

Maintaining National Identities: Cuisine, Immigrant Exclusion, and Nationalism

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Abstract

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National identities are the sum of many different social characteristics. Nationalism collects many different traits to draw a boundary between members of the national community and outsiders or foreigners. Is traditional cuisine one of these boundary-marking distinctions? Cuisine is often used as shorthand for cultural identification with one's own group as well as identification other groups. Logistic regression analyses reject the idea that traditional foodways are a meaningful way nationalists assert their identity. Nationalism is much more grounded in exclusion of immigrants from participation in the national community than in solidarity through shared cuisine.

## MAINTAINING NATIONAL IDENTITIES: CUISINE, IMMIGRANT EXCLUSION, AND NATIONALISM

How do people know that they belong in a nation together? National identities are complex groupings of different traits that together give stories of peoplehood (Smith 2003). These stories describe distinctive values and behaviors that separate one nation from another. Nationalism, conscious work to delineate the boundaries of a nation, may include emphasis on certain traits for one national group, while another national group may prefer a different grouping of traits. Foodways are one common way people describe what ties themselves and their compatriots together. However, we know little about the connection between national foodways and other elements of nationalism. Consuming a food can be an act of inclusion into a group that changes the whole status structure in a society (Mintz 1987), and it can also be an act of excluding those outside the group. Is cuisine an important identity symbol for nationalists?

At its root, nationalism is social closure that works to protect a nation's institutions and resources from use or control by other groups or nations. Nations define themselves through the things that give group members shared experience but set them apart from others (Smith 2003, Anderson [1983] 2006). Shared culinary history and practice could generate national solidarity. Foodways are a concrete expression of national character that can be demonstrated much more easily than a set of values or norms without a visible synecdoche (DeSoucey 2010). This study tests a strong relationship between cuisine and nationalism: whether culinary traditionalism contributes to formal support for European nationalist political parties. By comparing culinary traditionalism with anti-immigrant sentiment, a more obvious, accepted, and direct way to define who is in and who is outside of a nation, I also provide an idea of the relative importance of foodways.

## FOOD, NATION, AND POLITICS

Nationalism aims for political power and autonomy for a nation, a self-conscious group united in culture (Gellner 1983). Nationalist political parties advance agendas for restricting membership in a nation, using common heritage and traditional customs to draw a genetic and cultural boundary and to emphasize trust among members. Preserving tradition is an argument for maintaining the status quo and defending what privileges or resources an individual or group owns (Calhoun 1983). Studies of distinctions and cultural divisions have long included food and eating as important and telling markers of social structure and groupings (Douglas 1984, Levi-Strauss 1969). Sharing in traditional cuisine implies shared memory and refers to a seemingly homogenous youth experience at the family table and on national holidays. We have little more than anecdotal evidence of traditional foodways intersecting with national boundary maintenance, and mostly it concerns exclusion on the basis of cuisine rather than glorification of shared foodways. Shakespeare mocked the Welsh through Fluellen's leek-adorned cap in *Henry V*. English dockworkers mocked their Irish colleagues for their diets of potatoes and fried fish (Scholliers 2001). Japan under the Meiji Restoration provides one example of an internally focused use of food, though not traditional food and not for the express purpose of identity maintenance. The emperor instituted national nutrition standards and diets to ensure a supply of healthy soldiers (Pyle 2006), effectively producing a dominant national cuisine and contemporary solidarity around the new traditional food (Hiroko 2008).

Under the classical state-building model, nationalism, "collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit" (Hechter 2000:7), springs from the spread of an official language and culture (Gellner 1983, Anderson 2006). Yet contemporary nationalism is resurgent in places with relatively long histories of

nationhood, such as Denmark, Sweden, and Britain. Contemporary European nationalists focus on excluding an increasing population of immigrants, who are perceived as intruders (Van Gorp 2005) threatening European cultures and traditions (Schleuter, Schmidt & Wagner 2008). In the 1990's these sentiments targeted Eastern Europeans and migrants from post-Soviet states, with the focus becoming North Africans, Middle Easterners, and Central Asians today. Rather than resizing the political boundary, as traditional conceptions of nationalism imply, new European nationalisms want to strengthen the social boundary and enforce its connection to the political boundary. The goal is to return to imaginary congruence of the social boundary and the political boundary. Traditional foodways are one symbol nationalists might highlight to exclude and subordinate newcomers.

Indeed, groups advocating the protection of local, regional, or national foodways have sprouted across Europe over the past twenty years. Economists, sociologists, and anthropologists have put forth explanations for this phenomenon, usually centering on anti-globalization sentiments, *homo economicus* rationality, and broader health and production transparency concerns. Groups with similar goals and values have grown across the globe and in countries with little change in nationalism, which seems to rule out that their presence in Europe is related to increasing European nationalism. Furthermore, most contemporary research on food finds that taste and class are two of the main factors in diet. Among consumer groups in the United States and Europe, the trend of the past decade has been to insist on the authenticity of food, both in production and in taste. The Slow Food Movement, began in Italy, has spread throughout Europe, across the pond, and around the world. While encompassing discourses on traditional modes of production, the thrust of the current US movement exalts organic and local foods in a way that is very much connected to class and social esteem. Haute cuisine has always had an

element of Simmelian fashion that lends itself to status-seeking, and the current favor of organic and local food also requires significant time, knowledge, and money to make the “right” choices.

#### EXPECTATION

Harping on tradition, national character, and immigrants’ cultural differences serves to shore up the social boundary of national identity. At their root, the arguments of those such as the Le Pens and Geert Wilders boil down to claiming that non-group others have access to (and can deplete) national resources. Essentially, European nationalists are aiming for increased social closure to regulate access to common resources more strictly (Wimmer 2008). Their conclusion is reasonable. Maintenance of common resources is easier with greater group homogeneity (Ostrom 1990). This situation is fertile grounds for testing whether foodways are a site of boundary enforcement around national identity. My main hypothesis is that culinary traditionalism is associated with support for nationalist parties in Europe. Secondly, I hypothesize that exclusionary sentiments directed at immigrants contribute to nationalism and that these sentiments are also related to culinary traditionalism. It seems sensible to expect that people who have a clear idea of who outsiders are will have some sense of what traits define an insider. The relationship between anti-immigrant sentiment and nationalism is an already established, alternative style of boundary maintenance to compare to the use of foodways as a boundary. People who adhere to more traditional patterns of life may feel threatened by heterogeneity because it marks a potential challenge to their lifestyle and the status. Alternatively, individuals that feel their national identity is threatened by the presence of immigrants in their country may turn to eating traditional foods as a way to emphasize the difference between themselves and non-nationals.

I see three possibilities. First, nationalism and culinary traditionalism are conjoined because foodways are an important way of expressing inclusion and exclusion. Second, nation and culinary traditionalism go hand in hand because foodways are nationally normative, yet this distinction is somehow not relevant to nationalists. Third, nationalism, nation, and culinary traditionalism are unrelated because foodways are a function of health and production transparency concerns and provision, including class-based purchasing ability. Political opinions, too, are shaped by social structural positions. Nostalgia for “tradition” in England at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century pitted the middle class against elites seen as abandoning the country and its culture (Mandler 1997). Likewise, in McLaren’s (2003) analysis of Europeans’ perceived cultural and economic threat from immigrants, middle incomes were most likely to perceive threat. I expect that nationalism springs from middle and lower statuses. Age and sex are typically connected to political party affiliation, with older people and men more conservative and younger people more radical; I expect that younger people are more likely to be nationalists. At the same time, older people may place greater importance on traditional food, as may women, who are oftentimes in charge of cooking and who may act out connection to family traditions through what and how they cook.

#### DATA AND METHODS

To get at my question requires data that measures foodways and political expression of nationalism. These are rare, and in fact, I only found one dataset. The Eurobarometer 44.1 (1995) contained a module on food quality labels that queried the role of traditional character, among other consumer values such as price, in individuals’ decisions about which foods to eat and purchase. One of the main strengths of this dataset is its breadth; most scholarship on food is either nutritional or tied to limited interviews or ethnography. The opportunity to compare

consumption behavior with political opinions across so many people in so many countries is remarkable. Unfortunately, it also presents some measurement issues. The variables I could use were limited and not ideal, especially because their distributions frustrate statistical analysis.

Culinary traditionalism is operationalized as the reported frequency of eating traditional food. Because the survey was conducted before 1996, when genetically modified crops were introduced in Europe and the public controversy around these crops began, the frequency of eating *traditional* food is a most likely based in cultural history and the availability of other foods rather than a reaction to some more current concerns, such as the industrialization of modern diets. Respondents could report eating food prepared in the traditional manner never, sometimes, or often<sup>1</sup>. This scale does not capture much variation in consumption patterns; the majority of individuals replied that they eat traditional food sometimes (53.5%). It does draw an important distinction between individuals whose habit is culinary traditionalism (often; 35%) and individuals whose habit is omnivorousness with traditionalism as one of many choices. While nationalism is not a mainstream political ideology, culinary traditionalism, eating traditional food often, is fairly common.

I operationalize attitudes towards immigrants through the item that asked whether respondents would like to expand (21.2%), maintain as is (57.8%), or restrict (21%) non-EU immigrants' rights in their country. "Rights" can mean many different types of privileges: legal, educational, economic, religious, and more. I cannot distinguish between these facets. I interpret that individuals who want to restrict immigrants' rights express this opinion because they believe immigrants should not be treated as equal members of the national community; likewise, I assume that desiring to maintain the current level of rights indicates that immigrants are equal

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<sup>1</sup> Exact wording of survey items is included in an appendix.

enough and that wanting an expansion of rights signals the belief that immigrants should be treated more equally than they are. Migration into the EU-15 actually declined in the early 1990's after a big spike following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In 1995, non-EU immigrants were predominantly from Eastern Europe, plus the guest workers who were invited started about two decades earlier.

Nationalism is operationalized as whether an individual projects that he or she will vote for a nationalist political party or for another political party in a hypothetical national election the next day. Each respondent was given a comprehensive list of parties; these lists varied across countries. I have recoded the party results to a binary outcome (nationalist vote = 1; 7.4% of respondents) by identifying which political parties espoused nationalist ideologies, evidenced by public statements by leaders or platforms declaring a unique national culture and tradition which should be protected or strengthened and desire for stricter immigration laws to keep out non-nationals (especially non-Europeans), and membership in European pan-national alliances of other nationalist parties. The advantage of using a projected vote the next day is that it captures political party evaluations at that moment instead of in the most recent election, which could have been several months prior.

Though using a relative measure of income or education would be an appropriate model for individual characteristics, I refrain from using these covariates because of their high proportion of missing data points in this dataset. The socioeconomic class measurement included in the dataset, the standardized European Social Grade scale, already mixes income, consumption of durable household goods such as electronics, and occupation, so it can be considered to approximate relative income as well as educational outcomes. This scale (1=lowest

class, 7=highest class) is the operationalization of socioeconomic status in the model. Age (raw number) and sex (1=female) are also included to capture some individual variation.

The survey sampled over 17,000 EU citizens across the 15 states that were members of the European Community at that time<sup>2</sup>. The data was collected in a multistage probability sample by country through personal interviews; each national sample includes approximately 1000 individuals, with extra sampling in Germany and smaller samples in Northern Ireland and Luxembourg. After excluding missing values, 8322 cases remain.

I use to maximum likelihood method of logistic regression to predict the probability of voting for a nationalist party, a binary outcome, based on culinary traditionalism, opinion on immigrants' rights, social class, sex, and age. I choose this causal expression because I have defined nationalism as a specific political outcome that is the result of desires to protect national resources, including cultural institutions, and treating nationalism as the outcome of interest permits the direct comparison of culinary traditionalism and exclusion of immigrants as causal factors. I treat culinary traditionalism and opinion on immigrants' rights as categorical instead of continuous, with never consuming traditional food and expanding immigrant rights as the referent categories.<sup>3</sup> To acknowledge that my individuals do not live in one homogeneous cultural context but instead in 17 different national contexts, I compare a regular model with a hierarchical model that includes fixed effects for nations, counting Northern Ireland and Great Britain as separate.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the most complex model speaks to individual political behavior, individual social structural position, and national conditions.

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<sup>2</sup> Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

<sup>3</sup> Regression analysis treating these as continuous yielded the same substantive conclusions.

<sup>4</sup> Counts of cases by country are included in an appendix.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics*

<i>Variable; N=8322</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Dev</i>
Vote (0:1; 1=Nationalist Party)	0.08	0.27
Traditional Food (0:2, 2=Often)	1.24	0.64
Imm. Rights ( 0:2, 2 = Restrict)	1.00	0.66
Social Class (1:7, increasing)	4.57	1.74
Age (15:99)	43.6	17.16
Sex (1=Female)	0.50	0.50

## RESULTS

Voting for a nationalist party is an unusual position in all the countries surveyed. In contrast, about one third of respondents reported eating traditional food often, and about one fifth of respondents would like to restrict immigrants' rights. The overall odds of voting for a nationalist party versus a different party are a rather small 0.082. Seemingly small changes in odds of a rare event actually may be large relative changes. The biggest changes in odds under Model 1 (no country fixed effects) come from wanting to restrict immigrant rights, eating traditional food often, and being female. According to this model, culinary traditionalism and desiring to restrict immigrants' rights have similar effects. While there is no difference in the probability of voting for a nationalist party between individuals who wanted to expand (referent) and individuals who wanted to leave as-is non-EU immigrants' rights, those who expressed the desire to restrict immigrants' rights were much more likely to vote for a nationalist party. The relationship between culinary traditionalism and nationalism is parallel: the consistently traditional are in fact more likely to express nationalism than those who never buy and consume traditional foods, and neither occasional traditionalism nor never eating traditional foods is associated with a higher probability of voting for a nationalist party. At this point, the initial idea

for this paper, that national identity emphasis through food contributes nationalism, has some credence.

Model 2, including countries, paints roughly the same picture, excepting that diet no longer contributes to the story, replaced by the country effects, some increasing the log-odds greatly and some decreasing the log-odds. The probability of voting for a nationalist party is greatly conditioned on the respondent's nation. Predicting nationalism based on country alone fits the data relatively well. The best-fitting model, judging by AIC and nested model testing, is Model 2, the country-level fixed-effects model; effect sizes for Model 2 are reported in Table 2. In the fixed-effects model, the effect of eating traditional food often is suppressed and becomes non-significant. An AIC comparison between this model (AIC = 3765.9) and the nested model dropping food consumption habit (AIC = 3679)<sup>5</sup> demonstrates that the more complex model is highly preferable. It appears that much of the variation in eating traditional food may be the result of cultural differences between countries, and indeed two-way independence tests confirm this.<sup>6</sup> When only examining pairwise relationships, nationalism is not solidly independent from or conditional on food choice because country-level variation connects the two as a lurking variable. However, introducing fixed effects severely undermines the data structure because it introduces possible independent variable conditions unrepresented by observed behavior. For instance, in none of the complete cases from Finland did a person vote for the lone nationalist party I could identify (the Swedish People's Party, which presents interpretations problems in itself).

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<sup>5</sup> Estimated effects are not reported here.

<sup>6</sup> For nationalist vote, culinary traditionalism, opinion on immigrant rights, and social class, pairwise log-linear independence tests rejected independence,  $p < 0.001$  for all.

Table 2. Model 2: Country Fixed Effect Logistic Model Results

	<i>Estimate (Std. Err.)</i>		<i>Estimate (Std. Err.)</i>
Food: Sometimes vs. Never	- 0.05 (0.15)	Germany	- 1.43 (0.29) ***
Food: Often vs. Never	0.21 (0.16)	Ireland	- 1.36 (0.41) ***
Rights: As Is vs. Expand	0.59 (0.12) ***	Britain	- 1.35 (0.33) ***
Rights: Restrict vs. Expand	1.16 (0.14) ***	Denmark	- 1.33 (0.34) ***
Class 1 (Lowest) vs. 7	- 0.74 (0.21) ***	Netherlands	- 1.32 (0.31) ***
Class 2	0.08 (0.19)	Luxembourg	- 1.17 (0.48) *
Class 3	0.01 (0.18)	Finland	- 0.95 (0.29) ***
Class 4	0.07 (0.15)	(France)	(referent)
Class 5	0.10 (0.16)	Greece	0.24 (0.24)
Class 6	0.20 (0.16)	Belgium	0.51 (0.21) *
Age	- 0.01 (0.002) *	Portugal	0.52 (0.24) *
Sex	- 0.28 (0.09) **	Austria	1.03 (0.19) ***
Intercept	- 3.07 (0.29) ***	N. Ireland	1.12 (0.29) ***
		Italy	1.14 (0.19) ***
		Spain	2.61 (0.18) ***

\*\*\*p<0.001 \*\* p<0.01 \*p<0.05

Social class is negatively associated with voting for a nationalist party; upper class individuals are less likely to do so. Though the effects of age and gender were not formally hypothesized, the analysis does reveal patterns to their effects. Age has a small yet significant moderating effect, and women are categorically less likely to vote for a nationalist party than men.

## DISCUSSION

While theoretical argument and common wisdom led to the expectation that foodways intersect with politics in meaningful ways, this analysis finds evidence to the contrary. Everyday culinary

routines appear to carry no broader political effect. Traditional eating has no within-country relationship to political action and opinions promoting social closure of the national community. Foodways are not central to how European nationalists know who belongs in their nations and who does not. Three ideas explain these results. It may be that variable misspecification and generally unusable data precluded my ability to see any relationships. Alternatively, the fact that the data is 20 years old and thus reflects a different food, social, and political context may be what causes negative findings for a trend that has some face validity in the present. The third option is that there really is no relationship, and negative findings are the end of the story. In the following sections I explore the plausibility of each explanation.

#### *Measurement Validity and Model Specification*

One reason for failing to find relationships is that the measurements may not be capturing what I intended or may be ill devised for my purposes. Using secondary data poses these limitations, and in this case, when I only found one dataset that measured consumption of national cuisine and political behavior, I had no solutions for dealing with these problems. To begin with, the main variable of interest, reported frequency of eating traditional food, presents some serious issues in analysis and interpretation. I had no way to exclude those who ate traditional food frequently because it was all they knew how to produce or because it was all that was available to them to purchase, so the categorical scale may be reflecting socioeconomic or location constraints instead of the choice to partake in a national symbol. Furthermore, the categories of “never,” “sometimes,” and “often” are not particularly useful as a scale because they are not clear in what frequency they mean. What one person reports as “sometimes” may be what another reports as “often,” and “sometimes” could range from once a week to once a month. The subjectivity inherent in the question undermines my assumption of standardized,

mutually exclusive answer categories, and it may be responsible for a lack of patterns in responses. A more ideal categorization would be specific about frequency, such as “daily,” “several times a week,” or “only on holidays.” Combined with a question about the breadth of choices available, I could be more confident that I was actually measuring the choice to eat traditional food instead of other foods and how much of a pattern this choice was.

Beyond these possibilities of measurement error is the fact that eating traditional food products is only one way of interacting with food as a national symbol and cultural resource. The most relevant comparison for nationals may be the unremarkable “normal” food of the status quo with a diet marked by foreign flavors and foods. This is what Calhoun (1983) would expect, assuming that radicalism and traditionalism are tied to things as they stand. Other national symbolic boundaries, such as language or dress, follow this status quo-versus-foreign trend; national language campaigns support the current national dialect, rather than traditional, local ones, in opposition to foreign languages, and clothing regulations largely legislate against religious and cultural dress from other national communities rather than for traditional garb. Studies of responses to non-national cuisine, such as of curry houses in Britain (Buettner 2008), appear to confirm that the point of social closure is not in protecting particular national dishes or foodways but in keeping more identifiably foreign foodways out. The data used for this study has no way to compare consumption of some definition of native food with consumption of food somehow identified as foreign, and the scale I used of consumption of traditional food sheds no light on this potential relationship. A response on the frequency of eating foreign, non-European foods, supplemented by willingness to prepare these foods oneself, would potentially explore my questions better. Other, more fruitful questions would be whether foreign foods should be available in local grocery stores, in local restaurants, or in school cafeterias.

Perhaps the statistical results are a product of the simplistic coding and the choice to compare nationalists with all other voters. Contrasting eating habits with a broader range of political party options may produce a different resulting conclusion about links between food and political behavior or opinions, though it is hard to imagine a mechanism for how affiliation with the Christian Democrats or Socialist parties, for instance, would vary with food choices other than by confounding variables such as social class or contextual peculiarities. This is the least convincing reason to discount the validity of the measurements. I strongly suspect that restricting my analysis of food to traditional foodways, and further to a very subjective and simplistic measurement, limited what I could discover.

#### *Old data*

A second consideration is that the data is simply too outdated to give light to a connection between cuisine and nationalism, which may be a contemporary phenomenon. One of the pitfalls of this study is that it treats the inherently social process of political mobilization as a choice with perfect information and no bias. Party choice must have something to do with information about the parties and about the political and social context. The recent growth in neo-nationalism in Europe was just beginning in 1995. Most of the political parties I coded as nationalist were only a few election cycles old and very much on the fringe of national political life. They were likely unknown or unfamiliar to a high proportion of the population. This is compounded by the idea that even those who did know of the nationalist parties or sympathize with them might vote or support a larger party instead, being more confident that the larger party would accomplish their goals. Many European countries have proportional representation with thresholds for legislative seats; voting for a small party without any seats or with only a few seats means your ideas, by way of your representatives, have little weight in national decision-making. We can

consider that lack of information for some and reluctance to join a small political group with little chance of influence for others leads to underestimating the probability of nationalist sentiments and thus underestimating nationalism's connection to other traits or behavior. Data collected more recently may solve this issue, but then again, more recent data would encounter the complication of how activism on "authentic," local food, as opposed to industrialized food, dominates societal discussions of food.

### *No relationship*

The third, and most persuasive, consideration is that habits of diet have no relationship to national identity maintenance. Where consumption of traditional food is potentially related to nationalism and social closure, the effect vanishes with the addition of modeling country-level variation; the variation in eating traditional food was actually acting as a proxy for differences by nationality in the likelihood of voting for a nationalist party. Exclusion of immigrants from full membership in the nation, through restricting their rights, is still an important piece of the story of nationalism, regardless of which nation. My assertion that nationalism in Europe aims to make access to national institutions and resources restricted to nationals, a flip of the usual definition that it desires to shrink governance to match the social boundaries of the nation, is supported by the positive association between favoring immigrant rights restrictions and nationalism. Incorporation of this boundary into daily life through food is not an important behavior for those worried about maintaining the prestige and uniqueness of a nationality.

This leads to the conclusion that cuisine is not a politically salient national symbol or national resource. Is this plausible? For European states formed through homogenizing projects over the past few centuries, culinary symbols may have been stripped of their social distinctions. Without conscious effort to institute a national cuisine, culinary pluralism may be the norm.

Several other processes support this. Firstly, Europe has a culinary history of pan-national eating, built through the kitchens of the nobility. Cooks crossed borders, especially in traveling to learn the haute, French style. This leaves the populations with a particular view of “proper” food; status-seekers will imitate a pan-national instead of provincial diet. Secondly, colonialism transported non-Europeans and non-European food to metropolitan Europe. Colonial administrators also returned with hankerings for the foreign tastes, providing the consumer audience (Buettner 2008). Modern cross-national communication and internal European migration continue to enforce symbolic pluralism.

Culinary pluralism is not the only reason for disconnection between the daily practice of eating and boundary politics. An even simpler explanation exists: human lives are not perfectly curated displays of principles and beliefs; political beliefs are not grounded in regular behavior and banal boundary maintenance. The results of this analysis provide support for dismissing the assumption that public opinion is the result of informed, thoroughly considered decision-making. It appears that humans are not the actors we think ourselves to be; our thoughts and actions are not coherent representations of our desires and priorities.

Perhaps the incoherence between daily practice and political opinion is limited to foodways, not touching other symbols of national identity. I return to the examples above of language and dress. The politics of national language are much more in the news and part of national dialogues than the politics of national food. Dress, too, is a flashpoint. What is different about language and dress? They are public activities, language more so than dress. Eating is done in the privacy of the home or in the restaurant of a patron’s choosing. People consider it a private matter of preference or else for individual status-seeking (Bourdieu 1984, Meyer 2000). Omnivorousness, eating a varied diet, is valued above cuisine-specific diets (Peterson and Kern

1996). In fact, immigrants may be pressured less to learn traditional foodways of their new national cultures than to simply give up on eating only their native dishes and vary their diets. During the great wave of European migration to the United States at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, community social services and kitchens run by native-born Americans taught and urged immigrant women to learn new American cooking, that melting pot that mixed and mingled and bastardized the incoming and the established foodways (Higham 1973). In terms of cuisine, assimilation has less to do with only eating the native traditional foods than it does with eating an omnivorous, modern diet.

The bulk of previous research on food establishes that food is an important arena where status distinctions are performed and contested. This project explored whether the national/non-national status distinction is played out through food. In all likelihood, food is dominated by class and taste, in a Bourdieuan sense, in addition to some country- or region-specific norms. At their heart, foodways are collections of norms about how food is eaten and produced and the roles of the preparers and producers. Replication of this study with current data would likely confirm the results presented here, with no relationship between nationalism and culinary traditionalism, but with relationship between location, social class, and eating behavior.

## CONCLUSION

Nationalist ideologies are the rejection of pluralism. Put another way, nationalism bounds tolerance. At the outset, it seemed plausible to expect that nationalists would reject culinary pluralism in favor of giving particular importance to partaking in the food traditions of their nations. Analysis shows that instead of rejection of culinary pluralism, nationalists appear not to care about boundary enforcement through foodways. I expose a curious lack of continuity between everyday experience and political ideologies regarding an idealized view of the

importance of national identity. The act of voting for a nationalist party is not connected to one of the most accessible and frequent opportunities to share belonging to a nation. The lack of a trend in foodways points to selective use of cultural symbols and performances in maintenance of national identity boundaries. While language rights are a cause for sometimes-violent protests, even in such places as Belgium, and some political parties in Belgium, Spain, and Finland are explicitly focused on maintaining languages, food, another symbol, holds no special meaning. This is surprising and mystifying. Rather than aligning their behavior with professions of the importance of protecting a nation's shared experiences, daily behavior undermines one of the most basic ways people can identify with previous generations.

Nation-building in the modern age reorganized social boundaries. The creation of equal citizenship within the state required that some identity characteristics be reduced to symbolic differences only or possibly even eradicated. National identity is a product of ignoring some distinctions that might create internal divisions; homogenization is key. In the wake of the mighty force of the state, localized dialects have declined; local authorities are challenged by the national bureaucracy and its local agents; local heroes become national myths or else near-forgotten namesakes. Tradition, and the identity and group boundaries that go along with it, is forgotten and yet invented and remade. Under these circumstances, the heritage of a traditional cuisine seems unlikely grounds for national boundary maintenance. We have studied language, governance structures, and education. Has cuisine, too, been homogenized, leaving traditional foodways as artifacts of formerly important identities? This study concludes that traditional foodways are not an important marker of national boundaries, but it leaves open the possibility that this has not always been the case. Before we write off culinary differences, we must

understand how the nationalizing project of the modern age may have limited what this study could discover in contemporary times.

#### APPENDIX 1: EXACT SURVEY WORDING

Thinking of people living in (OUR COUNTRY) who are not nationals of a European Union country, do you think that their rights should be extended, restricted or left as they are?  
(*extended, restricted, left, don't know, NA*)

Do you often, sometimes or never eat food products - such as cheese, cakes, cooked meats - which are made or produced in the traditional way?  
(*often, sometimes, never, I do not know what you mean with food products which are made/produced in the traditional way (SPONTANEOUS), DK, NA*)

If there were a "General Election" tomorrow (SAY IF CONTACT UNDER 18 YEARS: and you had a vote), which party would you vote for?

#### APPENDIX 2: CASES BY COUNTRY

Austria	527	Italy	562
Belgium	544	Ireland	497
Denmark	568	Luxembourg	264
France	686	The Netherlands	742
Finland	651	Northern Ireland	136
Germany	1070	Portugal	450
Great Britain (- N. Ire.)	660	Spain	565
Greece	400		

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