

South African Restaurants and Global Michelin-Starred Restaurants: A Comparison of Cuisine Types

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Abstract *Many restaurants around the world claim to have a specific cuisine. Cuisine, representing a style of cooking, can be attached to a specific geographical location, cultural background or “technical” way of preparing food. A specific cuisine can be diffused by the movement of people and the influence of social elite, among other factors. The Michelin Guide is seen as the leading restaurant guide and represents a benchmark for restaurant trends around the world. Each country has its own heritage of cuisines, influenced by its history and by external factors (such as immigration). South African cuisines also show these internal and external influences. This article makes a comparison between the variety and types of cuisine in South Africa and Michelin Guide restaurants, using data from the Eat Out website for South Africa and the official Michelin Guide website for Michelin Guide restaurants. Results show a good match between restaurants on the two websites as regards a geo-cultural perspective of types of cuisine, and that South African restaurants are in line with general global trends in restaurant cuisines.*

Keywords: *Michelin Guide, Restaurant, South Africa, Cuisine, Food*

INTRODUCTION

Living organisms such as humans need energy and such energy “is usually obtained by consuming food. So it is not hard to imagine why food affects all aspects of human life and culture” (Zhu et al., 2013:1). Beyond that, eating is also “a mundane, everyday experience shared by cultures across the globe” (Park, 2017:366). Because of its ubiquitous nature, food – in its various aspects – is a topic of academic research. Food has been studied from the perspective of various disciplines, such as sociology and history, and the results have included an understanding that “how food culture evolves will have profound impact on numerous domains” (Zhu et al., 2013:1). The interest in studying food has grown over time becoming a legitimate area of social sciences research; however, “it has remained as a limited area for a long time” (Polat & Aktaş-Polat, 2020:244). Nevertheless, “few studies have taken quantitative, systematic approaches towards food culture, mainly due to the scarcity of

systematically collected databases” (Zhu et al., 2013:1).

Food is not homogenous: it includes a great variety of ingredients and cuisines. The myriad cuisines and foods in the world “are naturally intertwined with cultures, traditions, passions, and religion of individuals living in different countries and continents” (Sajadmanesh et al., 2017:1013). Every “culture has its own unique and distinct way of preparing and serving cuisine” (Mhlanga, Hattingh & Moolman, 2015:755). Studies have been done on the spatial patterns, geography and recurrence of cuisines types, for example by Zelinsky (1985), who in 1985 did a “survey” of restaurant cuisines in North America (United States and Canada) which showed the great variety of types of cuisine and specifically how they are spatially diffused.

Restaurants are places of food consumption, for chefs to “recreate their cultures and for diners to mold their identities” (Park, 2017:366). In this context, “The Michelin

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(or Red) Guide is considered to be the most reliable and widely consulted restaurant guide in the world, respected by both chefs and the dining-out public” (Lane, 2000:497). The impact of the Michelin Guide on restaurants, food and society is well recognised: “In Europe, the guide has been accredited in helping to foster innovations and advancements among some of the world’s top chefs and, consequently, the entire industry” (Kiatkawsin & Sutherland, 2020:1).

South African cuisine is a meltingpot, a “rainbow” of different flavours from the Khoikhoi, Zulu and Xhosa inhabitants to the various European and Asian nationals who migrated to the area throughout the centuries (see Snyman, 2004). In South Africa, “the local cuisine is evolving, spurred on by a vital force that lets us borrow from the past and take into account the present, yet still look to the future” (Snyman, 2004:91). However the lack of African cuisines in South African restaurants has been noted (Mutsago, 2011:1; Mhlanga et al., 2015:755).

The market for luxury gastronomy is booming as integral part of the tourism sector (Batat, 2020:1). In this context, the “Michelin Guide is then considered as a strong competitive advantage for both rural and urban destinations, which can be used in marketing strategies to attract worldwide tourists who seek to live a unique luxury gastronomic experience offered by a renowned Michelin starred chef” (Batat, 2020:1). From a tourism perspective the presence of a distinctive local cuisine is also important. Tourism can contribute to the preservation of local cuisines, and the public and private sector at national and local levels should attend to this as an aim (Polat & Aktaş-Polat, 2020:252).

With this in mind, the present article, through the extrapolation of data from the Michelin Guide website and the Eat Out website, compares the variety of restaurant cuisines in South Africa with the variety of restaurant cuisines in the Michelin Guide and analyses what could be labelled their geography of cuisines. The similarity or dissimilarity of types of cuisine indicates if restaurants in South Africa follow similar trends to top global restaurants – and thus resemble those in the Michelin Guide – or have their own specific trend in cuisines. This article contributes to the current growth in academic literature about luxury restaurants (Kiatkawsin & Sutherland, 2020:2).

METHODOLOGY

This article investigates (compares) restaurant cuisines in South Africa and in the Michelin Guide. To extrapolate the restaurant cuisines in these two contexts, two websites were used: the official website of the Michelin Guide and the Eat Out website for South Africa. Both websites show the number of restaurants for each type of cuisine. The list of types of cuisines is, however, not identical. While this partial

mismatch can be a limitation, it can also be a strength, by allowing comparison of the two different lists themselves, showing how many types of cuisine are identical and how many are not. Besides this comparison of the cuisines lists, the websites show how many restaurants are present for each cuisine. A weakness is that on both websites each restaurant can be “registered” for more than one type of cuisine and therefore belong to several types of cuisine (this is especially true of the Eat Out website). This weakness, however, does not negate the aim of this article, as restaurants with several cuisines simply imply that they are specialised in various cuisines.

The choice of the two websites was based on two different issues. The Michelin Guide website was chosen because the Michelin Guide itself represents the main reference for top restaurants; in short, “the Michelin restaurant guide has long been considered as the definitive arbiter in fine dining by most gastronomic experts” (Kiatkawsin & Sutherland, 2020:2). The Michelin Guide is frequently recognised as a “global benchmark for chef and restaurant ratings” and since it was first compiled in 1900, it “has developed into a prestigious ranking of fine dining and cuisine and has an international influence on haute cuisine” (Schwark, Tiberius & Fabro, 2020:2). At 11 November 2020 the total number of restaurants on the Michelin Guide website was 15 480 (Michelin Guide, 2020a). On the other hand, the Eat Out website was chosen because it is one of the major South African websites about food and has an extensive list of 5164 restaurants (Eat Out, 2020a). An article notes that, because of COVID-19, “Eat Out launched the Eat Out Restaurant Relief Fund” (New Media, 2020; Von Ulmenstein, 2020) and also that the Eat Out website “reaches up to 400 000 foodies per month” (New Media, 2020). Eat Outsays of itself: “SA’s best guide to SA’s best food, Eat Out is one of South Africa’s most loved food brands” (Eat Out, no date). Further, “Eat Out is also linked to the Restaurant Association of South Africa (RASA), an NPO formed in 2004, acting in the interest of South African restaurateurs, and claims to be the official voice and lobbying body of the industry” (Von Ulmenstein, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (no date) defines cuisine as a “manner of preparing food” or “style of cooking”. The Cambridge Dictionary (no date) also defines cuisine as “a style of cooking”. Geographical cuisine, meaning belonging to a specific geographical area (national, regional or local) is associated with the specific area’s local culture, for example Italian cuisine, Mediterranean cuisine, Sardinian cuisine. The type of cuisine based on specific methods or styles of cooking would include molecular cuisine, nouvelle cuisine, fusion cuisine. “Nouvelle cuisine, haute cuisine, molecular

gastronomy, and Note by Note (NbN) cuisine are examples of the ornamental culinary” (Polat & Aktaş-Polat, 2020:250). While these cuisines could also be associated with a specific place – nouvelle cuisine with France, for example – it is less related to a specific geographical or cultural context than to specific “technical” ways of cooking. This last issue shows that the division into two main types of cuisine and further divisions within the two main groups should not be regarded as firm and exclusive. On the contrary. Examples are hybrid cuisine, consisting “of a combination of different local cuisines” (Polat & Aktaş-Polat, 2020:249) and fusion cuisine, which specifically “provides both mental and visual satisfaction with a hybrid presentation by dissolving different cultures in a pot” (Polat & Aktaş-Polat, 2020:250). Cuisine, therefore, includes the style of preparing and cooking food. This article divides the many types of cuisine into four main categories or types (again, these distinctions should not be considered as rigid but rather as general trends). This article distinguishes these cuisine types:

- Linked to or associated with a specific place or culture (called “Geographical/cultural”).
- Involving a specific “technical” way to manage, cook and represent food (called “Technical/context related”).
- Including both “geographical” and “technical” aspects (called “Combined”).
- Based or focused on only one or two ingredients or a specific type of ingredients, such as seafood (called “Ingredients”).

The spread of a type of cuisine can happen in various ways, such as people movement (migrations), the influence of tourism and diffusion through elites (Polat & Aktaş-Polat, 2020; Park, 2017; Sajadmanesh et al., 2017). The link between Michelin Guide restaurants and “elite” is clear. The social elite can be associated with Michelin restaurants and the Michelin Guide has an acknowledged role in influencing the culinary world. Consequently, although “Michelin restaurants cater for only a small and relatively privileged section of the population, their cultural impact as taste makers, as well as their economic influence, go well beyond this” (Lane, 2000:494). The influencing role of haute cuisine restaurants can be linked to tourism destination image and attractiveness, agriculture and food processing criticism and the introduction of “new ingredients and methods of preparation to ordinary consumers, fostering a culture of fine dining and associated sociality” (Lane, 2000:494). Luxury gastronomy can play a significant role “in promoting the local food culture and heritage and attracting actual and new tourists by reflecting in their cuisine the distinctiveness of the region and its culinary traditions” (Batat, 2020:7). From a tourism perspective, therefore, “luxury gastronomy represents a real competitive advantage that helps to retain and attract local and international visitors and to make them

revisit the destination to live a unique and highly creative food experience delivered by a renowned Michelin-starred chef” (Batat, 2020:3).

It is not always possible to strongly link Michelin restaurants to indigenous cuisine, for example in England, where the attempt to resurrect the native culinary culture has failed (Lane, 2000:515). On the other hand, despite contradictions (Matta, 2013) in Peru high-end cuisines chefs are reconnecting to indigenous food (see Mnguni & Giampiccoli, 2019:7).

That cuisines are important can be recognised by the fact that specific cuisines have now reached world-recognised status. Consider, for example, that a type of cuisine can be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Thus, in the year “2010, food made its first appearance on UNESCO World Heritage lists with the inscription of three diverse cuisines and one type of culinary product: the Mediterranean Diet, the French Gastronomic Meal, Mexican/Michoacán Cuisine, and Croatian gingerbread” (Giovine & Brulotte, 2016:10). The spread of cuisines should also be contextualised in the more general globalisation framework: the idea that a “standardization and homogenization of cultural paradigms and experiences has occurred” (Lane, 2011:697). However, while a “limited world-wide spread of mass-produced and highly standardized restaurant food, connected with US cultural political and economic domination, is accorded some validity”, the proposed process of homogenisation and the production of “autonomous ‘third culture’ has been discarded by most academics (Lane, 2011:697).

Globalisation has influenced many aspects of life; however, although “perceptions of homogenisation of products are rife, equally present are arguments for their heterogenisation” (Balkaran, Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2016:1). It is worth noting that although “Western/American culture has spread globally, local cultures may have embraced some elements from these cultures, and they have done so without complete adulteration [...] the homogenisation of food habits is not conclusive as it is subject to local interpretations” (Balkaran et al., 2016:1). In the culinary context, food culture has not been homogenised and local interpretations are present (Flandrin & Montanari, 1999:551).

Thus, globalisation has a contradictory (possibly opposing) influence of homogenisation or standardisation and also diversification. In this sense, globalisation involves “simultaneous processes of homogenization and diversification of culture and refer to this phenomenon variously as glocalization – a homogeneity-heterogeneity mix – or as deterritorialization and pluralization of cultural styles” (Lane, 2011:698). Another description is “cultural reterritorialization”, where globalisation is contrasted with the “reassertion of local identities” (Lane, 2011:699). It must be recalled that “although regional cuisines are invented traditions, we must recognize the force with which these traditions are invested and reinvested with meaning and

often with vehement local patriotism. This approach focuses on significant local cultural resources which may be used to contest and oppose global influences” (Lane, 2011:699).

Diversity is important. It emphasises and promotes each society’s characteristics and “amplifies society’s capacities in order to develop creative activities since creativity is enhanced within a society that grows and thinks on the basis of its own cultural characteristics and thus does not depend on a dominant globalised culture” (Montanari, 2002:1). “Cuisine, like culture, changes and evolves independently or by means of contact and exchange with other cultures (cuisines)” (Giampiccoli, 2017:11) and “‘Diversity’ contributes to the stability of environmental, social and economic systems and is therefore essential for sustainable development” (Montanari, 2002:1).

Diversity should be seen as a resource, a positive resource for human development. At the same time two issues are relevant: first, diversity should not be understood as superiority (or inferiority) of one culture (or food style or cuisine) to another, but equal appreciation and value should be given to both; second, historically – like today – cultures (read cuisines) are not impermeable, and so exchange and fusion of different cuisines should be seen as a way of general enrichment. This implies that cuisine should be kept as traditional as possible but at the same time allow valuable exchange (absorption) with other cuisines and possible reinterpretation by them. The right balance between maintenance of tradition and exchange or absorption from other cultures or cuisines is necessary; in the globalisation process maintenance of cultural diversities (seen as equal) and homogenisation must be balanced. Diversity is a strength to humanity and its development; diversities should work together, on equal footing and without hierarchical status, highlighting their differences but forming commonalities and intersections towards a just development.

Certainly, global food trends exist. For 2019, “chefs predicted more plant-based meals, fast-casual dining, and kelp” (Stephens, 2019). Chefs were “forecasting sherry, sustainable seafood, smoked everything, lots of bread, and so much more” (Stephens, 2019). A 2019 study states, “In the centre [...] culinary differentialism has increased, affecting the established global culinary hierarchy” (Lane, 2019:10).

The Michelin Guide has historically been under French influence, meaning that French cuisine was regarded as the model to follow in haute cuisine. However, examples show that “culinary culture has lost its total dependence on French classical cuisine, but the latter nevertheless remains an important influence” in Germany and particularly in Britain (Lane, 2011:707).

As to luxury restaurants, it is also clear that regardless of “the pervasiveness of mass production, product standardization and levelling out, there still exist ‘prestige’ economies where considerable investment in skill, time and money

creates highly customized and relatively rare goods. The production of haute cuisine meals is one such economy” (Lane, 2011:696). The Michelin Guide (2020b) writes that restaurant trends in 2020 would include:

- Deeper explorations of regional cuisines.
- Preservation of heritage food culture.
- Continued drive towards environmental sustainability.
- Making fine-dining more child- and female-friendly.
- Food and beverage industry workforce sustainability.

In reference to haute cuisine, which is a fundamental factor in restaurants in the Michelin Guide, it is noted that because “of the high innovation rate, haute cuisine is ever-changing. Trends, such as molecular cuisine, come as fast as they go” (Schwark et al., 2020:2).

Specific differences between the cuisines of particular geographical areas are going to be rediscovered or emphasised. “No longer are the cuisines of Asian countries being lumped together. Inquisitive consumers want to know more about the cuisines of China, India, Vietnam, and other Asian and Southeast Asian countries, including the regional differences of the cuisines within these countries” (Nachay, 2019:50).

SOUTH AFRICAN CUISINE(S)

It is obvious that developed countries have their own cuisines, whereas in Africa “culinary history is complex and evolving, and it is likely that any contemporary African cuisine will have been built on pre-colonial, colonial and these more recent globalising influences” (Cusack, 2000:210). Colonisation has had an important – if not fundamental – role in shaping the current cuisines of most, if not all, African countries. Many people in Africa “are keen to redefine narratives surrounding the continent. This has led to the ‘green shoots’ of the sourcestenance trend emerging within the region. A renewed sense of pride means that operators are turning towards indigenous, local produce for inspiration, to ensure African cuisines receive the same attention as others” (Jones Lang LaSalle IP, Inc, 2020:22).

However, it is important to note that cuisines are not neutral statements but reflect specific power relations. Whatever their national, regional or ethnic characteristics, cuisines – like most material culture – “are clearly products of dominant ideologies and related power structures” (Cusack, 2000:207). Thus African “cuisines are nurtured by such ideologies as imperialism, capitalism and nationalism. Most emerging African national cuisines – and what people actually eat in Africa, not necessarily quite the same – clearly reflect the colonial encounter and the subsequent dependent relationship with the West, as well as indigenous ethnic culinary practices” (Cusack, 2000:207).

South Africa has not been immune to these various circumstances. The country's cuisine is now "an amalgamation of the recipes from the many cultural groups that have coexisted in the country during the course of the last 360 years or so. Very little French cuisine is found anymore. The first known inhabitants of the country, the Khoisan, were mainly hunter-gatherers. Later, the Nguni peoples introduced agriculture to the country and planted maize, sweet potato, gem squash and other vegetables for their consumption" (Muellers, 2011:3). South African "cuisine is well known on the international level and by virtue of being in Africa; visitors assume that the South African cuisine exhibit unique and distinctive preserved traditional characteristic associated with its history, culture and people" (Mutsago, 2011:1). The varied history of South Africa is responsible for the exciting fusion of food cultures in what has become known as "Rainbow Cuisine" (Mutsago, 2011:4). This mix of cultures can also be noted in the use of a specific ingredient, namely meat – a fundamental ingredient to most South African people. That is why "it is evident that South Africa has developed an intricate meat cuisine over the last few centuries" (Erasmus & Hoffman, 2017:71).

However, "authentic" South African – meaning indigenous – cuisines are rare in restaurants (Mutsago, 2011:5).

"The authentic South African cuisine has also been hidden from the view, with international cuisines taking over" (Mutsago, 2011:3).

Debate abounds. It is for example noted that in South Africa the "range of possibilities on offer through manufactured food and restaurants no doubt contributes to the development of a national taste, but also to a regional" specific taste (Chevalier, 2015:128). It can be argued that "a specifically South African cuisine has yet emerged from all these culinary encounters, certainly not anything that we could call a creole food culture" (Chevalier, 2015:128).

A single street in South Africa's major cities can have a variety of restaurants and cuisines, such as Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, French, Korean, Mexican, Vietnamese, Brazilian, Swiss and Greek together with international food chains such as KFC and McDonalds (Muellers, 2011:3; Mutsago, 2011:3). It is notable that "French cuisine was highly sought after during the 1960–1980s period, especially in cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town, but this 'fad' gradually diminished so that today there are also many restaurants that serve traditional African local dishes" (Muellers, 2011:3). However, "tourists looking for authentic South African cuisine have to look harder for the few restaurants that specialise in it" (Mutsago, 2011:3).

Local black cuisines (and not only black cuisines) are alive and diverse. "Now, as then, the San hunt for meat and gather herbs and roots. The VhaVenda in the far north enjoy mopane worms and King's porridge, a multi-tiered maize-meal creation. Xhosas in the Eastern Cape bake bread in the embers of their fires and simmer samp and

beans in a potjie. Ndebele north of Johannesburg tuck into morogo (wild edible greens), maize, and pumpkin, while Zulus in KwaZulu-Natal prepare beef stew with dumplings and madumbe tubers" (Snyman, 2004:91). Muellers also mentions various traditional black dishes including pap and phutu (a crumblier version of pap), "Umngqusho (ex-President Mandela's favourite dish), Mashonzha, and the traditional local beer Umqombothi" (Muellers, 2011:3). Of all these indigenous dishes, and others local black people eat, hardly any are served in upmarket restaurants: "despite the fact that various delicious African dishes have been recorded, only one (pap and stew) made it to the menu books of a few restaurants in South Africa. The current state in the South African cuisine offers little guarantees that visitors can experience the African dining experience on their visit to the local restaurant" (Mutsago, 2011:1). Lately it has become clear that in South Africa (as in other places around the world) French cookery is no longer the recognisable "standard": other cuisines, such as Italian and Japanese, are regarded at the same level as the French. "In South Africa, a unique style of fare has emerged" (Muellers, 2011:3).

CASE STUDY: SOUTH AFRICAN RESTAURANTS' TYPE OF CUISINE

Against the background outlined above, this section compares the type of restaurant cuisines in South Africa (using the Eat Out website) with the type of cuisines in restaurants in the Michelin Guide (using the Michelin Guide website). This comparison is not about quality but about types of cuisine. Thus, while the Michelin Guide website (2020a) differentiates six "distinction" categories or levels (3 Stars Michelin, 2 Stars Michelin, 1 Star Michelin, Bib Gourmand, Plate Michelin, and Michelin Green Star), this article uses all these levels indifferently. The criterium is that a restaurant is listed on the Michelin Guide website, not its specific quality – which however presupposes a high standard for simply being included in the Michelin Guide. It is probably generally (very generally) assumed that the quality of Michelin Guide restaurants will be higher than of South African restaurants, but, in this article, this is not relevant. The aim here is to compare South African restaurants' types of cuisine with the types of cuisine in Michelin Guide restaurants.

As indicated above, this article distinguishes four categories or types of cuisine: "Geographical/cultural"; "Technical/context related"; "Combined"; and "Ingredients" cuisine. These categories are fluid and one type of cuisine could belong to more than one category. Nevertheless, this categorisation is useful for the comparison investigated here.

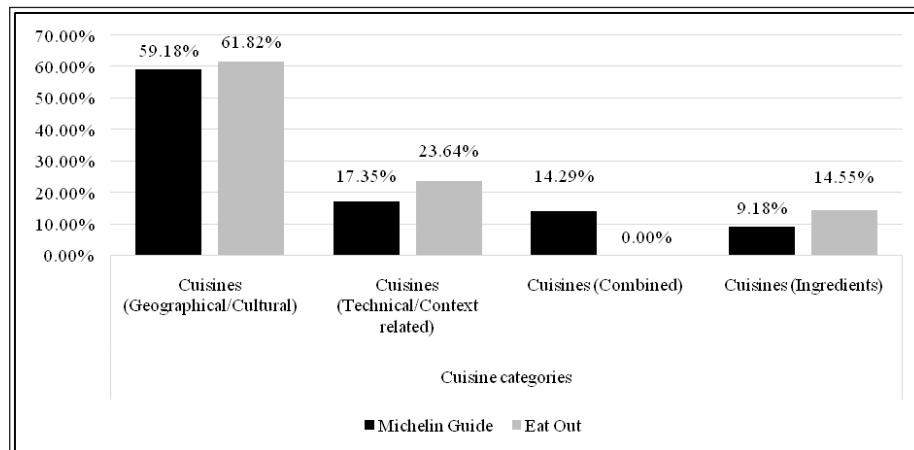
Table 1 presents the number of types of cuisine in each category in South African restaurants (Eat Out website) and in restaurants on the Michelin Guide website, whereas Fig. 1 shows a comparison (in percentage) of the number of restaurants in the four categories between the same websites.

Table 1: Comparison of Number of Restaurants in Each Category between the Michelin Guide and South Africa

Cuisine Categories	Number of Restaurants	
	Michelin Guide	Eat Out
Cuisines (“Geographical/cultural”)	58	34
Cuisines (“Technical/context related”)	17	13
Cuisines (“Combined”)	14	0
Cuisines (“Ingredients”)	9	8
Total number of cuisines	98	55

Sources: Michelin Guide (2020a); Eat Out (2020a).

Table 1 shows the total number of cuisines in Michelin Guide restaurants to be almost double (98 against 55) the number of cuisines in South African restaurants on the Eat Out website. However, from Fig. 1 it is interesting to note that both the Michelin Guide and Eat Out websites have a similar trend in three out of four categories of cuisine, namely “Geographical/cultural”, “Technical/context related” and “Ingredients”. These three categories have similar percentages (Eat Out slightly higher). It is especially noticeable that the bulk (about 60%) of restaurants on both websites belong to the “Geographical/cultural” cuisine category, which shows that the “Geographical/cultural” category is the most important in defining a restaurant’s cuisine. Place of origin or cultural identity, or both, remain – by far – the most important criteria by which restaurants (arguably chefs) define their cuisine.



Sources: Michelin Guide (2020a); Eat Out (2020a).

Fig. 1: Number of Each Type of Cuisine Category on Michelin Guide and Eat Out websites

The “Technical/context related” category exemplifies specific types of cuisine, such as “contemporary cuisine” or “country cooking” and is the second most important characteristic with which restaurants associate their cuisine. “Ingredients” is the category with a smaller percentage of Michelin Guide restaurants than Eat Out restaurants. However, Eat Out does not have any restaurants belonging to the “Combined” category, whereas about 15% of Michelin Guide restaurants belong to it. The zero “Combined” category restaurants in Eat Out could be due to the specific format in which a restaurant must register on the website (In this case, it could be a limitation of the website and of this research.) However, it can also be argued that whatever the reason for the absence of “Combined” cuisines in restaurants or on the website, the figure shows that this category is overlooked, not specifically recognised or, possibly, differently named among South African cuisines, whereas “Contemporary French” and “Modern British” (see Table 4) are recognised.

Table 2 shows a detailed comparison (in percentage and absolute numbers) between types of cuisine belonging to the “Geographical/cultural” category. In Table 2 (as in Tables 3, 4 and 5) the use of fonts is as follows:

- **Bold** font indicates an exact match: The same cuisines are present on both websites.
- *Italics* indicate that the cuisines are similar or inclusive. For example, Emilian cuisine also belongs to Italian cuisine although this does not mean that both are the same – each cuisine can have its distinctive traits. But for the purpose of this article, Italian cuisine is taken to include Emilian, Ligurian and other cuisines in the Italian territory.
- Regular font indicates lack of a possible match: A cuisine on the Eat Out website cannot be matched with one on the Michelin Guide website (Note that this research compares types of cuisine in South African restaurants to those in Michelin Guide restaurants,

therefore the South African Eat Out website is the starting point for the comparison).

Table 2 shows that 16 restaurants (in bold) out of a total of 33 have types of cuisine identical to Michelin Guide restaurant types. Thus, about 50% of the types of cuisine in the Eat Out section of Table 2 match those in the Michelin Guide exactly.

Each country or locality should also have specific cuisines related to its specific context (or immediately surrounding context). For example, in Table 2 South Africa shows Dutch, South African, Halaal, Cape Malay and Mozambican cuisines, which are not present in Michelin Guide restaurants. At the same time, while the Eat Out website indicates Italian cuisine (in general), the Michelin Guide website in addition to general Italian cuisine also has Apulian, Calabrian, Campanian, Cuisine from Abruzzo, Cuisine from the Marches, Emilian, Ligurian, Lombardian, Mantuan, Piedmontese, Roman and Sardinian, indicating a far more detailed differentiation of cuisines (as should be). Some of these specific cuisines can be significant. For example, Piedmontese (cuisine from the specific Piedmont Region or area in Italy) is represented by 62 restaurants or 1.37% of all Michelin Guide restaurants in this category. This puts Piedmontese cuisine in 14th position out of 58 cuisines in this category on the Michelin Guide website, showing how the Italian “general” type can hide strong local specialities.

Considering that each country in the world will have its own cuisines based on its specific (or surrounding) local context, a match of 50% shows that South African restaurants are well in line with cuisines in the global Michelin Guide. In addition, the presence of specific cuisines related to the South African context, such as African, South African, Dutch, Halaal and Indian (with numerous Muslim and Indian communities in South Africa), show important the local context is. Table 2 shows that almost a quarter of all restaurants on Eat Out associate themselves with South African cuisine (however, as explained above, South African cuisine is itself a mix of various cuisines from different social groups living in the country and influenced by colonisation and migration). African cuisines represent almost 4.5% in the Eat Out section of Table 2, but the percentage could (the conditional tense is important) be higher: it could encompass African/South African, meaning indigenous food of black people in South Africa, such as Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Khoikhoi, Mpondo, Tswana and Sotho people – to name a few. In general, the balance between South African and Michelin Guide restaurants shows similarity in cuisines, but South Africa also shows a decent presence of more locally specific cuisines linked to the country’s context.

Table 2: Comparison of “Geographical/Cultural” Cuisines between the Michelin Guide and Eat Out Websites

	Cuisines (“Geographical/Cultural”)		
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
Michelin Guide	<i>Alpine</i>	0.22%	10
	<i>Alsatian</i>	0.75%	34
	<i>American</i>	4.15%	188
	<i>Apulian</i>	0.20%	9
	Asian	2.14%	97
	Austrian	0.80%	36
	<i>Basque</i>	0.40%	18
	<i>Beijing Cuisine</i>	0.49%	22
	Belgian	0.71%	32
	<i>Brazilian</i>	0.44%	20
	<i>Calabrian</i>	0.18%	8
	<i>Californian</i>	2.27%	103
	<i>Campanian</i>	0.51%	23
	<i>Cantonese</i>	4.81%	218
	<i>Catalan</i>	0.51%	23
	Central Asian	0.15%	7
	Chinese	3.33%	151
	<i>Corsican</i>	0.20%	9
	<i>Cuisine from Abruzzo</i>	0.40%	18
	<i>Cuisine from the Marches</i>	0.20%	9
	Danish	0.24%	11
	<i>Emilian</i>	1.10%	50
	Ethiopian	0.29%	13
	European	0.35%	16
	French	6.43%	291
	<i>Galician</i>	0.29%	13
	German	0.18%	8
	Greek	0.84%	38
	<i>Huaiyang</i>	0.31%	14
	<i>Hunanese</i>	0.18%	8
	Indian	2.54%	115
	Indonesian	0.24%	11
	Irish	0.27%	12
	<i>Isan</i>	0.18%	8
	Italian	13.91%	630
	<i>Italian-American</i>	0.57%	26
	Japanese	8.52%	386

Cuisines (“Geographical/Cultural”)			
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
	Korean	1.57%	71
	<i>Latin American</i>	0.35%	16
	<i>Ligurian</i>	0.62%	28
	<i>Lombardian</i>	0.53%	24
	<i>Lyonnaise</i>	0.27%	12
	<i>Mantuan</i>	0.18%	8
	Mediterranean Cuisine	11.59%	525
	Mexican	2.50%	113
	Middle Eastern	0.60%	27
	Moroccan	0.18%	8
	<i>Northern Thai</i>	0.24%	11
	Persian	0.18%	8
	<i>Peruvian</i>	0.64%	29
	<i>Piedmontese</i>	1.37%	62
	Polish	0.51%	23
	Portuguese	0.51%	23
	<i>Provençal</i>	1.06%	48
	Regional Cuisine	17.09%	774
	<i>Roman</i>	0.18%	8
	<i>Sardinian</i>	0.22%	10
	Scandinavian	0.33%	15
Eat Out	<i>African</i>	4.39%	175
	Argentinian	0.13%	5
	Asian	5.24%	209
	Austrian	0.10%	4
	Belgian	0.25%	10
	Cape Malay	1.00%	40
	Caribbean	0.25%	10
	Chinese	2.63%	105
	Dutch	0.15%	6
	Ethiopian	0.30%	12
	<i>Food from the Americas</i>	5.16%	206
	French	3.23%	129
	German	0.65%	26
	Greek	2.06%	82
	Halaal Friendly*	1.50%	60
	Kosher	0.15%	6
	Indian	4.61%	184
	Italian	12.33%	492
	Japanese	1.88%	75

Cuisines (“Geographical/Cultural”)			
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
	Korean	0.23%	9
	Mauritian	0.05%	2
	Mediterranean	11.60%	463
	Mexican	2.63%	105
	Middle Eastern	1.43%	57
	Moroccan	0.55%	22
	Mozambique	0.70%	28
	Portuguese	3.48%	139
	Russian	0.03%	1
	South African	24.01%	958
	<i>Spanish</i>	0.45%	18
	Strictly Halaal	5.71%	228
	<i>Thai</i>	2.81%	112
	Turkish	0.30%	12

Sources: Michelin Guide (2020a); Eat Out (2020a).

Font legend: **Bold**: present on both websites; *Italics*: similar or inclusive on both websites; Regular: only in one website.

Table 3 shows the “Technical/context related” category of cuisines. In this table, four types of cuisine (out of 13) in the Eat Out section match exactly, and only one is similar or inclusive (in italics). This means that about a quarter of cuisines in this category match, which shows a weak similarity between South African and Michelin Guide restaurants in this cuisine category. Emphasising the weak relation between Eat Out and Michelin Guide cuisines, Table 4 shows that Eat Out does not have any cuisines that could fit “Combined”, whereas the Michelin Guide website has 16 of these. From Table 2, related to the “Geographical/cultural” cuisine category, Table 3 (“Technical/context related”) and Table 4 (“Combined”) show a declining similarity between Eat Out and Michelin Guide restaurant cuisines.

Table 3: Comparison of “Technical/Context Related” Cuisines between the Michelin Guide and Eat Out Websites

Cuisines (“Technical/Context Related”)			
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
Michelin Guide	Barbecue	1.40%	55
	Contemporary	14.09%	555
	Country cooking	17.21%	678
	Creative	27.74%	1093
	Deli	0.23%	9
	Dim Sum	0.48%	19

Cuisines (“Technical/Context Related”)			
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
	Fusion	2.72%	107
	Gastropub	0.63%	25
	Grills	1.35%	53
	Home Cooking	1.27%	50
	Hotpot	0.18%	7
	Innovative	1.75%	69
	International	13.40%	528
	Market Cuisine	16.85%	664
	Organic	0.71%	28
Eat Out	Bakery fare	10.67%	621
	Bistro fare	11.03%	642
	Buffet	3.26%	190
	Café fare	15.80%	920
	Contemporary fare	1.58%	92
	Country-style fare	0.60%	35
	Deli fare	3.16%	184
	Fine-dining food	3.74%	218
	Health food	6.72%	391
	International	0.70%	41
	Light meals	25.71%	1497
	Modern	11.20%	652
	Pub fare	5.82%	339

Sources: Michelin Guide (2020a); Eat Out (2020a).

Font legend: **Bold**: present on both websites; *Italics*: similar or inclusive on both websites; Regular: only on one website.

Table 4: Comparison of “Combined” Cuisines between the Michelin Guide and Eat Out Websites

Cuisines (“Combined”)			
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
Michelin Guide	American Contemporary	0.75%	44
	Asian Contemporary	0.26%	15
	Asian Influences	0.57%	33
	British Contemporary	0.33%	19
	Chinese Contemporary	0.26%	15
	Classic Cuisine	14.06%	821
	Classic French	4.16%	243
	Creative British	0.12%	7
	Creative French	1.40%	82

Cuisines (“Technical/Context Related”)			
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
	European Contemporary	0.79%	46
	French Contemporary	1.30%	76
	Italian Contemporary	1.16%	68
	Japanese Contemporary	0.26%	15
	Modern British	5.17%	302
	Modern Cuisine	65.22%	3808
	Modern French	5.12%	299
Eat Out	N/A	N/A	0

Sources: Michelin Guide (2020a); Eat Out (2020a).

Font legend: **Bold**: present on both websites; *Italics*: similar or inclusive on both websites; Regular: only on one website.

Table 5, which deals with the “Ingredients” category, continues the declining similarity trend from Table 2 onwards, which shows the greatest similarity. In Table 5 only two types of cuisine (Pizzas and Seafood) match exactly, while only Meat and Grills in the Michelin Guide can be regarded as similar to or inclusive of (in italics) cuisines in Eat Out.

Table 5: Comparison of “Ingredients” Cuisines between the Michelin Guide and Eat Out Websites

Cuisines (“Ingredients”)			
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
Michelin Guide	Cheese, Fondue and Raclette	0.67%	7
	<i>Meats and Grills</i>	11.23%	117
	Naengmyeon	0.86%	9
	Noodles	4.13%	43
	Noodles and Congee	1.15%	12
	Pizza	4.51%	47
	Ramen	1.82%	19
	Rice Dishes	0.77%	8
	Seafood	74.86%	780
Eat Out	<i>Burgers</i>	18.88%	1158
	Coffee	12.06%	986
	Pizzas	13.85%	740
	Seafood	14.57%	850
	<i>Steak</i>	4.68%	894

Cuisines ("Ingredients")			
	Name	% of Total	Number of Restaurants
	Sushi	4.55%	287
	Tapas	4.25%	279
	Vegan food	11.08%	261
	Vegetarian	16.07%	680

Sources: Michelin Guide (2020a); Eat Out (2020a).

Font legend: **Bold**: present on both websites; *Italics*: similar or inclusive on both websites; Regular: only on one website.

Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show that similarity between Eat Out South African and Michelin Guide restaurants has a positive trend only in relation to the "Geographical/cultural" cuisine category, whereas the other categories show weak to zero similarity. However, as the "Geographical/cultural" cuisine category also has, by far, the greatest number of restaurants or types of cuisine, it should carry more weight than other trends, which implies that a generally positive similarity trend can be seen between South African and Michelin Guide restaurant types of cuisine. The positive trend is specifically supported by cuisines related to the geographical or cultural context, whereas it is less supported by other types of cuisine. In the "Geographical/cultural" cuisine category, the presence of specific cuisines in South Africa not present in the Michelin Guide, such as South African and Cape Malay cuisines, reinforces the finding that Eat Out restaurants are following the trend of giving first importance to cuisines associated with a geographical or cultural context. This result seems to be in line with the history of South Africa and the representation of the country's cuisines as "rainbow cuisine". The emphasis on cuisines associated with a geographical or cultural context is therefore seen as in line with the Michelin Guide restaurants but also in line with the history of South Africa.

CONCLUSION

This article has investigated a comparison between types of restaurant cuisines in the Michelin Guide and Eat Out (for South Africa) websites. The aim was to verify how much similarity is present between types of cuisine in South African restaurants (using the restaurants shown on the Eat Out website) and those in the Michelin Guide (using the restaurants on the Michelin Guide website). This study is valuable because types of cuisine around the world can be influenced by various factors such as people movement or migration, and social influence, by which the social elite diffuses its influence to the general public. South Africa received both these types of influence and continues to do so. South Africa is also not immune to influence by a social elite, which is a general occurrence everywhere and the paper shows that in the "Geographical/cultural" cuisine

category there is a good match between types of cuisine in the restaurants on the two websites, whereas the similarity of cuisines in the other three categories is weak, very weak or zero. The fact that most restaurants on both websites fall into the "Geographical/cultural" cuisine category also shows that cuisines principally based on a specific geographical or cultural context are by far the most important types of cuisine recognised by restaurants (or rather, chefs).

It is here proposed that, based on this case study, South African restaurants are in line with general global trends in restaurant cuisines, especially with reference to cuisines based on specific geographical or cultural contexts, but less in line when it comes to "Technical/context related", "Combined" and "Ingredients" cuisine categories. It could be that many restaurants in the "Combined" cuisine category need higher skills or a specific approach (and clientele) of which there is not enough in South Africa to be profitable. All in all, South African restaurant cuisines show a great variety, in line with global trends however a weak point can be noted: the absence of differentiation of many other, often local indigenous, cuisines belonging to various South African cultural groups – Zulu and Xhosa, to name just two. The increase of South African cultural groups' cuisines should instead see positively also in relation to the promotion of the tourism sector.

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