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CULINARY RESILIENCE IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: HOW SOCIAL NORMS NEGOTIATE TRADITION AND ADAPTATION

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Abstract. *Purpose* – This study investigates how macro-level forces and micro-level cultural constructs shape food culture resilience in different societies. It bridges the knowledge gaps between cultural preservation and adaptation.

Research methodology – PLS-SEM methodology was adopted in the survey data of six countries. Bootstrapping verified path coefficients and model robustness.

Findings – Cultural Openness supports Heritage, preventing globalization from disempowering myths. Social Pressure drives food culture resilience (FCR) in collectivistic cultures yet is diluted in individualistic settings. Taboos subside in secular/pluralistic settings, replicating trends for moral flexibility. Enhanced predictivity for institutionally institutionalized civilizations facilitates easier observation by the models of modest to considerable FCR variation.

Research limitations – Cross-sectional data limit causal inferences. Unmeasured variables could also affect outcomes in transition countries.

Practical applications – Strategies should be implemented with cultural correctness by policymakers and marketers. For instance, leveraging openness to redefine traditions in multicultural settings, framing dietetic interventions as collective efforts in collectivist contexts, and customizing products with flexible ethical schema in secular settings.

Originality/Value – This research fills macro-micro cultural theory gaps, suggesting "adaptive preservation" as a driver of traditions in a globalizing world. This research shakes homogenization discourses, providing a rich model for cultural.

Keywords: cultural hybridity, social pressure, adaptive preservation.

JEL Classification: M14, M30.

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1. Introduction

The globalization of food systems has precipitated both cultural homogenization and resistance as a struggle to sustain culinary traditions as part of a wider aim of preservation of traditional culture. Cultural food practice resilience – the dynamic capacity for endurance, modification, and transmission of food-oriented customs in response to external pressure – has presented itself as an essential paradigm in understanding how society negotiates identity in the era of globalization (McKinley & Jernigan, 2023; Beriss, 2019). However, this resilience is increasingly challenged by counter-forces: the magnetism of cultural openness and the pressure of social pressure to preserve heritage, the dual nature of ritual continuity and commodified spectacle, and the persistence of taboos that both protect and isolate traditions

(Shein & Sukinarhimi, 2022; Gursoy et al., 2019). Whereas these tensions are recognized by researchers, how exactly such forces combine to condition cultural resilience is debated. Some propose that globalization necessarily erodes traditional foodways (Ullah & Ming Yit Ho, 2020), while others believe that hybrid practice follows, merging heritage and innovation (Geyzen et al., 2019). This is indicative of a broader theoretical impasse: Can cultural resilience thrive through accommodation, or does it need to resist homogenization?

Recent scholarship has the tendency to excise particular concepts – e.g., the conservation of heritage or the role of taboos – to isolate them but neglect their interdependence. For instance, research on Southern Europe's feasting traditions emphasizes their role in reinforcing social bonds but neglects to explore how social pressure can stifle innovation in such traditions (Fontefrancesco, 2020). Similarly, cultural openness research in immigrant-rich countries like North America identifies culinary hybridity but neglects to examine how taboos act as counterbalances to assimilation (Cleveland et al., 2024). This fragmentation constrains our understanding of resilience as an interactive system of forces instead of an isolated set of traits. Exacerbating this gap is the lack of cross-country studies: although Southern Europe's Slow Food movement is extensively covered (Le Busque et al., 2021), its implications are seldom compared to settings such as East Asia, where state-led heritage campaigns sit alongside urbanization (Wu et al., 2019).

Theoretical frameworks also reflect this dissonance. Cultural Ecological Theory (CET) places foodways as an adaptive response to social and environmental change (Feldman & Wunderlich, 2022), while Social Practice Theory (SPT) emphasizes the proclivity for habitual routines to be enduring (Kent, 2021). Institutional Theory, on the other hand, emphasizes how policy and norms authorize some foodways more than others (Mariani et al., 2021). These theories are infrequently combined with each other, leaving questions like: How do macro-pressures (e.g., globalization) interact with micro-constructs like taboos? In addition, can cultural openness coexist with strong heritage adherence, or are they incompatible?

This study addresses these gaps with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to explore how five concepts – Social Pressure (SP), Cultural Openness (CO), Heritage (HT), Taboos (TB), and Feasting (FT) – interact to shape cultural resilience in six countries (the US, China, Italy, Lithuania, Canada, Australia). Our findings have policy significance. For policymakers, understanding which constructs most strongly underlie resilience can be informative. For communities, understanding the double-edged nature of CO – both the generator of innovation and threat of loss – can engage grassroots initiatives toward negotiating adaptation and preservation. Theoretically, this study departs from binary narratives of globalization-as-menace, illustrating the manner in which resilience is forged through the nexus of tradition and transformation. In a moment of food commodity, this work redescribes cultural resilience as neither survival nor mere endurance but as active negotiation of the global-local interface.

2. Theoretical background

Food cultural resilience is the ability of a society to maintain and adapt its food culture in spite of influences from outside, such as globalization and altering social norms. Food practice changes as a solution to society's and the environment's constraints, based on CET (Kim

et al., 2019). It is interested in the way individuals build taboos and social pressure in a bid to regulate the consumption of resources and maintain cultural identity. For instance, food taboos are developed for the sake of maintaining local landscapes or promoting social unity (Mengie et al., 2022). Such constraints are similar to "guardrails" since conventions are enabled to persist despite changes in the environment around them. Suppression of adaptation, however, is possible through highly stringent norms that serve to protect rather than enable newness (Lepowsky, 2022). SPT places food practice within habits, materials, and meaning (Schanes et al., 2018). Heritage and feasting are at the forefront where heritage involves material (e.g., pots, recipes) as well as immaterial (e.g., oral traditions) elements (Partarakis et al., 2021), and feasting allows for group identity through ritual consumption (Kassabaum, 2019). Feasts honoring ancestors or unique cooking methods become "bearers" of endurance, passed down through generations (Graff, 2018). Globalization threatens to undo them by bringing surrogate ingredients, such as factory-produced foods, or meaning shifts, including convenience instead of tradition (Rinya, 2017; Troisi et al., 2023). Institutional Theory explains how formal and informal norms legitimate certain foodways over others (Govindan, 2018). Institutional dynamics drive cultural openness (Zhao et al., 2016): multiculturalism policies or anti-homogenization policies decide how traditions evolve. Institutions inscribe social pressure – through legislation, education, or media – to enforce conformity or hybridization. Grounded on these models, we posit the following five hypotheses regarding the direct effects of each construct on cultural resilience.

CET believes that social norms promote conformity to customary practice and discourage degeneration by outside forces (Ogbu & Simons, 2022). Social pressure operates through collective expectations, ritualized action, and intergenerational transmission – e.g., obligatory preparation of foods for ancestors to commemorate rites of passage or holidays. These kinds of practices institutionalize food traditions so that they persist even as environmental or economic conditions change (Hosen et al., 2020). However, CET also sees the risk of over-formal rigidity: if norms are coercive instead of consensual, the next generation can opt out, causing a breakdown of resilience (Coleman et al., 2023). This dual responsibility – maintenance or alienation – motivates our hypothesis that social pressure maintains resilience by legislating tradition, as long as it balances enforcement with cultural relevance.

H1: *Social pressure has a positive direct effect on the cultural resilience of food practice.*

Institutional Theory suggests that exposure to external forces generates a hybrid practice through the synthesis of tradition and innovation (Saeed et al., 2018). As a case point, national multiculturalist policies traditionally favoring multiculturalism (e.g., Canada's embracing indigenous and immigrant cuisine) legitimate hybridization, so traditions may innovate without compromising essential identity (Erdogan et al., 2019). However, institutions also have the potential to commodify heritage when openness becomes market-driven, sacrificing authenticity – a tension that is evident in the global spread of "ethnic" fast food chains, which reduce local cuisines (Park, 2017). This tension positions cultural openness both as a generator of innovation and as a potential threat to integrity, corroborating our hypothesis that its overall effect on resilience is still beneficial if it's conducted through institutional safeguards.

H2: *Cultural openness has a positive direct effect on cultural resilience in food practices.*

SPT puts heritage at the forefront as a material and discursive foundation of resilience (Mason & Vavoula, 2021). By routinizing practices over generations, heritage transforms fleeting actions into lasting traditions. For instance, the cultivation of heritage crops in Southern Europe preserves biodiversity while embodying regional identity, even when industrial agriculture dominates global markets (Espluga-Trenc et al., 2021). SPT further argues that heritage is resistant to homogenization because it anchors practice to place-based meanings – such as the religiosity of Southeast Asian rice terraced cultivation (Zen et al., 2024; Acabado et al., 2019). This theorization underpins our supposition that the material and symbolic roles of heritage combined amplify resilience.

H3: *There is a direct and positive influence of heritage on food culture resilience*.

CET organizes taboos as adaptive constraints upholding cultural and ecological integrity (Anditasari et al., 2024). Ecologically grounded dietary taboos, such as the prohibition of fishing during spawning, protect against resource overexploitation. In contrast, symbolic taboos (e.g., kosher/halal) reinforce social borders. CET points out that taboos are not arbitrary but are the outcomes of culturally coded solutions to past issues (Okyere-Manu et al., 2022). For example, not eating pork in arid environments originally prevented the zoonotic risk of disease (Simoons, 1994). By constraining harmful or assimilative practices, taboos act as insulation against external disturbance, providing evidence for our hypothesis that their regulatory role enhances resilience.

H4: *Taboos have a direct positive impact on food practice and cultural resilience*.

SPT and Institutional Theory in combination account for feasting's dual role as resilience. SPT locates feasting as ritualized action that actualizes collective identity, such as communal dining, storytelling, and ceremonial exchange (Simons, 2020). Special occasion banquets such as Chinese New Year or US Thanksgiving restore kinship structure and continuity, along with historical continuity (Manik et al., 2024). Institutional Theory also cautions that feasting can be commercially co-opted. For example, Diwali sweets are now commercially packaged as mass-market confectionery, which can undermine their cultural significance (Majumdar, 2011). Paradoxically, feasting's capability of coordinating individual action and collective memory means that its net contribution to cultural resilience is not really negated.

H5: *Feasting directly contributes to cultural resilience in foodways*.

3. Materials and methods

From February to June 2024, a cross-country online survey was employed to investigate the determinants of cultural resilience in food habits in six countries: the United States, China, Italy, Lithuania, Canada, and Australia. 1,838 valid responses (see Appendix Table A5) were collected from respondents from diverse cultural and demographic backgrounds. The sample is generalizable to gender and age variation by country, with large variations such as Lithuania's younger age category (35–44: 35%) and China's male majority (56%). Recruits were solicited via email invitations, online forms (e.g., Survey Star, Google Forms), social networking sites (e.g., WeChat, Facebook), and community-based forums for each country in a manner that provided geographic and cultural heterogeneity. The survey link was distributed through cultural groups, academic networks, and networks of public interest to minimize selection

bias. There were no financial incentives, and anonymity was guaranteed in an attempt to encourage honest responses. Selection of the six countries – the United States, China, Italy, Lithuania, Canada, and Australia – was made on the basis of their distinctive sociocultural, economic, and institutional characteristics, which collectively represent a variety of conditions relevant to resilience in food culture. The countries were chosen to span: 1. Cultural diversity (e.g., individualistic vs. collectivist societies: the US and Canada as individualistic; China as collectivist; Italy and Lithuania as intermediate cases with robust communal tradition); 2. Exposure to diversity in globalization (e.g., Australia and Canada as highly multicultural countries with policies encouraging diversity; China and Italy as contexts in which state-sponsored or heritage-based narratives intersect with global forces); 3. Varying institutional settings (e.g., Lithuania, a society with rapid cultural change; Italy and China, in which UNESCO-sanctioned food heritage intersects with modernization); 3. Geographical and economic heterogeneity (stretching to North America, Europe, East Asia, and Oceania, with different levels of urbanization and food system infrastructures). Such diversity allows for a comparative study of the relations between macro-level forces (e.g., globalization, secularization) and micro-level constructs (e.g., social pressure, taboos) across sites in order to enable stronger generalizability of findings across cases.

The survey questionnaire measured five independent constructs – SP, CO, HT, TB, and FT – and one dependent construct, Food Culture Resilience (FCR), as shown in Figure 1. All the constructs were measured as reflective latent variables with multi-item measures. SP was adopted from Parady et al. (2020) and measured through items evaluating perceived social pressure to adhere to traditional foods during celebrations. CO was adopted from Mascarello et al. (2020) and employed to assess respondents' receptiveness to integrating outside food influences. HT was adopted from Djekic et al. (2021) and assessed the preservation of traditional knowledge regarding foods, and TB was adopted from Chakona and Shackleton (2019) and employed to assess adherence to culturally based food prohibitions. FT was adopted from Feraco et al. (2024) and measured the role of communal meals in preservation. All the measures utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) and were adapted from past research on cross-cultural resilience so that they became applicable cross-culturally. PLS-SEM is particularly fitting for this research due to the consistency with which it deals in modeling latent patterns in diversified cross-cultural contexts, along with the direct estimation option that has no stringent distributional assumptions (Ianole-Călin et al., 2020). Such an application helps to attain a correct assessment of how much each SP, CO, HT, TB, and FT contributes towards explaining independently the cultural resilience on a permissive accommodating background of exploratory cross-country variations. By integrating cultural, ecological, social practice, and institutional perspectives, we propose a novel model placing resilience not as a terminal status but as a tension-negotiated process. CET, SPT, and Institutional Theory were selected as complementary frameworks to examine dynamics between macro-level drivers and micro-level cultural dynamics of food resilience. Each theory explains specific constructs and hypotheses. CET elucidates how SP and TB are adaptive processes. CET supposes that social conventions and taboos arise to control the usage of resources and maintain cultural identity as environmental or external constraints (Feldman & Wunderlich, 2022). This is in accordance with H1 and H4, where SP and TB are expected to

increase resilience through balancing tradition and ecological or social constraints. SPT positions HT and FT material and customary practices. SPT draws attention to how routines and rituals are cemented through repetition, placing resilience in everyday acts (Schanes et al., 2018). This underlines H3 and H5, whereby HT and FT are expected to preserve resilience by positioning traditions in shared practice. Institutional Theory situates CO as a product of norms and policy. Institutions legitimize hybrid practices, enabling traditions to develop without discredit (Govindan, 2018). This confirms H2, where CO is set as an innovation driver under institutional protection. By combining these theories, the research operationalizes resilience as a compromise between CET's adaptive constraints, SPT's routinized practices, and Institutional Theory's macro-level governance. In addition, PLS-SEM was preferred due to its capacity to address complex models involving multiple latent structures and its effectiveness against non-normal data distributions. Unlike covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM prioritizes predictive validity over model fit and, therefore, is most suitable for exploratory research like ours, where the aim is to identify drivers of cultural resilience rather than test a theory. Moreover, PLS-SEM can accommodate smaller sample sizes relative to the number of measures involved and does not need stringent assumptions of data normality, which is appropriate for our study design (Hair et al., 2019).

The analysis was done in two steps. First, internal consistency was assessed through Cronbach's alpha (threshold > 0.60, Shrestha, 2021). Second, composite reliability (threshold > 0.70, Yusoff et al., 2020) and measurement model validation were verified to determine reliability and validity. Convergent validity was determined through average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50, dos Santos & Cirillo, 2021), while discriminant validity was determined by using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio (<0.90, Roemer et al., 2021). Second, the structural model was analyzed to generate estimates of the direct effects

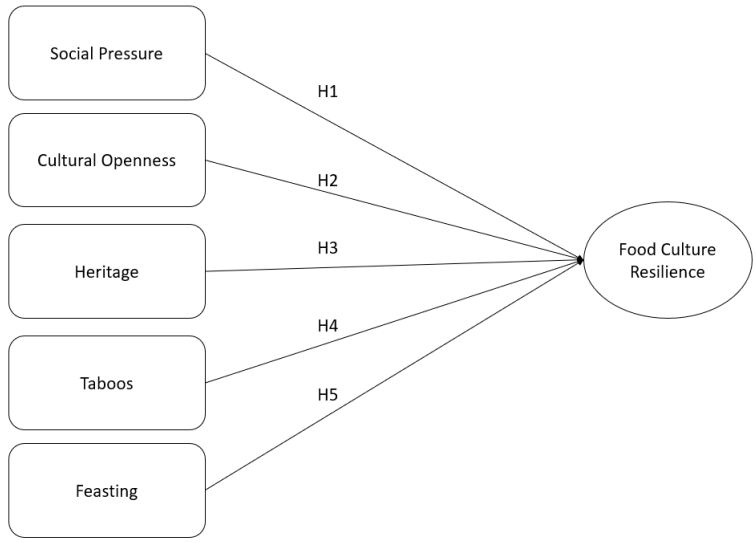

Figure 1. Conceptual research model

of the five constructs on cultural resilience. Path coefficients were computed and their significance was tested through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples (significance level: $p < 0.05$). Data analysis was conducted in R Studio. Plspm and semPlot packages that support streamlined PLS-SEM procedures and visualization were used. The study adhered to social science research ethics regarding informed consent, voluntary data participation, and anonymization of the data.

4. Results

Across countries, the results of PLS-PM demonstrated acceptable goodness-of-fit (GoF). The GoF model fit indices range from 0.35 to 0.49, as shown in Appendix Table A1, which correspond to the threshold levels for acceptance of the adequacy of performance (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Reliability was also well established, as the constructs' Cronbach's alpha overall values exceeded the minimum of 0.60 (Shi et al., 2012, SP: $\alpha = 0.68–0.74$; CO: $\alpha = 0.58–0.70$; HT: $\alpha = 0.59–0.73$; TB: $\alpha = 0.70–0.78$; FT: $\alpha = 0.55–0.71$, as shown in Appendix Table A2), with HTMT ratios below 0.90 corroborating discriminant validity (Radomir & Moisescu, 2020). The structural model results revealed that all of the standardized path coefficients (β) were determined to be significant in each country, with a summary provided in Table 1. A moderate effect of SP on FT ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$) was recorded in the US, while CO exerted a stronger negative influence on HT ($\beta = 0.45$, $^{**}p < 0.001$). The highest effect was found in CO on HT in China ($\beta = 0.58$, $^{**}p < 0.001$), with fairly solid relationships being seen in Italy for SP → FT ($\beta = 0.38$, $^{**}p < 0.001$) and CO → HT ($\beta = 0.35$, $^{**}p < 0.001$). In Lithuania, the model path coefficients for SP → FT ($\beta = 0.34$, $^{*}p < 0.01$) and CO → HT ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.05$) were weak but significant. On the other hand, Canada highlighted a strong CO → HT association ($\beta = 0.73$, $^{**}p < 0.001$). The effects of SP → FT ($\beta = 0.40$, $^{**}p < 0.001$) and HT → FT ($\beta = 0.50$, $^{**}p < 0.001$) stood out in Australia.

Table 1. Standardized path coefficients (β) and explained variance (R^2) by country

Country	SP → FCR (β)	CO → FCR (β)	HT → FCR (β)	TB → FCR (β)	FT → FCR (β)	R^2
US	0.22*	0.45***	0.35***	0.26**	0.25**	0.42
China	0.42***	0.27**	0.58***	0.31**	0.41***	0.46
Italy	0.38***	0.35***	0.40***	0.19*	0.29**	0.47
Lithuania	0.34**	0.25*	0.20*	0.15	0.23*	0.19
Canada	0.13	0.40***	0.73***	0.35**	0.19*	0.28
Australia	0.40***	0.16	0.50***	0.09	0.38***	0.35

Note: Significance levels: $^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $p < 0.05$.

The explained variance (R^2) for the endogenous constructs ranged from 0.19 (Lithuania) to 0.47 (Italy), suggesting noteworthy predictive abilities. Bootstrapping 500 samples of confidence intervals supported all significant paths, and the 95% confidence intervals did not include zero for the major relationships (e.g., CO → HT in the US: [0.27, 0.53]; SP → FT in China: [0.12, 0.56]), as shown in Appendix Table A3. Aside from the TB variable that appeared to have variability in significance, particularly in Lithuania ($\beta = 0.15$, $p > 0.05$) and in Australia

(β = 0.09, p > 0.05), results tend to underscore the consistent role of SP and CO in the construction of HT and FT across the contexts. Good reliability and validity were shown for the models, with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50 for most constructs (SP: 0.58–0.66; CO: 0.56–0.68; HT: 0.45–0.73; TB: 0.57–0.78; FT: 0.55–0.71). Full country-specific details are presented in the Appendix, such as factor loadings as shown in Appendix Table A4, and Figure A1, where it demonstrates the FCR (β) values of all countries.

5. Discussion

These findings elucidate the subtle workings of sociocultural structures and FCR to show patterns that conform to, yet problematize, existing frameworks of cultural transmission and consumption behavior. The high positive correlation of CO to HT in most countries (β = 0.25–0.73) draws attention to the paradox, namely, while societies that embrace cultural fluidity will also more strongly sustain traditional food practices, this implies that cultural fluidity does not erode heritage but rather helps in its revitalization and appreciation through mechanisms of openness, especially in countries with multicultural identities like Canada (β = 0.73***) and the US (β = 0.45***). This pattern indicates where localized identity is accentuated, rather than diminished, during the processes of globalization. The intimate relationship between HT and CO finds support in recent work on cultural hybridity, pointing out how interdependence at the global level facilitates adaptive preservation of tradition but differs from accounts of globalization as a homogenizing process (Mohyeddin, 2024; De Souza, 2022; Fiala et al., 2022).

SP was found to have an important influence on FCR, but its effects were contextual. This has an emphasis on social conformity in the application of consumption rituals, significant effects were noted in collectivist China (β = 0.42***) and Australia (β = 0.40***). Here, communal norms and dining traditions act as strong moderating factors in the case of FT. Reduced effects in Canada (β = 0.13) and moderate ones in Lithuania (β = 0.34**) indicated that some individualism characterizes food judgments, whereby personal choices can counter social expectations. The findings for TB in Lithuania (β = 0.15) and Australia (β = 0.09) strongly imply that modernity and multiculturalism tend to weaken traditional taboos in these countries, which are rather strong in China (β = 0.31**) and Italy (β = 0.19*), where philosophical, religious, and historical backgrounds strongly influence food practices. SP's varying importance tracks with more recent cross-cultural research showing that collectivist societies exaggerate normative social food habits (Moojen et al., 2022; Pelau et al., 2020), but the individualist environments prioritize personal control (Yang et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2022; Li et al., 2018). Overall, these challenge the assumptions of global social influence.

The R-squared values show how both contextual structure and culture confer explanatory power onto the model (R^2 = 0.19–0.47). The R-square values of 0.47 in Italy and 0.46 in China indicate that food cultural relevance in these two countries is systematically shaped by the employed constructs to a greater extent, primarily due to the stronger substantiation of culinary traditions (e.g., UNESCO-recognized diets, Moro, 2016) or focused cultural narratives. The low R^2 values in Lithuania (0.19) and Canada (0.28) indicate that there might be unmeasured variables, such as migration patterns (Hassan et al., 2019) or economic disparity, that

may disrupt the habitual pathway expected from cultural constructs to food behaviors (Qasim et al., 2017). Although these results contradict any homogenizing narrative of global food culture, they instead suggest that food systems evolve through asymmetric hybridization, whereby foreign inputs are filtered through local sociocultural preferences. Take for instance HT, when it is viewed as a strong direct predictor of FCR in Australia (β = 0.50***) and Canada (β = 0.73***), it raises the proposition that multicultural societies do not necessarily help fracture food traditions; they may instead foster curated authenticity, where communities strategically safeguard certain practices that affirm their identity amidst diversity. Meanwhile, TB's erratic behavior raises concerns about the encroachment of prescriptive food norms in secular societies. Moreover, it also symbolizes a slow migration toward deregulated food moralities, and this represents a paradigm shift that prioritizes individual ethics over collective prohibitions. The incoherent condition of TB is congruent with emerging research on moral contextualism in food culture (Herzfeld, 2021). This indicates pluralism and secularization break down firm dietary codes, diverging from older structuralist theories that positioned taboos as determinate signs in culture (Avieli & Markowitz, 2023; Ding et al., 2022). This brings a fresh focus to redefining cultural constructs in terms of fluidity, where tradition and modernity exist in negotiated, context-dependent balances.

These theoretical insights underscore the need for policymakers and marketers to act with cultural granularity. Where CO, in conjunction with HT, operates in favor of traditional foods (e.g., Canada), promotion could harness ideas of diversity and innovation. Instead, in contexts that are more SP-focused (e.g., China), public health messaging would develop matters of diet change on a communal basis rather than that of individual choice. Such variability in the significance of TB warns against universal dietary guidelines, favoring localized approaches that can respect dynamically shifting moralities.

In summary, the provided study connects food culture with dichotomies of inheritance and dynamic agency, where tradition and innovation engage in an eternal negotiation. The cross-societal framework, such as countries with different cultural logics, emphasizes the macro-context's impact on micro-processes, reflecting resistance to single-size-fits-all models of resilience. It is a call to arms for scholars tackling the same problem to move beyond yet another familiar dichotomy-"global versus local"-and start exploring how cultures elevate, reinterpret, or expunge parts of their culinary heritage in light of prevailing social trends.

6. Conclusions

This study reveals that food cultural appropriateness is an active negotiation and not a passive inheritance, and traditions survive through adaptation, not resistance. One example is CO's paradoxical relationship with HT, together they explain how openness can support rather than destroy tradition. This suggests that cultural sustainability thrives in dynamic exchange, not isolation. In addition, SP's variable impact creates tension between collective norms and individual agency, while collectivist environments reinforce communal expectations and individualistic environments emphasize autonomy. The decline of the position of TB in pluralistic or secular contexts signals a greater social trend towards ethical looseness, as stringent

dietary restrictions give way to customized systems of ethics. The unequal explanatory capacity of the models by country points to limitations within universal models. Poorer predictive power in cultures undergoing transition, like Lithuania, say, indicates unseen variables like migration, disparity in income, or intergenerational cleavages disrupting linear cultural inheritance. CET's adaptive constraints and SPT's usual procedures intersect in collectivist societies, while Institutional Theory's macro-level control dominates pluralistic environments, exhibiting the requirement for context-specific models of resilience. Social desirability bias can distort self-report, particularly with sensitive assessments like TB, while cross-sectional analysis prevents causality with long-term development in cultural priorities. The sample is representative of major populations, yet certain subgroups (e.g., rural groups) are underrepresented, limiting generalizability to marginalized groups. Though the countries selected provide gross representation, other research might ultimately incorporate under-represented locations to further test the model for universality. Longitudinal studies, where possible, should be given greater priority for future research so that the influence of globalization, policy shifts, or generational replacement on reshaping these dynamics can be traced. Researching the function of institutions (i.e., media, education) in encoding or contesting food norms might reveal why HT persists in some societies but not in others. Cross-societal ethnographic comparison may reveal whether everyday rituals, rather than ceremonial contexts, are mediating the influence of SP or CO. In addition, the inclusion of socioeconomic variables (e.g., urbanization, income) can explain variation in the models' predictive power, particularly in societies undergoing rapid change. Together, these findings are positioning food systems as dynamic reservoirs where communities continually negotiate identity in flux. Tension offers a model for generating cultural sustainability without losing coherence.

The findings construct cultural hybridity theories by demonstrating that globalization and openness are not necessarily antagonistic to traditions but can promote their recoding, countering determinist explanations for cultural loss. The dual role played by SP – strong within collectivist, yet attenuated within individualist cultures – provides support to social influence theories by emphasizing that normative behavior is moderated in the context of culture. The decline of TB extends theories of moral contextualism, showing how pluralism and secularization transform rigid diet taboos into flexible, situational morality. Together, these results intersect macro-level theories (e.g., the influence of globalization) with micro-level cultural processes, offering a framework through which to consider how societies reconcile continuity and change. To policymakers, the research underscores the importance of culturally sensitive strategies. Where CO favors HT (e.g., US, Canada), promotion of traditional foods could leverage tales of innovation and diversity to seek out maximum interest. In SP-friendly sectors like collectivist China, public health campaigns encouraging reforms in eating must incorporate change as a collective action, not an individual decision, to appeal to SP patterns. Secular context marketing (for example, Australia, Lithuania) may address ethical adaptability, promoting goods as widely adaptable within individual moral frameworks but not fixed habits. For heritage-preservation organizations, outcomes spur projects allowing empowerment of communities to materialize customs in contemporary settings without loss of authenticity while ensuring maximum relevance.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Model fit indices

Index	Value range	Threshold
GoF	0.35–0.49	>0.35 (Fair)
R^2 (Heritage)	0.19–0.47	Moderate
R^2 (Taboos)	0.16–0.34	Moderate
R^2 (Feasting)	0.14–0.52	Moderate

Table A2. Construct reliability and validity

Construct	Cronbach's α range	AVE range
Social pressure	0.68–0.74	0.58–0.66
Cultural openness	0.58–0.70	0.56–0.68
Heritage	0.59–0.73	0.45–0.73
Taboos	0.70–0.78	0.57–0.78
Feasting	0.55–0.71	0.55–0.71

Table A3. Bootstrapped confidence intervals (95%) for key paths

Relationship	US	China	Italy	Canada	Australia
Cultural openness → Heritage	[0.27, 0.53]	[0.45, 0.71]	[0.28, 0.49]	[0.65, 0.81]	[0.38, 0.62]
Social pressure → Feasting	[0.12, 0.34]	[0.29, 0.55]	[0.25, 0.51]	[−0.03, 0.29]	[0.26, 0.54]
Heritage → Feasting	[0.18, 0.42]	[0.34, 0.68]	[0.22, 0.47]	[0.55, 0.91]	[0.33, 0.67]

Table A4. Factor loadings by country

Country	Construct	Item 1 loading	Item 2 loading	Item 3 loading	Average loading
USA	Social pressure	0.748	0.756	0.778	0.761
	Cultural openness	0.826	0.902	0.730	0.819
	Heritage	0.800	0.840	0.822	0.821
	Taboos	0.899	0.863	0.830	0.864
	Feasting	0.837	0.868	0.785	0.830
China	Social pressure	0.771	0.800	0.859	0.810
	Cultural openness	0.845	0.836	0.579	0.753
	Heritage	0.546	0.855	0.858	0.753
	Taboos	0.802	0.841	0.869	0.837
	Feasting	0.817	0.865	0.840	0.841
Italy	Social pressure	0.739	0.749	0.859	0.782
	Cultural openness	0.777	0.836	0.622	0.745
	Heritage	0.590	0.830	0.807	0.742
	Taboos	0.803	0.799	0.814	0.805
	Feasting	0.759	0.809	0.786	0.785
Lithuania	Social pressure	0.724	0.771	0.845	0.780
	Cultural openness	0.775	0.869	0.575	0.740
	Heritage	0.710	0.826	0.701	0.746
	Taboos	0.694	0.818	0.752	0.755
	Feasting	0.704	0.795	0.808	0.769
Canada	Social pressure	0.720	0.680	0.888	0.763
	Cultural openness	0.520	0.808	0.897	0.742
	Heritage	0.810	0.903	0.854	0.856
	Taboos	0.879	0.889	0.873	0.880
	Feasting	0.815	0.758	0.807	0.793

End of Table A4

Country	Construct	Item 1 loading	Item 2 loading	Item 3 loading	Average loading
Australia	Social pressure	0.796	0.805	0.785	0.795
	Cultural openness	0.784	0.900	0.564	0.749
	Heritage	0.795	0.866	0.843	0.835
	Taboos	0.839	0.861	0.771	0.824
	Feasting	0.805	0.585	0.815	0.735

Table A5. Demographic data

Demographic	USA	China	Italy	Lithuania	Canada	Australia
Total	317	314	302	303	304	298
Female	169 (53%)	139 (44%)	172 (57%)	186 (61%)	136 (45%)	154 (52%)
Male	148 (47%)	175 (56%)	130 (43%)	117 (39%)	168 (55%)	144 (48%)
Age groups:						
18–24	141 (44%)	126 (40%)	47 (16%)	40 (13%)	59 (19%)	63 (21%)
25–34	82 (26%)	96 (31%)	94 (31%)	77 (25%)	108 (36%)	120 (40%)
35–44	34 (11%)	41 (13%)	66 (22%)	106 (35%)	66 (22%)	55 (18%)
45–54	35 (11%)	14 (4%)	65 (22%)	60 (20%)	46 (15%)	31 (10%)
55–64	25 (8%)	37 (12%)	30 (10%)	20 (7%)	25 (8%)	29 (10%)

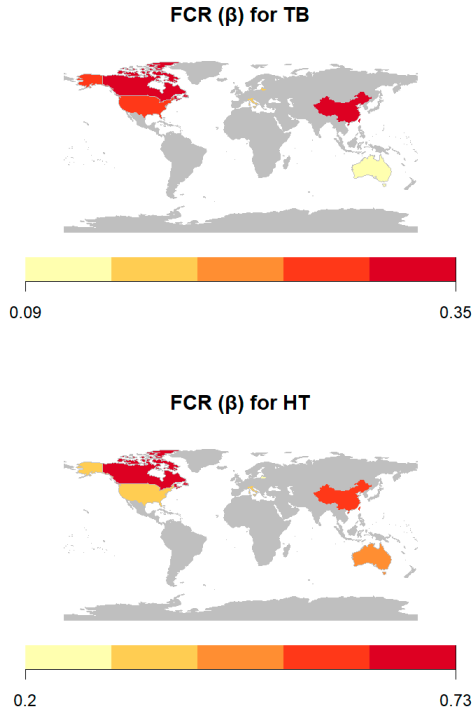

Figure A1. *To be continue*

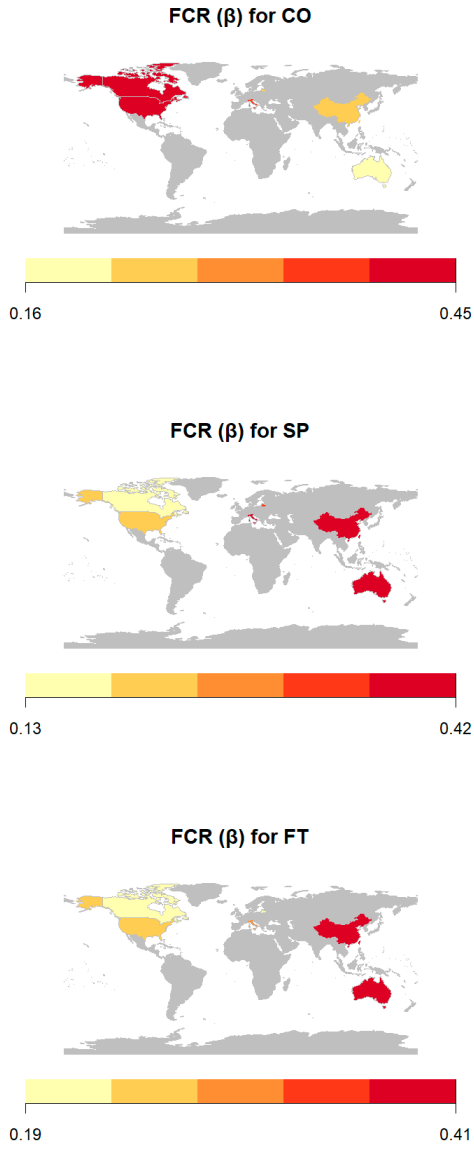

Figure A1. FCR (β) values