiences within the culinary field?
  - f. How have those experiences shaped you?
8. Who does the scheduling for your shifts?
  - a. Do you get a chance to request a change on the schedule?
  - b. How do you feel about this?
  - c. Have there been any incidents of being reprimanded that make you not wanting to show up to work?
9. Do you feel that one's gender shapes how individuals are treated in the culinary field?
  - a. If so, in what ways?
  - b. If not, why?
10. What does it feel like to be in the culinary field?
  - a. In what ways do you think your gender shapes how your co-workers interact with you?
11. Are there patterns tied to gender in how individuals are treated while working in the kitchen?
  - a. Why do you think this happens?
  - b. Do you engage in actions that might reinforce these patterns?
12. How would you describe your co-workers?
  - a. Do you think any of your co-workers receive more pressures than others? Why?
  - b. Do you think any of your co-workers receive more gratifications than others? Why?
13. Do you think gender plays a role in people's employment experiences in the culinary field?

- a. Are individuals disciplined in different ways in relation to their gender?
  - b. Do you think anyone ever has their contributions overlooked? Why?
14. To what capacity do you supervise others? Or to what extent are you under another person's authority?
  15. What types of pressures do you experience in your line of work?
  16. What types of gratifications do you get out of your line of work?
    - a. In what ways do you think your gender shapes how your co-workers interact with you?
  17. Do you supervise anyone? What is your approach to interacting with those below you?
    - a. Do you think your gender influences these patterns? What about the gender of your subordinates?
  18. Does anyone supervise you? What is their approach to interacting with you?
    - a. Please explain the interaction between you and your supervisor.
  19. How would you describe your work style?
  20. What approach do you prefer to use when managing the kitchen area? Or what approach do those in authority prefer to use when managing the kitchen area?
  21. How do you think your gender plays a role in how you are treated in your profession?
  22. Are there patterns to how people interact at work based on gender?
    - a. How do men treat men?
    - b. How do men treat women?
    - c. How do women treat women?
    - d. How do women treat men?
  23. Have there ever been any experiences in your work environment that caused you to have a strong emotional reaction? Can you please share some of those?
    - a. How did you react?
    - b. Did anyone intervene?
  24. Thank you for all that valuable information, is there anything else you'd like to add before we end?

## Vita

Mariel Cano was born and raised in the city of Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico where she currently resides. Cano became an undergraduate student at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and graduated with cum laude honors as she achieved a bachelor's degree in communication and media advertising in 2014. While pursuing a graduate certificate in women and gender studies, Cano was first introduced to an Anthropology course of culture and food by Dr. Guillermina Nuñez-Mchiri. After completing the certificate, in Spring 2017 the author decided to pursue a master of arts in sociology and began doing research as a part of a sociology gender course under the direction of Dr. Carina Heckert. An independent course on qualitative research with the supervision of Dr. Sarah Upton acquainted Cano with all the processes and terms for doing deductive qualitative research. As a mentee of these prominent and empowering female mentors, the author decided to further analyze gender and its performance in the culinary industry through a qualitative research lens. While she pursued her master degree, she also worked at UTEP as a graduate coordinator for a bystander intervention program to educate students, faculty and staff on the proper techniques and tactics to positively and safely intervene to avoid stalking, dating/domestic violence and sexual assault. She was also a speaker at the UT System Regional Bystander Intervention Program Conference in Austin, Texas on January 2019. Cano wishes to devote her life to higher education and teach at a university level in the country where she was born.