

Nourishing the Nation:
Manifestations of Catalan National Identity Through Food

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Dedicated to those who could not read this thesis,

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Notes on the use of Catalan language:

I will regularly include words in the original Catalan in this thesis, particularly where these words or concepts would be unwieldy to translate directly into English. Such words will be explained when introduced, and a glossary is also included in the Appendix.

When using these words in plural, this is normally demonstrated by the simple addition of an 's'. However, where the word ends with 'a', this letter is removed and 'es' added e.g. '*escudella*' to '*escudelles*'. If the word ends in 'ca', then this is substituted to 'ques' e.g. '*coca*' – '*coques*'.

All quotes from informants and foreign language literature are translations I have made myself into English from Catalan or Castilian.

All images and photos used in this thesis were taken or created by myself, apart from some images from books, adverts and other sources. Where possible the source has been noted, but due to the nature of data collection I could not always locate the origin of certain images.

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Nourishing the Nation

My aim in this thesis is to show how food is used to express Catalan national identity in the Catalan Autonomous Community (CAC) of Spain. I seek to improve understanding of the lived realities (Llobera, 2004) of nationalisms and to do so through an ethnography of ‘national’ foods in Catalonia. I argue that, due to its quotidian and essential nature, food is an excellent means of studying the mundane, everyday, lived aspects of such movements. In doing so, I also aim to elucidate the ways in which food can be used to study nationalist movements more generally. In particular, can the discourse surrounding food parallel nationalist discourse?

Gellner described nationalism as “a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across across political ones” (Gellner, 1983: 1).

While I believe this is a useful definition, the use of the term “ethnic” begs a number of questions. I shall therefore also draw on the more anthropological sensibility of B.Anderson (1983: 6) that a nation is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”, with cultural roots as the source of its power. The Catalan political theorist Montserrat Guibernau perhaps has perhaps the most accurate definition of nationalism for this thesis “a human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project for the future, and claiming the right to rule itself” (Guibernau, 2002: 3). Based upon this, Guibernau believes that nationalism itself is the “sentiment of belonging to a community whose members

identify with a set of symbols, beliefs and ways of life, and have the will to decide upon their common political destiny” (ibid).

Now is also an excellent moment to study Catalan national identity due to the current rise in support for the independence movement within the CAC (henceforth, I will call it by its most common moniker ‘Catalonia’, or the ‘*Principat*’). Nationalism has perhaps been one of the most enduring ideologies of modern times, and not an example of false consciousness that will simply go away. Indeed, national identities have gained an almost untouchable reverence and, as Jenkins described in Denmark, they have “acquired a privileged status as a resource or bargaining chip, a card which is difficult to trump, the defence of which does not have to be justified” (Jenkins, 2000: 159). Globalization produces weak states, but does not necessarily do the same to nationalism, and can even have the opposite effect as nations seek to reassert a political or cultural identity they feel to be at threat, perhaps due to globalisation itself (Pratt, 2003; Castells, 2004). Simultaneously, globalization has also produced a renewed interest in local food cultures and traditional foodways (Freedman, 2007).¹

Despite the clear continued power of nationalism and national identity in the twenty-first century, consideration of what I call the lived aspects is lacking from much existing work on nationalism. There are some exceptions, such as Jeremy MacClancy’s *Expressing Identities in the Basque Arena* (2007), which forms a partial model for the present thesis. I also follow Llobera’s (2004) call for a better

¹ “The oversupply of novelties, in practice and in discourses, seemed to have contributed to feelings of insecurity in the 1980s and 1990s, which in turn caused new interest in traditional foodways. The Slow Food movement, the interest in the authenticity of the *terroir* and the continuance of the timeless *haute cuisine* testify to this” (Freeman, 2007; 357)

understanding of nationalisms through the anthropological study of their “subjective feelings or sentiments” and “concomitant elements of consciousness” (Llobera, 2004: 188). As he bluntly states, “We cannot make a scientific inventory of the social facts of nationalism, for the simple reason that we lack the basic building blocks: good monographic studies of nations” (ibid: 184). With this thesis I therefore hope to contribute to these “building blocks” by considering Catalan national identity (Catalanism) through the perspective of food, against the backdrop of a continually fraught relationship with the Spanish state and the recent rise in pro-independence sentiment in Catalonia.

In this introduction I will detail why I believe food to be a beneficial means of studying nationalisms, and followed by a delineation of the scope of this thesis. I then give a brief history of Catalonia and the nationalist movement, which is essential for understanding the contemporary situation, which I also describe at the end of this section. As a further introduction to Catalan nationalism, I will also describe some (though by no means all) of its key components and symbols, which are important for understanding the rest of the thesis. Next I will outline my methods for gathering data, and finally the outline of this thesis.

1.1 Food as identity

Food might at first not seem an obvious choice for studying a politicised ideology such as nationalism. Yet, food is one of the fundamental means through which particular human societies have differentiated themselves from others and asserted a

separate identity (Fischler, 1988). Like all identities, both national and food-based identities demarcate insiders and outsiders.

In seeking to study the lived reality of nationalisms, food as an everyday point of reference is a useful lens through which to consider such movements. In the words of MacClancy, “turning foodstuffs and dishes into bearers of national identity is a down-to-earth way to make an otherwise abstract ideology more familiar, domestic, even palatable” (MacClancy 2007: 68). This is particularly so in Catalonia, where questions of national identity permeate every aspect of life, as MacClancy also discovered in the Basque country.

On a practical level, food is also a useful means of entering informant discourses in national arenas as a more ‘palatable’ subject than controversial issues such as language or politics, which may alienate potential informants. Choosing food as a subject of study is therefore a research strategy as well as simply a focus of research. I do not wish to argue that food is the most important delineator of Catalan identity. This role falls to the Catalan language, the most prominent means by which Catalans differentiate themselves from the ‘Other’, namely Castilian-speaking Spain. However, I do believe that, like language, food is a thread that runs through all manifestations of Catalan identity, due to its ability to carry “powerful meanings and structures under the cloak of the mundane and the quotidian” (Sutton, 2001: 3). Now is also an interesting time to study food in Catalonia, thanks to the global prominence of its celebrity chefs, who have put emphasis on their Catalan roots as inspiration, and

the current campaign to have Catalan cuisine recognised as an intangible cultural heritage through UNESCO.

Yet in order to demonstrate how food is used in identity expression in this instance, one must first ask the questions “*can* food be used as a symbol of *national* identity”, and “how would one recognize this?” For me, there were two main factors that needed to be present in the minds and words of my informants. Firstly, Catalan informants needed to have a developed and extensive discourse around the notion of ‘their’ foods, foods to which they have attached their own identity (or ‘signature foods’, in the words of Mintz, 1996). This discourse is not just centred on emotional feelings of belonging or a single objectified ingredient, but also performances such as the way these ingredients are combined and the culinary processes used. In this sense, the word ‘cuisine’ may be more accurate. I will rely on the remarks of one of my informants to provide an emic description of this word as “a way of understanding foods, of combining them between them, of what configures the dishes, and the taste”.

Secondly, there must be unities in this discourse amongst informants, to provide a set of shared symbols and worldview (Guibernau, 2002). That is not to say that discourse should be identical between informants, and indeed one of the characteristics of cultural nationalisms is the multivocality inherent within a single system (MacClancy, 2007; Bray, 2011). Despite individual nuances however, there must be an overall set of themes and agreed parameters that define what makes Catalan food, or a Catalan cuisine. This must both be clear to the outside observer (i.e. the field researcher) and recognised by Catalans themselves, being both an emic and an etic category.

Of the two, the first factor is perhaps the most important. It is important to recognize that even where there is disagreement, the fact that there can be discussion demonstrates that there exists a concept of Catalan cuisine as a worthy subject of discussion. When it is continually discussed it is continually being reformulated, re-envisaged, and re-evaluated, itself essential for the perpetuation of the existence of this category. I would also like to parallel this to discourse on national identity more generally.

Both national identity and cuisines are, to use Hobsbawm's (1983) words, invented traditions. They are never static, but continually evolving and adapting to contemporary realities within communities, and even individuals. This is a point particularly emphasised by Bray (2011) in her ethnography on Basque nationalism, such that identity becomes "the product of a fluid and changing application of markers and boundaries by individuals in a constant process of identification and self-identification" (Bray, 2011: 217). Identities themselves do not exist outside the peoples who identify with them, and continued debate (often highly articulated) about identity within communities is essential to its survival.

As this research will show very clearly, both factors are present in abundance in Catalonia. Even those informants who were not involved with food as a profession had a clear set of ideas about what constituted Catalan cuisine. Moreover, many of these ideas were common amongst large numbers of informants, both within my field site of Vic and in the rest of Catalonia. It is this discourse which has provided the data

on which most of this thesis has been based, be it in direct primary interviews or from secondary sources such as books, articles or other media.

1.2 Setting the parameters: definitions and limitation of the topic

The foregoing begs many questions of the definitions I will be using in this thesis. I have already stated that I am focusing on nationalism, but I have also introduced words such as ‘identity’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘tradition’. I prefer the term national identity to ethnicity, since I believe that the latter is not an appropriate word to apply to the Catalan people, who very clearly refer to themselves as members of a ‘nation’ rather than an ‘ethnic group’. However, the word ‘nationalism’ (*nacionalisme*) is also disliked, for its political connotations in Spain as another term for Francoism/Spanish nationalism.² Still, the word ‘*Catalanisme*’ (anglicized to ‘Catalanism’) is acceptable, although its most accurate translation is ‘Catalan nationalism’, since the word describes the ideologies behind Catalan nationhood. For this thesis, for clarity I will use both Catalanism and Catalan nationalism.

Both Bray (2007) and MacClancy (1997) in the Basque country, and Medeiros (2013) in Galicia have recognised that there may be different shades of allegiance to a ‘nation’, from strong nationalists with political ambitions to ‘non-nationalists’ who show pride in symbols of Basque or Galician identity. There are rarely any illusions about local or political elites and their manipulation of these sentiments. In this regard

² In the words of one of my informants, who herself was born in Madrid, “Catalonia is a nation, with its own different language, its own popular culture, but it can’t be a nationalism”.

Catalonia is not unique. Catalans are quite aware that the Generalitat and ruling party there uses Catalanist fervour to its own ends. There is a deep mistrust of the political class, even if they are Catalan.³ The result is that Catalanism is separated from politics in the minds of most informants. Catalan symbols are a source of pride, and many of my informants expressed strongly that they saw themselves as separate from Spain, and that they would like to be ‘independent’ in the ideal world. However, they saw this desire as unrelated to contemporary ‘politics’, and that current politicians couldn’t be trusted with independence.

I should also make clear the limitations of this thesis. I am focusing on how food is reflected in national identity. There are other identities on which I will not be able to focus due to the lack of space. One of these is gender, and the other is class. Both are themes that have been considered extensively in discussions of food (Counihan and Kaplans’ edited volume (2013) for the former and Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (1984, 2010) in the latter are classic examples), and Pratt’s essential work *Class, Nation and Identity* (2003) also contrasted nationalisms with class-based movements.

Issues of gender are present in discussions of Catalan food, but they are not especially relevant to the present discussion of food’s relationship with nationalism.⁴ This also applies to questions of class. While I saw some examples of class-based attitudes perpetuated in Catalonia in a very few households, I cannot claim to have recognised a clear schema of social classes into which my informants placed themselves. While a

³ This is no doubt due to corruption scandals. One recently implicated Jordi Pujol and his family, one of the architects of contemporary Catalanism.

⁴ Congdon MS.

study of this situation in contemporary Catalonia may be interesting (updating the work of Giner, 1980 and Pi-Sunyer, 1974), I also found it of little direct relevance to the two interlinked subjects under study, that of food and nationalism.

One would have thought class and food in Catalonia to perhaps be linked by the limits on what individuals can actually afford to consume. In reality, this varies little between households, regardless of economic circumstances. As I shall describe in this thesis, certain festive foods are eaten throughout Catalonia on certain days, regardless of economic standing. Even though there are certainly variations between regions and even households, they are still eating the same dish. I should also say though that my intention was never to create a description of Catalans' everyday diet. My research focuses on the *discourses* about foods, rather than nutritional consumption, basic patterns of eating etc.

I also focus little on the role of the Catholic Church in Catalonia. Llobera (2004: 17) considers a "strong Catalan 'national' Church" to have been essential to the development of Catalanism, due to relative autonomy from the Spanish state and pedagogic role. However, I did not find a strong connection between religious belief and a Catalan identity today.

The only way in which religious influence has really continued in Catalan life is through the continued celebration of saint's days, particularly Catalan patrons such as Saint George, the Virgin of Montserrat, and Saint John. These have now largely become secular celebrations, but are celebrated in a self-conscious way as markers of

difference. As this thesis will show, one of the markers of difference is through associated festive foods, making that the only way in which Catholicism will make an appearance in this thesis. Nor will recent immigration be considered, as there is no evidence that it has affected gastronomicalism.

I stated at the start that I would focus on the Catalan Autonomous Community only, an important delineation since this does not define the borders of the Catalan language, nor Catalan identity. Catalan is spoken in a much larger group of areas called the *Països Catalans* (Catalan-speaking areas), which includes the CAC, the Balearic Isles, Valencia, Andorra, Roussillon (Northern Catalonia), and a strip of Aragon called *La Franja* (lit. the strip). A current in Catalan nationalism has been the notion of a unified *Països Catalans*, which is still active today and especially popular amongst youth groups. The image of the *Països Catalans* is a popular motif on pro-Catalan and pro-independence memorabilia, much like Urla's (1993: 825) descriptions of the "bounded visual image, detached and floating in space" used in Basque nationalism to both delineate a nation and act as its personal logo. In Catalonia the discourse of the *Països Catalans* has often been used to show how these areas have been subjugated to the decisions of greater powers (Spain and France). Contemporary controversy has also revolved around whether 'Catalan' can be used to describe its dialects in Aragon and Valencia, heavily influenced by ruling political parties (CNA, 2015).

In these kinds of context, seemingly innocuous or even academic terms such as 'language', 'tradition' or 'ethnicity' can be adopted (and altered) for political

purposes *in situ* (MacClancy, 1997; Ardener, 2007; Macdonald 1997). While terms such as ethnicity and ethnic group are rarely used as an emic category, words such as ‘tradition’, ‘traditional’ or ‘authentic’ are often used to suggest antiquity and an entrenched place in Catalan culture. They are not innocent words however, and I prefer not to use them as an impartial observer. However, I believe they can be useful in some contexts to suggest an object or behaviours’ presence over time, at least through several decades as experienced by informants. This can be opposed to ‘new’ products, where their appearance is still recalled in living memory.

On the subject of ‘tradition’ and ‘newness’, I should also draw attention to Catalonia’s prestigious position in contemporary global new cuisine, which I call by its Catalan name of ‘*nova cuina*’, first developed by Ferran Adrià in his restaurant on the Costa Brava, El Bulli.⁵ Adrià’s style of cooking burst onto the international restaurant scene in the 1990s, and El Bulli was ranked best restaurant in the world by the magazine *Restaurant* in 2002, then for five consecutive years from 2006. This undoubtedly put Catalonia on the map as a major gastronomic destination, even after El Bulli closed in 2011, and Adrià dedicated himself to other food-related and didactic projects.

Many of his contemporaries and successors have likewise contributed to Catalonia’s reputation in modern restaurant cuisine, particularly chefs such as Carme Ruscalleda, Joan Roca, Carles Gaig, Nandu Jubany and the late Santi Santamaria (all, with the exception of Santamaria, appear in this thesis). Joan Roca is particularly influential

⁵ Other titles have been used, such as the French *nouvelle cuisine* or molecular gastronomy, even though Ferran Adrià dislikes these titles.

(along with his brothers Jordi and Josep) as leaders of the movement today, having garnered El Bulli's former title of best restaurant in the world in 2012, and again in 2015. Regardless of individual attitudes to *nova cuina* itself, there is almost universal admiration for these chefs and the figure of Adrià in Catalonia. This facet of Catalan cuisine cannot be ignored in a study such as this. It is essential to realize though that the chefs following Adrià have countered criticisms against his style as non-Catalan by clarifying their roots in 'traditional' Catalan cuisine, to make a 'tradition of innovation'.

1.3 A brief history of Catalonia

There is a massive literature on Catalan history, much of it in Catalan or Castilian, and the vast majority of this has not been translated into other languages (Tree, 2011). Even outside of historical literature, much work on Catalan identity has often had a strong historical element to it. This is not surprising, considering that besides language the notion of a shared history and identity stretching back through the past is so central to discourses on Catalanism. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to separate objective history from nationalistic narrative (Bray, 2011).

The earliest document to refer to the Catalan people by name dates from 1117. The oldest written text to be written entirely in a recognizable form of Catalan dates from 1131. There is still some uncertainty over the origin of the name "Catalonia", but a popular view seems to be that it originates from "Gothalonia", a reference to the pre-Islamic Visigothic period (Chaytor, 1933).

In 1137 Aragon was united with Catalonia through a dynastic union. Thanks to a flourishing empire that included at various times Sicily, Sardinia, Naples, Malta and parts of Greece, Catalonia-Aragon became prosperous through its principle port of Barcelona. In 1283, Pere III (who has the epithet of “the Great” in Catalonia) officially instituted the Catalan Corts (or Court), by which he decreed that his descendants would be bound. The Corts was convened once a year, though in the mid-fourteenth century the Corts created a new governing body to act outside of usual sessions – the Generalitat, or Parliament.

1.3.1 Collapse of the fifteenth century and membership of the Spanish Empire

Despite its position as one of the wealthiest states in Europe at the time, this did not make it immune to the crisis of the Late Middle Ages.⁶ In 1410, Martin I, the last King of Aragon of Catalan extraction, died without an heir. Many nationalist historians have blamed Catalonia’s decline on the subsequent Compromise of Casp, where the Castilian Ferdinand of Trastamara was elected to take the throne. The uneasy relationship between the Corts and their new rulers often led to outright revolt.

With the marriage of Ferdinand’s grandson, Ferdinand of Aragon, to Isabella of Castile (becoming the Catholic monarchs), the creation of a unified Spain began. In 1486, the year in which Columbus reached the New World, Catalan merchants were expelled from the Casa de Contratación in Seville, the commercial heart of the city

⁶ Admittedly little mention is made of this period in the historiography of Catalonia, even though its effects would have lasting consequences (Ryder, 2007).

that was soon to have exclusive rights over trade with the New World. This was to set the tone for the treatment of the Catalans where trade with America was concerned. Elliott (1963) takes the view that this exclusion was key to the continued presence of separate Catalan identity, as it officially encouraged a continued sense of difference.

As Catalonia's splendour waned, so Castile's grew, along with Catalan resentment. Catalans "felt themselves being gradually and irrevocably elbowed out of the many lucrative offices in the Monarchy" (Elliott, 1963: 13). Still, towards the end of the fifteenth century, some stability after the turmoil of the previous hundred years was achieved, even if this came with a sense of dissatisfaction that increased as the decades continued. These eventually manifested in the Catalan Revolt of 1640-1659, against the Count-Duke Olivares' overuse of Catalan resources in the war with France, also called the Reapers War. This conflict is now celebrated in Catalonia's national anthem, *Els Segadors* (the Reapers). The war concluded with the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659), when Perpignan (North Catalonia) was ceded to France.

1.3.2 The War of the Spanish Succession

In 1700, the last Spanish Habsburg monarch died without direct heirs, leaving the throne open to the French Bourbon Philip of Anjou (later Philip V). This was challenged by the Austrian Habsburgs and other European powers that feared French dominance in Europe, precipitating the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). Catalonia supported the losing Austrian faction, which accepted defeat in 1713. The

Catalan armies continued to fight for another year, until 11th September 1714, when Barcelona surrendered.⁷

Philip V abolished all Catalan institutions in the *Decreto de Nueva Planta* (1716), representing the end of a measure of independence from the absolute will of the Spanish monarch. The Catalan language was prohibited for official purposes, and later in schools. Although these did have some effect, the process was hampered by the inherent weaknesses of the disorganised Spanish state, and many official documents were still written in Catalan into the nineteenth century.

1.3.3 Industrialisation, Revolts, and Renaissance

Following this defeat, Catalonia soon recovered and began a period of industrialisation that would reach its height in the next century. The end on the ban on trade with the Americas in 1778 led to a massive increase in the market for Catalan products, most of which were textile-based, using technology similar to that used in England at the time. The Napoleonic invasion halted this briefly, but afterwards industrialisation continued at a faster pace. Underpinning all these changes was the emergence of an industrial bourgeoisie of great wealth and diverse origin. Another consequence of the rapid industrialisation was the development of a large working class composed of both native Catalans and immigrants (many from southern Spain), which mobilised rapidly (the first trade union appeared in 1840: McRoberts, 2001).

⁷ The date of this event, 11th September, is celebrated as the *Diada* or Catalan national day.

It is important to stress here that Catalanism was by no means a uniform phenomenon among the entire population. Catalan society during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was heavily stratified, with great social inequality between the wealthy bourgeoisie and the working classes, and differing political opinions to match. It was in the latter group that anarchist and communist doctrines found fertile support. The nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries produced a litany of violent protests by this group, culminating in the Tragic Week of 1909, where a forced conscription for one of Spain's colonial wars set off a week of violent anti-militarist, anti-clericalist and anti-monarchist protests led by anarchist, republican and socialist groups.

It was undoubtedly the Catalan Renaissance or *Renaixença*, the nineteenth-century cultural movement that allowed the recovery of Catalan as a literary language, creating the atmosphere in which Catalan nationalism was to flourish and providing a separate cultural existence on which a political existence could be based (Balcells, 1996). Though the *Renaixença* was a literary-based movement from the start, the emergent Catalan literature was connected with dreams of independence, both political and linguistic. By the 1870s, everyday Catalan speech was acceptable in literature, but this highlighted the problems with a lack of standardization and education in Catalan. The only way to achieve this was seen as political autonomy. In brief, this concern over language was transformed into a desire for a distinct national identity in Catalonia.

However, there was a continued sense of political subservience in Catalonia at this time. Two of the main reasons why Catalan nationalism grew so rapidly were a slump

in prosperity thanks to the loss of the Spanish colonies and markets, and anger at a political system that favoured Castilian speakers over Catalans (Cramer, 2000).

While undoubtedly the Catalan Renaissance had a forceful effect, use of Catalan was heavily proscribed. For example, in 1862 Catalan was prohibited in documents drawn up by notaries (though this was rarely followed), and in 1896 it was prohibited in telephone conversations (Hall, 2001).

1892 saw the founding of the first Catalan political party, the Lliga Catalana (Catalan League). In the wake of the break-up of the Spanish Empire, and especially the loss of Cuba in 1898 (a key market for Catalan products), Catalanism seemed increasingly attractive to wealthier Catalans. In the early 20th century, Catalanism found itself in a complex situation. Self-government (if not actual independence) was at the top of the agenda, but Catalan politicians also had the dream of acting as a role model for the modernisation of the rest of Spain (Keating, 1996). In that sense, there was an attempt to promote Catalonia as Spain's saviour – an idea that received short shrift in Madrid. However, in 1914 Catalonia was granted its own very limited self-government institution, the Mancomunitat.

Primo de Rivera's dictatorship at first received strong support from the Catalan bourgeoisie, who hoped he would protect them from their own working class. It soon became obvious, though, that Primo had no intention of honouring ideas about Catalonia's self-government. This was to be a huge embarrassment for conservative *Lliga*-based Catalanism, destroying its credibility. Too late, the bourgeois realised that Primo would always have an ingrained mistrust of Catalans, even if they supported

him.⁸ Left wing and radical movements began to dominate Catalan politics at this time.

1.3.4 The Republic and Catalonia under Franco: 1931-1979

In April 1931, Francesc Macia (nicknamed “*l’Avi*”, grandfather, in Catalan) of the left-wing Esquerra Republicana Catalana (ERC) proclaimed a Catalan republic. However, soon afterwards he arranged a deal with Spain’s now republican government to settle for autonomy. In 1932, Catalonia gained its first statute of autonomy under the Second Spanish Republic, when the Generalitat was reinstated. This was not to last long, as the Spanish Civil War began five years later. In order to understand the present-day importance of the Catalan language we must consider its repression under Franco following the Civil War of 1936–39 (Gore and McInnes, 1998; Llobera, 2004). Catalonia had aligned itself with the Republican side (seen as the least centralist option), and indeed in the eyes of many Francoists, to be Catalan was to be Republican.

Almost immediately, Franco’s regime imposed linguistic restrictions on the use of Catalan, and by extension on Republican Catalan nationalism. All obvious linguistic manifestations of a separate Catalan identity, such as street signs, were removed and replaced. Public written and spoken use of Catalan was banned, books in Catalan were publicly burned and pulped, all Catalan publications suspended, and the Institute

⁸ History would repeat itself again under Franco, as wealthier Catalans who aligned themselves with Franco (called “Catalans of the Eixample” – DiGiacomo, 2001), in the hopes this would protect Catalan industries, found the inherent mistrust of Catalans would still lead to negative treatment.

of Catalan Studies closed down. In primary and secondary education not only was Catalan completely banned, but also Catalan schoolteachers were transferred from the region and replaced by Castilian speakers. The consequences of this were clearly felt in the early post-transition years when most Catalan speakers could not write the language (Crameri, 2000). Catalans were urged to “speak Christian”, and “stop barking”, a reference to Franco’s term for Catalan as “the language of dogs” (Wardhaugh, 1987).

The attitude of most of the population was passive resistance (Hargreaves, 2000; Guibernau, 2004; Llobera, 1989). It was within family circles that reading Catalan literature took place, and many middle-class families preserved small Catalan libraries. More generally, it was in the family that Catalan lore, attitudes and customs were passed down (Llobera 1996). The Catalan language was deliberately preserved as a “systematic resistance strategy”, as ironically, one of the effects of Franco’s repression was that it made Catalan synonymous with freedom and rebellion (Guibernau, 2003: 63).

During the Franco years, another very effective means of Castilianization was to encourage the migration of Castilian-speaking workers to Catalonia in order to ‘dilute’ the Catalan-speaking population. By the 1960s, because of sheer numbers, Castilian-speaking migrants collected together in immigrant ghettos, where they had no need to speak Catalan or assimilate, either linguistically or socially (Balcells, 1996). However, this had an unintended result: the speaking of Castilian and Catalan took on a class aspect; Castilian became associated with poorer, working class

migrants, and Catalan with the wealthier, middle and upper classes, thus making it more attractive to second-generation immigrant families.

1.3.5 The current situation

In 1977, two years after Franco's death, a million Catalans demonstrated peacefully in Barcelona in favour of autonomy on the 11th of September, Catalonia's national day, proving that Catalan nationalism had not disappeared. Following the introduction of the Spanish Constitution in 1978, Catalonia was given the status of an autonomous community and the Generalitat was again reinstated in 1979. Catalan was accepted as one of Spain's six official languages.

Today, Catalonia is home to about 7 million of Spain's 47 million people, and at present accounts for about 20% of Spain's GDP. In Spain, there are now about 5 million native Catalan speakers. Catalonia is also the most industrialised regions of Spain. Contemporary Catalanism emphasises increasing autonomy through democratic and peaceful means, although recent polls and elections results have shown clearly that separatism and the desire for independence as a state are growing. It is estimated that about half the population are in favour of independence, though most Catalans want the right to vote on this issue (Keeley, 2014).

There are two main parties in Catalonia, the CiU (Convergència i Unió, a centre-right coalition of two smaller parties) and ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, a left

wing, pro-independence party). The CiU has also managed to be a force in its own right in Spanish politics in general, by supporting state-wide ruling parties (socialist Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and conservative Partido Popular) at national elections throughout the 1990s.

Many Catalans saw the European Union as a godsend, with its emphasis on ‘A Europe of the Regions’ (Llobera, 2004). In practice though, the EU has been a double-edged sword, since national Spanish initiatives easily overwhelmed those of the regions, and there have been arguments suggesting that the European Community has had a negative effect on regionalisation (del Río Luelmo and Williams, 1999). Many Catalans in recent years have felt that the EU has failed to protect them (Strubell, 2008). Indeed, over the last few years, there has been a perceived worsening of relations between Catalonia and the Central Government. In 2009, 170 towns held unofficial, symbolic votes for independence. There was only a 25% turnout, though of those 94% backed independence (BBC News, 2009).

The most evident sources of conflict between Catalonia and Spain, though, can be seen in the controversy over the Generalitat’s 2006 Statute of Autonomy, which highlights most of the key areas of controversy in the relationship between Spain and Catalonia. It was intended to allow greater self-government, for example, greater control over judicial appointments, immigration, and fiscal policy. Catalans were also redefined as members of a nation, and Catalan given preference over Castilian.

The right wing Partido Popular and various other bodies soon presented an appeal stating that 113 articles of the 221 in the Statute were unconstitutional. After four years, the Constitutional Court published its decision in June 2010, during which the Statute entered into force. Fourteen articles were declared unconstitutional, and 20 altered. The alteration that caused the most anger in Catalonia concerned the court's decision that Catalonia's definition as a nation has no legal value, and it can only exist within "the only and indissoluble unity of the Spanish *nation*" (emphasis added, Pericay, 2010).

Another important section the Court has removed refers to the money Catalonia transfers to other autonomous communities and the expenditure the Spanish Government makes in Catalonia. Conflict over financial issues has been a feature of Madrid–Autonomous region relations since 1979 (del Río Luelmo & Williams, 1999), and Catalonia has very little control over the funding it receives. Those seeking to change Catalonia's relationship with Spain, or end it altogether, have often brought up the economic argument. The present economic crisis, which has hit Catalonia particularly hard, has intensified these debates. Due to its comparative wealth in Spain (by GDP it is 22% wealthier than Spain's average), Catalonia has a large fiscal deficit of 9.76% (i.e. almost 10% of earnings in Catalonia leave it and are not returned in public investment). This makes Catalonia one of the most heavily taxed regions in Europe (Gibson, 2010).

Following the ruling, a million and a half people joined a protest in Barcelona on 10th July 2010. Aside from fomenting independentist sentiments, the ruling had the effect

of creating solidarity across political lines (Nationalia, 2010). All in all, the 2010 judgement has only served to worsen a feeling of dissatisfaction with the central government, leading many to question whether the current model of autonomy is really working. It should be said though that Catalonia has a high degree of autonomy, second only to Navarre and the Basque Country. The Generalitat controls environment, industry, agriculture, transport, and commerce. (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015). Catalonia has its own police force, the Mossos d'Esquadra, which replaced the national police and Civil Guard in 2008. The Generalitat also performs a legislative function within Catalan Civil Law, which concerns mainly family and inheritance law (Mas i Solench, 1990).

Other sources of bitterness include the abundance of toll motorways in comparison with the rest of Spain (Strubell, 2008) and attempts at educational reform by the Spanish ministry of education to do away with Catalonia's system of bilingual education. A point of particular dispute in this arena came about when education minister José Ignacio Wert blamed the Catalan education system for the rise in pro-independence sentiment, and expressed a wish to 'Castilianize' Catalan children. While there may have been a grain of truth in his comments, his claims caused widespread anger (Vilaweb, 2012).

In September 2012, Catalonia's national day (*Diada*) was the setting for a large-scale protest in favour of independence in Barcelona,⁹ attended by about 1.5 million people. This event can show the clear shift to pro-independence aims in contemporary

⁹ I attended the three Diadas from 2012 to 2014, so can describe them from personal experience.

Catalanism, and also an emphasis on raising international awareness. The Diadas of the next two years also played host to similar protests, both called ‘the Catalan Way’, organised by the Assemblea Nacional (ANC). In 2013, this was a human chain stretching all along Catalonia’s coastline from north to south, inspired by the Baltic Way of 1989, when a similar human chain was created across the Baltic States. A testament to its popularity is that almost all the 350,000 places were filled several months before the event, and many participants went unrecorded. Barcelona played host to 2014’s Diada, since this year was also the tercentenary of the Siege of Barcelona itself, the very event celebrated by the Diada. The 2014 co-ordinated protest was a massive ‘V’ spread over Barcelona (for ‘*votar*’, to vote), the 900,000 protests forming a human mosaic in red and yellow to mark out the *senyera* (Catalonia’s national flag).

As a reaction to the massive protest in 2012, ruling President of the Generalitat, Artur Mas (CiU) announced a snap election on 25th November 2012 where an independence referendum was central to the campaign. While CiU lost seats to ERC, pro-independence parties made up half the Generalitat. Following a coalition between CiU and ERC, in January 2013 the Generalitat announced a “Declaration of Sovereignty”, stating that they would hold a vote on independence in 2014. This decision was strongly opposed by the Spanish government, which formally rejected the proposal in April 2014. In March, Spain’s constitutional court had also ruled the referendum to be unconstitutional (Keeley, 2014).

In light of Spain's position, in September 2014 Mas finally admitted that the referendum would be non-binding, but would still take place. Once more, the Constitutional Court ruled this as unconstitutional, but an unofficial referendum went ahead. Results were 80% in favour, although less than half of Catalonia's 5.4 million eligible voters participated. In January 2015, Mas announced new elections for the 27th September. Unlike 2012's agenda, which focused on a referendum, 2015 will focus more on a unilateral declaration of independence by the winning parties (BBC News, 2015). This is to circumvent the Spanish government restriction on a binding vote on independence, which Mas and other pro-independence parties wish to do indirectly by making a declaration of Catalonia as an independent state as part of their election agenda should they gain power.

The context of the European Union adds another layer of complexity to the question of new states within Europe. This has become particularly evident in the debates surrounding Scottish and Catalan independence (which are often compared). One of the earliest aims of the European Union was to develop a supra-national identity that would eventually overcome the notion of a nation-state, while empowering regional identities (Shore, 1993). This has backfired somewhat as movements within some of these regions have begun to demand full statehood. The main questions arising then are whether these new states would automatically remain members, or would they have to reapply, and would they still have the criteria necessary to re-enter? Controversy also surrounds the Spanish government's influence on such a decision, best seen in the furore around successive European Commission Vice Presidents' comments in recent years (For more on this controversy, see: Kelly, 2012; Nielsen, 2013 and Reding, 2014).

1.4 Symbols of Catalan nationalism

1.4.1 Language

For Catalan nationalists, language has always been the most important form of national distinctiveness. Unlike religion...language serves to distinguish Catalans clearly from other Spaniards. Though many Spaniards may deride it as no more than a vulgar dialect of Spanish, Catalans can point to a rich body of literature in Catalan and to linguistic judgements that Catalan is a distinct language (McRoberts, 2001:139)

Language is a key symbol of Catalan identity.¹⁰ It is language that really separates Catalans from the rest of Spain (the ‘Other’) (Crameri, 2000; Balcells, 1996). It therefore sets identity boundaries, provides a historical link and continuity with the past,¹¹ and is the foundation on which Catalan culture is based.

Due to its immediacy in everyday life, the association between language and identity occurs not only in political and intellectual discourses, but also in the popular mind. Catalans will not consider another person to be truly Catalan unless they can speak the language, and are comfortable using it on a regular basis (Hargreaves, 2000; Woolard, 1986; DiGiacomo, 2001). Catalan political theorist Jordi Pujol takes the view that those who live and work in Catalonia, but also crucially those who also speak Catalan, are Catalan. Language has also been key to the claim of Catalonia as

¹⁰ These issues were discussed further in my Masters thesis in 2011, “Language and Identity in Catalonia”.

¹¹ Catalans are fond of referring to *la nostra llengua mil·lenaria* – our thousand year old language (DiGiacomo, 2001).

an open nationalism, willing to accept those who make the effort to integrate.

Considering the high levels of immigration to Catalonia in the last hundred years, and the fact that these groups generally have a higher birth rate than native Catalans, it is for this reason that a language-based identity has been far more successful than one based on race or birth.

Current statistics show a very high level of Catalan awareness amongst the Catalan population. In 2011, 95% of the population understood the language, while 73% could speak it and 79% read it. Only 56% of the Catalan population can write the language however, but this is still an improvement on 1986, when only 31.5% could write it (Ideascap, 2015). Age also makes a difference to Catalan language understanding, as for those under 25, only 3% cannot speak Catalan. For the over 75s, this rises to 10% (Nationalia, 2013). In terms of self-identity, according to a 2007 study (Ideascap, 2007, in Strubell, 2008), just 4.5% considered themselves Spanish or more Spanish than Catalan, whereas 43% considered themselves equally Spanish and Catalan, and 50.5% more Catalan than Spanish or just Catalan.

1.4.2 Catalan national character

Speaking the language though is not a simple matter. Learning and speaking Catalan are believed to bring out the characteristics of the Catalan character, or *seny*, in an individual. Language, and *seny*, are seen as making up the “*fet diferencial*” that differentiates Catalans from other Spaniards (Hargreaves, 2000: 20). It is characterised by a sensible, rational, down to earth attitude, a business-like and hard-working approach to life. This is often contrasted with the supposed character of

Castilian speakers, who at best are alleged to be more superficial and impatient than the reserved Catalans, and at worst lazy, profligate and irrational (Smith, 1996).

Catalans also tend to see themselves as better educated and having more in common with the rest of Europe (Wardhaugh, 1987; Gade, 2003). A Castilian-speaking immigrant who learns Catalan demonstrates the “hardworking ambition and good sense that qualifies one as a genuine Catalan” (Woolard, 1986: 63).

This down to earth, business-like *seny* on which Catalans pride themselves has another side to it, though, that of *rauxa*. This is the propensity to seek relief from social constraints by excess and lack of control. It is said that this propensity has also created the wild creative talent evidenced by Catalonia’s many famous contemporary artists, such as Dalí, Miró, or Tàpies, and in the food world Adrià and his acolytes (*Seny* on the other hand means that these artists can profitably make use of these creative outbursts).

However, it is naïve to take the essentialist view that *seny* objectively describes a Catalan, and it is very much an emic category. What is important is that Catalans agree with such stereotypes about themselves, and also about ‘the other’ i.e. the Castilian character, and this has an effect on conscious behaviour. As Macdonald (1997) takes care to point out, we cannot ignore this phenomenon as it affects actors’ behaviour. Communities also turn negative stereotypes into virtues, a process that has happened in Catalonia.

Seny is the positive side to the perception of Catalans as stingy, mean and money-grubbing in other parts of Spain (Catalonia's fiscal demands fit perfectly into this negative stereotype). It is highly significant too that a widespread advertising

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Carme Ruscalleda.
 "Jo crec que la perfecció no existeix i que mai aconseguirem aquella puntuació de 10 punts que tots desitgem. I que ens equivoquem cada dia, però això no impedeix que no parem de treballar ni de buscar-la. I encara que sapiguem que no l'assolirem, hi arribarem a la vora."



Santiago Dexeus.
 "El seny és una part de l'ètica i crec que és una part molt important. I quan has mamat a casa certs valors, certes formes de veure les coses, això ja ho tens ben guanyat. Jo, la veritat, em sento molt recolzat per tot el que vaig aprendre de petit de la meua família, del meu pare i de la meua mare."



Carles Puyol.
 "Si som al minut 90 i anem perdent, sempre mirem de mantenir la calma encara que sigui un moment molt difícil. Però tenim una forma de jugar i un estil, i intentem no canviar-ho. Mai no hem de començar amb pilotades llargues, perquè va contra la nostra idea d'entendre el futbol."



La manera de fer banca en el segle XXI.
bancsabadell.com/seny

Seny.



Divendres, 16 de novembre de 2012

Figure.1.1: Advertisement for Banc Sabadell that uses the ideal of *seny* to suggest reliability and levelheadedness inherent in a Catalan business. Famous Catalan figures (a chef, a medic and a footballer for FC Barcelona) give their opinions on how they apply *seny* in their everyday life. (Source: El 9Nou)

campaign for Catalan Banc Sabadell during fieldwork emphasised *seny* as a positive characteristic (Fig 1.1). Its capacity for use in a Catalan-focused marketing campaign, using famous Catalan personalities (including a well-known chef, Carme Ruscalleda) demonstrates well the importance of *seny* as a recognizably Catalan approach to life.

Catalan *associacionisme* and *pactisme* are also seen as facets of the Catalan character. The former is the supposed propensity for Catalans to form groups based on a shared interest, and can include societies of *sardanistes* (dancers of the *sardana*, the Catalan national dance), hikers and *excursionists*, hobbyists, football supporters etc. These started in the nineteenth century onwards as a manifestation of Catalan civil society. *Excursionisme* (going on visits to other parts of Catalonia) was especially significant as it emphasised the bond between territory, land, folklore and people, as well as its regional foods (discussed further in Chapter 8). The “cult of territory” assumed a central role in the ideology of groups such as the *Excursionista Català* (Conversi, 1997). *Associacionisme* can also be seen today in the active participation in pro-Catalan and pro-independence groups. The best known of these are Omnium Cultural and the Assemblea Catalana (which will appear regularly through this thesis) but there are also other smaller, regional based groups.

Pactisme is often mentioned in the context of history. It is presented as the desire to avoid conflict and achieve compromise through negotiation. It is idealised in the historical relationship between the Corts and the Counts of Barcelona, which was underpinned by the idea of a contract between a ruler and his subjects. This is contrasted with the Castilian (and later Spanish) absolutist style of ruling. While

pactisme is accepted too as a somewhat idealistic concept (history also shows very clearly that *pactisme* did not always triumph), it is still presented as a political virtue in present times (Hargreaves, 2000). This may also explain the emphasis on peaceful protest and lack of a lasting terrorist organization.

This shows too the “powerful historiographical current” (Mar-Molinero and Smith, 1997: 9) present in Catalan nationalism. A glorification of history is part of all nationalist movements, and in Catalonia particularly since history plays such an important part in the justification of Catalonia as a separate nation (Keown, 2011a; Llobera, 1994). Indeed just as Catalonia is presented as the protagonist of history, Spain is the perpetual antagonist.

All this came under the doctrine of *pairalisme* or allegiance to the paternal house, and developed into an ideology particular to the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie relating family, patrimony and undivided inheritance. It implies a time-honoured image of Catalan rural life and particularly the peasantry. The importance of this image in the Catalan national image was first voiced in the nineteenth century, and formed part of the traditionalist, romantic, conservative and above all Catholic vision of Catalonia, especially in the work of Bishop of Vic, Josep Torras i Bages (*La Tradició Catalana*, 1966). How much this ideal is representative of practical reality is debateable, but like the *hereu-pubilla* system, *pairalisme* has been transformed into a ‘cultural ideal’ forming part of a ‘Catalan tradition’ which can be realized precisely because it is now largely divorced from its former associations (Bestard-Camps and Contreras, 1997). This is also true on the political level, as *pairalisme* and other specific features of

Catalan kinship appear in both the speech of politicians and in literature (Llobera, 1997; DiGiacomo, 1987).

1.4.3 Flags: the *senyera* and the *estellada*

In contemporary Catalonia, there are two basic flags in use: the *senyera* and the *estellada*. The *senyera* is a simple design of four red bands across a yellow background, and the *estellada*, a variation on the *senyera* with a blue triangle over the *senyera*, which bears a white five-pointed star (Fig 1.2). While the *senyera* represents Catalonia as a whole (it is part of Barcelona's coat of arms), the *Països Catalans*, Catalan identity etc., the *estellada* is



Figure 1.2: The *senyera* (above) and the *estellada* (below) flags

unequivocally associated with pro-independence Catalanism. Precise details vary, but the usual story is that the *senyera* came into existence during the reconquest of the area from the Moors around the ninth century, thus coinciding with the mythical beginnings of Catalonia. So prevalent is this story that there is even a tableau representing this momentous event in the Museum of Catalan History in Barcelona (Figure 1.3).

Whatever the origin, the *senyera* is an ubiquitous symbol in Catalan everyday life. It appears on balconies, graffiti, and is present on the huge selection of Catalan-themed memorabilia sold by several companies that have sprung up in the last four years. Such memorabilia includes clothing, home wares, stationary, and passport covers or fake identity documents for a future Catalan state (see Figure 1.4).



Figure 1.3: Tableau showing the creation of the *senyera* at the Catalan History Museum. The Frankish king grants Wilfred the Hairy a coat of arms by drawing four bloodstained fingers from Wilfred's wounds over his plain yellow shield.

However, during my time in Catalonia the independentist *estellada* noticeably gained in popularity over the *senyera*. This may be because the *senyera* is shared with several autonomous communities that are better integrated into Spain (e.g. Valencia), and is also part of the Spanish coat of arms from the Crown of Aragon (Balcells, 2008). The *estellada* on the other hand is a much



Figure 1.4: An example of a non-official, novelty Catalan ID belonging to the author, one of many designs on offer from various sources in Catalonia. Note the use of the *Països Catalans*.

clearer symbol of deeply felt Catalanism since it has not been used to promote any agenda unrelated to Catalan nationalism. Indeed, it is telling that when I tried to buy a *senyera* at the end of my fieldwork in Vic, I was unable

to find one, since shopkeepers no longer bother to stock them, as there is only demand for *estellades*.

The *estellada* developed in the early twentieth century with the move towards pro-independence attitudes in Catalan politics, and the widespread belief in Catalonia today is that the newly-independent Cuba's flag acted as inspiration. While the *senyera* remains in a single form, with the *estellada* different colours can also be used to symbolise different political allegiances. A red and yellow version (the 'red' not 'blue' variation) was associated with leftist Catalanism, particularly Communist, or a black version for anarchist leanings. Today, the red and the blue versions are used interchangeably as the red has largely lost its political associations.

1.4.4 Festivals

It is impossible to deny the importance of festivals (or *festes*) in contemporary Catalan identity. In the words of Conversi, popular *festes* represent a “culminating moment for the expression of national identity. Local events, celebrations, folkloric, religious and even pre-Christian festivals acted as a catalyst of nationalist expression” (Conversi, 1997: 155). Festivals are also bound up with other manifestations of identity, such as memory, place and food - indeed, food is the central aspect of Catalan celebrations (Payne, 1991).

From the literature, festivities in Catalonia can be divided into two types: national celebrations, important throughout all Catalonia, and the more local events, such as particular religious days and the Festa Major (or main festival, held in every town and village in summer). Of course, there is some interplay between them, and national events are celebrated in particular ways at a local level, while others are emphasised or deemphasised depending on the location. For example, Corpus Christi is a significant event in the Catalan festive calendar, but in Burga this is the most important festival of the year (Noyes, 2003), and overshadows later, more national events.

There are three national days throughout Catalonia, celebrated in all areas of the Principat. These are St George's Day on 23rd April, St John's Eve on 23rd June, and the September *Diada* on 11th September. Saint George is one of Catalonia's national saints, alongside the Virgin of Montserrat, and his celebration is associated with roses (Catalonia's national flower) and books. St John's Eve is celebrated throughout Spain, but it has been catalanized with the *Flama del Canigó* (Canigó flame) that is ceremoniously carried from the Canigó mountain to the rest of Catalonia to represent solidarity amongst Catalan-speaking areas. The September Diada serves as a means of remembering a traumatic moment in Catalan history. These will be discussed further in relation to notions of national foods in Chapters 7 and 9.

There is no denying too the importance of the FC Barcelona football club as a sign of national identity (Beary, 2011). Under the Franco regime, supporting Barça was a means of covertly supporting Catalonia (Ranachan, 2008). In the celebration of the

September Diada, representatives of the club are often central to celebrations. It is arguable then that Barça football matches are also a type of festive event, in which Catalan identity is celebrated through sport.

The 1992 Olympics in Barcelona is an event that was discussed quite extensively in the academic literature of the time. Catalan culture (particularly language and history) featured extensively in the proceedings, which took on a festive nature. The work of Hargreaves (2000) provides an extremely detailed account of the run up to the games and the event itself, and in particular discusses the national and international politics at play – a scene dominated by simmering resentment towards one another on the part of the Catalan and Spanish authorities, but which through carefully diplomacy never erupted. Despite claims that the games would lead to cultural homogenisation, he believes that they represented a triumph of Catalan culture, and that they led to the stimulation of both cultural and economic development.

1.4.5 Further symbols: sardanes, castells, and places

One way that the organisers of the 1992 Olympics marked the event out as a Catalan event was by the presence of the *sardana*, Catalonia's national dance, in the opening ceremony. This circular dance is particular to Catalonia, and is often seen at Catalonia's three national festivals, and at other events with a strong Catalanist focus. It is also seen as a manifestation of idealized aspects of Catalan character and *seny*, for its calm, measured and precise movements, concentration and diligence (Brandes, 1990; 24). The dancer also must count continually to remember which formula of

steps to follow, which vary depending on each dance. As Noyes (2011a) remarks, the Catalans' stereotypical business aptitude carries on into perceptions of the *sardana*, as they count even while they dance. The *sardana* dates from about 1850, and the actual roots are unknown (Martí i Pérez, 1994), though it is reputed to originate from the staunchly pro-Catalan Empordà region in the north-east.

Problems though do exist in the contemporary era. It is ironic that while the best infrastructure for learning it that has ever existed (the regional government subsidizes *sardana* instructions in schools, with the explicit aim of using it as an integratory tool), it appears that young people have been deserting the tradition,¹² since it is seen as old-fashioned (Martí i Pérez, 1994). Still, that does not undermine its importance, and it is seen in many towns and cities as a symbol of Catalanism.



Figure 1.5: Castells on the packaging of Llet Nostra, a Catalanist brand that uses national identity for brand image. This is a classic example of the appearance of Catalan symbols in everyday life – and food.

A further manifestation of Catalan identity which should be discussed in this section are the *castells*, or human towers. Unlike *sardana* groups, these have become increasingly popular in recent years. Originally they originated in Valls, a town south

¹² Noyes (2011a) goes so far as to claim that younger Catalans wince at the mention of *sardanistes*, and my Catalan teacher in Oxford likewise dissuaded me from studying the *sardana* as a focus of research, as he felt it had little contemporary appeal.

of Barcelona, the point of origin of another now popular food event, the *calçotada* (spring onion eating). There are now many groups spread throughout Catalonia. Like the *sardana*, they too can be seen as symbolic of Catalan identity. The construction of a tower requires mathematical precision and decision-making, and is open to anyone who is capable of forming part of the collective whole.

In 2010, the *castells* were also granted UNESCO intangible world heritage status, which has meant in practice that they can now be used to promote Catalan identity, and specifically independence, to a global audience. An example of this was in Omnim Cultural's worldwide 'Catalans want to vote: Human Towers for Democracy' event, to promote the November referendum in 2014. *Castells* have also been used to promote Catalan products e.g. Llet Nostra (Figures 1.5 and 1.6).



Figure 1.6: Promotional image for Omnim's 'Catalans want to vote: Human towers for democracy' campaign that took place in several cities across Europe, which are listed at right (Source: Omnim Cultural)

I will be discussing the importance of landscape in this thesis, and the way ideas about places can be imbued with Catalanist associations. Balcells (2008) recognises several such sites of memory. This includes sites associated with Barcelona's defeat in 1714, Canigó mountain in France, associated with the *Flama del Canigó* events held every St John's Eve (these will be discussed in context later in this thesis); Montserrat, (literally 'jagged mountain') an eye catching natural landmark that contains the sanctuary of the Virgin of Montserrat, another of the Patron saints of Catalonia; the six hundred year old Generalitat's Palace, and finally Barça's Camp Nou stadium and museum in Barcelona.

1.5 Methods

1.5.1 Language

Both Noyes (2003) and Waldren (1996) found that speaking Catalan in their field sites in the *Països Catalans* was enthusiastically received. The highly Catalan location in which I based myself, and the explicit focus on Catalan identity, mean that linguistically I was in a position where learning Catalan was essential.

To facilitate this process, I took Catalan lessons with the Catalan Reader at Oxford University, and took a foundation exam in the Catalan language, which helped in a

related issue in the field, that of getting an affiliation to a university.¹³ By the time I arrived in Barcelona in June 2012, I was more or less fluent in Catalan, though I took a private course in Barcelona to further perfect my Catalan and improve on my Castilian (which I studied since 2007).

In Vic, I found that, as an outsider, speaking Catalan was of enormous importance. With this knowledge, I decided that learning the language to a high standard was the best way of integrating into the field and having success in fieldwork. I found this was not only an advantage in the practical aspects of life, but Catalans also saw this as a dedication to understanding Catalan culture accurately. I found myself contrasted positively with those immigrants who had come over from Spain in the 1960s, mainly for work, but also part of Franco's covert de-catalanization program, and never bothered to learn. The usefulness of learning Catalan to near fluency in this context therefore cannot be overstated.

1.5.2 Locations

When I first arrived in Catalonia, I remained in Barcelona for two months for preliminary research and final language training before moving to my fieldwork site of Vic. Vic is a small city of about 40,000 people in the *comarca* (county) of Osona, about one hour northwest of Barcelona, and within the province of Barcelona. I selected Vic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was a town that almost all of my

¹³ Through Joan Bestard-Camps & Jesus Contreras, I was able to become a visiting student at Barcelona University.

Catalan acquaintances in the UK recommended to me. Since one of my strategies throughout fieldwork was to follow the advice of Catalans wherever possible, this also applied to the town that was to act as a base of research.

The reasoning behind this recommendation also guided my decision, as Vic is regarded as being one of the ‘most Catalan’ towns, a symbolic centre and historically a bastion of old fashioned Catalanism. It is also associated with several important Catalan figures. Catalonia’s national poet, Jacint Verdaguer was born in a village outside Vic, and completed his education there. Also associated with Vic are the philosopher Jaume Balmes, and Bishop Josep Torres i Bages, who in 1892 wrote *La Tradició Catalana*, the basis for a more conservative Catalanism with its roots in Catholicism.

Moreover Vic was only an hour from Barcelona by bus, and is fairly well situated by rail and car to visit other parts of Catalonia. Vic is also fairly unknown to non-Catalans, so I had less concern with the effects of a large tourist industry on my research. Vic is popular with internal tourists from within Catalonia, particularly the weekly market on Saturday. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the popularity of Vic’s weekly market also contributed to its reputation as a Catalanist town, due to the centrality of markets in Catalan social life.

Another reason given for this supposed closed nature was the climate, since its cold, foggy winters allegedly made Vicatans unsociable in the colder months. This climate was also another factor that, indirectly, brought me to Vic. It is a city known for its

fog (*la boira*), a result of its location in the bend of a river. This has created a unique climate that is ideal for sausage production, particularly the Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) *llonganissa de Vic*, for which Vic is famed both within Catalonia and further afield. Much of Catalonia itself is famous for its sausages (*embotits*), which are made differently from other parts of Spain, and as this thesis will show, are Catalan symbols themselves. Vic's identity as a centre of production for this archetypal Catalan product reaffirms its reputation as a true Catalan town. The sausage industry is also a testament to the importance of pig-raising to Osona's economy. This industry has even left Vic with a sensory footprint, the so-called '*eau de Vic*': a farmyard smell of the pig farms surrounding the city, mixed with a metallic hint from the slaughterhouses.

It is hardly surprising therefore that agriculture and agro-food industries account for 3.8% and 10.8% respectively of Osona's workforce in 2008 (more recent, post-crisis data is lacking). The percentage of the population employed in primary industries, 4.3%, is particularly high for Osona when compared to the rest of Catalonia (1.3%) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009).

Since Vic has such a reliance on the agro-alimentary industries and an international reputation for the PGI *llonganissa de Vic*, a recent initiative has been the recognition of Vic as a UNESCO city of gastronomy. This has been organised principally by the Gremi d'Hosteleria (Hospitality guild), that was in the final stages of completion when I left, but was eventually unsuccessful. This candidature shows the explicit

attention attached to food and a ‘gastronomic heritage’ to the city of Vic, making it more attractive for the study of this subject.

Finally, Vic has its own small vocational university, and interestingly for me the first university in Spain to offer a Masters in Communication and Gastronomy. The course was first offered from 2006, though unfortunately when I arrived in Vic it had recently been cancelled due to lack of student numbers in the wake of the economic downturn, and other universities in Spain had taken up the idea. Still, this was one more ingredient to the mix that led to my final decision to remain in Vic.

During my stay I lived in the Plaça Major (central square). I selected it for convenience, but soon realised that this was to be significant the eyes of some of my informants. Having learned Catalan, I was already seen in a positive light by Catalans. When I mentioned that I was living in Vic, and above all in ‘La Plaça’, this was seen as further proof of my affection for Catalan culture. As I have said, Vic’s status as a centre of Catalanism is known (and sometimes stereotyped) throughout Catalonia. To live in the very centre of that, in the Plaça Major, fortified my Catalan connections in the eyes of many informants. This was often underlined when Catalans introduced me, pointing out that I was English, had come to Vic speaking almost fluent Catalan, “and she even lives on the Plaça!”

I also spent a few weeks (on several visits) in other parts of Catalonia, particularly the north-eastern region of Empordà (on the border with France), and the southern tip of Catalonia in the Ebre Delta (the so-called *Terres de l’Ebre*). This was mainly on the

advice of informants, since these regions expressed the contrast in Catalan regional food cultures. Empordà has also contributed a great deal to Catalan cuisine itself, and is the place where many of Catalonia's great gastronomes and chefs have chosen to open restaurants. This is probably due to the proximity to France and the popularity of tourism in the area.

1.5.3 Interviews

During fieldwork in Catalonia, there was no absolute template for the ideal informant. I tried to interview individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds (following MacClancy, 2007: 23). I will discuss this later in this section, but I focused both on those who had careers in food (chefs, producers, food writers etc.), as well as activists and more general members of the population.

This raises the question of gatekeepers and entry into a social group. It is well known that the people with whom one affiliates, and also resides, may affect access to others, as the anthropologist is channelled in line with current networks of friendships and enmities (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Shore, 1999; Gardner, 1991; Beatty, 1999). It was necessary to move through a variety of social groups within my fieldwork site, and I decided it would be better not to affiliate myself too much with one at the beginning. It is for this reason that I chose not to stay with a family in Catalonia.

Informants came from a variety of sources. An important group used in my research were informants who were based in the food industry. These were often chefs or owners of restaurants, those involved in food production (usually making Catalan products), and also a few managers of restaurant cooperatives. The Fundació Alicia, a foundation involved in food research and promoting healthy eating, with some connection with Ferran Adrià, was also a useful source. I started off with a focus in Vic, then later became involved in other areas part way through fieldwork.

Also important were food and gastronomic writers who do not run an establishment themselves, but who are intrinsically involved with world of cuisine and gastronomy in Catalonia through their publications. They generally have strong feelings about questions of identity and food in Catalonia. As I will discuss later in Chapter 3, these writers contribute a great deal to opinions on food amongst Catalans.

Beyond this, I also interviewed close acquaintances in more informal settings, who were normally unrelated to food through work. They included individuals who participated in voluntary organisations and who have already been discussed, and also personal friends whom I came to know in the field. A list of these informants can be found in Appendix 4.

Voluntary organizations

Due to the centrality of voluntary associations and similar groups in Catalan social life, joining these groups was an important means of accessing informants in the field. Several ethnographers have noted the importance of such groups in both Catalonia and the Basque country (Noyes, 2003; MacClancy, 2007; McDonald, 1989).

I therefore joined the three main cultural groups in Vic: the groups of *sardanistes* (*sardana* dancers), the Geganters del Carrer Riera, and Els Sagals d'Osona (*castellers* – groups involved in building human towers). The *sardanistes* was the group with which I most participated, at weekly Friday meetings. The *geganters* are the carriers of the *gegants*, or giants, massive wooden figures that are carried in processions. The *sardana* and the *geganter* groups were the ones with whom I became most involved early in my stay. I also tried to involve myself in the *castellers*, but found it harder to integrate with them due to the large number of participants.

There are also two other groups that had an influence on my fieldwork, the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) and Omnim Cultural. These are pan-Catalan groups, which have a strong influence throughout Catalonia. Omnim has a long history, having been founded in 1961. The aim of the group has always been to campaign for Catalan culture, primarily language, and it was a clandestine organisation for much of the Francoist period. The Assemblea is a more recent group, founded with the explicit goal of promoting independence for Catalonia, in contrast to the more moderate cultural promotion of Omnim. There were also allegations that Omnim had become

too associated with the dominant *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) party. However, *Omnium* has now also begun to associate itself with an independentist agenda.

Photo elicitation

All these groups, except the *castellers*, provided me with individuals and groups whom I interviewed, and used in photo elicitation described below. I interviewed the co-ordinator for *Omnium* cultural. A group from the *Vic* organisers of the *Assemblea* formed to give a group interview, as did the *geganterers*, and the *sardanistes*, with whom I did two interviews, one for the older dancers and the younger age group.

I decided to use photo elicitation primarily in-group interviews in an informal setting, as a springboard for discussion, based on each informant's reactions and associations with the images. I also wished to gain insight into attitudes across my informants about specific foodstuffs. While I had concerns this might lead my informants too much in discussion, this was important for gaining some unity amongst the (at times messy) multivocality inherent in nationalist fieldwork. Banks (2001) suggests that photos can act as a discussion of "broader abstractions" (Banks, 2001:88) and provide a more comfortable interface than direct questions that may perturb the interviewee.

Image selection required good knowledge about the components of Catalan cuisine, so I started photo elicitation halfway through fieldwork, when I had gathered a well-informed selection of photos and media to use. The advantage of this method in the

context of Catalan fieldwork is that it can be incorporated easily into everyday food-based interactions, e.g. end of meal discussions.

Cookbooks, gastronomic literature and magazines

I decided to use this method initially because MacClancy (2007) used it as a means of understanding Basque cuisine. I have also come to find that many of the Catalans I know also see cookbooks in and of themselves as part of their culinary identity. There are also books (and sometimes magazine articles) that I refer to as “gastronomic literature” that are not cookbooks (though they may contain recipes), which deal explicitly with the theme of Catalan cuisine, discussing its characteristics, ideals, regionality etc. They have created a rich discourse on the subject, which is used by Catalans to construct their own ideas about food (as I described earlier, I tried to interview many of the writers of such cookbooks).

These books are also a useful way of accessing the attitudes of certain authors and former authorities on Catalan cuisine whom I could not interview because they have died, but are nonetheless influential. It was impossible, however, to study all cookbooks in Catalonia, so I followed informant-based suggestions for which books they found most influential. I will discuss these cookbooks further in Chapter 3.

Books were not the only source of literature. There are several cooking magazines in Catalonia, most of them widely distributed across Spain. There was only one though

that was of interest to me, Catalonia's most popular cooking magazine, *Cuina*. Other magazines of use included the related *Descobrir*, a Catalan travel magazine limited to Catalan-speaking areas, and *Sapiens*, the Catalan history magazine, which promotes a decidedly nationalist message. These have promoting Catalan culture as their explicit aim. Articles on food and other national subjects from popular newspapers in Catalan also provided useful data, such as *La Vanguardia*, *El Periódico*, *Ara.cat* and *El Punt Avui*.

Participant observation

Considering that food is a very lived experience, participant observation was certainly going to be an important method in food-related research. This included not just eating with Catalans, but also cooking food with them, an essential process (I argue) for catalanizing food and imbuing it with identity. Other participant observation included the *busca-bolets* (mushroom hunting), a central part of Catalan food-based identity, and also *matances de porc* (pig killings), where I helped with preparation of the carcass and participated in the meal afterwards.

I would also include experiences of festive days and events in participant observation. This includes all of Catalonia's three major festivals, experienced in both Barcelona and Vic. I have described the general characteristics of these events, and in this thesis will describe them further while analysing their importance in Catalonia (specifically the independence movement), but also how they are connected with food.

Other festive events that I observed are Catalan food festivals, which are discussed in further detail in Chapter 7. Most have been created within the last 25 years, though some are older. These festivals are held throughout Catalonia, and are intended to celebrate and promote a particular local product, or sometimes a local dish. This is intrinsically tied up with their particular season, or *temporada*, a concept which is very important to Catalans on the subject of food, and which will be discussed further throughout the thesis.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

In the next chapter I will give an overview of the literature surrounding expressions of national identity, and how food is used in these expressions of national identity, as well as relevant ethnographic literature on Catalonia (including, briefly, research on food and Catalan identity). The third chapter will constitute something of a literature review too, but this time to Catalan culinary literature. This will provide a history of Catalan cuisine, and introduce some of the texts and writers who will feature in this thesis. In Chapter four I will give an overview of the key sauces that are seen as the starting point for Catalan cuisine, and consider the discourse surrounding them. Next I describe Catalonia's 'signature dishes' (Mintz, 1996) and the discourse surrounding them, and in doing so introduce most of the key concepts present in Catalan food-based identity. This is followed by a brief chapter dedicated to the bid for UNESCO intangible heritage for Catalan cuisine, and the context of Catalonia's cuisine in the Mediterranean and *Països Catalans*. Next I go further into the concept of the

gastronomic calendar, that is that each festive day has an associated food, and its connection with markets and seasonality in national identity. This progresses onto a chapter on the importance of landscape in Catalan gastronationalism, inspired by a Catalan saying ‘a cuisine is a country’s landscape in a pot’. Finally, I discuss more recently developed, explicitly Catalanist foods that could potentially become national foods, which are associated with the three national days.

Chapter 2. Nationalism, gastronationalism and Catalonia

In the introduction I claimed that to understand nationalist movements we must understand their lived realities (MacClancy, 2007). Further, I suggested that the study of food is one way of elucidating this reality. For this purpose I adopt the term ‘gastronationalism’, proposed by DeSoucey (2010), as appropriate to this case. This chapter will therefore begin with a consideration of appropriate theories of nationalism, with suitable ethnographic examples, stressing particularly the question of nationalism’s lived realities. This will lead to a consideration of features that frequently appear in discourses on nationalisms, such as historicism, kinship, language, and territory. In the next section, entitled ‘Food and National Identity’, further justification for the study of gastronationalism will be offered, including a consideration of previous ethnographic examples. Finally, I discuss relevant ethnographic material on Catalonia, including the small corpus of literature on food in Catalonia.

2.1 Theories of nationalism

The intention of this section is to elucidate common themes running through nationalist movements, specifically their cultural aspects, in order to justify the ‘lived realities’ approach I adopt here. Prominent theorists in my approach will include Benedict Anderson (1983 – *Imagined Communities*), Ernst Gellner’s equally well-known account of the rise of nationalism in Europe, *Nations and Nationalism* (1983),

and for Catalonia specifically Josep Llobera, particularly his 2004 work *Foundations of National Identity: From Catalonia to Europe*, which provides the best overview of Catalan nationalism from an anthropological perspective. This book is something of a retrospective on his approaches to nationalism throughout his career, a summing up of his views. As a Catalan himself who was born in Cuba and lived outside Catalonia for much of his life, he provides unique insight into Catalan nationalism, yet achieves the perspective of an impartial observer.

Aside from Llobera (2004) in Catalonia, the work of MacClancy in the neighbouring Basque country also provides some useful comparative ethnographic material, specifically his 2007 book *Expressing Identities in the Basque Arena*, something of a model for this thesis because of its specific focus on the lived realities of nationalism. Other important ethnographic examples include Maryon McDonald's study (1989) of Breton nationalism, and Roger Just's account of the creation of the Greek nation state (1989). Other authors who will be briefly considered include Jeff Pratt (2003) and Michael Billig (1995), and also briefly Zoe Bray (2011) in the Basque country and António Medeiros (2013) in Galicia.

Gellner (1983) was vehemently opposed to the notion that studying particular nationalist movements could allow us to understand nationalism itself better.¹⁴ He states categorically that "their precise doctrines are hardly worth analysing" (Gellner, 1983: 124), since nationalism springs not from a particular set of circumstances but from a common social condition. He does concede that it may be useful to understand

¹⁴ He did modify his position somewhat in later life, but still denied the importance of culture in nationalism (MacClancy, 2007)

the circumstances in which particular nationalisms arise, but the way nationalists understand the world (their doctrine) is irrelevant to general theory.¹⁵

Such ways of looking at the phenomenon of nationalism in recent years have nonetheless declined in popularity. Increasingly, anthropologists have started to realise that to understand nationalism better, we need to go beyond the theory and step into the field – something Gellner himself failed to do. Llobera (2004) suggests that we are limited in our ability to study nationalism, because we do not have the basic data that would allow us to do so.¹⁶ Like MacClancy (2007) he agrees that, without detailed ethnographic monographs of nationalisms, we run the risk of misunderstanding them (Llobera 2004: 184).

MacClancy (2007) recommends that to study nationalism we must look at the “everyday, unofficial nationalism” (MacClancy, 2007: 14), based not on politics, but everyday interaction. Taking a somewhat anti-theoretical stance, he suggests that students of nationalism should “investigate who is using what ideas when, how, for what reasons and to what end” (ibid: 5). Similarly, what really interested Llobera (2004) is what triggers nationalist movements and keeps them going. He believes that to understand nationalisms properly we must consider their historical background, using Ferdinand Braudel’s notion of the *longue durée*. Llobera emphasises the medieval heritage of nations that have provided foundational material for nineteenth-

¹⁵ “The precise appearance and local form of this phenomenon no doubt depends a very great deal on circumstances which deserve study; but I doubt whether the nuances of nationalist *doctrine* played a part in modifying those circumstances” (Gellner, 1983; 124)

¹⁶ Anthropologists’ habitual emphasis on communities in the micro-scale does not help in the study of nationalism. Indeed, Llobera sees this as the reasons for the limitations in the work of one of the few non-Catalan anthropologists in the field, Hansen (1977), whose work will be considered in the final section.

century nationalisms (“a reservoir of ethnic potential”,¹⁷ Llobera 1994: 214). He is against the instrumentalist approach of seeing nationalisms as a modernist creation that appears *ex nihilo*. He is not necessarily putting forward a lineal history, and he does not go so far as A.D.Smith (1986) might in invoking ‘perennialism’ as the origin of Catalan nationalism.

The reason why Llobera’s approaches to nationalism are of such relevance here is because he admits the importance of emotions in nationalisms (specifically love and hatred), from which other theorists have shied away.¹⁸ Instead in his *Foundations* he makes an effort to actually examine the cultural aspects of nationalist movements, drawing on in-depth case studies of Catalonia to bring in history (or constructions of it), kinship, language, territory, national character, religion, poetry and literature, music, places of national memory, and national days. His discussion makes evident the at times messy interplay between all these factors, for example, national days as sites of memory, territory and kinship etc.

While this is a detailed list, he ignores food, unlike MacClancy (2007), who similarly approaches Basque nationalism by providing detailed insight into its cultural components. He takes as his starting point the notion that, “where divisive politics permeates so much, people are made much more sensitive to their acts... and of the possible political meanings they can be given” (ibid.: 27). He dedicates chapters to the culture of the political activists, with a special emphasis on rock music, sport

¹⁷ He uses the term “ethnic” rather freely, without really specifying what he means by it.

¹⁸ “While nationalism is a language that may convey economic and political realities, when stripped of these shells it contains a spiritual core that essentially consists of sentiments” (Llobera, 2004: 27)

(football), food, biological approaches to nationalism, art, graffiti and finally the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao. This is an eclectic list, but it suggests some of the multitudinous points of departure for considering nationalism.

Another approach is that of Benedict Anderson (1983), famous for his suggestion that the nation is an “imagined community”, a community so large that individuals cannot know all its members but are taught to imagine that they all share a common, horizontal bond through the very idea of the nation. However, B.Anderson’s theory has its limitations. Is it really feasible to expect the concept of a ‘community’ that exists only in the mind to create such strong feelings of belonging as nationalism, for which, as B.Anderson points out, members may be willing to die? Newspapers, language and shared conceptions of ‘culture’ can only go so far. To suggest that a sense of alienation in peripheral ‘colonies’ on the part of educated ‘creoles’ was the foundation for nationalist yearnings to throw off colonial oppressors seems too instrumentalist. Similarly, if the community is ‘imagined’, what guarantee is there that conceptions of the nation are the same across all its members? Something is required that is more concrete, prosaic and quotidian, something centred more on interaction between members than on what is in their heads. (Sutton (2001) makes a similar criticism, which will be discussed later in the context of food and nationalism). A close focus on the lived realities of everyday nationalism can perhaps answer this objection.

2.1.1 Nations and states

Gellner (1983) takes the view that only a centralized state is capable of overseeing education to permit the transmutation of folk culture into high culture that is so central to his theory, since it encourages a feeling of solidarity and a common culture that is essential for the state's legitimization of itself. While this was not applicable to Catalonia,¹⁹ B.Anderson's keenness to stress the importance of language to national identity as a means of creating "particular solidarities" (ibid.: 133) is most certainly relevant. The move towards a secessionist nationalism in Catalonia also suggests a further realisation of the importance of a state to Catalan identity preservation and dissemination, as the primary reason many pro-independence Catalans now give for their support is the need to preserve the Catalan language through a state apparatus that can only be Catalan.

The importance of historical continuity (or rather, inventions of it) in Just's (1989) case for Greece shows some surprising parallels with Catalonia when it comes to the question of statehood. Greek merchants had extensive influence in the Ottoman Empire, but as ideas of nationalism spread through Europe, the ideal of a "free and

¹⁹ The industrial, Catalan bourgeoisie (civil society), however, did partake of this process, to encourage the transmutation of low culture to a literate high one which could overcome political and class differences, through a system of adult education in the '*Ateneus*'. The bourgeoisie (and later regional government) therefore took on a role similar to the state in an attempt to educate the working classes into a national culture. Gellner (1983) notes too that political and class tension is acute in such circumstances, which explains the actions of the Catalan bourgeoisie. The aim was to create a unifying affiliation through the nation to steer it away from competing political ideologies like the anarchist and communist movements of Barcelona – a move which was not always successful. A situation unique to Catalonia, though, is that the bourgeoisie had another motive for emphasising Catalan culture, namely as a means to turn away from the backward, Madrid-based Spanish social elite who had no interest in the modernizing interests of the Catalan industrialists.

independent Greek state...based on the congruency of territorial sovereignty and ethnic unity” (Just, 1989: 74) started to appear. There had never been such a state in existence, despite later attempts in the education system to link nineteenth-century nationalism with the classical Hellenic age (the ‘Golden Age’ in this case). That this was a fiction was unimportant.

We see too here the importance of history when dealing with nationalist movements, which deserves some discussion, though it is also relevant to the discussion on its lived realities. Indeed, Just (1989) sees the importance of an “ethnos” only becoming apparent when the question of history is introduced. In the words of McDonald (1989: 97), “identity is forged out of the structures of the present, and turns to the past for self-derivation. The present is understood by reference to the past, and the past made to generate the present”. Llobera (2004) suggests that it is the at times precarious future of nationalist movements that necessitates this idealization of the past. Catalan nationalists needed to be “looking back with relish” (Llobera, 2004; 21) to find the foundation of a nationalism against the state. History is instead a “feedback mechanism” (Llobera, 1994; 213) in which selective information from the past is fed into the present through images, symbols and myths. The past must provide a plausible history for the recreation of nationalism in the nineteenth century.

Pratt (2003) also suggests the historical focus as something that marks out nationalist movements, which “offered the reconstitutions of ways of being which had been lost” (ibid: 181). This is unlike class movements that attempt to create a new kind of society. Identity discourses emphasise either foundational moments and continuity

(nationalisms), or future transformations, the latter of which Pratt associated with class-based movements. However, I suggest that nationalist movements (like that of Catalonia) can also emphasise a future. In fact, future changes probably act as the main aim of nationalist movements in the contemporary era. That is not to deny the importance of history in national identity construction, in the way suggested by Llobera (2004) and McDonald (1989), as a justification and starting point, yet the emphasis on past splendours does not signify a desire to truly recreate that past, as Pratt (2003) seems to suggest.

To further understand why nationalist ideology has lasted so long, or why it has been so successful in motivating large groups of people, Billig's theory of banal nationalism (1995) deserves some mention. Like Llobera (2004), he accepts that there is an emotional core to nationalist movements, and both authors question the conditions under which nationalism gains power. For Billig, the problem nationalist movements face in most Western nations is that they are associated with crisis, not everyday experience. We therefore need to understand "why people in the contemporary world do not forget their nationality" (Billig, 1995: 7), and how it becomes commonplace. Billig claims that, apart from formal occasions and state days (of which he is too dismissive), there may be few chances to encourage nationalism. This is done by more subtle means, for example the hanging of national flags in prominent places. This he calls a continual "flagging, or reminding" (ibid.: 8) of nationhood in Western nations. He is therefore looking at more routine forms of nationalism, rather than those in a crisis.

2.1.2 The lived realities of nationalism: history, motherland, territory

The discussion so far has lead us to the conclusion that the most useful way of thinking about what makes a nationalist movement is to consider the lived reality of those movements. Certain themes are more attractive for nationalist intellectuals attempting to manipulate or at least experiment with national identity creation. Home and homeland are powerful images. National identity may coalesce around one dimension of national culture that comes to stand out as a marker of difference.

I have already noted the powerful historicizing current running through discourses of national identity. Just (1989) suggests that historical continuity is essential, for a variety of reasons. In the context of a national territory (to be discussed momentarily), one must have a rooted and long-lasting claim to a locality. Culture is another useful symbol, but it can be a double-edged sword since it is not fixed. Just comes to the conclusion (in the Greek case) that it is through claims to race and ancestry that the ‘ethnos’, the basis of Greek nationalism, can really be said to exist.

This is an awkward conclusion at the present day, and the relationship between race and nationalism is a difficult one. B.Anderson (1983) suggests that the reasoning behind this is intimately tied up with notions not only of territory, but also of language and kinship. Pratt (2003) suggests that kinship is a powerful source of national loyalty, though it is also problematic, as elevating such ideas up to the level of the state may entail notions of race. Llobera (2004) and B.Anderson (1983) invoke the powerful notions of ‘motherland’ and ‘fatherland’ in connecting nationalism to

kinship, as well as images of hearth and home as focuses of national identity, though Llobera also suggests that seeing nations as ‘kinship writ large’ oversimplifies their complexities.

Both B.Anderson (1983) and Llobera (2004), however also suggest that culture and language are more than just useful as symbols. A language is not just an emblem, it has the ability to create a sense of solidarity between its speakers. Language and culture are learnt from the cradle, which explains how essentialist conceptions of ethnicity can come into being (B.Anderson, 1983). In a similar vein, Llobera (2004: 46) notes “national language [is] a kinship language”, and by growing up with that language, it comes to be associated with a sibling and parental group. Later, these sentiments can be mobilised to connect the nation with a kin group. At the same time, though, the very emphasis on language and culture as things that can be adopted later in life means that “the nation presents itself as simultaneously open and closed” (B.Anderson, 1983: 146). One can be naturalized by learning a language and adopting a national culture, as well as by being born into these phenomena through childhood socialization.

Antonio Medeiros (2013) also mentions notions of race in Galicia in the romantic Celtophilia still present in nationalist sentiments there, despite it having no scientific basis. Medeiros’s ethnography provides an interesting and timely contribution to practices of nationalism in the field. Galicia as a regional nationalism within the Spanish state has the interesting situation of being connected culturally to a sovereign state, Portugal, where expressions of national identity take place in a different context.

In the context of Galicia, he seeks to unpack notions of ‘culture’ in Galician nationalism by analyzing its associated texts, and also experiencing it through ethnographic fieldwork. Another anthropologist on Basque nationalism, Zoe Bray (2011) also followed this approach, likewise doing multi-sited ethnography, in France and Spain. Perhaps due to this perspective, her main conclusion is that ‘Basque identity’ is never a fixed identity, but rather “a composite conglomeration of flexible and changing boundaries” (Bray, 2011: 215). Her conclusions are unusual but perceptive, in that they stress the individual experience of identity (national is not always an appropriate word for ‘non-nationalists’ who still take pride in Basque symbols), whereas most work has so far stressed the collective element of nationalisms.

Notions of territory and land also appear regularly in nationalist ideologies. As Llobera (2004: 48) perceptively points out, “territory is perhaps one of the most concrete and important phenomena that exists for human beings”. Just calls this connection between nation, state and territory “geographical circumscription”, suggesting that “the existence of a state presupposes the existence of its territory” (Just, 1989: 75). At its most fundamental level, this represents a link between a land and its people. A.D. Smith (1986) connects the popularity of landscape in nationalist movements to nostalgia for a lost past. He claims that the root of this is the desire to link oneself to a greater project through the nation, thus achieving a kind of immortality. This is tempting, but in the lived reality of national movements one has to wonder whether he reads too much into the motivations of its participants.

The idealisation of a rural way of life that has now disappeared is perhaps the one feature that unites all theories of nationalism discussed so far. Indeed it was something obvious even to Gellner (1983). We have already seen how nationalism claims to exalt folk cultures, based on “symbolism drawn from the healthy, pristine, vigorous life of the peasants, of the *Volk*” (Gellner, 1983: 57). In more practical terms, Pratt (2003) talks of the importance of rural links and community associations that acted as a base for political and even terrorist groupings in the Basque country. In many national cultures, the essential elements are located in the peasantry and rural society in the relevant period, an approach that is not without problems. Llobera (2004) describes how folklorists and historians in the nineteenth century invented the ideal of *pairalisme* (exemplified by the ideal of the *casa pairal*, the Catalan farmstead) as a national virtue, even though it had already largely died out with urbanization. Medeiros (2013) too found that old stereotypes and rural ideals were constantly reutilized into contemporary settings, to suggest an “essential and perennial” culture directly descended from the peasant “tradition” (Medeiros, 2013: 67).

This goes hand in hand with the valorisation of landscape, the natural habitat of this peasant ideal. For example, McDonald recalls the belief amongst Breton militants that mountains and isolated communities are havens of true Breton identity, even though the inhabitants of these places, unlike the self-appointed militants, would be more than happy to throw off this image (and the speaking of Breton). Llobera (2004) also describes the importance of landscape in Catalanism through the emphasis on *excursionisme*, that is, getting to know the country through travel, and by extension the nation itself. Also inherent in this is the idea of mapping a country, setting its

border and turning that map into a national symbol, a sort of logo, a trend also noted in the Basque country by Urla (1993).

The connection between landscape and food, on the other hand, is something that has been largely ignored in the context of discussions of nationalism. Catherine Palmer (1998), who follows Billig (1995) in her attempt to get to the lived reality of nationalism, does consider this in a limited way. She is forced to dedicate much more attention to landscape however than the body or food, thanks to the alleged lack of ethnographic data regarding the latter.

Before concluding, a point that is also worth mentioning is the importance of national days. The importance of such events in nationalism's lived realities has received little attention until recent scholarship, aside from Connerton's discussion of "commemorative ceremonies". While he places erroneous emphasis on the rites as formalised and repetitive, he does draw the vital conclusion that participants strengthen collective identity by feeling some connectedness with past performances as a "collective autobiography" (Connerton, 1989:70)

In the Catalan case Llobera (2004) dedicates a chapter to them in *Foundations*, where he compares Catalonia's two Catalanist annual celebrations, St. George's Day and the Diada (further discussion can be found in context in Chapter 9). Medeiros (2013) likewise dedicates a chapter to his experience of Galicia day, the feast day of Santiago de Compostela. This day is an interesting nexus point with the Spanish state, since Santiago is also a patron of Spain. Like Llobera, Medeiros also made an analysis of

political speeches from these days, a useful barometer for studying national movements. They also both point out the importance of historiographical elements that lend heightened significance throughout the day. Indicative of recent interest in national days is also an edited volume on the subject by David McCrone and McPherson (2009). There is not time to consider the full content of this recent text, yet the editors make clear that such days are indispensable for reinforcing national identities. Despite conflicting discourses that may surround such days, they are essential to understand “how national identities are made, unmade and remade” (McCrone & McPherson, 2009: 8). These events are obviously essential for national identity expression, particularly in Catalonia, yet no discussion has satisfactorily centred on food in any of these accounts.

2.1.3 Why study nationalist movements?

Catalan nationalism is a cultural, civic nationalism, as opposed to a state-based nationalism (Llobera, 2004). In such a nationalism, identity is borne by institutions and practices in civil society and the shared values inherent in such a society (Keating, 1996). In studying any nationalism, it is important to gain an “emic” understanding of why nationalisms occur (Pi-Sunyer, 1983), and in Catalonia such an approach is especially essential. To do so, we must consider cultural dynamics, as purely economic and political arguments do not suffice. Nationalism is derived from a specific culture, which in turn is essential in giving meaning to the lives of participants, yet is also flexible in relation to contemporary demands.

From this discussion we can conclude that nationalism is a flexible doctrine that provides a means of coping with the dilemmas of modernity. Its chameleon-like nature means that it can be many things to different people, undoubtedly contributing to its longevity. What is more, nations need an ‘Other’, a shared enemy against which national identity may be forged and projected. Shared conceptions of ‘culture’ (i.e. ‘high culture’, Gellner, 1983), though a slippery term and in continual flux, become increasingly relevant in this context. Yet each nationalism is different. A study of the cultural aspects of Catalan and other nationalisms will therefore contribute to greater understanding of the phenomenon, while also explaining the longevity of the phenomenon based on its lived reality.

2.2 Food and national identity

“Thinking about food has much to reveal about how we understand our personal and collective identities. Seemingly simple acts of eating are flavoured with complicated and sometimes contradictory cultural meanings. Thinking about food can help to reveal the rich and messy textures of our attempts at self-understanding, as well as our interest and problematic understanding of our relationship to social Others” (Narayan, 1995: 64)

It has become a truism to state that food signifies much more than the nutritional sum of its parts. This quote by Narayan in the context of colonialism and cuisine is one of many that draw attention to the multiple meanings attached to food in the context of identity politics. The act of eating “lies at the point of intersection of a whole series of intricate, physiological, psychological, ecological, economic, political, social and cultural processes” (Beardsworth & Keil, 1996: 6). Food is central to our sense of

identity, a means of expressing in-group affiliation and also delineating boundaries (Fischler, 1988; Bell & Valentine, 1997; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993).²⁰

Since the subject under study is the connection between national identity and food ('gastronationalism'), my focus here will be on literature that connects food with national identity, rather than on the wider aspects of the anthropology of food. I will not be discussing, for example, Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984, 2010) where he considers how class identity affects attitudes to 'taste' (gastronomic or otherwise). Nor will I consider nutritional approaches in the anthropology of food, though I am aware that some research has been done in Catalonia itself (specifically the Pyrenees between France and Spain, Macbeth & Green, 1997), since these do not reveal useful connections between national identity and food.

DeSousey (2010), who first used the term 'gastronationalism' to describe the phenomenon under discussion, defines it thus:

"Gastronationalism... signals the use of food production, distribution, and consumption to demarcate and sustain the emotive power of national attachment, as well as the use of nationalist sentiments to produce and market food... It presumes that attacks (symbolic or otherwise) against a nation's food practices are assaults on heritage and culture, not just on the food item itself."²¹ (DeSousey, 2010: 433)

²⁰ "Food tells not only how people live but also how they think of themselves in relation to others. A people's cuisine, or a particular food, often marks the boundary between the collective self and the other, for example, as a basis of discrimination against other peoples." (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993: 4)

²¹ One can see this quite clearly in the recent outrage at the US ambassador's disparaging remarks about lamb and potatoes in Britain (Sherwin, 2014)

DeSoucey suggests that an examination of food as a marker of national identity reveals much about debates on identity in the European context. She also suggests that gastronationalism is often a tool for state intervention, one that “connects macro- and micro-level concerns around globalism, from the state to food producers’ and consumers’ lived experiences” (DeSoucey, 2010: 435). The protection of certain foods as carriers of national identity, even in the face of international criticism (and maybe even *because* of it, as in the case of the *foie gras* industry), is a means of protecting the nation. She takes inspiration too from Ferguson (1998: 619) in his descriptions of a “culinary nationalism” that associates French cuisine with a reputation for culinary excellence.

DeSoucey’s definition suggests perhaps the most compelling argument for studying culinary nationalism or gastronationalism, in that food is one of the basic, everyday essentials. It is also an excellent example of Billig’s ‘Banal nationalism’. Food is an ideal vehicle with which to study the lived reality of an at times esoteric and abstract national movement.

One can add to this Mintz’s belief (1996: 7) that foods are positioned within the histories of those who have eaten them, through which they become “conditioned with meaning”. Dishes in the style of a particular place Mintz calls “signature foods”, as they represent a distinctive character that is something more than the sum of their parts. A population must eat a cuisine (everyday and festival foods) regularly so that they consider themselves experts.

However, Mintz also states categorically that there can be no such thing as national cuisines, since cuisines belong to a region, never a country. Regional cuisines have the appearance of national cuisines because regions contribute chefs, a refinement of the regional but not truly national. So-called national cuisine can really only be seen to exist in contrast to some other national cuisine. In these instances, “National cuisine is simply a holistic artifice based on the foods of the people who live inside some political system, such as France or Spain” (Mintz, 1996: 104). Such states apply a top-down approach to disseminate national and culinary identity and enforce difference between nations. While perceptive (one can draw parallels to the raising of folk culture to national culture), he is too keen to oversimplify reality by presuming the existence of a nation-state, while forgetting that states may contain different nations. As Spain shows well, the nations of the Basques and Catalans have their own cuisines, which the state may prefer to call ‘regional’, but which their inhabitants call ‘national’ (Llobera, 2004).

Laudan (2013) is in agreement with Mintz that familiarity is a basic element of cuisines in the milieu where they are eaten, but she accepts the existence of national cuisines. I will adopt her definition of national cuisine henceforth:

“A national cuisine is usually thought to be one which is familiar to all citizens, eaten by all of them, at least on occasion, and found across the entire national territory, perhaps with regional variations. It is assumed to have a long continuous history, and to reflect and contribute to the national character.” (Laudan, 2013: 324)

While accepting the existence of national cuisines (which are themselves classic examples of ‘invented traditions’), she makes a very important point that these cuisines are recent constructions (i.e. from the nineteenth century on). I therefore also adopt Laudan’s (2013) conclusion that the modern concept of national cuisines came into being with the arrival of nation states. In this period, the centralization of the nation-state, industrialization, internationalization and urbanization were all intertwined, leading to the rise of ‘middling cuisines’ and homogenous eating habits and diets. Ideas about how the fate of the nation (and indeed, empire) depended on its stomach began to appear in this century. By the early twentieth century, national cuisines were a useful tool for citizens in understanding the abstract concept of their own or others’ national identities.

2.2.1 Gastronationalism at work

While Counihan and van Esterick’s edited *Reader* provides an excellent introduction to many of the basic topics in the anthropology of food, strikingly absent is a selection of chapters really devoted to food and national identity, though included is Wilk’s essential discussion of Belizean food in the pre- and post-independence eras (1999). Emphasis instead is placed upon supranational, globalised, racial or ethnic identities, as well as nutritional issues and obesity. A more enlightening volume in this respect is Domingos, Sobral and West’s *Food Between the Country and the City: Ethnographies of a Changing Global Foodscape* (2014). Within this volume, two contributions particularly stand out: Sobral’s chapter on Portuguese national cuisine, and Yotova’s reflections on yoghurt in Bulgaria.

As in many developed countries, Portugal saw a demand for so-called traditional foods towards the end of the twentieth century, part of a global criticism of the agro-food industry (Belasco, 2007). Fast food was rejected in favour of an “authentic” cuisine, best demonstrated by the Slow Food movement.²² But the most salient feature uncovered by Sobral is the defence of the countryside as the cradle of authentic Portuguese national cuisine. As in other European examples, this occurs against a background of cultural and political nationalism that gained pace with an emptying of the countryside through urbanization. In both Portugal and France, it was an urban elite that defended regional food through the medium of the idealisation of the countryside. Food therefore links both past and present in the context of the rural, which is seen as the only place in which to grow proper Portuguese products for use in ‘traditional’ cuisine – “nationalism remains present in both cuisine and the identity of products” (Sobral, 2014: 157).

Sobral also shows that cookbooks have been disseminators of culinary nationalism in Portugal since the nineteenth century, drawing parallels with the creation of B. Anderson’s imagined communities. They have many roles: “cookbooks perform nationalization in what concerns food and cuisine through selection, establishing boundaries and identifying certain dishes and recipes as national; hence, they are a powerful instrument for the reification of national cuisines” (ibid: 150). These cookbooks have their limitations, as they do not accurately express quotidian diets. Nonetheless, the written literature contributes to this restructuring and reformulation of national cuisines, for example, by laying down set procedures and typical

²² Gastronationalisms are not automatically connected with the Slow Food or organic movements (Yotova, 2014).

ingredients, archetypical national dishes, foundations of national culinary identity, the evolution of the cuisine etc. This is a selective codification of recipes, an invention of tradition that standardizes recipes for urban consumption (Appadurai, 1988).²³

Sutton (2001) also makes reference to B.Anderson's idea of imagined communities in a more general context, but is critical of the effectiveness of his theory. While Sutton sees the concept of imagined communities as useful in the context of migration (e.g. eating food from home as a Greek migrant and knowing that others in Greece are eating it too), he sees it as "far too literary a conceptualization of processes of identity formation and reproduction" (Sutton, 2001: 84). B.Anderson's newspapers lack the emotional immediacy of more embodied experiences on potential members of his imagined communities. Inspired by Billig (1995), Sutton believes something more immediate is required to prevent people from forgetting their national identity alongside many other shifting identities. For example, Greek feta can be both a national food, eaten by all Greeks, and associated very strongly with particular localities through personal, spatial memories from childhood. This also highlights the fact that the sensory experience of some aspects of national identity can also be a very strong effective memory of place, for example, basil as a smell that conjures up Greece. Regional and national memory can complement or contradict each other, and both are equally powerful.

Although Sutton considers national identity, like other authors he does not consider how food, festivity and nation might be connected, for example, in national days and

²³ For a further discussion of cookbooks in national identity creation and how they can be used from a methodological perspective, see the discussion at the start of Chapter 3.

their foods, or through seasonality and the connectedness with the land. He does consider the importance of seasonality and festival as expressed in food, which acts as a mnemonic device for religious and seasonal cycles, but there is precious little on the connection between food, seasons and national days in the literature, suggesting a field worthy of further investigation.

Another writer to discuss the importance of cookbooks is MacClancy (2007), who dedicates an entire chapter in his ethnography of Basque nationalism to this subject. In cookbooks, he finds, there is rarely any agreement about what constitutes Basque cuisine. Localism might be downplayed, an ahistorical perspective taken, and the idealization of the past is ever present. MacClancy also perceptively points out that cookbooks freeze a recipe in time, thus ignoring the changeability of orally transmitted recipes (an issue that comes up in discussions of cuisine as UNESCO intangible heritage).

These books present colourful, perfect images of Basque cuisine that Basques themselves can emulate, and emphasise Basque difference. They are not just entertaining, but “thicken the cultural context of nationalism” and are “an integral part of the evolution of nationalism” (MacClancy, 2007: 75). MacClancy also discusses the gastronomic societies that are a feature of the Basque culinary scene (there is nothing similar in Catalonia), and also the promotion of Basque New Cuisine as an innovator of ‘traditional’ cuisine (similar to Catalonia). Like DeSoucey (2010), he also considers the political dimension of the promotion of cuisine by politicians, showing how cuisine can sometimes be a way of unifying conflicting voices in the

nationalist movement. He also shows how dishes can be used as metaphors, certainly ‘good to think’ in that sense (MacClancy, 2007: 84).

The rural ideal also plays a part in Yotova’s account of Bulgarian yoghurt in national identity construction. The rural is made manifest in the figure of the grandmother and of old-fashioned “grandmother’s yoghurt”. This is similar to DeSoucey’s (2010) descriptions of the influence of grandmothers on conceptions of *foie gras* in French identity, since it is normally the role of older women to raise smaller animals for *foie gras* production. The village is seen as the cradle of Bulgarian national identity, and as in Portugal it is these places that are seen as keeping culinary traditions alive. What is interesting is that yoghurt, a seasonal product with regional variation, became a daily food for national consumption only after production could be industrialized in the Communist era, to become a “source of national essence” (Yotova, 2014: 177). We can therefore see that it was its ubiquity that gave it its privileged position, recalling both Mintz’s prediction that such foods are eaten regularly in their particular contexts and Laudan’s (2013) connection between urbanization, nationalism and staple foods.

Despite discourses to the contrary, therefore, modernity often plays a key role in the creation of ‘traditional’ foods as a reaction to perceived cultural loss. However, the relationship is not always that simple. For example, Yotova (2014) found that the socialist regime was keen to highlight the modernity of yoghurt-related scientific achievements. Scientific publications included praise of traditional sheep breeding, images of Bulgarian mountains, and praise of national landscapes. Taking up this last

point, the cases of Bulgaria and Portugal show well how food and cuisine becomes intimately connected with notions of landscape and territory, artefacts that feature frequently in nationalist ideologies. This is a relationship that cannot be ignored in the study of food and nationalism.

2.2.2 Marketing the nation through food

B.Anderson (1983) points out the importance of a capitalist, consuming market for nationalist cultural output, yet this aspect has been little explored. Might food provide an interesting means of studying nationalist markets? Both Sobral (2014) and Yotova (2014) show how food marketing and advertising play up to nationalist rhetoric. To put it cynically, gastronationalism sells. “Grandmother’s yoghurt” is popular because it emphasises tradition, while simultaneously being a clear indication that globalisation has affected Bulgaria. This image of a national, rural-based product was also hugely significant in selling the product in Japan, and it went a long way to creating an entirely new market. Post-socialism, it also guaranteed a large market back home, as the product was able to surmount its communist associations by having become international. In the Basque country, the image of good cuisine is also a good one to tout for tourism, though locals sometimes resent their territory being essentialized for and by outsiders as a place of good food and nothing else (MacClancy, 2007).

Roland Barthes sees food advertising in France as showing clearly that “food permits a person...to partake each day of the national past” (Barthes, 1961/2013: 27).

Innovation is frowned upon unless there is something rediscovered from the past. Advertising abounds in historicism, hinting at both nostalgia and continuity. It also idealises the soil and *terroir*, a paradox in light of the industrialization of food.²⁴ Finally, food itself has the ability to take on new meanings according to consumers and situations. This chameleon-like ability is something noted by other authors (Garth, 2013a; MacClancy, 2007). Like nationalist movements, foods can have many meanings to many people, and these meanings shift and change depending on the context and current events.

There has also been an increased interest in the significance of the protection or registering of products, particularly under protected denominations of origin (PDO), as in the European Union. Food and drink has been central to many of the policies of the CAP and the EEC (Delamont, 1995), and the decision to protect certain products can become a means of self-promotion and national identity assertion, for example, feta cheese in Greece when opposed to Danish ‘feta’ (Sutton, 2001; DeSoucey 2010). In this case, foods become means of expressing national identities in relation to the European Union, a phenomenon also noted by Klumbyte (2009) with the ‘Euro’ as opposed to ‘Soviet’ brand sausage in Lithuania. West (2013) also records that the large-scale protection of appellations of origin can have complex consequences. Catalonia has several PDOs, and it is clear that their significance as markers of regional, and sometimes by extension national identity must be considered.

²⁴ On the question of *terroir*, no discussion is complete without Marion Demossier’s (2011) consideration of the complexities and contradictions behind the creation of *terroir* in France and its current interpretations, or Amy Trubek’s (2008) application of the concepts of *terroir* outside France. These authors will be considered in Chapter 7, in the context of the application of *terroir* to Catalonia.

The notion of heritage cuisine, particularly as intangible heritage for humanity in recent UNESCO designations, is also very relevant to the question of gastronationalism. This is also particularly pertinent to Catalonia, where a campaign is currently underway to achieve this status for Catalan cuisine. An excellent volume in this regard is an edited volume by Michael Di Giovine and Ronda Brulotte (2014), *Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage*. Food becomes heritage when it has the capacity to bind groups together in commensal spaces that may stretch across space and time, allowing groups to feel a connectedness with the ancestral past.

They and their contributors recognize too the important commercial interests at stake in these designations, and also how they can be used at a governmental level. In their introduction (ibid) the editors even use B.Anderson's (1983) term to suggest culinary heritage can be used to unite groups in 'imagined communities'. Issues of 'authenticity' and 'terroir' or the taste of a place (Trubek, 2008) are also relevant for these discussions. They also perceptively note that often the discourse inherent in these nominations both emphasises culinary tradition and antiquity while downplaying modernity and external influence, yet also presenting cuisines in such a way to appeal to a contemporary, international, and even elite audience. Sammells (2014: 144) in the same volume, calls these "haute traditional cuisines", explaining that they must be "simultaneously grounded in local foodways and appeal to global communities of elite diners". Most of the nominated cuisines (French, Mexican, Mediterranean) have international renown and a developed tourist industry, facts that are downplayed in their nominations.

2.2.3 Gastronationalism outside Europe

The Caribbean has provided further evidence of connectedness between national identity and food. Wilk's work (1999) on Belizean cuisine is a key text in relating cuisine to national identity, and it elucidates a number of key themes that may be relevant in the analysis of Catalonia. While Wilk's main analysis is of little relevance to this thesis (he attempts to apply Bourdieu's theory of class and consumption to contemporary Belizeans), he believes that the Caribbean is the ideal place to study food and national identity because nationhood is such a recent concept. This is especially so in Belize, which only achieved independence in 1981. As with many nationalisms, Belizean nationalism began amongst a foreign-educated elite. Belizean national cuisine was not recognized by its citizens more widely until the early 1990s, when the notion of Belizean cuisine became commonplace. Often, these foods were former festival foods, or 'poor' dishes that were converted into national cuisine – a similar process to that of international Italian cuisine (Helstosky, 2004). One could also draw parallels here to the way that Gellner (1983) suggests that folk culture becomes national culture.

Belizean food itself had origins in British, Mexican and global cuisine, but ironically the key context was the contrast with an externalised other (the US and former colonial ruler Britain) in the midst of transnational relations. This discourse took the form of the local versus the global, a tempting contrast but an oversimplification (Pratt, 2007). Indirectly, outsiders rather than insiders can be the principal agents in “formulating and valuing the local” (251): for example, a formerly unimportant dish

of bush rat became a focus of national pride after it was lampooned in British media. As we have seen, this contrast with the ‘Other’ is a feature of nationalist movements. In common with national symbols in other contexts, foods can gain prestige if they are threatened or insulted by this ‘Other’. The Belizean case shows that studies of food can elucidate and clarify these issues in a nationalist setting.

Several contributions from Hanna Garth’s (2013) *Food and Identity in the Caribbean* are also instructive in this context. We are told that the hardy cassava plant and its fruit have come to symbolise the Makushi people of Guyana, having become inextricably tied to that identity as “we food” (Schacht, 2013). The Makushi are survivors of a difficult history, which is attributed to the adaptable cassava plant. Cassava consumption is also a means of differentiation from other Guyanese groups. Even though this is an example of ethnic, not national identity, it is still applicable in indicating how foods can come to represent peoples symbolically.

While the products used in a cuisine may be important, Caribbean examples also show that claims to difference can derive from combinations of ingredients. Guyanese claim difference from other Caribbean cuisines through the combination of spices and culinary procedures, the flavour, and the insistence on homegrown produce (Richards-Greaves, 2013). This is also seen in Cuba (Garth, 2013b), where the emphasis is also placed on food grown in a particular region associated with its history, though ironically Cuba imports most of its food. Like the Dominican Republic, Cuba also has a dish that represents national identity, the *ajiaco*, a stew that contains a variety of different ingredients that symbolise the Cuban people. Also, as in

Guyana, the *combinations* of food are seen as something that gives a Cuban identity to dishes, even if their ingredients are foreign. A similar process occurs in Catalonia, which shares its ingredients with much of the Mediterranean, but has unusual means of combining foods, e.g. seafood and land animals in one dish (Vackimes, 2013).

One excellent monographic study is Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney's *Rice as Self* (1993), which follows the history of rice in Japan and its centrality in Japanese identity. Of particular significance is the image of the rice paddy and its landscape, so rice cultivation represents not just "our food", but also "our land". As in Europe (and elsewhere), there is a glorification of the rural way of life represented by rice agriculture and the paddy fields. The metaphor is powerful as "our ancestral land...[rice paddies] stand for the Japanese nation itself with its quintessential beauty and changing colours marking 'the Japanese seasons'" (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993: 98). Land and seasonality become connected with national identity through food and agriculture. This also clearly demonstrates how images of the past as agrarian and rural become closely intertwined with the nation in Japan through the rice paddy.²⁵ Like many such manifestations of idealised rurality, this is an image created in an urbanised environment, with industrialization lending an idealised lens to agriculture.

²⁵ "A crucial dimension of rice symbolism in Japanese culture is the rice paddies that stand for agriculture, the countryside, and the past – all symbolizing nature with its soil and water and, ultimately, the Japanese nation and its people. These associations in Japanese culture are far from unique" (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993; 120)

2.2.4 Concluding gastronationalism: land, growth, nation

From this extended discussion, there are a number of themes that can be identified when it comes to national foods. Food, like nationalism, is multivocal and the subject of changing interpretations and meanings. Some food products may be unchanging but have a plurality of meanings that are refined over time. Others may change their nature depending on the context, for example, through migration or political change. Nonetheless, by bearing the stamp of the past, foods become the bearers of history, and by extension of the national past.

This discussion has also shown the importance of considering national dishes in depth. Are there any rules defining what makes some dishes better than others in aiding national identity? Several authors here have discussed the transformation of humble dishes into national ones. This may be related to the national idealisation of the countryside and rurality, as well as being examples of Gellner's remarks about the elevation of folk culture into national culture. Ohnuki-Tierney (1993), on the other hand, suggests that it is powerful, elite foods that are at an advantage, such as rice in Japan, which is not a staple food. This is harder in some cases, e.g. Jansen (2001) on Algeria, and the symbolism of Arab bread. This was the ideal foodstuff to contrast with those of the French colonial settlers, but he also found that French bread was still associated with prestige. Some foods can be utilised, others may not be due to other complex social factors at play. There may be no rule, though contemporary quotidianity is not necessarily an essential characteristic that guarantees national idealization of a dish. As Mintz remarks, though (1996), it is nonetheless essential

that all members of a nation be familiar with the dish in such a way that the metaphors added to it will be meaningful.

What is more, food is intimately connected to landscape, territory and seasonality (A.D. Smith, 1986; Llobera, 2004). However, aside from Ohnuki-Tierney (1993), no attempts have been made to study these relationships in any depth, and the influence of this work has been limited. Seasonality has a less obvious link, and has not been truly considered in the context of national movements. The connection between national foods and national days has also largely gone unnoticed.

So far, the importance of the native land as a location and source for growing national produce has become evident. Mintz (1996) mentions this in his theory of ‘signature foods’, and it is inherent in the idealization of the rural and of landscape in Portugal and Bulgaria. Sutton (2001) recalls the importance of sending food packages to emigrants, whereby the nature of the product as grown in the national soil means the product carries part of the homeland with it. The extreme negative reaction of many urban Japanese to the importation of Californian rice today, identical to modern domestic rice in Japan, shows clearly the importance of the place of origin (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993). The Caribbean examples also make reference to this association, as does the legislation for the protection of certain products in the European Union, and ideologies of *terroir*.

Another salient feature is the presence of globalization and modernity in these examples. National identity comes into sharp relief when brought into contact with an

Other. Similarly with food, national cuisines become rarefied and burdened with meaning once other foods begin to appear alongside them and even to challenge them or their consumers. Culinary literature plays an important part in this process, refining and standardizing national cuisines, and contributing to national identity construction. In conclusion, therefore, the disparate materials discussed here show clearly that food is a useful means of understanding the complex and abstract concept of national identity, by allowing us to consider the everyday practices inherent in the lived realities of nationalisms.

2.3 Current ethnographic research on Catalonia

A recurrent theme in Spain's history has been the conflict between Castilian centralism and the regional identities that make up the rest of Spain. As we have seen from its history, Catalonia has had a long-lasting and powerful national identity, and it is indeed remarkable that it has survived up to the present day (Llobera, 2004; Hansen, 1977). It is surprising, then, that comparatively few ethnographic monographs have been written on Catalonia. This may be because Catalonia has had a reputation as a more developed, industrialised and urbanised region, and has seemed less "exotic" and remote than other parts of Spain, such as the Basque country or Andalucía, and therefore was less attractive to early Mediterraneanists. The habitual emic alignment of Catalonia with northern Europe has no doubt contributed to this.

Much work on Catalonia today is either historical or linguistic (particularly socio-linguistic). According to McDonald (1989) this trend is typical in minorities, since

these are both important means of justifying their existence. This is particularly salient for those nationalisms that mark language out as a key differentiating factor. There are of course other anthropologists who have worked on Catalonia, particularly in the field of kinship and Mediterranean studies, but not all of their work is relevant to this discussion. The work of Llobera has already been mentioned, especially his *Foundations of National Identity: From Catalonia to Europe* (2004), which provides an excellent overview of modern Catalan nationalism and has greatly informed this thesis (I have already used it to introduce the salient aspects of Catalan culture that the reader needs to know in Chapter 1). The focus of this section is on anthropologists who have actually carried out fieldwork in particular locations in Catalonia for an ethnographic monograph. They include a discussion of Dorothy Noyes (2003) on the Patum of Burges, and Alexander Robertson (2012) on Mieres.

The work of Dorothy Noyes, particularly her book *Fire in the Plaça: Catalan Festival Politics after Franco* (2003), is another essential piece of ethnography on Catalonia (specifically the town of Berga in north Catalonia). It provides a fascinating account of the unique Patum ritual in Berga, held on Corpus Christi. It is not possible to discuss the Patum in its entirety here, though some of Noyes's more general conclusions on the connection between culture and national identity should be considered.

Her work is important because it draws attention to the way in which regional and location-specific cultural acts are incorporated into wider Catalan culture, and also how issues universal in Catalonia are manifested in localised acts. For example, she

proposes that in the 1970s, the Patum was a symbol of a united Catalonia and controlled violence, and it acted as a rehearsal for demonstrations in Barcelona in 1977. In the 1980s, factionalism and the early difficulties of post-transition Catalonia within and outside Berga meant that the festival turned in on itself, becoming a representation of an ephemeral unity that could only last for the festival's duration. Now it has protected status as intangible world heritage under UNESCO, and has become one of many symbols of Catalonia to be used for promotion, both in a touristic sense and at a more controversial, political level.

Noyes' main emphasis, though, is the importance of embodiment. The Patum is a series of dances (*balls*) by members of the town, who take on particular roles. It is an aggressive festival, in which fire and movement are central features. Newcomers are forced to become members of the community and useful social persons through the festival. This is particularly applicable in the context of immigration to Catalonia, both historically and in the present day. Catalan identity (as well as that of Berga) is manifested in the festival as performative and based on memory and experience, rather than ethnicity or ideology. As she emphasises throughout the book, "the Patum has to be lived" (Noyes, 2003: 26, 31), and also consumed through excessive alcohol and food consumption (the significance of this latter point will be discussed later).

The most recent piece of ethnography is by Robertson (*Mieres Reborn*, 2012; article 'Conviviality in Catalonia', 2010) on the village community of Mieres in northeast Catalonia. This is the product of over twenty years of annual visits to the site, so Robertson has the advantage of being able to see how changes over the years have

played out in this small community. Robertson's focus, though, is on the Mieres community alone. Although a consideration of the wider Catalan context plays an important part in the work, it acts as a background rather than a focus. His main interest is the situation of memory and history amongst the inhabitants, as in Mieres there are different generational interpretations of the past. He focuses in particular on the memories and views of older informants and the activities of their grandchildren in trying to find out about the past – part of the new emphasis on history in post-transition Catalonia.

He also considers the issues facing any rural community in the face of second-home ownership, youthful disillusionment and changing economic circumstances. He does not take the view that modernity entails a destruction of community life – far from it – indeed his work seeks to show how rural traditions and festivals have been revived or recreated in what he calls 'Rituals of regeneration' (a trend seen in other Mediterranean contexts – Boissevain, 1992). Indeed, this conclusion is one that he shares with this thesis. Still, what happens after the *festa* is another matter, as there are conflicts of opinion over what should happen to the village, both intergenerationally and also between official and popular discourses on the community.

When anthropologists have decided to take an interest in Catalonia, they have often focused on kinship. Anthropologists in this area have included mainly Spanish anthropologists, but also some academics from further afield. This has often been combined with studies of the home, not surprising considering that the house is one of

the most powerful symbols of Catalan kinship (Bestard-Camps, 1997; Llobera, 1997; Asano-Tamanoi, 1987). Bestard Camps (1990) is of the view that the emphasis placed upon the house is a result of the impartible inheritance practiced in Catalonia, an unusual practice within Spain. This distinctiveness led to the creation of a nationalist ideology called *Pairalisme* in the nineteenth century, centred on the *casa pairal* (ancestral home), which was presented as the ideal for the foundation of the Catalan nation (Llobera, 1997, 2004). It is therefore difficult to separate kinship studies by Catalan authors from nationalist texts. As we have seen, though, the Catalan case provides an interesting context for the discussion of kinship and the early development of nationalist sentiments. Due to the focus on the house, regular commensality is a central element of *Pairalisme*, and expresses the intensity of family relations. Even today, to live in the same house over generations is a source of pride, and it is still important as a means of ensuring family continuity (Bestard and Conteras, 1997; Asano-Tamanoi, 1987). The related ideal of a self-sufficient household with its own garden (*hort*) is also deeply rooted in the Catalan house (Robertson, 2012).

2.3.1 Food and Cuisine in Catalonia

To conclude, I shall consider the small body of work that has been done on food and national identity in Catalonia. It is impossible to emphasise enough the central position of Catalan food and its associations in Catalan culture. In the words of Robertson in his fieldsite of Mieres:

“Food is the essence of conviviality in Catalonia, and although its processes are so ephemeral, the sensual intensity of eating together has a binding power that is everywhere apparent in the social life of Mieres” (Robertson, 2010: 72)

This brief quote brings up several features of the position of food in Catalonia, particularly its association with conviviality and sharing as a powerful metaphor for togetherness. In a case of conflictual identity, it is the “nostalgic enactment of identity through which the consumption of particular foods proves to be a powerful statement of identity and difference” (Roser i Puig, 2011: 231). MacClancy (2004) makes similar remarks about Basque cuisine, where cuisine is mobilised to suggest a prestigious and distinctive culture. Cuisine becomes a national virtue, and eating in a local manner becomes a means of consuming history. Historical rootedness is therefore essential to cuisine, a situation which is also found in the Catalan case.

Following Franco’s death, Catalans renewed their interest in gastronomy. Several writers, such as Robertson (2010), Noyes (2003) and Roser i Puig (2011), have also found the experience of deprivation to be very pertinent in the history of Catalan cuisine, thus linking food once again to memory. High levels of food awareness were maintained throughout the autochthonous Catalan population, and Catalonia prides itself as a country where locals know how to eat well. Visceral memories of past hunger sharpen the importance of food and create a connection with festivity, when food would be available. Noyes in particular draws attention to the importance of commensality in times of famine, when sharing food is really a “labour of love” (Noyes, 2003). Robertson (2010) speaks of memories of the Civil War being mainly tied up with food. This time is known as the *misèria* (time of wretchedness), and some

of his informants refused to speak of it because it was so painful. Food is a constant subject of conversation, particularly amongst those who lived through this period. Indeed, these findings suggest that food (or a lack of it) acts as a lens through which informants remember and interpret the past.²⁶

The Catalan government has taken a part in this interest too. According to Davidson (2007), food is a medium through which the Catalan government engages in a new relationship with the rural by officially denominating areas and the products linked to them. This is a means of image management, with the government acting as the protector of produce, place, and by extension cultural patrimony. Taste has now been officially recognised as a means by which a government-sponsored identity can be developed, or as Davidson puts it, “literally packaging a nation” (Davidson, 2007: 40) – a trait we have already seen elsewhere. It is telling that Ferran Adrià, the head chef of former restaurant El Bulli, received the St George’s Cross, the highest award for contributions to Catalan culture, in 2002. This illustrates the recognition of cooking and cuisine as an important part of Catalan culture and expression (Roser i Puig, 2010).

A more recent article by Sophia Vackimes (2013) considers the relationship between Catalan *nova cuina* of molecular gastronomy and national identity. She draws particular attention to the apparent contradiction between the hyper-modernity of the culinary techniques and the idealization of tradition. She sees this as part of a clever

²⁶ In my experience, this claim that food is a popular topic of conversation is certainly true, though this applied to all generations, not just the older ones. I also did twice hear some mention of the *miseria* amongst informants who had lived through it, and in one instance this had galvanized the attitudes of these informants against Spain. However, perhaps because I was not focusing on the discourse of the elderly, unlike Robertson, I did not hear this too regularly.

marketing strategy on the part of the regional government and the chefs themselves. The ideal of the ‘tradition of modernity’, where the culinary creativity of Ferran Adrià and company is presented as part of a Catalan ideal for innovation stretching back to the nineteenth century, is simply part of this marketing appeal. This is part of a general trend globally to fetishize the local, one that began with the government promotion of *terroir* in France, and is far from unique to Catalonia. Like Davidson (2007), and DeSoucey (2010), Vackimes sees the Generalitat as one of the principal agents in this process, particularly “by linking nature and the physical landscape with ‘authentic products’ and a creative ‘native talent’” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2012: 280 in Vackimes, 2013). Nonetheless, she concludes by criticizing (rather too eagerly) the Generalitat’s implied hypocrisy in glorifying ‘local foods’ for political and touristic ends, while neglecting either those who do not have enough access to basic food staples or agricultural producers.

The most recent work on food in Catalonia is a chapter in Di Giovine and Brulottes’ edited volume *Edible Identities* (Fuentes et al, 2014). The authors consider how the renovation of Barcelona’s market halls is connected with the recovery of traditional Catalan cuisine. They introduce a number of key concepts that are essential to understanding Catalan cuisine, such as the importance of regionality and landscape, and also claims of the loss of cuisine (even though recent trends suggest the reverse). The renewed interest in Catalan cuisine from the 1980s onwards (coinciding with the resurgent Catalan identity) is also coincidental with a gradual resurgence in interest in markets. The promotion of Mediterranean cuisine also plays a part in this revival, as well as in tourism promotion strategies and immigration. What is most interesting for my research however is that Fuentes et al recognize the importance of the market in

Catalan social life, that despite their use in heritage promotion or tourism schemes and ‘elite’ cuisine, they are “interwoven into the fabric of everyday life” (ibid: 170). They are thus essential spaces of contemporary expressions of Catalan social and food identity.

Chapter 3. Catalan cookbooks: creating Catalonia through culinary literature

3.1 Why consider cookbooks?

According to Appadurai (1988), cookbooks tell unusual cultural tales in complex civilizations. They can “combine the sturdy pragmatic virtues of all manuals with the vicarious pleasures of the literature of the senses” (ibid: 3). Hence they have the dual purpose of being both mundane guides to the everyday activity of cooking, and provide an ideal to which readers can aspire.

Despite this though, historians and social scientists have been wary of using cookbooks as a research tool since they may not represent a lived reality. However, despite their bad reputation as sources, cookbooks can be useful in other ways, since they are reflections of the societies that produce them. Cookbooks are “a special category of texts” that “tell us more about a people’s collective imaginations, symbolic values, dreams and expectations, in so far as these are connected with the art of eating and drinking” (Fragner, 1994: 71).

It has been noted, albeit infrequently, that cookbooks too can play their role in constructing national identity. It is a well known fact that nations are created on print capitalism (B.Anderson, 1983), widespread literacy and the ability to disseminate printed material that creates ‘imagined communities’ of a nation of readers.

Cookbooks also begin to have a privileged position in middle class households at

around about the same time as the nation. Newspapers, the primary literary source of the imagined community, could also carry cooking advice and recipes (Goody, 1982).

More recently, Lara Anderson (2013) has demonstrated how cookbooks were used in the creation of the Spanish nation-building project of the late nineteenth century. As she explains, “all of the texts considered contain strategies and rhetoric typical of the nation-building projects” (L. Anderson, 2013: 4-5). Unlike France or Italy, that had already a developed national identity and culinary identity, Spain’s national cuisine in the mid-nineteenth century was largely non-existent. The elite consumed French cuisine, and popular cuisine was impoverished and regionalised. Spanish cookbook authors explicitly recognised the lack of a cuisine as symptomatic of the lack of national unity. One such writer was even commissioned by the dictator Primo de Rivera. Additionally, a national culinary repertoire was seen as a way of uniting Spain’s regionally diverse regions at a cohesive, national level.

Hence I argue that we should study cookbooks, and gastronomic books (i.e. books on informed eating) in the Catalan context to better understand national movements. Cookbooks become a means of standardizing cuisine, and their texts show how food becomes a symbol or metaphor of the ideals of Catalan nationalism. Returning to Appadurai once more, cookbooks must be viewed as “revealing artefacts of culture in the making” (ibid: 22) in a contemporary setting: if we want to study the development of contemporary national identities, then we must study their cookbooks.

It would be impossible to analyze all the cookbooks in Catalonia, and (though there are no statistics) my informants remarked that there seemed to have been more cookbooks published on Catalan cuisine than ever before. Since they are a form of nationalist literature, this is hardly surprising in contemporary Catalonia. In this chapter though I will introduce the most essential ones through Catalonia's history, going from the medieval cookbooks *Llibre de Sent Soví* and *Libre de Coch*, to the increasingly nationalist cookbooks of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This will also double as a history of Catalan cuisine, showing how cookbooks on national cuisine often occur simultaneously to positive times for Catalan nationalism. I will conclude by presenting the contemporary situation and introducing some of the writers and texts that I will draw upon over the rest of the thesis.

As I said in my introduction, these can be beneficial records of the thoughts and ideas of writers that have influenced Catalan cuisine, particularly when these writers have passed away. I think it is also important to consider the opinions of informants on these cookbooks, or (for older cookbooks) how they were perceived in Catalan society at the time.

3.2 Medieval cookbooks in present parlance

Catalonia has had a long history of cooking manuals, the earliest of which is the *Llibre de Sent Soví* in 1324 (also called *Libre de totes meneres de potatges de menjar*), and later the famous *Libre de Coch* of 1520 by Robert de Nola, the first

cookbooks published in the Catalan language which became something of a bestseller of the era in both Catalan and Castilian, going through 10 editions in one century.

Catalans take pride in the fact that their cuisine was seen as a one of the best in Europe at the time, and was mentioned in other European cookbooks of the day. Indeed one sentiment I heard was that Catalonia had had two golden ages, both in terms of political power and culinary influence throughout the known world: one in the medieval era and the courts of the Catalan-Aragonese empire, and one today with Ferran Adrià and the *nova cuina* movement. For example, Barcelona chef Fermi saw the medieval era as a “golden age, politically and economically”, and also for its food. He referred particularly to the *Llibre de Sent Sovi*, taking pride in its role as the first European cookbook in the vernacular. He connected the later political ostracism to the decline in the culinary reputation of Catalan cuisine, which only experienced resurgence in popularity in the 1980s. This too he connected to political movements, in this case the end of the Franco dictatorship and the establishment of democracy and the Catalan government. Cookbooks and cuisine are symptomatic of the greater health of the Catalan nation.

The clear importance of these two books was brought home by the comment of one informant, a food writer Pau, who explained “they’re so important, because very few peoples can really say ‘our cuisine, this is when it begins’. So [the cookbooks] prove that it’s a cuisine with great antiquity”, and he went on to explain how the current food innovations were a natural progression from the past, where then as now Catalonia has produced renowned chefs throughout the known world.

The most important edition of the *Llibre de Sent Soví* in recent times was the 1979 edition by Rudolf Grewe. Not only does he include the manuscript itself adapted for modern readers, he also includes an in depth introduction to the cuisine of the era, setting the scene for understanding the environment of the cuisine in the medieval court. It is significant that the edition was published, like many others relating to Catalan history, just after the end of the Franco era, so can be seen as part of the restatement of Catalan culture that occurred at this time.

Grewe claims that with Catalan cuisine “we are sure that we can talk of a medieval Catalan cuisine with its own personality. Numerous ‘dishes *a la catalana*’ that figure in the foreign recipe books prove that well enough” (Grewe, 2009: 30). This he connects with the economic success of the Catalan-Aragonese Empire. More recent editions play on this (Santanach, 2006). Even though this is historical research, one sometimes can detect a subtle pro-Catalanism throughout the text.

The existence of dishes currently recognised as Catalan at the time of the writing of *Sent Soví* is a preoccupation of modern day editors. Many informants see the book itself as a demonstration of the antiquity of Catalan cuisine, through the presence of an early form of some features important to Catalan cuisine such as the *sofregit* and the *picada* (foundational sauces for cooking Catalan foods, discussed in Chapter 4).

The view that Catalan cuisine has this unbroken tradition from the medieval golden age to the present day draws parallels to the notion that the Catalan nation has had an unbroken history and fully-formed sense of national identity since this time too. The

food represented in these cookbooks is described “very connected” or “rooted”, in not just informant discourse, but also by the Generalitat, and the Generalitat-sponsored UNESCO Catalan cuisine campaign, where these cookbooks have been essential in backing up claims to antiquity and uniqueness. While one should not be too hasty to dismiss this argument, and in the case of cuisine there are almost certainly some elements of medieval cuisine that have remained (not just in the *sofregit* and *picada*, but also possibly in the Catalan habit of mixing sweet and sour flavours, *agredolç*, which was common to most of medieval Europe), it is not without controversy.

In my interview with Ferran Adrià, for example, he was critical of the notion that the *sofregit* and *picada* to be found in these two medieval cookbooks was the same as that of today. On the contrary, he argued they are completely different, and the connection placed upon them now was the result of “socio-political movements” that put different interpretations onto food.

The *Libre de Coch* of 1520, by ‘Mestre Robert’, or Robert de Nola, the chef to King Ferdinand I of Naples, was the first Catalan cookbook to have been properly published in Catalan and to have a wide readership. Catalan writer Josep Pla begins his *El que hem menjat* (1972) with a chapter entitled ‘Robert de Nola: A memory’ to pay homage to this individual and work. He takes pride in its widespread popularity, yet bemoans the lack of a Catalan edition at time of writing (in the Franco period), and considers it shocking, especially as it is one of the first cookbooks in the vernacular in Europe. Indirectly, from the tone of his book he also seems to suggest that this lack is part of a more general decline in Catalan cuisine. When the founding

texts of Catalan cuisine are unavailable to general readership, then the culinary identity itself suffers.

After this time, with the end of the Catalan-Aragonese empire in the Mediterranean, and the centralisation of political power to Madrid, Catalonia entered the period known as the *Decadencia*, the decline. Few books of any note were published in Catalan, though a few cooking pamphlets of monastic origin did appear in the 18th century onwards. The next Catalan cookbook, *La Cuynera Catalana* (1835) is seen as the bridge between medieval cuisine and that of the present day (Martí Escayol, 2004), the sign of a rebirth in Catalan cuisine in the context of the renewed force of Catalan nationalism, and also part of a historic continuity from the medieval golden age.

3.3 *La Cuynera Catalana*

The first real Catalan cookbook of the modern period is *La Cuynera Catalana*, published anonymously in instalments from 1833 to 1835 by a Barcelonan publishing house, the Germans Torras. The title means the ‘*The Catalan Cook*’, with the subtitle ‘Useful, easy, safe and economic rules to cook well’. Note the use of the female form of the word (‘*Cuynera*’), delineating that this book was aimed at women. These were enormously successful, and were finally compiled into a full edition in 1851 with 500 recipes. It was, and still is, very popular, going through many reprints and re-editions up to the present day. Carme Queralt, in her introduction to the most recent re-edition calls it “a great work, a patrimonial, lexical, historical and cultural reference”

(Queralt, in Anonymous, 2009: 13), which sums up the reverence with which this book is seen in Catalonia.

What's unusual about this cookbook is that it is written exclusively in Catalan. Most historians date the Catalan *Renaixença* to 1833, with the publication of *Oda a La Pàtria* (*Ode to the Fatherland*) by Carles Aribau.

This poem was the first visible manifestation of a vindication of the Catalan language that had begun at the start of the century. La

Cuynera Catalana was published only 2 years later, but the *Renaixença* was in its infancy. The first book of Catalan poetry of the era was published a few years later, in 1839, when the first dictionary also appeared, and the first Catalan language magazine (*Lo Verdader Català*) appeared in 1843.

We can see from this context that to publish a book entirely in a colloquial Catalan was a bold undertaking, especially as the Catalan language had not yet been standardized, but quite possibly influenced by moves in Catalan literary culture. Indeed, in the original prologue, the writer admits that perhaps it is folly to start writing about the rules of the kitchen in Catalan, since those who cook may not have time to read such advice. Still, the writer claims this book can be useful to improve efficiency and knowledge of those who are badly trained, and this must be done in a



Figure 3.1: Print on the front page of the 1851 edition of *La Cuynera Catalana*. This image has become a symbol of historic Catalan cuisine. (Source: Anonymous, 2008/1851-3)

language that is used everyday by those who cook (“written out in our own Catalan language, with the aim of general use, and suited to the capacity of all”). This efficiency drive was to become a common theme in culinary literature of the time. The writer also states in the introduction that there must be good food but it cannot go beyond the bounds of Christian propriety – another theme that was to appear in later cookbooks from the period.

The cuisine seen here is still a largely old fashioned, indeed medieval cuisine, with some modern touches. For example, we see ingredients that were only recently incorporated from America e.g. turkey and tomatoes, red pepper and chocolate. Extensive use of spices is still present, as in medieval cookbooks. The recipes most likely come from a variety of sources, either verbal and written, but certainly from other books in other languages (Queralt, in Anonymous, 2009). There is an awareness of other cuisines and internationalization of recipes e.g. *a la castellana* (Castilian), *l'espanyola* (Spanish – interestingly they are divided up), *l'italiana* (Italian) etc., whilst Catalan recipes are given a separate denomination as ‘*a la catalana*’. For example, *allioli* is called ‘*salsa catalana*’. The writer of the introduction to the 1980 facsimile of the 1851 edition sees this as further evidence of the “national affirmation” of the writer, since the writer is creating a culinary ‘other’ against which Catalan dishes can be contrasted.

One should remember that cookbooks provide fascinating social history. Like many of the cookbooks under discussion, *La Cuynera Catalana* was aimed primarily at the

Catalan bourgeoisie, who as in other countries were also were the earliest supporters of the nationalist movement.

Like many early cookbooks, we are not entirely sure who wrote it. What we do know is that by choosing to publish in Catalan, the author is aligning himself or herself with the ideals of *Renaixença*, though not in the overtly literary sense generally associated with the poetic movement. Instead this cookbook should be compared to the work of folklorists and historians, who researched popular culture at this time as part of the incipient nationalist movement. This can be seen in the recipes, which, with the exception of some foreign ones, are clearly identifiable by their ingredients and procedures as belonging to Catalonia.

3.4 Later nineteenth century cookbooks

Four known cookbooks were published in Barcelona in the next twenty-five years. In 1857 the next cookbook to deal explicitly with Catalan cuisine and to use Catalan was published in Vic: *'Avisos o sien reglas senzilles a un principant cuiner o cuinera'* by Felip Cirera (also called Felip del Palau or Palacio, as he was chef at the Bishops Palace in Vic). The four editions published over the rest of the nineteenth century suggest a popular acceptance of the book in Vic households, and suggest “a public eager to instruct themselves in the art of economical cooking and baking in their own language” (Angelats & Vila, 2003: 35).

In the intervening forty years or so, the Catalan nationalist movement gained strength. The next text of interest to us appears in 1895, *Carmencita, or The Good Cook*, by Doña Eladia Maria, “widow of Carpinell”. Although written in Spanish, it is interesting to note that the writer states she is familiar with “Cuisine from Spain, Catalonia, Cuba, America, France and Italy”, suggesting that Catalan cuisine was distinctive enough to be seen as separate from the rest of Spain. Another claim to fame is that it includes the first recipe for *canelons*, which had come to Catalonia from Italian chefs and was to become a Catalan favourite. Its introduction glorifies the female Catalan cook, delineating its audience as housewives, not professional, male cooks, nor men who give large, loud banquets, about whom she is critical. This cookbook was one of several that my informants mentioned as an important cookbook used by older female relatives, sometimes passing from generation to generation (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2005). It is now on its 39th edition, a testament to its enduring popularity (Anonymous, 2009).

3.5 The twentieth century

The most important work though at the turn of the century was *La Cuyna Catalana*, literally “Catalan cooking” of 1907, by Josep Conill de Bosch (his surname literally means woodland rabbit, a popular meat of the time, most likely a pseudonym, and quite possibly a woman). Again, this was expressly aimed at women cooks. His (her?) intention is to help others in “the transcendental work of preparing, dressing and presenting dishes”, a work he (she?) describes later as “the greatest transcendence, both for the individual and the community”.

The writer begins by referring to national dishes typical of Catalans, particularly the *escudella i carn d'olla*. Conill de Bosch claims that just as an Italian will never get tired of macaroni, so the Catalan will always have affection for *escudella i carn d'olla*. Despite this he takes pride in saying that there are many different variations of the same dish, such as 15 of the aforementioned *escudella*. Like other contemporary writers, there is a warning that he is not in favour of gluttony, but supports good food.

The writer then sets out his basic argument, that is “strong races are well fed races”. It is interesting that he makes reference to race, since racial arguments have been present less in Catalan political discourse than those of nationalist movements. Unlike the Romans, one should not fall into gastronomic excess and eat only for pleasure. The ancient Greeks, are idealised in this respect. People should eat to live, not live to eat. He sums up his logic for good food leading to a healthy nation as follows:

“Good cooks make good food;
Good food is eaten with pleasure;
Food eaten with pleasure is digested better;
Better-digested food leads to the conservation of the individual in good health;
The conservation of the individual in good health means their bodily functions are regular;
Regular functions make strong races;
Strong races go forth beyond others and in the end make themselves masters of the world” (Conill de Bosch 1907: 8)

With this final statement (which, he says, should need no further explanations in understanding the usefulness of the book), the author is clearly linking this cookbook

to the grander scheme of constructing a Catalan nation from its stomach. Good food is important because it will make Catalans a great people. He concludes with another popular phrase in Catalonia, and one which is still used today “*a la taula y al llit, al primer crit*” (to the table and to bed at the first call), leaving the reader in no doubt that this is a Catalan cookbook and the writer is situating themselves in the popular culture of the time.

Next we have the 1923 *Art de Ben Menjar*, (‘Art of Good Eating’), by Marta Salvia. The writer in the prologue begins with a brief introduction to cooking by going back to its origins, briefly referring to Homer and cuisines of antiquity, as well as the principal historic texts in the Iberian Peninsula and Catalonia. This historical situating was a technique also used by Cunill de Bosch, and historical connections are central to justifications of nationalist movements. Writers are therefore placing their cookbook within the context of an evolution from a historic past.

Her intention is not to appeal to refined palates, but to contribute to the good preparation of dishes “at the hearths of our native land”, i.e. Catalonia. This use of “our native land”, (‘*la nostra terra*’ in Catalan), is a frequently used phrase to be found running through both nationalist texts and many of these Catalan cookbooks. These allow the books to be situated in Catalonia, and also suggest further proof of the influence of nationalist ideas on Catalan culinary literature.

It is worth considering the reactions to these cookbooks, though contemporary reviews are hard to find. For this cookbook, the review in the Catalanist magazine

L'esquella de la Torratxa is especially telling. Firstly, the reviewer states that it's enough that the book is written in Catalan to prove its patriotic credentials. In other quotes, the book is described as a "demonstration that Catalonia has returned to being rich and full,"²⁷ because only rich and full peoples are worried about good food...Catalonia already has its own cuisine. Just as it has a history, a language, a dance, music, and painting, ...So too it has its own cuisine, over which we can now set the nationalist banner." This is followed by a demand to the Mancomunitat (the Catalan government) to create a section for cooks in the School for Fine Arts, not for political banquets but for "the cult of Catalan cuisine". This review speaks for itself in demonstrating the connection between cookbook, cuisine and national identity in early twentieth century Catalan nationalist thought.

3.6 Ignasi Domènech, chef and cookbook writer

No consideration of Catalan cookbooks is complete without mention of the works of Ignasi Domènech. Born in 1874 Domènech was apprenticed to the kitchen at 10 years old in his uncle's inn, and then continued his training in Barcelona and Montserrat, where he learned Catalan cuisine. He continued to travel around Europe and Spain, and finally returned to Barcelona some time in the 1920s (Lladonosa i Giró, 2000b), which coincides with the time he began publishing in Catalan. Domènech published over 30 cookbooks (the first in 1914 and the last in 1942), and edited two cooking magazines. Considering his extraordinary output, relatively few of his books were published in Catalan, though those that were have had huge popularity and influence

²⁷ A reference to the second line of the Catalan national anthem

up to the present day, and are seen as referents of twentieth century Catalan cuisine. His Catalan publications are *La Teca* (literally ‘The Grub’, 1924), *Llaminadures* (‘Sweet things’, 1924), *La manduca: Un tresor de platets de gust* (1926), *Àpats* (‘Meals’, 1930) and *El carnet de cuina de l’excursionista* (‘The excursionist’s cooking license’, 1930).

Ignasi Domènech’s decision to publish in Catalan at this time may well have been influenced by the atmosphere a heightened awareness of Catalan identity, an unexpected result of the repressive Primo dictatorship. At the same time, language delineates the preferred audience of a cookbook i.e. Catalan speakers. As the author of *La Cuynera Catalana* remarked in 1853, a cookbook for everyday usage needs to be written in the language for everyday communication. As Crameri (2000) has pointed out, the very decision to publish in Catalan can be a political statement. We do not know Domènech’s own views on the subject of Catalanism (he probably sought to avoid controversy, like many of today’s chefs in the Catalan-Spanish relationship), though as he is happy to say in the introduction to *La Teca* (1924) “*La Teca* is a work resulting from the affection that I feel for our cuisine” and that “Catalonia needs a simple book on cuisine, in which recipes will be well specified” (Domènech, 2011: 16). Domènech’s decision to publish in Catalan was therefore probably a combination of the practical considerations of market demands influenced by popular nationalist sentiment.

La Teca has become a classic of Catalan cuisine, and almost every household that I knew today had its own copy. It is probable that most of the dishes that I came into

contact with most frequently in Catalonia had this privileged position because of their inclusion in *La Teca*. Lladonosa i Giró (2000b: 174) describes it as “a treasure”, while in the introduction to the most recent edition (Domènech, 2011: 13) chef Pep Nogué calls it “an authentic treatment of the cuisine of the era. A cuisine based on traditional dishes”. Nogué continues by saying that it is now the book that every cook or student should have on their bookshelf, not only because of its legacy, but also because of its popularity. Many of the professional chefs with whom I spoke had been particularly influenced by *La Teca*, particularly Carme Rusalleda.

It contains a compendium of present day Catalan classics, such as “a good *carn d’olla a la catalana*” (ibid: 41), various other Catalan dishes, along with a few international dishes from his stay in London and Paris. It also contains a list of the “Festivals or Gastronomic parties in Catalonia”,²⁸ listing the principal saint’s day of each month, and the best dish to eat for then. This is significant, since many informants saw the extensive association of foods with every feast day as something particular to Catalonia. As we shall see in the discussion of *Àpats*, this is significant in the context of Catalan identity.

Alongside *La Teca*, Domènech’s most remembered work in Catalonia is *Àpats* (1930). Much like *La Teca*, this is still a popular and widespread work. Twice whilst I was visiting households, one in Baix Empordà and one in Osona, a copy of this book was brought out to look over and discuss. It is an entertaining read. The book begins with a Gastronomic Calendar, though with much more depth than *La Teca*. Not only

²⁸ “Diades o festes gastronòmiques a Catalunya” (Domènech, 2011; 25)

does it now include several recipes for each month, but also more in depth descriptions of the nature of each dish.

This is one the first times that we start to see a contextualisation of recipes within Catalan cookbooks. Food is associated with custom, and a Catalan culture and norms of behaviour i.e. a gastronomic calendar. The importance of the gastronomic calendar to Catalan food identity will be discussed in Chapter 7, but the gastronomic calendar acts as a powerful unifying tool, since it means that, ideally, Catalans will be eating the same things on the same days. The information here would have been based on known habits of the time, using foods which also generally differ from those of Spain. It becomes clear then how this gastronomic calendar can be seen as a claim to cultural difference by Catalans and also act to promote national unity through shared performances and eating habits, and why its inclusion here furthers the Catalanist nature of the book.

Though there are some similarities with *La Teca* (and some duplicated recipes), *La Teca* is undoubtedly a cooking manual written for everyday usage. *Àpats* on the other hand is more complex. It is clearly a recipe book for the most part, but it has some sections that would be little use to prepare food e.g. the information on the festive days and the gastronomic calendar, the history of popular Barcelonan restaurants, and the section on his menus. These are entertaining curiosities, to be read in leisure time and outside a cooking environment. It is therefore meant to be read as a contribution to knowledge about the context of Catalan cooking and its cultural traditions, not just as a recipe book. Taking this idea further, one must remember that ‘anthropological’

material is also central to national movements. This includes books on ‘traditions’, ‘village life’, ‘custom’, agricultural procedures, popular festivals etc. Added to this, culinary traditions are a natural addition. This ‘academicism’ was and still is an important component of Catalanist literature, and we should consider cookbooks in this canon.

The non-textual elements are also interesting, since it is a beautifully illustrated book, and like many modern cookbooks it is a shame to put it in the potentially messy environment of a kitchen, suggesting a more popular widespread use than just as a cookbook. This is unlike *La Teca*, which is a simple, unembellished manual.

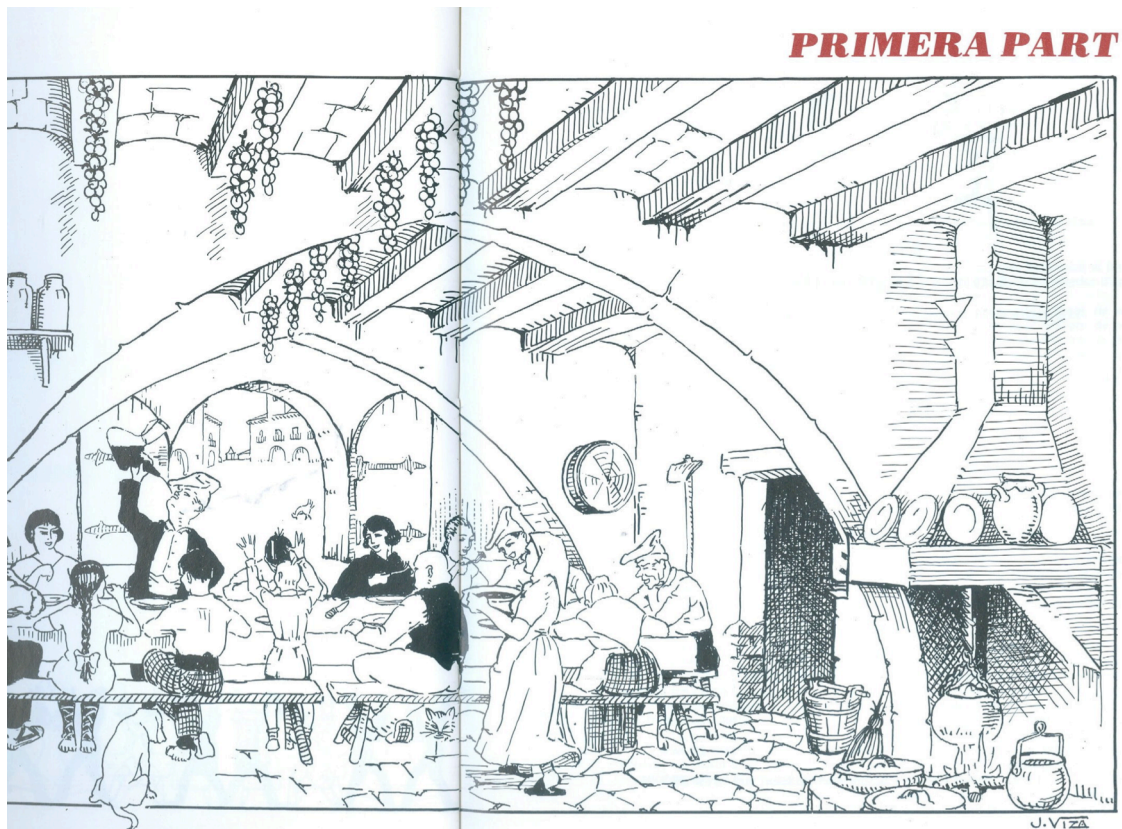


Figure 3.2 Print used at the beginning of every new section in *Àpats* (1930?), showing the idealized peasant setting in a Catalan household. Note the *barretina*-clad Catalan men (a soft pointed cap in red or purple, and part of national costume), one drinking wine from a communal *purró*, a sense of conviviality, a large hearth with an *escudella* cooking pot (presumably containing an *escudella i carn d'olla*, or *sopa*), the flat *olla* pots around the fire for other stews, agricultural implements on the walls, and *tomàquets de penjar* (hanging tomatoes, the best for making *pa amb tomàquet*) from the ceiling, through the window a typical town square (that looks suspiciously like Vic) etc. (Source: Domènech, 1930?)

However, the most interesting feature of these non-textual elements is the picture used to separate each section of the book (Figure 3.2). It presents a typified, bucolic and rather idealised image of lunchtime of the extended family in a Catalan peasant kitchen. All this is immediately recognizable as taking place in Catalonia – the picture easily says a thousand words about the attitudes of the author, his publishers and their audience.

One cannot rule out the use of irony, as this book was destined for a Barcelonan readership, who may have found these images of rural life quaint. This may be a satire on rural versus urban life, of a Catalan publisher trying to gently poke fun at his readers, and encourage them to laugh at themselves and their ideals of the rural Catalan ‘pagès’ who were so idealised in the Catalanist movement. On a more prosaic level though, this non-textual element again grounds the book in a Catalanist milieu, and perhaps even could be seen as a semi-‘anthropological’ attempt to demonstrate how Catalans lived and ate, just like the Gastronomic Calendar at the start of the book.

Furthermore, in a 1930s edition of *Àpats*, there is an open letter to readers at the start (the only description of the writer is ‘Símon’), which performs a similar function to that of the introduction, and makes manifest its Catalanist nature. The book is described as “a veritable treasure of home cooking. It will be highly useful for *Catalan* families for the variety of dishes that can be found there” (Domènech, 1930?: emphasis added), in the creation “of the most celebrated meals of our land”. Again, we see the concept of “our land” appearing, connecting this cookbook with land that

is the basis of the nation. The book is said to be especially useful for restaurateurs, inn keepers, and hoteliers, who are those who must know Catalan cuisine best, as well as home cooks. This is significant as these professionals would cater to Catalan *excursionistes*, many of whom travelled around Catalonia as part of the project of discovering the nation – and to consume good Catalan fare.

3.7 *Llibre de la Cuina Catalana*: a nationalist's cookbook

In 1928, the *Llibre de la Cuina Catalana*, was written purely with the intention of glorifying cuisine as a rallying point of Catalan nationalism. The author, Ferran Agulló, is interesting because he wasn't a cook; he was a well-respected member of the intelligentsia and political elite of the era and associated with the right-wing *Lliga Catalana*. Journalist, poet but also a gastronome, he is reputed to have popularised the name 'Costa Brava' to refer to Catalonia's northern coast.

This is an example of a famous, Catalanist author publishing a cookbook, showing quite clearly how cookbooks could be used as tools for nationalist writers. In the introduction to his book, he throws down the gauntlet for his defence of cuisine as a repository of Catalan identity. These are the first words of his book:

“Catalonia, just as it has a language, a right, customs, its own history and a political ideal, so it has a cuisine. There are regions, nations, peoples, who have a special, characteristic dish, but not a cuisine. Catalonia has that”. (Agulló, 1933: 11)

And it has more, he goes on to add, it has the power to assimilate dishes from other cuisines: “[Catalan cuisine] makes these dishes of other cuisines their own and modifies them according to their taste” (ibid). The cuisine is then further defined as essentially simple, inexpensive and easy. Catalan cuisine also has global reach through its adventurous inhabitants (the ideal Catalan of the time was one who travelled, made his wealth, then returned to enrich his homeland):

“The cuisine of Catalonia represented by a few of its dishes, has left its borders, conquering South America, Australia, Italy and a large part of the Iberian regions. It has been an instrument of expansion, and with the goodness of its dishes, Catalan cooks of sailboats, who upon their leaving the Catalan shorelines, installed themselves in the five corners of the world”. (ibid: 11 – 12)

Agulló notes that he is aiming at those who have some experience of cooking, not for those who know nothing. He states clearly that the book is not to teach people to cook, but with promoting Catalanism through its recipes. He is presenting a simple and economical cuisine, that applies to the all people in Catalonia, whom he has come to know from his travels throughout the country – as I said earlier, both then as now, exploring Catalonia as an *excursionist* was an important activity for nationalists. His introduction concludes by stating that he will “demonstrate that Catalonia has its own cuisine, special, complete and for all tastes and dietary regimes”.

After the introduction, Agulló then goes on to discuss food for daily meals and festive occasions, before going into the recipe collection. Like its inclusion in Domènech’s *Àpats*, this chapter has an ‘anthropological’ feel to it, of one who has researched the details, and set them down for readers. Once again, we see how these cookbooks can

become guides to ideal behaviour for Catalans in a nationalist context. Like B.Anderson's (1983) printed newspapers, ideally Catalan readers would be reading the same information about how other Catalans behaved, and perhaps even self-identify with it, situating themselves (and what they ate), within a Catalonia unified by these characteristics.

Next, Agulló talks of how there is a set menu expected of all types of celebration, from baptisms to Festa Majors. Many of the dishes he describes for each major annual celebration are identical to those of today. For example, obligatory dishes for Christmas and New Year are turkey, chicken or capons, and *escudella i carn d'olla* (I describe the gastronomic calendar further in Chapter 7). This section concludes with "This is the tradition. If in the city it is not conserved, it still holds very much so, still, in villages, towns and settlements" (ibid: 21). One can see clearly from this conclusion that the point of this section is to inform the readers about their own food culture that has been preserved in a rural setting. Since many of the readers would probably have been from Barcelona, aside from being informative the book may have been a call to keep up those 'traditions', as a means of manifesting Catalanism (and glorifying a 'folk culture').

Throughout *Llibre de la Cuina Catalana*, Agulló repeatedly makes reference to the concept of the *Països Catalans*. At a cultural level, this means the inclusion or appropriation of some aspects of these areas, and this is especially true in discourses on cuisine. For example, dishes from Valencia or the Balearic islands will be discussed as if they are just as Catalan as anything from within the Principat. Agulló

includes a great many recipes from the Balearics. In his section on sauces, he includes mayonnaise sauce as one of the principal sauces, which he underlines as being from Mahó – “*salsa mahonesa* called *maionesa*”, which really should be called *mahonesa* because of its town of origin in Menorca.

One can therefore see how the ideal of a wider reaching *Països Catalans* identity is subtly suggested by the inclusion of references to it. Similarly, in the introduction, Agulló underlines the importance of variety and diversity that is seen to represent the different counties of Catalonia and the *Països Catalans*. In his own words):

“Just as the language has dialects, and the law has county modalities, and customs and dances are diverse in the different counties and ancient realms of Catalonia (Valencia, Mallorca, Provence, Rosselló), Catalan cuisine is one, but each one of these territories has special dishes, dishes that have taken the name of one of these counties” (Agulló, 1933: 12)

By referring to the Catalan-speaking areas, as “ancient realms” he is bringing them into the fold of the overarching Catalan nation by including their cuisine as part of the larger “one” of Catalan cuisine. The *Països Catalans* are an indivisible whole, and so too is Catalan cuisine, though regional variations are recognised. Like many of today’s cookbooks, Agulló’s recipe collection begins with an explanation of the sauces in Catalan cuisine. He recognises that there are many different variations, and he is just providing the basic recipe. Again, we can see how regional specificities and variations have to be accepted in the Catalan case, if a believable national identity is to be created, and one in which regional variation, not homogeneity (which was to

become associated with Spain), comes to be seen as another defining feature of Catalan culinary identity.

This work is very interesting from a fieldwork perspective, as these are many of the features expressed by Catalans today as central to their cuisine. It is also interesting that the Draft Constitution of the Catalan Republic was written in the same year, a document that was meant to act as the foundation for a Catalan state that never materialised. What is certain is we can see the *Llibre de la Cuina Catalana* as a culmination of this Catalanist sentiment when it comes to food.

In the selection of images I used for photo elicitation, I decided to use the introductory quote above as the culminating image for an interview. Something that caused controversy with two respondents was this notion of “a political ideal” as central to Catalanism. This statement is probably down to the position of Ferran Agulló in Catalan politics. He was a member of the *Lliga Catalana*, a right wing, Catalanist party that dominated Catalonia’s political scene in the early twentieth century. They are a controversial group now, since they were in favour of submitting to both Primo de Rivera and also in the Civil War were supportive of Franco. These informants were aware of this situation and disliked the term “political ideal”, since Agulló was trying to use Catalan cuisine to promote his own agenda. They thought the phrase presumptuous, stating that Catalonia had no political ideal, aside from independence (both were strong independentists). Throughout the photo elicitation though, all respondents agreed with the phrase, and it elicited a positive reaction. Also most respondents were aware of the book, but were not very familiar with it.

3.8 The Republic and cookbooks in the Franco era

With the arrival of the Republican government in 1931, few other cookbooks of note were published, though existing cookbooks were republished. But a new alimentary reality hit Catalonia with the Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939), which led to a new type of culinary literature. By popular demand, in 1937 the Generalitat published a recipe book with advice on wartime cooking, followed by several similar texts. These continued into the post-war years, as Catalonia was a Republican stronghold, and suffered greatly in the early years of the Franco regime (*'la miséria'*, or misery as it was called).

It goes without saying that in the Franco era, publications in Catalan were largely forbidden, though this was relaxed in the 1960s and 70s, and re-editions of popular works, especially cookbooks, were permitted (needless to say, *Llibre de la Cuina Catalana* of 1928 was not one of them). Cookbook publications in Spain and Spanish experienced a rise in popularity from the 1950s on however, and one of the most popular books of this time (published in Barcelona) was *Sabores* from 1945. In the 1960s, new Catalan cookbooks make an appearance, and were permitted because of their supposedly non-political nature as expressions of folk culture (Hall, 2001).

Ironically, this meant that one of the few ways that the Catalans could have access to new literature in their language was through cookbooks. These restrictions made Catalan books far more valued, and these came to be objects of covert Catalanist significance in the Franco era. Many families kept treasured Catalan libraries hidden

in their homes, and of course cookbooks formed part of these libraries. Mon, a professional cooking instructor, emphasised particularly the symbolic importance of these books. Not only did they become a symbol of Catalan identity through their language, they also helped to preserve Catalan names for particular foods. For example, the Catalan word for broth, *brou*, could become the Castilian *caldo* when Catalan cannot be spoken, leading to the loss of the vocabulary that contributes to distinctiveness (I will discuss the issue of translation in the chapter 4).

Cookbooks are a seemingly uncontroversial form of literature, regardless of the language used. One could even argue that by allowing the publication in Catalan of certain seemingly non-threatening genres (e.g. folklore, dance, religious tracts, cookery etc.), the language could be trivialised as unsuited for serious topics of politics or history. Inherent in this is no doubt the association of cookbooks with women readers, so potentially placing Catalan in the inferior, feminine sphere through culinary literature.

However, one of the Catalan language cookbooks published at this time (*200 Plats casolans de cuina catalana*, 1969, by Antoni Dalmau) might well carry a hidden pro-Catalan subtext. Dalmau defends the notion that every region or village of Catalonia has its own dishes that distinguish this from the rest, much as Ferran Agulló had done 40 years earlier. Indeed, some of the points made by Dalmau mirror those of Agulló, for example, that Catalan cuisine is uncomplicated, and that it “has left its frontiers, conquering those of the two Americas, Australia, Italy, and all the Spanish nation, being in its time a vehicle of expansion” (Dalmau, 1969: 5-6), thanks to the maritime

exploits of its inhabitants. The parallels with Agulló are clear, though what is interesting here is the claim that Catalan cuisine has “conquered” Spain. Considering the political situation of the era, when Catalan identity was in a moment of oppression, the description here is a total contradiction of the official image of a Spanish identity that had overcome regional differences. Reference is also made to the past glories, particularly to the *Libre de Coch* of Mestre Robert – another example of how this book is glorified as “one of the first written cookbooks in the world” (ibid: 5).

He also imitates Agulló’s sentiment that Catalan cuisine is not a chauvinistic cuisine, “it has never suffered the sin of exclusivity and has adapted to universal modalities” (ibid: 6). While listing the places associated with foods, like Agulló and Domènech, he also makes a brief remark that days are associated also with foods. He concludes his introduction by saying that he hopes this series of culinary recipes will be shared throughout Catalan home kitchens, suggesting that like many authors his aim is to promote Catalan recipes at a popular level. It is a hidden transcript (Scott, 1990) of both resistance and preservation.

Another cookbook published at the same time, *Catalunya llaunera* (‘Sweet Catalonia’, Anonymous, 1968. The two books were published by Editorial Millà as part of a tentative series on Catalan popular culture) also reinforces this stance by referring to the gastronomic calendar and regional specialities – just as Ignasi Domènech had done in *Àpats* (I should also add that sweet foods are also considered

as something that differentiates Catalan cuisine from its neighbours, this is discussed further in particular in Chapter 9).

It is important to remember that one way Catalans seek to differentiate themselves today from Spaniards is by this very diversity, held in contrast to a perceived homogenous Spanish identity. So to glorify the specificities of Catalan food cultures was an implicit celebration of this Catalan identity. When one realises that to write something similar outside of a cookbook would have been unthinkable in that time, it becomes clear how culinary literature became so associated with a defence of Catalan identity.

The exhibition in Palau Robert from 2005 also noted another book called simply *Cuina Catalana* from 1971 by Maria del Carme Nicolau, where in her introduction (entitled “Every land...does their cuisine”), the writer “defends the taste of Catalan cuisine as its own cuisine and explains its evolution” (Generalitat de Catalonia, 2005: 25). In her introduction, Nicolau states that:

“It is an indisputable reality; you only have to put your nose into Catalonia, and you can tell that not only the *aesthetic of landscape*, the clothing, the customs and the *language* change, *so to does the style of eating*, the preparation and the condiments” (Nicolau, 1977: 11, emphasis added).

This extended quote brings up several interesting points. First of all, she mentions the landscape, which as further discussion in Chapters 7 and 8 should show is a potent point of national identity and difference, and is also connected to cuisine. She also

states clearly that there is a different language; in the repressive Franco era to state that there was still this separate language that visibly differentiated Catalonia was bold indeed. As has been shown elsewhere, the Catalan language is the main justification of the separate Catalan identity, but here it is implicitly linked with the separate food identity as well (Mon's earlier comments apply here too).

Nicolau then goes on to praise the *escudella i carn d'olla*, as “the typical dish of our land...with rice and *fideus* [pasta]...What is the magic of this Catalan dish!” (11). She is similarly effusive about “*seques amb botifarra*” (beans and sausage), seeing them as the best standard bearers of Catalan cuisine. Unlike other authors (both before and after) she is critical of the mixing of other cuisines with that of Catalonia, even going so far as to use the term “our national cuisine”, which is losing its good tastes to foreign influences. She then concludes in a similar manner to some other writers e.g. Agulló, by saying she is contributing to a further of knowledge of the cuisine to prevent its disappearance. She is optimistic though, idealizing Catalan cuisine as an unchanging cuisine that will always remain popular for Catalans. Though now these words may sound quaint, even chauvinistic, to claim in print that any aspect of Catalan national identity was going to continue to survive would have been almost unthinkable. Even though these words relate to homely, familiar, dishes for Catalans, there is an unmistakable hint of national pride.

In this sort of environment, Catalan books, both cookbooks and other genres, came to have special significance as material objects. They became objects of resistance, and hold a special reverence not just for what they say but also what they represent. When

considering the relevance to the discussion of cookbooks as nationalist objects, the following story I heard from Jordi, a university lecturer in Barcelona, was especially illuminating. In his childhood under Franco, Jordi's mother kept Domènech's *La Teca* in pride of place in their kitchen, as a focus of Catalan identity in the domestic environment. These were Catalan recipes, written in the persecuted Catalan language, and to cook the recipes for her family was a means of both transmitting Catalan identity, and quietly rebelling against the Francoist regime. He therefore came to see this cookbook as a rallying point in his early development as a Catalanist. One could even say that they are literary Proust's madeleines, intimately bound up with a past moment and memory that can be recalled on contact with them. Like food itself, books on food are powerful tools of memory.

3.9 Josep Pla and the defence of Catalan cuisine under Franco

Before moving onto culinary literature in the transition and post-Franco era, this is the ideal place to consider another writer, Josep Pla. Pla was often one of the most readily-quoted Catalan authors amongst my informants, and was undoubtedly one of the most important Catalan writers of the twentieth century. He was born in Palafrugell, Baix Empordà in 1897, and died in that same town in 1981, having seen some of the most tumultuous years of Spain's history.

He began his career in journalism in 1919, travelled the world and reported on politics from Madrid in the months leading up to the Civil War, when he fled the country. After returning in 1940, he based himself in his native Catalonia, and wrote extensively on his experiences, making him an excellent source of information on

Catalan life in this period. As a journalist, Pla's works were largely centred on his personal experiences. In the case of his later works on his homeland, there is also an element of salvage ethnography, since he was one of several authors of the time²⁹ that felt Catalan rural identity was gradually being eroded by Francoism, modernity and tourism, and had to be recorded for posterity.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, he was politically neutral (though privately opposed to Francoism) and was able to continue writing during the dictatorship. This may be the reason why he managed to publish in Catalan in the 1950s on, at a time when the language was largely banned. It is also for this reason that after 1978 the post-Francoist Catalan literati snubbed him.

Food appears in many of Pla's works about his home country, and not all of them can be discussed in this thesis. In case of doubt when it comes to areas of Catalan life (including cuisine), Pla is the first port of call for Catalans (Gencat.cat, 2012). Like Chekhov in Caldwell's ethnography on Russian identity and the *dacha* (country home), Pla's works are seen as essential sources of information on many subjects in Catalonia, including culinary heritage. Caldwell (2011: 30) calls Chekhov a "key informant – a person who, in anthropological terms, possesses extensive knowledge on a particular subject, can communicate that knowledge effectively, and enjoys widespread respect and acclaim for that knowledge", giving an account of everyday life. In this sense, I view Pla's work as similar to that of my primary informants, as a

²⁹ Particularly historian Jaume Vicens Vives, who wrote one of the most influential histories of Catalonia in the twentieth century, *Noticia de Catalunya* (1954).

means of seeing inside the mind of a Catalan who had strong views about his identity, how it related to food and whose views are respected by other Catalans.

Perhaps his most famous work on food is his book *El que hem menjat* (1972), literally ‘What we have eaten’. This work follows his thoughts and experiences with food throughout his life, in 65 chapters dedicated to different parts of in Catalan culinary culture, particularly in Empordà, the area where he was born and lived for much of his life. The work is not really a gastronomic text, and Pla did not consider himself a gastronome (he didn’t actually enjoy eating), but it does contain his thoughts about cuisine, particularly traditional cuisine outside of restaurants and within the home. As I said earlier, Pla’s works are a source of information for Catalans on their own culture (a frequent saying to back up some cultural claim was “Pla wrote about it”). This book is no exception, and is now itself the basis of contemporary culinary literature.³⁰

The tone of *El que hem menjat* though is one of loss, and every chapter mentions or concludes with a mournful diatribe about the impending disappearance of whatever is under discussion. His first sentence sets the tone, and also delineates that he will be talking mostly about Empordà, “In this country where I normally live – in Empordà – there is a certain familiar cuisine that, undoubtedly, these days is gradually disappearing in a certain and inevitable way.” (Pla, 1972: 7). Idealization of the past is

³⁰ For example, celebrated chef Joan Roca, began the introduction to his first cookbook (on his mother’s cuisine, it is important to note) with a reference to Josep Pla’s *El que hem menjat*, quoting the claim that the cuisine he discusses is a ‘familiar cuisine’, and a good cuisine. Like Pla, Roca goes on to point out how much has changed since some idealized past time, how tourism has contributed to the abandonment of traditional cuisine in favour of something foreign, and continues the litany of loss heard in Pla’s work and others.

key to his message, and he blatantly claims that “before everyone ate well, poor and rich” (ibid).

3.10 Culinary literature in the post-Franco era

With the coming of democracy, Catalan language and identity was now an acceptable medium and subject for publications. This was true of cookbooks and also magazine and newspaper articles. There had already been some tentative attempts at promoting Catalan culinary identity, for example with the 1975 *Assortiment Gastronomic de Catalunya*, organised by chef Josep Lladonosa i Giró. Culinary literature from this period is dominated by authors, rather than set books, such as the aforementioned Josep Lladonosa i Giró, Nestor Lujan, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, and Jaume Fàbrega, to name but a few. New editions could also now be published of the first Catalan cookbooks that

had a more obviously Catalanist tone, such as Agulló’s *Llibre de la Cuina Catalana* in 1978, and also Rudolf Grewe’s edition of the *Llibre de Sent Soví*, in 1979.



Figure 3.3: Books by Joan, Josep and Jordi Roca in the atrium of Celler de Can Roca

One work from this period that also cannot be missed is *L’art del menjar a Catalunya* (The art of eating in Catalonia), by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, first published in

1977. Firstly, the date of publication is significant, two years after Franco's death. Secondly, its subtitle, "A chronicle of the resistance of signs of gastronomic Catalan identity", positions it unambiguously as a book aimed at promoting Catalan cuisine as a sign of resistance against the old regime and a symbol of identity to be preserved. This is a similar stance to Agulló's *Llibre de la Cuina Catalana* 50 years earlier, and Pla's *El que hem menjat*, and I believe may have contributed to the continued survival of Catalan cuisine and its regeneration in the post-Franco era by sensitizing Catalans to cuisine as a national symbol. It was republished in 2004 with the subtitle "the Red Book of Catalan Gastronomic Identity". This change of title suggests a changed situation, where cuisine was no longer at threat of being lost as it had been at the end of the Franco period.³¹

Other essential names include the modern chefs of this time. Indeed, it could be argued that no chef can really be taken seriously in Catalonia without publishing at least one cookbook, and most have several to their name. Some, like Ferran Adrià, the Roca brothers or Carme Ruscalleda, see these cookbooks as a central part of their output, and are useful for the researcher seeking to understand their trajectories, inspirations, methods etc. Ferran Adrià in particular often refers back to his first publication (*El Bulli. El sabor del Mediterráneo*, 1993) to defend criticisms of excessive modernity that ignores the Catalan context, where he explicitly demonstrated his inspiration by Catalan cuisine in his earliest creations. On a more mercantile level, they are also useful cash cows and tools for self-promotion, and even act as personalised souvenirs of a visit to a celebrated restaurant such as the Celler de

³¹ This realisation was also made separately by Fuentes et al (2014), who note that this work provided "an ironic and provocative if not heretical culinary parallel to the mission of protecting the language" (Fuentes et al, 2014: 161)

Can Roca (see Figure 3.3). More recently, Joan Roca has recognised the essential role of research and cookbooks in his personal cooking philosophy, which he calls ‘*academicism*’.

It is important now to briefly introduce some other writers from the last thirty years who have played an important role in the development and dissemination of ideas about Catalan cuisine. One is Nestor Lujàn, a journalist and gastronome. His works mostly catalogue the history of Catalan cuisine, and much like Pla his opinions are sacrosanct. They also emphasise the historic continuity of Catalan cuisine, which Lujàn believed traced its origins back to the Romans, with titles such as *A Thousand Years of Catalan Cuisine* (1989) or *Twenty Centuries of Cuisine in Barcelona* (1993). Both Vázquez Montalbán and Lujàn had died over a decade before I arrived in the field, so their books provide an essential overview of their attitudes to cuisine.

Another author who is impossible to miss is Josep Lladonosa i Giró, who has already had a brief mention for his Gastronomic Assortment of 1975. As I will discuss particularly in chapter 7, this was an important moment for resurrecting Catalan cuisine towards the end of the Franco era. He himself was a very strong Catalanist, and was very clear that he saw his protection of Catalan cuisine as a nationalist duty. He also published one of the first full length cookbooks on Catalan cuisine in the post-Franco era, entitled appropriately *The Cuisine that Returns* (*La Cuina que Torna*, 1982), followed by other cookbooks (including one of today’s classic cookbooks, *The Big Book of Catalan Cuisine*, now in its third edition, 2005) and gastronomic literature (like Lujàn, these are mostly historic in focus). He also had a restaurant

traditions (Sano and Clotet, 2010, already in its third edition in 2012), *501 Catalan recipes that you have to try before you die* (Garcia Massagué, 2012), they appeal to a Catalan consumer who is keen to promote and express their identity by investing in Catalan books and products. It is interesting that many books with titles such as those above appeared soon after the 2012 protest. Re-editions of old favourites, such as *La Cuynera Catalana* of 1853, Ignasi Domènech's *La Teca* and *Àpats*, and the *Llibre de Sent Sovi*, add to this popular literature on Catalonia's historic and culinary past.

Chapter 4. The Foundational Sauces

There will be a strong focus on cooked products in this chapter and the next, rather than the ingredients themselves. While some ingredients and products may be unique to Catalonia, many are shared with surrounding countries and identities. To claim them as particular to Catalan cuisine would not be convincing. What is particular though is their treatment when cooked, both in the eyes of my informants and from an objective, factual standpoint. It is through the act of cooking that ingredients, often of non-Catalan origin, are acculturated with significance in a national context, and become bearers of national identity. The style of cooking, the techniques, and the mixing of ingredients all contribute to the catalanization of a dish.

In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss several sauces essential to Catalan cuisine, which almost all my informants saw as central to the identity and specificity of Catalan cuisine. For my informants, these sauces were often related to other aspects of their culinary identity, such as their connection with a historical identity through cuisine, inclusion of new ingredients, changes in contemporary cooking styles, and most interestingly, comparisons and contextualizations of Catalan cuisine with others in the Iberian Peninsula. Hence, this discussion will frequently branch into other topics that appeared in discussions about these foundational sauces, following the associations and interpretations of informants.

4.1 The foundational sauces

Jaume F: “A thing that differentiates [Catalan cuisine] from Portuguese and Spanish cuisine are the sauces. There is a great richness in sauces, primary bases of cuisine. Of the *sofregit*, that doesn’t exist in Spanish cuisine, and in Portuguese very little and only in one place. The *picada*, which is the second base of a dish, and the *alloli negat*... Then, of the important sauces, the *romesco*, the best sauce in Europe. Because it’s phenomenal, the sauce of the *xató*, or of *calçots* which are also variants.”

This detailed quote from Jaume F, food historian and writer, introduces us to the foundations of Catalan cuisine, the sauces of the *sofregit*, the *picada*, the *alloli*, and the *romesco*. Jaume’s statement here is typical of many informants’ responses, as the first point of discussion for these bases of Catalan cuisine, which also lends support to claims of distinctiveness in the context of neighbouring gastronationalisms. This distinctiveness, combined with their central place as the starting point of any Catalan dish, has guaranteed these sauces a fundamental place in Catalan culinary identity, and for that reason deserves a detailed consideration at this early stage.

Ferran Agulló, in his *Llibre de la Cuina Catalana* (1933), dedicates an early chapter to “The basic sauces of our cuisine”, which he lists as: the *sofregit*, the *samfaina*, the *picada* and the *alloli*. One can already see clear parallels with Jaume’s statement above. The *samfaina* admittedly is no longer included in this list, perhaps because it is now considered a dish in its own right.³² The *sofregit* is the starting point of any dish,

³² And, it should be added, is almost identical to French *ratatouille*, so is perhaps not such a good candidate for the bearing of unique culinary identity. In situations where connections with prestigious French cuisine are to be emphasised however, the *samfaina/ratatouille* connection does come up.

done according to Agulló in different ways, according to the dishes, but is made up in its most basic form of onion, garlic, parsley and tomato.³³ The *picada* is a paste of various herbs, spices and above all ground nuts with some liquid. *Allioli* and mayonnaise differ little from their British counterparts in terms of basic ingredients. The *romesco* is conspicuous by its absence, but this may be because the *romesco* was limited to the southern areas of Catalonia at the time. This is a spicy and versatile sauce, red-orange in colour and made up of *nyora*,³⁴ dry bread, almonds (and other nuts), olive oil, *bitxo* peppers (very like chillies) and garlic (though, as many of my informants pointed out, there are almost as many variations as there are cooks, and this set of ingredients are only the basics).

The Michelin-starred chef Joan Roca (2004) begins his book *La cuina de la meva mare* (my mother's cooking) more unequivocally than Agulló on the significance of sauces, with his first chapter entitled "the bases of Catalan cuisine" dedicated to its sauces: *sofregit*, *picada*, *allioli*, and *romesco*. Like Agulló and other authors, Roca's first recipe of the work is a *sofregit*, underlining its importance in Catalan cuisine. He recommends placing a finely diced onion in a pan of fat or oil, until it begins to brown, when the garlic (if desired) and then the tomato must be added. He suggests that it can be sliced or grated, depending on the desired texture. Cook on a low heat until it has become like a sauce, to lessen the strength and bitterness of the tomato. During one of his presentations and in our interview, Joan Roca also recalled how his

³³ Garlic, he pointed out earlier in the chapter, dominates Catalan cuisine, and was brought by the Romans, where it was a basic element of the Roman legionnaires' diet. This can perhaps be considered an example of a linking of important elements of Catalan cuisine to a historical foundation – this will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter.

³⁴ A variety of small red bell peppers particular to Catalonia, dried for use in cooking.

mother would prepare the *sofregit* on a very low heat *overnight*, leaving the onions to caramelize for hours before their use the next morning in their small restaurant.

4.2 The historicism of the *sofregit*

This decision to include the *sofregit* as the foundational recipe is hardly surprising, since throughout fieldwork, one of the most uniform responses to the question of what makes a dish Catalan, or what is the most important element, involved the *sofregit* or the *picada*. For Ramon, a Vic chocolatier, the *sofregit* was the simplest denominator of Catalan cuisine, which he described as “very much of the home, cuisine of the *sofregit*”. Fermi, a chef in Barcelona, when asked what is the most representative dish in Catalonia, replied “any that had a *sofregit*, the basic sauce from which to make our cuisine”, adding later that all different ingredients combined well with a *sofregit* – “this is the mystery of Catalan cuisine”.

The following extract from a discussion with Carles, another Barcelona chef also brings out the importance of the *sofregit*, *picada*, and *romesco* and the at times contradictory discourses surrounding them:

VC: In your opinion, what are the most important elements in Catalan cuisine?

Carles: The *picada*, the *sofregit*, I think these are the two elements very autochthonous to us. They define the essence of ancient Catalan cuisine.

VC: Like the *sofregit* without tomatoes, surely? [A reference to a contradiction against the antiquity of the *sofregit*, since it contained tomatoes, a New World vegetable, so could not have been too ancient]

Carles: No! For example, the most ancient cookbook that we know is the *Libre de Coch* from 1400, it's anonymous and there's a *sofregit*. The next oldest, maybe one of the oldest, was *La Cuynera Catalana*, from 1830-35, and there we find tomatoes, though very subtly, not being used much. But the *sofregit*, consisting of onions, garlic, that also can be considered. Also another base of Catalan and seafaring cuisine is the *romesco*, hot and cold. This is also a very ancestral sauce, very Catalan.

One can see in Carles' interpretation of the centrality of Catalan sauces the current of a historicism that frequently pervades discussions of Catalan cuisine. For many of my key informants, their interpretation of contemporary cuisine is implicitly linked with that of the Catalan past, and how the preservation of characteristics of medieval cuisine acts as a window onto a golden age in Catalan history through its historic cookbooks, a concept already introduced in Chapter 3.

Pepa, the head of the Fundació Institute de Cuina Catalana i de la Cultura Gastronòmica (FICCG) and main organizer of the bid for recognition under UNESCO intangible heritage scheme, is particularly keen that the history of Catalan cuisine be researched. Her reasoning was that, if not, there is a risk that Catalan cuisine might be misunderstood. A historical background sets it on a more stable footing and lends legitimacy to claims of a unique culinary identity for the campaign. The power of the past (whether actual or invented) in creating this legitimacy is a feature to be found in many nationalist movements, but its use in the discussion of cuisine is interesting, showing how culinary identity combined with a nationalist past can be one of the many carriers of national identity too. In many ways, Barthes's claim that through national foods, peoples "partake each day of the national past" (Barthes, 2013; 27), rings very true for Catalonia. A common theme during fieldwork when introducing and describing dishes would be some background on its place of origin and history.

These asides were not limited to expert informants on Catalan cuisine, and were indeed part of an awareness of the dishes, albeit only a sentence or two.

In this way, food can act as a touchstone with a historical past, in which Catalans can connect what they consume with this past, which itself is also the foundation and justification of their identity. Josep S, the editor of the food magazine *Cuina*, after discussing chefs with global reputations that Catalonia has produced in the contemporary era, returned to historical justifications for this situation:

“We share a country that has a very important culinary history, very rich and very identificatory since the Middle Ages until now. And which lives alongside some vanguard cooks who have been directly inspired by this very ancient cuisine that has evolved.”

As I explained briefly in Chapter 3, it is significant that vanguard chefs of the *nova cuina* are described as direct heirs to this rich history, implying a seamless transmission between past and present. This sentiment of living alongside an “ancient cuisine” is a powerful image of national identity. Jaume F expressed almost identical sentiments:

“This [medieval cuisine] is a cuisine with an enormous historical influence on current Catalan cuisine. And even now there are many medieval elements. We’re very conservationist... So there’s a historic element.”

The importance of the *sofregit* as an identifying feature and of historical connectivity became particularly salient during a cooking session with Jaume, where he showed me how the different sauces were used in the contexts of not just cooking, but also with regards to his history and national identity. Like Carles, he compared the processes involved in making the dish we were cooking (rabbit in chocolate sauce) with those of the medieval era, claiming that “in the medieval era, they used to do this” while preparing the *sofregit*. Jaume explained how the *picada* would give the dish a medieval character from its grainy texture. As with Carles, I pointed out that chocolate was something that wouldn’t have existed in the medieval era. This aspect was unimportant, as chocolate was one of the more recent additions to the canon of ingredients one could add to the *picada* (a good demonstration of a dismissal of apparent contradictions in national ideologies).

Pepa also listed these sauces as the bases of Catalan cuisine:

“For me, it’s the *sofregits*, for me that’s key. And the *romescos*.³⁵ The sauces, and those that thicken them, the *picades*. Because I think that the *sofregits* in our way are not done in any other place. We make a *sofregit* for practically everything.”

For her, the *sofregit* was the most Catalan product. Later in this discussion, like Jaume she also referred to the connection with Arab cuisine through the *picada*, which

³⁵ Her decision to focus on *romescos* is interesting, since *romesco* is a sauce associated primarily (though not exclusively) with the southern part of Catalonia. Another of my informants, Joan, who worked in the Culture Department, also developed this remark – his views will be discussed in the context of geographical connectedness in Chapter 8. Pepa herself is from the extreme south of Catalonia, near the Ebre Delta. This comment shows the value of bearing in mind the origin of informants within Catalonia.

according to her friend the food writer Claudia Roden, could also be found in North African cuisines. This comparison with Arab cuisines is an interesting one, especially in light of the historic connection between Catalonia and Muslim rule of the Al-Andalus (711 – 1492). Despite the historic friction between the two areas, their rule is generally viewed in a much more positive light to that of the Spanish state. Jaume particularly was a huge supporter of ‘Arab cuisines’, which he was keen to point out were more developed than those of central Spain and Madrid. In this sense, one sees an interesting development of the ‘othering’ inherent in nationalist discourse. Far from being seen as the enemies of Catalan identity (which, historically, they were), this role has been taken on by the Spanish state, which destroyed the last vestiges of Al-Andalus and initiated the decline of the Catalan-Aragonese Empire. Following this historic interpretation, Moorish influences, especially in New Catalonia and its cuisine, are emphasised, since contemporary interpretations mean they shared a common ‘enemy’ with Catalonia today.³⁶

4.3 *Sofregit* as culinary differentiator

Returning to the distinctiveness of the *sofregit*, Jaume F considered the way of making the *sofregit* as distinctly Catalan, a means of differentiating Catalan from Spanish cooks, who use more tomato:

“When a Spaniard cooks [*sofregit*], you notice it. Because with a *sofregit*, it’s forbidden to notice the tomato, but in the Spanish way, it’s a tomato sauce. A

³⁶ This discussion is also now interesting in the context of recent immigration.

Catalan never uses tinned tomato, it's unthinkable, but the Spanish way always uses them. So theoretically it's Catalan cuisine, but, like in Barcelona, they've never had an excess of that which is Catalan cuisine.³⁷ So the *macarrons*³⁸ [from Barcelona] are wonderful, but I look at them and they're awful because with the Catalan ones you wouldn't notice the tomato."

The components of the Catalan *sofregit* are therefore different from those made by the non-Catalan, Spanish 'Other'. Their similarity might affect claims to culinary uniqueness, hence the need to draw attention to the presence of catalanizing features, such as the different use of tomatoes. Josep S also recalled that Catalan style of pasta dishes also make use of pre-cooked or roasted (not boiled) pasta, recalling for example the "*macarrons* from my maternal grandmother...in the Catalan way which is more cooked pasta than in the Italian style, with a *sofregit* and a tomato", as one of the most important dishes from his recollections of the formation of his Catalan identity through food.

Two other chefs who didn't wish to be named added that the well-known Catalan chef Ferran Adrià did a terrible *sofregit*, in this 'Spanish' style with tinned tomatoes. One used this as the basis for his questioning of Adrià's true identity as a Catalan, since if he could not make the *sofregit* properly, then how could he be called a true representative of Catalonia's culinary tradition? This shows well the importance of the *sofregit*, since a chef's inability to cook it properly questions their very identity in the eyes of his or her peers.

³⁷ Note this dismissive attitude to Barcelona, which has experienced much greater levels of immigration from elsewhere in Spain, and where Catalan identity has allegedly 'diluted' somewhat.

³⁸ Catalan pasta dish using macaroni, but where the pasta is normally baked as part of the meal instead of boiled.

Indeed, in a somewhat essentialist way, Jaume suggested that a non-Catalan would find it harder to make a *sofregit*, since they have not grown up with the ancestral tastes – though it would not be impossible. He added though it would be especially hard for a Spaniard, due to their inherent prejudices and mistranslations of Catalan culinary concepts. For example, the usual translation in Castilian culinary literature for *sofregit* is *sofrito*, but which actually describes another type of sauce entirely – one with more tomatoes, which are fried, and which he believed is rarely used in Catalan households.

The question of linguistic identity in translation is an interesting one in the Catalan-Spanish relationship, since the untranslatability of certain concepts (such as *seny* and *rauxa*) is often a mark of their distinctiveness. As will be discussed later in Chapter 5, an argument is put forward that one dish (the *fricandó*) is the most Catalan dish because it cannot be translated into Spanish, or any other language, making the concept exclusively Catalan. Similarly, several informants throughout Catalonia referred to the untranslatability of *sobretaula* (literally ‘around-the-table’, the act of discussing ideas around a table after the meal, rather than leaving to go to another room) as a particularly Catalan phenomenon, evidenced by the lack of any suitable translation in another language. Jaume F, Pere (a close informant in Vic) and their circle of friends (who often conducted *sobretaules*), suggested that it was also evidence of the classical origins in the remote past of the Catalan style of eating, claiming it was a direct descendent of the Greek *symposium*. Once again, historical connectedness allows for the historical justification so central to nationalist movements.

Conversely, it should be noted that another of my informants (Mon) saw no difference between the *sofregit* and the *sofrito*, since both required frying in oil, and had onions and tomatoes, but how much of each would depend on individual taste. She also saw no problems using tinned tomatoes if the need arose. Similarly, Ferran Agulló in his 1933 description of the *sofregit* suggests using preserved tomato or tomato paste, perhaps suggesting a certain leeway in this sense.

4.4 ‘We are of the onion’ – the onion in Catalan culinary identity

The key element of the *sofregit* though has always been the onion, and returning to Carles’ point, it is through the strong presence of onion that the *sofregit* can claim connectedness with medieval cuisine, since the tomato was brought from the Americas, and only came into widespread use in the nineteenth century. Discussing the *sofregit* as the foundation of Catalan cuisine with Nuria, a food historian, brought her onto the importance of onion to Catalan food identity.

“Everything we cook, we’re accustomed to make them with onion. I have many students with Erasmus, and they define the Catalans as onion-eaters. Because we put onion everywhere... So this *sofregit de ceba* is very Catalan, very done [here]. In other places they do it less.”

In this instance, identity is constructed in a general context of outsiders and their opinions. Nuria later went on to discuss further the importance of the onion in Catalan cuisine. She compared this with the Valencians and Valencian *paella*, claiming “they don’t put onion in the *paella*, it infuriates them! But here, a *paella* without onion, it

can't be". These may be small differences, she admitted, but they are important distinctions for culinary identity. She also made reference to the Catalans' use of onion in *truita* or *tortilla de patates*, best translated using the Spanish '*tortilla*', an omelette stuffed with potatoes and other ingredients. Both the Catalan word '*truita*' and the Spanish '*tortilla*' are used interchangeably, and I never heard any linguistic discrimination on this front. In Nuria's words,

"The *tortilla espanyola*, we don't have it. We have *tortilla catalana*, the *truita de patates* with onion, that is something that people who come from outside like a lot...it is said the *tortilla espanyola* is done without onion, and has been adapted somewhat to Catalonia."

I recall cooking the *truita/tortilla de patates* with three women: Mon, Irene, and her mother Concepció, and each said that the Catalan *truita/tortilla* has onions in it, which doesn't normally happen in the rest of Spain, where they only use potato. Like Nuria they all felt the need to emphasise these minor differences from Spain with reference to a similar and very popular dish. Mon said that

"There are very simple things like the *truita de patates*, but with onion. The Spanish *tortilla* doesn't have onion in principle. When it has onion, for me, it's my *truita*, when only half of it is potato."

During my discussion with Nuria, I was reminded of a popular Catalan saying '*Som de la ceba*', literally 'We are of the onion', to describe someone who felt strongly Catalan. This phrase had interested me, since I was curious how this particular vegetable came to be connected to national identity, and in what ways. For example,

was there some origin myth (A.D. Smith, 1986), or was this a means of relating identity to land, earth and national sentiment? Considering the information I had already gathered on onions in Catalan cuisine, I asked her whether this phrase was in some way related. Nuria was dismissive of a connection, but to explore further the significance of this phrase, I used it in the photo elicitation (See Figure 4.1).

The general consensus is that this saying is used to describe an individual who takes their Catalan identity seriously, and now means someone independentist, fanatical and stubborn.³⁹ The discussions revealed well the changes that



Figure 4.1: Image used in photo elicitation, based on a t-shirt design, to demonstrate the saying 'I am of the onion'. Take note of the star on the onion, a reference to the *estellada*, and the inherent implications of the phrase. (Source: Productes de la terra)

have taken place in attitudes to independence, and its acceptance as a legitimate stance. The Assemblea group claimed that to be an 'onion' was historically *catalanista*, and now *independentista*, since until about five years ago they would not admit to pro-independence sentiments, but now this is an accepted viewpoint. The younger *sardana* dancers also said something similar, though their consensus was that it used to mean being pro-independence, and was something negative, "whereas now

³⁹ It could parallel in this sense the saying that 'He's a donkey', which refers to a stubborn individual, and has now come to be a metaphor for the Catalan people in their relationship with Spain. The donkey is now one of the symbols of Catalonia, much in the way the Osborne bull is for Spain (Strubell, 2008).

we're all of the onion". The essence though is the same in all responses, that of a strong connection to Catalan identity.

As I had suspected, several respondents linked its origins though to the growing of onions, remarking on its connectedness with the land, the description of being '*de pagès*' (from a peasant background). One of the *geganters* reasoned it thus: "because the onion comes from the land, it's a way of saying you're from the land. Very connected with the land. It's difficult to pull us out", suggesting resilience and rootedness just like the onion itself. Another recalled that in his home village, a *casal independentista* (independentist meeting place) was called 'La Ceba' for this reason. All strongly independentist, the *geganters* connected this image with pro-independence leanings, claiming that before they had to fight for their views, and still do, that's why they need to be strong and resiliently attached to their territory and by extension their nation, like the onion is attached to the ground. Marta, another strong catalanist who worked for Omnium, reacted to the image by stating her stance: " 'I am of the onion', of profound and Catalanist convictions".

Pep V (an Omnium employee) on the other hand, often seeking to take the alternative view, disliked the image, seeing it as petty and small-minded. Like the *geganters*, Pep linked the phrase to the need to be strong after "300 years of oppression", but that this vision of Catalan identity was also limiting. He aligned it with the backward, folkloric interpretation of Catalan culture, unchanging and closed, unsuited to contemporary Catalanism.

Not many responses saw a connection with the onion's use in cuisine. Marta and a younger informant Berta admitted that they don't actually like onion, but admitted its important place in Catalan cuisine, for example, in the *sofregit*. Berta herself saw little in the phrase, it wasn't very significant for her. Similarly, Eloi, an Oxford student from Barcelona, claimed that he had heard it very little, but said maybe it might be thanks to the inclusion of onion in the *truita*, and it was a bit old fashioned. He was therefore the only one of my informants to connect the onion with the *truita de ceba*. Still, the connectedness with the land expressed by some respondents is worth considering further, particularly as ideas of land, territory, landscape, earth etc. are potent carriers of nationalist ideology. This discussion will be continued in Chapter 8.

4.5 The *picada*

The *picada* appears at the other end of the cooking process, as the final addition to the flavours of a dish. The cookbook writer Ignasi Domènech introduces the *picada* early on in his seminal work *La Teca*, claiming that “The bettering of our stews is the Catalan *picada*”, an addition which “improves stews in an extraordinary way” (Domènech, 2010: 30). In a 1930s edition of one of his later works (*Àpats*), the writer of the prologue likewise describes the base of Catalan cuisine as the “*picades*, truly original to our land”, in contrast to other foreign (French) sauces. There are no definite ingredients, but possible foods include garlic, parsley, saffron, almonds, hazelnuts, pine nuts, biscuits, chocolate, chilli, chicken or fish liver, pieces of bread, biscuits – the list could go on. Added to this is some kind of liquid, such as broth, white wine, vinegar, or even water. The *picada* thickens a sauce, making it more

substantial. Ramon P, an innkeeper, suggested its origin in subsistence cuisine (*cuina de subsistència*), another ideal that frequently occurred amongst informants when discussing Catalan cuisine:



Figure 4.2: The *picada*. At top, ingredients of the *picada* in a typical ceramic mortar and ready to be prepared, in this case parsely, dry bread, hazelnuts, liver and pine nuts. The next photo shows the addition of the mashed up ingredients to a stew at the end of the cooking process.

“The *picada*, it’s a genius idea, very creative, used by the mistresses of the house. They had very little, they just threw together whatever they had. And the reaction was that the ‘potatoes were better than the meat’ (*les patates són més bones que el tall*), but there was no meat. The *picada* was good for hiding that.”

After her discussions of onions, Nuria claimed that “the *picada* is also special with hazelnuts and almonds. This is the taste of the Catalans”.

The *picada* creates a sensory experience particularly associated with Catalonia. Jaume S, a modern chef in Figueres, chose the *picada* as the fundamental element of his version of Catalan cuisine:

“I think [Catalan cuisine] is characterised by the *picada*. The almonds, the *nyores*, and all that. I think it’s a determined point. And then there’s the *sofregit*, but the *sofregit* that is not of tomato. The tomato is very acidic, and so it’s difficult to digest. With little tomato in the *sofregit*, that’s the most important thing.”

See how once again, the *sofregit* with very little tomato is a commonality. Similarly, Josep S saw the *picada* in the context of history. His response to the question “What is the most important concept in Catalan cuisine” ran thus:

“It’s a very big simplification, but it’s graphic, which is starting with a *sofregit* with onion, and ending with a *picada*, and in-between, things happen! So the *picada* is a very important element in Catalan cuisine, it’s an element, a detail, what seems like a complement and that actually is very important because it gives a very Catalan personality to the cuisine.”

Pep P, an organizer of Fòrum Gastronomic, one of Spain’s premier food congresses, saw the *sofregit* and the *picada* as “traits that confirm a clear identity on Catalan cuisine”. The *sofregit* is a fundamental base because of its diversity as the foundation in many Catalan dishes (“simple *macarrons*, all the rice, a meat dish or *guisat de peix*, everywhere”). It was on the *picada* though that Pep especially concentrated as a means of catalanizing a dish:

“The *picada* includes those ingredients that allow us to finish the dish and add to it certain gustatory elements that differentiate these dishes from others done in different cuisines. We add the *picada* to a rice, and it makes it different. We add it to a stew (*estofat*), of veal for example, and it makes it different.”

This comment highlights several points in the discussion of the *picada* in Catalan identity made so far. For Pep, the *picada* identifies a dish as Catalan in contrast to any other cuisine, to give it that final point of particularity. Like Nuria, the sensory experience is also a key part of the *picada*'s capacity for Catalanizing a dish. On clarifying this point, Pep confirmed that it was exactly the *picada* which made a dish Catalan:

VC: The *picada* makes it Catalan?

PP: Exactly! It makes it Catalan on sight. Thanks to this *picada* it will end up adopting browns, dark colours, particular to our dishes. Only the *picada* has almonds, roasted hazelnuts, *vi ranci*,⁴⁰ all these ingredients make sure that it has a different look, a different odour, thanks to this *picada*.

4.6 The *allioli*

The *picada* is therefore not only about catalanizing taste and texture, but also the appearance. So far it should be clear that informants often talked about the pantheon of sauces together, and Pep was no different, going straight onto discussions of *allioli* and *romesco*:

“*Allioli* allows determined dishes to end up with a completely different flavour. It's another very simple base, garlic and olive oil. No more. The sauces from the south of Catalonia, the *Romesco*, which is a sauce and a dish. It's become a differential trait of Catalan cuisine.”

⁴⁰ Literally ‘stale wine’, a kind of dessert wine with a strong flavour, that has been submitted to oxidised ageing.

Like the *picada*, the *alloli* makes extensive use of the mortar. Since this is the main implement used in making these essential sauces, it becomes clear how this has become a symbol of Catalan cuisine. In the words of Pau, a journalist, “for Catalan cuisine in basic theory the sauces, *alloli* and *romesco*. Obvious tools such as the mortar would be for these sauces”. When I asked about essential implements for making Catalan cuisine, the mortar regularly came up as an answer. The most common type (indeed near universal in Catalonia) is made from glazed yellow pottery, with green splashes on the outside. Several of my informants remarked that this was one of the principal *estris* (tools) that they associated with Catalan cuisine from childhood, so much so that the minute they saw one they immediately thought of ‘*alloli*’.

The name *Allioli* (or aioli in English) describes quite simply what the sauce is, which is garlic (*all*) and (*i*) oil (*oli*), ground together at a steady pace until a creamy off-white paste is formed. Making it is a delicate process, and several of my informants admitted they couldn’t make it themselves, but would instead buy the ready prepared *alloli* in supermarket, which is cleverly sold in Catalonia in a plastic tub that imitates the shape and colour of the typical mortar. To help the mixture, there are various ingredients one can add, though these are the source of much controversy, since there are claims that this produces either an inferior version or something else entirely.

Regional variation is also associated with the *alloli* in Catalonia, such as the *alloli de codony* (quince), honey, or pear associated with the province of Lleida. One can also add either egg white (something that the gastronome Nestor Luján rails against), or

egg yolk, though this may lead to something else (mayonnaise, another Catalan sauce, with garlic). Easier to prepare is the *allioli negat*, which is still a combination of garlic with a little oil (or broth, as Jaume's quote at the start suggests) to produce a non-creamy version that can be useful in cooking. It doesn't require the patience of the original *allioli*, and if an *allioli* goes wrong it can be passed off as *negat*.

Allioli was not discussed so much by my informants, perhaps because it is not one of these principal bases of Catalan cuisine, and also because it has been globalised so extensively that it can no longer be called unique to Catalonia. Indeed, in one of the many popular food-related publications in recent years *The book of Allioli* (Garcia-Arbós, 2005), *allioli* is described as an essential element of Catalonia, the Catalan-speaking countries in general, and also of the rest of the Mediterranean cuisines, including Aragon, the rest of



Figure 4.3: Image of *botifarra amb mongetes* with *allioli* used in photo elicitation.

Spain, Provence and parts of Greece. The author also claims some connection for the dish with the Roman period and references in Pliny, another example of attaching food to a distant historical past to add to its prestige. However, the acknowledgement of its ubiquity in non-Catalan cuisines here, even while promoting it, suggests an admission of the problem of using it as a strong identificatory feature. It sometimes

mentioned in the context of the *Països Catalans* and culinary unity, for example in Agulló's book of 1928.

This may explain why the *alloli* was mentioned less by my informants as symbolic of Catalan cuisine than other sauces. It is still a dish that my informants had fond feelings for, as I included an image of a pot of *alloli* with sausages and beans early in my photo elicitation (Figure 4.3). Comments generally referred to other elements of the picture (the representativeness of sausage and beans as a 'national dish', the *senyera* phone cover etc.), but often revolved around the tastiness of the *alloli* and the dish itself in general. However, strong feelings of identificatory attachment were not suggested in response to this photo.

4.7 The *romesco*

Finally, the last sauce mentioned in Jaume's list at the start of ideal Catalan sauces is the *romesco*. This originated in the south of the Principat, in New Catalonia, where Tarragona is normally given as its original home. It is generally eaten with fish (where it is added during cooking), though a variation (*salsa de calçots* or *salvitxada*) is eaten at the *calçotada* (spring onion eating), and another, *salsa de xató*, eaten with the winter *Xató* salad.⁴¹ Like the *picada* and *alloli* the mortar is essential for making this sauce.

⁴¹ The *Xató* is a salad associated particularly with the seaside counties of Garraf and Baix Penedès, south of Barcelona. Its ingredients include endive leaves, anchovies, cod, tuna and olives, with the essential addition of the *Xató* sauce (to which the word *Xató* sometimes refers alone). It is normally a winter dish, being consumed between January and April, which is when the *Xató*-eating events and

Contrary to a claim that Catalans rarely add sauces to their foods,⁴² the *calçotada* is a prime example of this in practice. When the topic of *calçots* came up, my informants generally praised both the convivial atmosphere of the event, and the sauce, rather than the spring onions themselves – which some admitted were rather disgusting on their own. *Calçots* are spring onions, which have been dug up when sprouting then buried again in the summer. For the second phase, earth is continually heaped on the sprouting leaves, to blanch the stems.

By their *temporada* or eating season (January – March), they should ideally be about 8 inches long. They can then be cooked over a brazier, carbonizing the outside. Once cooked, the tender, white, edible inside needs to be removed from the burnt outer layer (the diner grasps the sprouts to accomplish this). This is a messy process, and the blackened hands and faces were a central part of the experience, to which my informants often pointed. The *calçots* are then dipped into the *salvitxada* sauce, and then lowered into the mouth from above (the characteristic gesture is also a famous image associated with Catalan food culture, a good example can be seen in Figure 7.2).⁴³ *Calçotades*, the occasions where these are eaten,⁴⁴ can either be small groups of friends, or massive festive events attracting hundreds of attendants, such as the

festivals (*xatonades*) take place. Unlike *calçots*, which now take place all over Catalonia, *xató* consumption is still largely limited to its area of origin.

⁴² I was often told that Catalans don't normally add sauces to already cooked foods, except for the *alloli* as a side sauce, since the sauce should already be present during the cooking. For my benefit in particular, this was contrasted with the perception of northern Europeans (specifically English tourists, apparently) who are seen to smother their food in sauces after it has been cooked.

⁴³ Pau, waxing lyrical about the experience, describes the *calçotada* thus: "The way of eating it, it seems hallucinatory for foreigners. To take up the blackened and dirty hands to eat it, the most informal thing in the world... To eat it in the countryside, and always with friends, because no one does a *calçotada* alone...but always is collective, always, always, always with people. Collective, territory, sun, the surprising way of eating it, this is Catalonia."

⁴⁴ One of many '-ades', to describe communal eating occasions centred around the eating of a particular food.

Calçotada of Valls, the town where they are said to have originated, and from where they spread to the rest of Catalonia.

The food writer Pau considered the *calçot* to be the most “singular” product in Catalan cuisine, not only because the product itself and its manner of growing are unique to Catalonia (recognised under the EU Protected Denomination of Origin scheme), but also because its manner of eating are so particular to the area. The *salvitxada* though was what he really found truly the grounding of the experience:

“The *calçot* ends up being a sweet product, smoky, very complex, with a unique sauce that is the *salvitxada* (basically a *romesco*). A sunny sauce, with tomato, dried fruits, products from reaping, from the garden, rosy. All the Mediterranean is compacted in here. It’s a product that ends up being soaked in this sauce.”

Here there is a clear link with the land, and also the territorial area of the Mediterranean, a relationship which will be discussed in more detail later in Chapter 6. National dishes will be the next area of discussion, since they are a natural progression (discursively and gastronomically) from these foundational sauces.

Chapter 5. Signature foods: A Catalan national dish?

Pere Q: “In festive cuisine here there is more identity, no? And there are some characteristics of Catalan cuisine that are distinctive. And there are these dishes, *pa amb tomàquet*, *escalivada* [roasted vegetables], *esqueixada* [salted cod with other vegetables and garden plants]. And after there are the big stews, goose, rabbit casseroles. Rices, this is more festive cuisine. But I think that one thing that is clear, there is a very strong cultural identity. And moreover communities realise this. This is cooked in their way, things in Catalan style.”

In Chapter 2, I introduced the concept of ‘signature foods’, as theorized by Sidney Mintz (1996). These are foods “conditioned with meaning” (1996: 7) for the people who eat them, and come to represent ideas, concepts and histories within the contexts where they are consumed. As Mintz suggests, the key point about signature foods is not quotidianity, but familiarity, at least enough that the people eating them can create a discourse around them, and place them in an identificatory context where they consider themselves experts. Most informants admitted openly that they don’t eat Catalan dishes every day – and, moreover, most couldn’t, considering their high calorific content, unsuited for contemporary concerns about obesity, and their cost. This process is described well by Pere Q in the introductory quote to this section. Many Catalan dishes are now associated with extra-ordinary or festive events, but that does not make them any less significant as ‘signature dishes’. On the other hand, the exception to this may be *pa amb tomàquet* (literally ‘bread with tomato’, bread which has been rubbed with tomato to soften it and then doused with olive oil and salt). Aside from having some claim to uniqueness, almost all my informants said they eat it almost everyday, since it is easy to prepare and eat on the go.

Some informants suggested that it was products and autochthonous varieties particular to Catalonia that made Catalan cuisine, but that cannot always be the case. On a more basic level, most of the basic ingredients cannot be considered unique to Catalonia, just as day-to-day foods share much in common with Spain or France. While the discussion of autochthonous and Catalan-grown varieties of fruit and vegetables is essential in considering how Catalan food culture connects to identity (and deserves its own discussion in Chapter 7), there was a pervasive sense that what truly makes Catalan food is not its point of origin, but its taste and its flavours. It is a truism to say that the act of cooking converts nature into culture, but cooking also converts raw ingredients into dishes and foods that have a place in a culinary identity.

First I will consider the discourse surrounding many of Catalonia's 'signature dishes', to use Mintz's term, which will lead into a discussion of some of the recurring themes in Catalan gastronomy, much in the style of the first section on sauces. These themes include once more historicism as the foundation of contemporary gastronomy through the ideal of subsistence cuisine and the revival of 'lost' dishes, Catalonia as a '*terra de pas*' (land of migrations), unusual combinations of *mar i muntanya* (land and seafood), and regionality and richness in diversity. I then go into particular detail on the *pa amb tomàquet*, the most ubiquitous Catalan signature dish, which I believe encapsulates many of the ideals of Catalan cuisine that will have been discussed by that point.

5.1 A competition for ‘best Catalan dish’

In November 2013, as part of the celebrations of the 150th issue, the food magazine *Cuina* created a campaign to find out which was the ‘best Catalan dish’. Contributors put forward their answer in either Twitter or Facebook. While this may seem a light-hearted and non-serious social-media based promotion for the magazine, the results were interesting when considering what Catalans consider to be their ‘signature dishes’. The magazine itself has always been careful to side-step political Catalanism, but still places emphasis on Catalan themes, locales and personages, and in this way quietly promotes a pro-Catalan agenda. This campaign is therefore one of many ways of asserting Catalan culinary identity by providing an outlet in which these ideas can be expressed, without being overtly Catalanist.

At the conclusion of the campaign, the top three dishes were clearly *escudella*, *canelons*, and *fricandó*.⁴⁵ During the concluding event of the magazine’s celebrations, three food writers were given two minutes to defend why each one should be the Catalan national dish, and guests would then vote on one of the three. While the arguments were presented with much irony (and mock rivalry between the speakers), the arguments these writers put forward provide a fascinating insight into some of the ideas about Catalan cuisine’s particular characteristics and what makes it distinctive.

⁴⁵ From 174 votes, the results with the top five dishes were: *Escudella i carn d’olla* (26) *Canelons* (14), *Fricandó* (14), *Pa amb tomàquet* (14) and a selection of cod dishes (10) that I put into one category for the purposes of analysis. The category of ‘*escudella i carn d’olla*’ likewise included other names for it e.g. *escudella*, *sopa de galletes*, *carn d’olla* and *pilota*.

Canelons were the first dish to be defended. These are much like Italian cannelloni, tubular forms of pasta stuffed with minced meat or vegetables, and covered with a



Figure 5.1: The image of *escudella i carn d'olla* used in photo elicitation

béchamel sauce,
and sometimes
grated tomato over
the top. They were
originally brought
to Barcelona by
Italian
restaurateurs in the
nineteenth century,
a fact readily

admitted by most informants. This Italian origin does not affect the perception of *canelons* as a Catalan food (an argument put forward at the event). On the contrary, *canelons* were an example of the openness to new ideas idealized by informants.

Canelons are also commonly associated with Saint Steven's day (26th December), where they ideally will use the leftover meat from Christmas Day, which is associated with the other dish, *escudella i carn d'olla*. They therefore well express the ideal of the gastronomic calendar that pervades Catalan culinary identity. At the same time, this association with a particular day also makes the role of *canelons* particular to Catalan culture, since Italians do not eat cannelloni on particular days. During the defence, this was indeed one argument used in favour, that it was a simple dish, which

could use “that filling that is *tota la vida*,⁴⁶ that filling from Christmas”, or any good meat or even brains. For this reason they could be an economical but still hearty dish.

The next defence in favour of *escudella i carn d’olla* played on the position of *escudella* as point of origin for *canelons*. Before this, the presenter said a comment that I had already heard a few times in culinary literature and amongst informants that “We are in the land of *escudella*! That’s all you need to know!”. This in itself should be enough, he suggested, but then went on to say that without *escudella*, there wouldn’t be *canelons* on St Steven’s Day, as the *escudella* customarily eaten on Christmas day throughout Catalonia is the base of *canelons*. This association is so entrenched, that when I showed this image of the *escudella* in photo elicitation, the immediate reactions were that this was for Christmas, one even responding “this is Christmas”. *Escudella i carn d’olla* is a hot pot of various ingredients, usually a selection of meats, a bone, sausage, meatballs (*pilota*), vegetables such as potatoes, cauliflower, beans and anything else that was available. Finally, rice, *fideus* (tiny



Figure 5.2 & 5.3: An example of (left) *canelons*, also used in photo elicitation, and (right) *fricandó*.

⁴⁶ Literally ‘of all one’s life’, a common phrase to suggest something has been present for the speaker’s whole life, or since time immemorial, and can be considered ‘traditional’.

pasta sticks) and/or large pasta pieces (*galletes*) would be added after several hours of cooking time and just before eating (see Figure 5.1). This will often be served as a two-course meal, with the broth acting as first course (the *sopa*, or *escudella* – though there isn't exact consensus on whether the latter just refers to the whole meal), then the remaining, broth-soaked meat and vegetables served as the main meal (*carn d'olla* literally means 'meat of the pot').

Later however, when the same speaker was asked which one he was defending, he replied *pa amb tomate* (aka *pa amb tomàquet*), instead of *escudella*, suggesting his true opinion. In the online vote, the *pa amb tomàquet* actually had a tie with *canelons* and *fricandó* (14 votes), but the decision not to count it may be in line with the prevailing view that it doesn't really count as a proper dish, and is more of a snack food.

The *fricandó* is an interesting dish, and had allegedly been in decline until a recent upsurge in popularity (symptomatic of a more general interest in 'traditional' Catalan dishes). This dish has already been introduced in the discussions of the *sofregit*, but to revisit, Magda (a chef in Vic) described it as "veal, sliced very finely, first covered in flour and fried, then put in a saucepan with a good *sofregit*. And then mushrooms, and this is simmered for a few hours". Its use of the *sofregit* marks it out as a Catalan dish, despite some similarities with French dishes. The inclusion of mushrooms is also an intrinsic part of the *fricandó*, which is also seen as a marker of its Catalan-ness. The fondness (indeed, at times, obsession) for mushrooms in Catalan cuisine was another feature regularly referred to as a defining Catalan feature, and something that

differentiated Catalan cuisine from the rest of Spain, where mushrooms are much less prevalent. Come autumn (and also spring), a popular past time is mushroom gathering (this will be discussed further in Chapter 8, in the context of national identity and landscape).

This standardization of the recipe was something underlined by the speaker at *Cuina*'s event, in that its recipe was universal across Catalonia, whilst with the others, anything could be added depending on individual preference. The implication from this is that *fricandó* has a much greater potential as a unifier of Catalan food culture. He also claimed that the others have forgotten one important point, that "it doesn't have a Castilian translation", since the *escudella* could be a Spanish '*olla podrida*' or '*cocido*', whereas the word '*canelons*' is the same in Catalan and Castilian. Once again, one can see that claims to linguistic uniqueness appear in Catalan gastronomic nationalism, whereby concepts (including dishes) are identifiable to Catalonia alone because they are untranslatable, in particular into Castilian.

It is worth noting that the *escudella* was the dish that won the title of 'Best Catalan Dish', and by a sizeable majority, gaining 75 votes at the party held by *Cuina*, followed by *fricandó* (68 votes), then *canelons*, (63 votes). While the general consensus from my experiences speaking about *escudella* in Catalonia suggests common components (give or take some variations between households), the basic form of the *escudella* is not something unique to Catalonia. Interestingly, many of my informants voluntarily pointed this out, saying that there are many variations of this kind of a hotpot or stew. Barcelona chef Carles happily admitted that:

“The most representative dish would be the *escudella*, our national dish. But if you look at it, *escudella* is no more than a *pot au feu*. Here there’s one, in France, in Germany too. And everywhere, it’s the dish that identifies, like with the Galicians, they have *pote gallego*, or in Madrid the *cocido madrileño*... a subsistence dish.... So the *escudella* is the national dish of Catalonia, but it’s a dish that you would say is born from necessity.”

5.2 The ideal of subsistence cuisine

Once again, Carles’ comment shows an idealization of subsistence cuisine, which is present in many culinary cultures (though, as discussed in a later section in this chapter, this has special ramifications in Catalan identity). Francesc, of Vic’s hospitality guild, who like many informants wasn’t keen on claiming just one dish as particularly representative, claimed that the *sopa de l’escudella* (*escudella* broth) was undoubtedly the most important dish in Catalonia, especially in the past, but it is something that is done all over the world, and may perhaps be the most common worldwide. For that reason, one cannot really say that *escudella i carn d’olla* is a dish that strongly identifies Catalonia in that it differentiates Catalan cuisine from others, but more for its former ubiquity.

Jaume F took a similar line, calling it the “dish that has filled plates for more than a thousand years, the most ancient documented dish in Europe”. This seems to suggest that even though it cannot be claimed as a unique culinary differentiator, its connection with a historical past makes it one of the top candidates for carrying Catalan identity. However, at a pro-independence lunch, one of the organizers of the event explained that though other dishes may be similar cross-culturally, they will still

be uniquely interpreted in Catalonia. For example, the *escudella i carn d'olla* is similar, but not the same as the Spanish *cocido*, since the Catalan version was 'richer and tastier' than the Spanish version (I cannot rule out some chauvinism here, considering the nature of the event).

It is a filling stew too, and high in calories, a fact often mentioned in discussions of the *escudella*, connecting it with not just a rural lifestyle with work in the fields, but also work in the factories as Catalonia industrialized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The advantage of the *escudella* was that it could be left to cook over hours, so women were able to work without needing to tend the fire. Indeed, in childhood Jaume F recalled his mother telling him to go and remind his father to put the *fideus* pasta and rice into the *escudella* in the late afternoon, so their supper would be ready to eat when she returned home from her shift.⁴⁷ Jaume was not the only respondent to connect a dish with Catalonia's social history, in this case the industrial past that has contributed much to the development of early Catalanism and contemporary identity. Like many Catalan dishes, it is also spread throughout all social classes (a point Jaume was keen to emphasise), the only difference being that the ingredients might be different depending on income.

In the photo elicitation, many respondents also selected *escudella i carn d'olla* as a national dish (amongst others), if not their own personal favourite. One respondent hypothesized that it was because of its strong association with Christmas that *escudella* had such a prized position as a national food. Since it is considered *the* food

⁴⁷ Jaume went so far as to claim it was a 'feminist' dish.

to eat on this day, according to the gastronomic calendar, Catalans have managed to develop a strong familiarity with it, making it a typical signature food. The dish also has strong familial associations, since it is over the *escudella i carn d'olla* that yearly Christmas meetings will take place (in the words of one informant “you get to see mum, and taste her food”).

The conversion of quotidian dishes into a festive, and later a luxury, cuisine has interesting ramifications in the minds of informants. As Pere Q’s quote at the start of this section suggests, there is more identity attached to festive cuisine. The *escudella* has been converted from an example of subsistence cuisine, eaten every day as drudgery because there was nothing else, into a special dish associated with pleasant times of reunion and festive occasions. One should also not deny the importance of the role of such reunions as places where national identity is discussed and debated, nor the importance of the knowledge that other households in Catalonia are eating the same food at the same time, a culinary variation on B.Anderson’s imagined communities.

Returning to *canelons*, Nuria the food historian was keen to point out that though they may be Italian in origin, their usage in Catalonia differs particularly from its usage there, since for Catalans it is a festive dish, “the national dish for Sundays, since the nineteenth century”. She also claims that *canelons* are a national dish because it was a Catalan, a Mr Flor from the brand Pavó, who was the first to invent dried *caneló* pasta, which was a huge success in Barcelona and allowed it to be made in the home, hence its association with the city, following the habit of associating place and food.

Food writers Pau and Jaume F likewise suggested *canelons* as the national dish, since they were first popularised in Barcelona, the capital city. Jaume F went further, using *canelons* as another example of the inter-classist nature of Catalan cuisine, since they rapidly moved from an upper-class restaurant environment to that of popular cuisine in the home. In common with the historicizing of dishes, Francesc, at the hospitality guild in Vic, immediately discussed the history and background of the *canelons* when they came up in our conversation.

“I always explain that *canelons* come from China (the pasta is from China), and Italy put in minced meat and wrapped them round, through France where they added béchamel, and then arrived in Barcelona where they put a tomato sauce on top to make *canelons a la Barcelonina*... It’s not of the Chinese, nor the Italians, nor the French. So, if you want to appropriate it then fine, but look at the history, you will see it doesn’t have ownership”.

5.3 A land and cuisine of migrations

Francesc’s comments and the awareness of their former ‘otherness’ show how *canelons* are also a useful example of how Catalan cuisine has adapted dishes from outside their borders, and made them their own. This was a common thread running through Catalan culinary discourse, the way in which it is an open cuisine, receptive to new influences, and adaptable to change. Catalonia is described as a ‘land of migrations’ (*terra de pas*) through which many civilizations have passed and left their mark. In terms of cuisine, this means an acceptance and even emphasis on the origins of some parts of the cuisine beyond the borders of Catalonia itself, related to migratory movements. In the words of Ignasi, a chef in the mountains near Vic:

“There is this basis, there’s not a [single] cuisine, they’re all fruits of different invasions. For example, the Greeks brought vines, grain, a series of things. The Romans, a few others. Everyone brought things. And America brought us many things. In Catalonia, we are the fruit of many influences.”

His comment is almost identical to that of Josep S, editor of the magazine *Cuina*, when discussing the same subject, who referred to influences from Arab, Iberian, Greek, Roman, Jewish, Italian cuisines, and also American produce and more recent influences from other parts of Spain, and modern French cuisine. It is particularly interesting and relevant that Josep is placing contemporary culinary movements and influences as part of a longer trend in Catalan cuisine. In this way, the French-influenced *nova cuina* can be justified as conforming to historical influences and an accepted ‘tradition of innovation’.

Barcelona chef Fermi likewise talked about the importance of external influences through history, pointing in particular to Roman influences. He contrasted this with the Basque country, which he also commended for its excellent culinary reputation, but claimed it had a limited *receptari* (recipe selection) due to its isolation in the Pyrenees. Fermi saw geography there as the primary feature, yet also a general “state of mind” which he also saw as essential for the openness to cuisine:

“We have had a particularly lucky geography. Others have a different geographical luck, but firstly we have had the sea. We’ve been a commercial people; we’ve been envied many times. We’ve had many different cultures here and this has predestined us...[Our geography] situated us in a place where people are passing.”

Fermi makes reference to the ‘commercial’ nature of Catalans, another national ideal. This ideal takes its origins from the maritime Catalan-Aragonese empire of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, lauded as Catalonia’s golden age, and also referred to in a positive sense from a gastronationalist perspective because it was a time of trade, and fits into this discourse of a cosmopolitan, diverse culture. Once again, national ideals are related to constructions of history, so central to nationalist movements.

The notion of the ‘*terra de pas*’ is also raised in the context of contemporary immigration to Catalonia. The comparison of the contemporary situation with an idealised characteristic of the historical past allows a justification of large-scale immigration in contemporary Catalonia. To accept migrants, and above all make them Catalan, is normalised as a natural part of the Catalan identity past and present. This view is particularly promoted in Omnim Cultural and the Assemblea, and also the language normalization programs. The need for a Catalan culture to continue adapting outside influences was a key part of Pep V’s Catalanist worldview (and that of the Vic branch of Omnim he managed), to avoid it becoming folklorized.

It is also revealing that the first words to the Preamble of the much disputed 2006 Statute of Autonomy emphasise Catalonia’s status as a land of migrations (Organic Law 6/2006 of the 19th July, on the Reform of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia: 1), “Catalonia has been shaped over the course of time through the contribution of the energy of many generations, traditions and cultures, which found in Catalonia a land of welcome”. Isidre, a Vic chef, expressed a similar sentiment with regards to cuisine:

“One has to really respect and look after our customs and traditions, but remain open to everything. More than anything, Catalonia has always been a land of migrations (*terra de pas*), and a land of mixing. It has taken elements that were foreign, and that have arrived at being typical things of ours. Like beans (*mongetes*), *pa amb tomàquet*, because these have come from the new world.”

Isidre’s remark does suggest the problem inherent in having an ideology of openness when it comes to gastronationalism, that of the risk of losing culinary identity because of a too rapid uptake of characteristics of other culinary identities. Carles was another cook that agreed strongly that Catalan cuisine was an open one, particularly as someone who extolled ‘traditional’ cuisine with influences from modern techniques and non-Catalan cuisines:

“There is a small danger. So before, something that is undeniable is that the *sofregit* is one of the bases of Catalan cuisine. The tomato wasn’t Catalan, evidently! Bit by bit the food was incorporated into the cuisine and the cuisine is capable of assimilating them. Now as the intrusion of foods and styles is so quick, there is a danger that within decades one loses identity. So evidently we have to prepare a branch of cooks that will preserve this cuisine a bit without it turning rancid.”

The concern that an ideal of openness in Catalan cuisine could lead to a weakening of culinary identity is therefore very present. However, very few of my informants (be they cooks or anyone else) believed that Catalan cuisine would ever be in danger of disappearing. For that to happen, Catalan identity would have to disappear entirely. There is a general acceptance though that its form may change. These concerns also relate to some of the complaints surrounding the cataloguing of Catalan cuisine for the UNESCO intangible world heritage candidacy (discussed in Chapter 6).

Both Isidre and Carles likewise also pointed out the inclusion of products from the New World, particularly the tomato, as part of this process, and what has allowed its survival. Francesc, in the context of Osona, also pointed to chocolate, tomato and potatoes, that were not present in Catalan cuisine in the 16th and 17th centuries, but that “we have adapted and made them ours”, and that a local variety of potato (*patata de bufet*) is now an identificatory product for the county. It should be said though that as we have seen, *pa amb tomàquet* is undoubtedly one of most Catalan-identified dishes in the cuisine, and also perhaps the most commonly eaten dish in Catalonia. Its significance will be discussed later in this chapter, but it is worth mentioning that my informants are quite aware and open about the fact that the tomato is a fairly recent addition to the cuisine.

In a similar way, when eating with Catalans, the origins or background of dishes were often discussed or pointed out to me. The consumption of ‘non-Catalan’ food on a regular basis does not affect the self-perception of being Catalan at all. Francesc saw this as part of a general historical trend, pointing out that other basic ingredients of Catalan cuisine, such as aubergines and oranges, were introduced by the Arabs, albeit slowly. Like Carles, he admitted there is a problem today where this process may happen too fast, but still he didn’t see this as a problem.

Several informants admitted that the food they normally ate in most contexts was ‘Italian’ in origin (i.e. pasta or pizza), and north African and Japanese cuisine has also gained popularity (the latter thanks no doubt to its promotion by Ferran Adrià and other new cuisine chefs). Indeed, one of my more unusual fieldwork experiences was

eating sushi alongside *pa amb tomàquet* with a group of young women in their twenties – the incongruity of the situation was not lost on them! Josep S, the editor of the *Cuina*, compared the current influence of Asiatic cuisine may be like that of Italian cuisine in the nineteenth century, which brought Catalonia many of its favourite dishes. Perhaps, he hypothesised, sushi will be seen as a characteristic of Catalan cuisine in a hundred years, as could couscous. This was not a minority view, and the presenter at a master class in medieval Catalan history⁴⁸ even suggested that sushi might be eaten at Christmas in a century! Pep V and Pere Q in Vic also suggested something similar, Pere referring to how he had catalanized curry by mixing it with *fideus*, and Pep emphasising his fondness for the variety of north African cuisine now available thanks to the large immigrant population. As he said:

“Most people would say this wasn’t Catalan cuisine, but yes it’s got to become part of the traditional Catalan cuisine some time. All these people are bringing in their cuisine. For me, cuisine is something that is globalized, but at the same time part of our own identity, and it helps us to understand our own diversity, as a positive value.”

This was often paralleled with a more open outlook in general to outside influence in Catalonia, and one that was at odds with the perceived insularity of Spain. In this way, cuisine comes to express another perceived difference between Catalonia and Spain. Jaume F in particular was partial to this approach, claiming that Catalan cuisine was “the most mixed, combined cuisine in the world”. He described it as “a reflection of the country”, and once again aligned an “inter-ethnic cuisine” with an “inter-classist” one. Catalan cuisine is described as a “very open cuisine”, and he

⁴⁸ Given by the Fundació Alicia, at Forum Girona on 24th February 2013.

compared it to Portuguese cuisine, a cuisine that adapted aspects of its colonies' cuisines.

He characterizes Spanish cuisine as a polar opposite, that has not adapted the tastes of the areas it has colonized. It might take products, but it does not take entire dishes, whereas the opposite is true of Catalan cuisine. Reference to history comes out once again in this discourse, as the 'Spanish' approach to colonial adaptations is perceived as a rapine acquisition of products of the New World, without bothering to learn about the position they occupy within that cuisine – an attitude he even called a “psychiatric illness of the Spaniards”. Catalan and Portuguese cuisine (the latter also a historic enemy of Spain) on the other hand are personified as more respectful and less chauvinist when adopting these external aspects, taking ingredients and bothering to learn their recipes wholesale.

While Jaume's remarks are those of a strongly pro-Catalan informant (indeed, even amongst his friends and admirers his research is criticized for presenting Catalan cuisine as the best in the world), this favourable comparison with Spanish cuisine is not unique. At the Fundació Alicia, a foundation dedicated to culinary research and education, a conversation with a team of researchers on their own attitudes to the adoptive potential of Catalan cuisine revealed a more complex connection between this aspect of Catalan cuisine and national identity as a whole. While in favour of the notion of '*terra de pas*' ('land of migrations'), they pointed out that Catalonia is not unique in this respect, and many other European countries have been that too. Italy and France have received migrant communities, but they have not had the openness to

variation that Catalonia has had, since this would be an insult, not just to their cuisines, but also national identity.

Most interestingly, two of the team, Laia and Jaume, interpreted this in the context of the theories of a Catalan philosopher, José Ferrater Mora, who wrote extensively on the ideal national ‘character’. He specified four characteristics, ‘*continuitat*’ (continuity), ‘*seny*’ (good sense), ‘*mesura*’ (measure) and ‘*ironia*’ (irony). *Rauxa*, the opposite of *seny*, was also a trait he discussed in his work. For Jaume and Laia, irony was a central part of the Catalan character, which has meant that Catalans don’t take themselves too seriously, and while they have huge pride and respect in what they have, this also gives a certain perspective, and acceptance of new ideas. Jaume went on to explain, “Catalonia is a place where patriotism doesn’t survive (it’s not very nationalist). It’s very open, very connected with the world. Nationalism is born from the lack of humour.” The group agreed in response that Catalan identity is very open at heart, which translates into the integration of other products and ideas.

The point about *rauxa*, is also that “it breaks all norms – but with *seny*. To break things with respect and in a good way”, and create innovation. Like Jaume, there was an unfavourable comparison with Madrid amongst the team. Some had worked with students in Madrid, to teach them dishes from El Bulli. However, these students lacked the concept of *seny*, or the desire to gain a deep understanding of the origins and inspiration behind the dishes. As a result, the finished product was rushed and sub-standard. Their attitude to difference was also more dismissive - difference was accepted, but only so far. “It [Madrid] doesn’t have a proper character, it’s of too

many places” they highlighted in their perception of Madrid. They felt that Madrid and its inhabitants didn’t have a true identity, but instead a confused and unacknowledged mixture of Spain’s multiple regional identities. In contrast, the group believed that awareness of the origins of their national foods should be present amongst Catalans who took their identity seriously.

The food writer Pau, who was also involved in the Nova *Cuina* movement situates a long-standing openness to innovation in a modern context. For example, modern Catalan cuisine has been highly influenced by Japanese cuisine, which has integrated well with the Catalan due to a similar use of fish. Restaurants serving traditional Catalan food are promoted by Catalan gastronomes alongside those newer restaurants serving Japanese-influenced cuisine (amongst others). He reasoned it thus: “because we have had many influences from other cultures. To be in Catalonia, it’s all Catalan, we use Catalan products, and we receive influences, so our cuisine is a total mix. It keeps going.”

It is also this reasoning that “to be in Catalonia, it’s all Catalan”, was also a defence of *nova cuina* against its detractors, who claim that such cuisine cannot be called truly Catalan. This aspect of the ideology of openness therefore plays well for the proponents of the *nova cuina* movement in Catalonia, since it can be marketed as part of a general trend that has historical roots.

Time and again, this discussion has returned to notions of historicism. Before ending this section, one should conclude with a discussion of the ideas of Pep P, for whom a

historical past is enmeshed with the notion of openness and dynamism. This ideal formed the basis of his worldview of Catalan cuisine, as he began our interview with the following words:

“Cuisine has a transcendental importance in the definition of Catalan identity. Cuisine is always one of the fundamental pillars of the culture of a people in our civilization, as well as for its collective identity. There are elements that come from a long time past and form this base that we have as Catalan cuisine. But there are also new elements that have gone incorporated with time, in the last few centuries, the last few decades and in the last few years that have been a process of integration. I do this preamble because Catalan cuisine has a characteristic, particular to a few great cuisines, of being very permeable to products that come from outside, or that Catalan travellers have discovered, and that they have incorporated into the cuisine.

[VC: Catalan cuisine is an open cuisine you mean, like Catalan identity?]

Yes, exactly. It’s an identity open to the world and so it’s a cuisine open to the world, This characteristic makes sure it’s a very dynamic cuisine. And very rich at times, in the sense of diversity not luxury...At the same time it produces a very great alimentary and culinary diversity.”

There is not much more to add to these statements, which sum up well the sentiments expressed by his compatriots in the preceding paragraphs. His comments also draw out the very interesting point of culinary diversity in Catalonia, a related concept, and one that is worth expanding. But first, the discussion must return to the original discussion of national dishes.

5.4 Rediscovery of ‘lost’ dishes and the preservation of identity

Some Catalans feel that they are losing their cuisine. I once heard Concepció mourn that you could not find good *peus de porc* (pigs trotters) anymore, people don’t want them. Ditto the rich (and somewhat off-putting) *cap i pota* (pig head and snout). This discourse of loss is a powerful one, and is a convincing call to action to galvanize Catalans into participating in their own culture and protecting it. A large part of Catalonia’s gastronomic literature centres on this premise, as did many of the events celebrating Catalan food in the years after the dictatorship. *El que hem menjat* by Josep Pla (1972) was written as a swansong to traditional Catalan cuisine, specifically in the region of Empordà. In another work, *L’art del Menjar a Catalunya* (1977), in the context of the post-Francoist re-Catalanization project, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán claims that “amongst the symbols of destroyed Catalan identity are gastronomic symbols” (Vázquez Montalbán, 1977: 21), and further “recovering Catalan cuisine today is almost an archaeological endeavour except in those area that have conserved a great fidelity in their gastronomic identity...everywhere else every exception confirms the rule and gastronomic memory has been reduced to one or two half-hidden dishes” (ibid: 22).

However, all is not lost for dishes such as *cap i pota*. Magda, a cook in Vic, included *cap i pota* in her list of preferred Catalan dishes, but likewise claimed it was a dish that had been lost, and that she has tried to recover. Indeed, the reclaiming of *cap i pota* was often held up as an example of foods that are disappearing, its recovery being a sign of increased interest on the part of Catalans in their culinary heritage and

in preserving their historical cuisine.⁴⁹ For example, this was one of the *esmorzars de forquilla* (heavy breakfasts) by Vic's hospitality guild in their gastronomic open days (discussed further in Chapter 7). Magda was keen to point out that there were several clients who came especially for this dish (again, referring to the *esmorzars de forquilla*), since it was difficult to find elsewhere. She added that she felt very happy to have resurrected this dish, and that it was perhaps the most Catalan on her menu.

Another informant, Francesc from the Vic hospitality guild, expressed this sentiment more explicitly, claiming that the greatest work of current Catalan chefs was to bring to light dishes that existed before, and might be lost. Such dishes were normally too calorific for today's lifestyles, so couldn't be eaten in exactly their original form. However "what chefs today have done is take this product, and made a format, some new textures, but the taste has the memory of what it was". Vindication is therefore not always about exact replication, but an attempt to preserve a memory and taste, which is enough to provide a direct link with the past. This connection though has been suitably updated to contemporary tastes, so is not so antiquated to be irrelevant, and therefore allows consumers and promoters to participate (in some way) in the senses of their national past.

Josep S, editor of *Cuina*, had this preservation even more firmly set in his agenda, and saw it as a key task of his magazine and its promotion of Catalonia:

⁴⁹ This trend has been noticed elsewhere, for example in the increased consumption in Barcelona markets of butcher's off-cuts and offal (Contreras, 2007 in Fuentes et al, 2014)

“It’s that we want to reflect the Catalan cuisine of today. And an important part of this is the preservation and revaluation, the divulgation of the cuisine from the past. And another part with contemporary cuisines that evolve, is that they do this cuisine with new things. That they have another point, that without renouncing ancient cuisine they’ll be at the forefront of world cuisines... There’s no contradiction in this. It’s that we don’t like to speak about the past as if it was a piece in a museum. Nor that the past doesn’t interest us or that we don’t like innovation.”

One can draw parallels with Pep V’s more general railing against the folklorization of Catalan identity. The informant who made the connection between his gastronomic activities and his national identity was Josep Lladonosa i Giró, a well-respected veteran chef, now retired, who organised the first Gastronomic Assortment of Catalonia in 1975, to showcase Catalan cuisine. As he explained, at the end of the Francoist period, Catalan dishes were gradually disappearing. Thus his motivation for this festival was a sense of duty to stem this apparent dissolution of Catalan cuisine. Furthermore, he explained that his entire career had centred on promoting cuisine as a Catalanist duty. For him, activism in promoting Catalan cuisine and dedicating oneself to its preservation are strongly linked to strong pro-Catalan national sentiments.

5.5 National dishes and unusual combinations: *mar i muntanya*, *dolç i salat*

The *canelons*, *escalivada*, *cap i pota*, *botifarra i mongetes*, these were all dishes that Magda tried to add to the *menu* (three course set meal) every weekend, which always had to include a ‘very Catalan dish’. The weekend of our interview, this was calamari stuffed with meat, an example of *mar i muntanya* cuisine. This type of cuisine,

literally ‘sea and mountain’ came up time and again in my conversations with informants as truly characteristic of Catalan cuisine. In discussing pork dishes, Magda also underlined the importance of *botifarra amb mongetes* (sausage with broad beans), a dish that never really fell out of favour, but which has now been established as a ‘typical’ national dish. In the context of the resurrection of dishes, Manel, a local chef in Manlleu, a town neighbouring Vic, thought that one of the most important elements of Catalan cuisine was the meat (“chickens, geese, pork, veal”) with vegetables and fruits, justifying this by claiming that “we work a lot with fruits”. He was referring in particular to a dish local to Manlleu, sausage with pears, which he was also proud to have rediscovered, and an example of *agredolç* cuisine.

Frequently, after describing the foundational sauces as what makes Catalan cuisine distinctive, my informants would then mention the habit of mixing fish and meat, meat and fruit, sweet and savoury. Straight after her remarks on the *sofregit* in the last chapter, Pepa claimed, “we mix foodstuffs [that seem strange], it’s very important, it gives a special touch to things. We put fruit into a dish, and we do many of these mixes”. Fermi suggested that if we were talking about obviously Catalan dishes, aside from containing a *sofregit*, it would have to be an example of *mar i muntanya*. The gastronomic journalist Pau too described the “never-playful game that is this mixing of common elements, meat fruit, fish and meat, *mar i muntanya*”, and which is “very identifying” for Catalan cuisine. Likewise, the Michelin-starred chef Carme Ruscalleda made the same point, linking it with the notion of the open cuisine and ideal of an open nationalism described earlier:

“I think the Catalans have a very open way of thinking. Because we’ve always had a very eclectic and varied cuisine. We have always made cold and hot, sweet and savoury, meat and fish...It’s for the many cuisines that there were. For the mixing of cultures. The contrasts. If we look at the cuisine of Castile, it’s a more limited cuisine, they have a much shorter recipe list, and ours is very long and varied. We’ve been mixing things for a long time.”

Carme was not the only informant to make this parallel, and it was often in this context that the aforesaid migratory influences on Catalonia as a *terra de pas* were discussed, with a listing of the different groups who had left their influence on the cuisine. Concerning the actual origin of *mar i muntanya/agredolç* cuisine, there are a number of theories, and it is possible there is no one explanation. These different ideas are useful to consider however, as they have the potential to tell us much about regional identity construction and how this relates to Catalan social history, landscape and the interplay of regional and national identities.

Jaume suggests the origin as coming from fishermen, and fairly recent, from the nineteenth century or so. It was a cuisine based on necessity, of combining whatever was available such as a piece of chicken, potatoes, beans, and any other vegetables. Mon likewise saw a subsistence cuisine origin, perhaps related to Catholic religious prohibitions where fish was required on certain days, but meat was also available. This though she associated with a cuisine in the interior, where fish needed to be used up, or where preserved cod was the only fish available (for this reason, cod itself is an important ingredient in Catalan cuisine). Another informant related its origins to the social and cultural history of the region, as younger sons of fishermen or farmers entered the cork industry that developed in the nineteenth century, and each brought foods from home to communal meals.

One of my older *Vigatan* informants, Montserrat, a lady in her 90s, claimed that this popularity in *mar i muntanya* is only a recent trend throughout all Catalonia, of the last two or three decades. Her daughter disagreed, claiming that some dishes were “of all one’s life”, such as ‘chicken with lobster’ or ‘meatballs with calamari’, and using their mention in Josep Pla as a justification that it certainly went back to the nineteenth century. Her mother agreed with this statement, though added that it certainly didn’t go back to the fifteenth century. Their particular connection with Empordà, a zone in the north-east of Catalonia was also underlined in this context. It is interesting that Empordà is often considered one of the most Catalan areas (I considered it as a field site), since it is geographically furthest from Spain, is the place of origin of the national dance and also celebrated by many of its writers and painters (Josep Pla especially). I was often told that Empordà was a microcosm of Catalonia itself, particularly in the huge variety of landscapes to be found within this small area. As the recognised place of origin of a universally recognised trait of Catalan cuisine, I suggest that this may also have contributed to Empordà’s standing as a nationalist centre, much as *llonganissa* and the sausage industry has done with Vic.

Sat and her mother’s remarks also show a common feature of the discourse of my informants, that is the awareness of the place of origin of certain dishes or ingredients within Catalonia. Empordà is likewise also associated with the other type of ‘mixing’, that of *agredolç* cuisine. Montserrat remarked that this was something she associated particularly with Empordà, and less with Vic. Her daughter added though that in Vic *coca* (sweet flatbread) “has always been” consumed with *llonganissa* sausage. This

was something also remarked upon during a photo elicitation with the Assemblea group, this time in contrast to Barcelona, where such combinations would be avoided, and a former inhabitant claimed he had had to acclimatize (interestingly, Barcelona is seen as having a less concentrated Catalan sentiment). Sat and her mother also gave other examples of *agredolç* cuisine, such as combining sugar with beans, hare with chocolate, liquor and forest herbs, cod with sugar or sweet pigs trotters.

For the hare, both gave an extensive account of the recipe and how it would be made, another commonly occurring feature in informant discourse, showing how clearly processes of culinary preparation are ingrained in conceptions of food. The sweet pig's trotters were regarded as something lost, and that surely I had never consumed them. Sat explained that her recipe was from 'Can Monset', the home of her French paternal grandmother's home, and that this dish was shared with French Catalonia. Here we can see a connection made in everyday discourse with a conception of the Catalan-speaking countries, along with the aforementioned awareness of locality and origins, suggesting a strong awareness of regional variations within Catalonia. Speaking at other times with the older Montserrat, another product strongly associated with the area of Girona is also the *botifarra dolça*, literally 'sweet sausage', where sugar is combined with meat in the sausage casing. From my experience of eating it, it is generally consumed with cooked apples, bread and milk, and often as a dessert.

Sat, her mother and several other informants mentioned the propensity to *dolç et salat* straight after discussing *mar i muntanya*, suggesting that these two characteristics are

closely linked in the minds of informants. Unlike *mar i muntanya*, the *agredolç* cuisine has a much longer history, and my informants almost universally recognised its roots in medieval cuisine. *Agredolç* cuisine is in fact probably one of the most obvious examples of the presence of historically documented cuisine being consumed today in Catalonia. It is therefore a potent symbol of the consumption of national pasts (Barthes, 2013). The description of this kind of food as ‘characteristic’ or ‘determining’ was usually followed in informant discourse by a discussion of its place in history. For example, Pere Q from the University of Vic remarked:

“The most characteristic things of Catalan cuisine are stewing, combining the tastes of meat and fruit, this is characteristic. Sweet and savoury. This combination, this is a clear Catalan element...For example, goose with oranges (French) is a dish that arrived in France from the north of Italy, where it arrived from Catalan cuisine in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.”

He then went on to discuss the political movements of the Catalan-Aragonese Empire, and how this influenced Italian cuisine, which then went on to influence that of France in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. Another informant with the historicist bent, Jaume F, made an important point regarding *agredolç* cuisine, which differentiated it from similar cooking styles in Europe, which was that the fruit was combined with the dishes during the cooking process, not placed with them at the end. As such, the favours are fully integrated into the dish, giving it a truly sweet-and-sour flavour. Another direct connection he made with the medieval past included the popular dish of fruit stuffed with meat, for example the *pomes de relleu* (stuffed apples) and *botifarra dolça*. Like many ‘national’ dishes, this was particularly associated with festive events, and in cookbooks is often described as a dish of the

Festa Major or annual village fete. Interestingly, it is also commonly associated with Empordà, from whence it has now spread to other areas in the last decade or so.

My other two principal historicist informants, Josep L and Josep S, were more explicit in drawing this historical connection inherent in *agredolç* cuisine. Josep L recalled that “This comes from a long time ago, these *agredolços*, from the medieval era when it was much used”, and that the use of honey or vinegar that is central to this cooking style helped both flavour and preserve dishes. Josep S was even more explicit, with his response to “what determines Catalan cuisine?”:

“Surely that it comes from the Middle Ages. And has these ancient dishes like ‘goose with pears’, which combined meat with fruit, with particular products from the Mediterranean.”

5.6 Regionality and richness in diversity

Josep S later suggested that historically Catalonia has not been able to support larger livestock on a grand scale (unlike other parts of Spain, e.g. Andalucía, Cantabria or Castile and Leòn). It is however home to huge variations in terms of both produce and cooking styles, as should already have become clear from the discussion so far. Both my informants and culinary literature described Catalonia as ‘rich’, ‘varied’, and ‘diverse’. This has several ramifications, not least because this is often used as a contrast with Spain, which is presented as monolingual, intolerant and conformist, refusing to accept the variety of identities within its borders. In other words, Catalonia

is identified as more tolerant of its regions than Spain is of its own on a larger scale (e.g. Vall d'Aran in north-west Catalonia and acceptance of the Aranese language there). The discussion of the ethnography in this section will also show the importance placed upon an *awareness* of these varieties, and their particular locales. In doing so, Catalans show knowledge of their national landscapes and patrimony, which are not just sources of pride, but signify knowledge of the nation and its characteristics and symbols. For a cultural nationalism, such knowledge is key to self-identifying as a Catalan.

This 'richness' in variety came through in discussions of national dishes. While the discussion so far suggests some consensus on a national dish, others were sceptical of the claim that there was one single national dish. Even if it could be narrowed down to a small selection, there would be many different variations throughout Catalonia. Throughout my interview with Pep P, he placed continued emphasis upon diversity and richness, and before our interview he stated clearly that he found a question such as 'what is Catalonia's national dish?' to be out of place. Being asked which was the most representative dish of Catalonia was an affront to the complexity of Catalan cuisine. In the words of Nuria, a food historian,

"It makes it [the cuisine] poor. Because a cuisine is not a dish, it's a way of doing. A way of eating, of understanding. Catalan cuisine can never be defined by one dish alone, nor can any global cuisine. Nor by a single product, because we're very rich in products. And in seasonality, which are what makes the products. The richness of the produce is what is Catalan."

Aside from bringing up Nuria's earlier point that it is the act of cooking ('way of doing') which makes a dish Catalan, this "rich in produce" (*ric en producte*) was to become a common theme throughout food-related discourse in Catalonia. Oriol, a graphic designer of food-themed T-shirts, considered diversity to be the most important element in Catalan culinary identity. Localism is also important, with the "specific food for each area" (Nuria). Others in the field discussed this too, and in fact it was probably the most commonly recurring theme in my interviews.

For example, Pau connected it to history ("It's the richness of the *rebot* that has greatly marked what has been this country, territory, especially in the 15th century of the conquerors. A great maritime relationship with other territories, and spices came in... These travellers, they've made a cuisine naturally"), discussing it in the context of the listing of Catalonia's migrations discussed earlier ("Arab cuisine and the cuisine of the south. Old and New Catalonia", a "contaminated cuisine", "an exterior cuisine, marine, open to the Mediterranean"). Yet Pau also saw this diversity and variety as differentiating Catalan cuisine from that of others, claiming:

"I think [what differentiates it] is a great variety and great personality. Many times, poorer peoples, because they are from the interior, have much more limited resources. It's a cuisine that is very much of subsistence. Based on potages, soups, stews, with a lot of fat. There's a lot of sea, where it makes it lighter. The proximity to the sea lightens it a lot, with fish, with nature, the boat. And it differentiates greatly from the cuisine of the interior, and afterwards there's a frontier cuisine that comes from many things. [VC: *Mar i muntanya?*] Yes, you see this everywhere. [VC: *dolç i salat?*]. Yes, yes it's very curious. The madness of using goose with pears, a fruit with a meat, honestly! It's surprising. But it works well."

His link with the richness in variety and subsistence cuisine was not unique, and it seems that they were often two sides of the coin, much as *agredolç* was to *mar i muntanya*. Carles believed that to fully understand Catalan cuisine as a whole, one must “bear in mind that Catalan cuisine is not a single cuisine. There are various cultures within Catalonia”. He then went on to divide Catalonia into five main areas, and went into extensive detail on their individual characteristics: Barcelona, the northern coast, the southern coast, the centre and the Pyrenees. Barcelona absorbs influences and has great diversity within itself. North of Barcelona, there is a manner of doing fish, the *suquet* (he describes it as “a very autochthonous” style) which originated on fishing boats to use whatever vegetables were available and unmarketable fish. South of Barcelona, there is *romesco* cuisine, and totally different to that of 200 km away. Pork, as well as cod define the central cuisine. He characterises it as “the cuisine of drying”, for the preserving of sausages. Finally, the Pyrenean cuisine he describes as “a miserable, austere cuisine”, with inventive strategies for survival. As a chef of the *nova cuina*, he linked this diversity with the contemporary movement in modern Catalan cuisine: “This diversity is what configures in some way this explosion of potential that you see in Catalonia right now, to do a more modern, vanguard cuisine”.

There were times when I thought this attitude somewhat contradictory in comparison with the discourse of the idealization of subsistence cuisine. I explained as much to Jaume F, who argued that richness in produce was indeed true in that there was a great deal of variety, but that signified more a little of everything than a huge bounty (“Catalonia has historically been very poor in primary materials... It was a very hard

Mediterranean, but yes there was a great variety, in little quantity, but yes, the greatest variety in Europe”).

It was this ‘diversity’ that should be idealised, in the form of different varieties in vegetables, fruits and grain, breeds of livestock, fish, mushrooms etc., and becomes clear in the revival of these different autochthonous varieties. Moreover, there is an almost competitive conversational game in Catalonia, of naming as many varieties of possible of a particular fruit or vegetable when in company. This became particularly noticeable in the photo elicitation. When I showed an image of the Vic market to the younger *sardana* dancers, they began taking it in turns to name all the varieties of tomatoes available in Catalonia, both from what they saw in the photo and their own knowledge.

It was as if they were trying to out-do each other with how many they could name, both of local varieties (such as the Montserrat tomato, significant because it associated with the shrine of one of Catalonia’s patron saints), and other more generic ones, such as cherry tomato, or the *tomàquets de penjar* (hanging tomatoes) for use in *pa amb tomàquet*. Other times it would be oil, and the different types of olive and their localities within Catalonia. On a few occasions the theme would be how many dishes one could name using a particular ingredient (in the photo elicitation, this was cod). Tallies weren’t kept of who had said what, but they were a means of showing knowledge of Catalan products, and by extension, national knowledge.

This attitude to variety/poverty may have been inspired by Josep Pla, who dedicates a chapter to this very phenomenon in his work *El que hem menjat* ('What we have eaten', 1972). He admits that the popular dish for decades (if not centuries) was *escudella i carn d'olla*, though he bemoans the elevated cost of the dish and its decline in popularity (still a pertinent complaint). Despite the appearance of monotony however, there is actually "enormous diversity" (ibid: 228) in local and county cuisine. He even claims, "this diversity is so fabulous, that I don't think one could ever do a cookbook of Catalan cuisine. This type of book wants a particular generality, and this can never happen. It's a country that has a palate that is often county, if not only local" (ibid). This might not be unusual in any country, but it is extraordinarily so in Catalonia, he argues.

There is moreover another element of variety, in the form of the gastronomic calendar, a point which has repeatedly occurred and deserves greater elaboration in Chapter 7, since it is another theme pervading Catalan gastronomic identity. Pla claims that the seasonal cuisine of the year is "so diversified", that there is a clear cuisine for spring, summer, autumn and winter (to which he dedicates several chapters for each one), and that this progression of seasonal products is clearly visible within markets (hence their discussion in Chapter 7). This parallels a comment made by several of my informants who remembered eating *escudella* regularly, that at least sometimes they had some variations throughout the year, so the monotony was bearable. Pla concludes his argument thus (ibid: 228-229):

"One can say that our traditional cuisine is mediocre, often precarious, often very thrifty...the country has never been rich enough to do a cuisine separate

from that of the popular current, rich, substantial and thought out like in France... Its monotony has been modified by the elements of diversity already discussed. In a culinary sense, each county is a world. Afterwards, there are the seasons of the year”

Apparent monotony is therefore counteracted by huge regional variation, of which most Catalans have at least a basic awareness, so much so to at least be able to associate a particular area, town or county with certain products or dishes. Jaume was quick to point out that this diversity was in strong contrast to Spain, which had little variety in either produce or dishes, part of his negative attitude to the Spanish state. His view though was far from unique, and informants would regularly compare the huge and varied list or recipes (*receptari*) with that of Spain, or more commonly individual regions of the Spanish state. One well-known chef and writer, Josep Lladonosa, who has written extensively on Catalan cuisine, claimed that having studied all the culinary traditions of the Spain, it was only on Catalan cuisine that you could easily write an extensive cookbook.

The contemporary Catalan chef Carme Ruscalleda defines the Catalan as “someone who doesn’t want to be bored at the table... There is an aptitude particular to the culture that knows how to put in this charm, this creativity. For that reason we have a *receptari* that is so rich, varied and plural”. She likewise drew attention to the diversity of Catalonia’s land- and foodscapes in contrast to that of the rest of Spain, particularly in Castile, describing that region as “a more limited cuisine. They have a much shorter *receptari*, ours is very long and varied”. Later in our interview, when I asked her what she believed to be Catalan cuisine’s distinctive features, she reiterated “this richness, richness in produce, and also in the combination of foods. From our

own initiative, in what is sometimes so simple and poor, we excel”. These remarks show clearly how diversity and Catalan cuisine’s extensive recipe list act as a marker of difference.

Ignasi also expressed almost identical remarks when it came to Castilian cuisine. In common with many of my Catalan informants, Ignasi had a habit of dividing Spain into its distinct communities and discussing them individually. This was an indirect way of denying the Spanish state’s legitimacy. Barcelona chef Fermi, more open in his Catalanist views, even went so far as to say that “there is no Spanish cuisine, just a cuisine of the autonomous communities”. The huge variety in landscape and microclimates within Catalonia was often also cause for comment in this context, and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Following on from this, Pep V claimed that the most representative dish of Catalan cuisine would depend on the area, due to the inherent variety and diversity present in Catalonia. He then went onto suggest that I should consider what would be the best dish for all the *Països Catalans*, in line with his strongly pro-independence sentiments and the stance of his cultural organization, Omnium Cultural, which promotes a greater Catalan identity to include all Catalan speaking areas. Like Magda, he suggested the *paella*, despite its associations with Spain:

“I would dare to say, for all the Catalan-speaking countries, it would be the *paella*. In some ways it’s very Spanish, very popular there. But, really, rice is a thing that we like a lot, and practically everyone eats it. And you go to some

place and I take some *paella de tota la vida*.⁵⁰ And we do that a lot “we’ll go there, and we’ll get a good rice”, it depends a lot on the time of year. I think it’s very representative of Catalonia. Because the rice from Pals [part of Girona] has nothing to do with that in the mountains, from Berguedà, or the typical *paella* from the zones of the coast, with seafood, or the mixed *paella* (*paella mixta*).”

Once again, in Pep’s response we can see this visualization of other parts of Catalonia and its landscapes through their products and other associated foodstuffs, depending on the season, in this instance the town of Pals or the county of Berguedà. Pep was not alone in suggesting *paella* as one of Catalonia’s national dishes. Discussing general food-related issues with the organizer of a recently developed sausage fair in La Garriga, surprising parallels appeared in her responses and those of others, including Pep’s, suggesting a strong consensus.

VC: What is the most Catalan product, for you?

Pep V: I have to say the *botifarra* (sausage), right? But the *botifarra* is a typical product. The *calçots*, the *paella*, though it is Valencian.

VC: And a typical dish – or dishes?

Pep V: I would say the *Paella*, or a *Fideua*, something more from the sea. Though if you went more to Girona, you have *mar i muntanya*, that is *pollastre amb gambes*, the thing is we have a very rich country.

Take note once more of the remark on a “rich country”. Returning to Pep V, there is once more a parallel in responses, as Pep went on to add that amongst Catalans themselves, this answer would change depending on location. In the neighbouring county of Olot, they would no doubt talk about the volcanic cuisine (once more, related to a distinctive landscape populated by extinct volcanoes), or in Osona it

⁵⁰ Literally ‘of all one’s life’, a common phrase to suggest a food is well-entrenched in Catalan ‘traditional’ cuisine, and the informant has eaten it all their life, if not their parents and grandparents too.

would be *mongetes amb botifarra*. We have already seen that Pepa, from the south, saw the *romesco* sauce local to that area as one of the bases of Catalan cuisine. This falls in well with Carles' descriptions of regional food areas within Catalonia and their respective styles, though he does not make the same parallels with landscape. Pep had suggested beans with sausage in Vic is due to the association of the town with the pork and sausage-making industry. Similarly Joan, the restaurateur of one of the most important restaurants in Vic, remarked that for him the most important Catalan products are truffles and pork, the principal products of the county:

“The pork as a product from here has always been done, and the truffle as an unusual product, a star, that we have always had here, especially in Osona, the truffle county, one of the few counties that has it in Spain.”

To finish this section, one should ask that if there is so much diversity and variety across the whole of Catalonia, can one really say there is a single cuisine? Yet as this discussion should show, it is this diversity that *is* the unifying feature, and the exceptional range of this variety in such a small area is also unique. Not only that, but this diversity must be celebrated and continually recognized as a trait that makes Catalonia unique. Awareness of this variety is a form of national knowledge, showing knowledge of landscapes, territory and nation. As we have also seen, this is in contrast to the perceived attitude of Catalans to Spaniards. Spain might have regional diversity, but will only accept it provided it does not affect the overarching Spanish identity, which should command the most important feelings of national loyalty. Even when individual autonomous communities are referred to by name, for example the Basque country or Castile, they are seen as poorer in diversity than Catalonia.

5.7 The ideal of thrift, and pork-based cuisine

Throughout the discussion of variety and diversity, there was a continual flagging up of the ideal of subsistence cuisine (*cuina d'aprofitament* or *cuina de subsistència*), or to use a popular Catalan phrase '*ens aprofita de tot*' – literally, 'we make use of everything'. This concept occurred time and again, and it should be evident by now that it is usually combined with some other ideal or theme. For example, subsistence cuisine and particularly the re-using of resources was central to two of the national/signature dishes discussed at the start of this section, the *canelons* and the *escudella i carn d'olla*, which are idealized precisely because they use leftover meat in the former or whatever was available in the latter. Another dish that has not yet been discussed, *pa amb tomàquet*, another highly symbolic food, is also based on the ideal of subsistence. It involves rubbing tomatoes onto hard bread, to make it palatable. As I have already discussed, dishes that have been 'revived' or 'rediscovered' are often praised for their origins as thrifty dishes that upheld this ideal of *aprofitament*.

Even in every day remarks and meals, this attitude appeared. In the unusual meal consisting of *pa amb tomàquet*, *truita de patates* and sushi that I shared with a group of young women in their twenties, one of the party started to eat the squashed tomato that she had used to make *pa amb tomàquet*. These tomatoes were normally thrown away, and the other diners protested in revulsion. She shrugged and defended her actions by saying "We're Catalans, *ens aprofitem de tot*". This casual usage of both national and culinary identity to defend quotidian behaviour shows well how

ingrained these attitudes are in my informants' psyches, and moreover how closely they are interconnected.

This ideal of thriftiness is very much related to several of the ideals of Catalan national character. As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, it is often claimed that Catalans are miserly, avaricious or penny-pinching in the anti-Catalan stereotypes from the rest of Spain. Since its foundations in the nineteenth century, it was generally agreed by most of its early ideologues that common sense, industriousness and a good business mind were essential parts of the Catalan character. The attitude of *ens aprofita de tot* in cuisine is therefore linked very fundamentally to the original ideas involved in the development of early Catalanism.

I have already hypothesized that the reputation Vic has as a stronghold of Catalonia may be due to its association with an industry and a product (sausages) regularly seen as characteristic of Catalan cuisine. One of Catalonia's national signature dishes that has not been discussed so far but which received regular mention was *botifarra i mongetes*, a simple combination of sausage and broad beans. Several of my informants said that if they had a non-Catalan to dinner, this would be the dish they would give them, since it represented one of the typical rural meals, from the environment of the countryside so idealised by early Catalan nationalists (DiGiacomo, 1987, Pi-Sunyer, 1987). Ideally, in line with the *cuina d'aprofitament* ideal, the beans should be cooked after the sausages, in the same pan, to make use of the leftover oil. It is also a fairly easy meal to cook today and in modern kitchens, unlike the *escudella i carn d'olla*, which requires hours of cooking time and now more expensive

ingredients than in the past. There were also several comparisons drawn between Catalan and Spanish sausages during fieldwork, particularly that in Spain meat is preserved in paprika, like the chorizo, which was entirely different from Catalonia, where salt and pepper were the only additions. Climate and locality also played its role, as my informants recognised that Catalonia was cooler than other parts of Spain, thus creating some uniqueness in the drying of sausages given by landscape and territory.

The key point to realize however about pig-related products is that they are classic examples of *cuina de subsistència*. Pigs were a popular animal to raise in small spaces,⁵¹ thus making them ideal for home consumption since they could be fed on any leftover foods. Once they reached maturity, all parts of the pig could be used, and nothing went to waste. Sat recalled that even now, she took pride in taking the offal and other edible waste products from a particular pork factory in Vic where she knew the management. In this way, she continued the tradition of ‘*aprofitament*’ of all parts of the pig. These include the blood, trotters, loin, bacon, lardons, lard, offal and intestines for sausage casings, liver, belly, ears and snout. Some of these are the sources of recently revived signature dishes, such as *cap i pota* (pig’s ear, snout and trotters), or sweet pig’s trotters, aside from the variety of *botifarres*. Of these themselves there are huge numbers of different types, and each varies from region to region (and, as Pla himself noted earlier, from town to town). The main varieties include: raw sausages (*per a coure*), which must be cooked, cured sausages (*curats*,

⁵¹ Today this is a thing of the past, thanks to the concern for trichinosis, foot and mouth and other diseases, which makes raising them prohibitively expensive, and the accompanying limits on housing.

of which the Vic *llonganissa* is one), and finally cooked sausages (*cuits*), that can be divided into those with and without blood (Torrado, 1985).

Barcelona chef Carles suggested the pig as the most typical product of Catalonia, for this precise reason – “It’s a subsistence product, one eats all of it”. He admitted this might not be unique to Catalonia, but, in line with the discussion in 5.6, it was the variety of these products that was unusual to Catalonia.

Another chef, Manel, believed that *botifarres* (sausages) and pork are the most typical foods of Catalonia (though, again, he added that these would vary in each house), because pork was a cheap and easy source of meat, which was killed at the *matança de porc* (pig killing), and could be preserved in a variety of ways. He described them as “products they did in the past”, suggesting that pork-related products in Catalonia had a historical connectedness. As he explained, “It’s a product of subsistence, pork. And in times of cold, you kill the pig, you make *llonganissa*, you make the sausages, preserves....I’ve always said that in Catalonia, it’s a subsistence cuisine”.

This subsistence cuisine, Manel added, was also related to historical trends as *terra de pas*. Catalonia had experienced many wars and plunders by passing armies, which had contributed to the *cuina de subsistència*. Another of my informants, designer Oriol, also related this kind of food to historical realities of the landscape and territory. He claimed that Catalan character and cuisine was characterised by a “rural origin, hardship has marked us greatly”.

For Oriol, upholding subsistence cuisine ideals is a means of remembering a culinary and national past. Historic connectedness was also key to other explanations of *botifarra* and pork products as carriers of national identity. Francesc, the coordinator of the hospitality guild in Vic, argued that his Catalan national food would have to be the *llonganissa*, for three reasons.⁵² Firstly, because it was from pork, which had huge culinary importance, “the most important in Catalonia”. Secondly, it had a history stretching back to Roman times, so “has a tradition”, and finally because it is an industry that brings wealth to the area.⁵³

Fermi too was keen to point out that he cooked traditional Catalan cuisine in his new restaurant, and that every cuisine had an element of *cuina pobra*. Like Carles he admitted this was not unique to Catalonia, but true of many countries where cuisine is based primarily on the cuisine of the people (*la cuina del poble*) rather than that of elites. For Fermi, this basis was in the garden (*horta*), itself a central part of Catalan nationalist ideology (DiGiacomo, 1987).

For Concepció, the *cuina d’aprofitament* was the central trait of Catalan cuisine. Like Sat, she also took pride in using more marginal food products in her cooking, such as offal, bones, and hooves. The latter two generally ended up in her *escudella i carn d’olla*, her favourite dish, and for her the national dish and symbol of the Catalan nation. She herself related it to a bourgeois sensibility in Catalonia, placing it in line with the tradition of common sense and the power of the middle classes (this may also

⁵² His choice is hardly surprising considering the local bias towards local foods, as mentioned earlier by Pep V.

⁵³ While Francesc was unable to give exact figures on this, there was a general consensus in Vic that the importance of the pig and alimentary industries had meant that Vic was less affected than some other cities by the recent economic crisis.

have been connected with her personal background, as the daughter of a self-made industrialist from a poor, rural background, who had married into an old Vic family). She also emphasised its rural origin in some of our discussions, a dish that her ancestors had eaten. Her reason for this choice of the escudella as a signature dish was therefore because the dish represented the two intertwined ideas that have already been discussed at length here, that is its manifestation of the Catalan ideal of thrift and *aprofitament*, and also the connectivity with a historical past where such dishes were common. Its association with Christmas was also another reason for her particular favouring of the dish.

A moment ago Manel mentioned pig killings as a source of the pork-based signature dishes. It is impossible to emphasize enough the importance of this event in renewing and strengthening social and kinship ties. Not only does the event itself require the labour (though more in a symbolic sense today than in the past, as professional butchers are brought in), it is also an opportunity to catch up with friends and family. Simultaneously, one is also participating in an activity that has a strong rootedness in the past, and thus recreating in some way a national past, that also involves the creation of national, signature foods and symbols in the form of sausages. At the end of the event or gathering, with the carrying away of the resulting products, social ties are upheld through the exchange of food. As the food is consumed these kin or social ties will also be remembered and commented upon, so comes to represent the event and their people themselves.

The act of gathering together in a festive, ludic setting around food, I believe, is also key to the national ideologies which surround the signature dishes of *escudella i carn d'olla* and other communal meals and food-centres occasions. As I have said, Christmas and the *matança de porc* are both occasions where social and familial ties are regenerated, and this occurs through interactions that are mediated by food. Food provides the sensory background to these emotional bonds. It is also in these contexts that ideas about national identity and national events come to be discussed, formulated, and articulated. I suggest that in Catalonia, food-related events act as the means by which inhabitants of a nation can come into contact with one another, and make the imagined community become reality.

Related to both communal consumption and *aprofitament* is the ideal of following the seasons (and a related concept called the gastronomic calendar, whereby certain foods are eaten on certain days). This means that whatever is available can be most usefully consumed. In the words of Pep S, Catalan cuisine must use “produce from the season, everything in its proper place. This process of *aprofitament*, today in the crisis, I think it’s a return to the past, a return to using more things that were thrown away”. Once again, his words show a desire to evoke a past approach to cuisine. This following of seasonal produce is also a means of connecting to the rural ideal central to many nationalisms, Catalonia’s included.

Subsistence cuisine may seem a far cry from contemporary consumption and *nova cuina*, but even there these ideas have still permeated. Joan Roca (2004) one of the most important modern chefs in Catalonia, talks about this in his first book, a work

dedicated to his mother's cooking. At the outset, he lays down his views that Catalan cuisine is based fundamentally on its products and good primary materials. Home cuisine has never been sophisticated, but "made with things from home, which are there at that precise moment in time". He relates the notion of a subsistence cuisine to the Empordan fishermen's cuisine he discussed earlier, who made use of whatever fish could not be sold for their daily meals in soups, broths or *suquets*, and which he ties to the proximity to the Mediterranean. Place is therefore central to *cuina de subsistència* in this sense. *Mar i muntanya* cuisine, for him, was a result of this need to use all available materials, something unnecessary today, but which he claims to still bear in mind in his contemporary creations. This could of course be self-promotion, a marketing ploy to appeal to the kinds of Catalan values I have discussed so far, but even then his choice of introductory words is still revealing in showing the importance of subsistence, thrift cuisine mentality to Catalan culinary identity.

5.8 *Pa amb tomàquet*: a Catalan 'we food'

At this point, it is essential to describe a food that has repeatedly occurred in the ethnography thus far, that is *pa amb tomàquet*. As I explained earlier, it consists of rubbing a ripe tomato into a slice of bread (an action called '*sucar*', juicing or moistening), ideally using bread that is a few days old so is slightly hard, allowing the juices to soften the bread. Salt and oil are usually added to conclude, but other ingredients can be added depending on individual preferences. It is also commonly the base for sandwiches, and combined with cold meats and sausages. It is more a snack food than a proper cooked dish, but constitutes an easy on-the-go meal. From

talking to informants, most claimed to eat it every day, or at least every other day, either as a snack or a light meal. Of all the signature dishes identified by Catalans, *pa amb tomàquet* is probably the most commonly eaten. In the words of Oriol, whose attitudes to this food will be discussed momentarily “I cannot go a week without eating *pa amb tomàquet*. With the *escudella*, maybe I eat it once a year”.

More than a signature dish in Mintz’s sense, I prefer to use the term “we food”, to show how *pa amb tomàquet* is gastronationalist symbol of Catalans. This term was used in Schacht’s (2013) chapter on Makushi food identity as an indigenous term to describe the cassava plant and its “complicated history of conflict, colonizations, and upheaval that has at times destabilized a people” (Schacht, 2013: 16). The cassava thus comes to encapsulate both the historic events and the contemporary identity which that history has created. While all signature dishes so far discussed in the Catalan case could be described as ‘we foods’, my interpretation of ‘we food’ in this instance is something that comes to personify Catalan people. The former may have national meanings and associations attached to them, but they do not have the embodied resonance of a ‘we food’. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, like the cassava amongst the Makushi, *pa amb tomàquet* is consumed (or at least encountered) on a quotidian basis by Catalans, so has a familiar and integrated place in Catalan contemporary identity.

Pa amb tomàquet sums up a lot of the features and ideas surrounding Catalan culinary identity that I have been describing. First and foremost, it is a prime example of the *ens aprofita de tot* attitude. Or in the words of the older group of *Sardanistes* during a

photo elicitation with an image of the *pa amb tomàquet*, “the Catalan doesn’t throw anything away!”. According to my informants, the dish first appeared in the nineteenth century, probably as a means of softening hard, inedible bread to make it more palatable (though no cookbook or gastronomic text mentions it until Vázquez Montalban in 1977). I was also told it used up old, over-ripe tomatoes, so contributing further to its reputation as a means of using up whatever ingredients were available. In the words of Joan G, a researcher at the Generalitat’s Department of Culture:

“An identificatory or symbolic trait, this has added value, the *pa amb tomàquet* is the most clear example... So a large slice of bread, very thick. First day perfect, second also, but at the end of five days not so good. There’s no secret to it. Here, we use the hanging tomato.”

It is also claimed as unique to Catalonia, though its spread to other regions of Spain has altered this conception somewhat, and now the emphasis is placed upon the process used to make it, that of rubbing the tomato in, rather than pouring on squashed or sliced tomato (more on that later). However, the key point is that *pa amb tomàquet* is recognized as distinctly Catalan by *non-Catalans* within Spain. It is therefore a point of self-identification that is reinforced by interactions with outsiders.

For example, Pep S recalled that the moment in his life that he felt most different, as a Catalan, from Spaniards was while making *pa amb tomàquet* in an all-male bar in Andalucía. After hearing he was Catalan, one of the other patrons recalled trying “something called *pan con tomaca*” in Catalonia. This association shows how strongly connected the food is with Catalans by other inhabitants of Spain. Pep

offered to show them how, and all the other patrons fell silent and gathered round to stare. The concept was completely alien to the spectators, and several remarked “the Catalans are a strange people, they’re people from the frontier”, highlighting their sense of otherness in the eyes of non-Catalans within Spain as a group that are on a border (whether with France or the rest of Europe he wasn’t clear). *Pa amb tomàquet* is equated with Catalans, both by insiders and outsiders, continually reinforcing this connection.

Its component ingredients also contribute to this position. The tomato, as both a central component of Catalan cuisine and a product from the Americas, represents well the ideal of an integratory cuisine open to new influences. The variety used, *tomàquets de penjar* (hanging tomatoes) are also unique to Catalonia. Bread, is a basic staple in Catalonia, and has received some attention with the recognition of *Pa*



Figure 5.4 A classic image of *pa amb tomàquet*, complete with *pa de pagès*, green olive oil and a rubbed tomato.

de pagès ('Peasant bread') as a food with Protected Geographical Indication within the EU. Its description even explicitly states that it is ideal for *pa amb tomàquet*, officially enshrined (indirectly) as part of a 'traditional' foodway. Oil too represents a point of pride as one of Catalonia's main exports, and also varies hugely from region to region, so acts as an example of the ideal of regional diversity and variety.

Unlike most of the other foods described so far, it is therefore not a dish eaten on special occasions, but instead one with which Catalans have an everyday interaction.

One should also consider *pa amb tomàquet* as Catalonia's 'we-food' because it can be found in all areas of Catalonia, a cultural unifier. This role is particularly important in Catalan food culture, due to the inherent diversity in cuisines that has already been discussed, which could contradict a claim of culinary unity in Catalonia. While visiting the Ebre Delta, which is an area sometimes seen as more influenced by Spain due to its location and history of immigration from other parts of Spain, my guide Gustavo claimed the fact that they ate *pa amb tomàquet* regularly proved that the Delta was part of Catalonia.

This symbolic association of *pa amb tomàquet* with Catalans has become such a commonly held assumption that it is even held as a cliché by some of my informants. When talking with Sat and her mother Montserrat, Sat suggested that along with *botifarra amb mongetes*, to 'outsiders' (i.e. Spaniards), *pa amb tomàquet* would be the food that was seen as most characteristic of Catalans. Her mother claimed "for all Catalans it's *pa amb tomàquet*. You ask, 'what's for supper' and they say 'we'll do *pa amb tomàquet*'". For them its supposed uniqueness to Catalonia, was a reason for its

status as a we food. Sat noted with amusement that in a Madrid restaurant she had seen the words '*Pam tomaca*', and its recent appearances outside Catalonia in the rest of Spain were limited to restaurants, not homes. Still, another of my informants, Jordi, remarked that *pa amb tomàquet* is not quite so unique as Catalans would like to believe, like Sat pointing to its presence in Madrid under a different name.⁵⁴

For Mon, even though *pa amb tomàquet* could be said to differentiate Catalans from their neighbours in Spain, she still considered its universal recognition as a cliché. Francesc, after saying that the *llonganissa* was his most important Catalan food, added almost as an apology that “if I wanted to say something romantic, I would say it was *pa amb tomàquet*. Yes it’s a symbol of identity, but aside from eating it, it’s not economically important”. Journalist Pau suggested it was an almost knee-jerk reaction to say it was the most typical dish, “for it’s ability to accompany things, it’s very mechanical, it’s the *pa amb tomàquet*. But it’s on the surface”. Likewise Josep S, when asked to list Catalonia’s most important national dishes said “clearly, a principal dish is *pa amb tomàquet*, it seems a silly thing to say but it’s a thing that identifies us greatly as a national cuisine”, before going on to discuss dishes such as the *fricandó*, the rices, cod dishes, fish, Christmas cuisine, and *crema catalana*.

⁵⁴ David Sutton in his *Remembrance of Repasts* (2001), also describes a similar kind of food, which his informants (ironically) also considered unique to the islands:

“Bread is also used as a mid-morning snack, dribbled with olive oil, rubbed with a juicy tomato and sprinkled with salt. This snack is considered by many to be a particularly Kalymnian food, and people recalled bringing it with them to school, along with a few dried figs. Workers still use this as a coffee-break snack (Sutton, 2001: 33)

On a side point, the basic “red sauce” Sutton also describes for many main dishes in Kalmynian cuisine consisting of “onions, garlic, tomatoes, salt and sometimes parsley” (ibid: 25) bears some resemblance to the *sofregit* in this description.

Several of my informants saw *pa amb tomàquet* as an extension of poverty cuisine into everyday life in the modern era, despite its relative recentness in the historical timeline. This was a fact that did not go unnoticed, but rarely dented its esteem. *Pa amb tomàquet* is perhaps the best example of how the emphasis on historical continuity going back centuries can be overlooked in preference for other national virtues if the food is convenient and ubiquitous enough.

Pa amb tomàquet is also a dish that is hard to produce beyond the borders of Catalonia. While any hard bread can be used, the preferred variety of tomatoes for making *pa amb tomàquet*, the *tomàquets de penjar*, are available only within Catalonia. Other tomatoes can be used, but the end product will not conform to the ‘proper’ *pa amb tomàquet*. While Irene was living in the UK for example, she said that she even brought these tomatoes from Catalonia, since the varieties found in British supermarkets either had too little juice or an unsuitable flavour. She eventually gave up trying. Likewise, Ricard, the son of Catalan expatriates who lived in the UK for twenty years during the Franco dictatorship, never made *pa amb tomàquet* in their home, as it just didn’t taste right. Even in Catalonia, Pep S was against using “those green tomatoes from the supermarkets. They won’t give juice or anything”, suggesting instead markets as the best places for them.⁵⁵ Related to the earlier comment on its presence throughout Catalonia, at popular food festivals throughout Catalonia *pa amb tomàquet* is almost always handed out as the festive food on these occasions. The presence of *pa amb tomàquet* in these contexts reinforces the importance of these arenas for consuming national foods.

⁵⁵ From personal experience, I can say they are right: most tomatoes in Britain are too dry, and turn the normally vibrant red *pa amb tomàquet* green.

As *pa amb tomàquet* has this recognised ubiquity and symbolic power, it is not surprising that it is used as a metaphor for Catalans, particularly within the independence movement. For example, when I asked Joan, a restaurateur in Vic, whether he thought there was a connection between cuisine and independence, he was sceptical of a connection, but that “sometimes you could say there were people who were ‘very much *pa amb tomàquet*’”. On this note, it is interesting that in the Album handed out by the *Vanguardia* to commemorate September 2014’s pro-independence Via Catalana

demonstration, there was a page dedicated to t-shirts from the march, one of which was a cartoon image of *pa amb tomàquet*, alongside others representing patriotic slogans (Fig 5.5) such as “I’m Catalan, so I’m not Spanish”, “Catalan Pride, “Independence”



Figure 5.5: T-shirts worn on the Diada march in 2014. The t-shirt with *pa amb tomàquet* is in the middle row on the far right. (Source: La Vanguardia)

and “One people, One language”. As a national symbol, *pa amb tomàquet* is just as powerful as any more obvious symbols, such as language, history or territory.

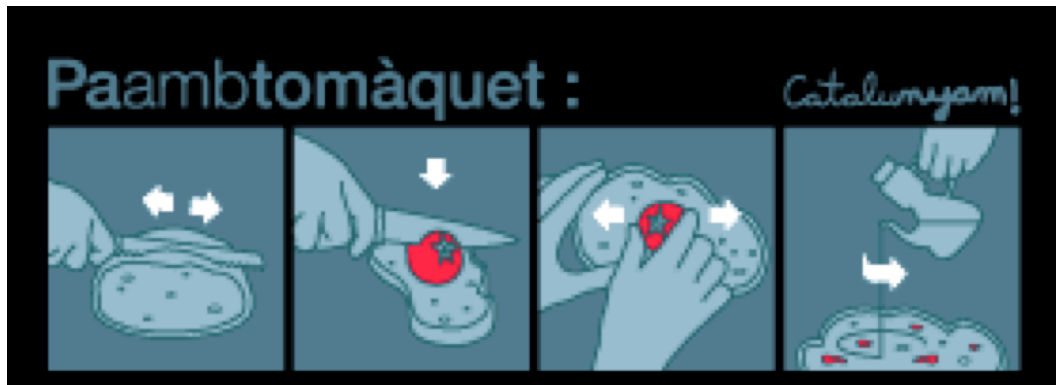


Figure 5.6: Catalunyam’s design for a t-shirt demonstrating how to make *pa amb tomàquet*. (Source: Catalunyam)

Interestingly, another of my informants made the connection between *pa amb tomàquet*, national promotion, and language. Oriol from the t-shirt company Catalunyam designed a t-shirt with a cartoon strip of pictorial instructions on how to make it (See Fig. 5.6) – the first of a series of similar designs demonstrating how to make certain Catalan foods, such as *alloli* and *calçots*. On their website, the product blurb reads “For being so simple and original, it’s one of the most popular dishes on our *receptari*. And for being so cheap, it’s the national dish of Catalonia” (Catalunyam, 2013). He described his motivations for making the design:

“It’s the most common, what everyone does. It’s done everywhere, everyone does it, in any occasion. If I invite you to breakfast, we’ll do a *pa amb tomàquet*. But equally if I invite you to supper at home, we’ll do *pa amb tomàquet*. Or if we go to a fancy restaurant, we’ll do a *pa amb tomàquet*. It’s transversal, all hours of the day, for everyone who wants it. I don’t know anyone who dislikes it. A dish that is so democratic, universal, is a dish that identifies us in this sense”.

Oriol explained that part of his inspiration was manuals for children, teaching them how to make *pa amb tomàquet*, as part of a general responsibility to pass on Catalan culture to the next generation (the packaging describes how these t-shirts make sure that “our traditions won’t disappear”). The other part was to teach outsiders (especially tourists) about Catalan culinary culture. He wanted to play on the joke that Catalans are continually teaching non-Catalans how to make *pa amb tomàquet* (much like Pep S). Now this is unnecessary as the t-shirt does it for them. In this sense, Oriol’s designs can be seen as a tongue-in-cheek means of spreading awareness of Catalan symbols to a non-Catalan audience.

During fieldwork, another indication of the importance of *pa amb tomàquet* was the reaction of Catalans to *my* making of this food. Their responses to first seeing me making it were very like the reaction to my speaking Catalan, that is pleasantly surprised that a non-Catalan was participating in such in-group activities as speaking the language, making the ‘we food’ etc. I mentioned these positive reactions to Oriol, and he too agreed that he would be pleased to see this performance from an outsider. Was this a way of becoming a Catalan, through the making of *pa amb tomàquet*?:

“I think that with this, it’s a bit like language. I think that, thanks to our history, we’re accustomed to be Catalans in private. Like, in a collective. With another Catalan, it’s normal to speak in Catalan, to do a *pa amb tomàquet*. But when someone non-Catalan speaks to you in Catalan, it pleases you. You note that this person has done a voluntary act of identifying themselves. *Pa amb tomàquet* is a bit of the same. It’s as if this person has incorporated themselves a bit in this cause”.

Speaking Catalan and preparing and eating *pa amb tomàquet* were not just about showing respect or politeness, it was for him a means of identifying. His comment thus connects *pa amb tomàquet* with one of the most important signifiers in Catalan identity, language.

Pa amb tomàquet can also be related to Catalonia's political movement in the form of satire. On May 9th 2013, in the midst of the controversy surrounding the Spanish Constitutional Court's ruling in March that Catalonia's proposed independence vote was unconstitutional, newspaper *la Vanguardia* published a cartoon that poked fun at the situation, and which used *pa amb tomàquet* to do so (see Fig 5.7). A Catalan (obvious by his bright red *barretina*) considers all the outrageous acts against Catalonia that the 'Tribunal Curtitucional' (a play on 'Tribunal constitucional',



Figure 5.7: Cartoon using *pa amb tomàquet* to protest the actions of the Spanish Constitutional Court (Source: Toni Batllori)

suggesting their short-sighted policies) could do. These include renaming Catalonia the “Community for Spaniards of the North-East”, or reassigning all the election votes amongst anti-Catalanist parties. He finally concludes by suggesting, “prohibit *pa amb tomàquet*?”, to which a voice off-side calls out “don’t give them any ideas”. The message is clear: though tongue in cheek, it shows that *pa amb tomàquet* is a very basic signifier of Catalan identity, much like language or territory. Its prohibition

would be a fundamental insult to the Catalan people, tantamount to removing their right to vote or refusing to acknowledge Catalonia as a geographical entity.

5.8.1 'Bad' pa amb tomàquet – self-identity by contradictions

While the discussion this far has centred on foods with which Catalans identify because they represent some aspect of being Catalans, it is also worth discussing foods that Catalans rejected. As I have said, *pa amb tomàquet* should be made by rubbing a tomato into the bread, and some of my informants contrasted this with making it in the 'non-Catalan' way, that was by pouring sliced or mashed tomatoes onto it. This way was often pointed out to me as non-Catalan, and 'what the Madrileños' do, and also associated with Andalucía. Ironically however, at a few festive events I attended in Vic, this was precisely the way in which they were made for large groups of people, since it saves more time than rubbing in tomatoes.

I was fortunate enough to gain experience in actually helping to prepare *pa amb tomàquet* in this way during a *gegants* festival in Vic. What had meant to be a procession through the city had to be cancelled due to rainy weather, and all the groups congregated in the large building belonging to the choral society. On a large table at the back of the hall, our ingredients were several large piles of sliced *pa de pagès*, and two or three containers of a thick tomato juice-like substance that contained all the usual ingredients of tomato (crushed in this instance), oil and salt. This was poured onto the bread with a spoon, a far more time-efficient means of

making it considering we had to feed about 200 people. The finished bread was stacked onto large trays and distributed with a *botifarra* at the end of the event.

It must be said that the end result was far inferior to the *pa amb tomàquet* made in the ‘proper’ way. The bread was too moist, and easily fell apart. I was surprised though that such a ‘non-Catalan’ means of making this was employed at festive events, such as the *gegants* festival, considering that these events are a focus of national identity expression. In this instance, convenience won out over culinary self-identification, but

I was curious about what Catalans felt about seeing this way of making *pa amb tomàquet*, and I included some of these in my photo elicitation (Fig. 5.8).

The reactions provided a fascinating insight into what Catalan culinary identity was *not*. While recognizing the food itself, most saw the images in an extremely negative light. The Assemblea group for instance remarked “how disgusting” and rapidly moved onto the next image. Marta said “This is a *pa amb tomàquet* that is not



Figure 5.8: Images used in photo elicitation, showing the making of ‘bad’ *pa amb tomàquet*

correctly done. It shouldn't be done like this. This is in cheap restaurants, to do a quick dish, but at home it's not done like this. For quality one has to rub it. This is for large quantities". Likewise the younger group of *sardanistes* called it "industrial *pa amb tomàquet*", but admitted that even they had sometimes done it to make enough for a large gathering. Ironically, the very *geganters* with whom I prepared the *pa amb tomàquet* reacted in the same way, saying "This is nothing", "it's not *pa amb tomàquet*", "you've got to choke on it", "it looks like it's from a can", and again "industrial". One even asked me where I had taken this photo, to which I replied that it was from their event! This elicited some embarrassed laughter, and they admitted that, despite the negative associations, it is done everywhere in Catalonia.

Some of my respondents even criticised me for including the photos in my images of Catalonia, or reacted in disbelief at my inclusion of them. Berta said "What can this say? You're bad for putting this in!", and also associating it with "a very large party". The strongest reaction however came from Cristina, Concepció and Irene, who found my inclusion of it to be offensive. Concepció had even told me not to include this image when I was developing the list of images for the photo elicitation. "*Pa amb tomàquet*, this isn't it" I was told. This was the "McDonalds of *pa amb tomàquet*. And we don't eat in McDonalds. Catalan cuisine isn't McDonalds" and "it's not fast food". They all agreed the taste wasn't the same, and that this image did not represent what *pa amb tomàquet*, and Catalan foods was all about.

It can be seen from these responses that *pa amb tomàquet* made in this way is associated with public events as a quick, cheap and easy food to make for large

groups, but cutting on quality. This is in contrast to the more intimate *pa amb tomàquet*, done at home or with close friends, where the tomato is rubbed into the bread. This is also in contrast to the negative ‘industrial’, ‘McDonalds’, ‘fast-food’, and mass-produced associations elicited by the ‘bad’ way of making *pa amb tomàquet*. This reaction has some similarities to Pratt’s (2007) description of the false dichotomy between “the mainstream and the alternatives” (285), where the industrial food industry acts as a negative counterpart to the more ‘local’ or ‘authentic’ foods with a “history” (ibid) that are supposedly produced outside this industry, when they are in fact simply branded in a way to appeal to these values. While the parallel is not total with *pa amb tomàquet* (even in the case of the ‘mass produced’ variety, no attempt has been made to produce *pa amb tomàquet* on an industrial scale), the situation shows well how this false dichotomy works in Catalonia, and that despite these negative attitudes, these practices still continue, and even in the context of ‘traditional’ events.

Oddly, despite mentions of this as the ‘non-Catalan’ means of making *pa amb tomàquet*, there was little discussion of it in the photo elicitation. Only Pep V drew a parallel, suggesting it as “like the Andalusian style, pouring tomato onto toasted bread” in contrast to the ‘proper’ way of doing it.

5.8.2 *Pa amb tomàquet* as *tapas*

In terms of manifestations of Spanish culinary identity outside its borders, *tapas* is perhaps the most enduring and commonly recognized. *Tapas* are small appetizers that

are served together to form a meal, generally consumed sitting at a bar, and are especially associated with the southern and central areas of Spain. *Tapas* is not native to Catalonia, but there are numerous *tapas* bars in Barcelona (mostly catering to tourists) and most towns and cities in Catalonia have at least one. Catalonia's relationship with *tapas* is a complex, since it is strongly associated with Spain. In the first cookbook in English on Catalan cuisine, *Catalan Cuisine: Europe's Last Great Culinary Secret* (1997) by Colman Andrews, he describes a general indifference to *tapas* on the part of Catalans. It is consumed by tourists and other Spaniards, not Catalans themselves. This is certainly the impression in Barcelona, and one of my informants from there, Oriol admitted to becoming angry when outsiders think Catalans eat *tapas*. The reality though is that they do, and see it as just one of the many food options available. Some Catalans may prefer to use the term *pintxos*,⁵⁶ which describe the Basque-style *tapas* that has become very popular in Barcelona thanks to several chains offering Basque cuisine. It is interesting that the Basque variety of this food is preferred over the Spanish one, since Basques are seen in a more favourable light by Catalans due to their similarly difficult relationship with Spain.

On the issue of actually consuming *tapas*, I will never forget my confusion early in my fieldwork, on being taken by the young *sardana* dancers to a popular *tapas* bar in Vic, having thought that *tapas* was distinctly un-Catalan. They did not find it so unusual, claiming it was convenient. There were several other places they liked to meet in Vic: a sandwich bar, a Sicilian pizzeria, or a French crêperie. Considering

⁵⁶ These *pintxos* (literally 'punctured') are slices of crusty bread with the toppings pressed in by a toothpick, hence their name.

their selections though, it became clear that the *tapas* restaurant was placed into the category of ‘other’ foods, i.e. foreign and non-Catalan. So while *tapas* comes from the same state, it is still classed in just as foreign a category as cuisine from Sicily or France, for example. On further interactions with these informants, I came to realize that contexts for eating Catalan food were far more valued and formalized. While trying ‘foreign’ foods might be suited for going out with friends, Catalan food was reserved for family occasions, or large formal dinners organised by the *Grup Sardanista Riallera*, when the group met as *sardanistes*, not just friends, and as performers of a Catalan cultural heritage.

However, it is not just what is eaten in *tapas*, but also the way of eating, that is alien, and has had to be changed at the popular level to be ‘palatable’ (in more ways than one) to Catalans. When we ordered, I realised the extent to which *tapas* has been catalanized. Each of the dishes were of Catalan origin, albeit in portions to be shared. There was the ubiquitous *pa amb tomàquet*, a variety of Vic sausages, and *empedrat* (a bean and cod salad), and *llonganissa* sausage croquettes. The *sardanistes* also pointed out that we were eating at a table, not at a bar, which is the usual way that *tapas* is eaten in Spain. It is interesting that this matches identical opinions that I heard throughout Catalonia, that Catalans eat sitting at a table, which is itself the focus of social life. Andrews (1997) relates how Catalans don’t feel they have eaten until they sit down at a table.⁵⁷ Likewise, in the context of a discussion on Catalan food with Oriol, I mentioned that Irene and I had eaten a dish of *patates braves*⁵⁸ earlier that day, a contradiction to his claim that Catalans don’t eat such foods. His

⁵⁷ Details of the story can be found in Andrews (1997), page 17.

⁵⁸ A dish of roasted potatoes or chips covered in a spicy sauce, and strongly associated with Spanish cuisine and often consumed as *tapas*.

first reaction was to ask whether we were sitting at a table, which we had been. This proved his point, that though we called it '*tapas*', it was being eaten in the Catalan way, at a table.

Several other informants raised the importance of the '*sobretaula*', which I discussed earlier. The phrase "we always get together around a table" was one I often heard when referring to Catalan social and eating habits, that is that Catalans will go and eat to socialize, rather than go to a bar for a drink or small *tapas*, unlike Spaniards. The Catalan medieval writer Francesc Eiximenis, who wrote of the Catalans' table habits in 1384, claimed that Catalans eat better than other nations because they sit at a table, amongst other reasons. Considering that Catalans often refer back to writings on themselves for identity construction, it is possible that my informants' statements were influenced by Eiximenis.

Another time I ate *tapas* with a group of older Catalans, they admitted that it was odd we were eating in a *tapas* restaurant, and the irony of the presence of *patatas bravas*.⁵⁹ They admitted (though half-seriously) that these were "very Catalan", since they were so ubiquitous. But when the *pa amb tomàquet* arrived a moment later, one of my companions said "ah, even more Catalan now", which went down well. With the presence of the *pa amb tomàquet* and sitting at a table, the Catalan-ness of the meal is re-established, even if it was within the context of a '*tapas*' (and by extension, Spanish) restaurant.

⁵⁹ The presence of a fieldworker studying Catalan food might also have made them more aware of the irony of their situation.

Chapter 6. Catalan cuisine in context

Considering the importance of heritage cuisine to questions of gastronomic nationalism, it would be out of place to ignore the campaign to have Catalan cuisine recognized as a UNESCO intangible heritage of humanity. In 2010, UNESCO granted intangible cultural heritage of humanity to a selection of food related cultural manifestations, including the ‘Gastronomic meal of the French’, North Croatian gingerbread making, and traditional Mexican cuisine. This was the first time that gastronomy had been recognised as a distinctive measure of heritage status in its own right, rather than as part of some other intangible heritage expression. This has led to other designations in the intervening four years, including ‘Washoku, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese’, ‘Kimchi’ (preserved and seasoned vegetables in Korea), Turkish coffee culture, and the Mediterranean diet in 2013.

This has therefore opened up a way for ‘official’ recognition from a respected worldwide body for culinary cultures, and has spawned a similar campaign in Catalonia initiated in 2012 by the Fundació-Institut Català de la Cuina i de la Cultura Gastronòmica (‘Foundation-Institute of Cuisine and Gastronomic Culture’ – FICCG). The FICCG is a private non-profit organisation that has been in existence since 1994, and which came out of the 1993-94 Congress of Catalan Cuisine. The Foundation added the name ‘Institute’ to the title in 2012 to coincide with the UNESCO bid in order to emphasise its role as a research organization.

To begin I would therefore like to give an overview of the activities of the FICCG, and their approach. My main interest though is the reaction of my informants to these efforts, and to the FICCG. Indeed, there is bound to be controversy when a formal group claims to become a legitimate authority on a particular symbol of identity. I was also interested in the connection between Catalan cuisine and expressions of pro-independence sentiment, and whether food could in some way be mobilized. I discuss this issue further in the context of Catalonia's national day in Chapter 9, but in line with the discourse-analysis heavy approach in this chapter, I will be looking more at what my informants said on the matter. I would like to consider some statements regarding the connections (or lack of them) between Catalan cuisine and other cuisines in the surrounding geographic areas, e.g. Spain, Europe and the Mediterranean. These provide a fascinating insight into self-perceptions of Catalans in relation to other identities.

6.1 Catalan cuisine: UNESCO intangible heritage

The FICCG is involved in several projects at present, aside from the UNESCO campaign. These include continual research for the recipe book created by the foundation, the *Corpus del Patrimoni Culinari Català* (Corpus of Catalan Culinary Patrimony), as well as other publications such as *Receptes 1714* (a collection of recipes to remember the tercentenary of the Siege of Barcelona) and in 2014 a small English-language book aimed at tourists (*Catalan Cuisine*) to raise international awareness (Pomés Leiz, 2014). The organisation's activities include research for the *Corpus*, now in affiliation with the Observatri d'Alimentació (ODELA) at the

University of Barcelona, and promulgation of Catalan cuisine in various arenas, in particular schools and museums. The organization also gives support to initiatives related to gastronomy, hospitality or tourism promoted by member groups (the Gastronomic Coordination and Promotion Service). Another project, related to the *Corpus*, is the *Marca Cuina Catalana* designation for establishments who do Catalan cuisine.

According to the founder and President, Pepa, the aims of the institute are to “Promote and consolidate Catalan gastronomic culture.” The aim is not just to internationalize Catalan cuisine with the UNESCO bid, but also “make sure there’s a permanence”. This emphasis on preservation is unsurprising considering that the main argument for the bid is that cultural heritage is at risk. It is this emphasis on creating permanence which has motivated the categorization of Catalan cuisine in the form of the *Corpus del Patrimoni Culinari Català*. This is a compendium of 1,136 recipes officially recognised by the FICCG, alphabetically ordered, which the FICCG advertises as “the most complete inventory of Catalan recipes in existence” (FICCG, 2015a). Originally published in 2006 (as the *Corpus de la Cuina Catalana*), the second edition came out in May 2011.

The fear of loss lies at the heart of UNESCO’s preservation initiative, that there is some aspect of human civilization that belongs inalienably to all humanity and is worth preserving in the face of the homogenizing influence of modernity and globalization. As in many nationalist movements, there is also a discourse of loss at the heart of Catalanism. The wealth of diversity that is key to Catalan national identity

is (allegedly) gradually seeping away. With this loss, some part of Catalan national identity will disappear forever. To preserve Catalan identity, cultural manifestations must be continually performed, re-enacted, and preserved by either popular or official channels. In a nutshell, such is the discourse that pervades many of the encouragements for the continued performance of cultural acts, and the preservation of Catalan symbols such as language and historical memory. These two are the most obvious, but cuisine is also pervaded by this sense that certain culinary ‘traditions’ are at risk of being lost, or have already been lost, despite a concurrent recognition of ‘revivals’. While highly unlikely to happen today, these cultural losses (sometimes called ‘cultural genocide’) were a very real concern by the end of the Franco dictatorship. All the same, this sense of impending doom lends added urgency to performance of Catalan cultural acts, or attempts to protect them.

Pepa admits that right now Catalan cuisine is not at risk, claiming that “many restaurants were doing ‘*cuina tradicional*’ and every year there are more”, with 173 making the application in 2013. However, continual work was needed to reduce any risk of loss, aided by the guarantee of preservation that UNESCO recognition could offer. In particular this has meant correcting some of the misconceptions about ‘traditional’ Catalan cuisine, for example that it’s fattening and unhealthy for contemporary lifestyles. This is why many of their promotional activities have sought to emphasise the connection with the Mediterranean diet (itself already recognised by UNESCO), and products such as oils and heritage vegetables. Pepa was an informant who made a very clear delineation between the modern cuisine of the *cuina nova* developed by Ferran Adrià, and ‘traditional’ Catalan cuisine, which is what she was protecting.

These measures generally receive a favourable reaction in Catalonia, not just because of the touristic economic potential they give to an area, but also because this international recognition furthers and even celebrates awareness of Catalan identity outside its borders. Further to this, such recognitions are also part of the game of one-upmanship the *Generalitat* plays with Spain, which can be held up of examples of a unique Catalan identity as sanctioned by an impartial, outside group with global prestige. This explains why the *Generalitat* put its support behind the campaign for Catalan cuisine almost since its inception in 2012.

The UNESCO campaign, was originally intended for 2013 recognition, but for unspecified reasons it has been put back to 2017. A UNESCO delegation visited the University of Barcelona in June 2012 to see a 14th century copy of the *Llibre de Sent Soví* (the underlying importance of this book to the bid was discussed in Chapter 3). According to the University of Barcelona's reporting of the event, the act showed that University was putting its support behind the UNESCO bid.

On the UNESCO front, there were originally nine members of the scientific committee in charge of researching and organizing the bid, but this has increased to fourteen. Common to many campaigns for UNESCO's Intangible Heritage status in cuisine (Di Giovine & Brulotte, 2014), academic specialists from a number of Catalonia's most prestigious universities (especially the University of Barcelona) make up this committee, giving credibility to that of the *Cuina Catalana* campaign. They include the president of the Institute of Catalan Studies, several historians and medievalists, two anthropologists, two nutritionists and a sociologist.

The effort to recognise Catalan cuisine as intangible world heritage is not the first in Catalonia, and there have been several successful campaigns, including the *Patum* of Berga (2005) and the *Castells* or humans towers (2010), so there is a precedent for recognizing Catalonia's cultural heritage. However, Pepa admitted that the application was somewhat awkward politically, as they cannot present as a region, but rather from a state level. This presentation has to officially be done from Madrid, which is complicated by the negative attitudes to Catalonia's independence movement, the current government, and Catalan identity in general. Complications also arise because the campaign will be presented as a *regional* food identity, not a national one. It is possible that this may be why there has been little support from Catalan cultural groups such as the Omnim Cultural or Assemblea, though I cannot be sure of this (none of my informants expressed this view). Conversely, the FICCG might have avoided any association of this kind in case it damaged the campaign's application process from the central government.

The UNESCO project was separate from Vic's (now failed) application to UNESCO's Cities of Gastronomy (part of its Creative Cities designation), though Pepa regarded it as helpful to the FICCG's campaign, and since Osona's Hospitality Guild is one of the bodies grouped under the FICCG they promoted each other's respective agendas.

The project '*Marca Cuina Catalana*' was created in 2001, and the first phase consisted in putting together the work that became the Corpus, first published in 2006. After this, the FICCG began recognizing establishments that cooked Catalan cuisine,

who could then be given a plaque to place outside their restaurant. Most establishments are restaurants, though some are shops and hotels. Most importantly though, the establishment must show that at least 40% of the dishes served are from the *Corpus*, using the exact same recipe and name as in the book. Restaurants can also apply to be members of the FICCG without being part of the Marca, though some are both. Although Pepa was unclear on the difference, it seems that ‘La Marca’ restaurants serve ‘traditional cuisine’ that are “typical of the country”, and others in the FICCG can be more experimental and work on “investigating Catalan cuisine”. As of 2014, there are 136 restaurants registered throughout Catalonia, and according to Pepa, 173 were applying in the year we spoke (2013). Restaurants under the Marca *Cuina Catalana* have to place the ‘C’ logo next to each dish from the *Corpus* on the menu.

On their website, the objectives are listed as firstly “guaranteeing the continuity of Catalan cuisine”, then creating a marker of quality for both Catalan restaurants and associated products, developing a network of establishments under this marker which will “defend and offer “our gastronomic cultural patrimony”, and finally provide opportunities for the “conservation of alimentary biodiversity, the promotion and defence of the rural area” (FICCG, 2015a). In line with these aims, to get the marker, establishments are advised to not just follow the recipe, but also use seasonal products and “own products”, and made following “methods respectable to tradition”.

Referring specifically to these “own products”, it is advised that establishments use recognised and regulated products according to the Protected Denomination of Origin schemes, provided these reach the necessary quality, “to encourage awareness and preservation of autochthonous products” (FICCG, 2015b).

Pepa recalled that the FICCG used to be very strict about the names, ingredients, and preparation in the first few years after the project began, and establishments had to use the precise recipe. However, it soon became clear that there were huge variations in names, and that there had to be some poetic license allowed. For example one restaurant had served a dish called “*pollastre de la iaia*” (grandma’s chicken) for many years, which was identical to a recipe in the book under a different name. When the establishment first joined, they were required to remove it or change the name, but when they refused to serve it, the FICCG came to a compromise and allowed them to say ‘*de la nostra iaia*’ (of our grandmother). Still, an application for such a change has to be made to the FICCG. According to Pepa, they have informants continually passing through restaurants to monitor compliance.

6.2 Reactions to UNESCO amongst informants

Attitudes to the FICCG and the UNESCO campaign reveals fault lines and a fundamental questioning of the situation of Catalan cuisine, and who has the right to ‘manage’ it. The reactions to UNESCO amongst my informants were mixed. In principle, there is of a positive attitude to the preservation and promotion of any aspect of Catalan culture, cuisine included. However, they found it hard to accept that Catalan cuisine could be controlled and managed by a Generalitat-sponsored organization.

In practice the codification inherent in the ‘UNESCO-ization’ of cuisine also raises concerns about its ability to change and adapt to contemporary and future realities, or

whether it will remain relevant to practitioners. Noyes (2011b) aptly sums up the concerns in her article ‘Traditional Culture: How Does it Work?’, including issues of stability, stakeholders, and the responsibility to perform and learn traditional arts. If this responsibility is assigned to some “supervising authority” there is a risk that incentives to learn them will disappear in their original practitioner group. While this is unlikely to happen in the case of Catalan cuisine, and the FICCG is not well known as an authority in Catalonia, such concerns are pertinent in this context. In the words of Barcelona chef Carles, he’s fine with UNESCO recognition, but adds it’s important that Catalan cuisine doesn’t end up like “a work of art from grandma, which is hung up and does nothing. UNESCO provides awareness, but if you don’t keep using and adapting it, then the cuisine will die.”

A journalist who has worked extensively with the *nova cuina* movement was particularly sceptical of the UNESCO bid, and also the Marca Catalana system for restaurants. He could see the importance of globalizing the cuisine, but felt that there was a real risk of a turning it into “the offerings of a museum. Because it doesn’t move, it’s immutable, codified”. Moreover, another criticism stemmed from the application of the Marca Catalana. As I have explained, to give a restaurant the Marca Catalana, 40% of the recipes have to be Catalan, and from the *Corpus*. Yet how, he asked, can a restaurant be registered as Catalan if the other 60% includes foreign dishes that have no connection with Catalan cuisine? All in all, while he believed that the *Corpus* could be updated, improved and adapted, successful UNESCO recognition would stunt this process:

“If you say that it’s Patrimony of Humanity, this recipe can’t evolve, because it’s final... I understand the idea of giving support, a visibility, but the way of saying, this is the dish and you can’t change it, that I don’t like.”

6.2.1 *Gaspaxo as a Catalan food*

Following on from this particular comment, I asked his opinion about a particularly controversial issue surrounding the Corpus, which was the refusal to include dishes that were of Spanish origin, but which had become popular since mass-immigration in the Franco era in the 1950s and 60s. A prime example is the cold soup *gazpacho* (or *gaspaxo*, as written in Catalan). He agreed that certainly this was a good point, and that, in principle it is not an example of Catalan cuisine but it is well integrated. At what point can one say that it is Catalan or not Catalan, especially if it includes ingredients grown within Catalonia?

I asked Pepa the same question, and she said that only when a food clearly has over 50 years of recognition and popularity in Catalonia can it be included, and “when it has enough tradition in Catalonia”. Allegedly the FICCG did a study into whether it was done at home, where it was done much less frequently than in restaurants. This she compared with its use in Andalucía, where it is consumed regularly within homes. This does back up Sat’s remark that, until ten years ago (when she made her first *gaspaxo*), this dish hadn’t come onto a Catalan’s radar.

Still, there were others who did cook it at home, and felt that it was well incorporated into the cuisine. Isidre, a chef in Vic, recalled that at first *gaspaxo* was looked upon with suspicion, a dish of “foreign people, even though they were of the same peninsula”, symbolizing more generally the way in which other Spaniards (aka *gaspaxo*-eaters) were viewed. Still, he added “we’re a land that has received much influence, including from the lands of our own peninsula”, and that now, in his view, it was totally integrated. Once again, we see the inclusion of *gaspaxo* fitting into the culinary ideal of an open Catalan cuisine. Likewise, the editor of *Cuina*, Josep S recalled how his grandmother had learned how to make *gaspaxo* from an immigrant from Seville. He emphasised strongly though that his grandmother never recognised the dish as Catalan, always recognising its origin (returning also to the importance of recognition of otherness and origins). However, he resignedly admitted that now it had become ubiquitous in Catalonia:

“I don’t know if the Andalucians do it in a different way, they do it in many ways, and Catalans do it in a thousand ways. In summer, we have all the right products to do *gaspaxo* here. They might be used differently, but we can do it with products from here.”

Like the journalist, he had pointed out that the dish could be made Catalan by using products from Catalonia, and Josep S also left the possibility that the ‘process’ and recipe might be different, an aspect that by now is clearly important in delineating culinary identity. For example, a restaurateur in one of the counties closer to Barcelona described how he’d made his own *gaspaxo*, by adding cherries and red fruits. Through the use of fruit, a Catalan culinary trait, he had Catalanized a foreign dish and adapted it to his own culinary identity. Still, Pep’s example was in a

restaurant not a home, returning once again to Pepa's requirement that a dish be practiced within the home.

6.2.2 Scepticism, praise and photo elicitation results

During one of my cooking sessions with Mon, a professional cooking instructor, she expressed scepticism of the FICCG and its attempts. Their Catalan credentials and intentions were undeniably sincere, but for her they seemed more interested in publicity and photo opportunities with the Catalan President and other dignitaries, than really helping Catalan cuisine in any practical way. I raised the issue of codification through the *Corpus*, recalling a story I'd heard about issues of naming recipes according to personal preference or the name in the book, even though the recipes might be identical. Mon replied this was exactly the problem, in that they went into too many technicalities. For example, we had been talking about the differences between *salvitxa*, *xató*, and *romesco* sauces, and she said that it was precisely this sort of thing that was discussed at the first two Congress of Catalan Cuisine in 1981/2 and 1993/4, which led to the creation of the FICCG. They are basically the same sauce, and while the discussion is interesting, she felt that it drew some of the attention away from the actual cooking – the skill that the FICCG is claiming to protect. All in all Mon concluded, if she had to choose who was doing the most for Catalan cuisine at present, between the FICCG and Ferran Adrià, then Ferran Adrià would win hands down.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ It is also worth pointing out that many leading actors in the world of Catalan cuisine are not involved with the FICCG. This surprised me at the start, but I later heard from a number of sources that they had felt alienated by the management of the FICCG.

More important though for Mon was the quality of recipes. According to Mon, she had tried two or three from the book, which were disastrous. If there is to be codification, it's acceptable (though not ideal) to have a book with antiquated recipes, but at least they should be of a high standard and workable. This question of quality was similar to a concern raised by the retired chef and writer Josep LG, who was also in favour of the promotion of Catalan cuisine through, for example, UNESCO. Yet in global promotion, one must also keep a high standard within the cuisine and country itself. He admitted that there were many restaurants that do bad Catalan cuisine, and was unimpressed with the system of plaques erected outside restaurants preparing dishes based on *Corpus* recipes. How could regional diversity be celebrated if you had to follow recipes that were identical all throughout Catalonia to be accepted as part of the Marca Catalana? This concern was echoed in some of the reactions to the campaign during the photo elicitation discussed shortly.

Barcelona chef Fermi on the other hand stated that Catalan cuisine was the recipes collected in the *Corpus* produced by the FICCG, (and also, he was keen to point out, the sort of cuisine he cooked himself). He later explained that his support for UNESCO recognition came from a desire to see a separate Catalan identity recognised by an official, world-recognised entity that was outside Spain:

“In the sense that UNESCO protects the differentiating facts (*fets diferencials*), like there is with French or Italian, if a cuisine has all these historic elements that can be protected, in order to be considered as a cultural fact (*fet cultural*), then it's Catalan cuisine. The thing with us, is that we've had a state, and we've had a hostile state, and we haven't been able to raise our voices, to tell things that have

a certain merit. For this reason Catalan cuisine isn't so well known, because many people associate it with Spanish cuisine. Notice up to what point it's political. That in Spain right now, the two important points that have taken the maximum amount of culinary quality, both in restaurants and Michelin stars, as well as products and related businesses, is Catalonia and the Basque country. *That's because we are nations without a state in a political conflict with Spain*"(emphasis added)."

Fermí (a strong Catalanist) therefore sees the bid for UNESCO intangible heritage recognition as a means of asserting Catalan existence and political rights within the context of a hostile Spanish state, as a kind of cultural one-upmanship. Like Pepa, he believed that UNESCO is a means of gaining international recognition for Catalan cuisine. Food historian Nuria had a slightly more balanced approach, suggesting that all cuisines are human patrimony. Comparing cuisine to a language (a comparison made elsewhere, both outside and within this fieldwork), she believed that cuisine is the patrimony of the people with whom it is associated. The problem is also that UNESCO has still to define exactly what they mean by culinary patrimony as intangible heritage.

I made use of photo elicitation to probe opinions about the UNESCO bid amongst closer informants. I added two images that were promotional materials of the bid within Catalonia, and could also be used in discussing other aspects of Catalan cuisine (Fig 6.1). With several groups, the first reaction with the left hand picture was to talk about similar food-related sayings in Catalan, and the UNESCO campaign wasn't even discussed before we moved on. With others, when I pointed out the UNESCO campaign, they were unaware of it, and uninterested. Amongst the group from the Assemblea, no one knew of it, and were even surprised at the existence of such a

campaign, claiming that while cuisine was important for Catalan patrimony, they couldn't understand why it would be so for global patrimony. However, they did admit that it was all good if it raised awareness of Catalan culture (via cuisine) in the world generally. Several respondents also found the use of wooden cutlery and dishes strange, since they don't use them. Cristina even said that it made her feel embarrassed, as its use was inaccurate and too folkloric to be a proper advert for Catalan practices, and it made them look backward.

For Pep V though, this image attracted him, particularly the phrase '*tothom a taula*', in that it suggested a space for discussion, be it of identity, or of cuisine, in the tradition of the *sobretaula*. While he claimed this was indeed folkloric, he also felt the image to be "traditional...very connected with Catalan cuisine, of course it identifies us", even if it may present a image of Catalan cuisine that ignores diversity. He also felt the image idealized a very heavy and old-fashioned view of Catalan cuisine, with



Figure 6.1: Images used in photo elicitation. The image to the left was the first the respondents saw and discussed. The tagline is a popular Catalan phrase meaning 'everyone to the table!'. The right shows an image of *crema catalana*, with the words 'We're the country of *crema catalana*' (Source: FICCG)

the wooden plates and almost stereotypical image of the *crema catalana*. He considered the UNESCO recognition to be “a commercial strategy”, perhaps useful for economic or political promotion, but unnecessary for him as a Catalan. This lines up with Concepció, Irene & Cristina’s first reaction, which was to see the image as an advert, with no relevance to their Catalan identity.

Marta on the other hand was positive, seeing the campaign as a good case for Catalonia as a whole. Marta herself works for Omnium Cultural, one of the principal Catalan organizations, and whose main aim has been to promote global awareness of the Catalan independence movement. Marta may have been applying this to the UNESCO campaign, seeing it as one other way of promoting Catalan identity, like others.

“I think that Catalan cuisine deserves to be patrimony of humanity. I think it’s very important, it’s a deserved recognition, because it has its own very important personality, since the medieval era, and it’s been adapting to the times. After all, it’s still evolving, it’s one of the most innovative. A historic recognition”.

Marta therefore did not appear to believe that the UNESCO campaign had the potential to arrest the development of future Catalan cuisine, although she later admitted that she didn’t have a strong opinion. With the second image also from the campaign, ‘We are the country of the *crema catalana*’, this had even less reaction to the UNESCO labelling, and led to more discussion of the *crema catalana*, though most agreed with the intention of the phrase, that is to show the importance of *crema catalana*. However, one informant (Concepció) was outraged, saying that “we eat

crema catalana, but that's not who we are. We're so much more", suggesting once more that the approach of the UNESCO campaign and the FICCG in this instance was too reductionist to truly represent Catalan cuisine.

One can see then that there is a general disinterest in the UNESCO campaign, though many informants felt that if it is promoting Catalan culture to a global audience, then it is acceptable. It can therefore be used as a weapon in this sense to assert Catalan existence as a political and cultural unity beyond the borders of the Catalan Autonomous Community. After I left the field, the FICCG began campaigns to boost support around Catalonia, so it is possible my informants were becoming more aware of the campaign. Still, the concerns of homogenization of the diversity of Catalan cuisine, one of the ways in which its proponents self-identity and differentiate it from other cuisines, will still remain. This applies too to issues of quality, and who is the agent tasked with preserving a cuisine: a public organization, an international body, or the people themselves?

6.3 Connections between cuisine & independence

The discussion on UNESCO raised the issue of the politicization of cuisine in Catalonia. That is, how cuisine is a salient aspect by which Catalans can differentiate themselves from Spain, and the importance of official recognition of this at a global level via UNESCO. One question that intrigued me during fieldwork was whether the current rise in pro-independence sentiment in Catalonia was in some way connected to attitudes or behaviours around food. We have already seen that those who were

very pro-independence can be called ‘very *pa amb tomàquet*’, but I wanted to probe deeper into this connection. Such a connection is hardly new in Catalan cuisine, as Ferran Agulló’s introduction (quoted in 3.7) to his book *El Llibre de la Cuina Catalana* demonstrates.

In many interviews, I asked my informants directly whether there was a connection between Catalan cuisine and the independence movement. The responses from many informants were interesting, not just because of the variety of opinions, but also because they suggested a deep sense of disillusionment with the current political situation, and also a perceived separation between everyday life (and the world of cuisine), and the world of politics. More importantly, the answers to this question revealed much about the connection between cultural and political aspects of Catalan nationalism. One can be pro-independence and very pro-Catalan but dislike the parties that support this view.

The general view was that cultural aspects such as cuisine feed into pro-independence sentiment by acting as a wellspring of Catalan identity which can be mobilised in developing and enforcing pro-independence sentiments. Pep Palau’s answer to the question, in one of my first interviews in the field, came to be repeated in various forms in the opinions of my informants throughout the field:

“The movement for independence is a movement that has had an unexpected size, that no one could have predicted. That it’s in the society, in all the ambits, age levels, social and professional categories. And so for cuisine, which is one of the fundamental cultural factors of this collective, as a people, as a nation, so

logically it is and will be one of the best expressions of this claim to independence, certainly... It's one of the ways of best expressing, most agreeably, how we are as a people, through how we eat."

Pau agreed there was a connection and used the metaphor that cuisine is a type of language, as well as being a cultural artefact: "Food is culture, and food forms a part of language. You speak, you think, and that facilitates the identity of a people. Language is a vehicle, and food is also a language". Osona chef Ignasi on the other hand replied that directly he saw no connection between cuisine and independence, but "with independence, it makes you feel a bit more Catalan, you have it inside, no? And this includes everything with food. That instead of choosing something foreign, you'll choose something from here". There is thus a slight hint of chauvinism in attitudes to non-Catalan goods from Ignasi's perspective, however I have not found this to be a strong current in Catalan gastronationalism.

Some of my informants hadn't actually thought about the connection between independence and cuisine. A representative of La Garriga town council and organizer of one of their food festivals admitted as much, but in her response referred to many of the foundations of Catalan cultural difference:

"I think it's all cultural no? Culture manifests itself in many ways, and gastronomy is another. The identifying Catalan traits (*el tret identitari català*) we're restoring it a lot, because we have in our background a cultural fact (*un fet cultural*)... We have differentiating traits that are different from the rest of Spain, that in this movement, it makes us get together more, because [the Spanish government] makes us forget them"

Catalan cuisine is therefore “an identifying trait” that differentiates Catalans from Spain, and can be mobilised to lend support to the independence movement.

Similarly, chef Magda in Vic was unsure if there really was a connection, but claimed that cuisine and food “all forms a part of this sentiment that we have as Catalans”.

Magazine editor Josep S believed that independence sentiments can be harnessed and connected to any other aspect of Catalanism, to use it to emphasise those differences that make Catalan identity separate. All in all, he concluded, “it’s that we’re a country, by which we mean, that all the things we have, a language, a history, a literature, a political vindication, also we have our own cuisine”. One can see in Josep’s answer clear parallels with the famous quote from Ferran Agulló’s introduction from the start of this section.

Pere Q in Vic University believed that “independence is a movement based on a feeling of belonging to a collectivity which has a culture, and that this culture is formed in part by food.” However he added that despite the symbolic value of cuisine as a cultural differentiator, food’s influence beyond being a national symbol is limited. The independence movement for him was based on two principles: firstly, the feeling of being misplaced in Spain, and secondly a solid group sentiment and feeling of nationhood, that would allow them a future on their own in the world. They weren’t independentists just because they ate differently. However, he agreed with all my other informants that “the independence movement has a lot to do with the feeling of cultural belonging, and here cuisine has a part”.

Some cooks even refused to enter into discussions of national politics altogether. Joan Roca, perhaps the most important chef in Catalonia today, responded to a question by Jaume F on the labelling of his cuisine as ‘Spanish’ by placing himself outside the debate, but making clear his identity as a Catalan nonetheless:

“I am a Catalan, and I want to be Catalan with dignity and without confrontations. I don’t want to enter into political debates, I want to be able to understand cuisine and continue doing my own cuisine as it’s always been done, which has Catalan roots because it’s the cuisine that we know, with the people with whom we’ve learned, and we’ve evolved. And evidently it’s an open cuisine, open to the world, to new influences from our voyages”

Joan Roca’s comments bring up once more the ideal of openness in cuisine that was discussed in the last chapter. Still, there were others who connected Catalan cuisine and the independence movement more explicitly. Food historian Nuria claimed that, at the time of our interview in April 2013, there was little connection, but during the tercentenary celebrations of the Siege of Barcelona in 2014, there would be. The year was dedicated to seventeenth century themed events, including in cuisine. She was designing menus for restaurants to serve “food before the Castilians came!”. This particular aspect of historical memory is perhaps the most explicit way in which food has been connected with the independence movement, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

A cook in Osona, Manel, made an interesting comparison between politics and cuisine. Manel had a deep disillusionment with the current political scene in Catalonia, and was quite open that he didn’t believe in independence, at least not with

the current politicians. He suggested that the cuisine of the past, with its “rich sauces, that’s dark, heavy” was like today’s politics, “heavy, corrupt, dirty”. Just as with Catalan cuisine and the contemporary movement of *nova cuina*, he believed that Catalan politics should be dominated by the younger generation, and that perhaps with better politicians, Catalonia might be independent – “I believe in a new cuisine, and I also believe in a new politics”.

It is clear that many informants made a clear differentiation between cultural and political aspects of Catalan nationalism. Like most of my other informants, Carles saw Catalan cuisine as “a cultural patrimony”, that was not a political patrimony. All the same, culture could be taken on and used by politicians when it served their interests. He recalled that several chefs, himself included, had banded together in the 1980s to petition the President of the Generalitat at that time, Jordi Pujol, to help with their efforts to promote Catalan cuisine. Carles recalled bitterly how they arranged conferences and events (he may refer to the 1981-82 *Congrés de la Cuina Catalana*) but cuisine as culture didn’t seem useful in a political dimension, so their efforts came to nothing. Nowadays on the other hand, “they do see a cultural potential, and with chefs when there’s any event or any political question, they try and put cuisine to the fore”, as in the UNESCO application, for example.

Like Pep P, he later added that cuisine is something attractive by which Catalans can explain themselves to non-Catalans. Oriol replied there was a clear and long-standing difference between Catalan cuisine that identifies it in contrast to that of Spain, and that, “culturally, [this difference] remains much clearer than politically”. Fermi was

against connecting cuisine with the movement for independence, even though he was strongly in favour of independence. For him, being pro-independence had nothing to do with his cuisine and defending Catalan cuisine in his restaurant. But his response to this question raised some interesting points about ideas of political unity with the rest of Spain and the historical connections of Catalan cuisine with others in the Mediterranean, and will be discussed in the next section on Catalonia's relationship with other national and regional units.

6.4 Catalan cuisine and connections with neighbouring cuisines

In the discussion so far, there has been some mention of the many contexts of Catalan cuisine: Spain, the *Països Catalans*, the Mediterranean, and the rest of Europe. I have already said several times that Catalans see themselves as aligned more with Europe, rather than with the rest of Spain. I was particularly intrigued by Fermi's comment, which I briefly mentioned in Chapter 5, whereby he refused to recognize Spanish cuisine as a legitimate entity. I include the entirety of his remarks here, simply because they reveal many of the interlocking factors I mentioned at the start of this section:

“There is something really clear: the concept of Spanish cuisine, it doesn't exist, it's a political concept. The concept of 'Catalan cuisine', yes, it exists, it's a cultural concept. It's not political. Why? It's very simple, because you have to know the history. Cuisine is culture. So Catalonia has been generating its own cuisine, from a geographic area, which takes in the area of the south of France... which has been a passing of routes. And all the cultures that have arrived in Catalonia have left a part of their origins. The Phoenicians, the Greeks, the

Romans, the Arabs, the Visigoths, everyone. So this cuisine has a lot in common with the cuisine of Toulouse and Languedoc, and Marseille.

The Mediterranean, it has a lot more in common [with Catalonia], including language, that Catalonia hasn't with Castilian!⁶¹ For that, the cuisines have a unity, a cultural proximity. The cuisine of Valencia, of the [Balearic] Islands, clearly they're *cosines-germanes*⁶² with Catalan cuisine. We had a political unity at one time, it's not coincidence that there's cultural unity. Spanish cuisine, no, it's a political concept."

Fermi's extended quote raises several interesting points. Firstly, the claim that Spanish cuisine does not exist is implicitly connected with the claim that there is no such thing as a united Spain. This in itself is one of the major arguments of the Catalan independence movement, that is that Spain is too centralist and unifying. As I stated earlier, the acceptance of regional identities within Catalonia is a direct contrast to this attitude. He also made reference to the ideal of the 'land of migrations', which in this instance is used to show connectivity with other (non-Spanish areas), particularly France.

The French connection is an interesting one, particularly since this close proximity undoubtedly aided the rise of the *nova cuina* movement in Catalonia that was inspired by *nouvelle cuisine*. The Basque country also played a part in this development though, significant considering this area's likewise somewhat fraught history as part of the Spanish state. France is also a state, so to compare Catalonia and France in this

⁶¹ My informant is here referring to parallels between Catalan and neighbouring romance languages, such as French and Italian, and claiming that they are linguistically and culturally closer to Catalan than Spanish is to Catalan.

⁶² Literally 'cousin-sibling', a kin relationship that describes family connection between two first cousins, who are more like siblings because they may have grown up together or in close proximity, and share an intimate, close, emotional connection. Take note of the reference to kinship here, and the suggesting of a cultural (and possibly by extension national) unity between areas of the *Països Catalans*.

way is to suggest Catalonia is on a level footing as a distinct entity. It is also interesting that in Fermi's comment, the past "political unity" between the *Països Catalans* is seen as more legitimate than the "political concept" of the Spanish state today.

Two older informants, Sat and her mother Montserrat replicated this view. Sat was keen to point out dishes that French (specifically Roussillon) and Catalan cuisine shared, and they particularly emphasized how they had once been united, and together for many centuries, playing on the notion of the concept of the *Països Catalans*. Sat later clarified:

"I think Catalonia is one of the parts of Spain that has changed most in terms of food...My impression is that we've got more from the French than from the rest of Spain...We've had lots more contact with Europe. Here we have a good bit of frontier. And of course, the rest of Spain seems so far away."

She therefore hints that Catalonia is perhaps more innovative (she does not see changing foodways negatively), and is more closely related to France and the rest of Europe than to Spain. Her mother added "There are lots of people in Spain who know nothing about Catalonia" to this comment, an attitude I heard elsewhere which heightens the sense of distance from a Spain apparently uninterested in Catalonia.

While Fermi denies the legitimacy of Spanish cuisine as a whole, he is very complimentary of other cuisines within Spain. He represents a habit of referring to Spain by its individual autonomous communities. This particularly happens with

cooking styles, and suggests a worldview whereby Spain is divided into different areas, not unified. It is interesting that Vázquez Montalbán (1977), in his polemical work on the defence of Catalan cuisine, continually referred to ‘Cuisines of the Spanish state’, not ‘Spanish cuisine’.

It is as if by suggesting that there is no such thing as gastronomic unity, there is a denial of the unity of Spain as a political and culturally justified entity. Considering that such claims to a unified cuisine have been used by the Spanish state in the past to cement Spanish identity, both in the nineteenth century (L. Anderson, 2013) and during the Franco period, this denial of such unity is unsurprising. Toni, the founder of the Fundació Alicia, explained to me that that in the Franco era, food was used to express unity, not diversity within Spain. Tourism within Spain was encouraged to “get to know the Francoist soil”, and that sameness and unity were emphasized in this experience. There would be lists of recipes with no recognition of their point of origin within Spain. If there was some recognition, it was as a folkloric curiosity, and then each part of Spain would be limited to a few set dishes, thus essentializing them (this may explain another reason why some informants disliked claiming one dish or a few dishes as particularly Catalan). However, as Toni added, “The *suquet* was still the *suquet*, a Catalan dish, and always would be.”

Secondly, the connectivity with the Mediterranean area is evident, which is also related to the *Països Catalans* ideal, and also Catalonia’s golden age when the Catalan-Aragonese empire ruled this area. Once more, my informants expressed eagerness to connect themselves to any country aside from Spain. For example,

Francesc, said that he saw parallels with Greece, Turkey, Italy (all states, take note), and even claimed that the same kinds of utensils were shared with Algeria, suggesting a connection (highly unlikely!). Nuria said of Mediterranean identity that it was all related to the historic connections between the *Països Catalans*, as well as places like Sicily. She remarked that “the Mediterranean seems like my home. I see [other Mediterranean countries] as siblings and very close”. Once again, like in Fermi’s comment, the notion of kinship comes up – a stark contrast to the alien perception of Spanish cuisine.

Francesc also stressed that the use of olive oil was likewise a feature that placed Catalonia in the Mediterranean area. This comment came up repeatedly in conversations with informants, particularly in contrast to butter-based cuisines (in this case, difference from France is suggested). This difference was a fairly recent one, I hasten to add, since olive oil was not always widely available, and pig fat was often the preferred cooking oil due to its ubiquity.

Awareness of the 2013 recognition of the Mediterranean diet as UNESCO intangible heritage may have contributed to this idealization of the Mediterranean diet, and indeed both official promotional discourse (generally from Generalitat sponsored initiatives) and my informants often made comparisons between Catalan and Mediterranean cuisine in the context of the latter’s healthful properties. This aspect is central to the personal discourse of famous chef Carme Ruscalleda.

6.4.1 *Paella: a Catalan dish?*

Finally, a consideration of the question of the *Països Catalans* in Catalan food discourse would be incomplete without some discussion of the *paella*. *Paella* is of Valencian origin, and therefore from Catalan-speaking area,⁶³ and is a rice dish with added ingredients, cooked in a large pan (ideally) over an open flame, with various ingredients added. I already mentioned in 5.6 how Pep V chose *paella* as the most Catalan dish in his opinion, precisely because of its connection with the *Països Catalans* (I will also discuss this matter further in 8.2). In 4.1.4, Nuria also mentioned how Valencians dislike the Catalan practice of using a lot of onion in *paella*.

Their responses show that *paella* is regularly cooked in Catalonia, though informants normally differentiated between *paella* and *arros*, the latter being a non-specific rice dish. When I asked what the difference was between the two, I received several responses, which highlighted the differences between the two. Firstly, different receptacles are normally used, since in Catalonia a wide ceramic pan is preferred. However, metal pans are more ubiquitous further south in Catalonia, closer to Valencia. The preference for the ceramic pan though contributes another difference to Catalan and Valencian rice dishes, which is that Catalan rice dishes allow slower cooking, and all the juices do not have time to evaporate. As Mon remarked, “in the case of pots, in Catalonia we use the *cassola* [wide ceramic pot] because we like rice with more juice, and with the *paella* you can’t”. Sat also made a similar remark (“here people don’t prefer them so dry, they like them more liquid). Sat and her mother both

⁶³ Despite recent controversy on whether the language spoken there should really be called Valencian.

agreed that the arrival of *paella* in areas of Catalonia outside the far-south was fairly new, from about forty years ago.

A final point of differentiation between Catalonia and Valencia is the actual ingredients used. As I have already described, *mar i muntanya* cuisine is a characteristic of Catalan cuisine, and this is particularly applied in rice dishes like *paella*. However, Catalans claim that Valencians dislike this mixing, and will only cook either meat or seafood, never together.

Chapter 7. The gastronomic calendar at work: seasonality, festivity and territory

One feature that immediately strikes a first-time visitor coming to grips with food in Catalonia is the emphasis placed on seasonality, and how this is ingrained into food culture. This is hardly unique to Catalonia, but when one considers that seasonality also goes hand in hand with eating produce that is local to Catalonia (or at least from a short distance outside), and that this also means eating certain products or varieties unique to Catalonia, one sees how food and identity become connected in this context. In this environment, food festivals centred around a local speciality that are available for a short time become both a means of community promotion on the touristic level, and a source of local identity and pride. Food is the medium through which local identity is expressed on the county and regional levels, so much so that many Catalans seem to hold a culinary map of their country in their minds, associating food, people, place and season.

Related to the question of food festivals, therefore, is also the idea of the gastronomic calendar that I have already mentioned copiously. This describes occasions where certain foods are eaten on certain days or in certain seasons, normally connected with secularized religious feast days. Most of these are older than most food festivals, which have only sprung up in the last thirty years or so. Food fairs also come from older weekly markets, which are likewise important centres of county identities throughout Catalonia and provide a strong link with the past. As one representative of a newly developed fair explained, “the Catalan people like to go out into the street”,

thus making newly developed fairs part of a historical trend. They are also locales where seasonal produce can be bought.

Through considering seasonality, one comes to see its connection with landscape, itself another central part of Catalan culinary and national identity. Indeed, it is at times difficult to talk about these concepts lineally because of the interconnectedness between these themes and a number of other strands, including markets, food fairs and tourism. For that reason, I have created a conceptual diagram to show, very simply, how these concepts are related (Figure 7.1). What I wish to show with this chapter is how ideas about national identity are connected jointly with landscape and regional identity, which are themselves linked to each other. Landscape is also strongly related to seasonality, which is made manifest in markets and food festivals.

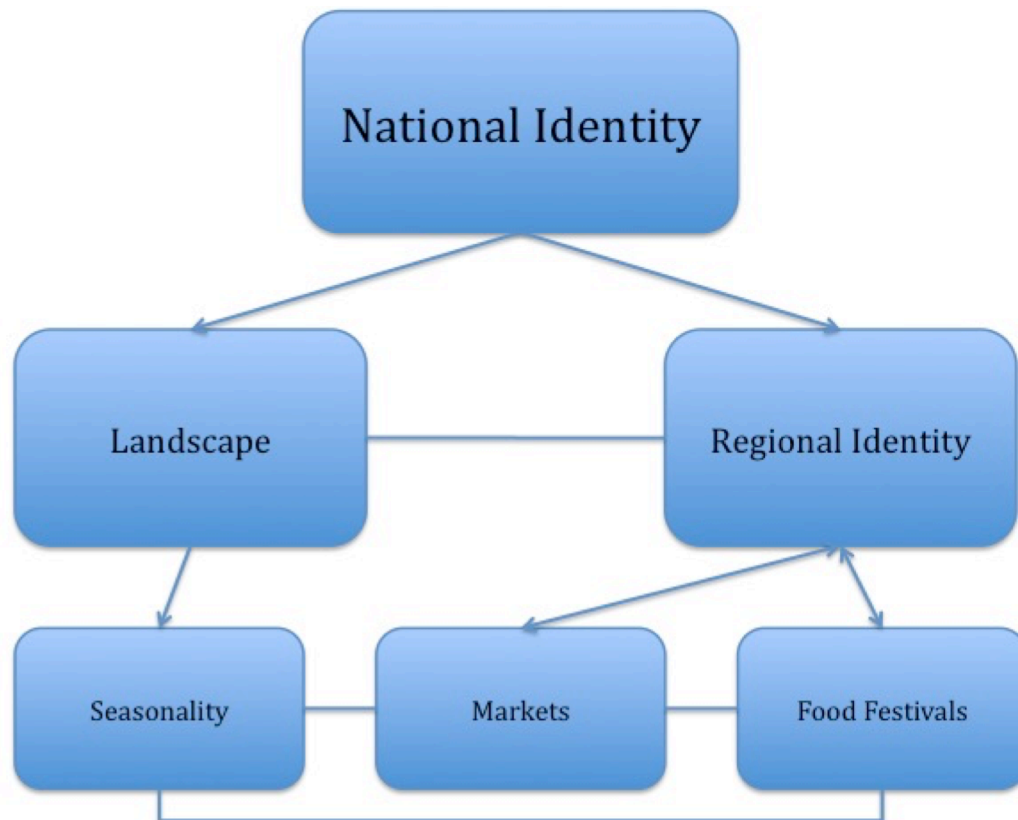


Figure 7.1: Conceptual framework of how the subjects to be discussed in this chapter relate to one another in the Catalan context.

These in turn are also strongly tied to regional identities (Landscape will be discussed in Chapter 8).

However, little has been done to relate these concepts through the lens of food. That is my intention here. I will begin by first discussing the gastronomic calendar and its relationship with seasonality, then go on to explain how this feeds into notions of regional awareness of other areas of Catalonia and the *excursionist* ideal of knowing the nation. This in turn moves into the way in which markets are centres of national identity construction, where I will compare weekly markets with recently developed food fairs. Next I consider the attitudes to Catalan produce, and also what I call ‘locavore’ (local eating) movements such as Slow Food,⁶⁴ which place emphasis on concepts such as local foods, organic produce, and heritage varieties. Then, I consider how landscape is expressed in a culinary sense, concluding with a consideration of an activity particularly associated with Catalan foodscapes, that of mushroom hunting.

7.1 The Gastronomic calendar and seasonality

In contemporary Catalan national culture, so central is the gastronomic, festive calendar that in 2013 Omnium was able to dedicate one of its annual calendars on

⁶⁴ Slow Food is a non-profit organization that encourages the tasting and protection of local, ancient or heritage varieties of food through promoting small-scale agriculture, and ‘slowness’ through thought in preparation and conviviality in food consumption, versus mass-produced and standardized products, particularly fast foods. The movement first began in 1986 by founder Carlo Petrini, a leftist intellectual and journalist, as part of a resistance campaign to the opening of McDonalds near the Spanish Steps in Rome. Its structure is focused on ‘convivia’ or local societies, based on pre-existing food and drink societies. The movement’s heartland has been the Piedmont region of Northern Italy, where its headquarters are still based, so Italians have been a driving force. It became an international non-profit organization in 1989 with the development of the Slow Food Manifesto in Paris, and is now present in 150 countries worldwide.

Catalan themes to ‘Gastronomic traditions and customs’ (See Fig 7.2). The images show well the concept of the yearly cycle described by many of my informants.

January shows the celebration of Epiphany (Nit de Reis) through the *Tortell de Reis* (King’s cake). The *Tortell de Reis* is a round cake in the form of a ring (seen in the centre of January’s image), made from a sponge or coca base, covered in glazed fruits and sometimes filled with cream. The cake often comes with a crown, and inside a figurine of a king and a bean are hidden. The person who finds the king will wear the



Figure 7.2: Overview of Omnium’s 2013 calendar representing the gastronomic calendar (Source: Omnium Cultural, 2013)

crown for the day, whereas the finder of the bean must pay for the *Tortell*, either this year, or preferably next year. The latter is preferred because it means the participants will have to meet again next year, so ensuring the continuance of this connection between the participants through food. This round *Tortell* is also now associated with

other festive days, particularly Saint Anthony the Abbott on 17th January, though according to some of my informants this association is fairly recent.

February represents a particularly seasonal product, the consumption of *calçots*, specially grown spring onions. As I described when I introduced this food at the end of 4.7, *calçots* are generally eaten from late January to mid-March, making February the ideal month (though I was told, with disgust, that some unscrupulous restaurants had lengthened it to late April). The point of origin for this dish is the area around the city of Valls in the south of Catalonia. Thanks to this association, a huge, communal *calçotada* festival is celebrated in the city one weekend in February, an event which will be described throughout this chapter. I experienced several *calçotades* aside from the public one in Valls, since the practice has spread to other parts of Catalonia, and is a popular excuse for a communal dining experience during this time. It is also without doubt a uniquely Catalan food practice, perhaps contributing to its popularity in recent years (the gesture of lowering the *calçot* into the mouth as in 7.2 is immediately recognizable in Catalan food culture).

March shows a popular figure representing Lent in Catalonia, *la vella de Quaresme*, an old woman with seven legs, each leg representing the seven weeks of lent, holding the foods of that time: salted cod, vegetables, and a plate of *bunyols*, fried dough balls. Even non-religious households uphold these associations, or make some reference to them in family meals at the weekend. In most of Catalonia these are only eaten at Lent and Easter, whereas in Empordà (the area with which they are principally associated, and where they are called *brunyols*), they can be found all year round. In a household in Foixà, in Baix Empordà, Easter Sunday was the day when

my informants made *brunyols* with another family who travelled from a neighbouring town. When I tried to ascertain how long this had been going on, I was told this was a ‘family tradition’, and the latest manifestation of a connection between two families. Another festival often referred to by informants at this time, which is also strongly associated with a food, is Saint Joseph’s Day (March 19th) celebrated as Father’s Day. The food for this day is the *crema catalana*, or *Crema de Sant Josep* for this association. The *bunyols* are also an example of the prevalence of sweet foods in the gastronomic calendar, and the well-developed pastry and confectionary industry in Catalonia is sometimes referred to as an identifying feature of Catalan culinary identity.

April, the usual month of Easter, represents a godparent giving an old-fashioned *Mona* to his godchild (normally done on Easter Sunday or Monday). Until the twentieth century, the *mona* was a bread loaf baked with eggs, the number of eggs representing the age of the child, and shapes becoming more elaborate as more eggs were added. In the 1930s however, *mones* began to be made from chocolate, which is now the dominant medium, taking the form of elaborate chocolate houses, eggs, rabbits and chickens (rather like Easter eggs in the English-speaking world). Another variation combines both, with a sponge cake base and a chocolate egg on the top, which one of my informants considered more ‘traditional’, since it was closer to the older style of *mona*. The *mona* has now become something of an art form in Catalonia, with bakers and chocolatiers seeking to produce innovative and unusual signature creations every year. In Barcelona and larger cities, families generally go out for a walk some time over Easter weekend to look at these *mones* in local shop windows (Martí Escayol, 2004).

However, whilst I was in Catalonia, I was told that interpretations of the older style of *mona* (that seen in 7.2 and 7.4) were becoming increasingly popular, particularly in Barcelona, where I was able to see them first-hand. Mon noted that the time of the popularity of this kind began about the time of a rise in pro-independence sentiment, musing on whether Catalans had felt a new impetus to express past cultural artefacts in light of the increased emphasis on history as the source of national identity.



Figure 7.3 and 7.4: Modern chocolate *mones* in different designs, from a shop in Vic (left) and newly popular, old-style *mones* with eggs baked into the bread, in Barcelona (right).

The responsibility for providing a *mona* is taken very seriously in Catalonia, and the two occasions I heard of when a godparent neglected this duty were sources of regret and disappointment. The *Tortell de Reis*, the *mona*, and the individualised case of the Empordan *brunyols* show an interesting aspect of Catalan food culture, that is the way that social ties (whether amongst distant kin or godparents) are kept up by exchanges of food.

May celebrates the month's association with Sant Ponç, patron saint of herbalists and beekeepers. According to the blurb, "In Catalonia, it's tradition to organize markets in

the street where one can find remedial herbs, aromatic or for cooking, honey, syrup, comfitures, typical spices of the territory, caramels, sweets and preserve fruit” (Omnium Cultural, 2013). It is true that there are many gastronomic fairs dedicated to herbs, honey and jams in this month. One can also see claims of markets as ‘traditional’ indicates their potential as spaces of Catalan gastronationalism.

The next important festival is the Nit de Sant Joan (Saint John’s Eve) on 23rd June, associated with *Coca* (sweet flat bread), seen on the character’s head in Omnium’s calendar, which also emphasises the fire that is the symbol of the holiday. This feast day is also one of the three principal Catalan festivals, along with Saint George’s Day (April 23rd) and the National Day (September 11th) – interestingly these two do not have a specific food associated with them, though efforts are now underway to find foods for them (as will be discussed in Chapter 9).

July celebrates seafood and in particular *sardinades* (sardine-eating celebrations), evidenced by the brazier and the sailor singing *havaneres*.⁶⁵ The month also contains the saint’s day of sailors, Santa Maria del Carme, on the 16th July. August emphasizes the association the month with the Festa Majors and communal dinners. At home, these would be celebrated with “the typical dish of the territory”, emphasising also the regionality inherent in Catalonia’s gastronomic landscape.

⁶⁵ A type of song that originated amongst sailors and fishermen on the north-east coast of Catalonia, inspired by trips to Cuba (hence the reference to Havana).

As mentioned a moment ago, there are no associated foods for September 11th (the Diada), Catalonia's national day. In Omnium's calendar however, *pa amb tomàquet* is the assigned dish for September and the Diada, proving once again the Catalanist association of this food with national identity as discussed in Chapter 5. In common with Omnium's catalanizing agenda, the blurb emphasises the celebration of the fall of Barcelona on the eleventh of September 1714, which is "a good moment to pay homage to the most humble of our foods, which has also become a characteristic symbol of Catalans, the *pa amb tomàquet*, and the wine drunk in a *purró*". The remark makes clear *pa amb tomàquet*'s role as a national food par excellence, and also the communal nature of the event through the shared drinking implement, the *purró*. *Purrons* are present at most communal festive events, and shared by all visitors.

October is the month of mushrooms, showing a *boletaire* (mushroom hunter) on a stylized mountain and woods. This is an obvious choice for a Catalanist calendar, since the activity of mushroom-picking is an essential component of Catalan culinary identity, and one of the most common self-identified features of gastronomic uniqueness (their further significance will be discussed in Chapter 8).

The major festival of the autumn period is that of *Tot Sants* (All Saints), held on 1st November. This time of year is associated with chestnuts, sweet potatoes, and *panellets*, small sweetmeats of almond flours and nuts. Omnium's image represents the autumnal *castanyada* (roast-chestnut eating events), with the stereotypical old woman over her brazier, the roasted chestnuts wrapped in newspaper cones

(something several informants particularly described), and a selection of *panellet* varieties along the top.

Finally, in December we see all the associated foods for Christmas and Saint Stephen's Day, including *canelons*, *galletes* pasta for the broth, *turró* (nougat), cava, *escudella*, *carn d'olla*, and *neules* (curled biscuit straws). This association of Christmas with *escudella i carn d'olla* and *canelons* has already been discussed extensively in Chapter 5.

Considering the calendar's content more closely reveals that about half the months receive their association with particular foods because of the seasonal availability of these foods, such as the *calçots* for February, the herbs and fruits in May and June, seafood in a summer month, mushrooms in October and chestnuts for November. Heavier foods can also be found in the winter months, which is also considered by my informants to be a seasonal variation because of climate rather than available produce. This association between the gastronomic calendar and their associated foods begins in early life, as *panellets* are often the first foods that children make in school, as part of the autumn celebrations. So engrained is the connection between season and produce that eating certain festive foods outside their associated remit creates revulsion, such as the year-round presence of packaged *panellets* for tourists in Barcelona's airport.

Seasonality is not the only factor to consider here. The gastronomic calendar is essential to claims of gastro-cultural uniqueness. Most Catalans realize that they eat, with a few exceptions, the same foods as their neighbours. This is so even for signature dishes, such as *escudella i carn d'olla*, *canelons*, and *crema catalana*. As I described in the Chapter 5, the first two

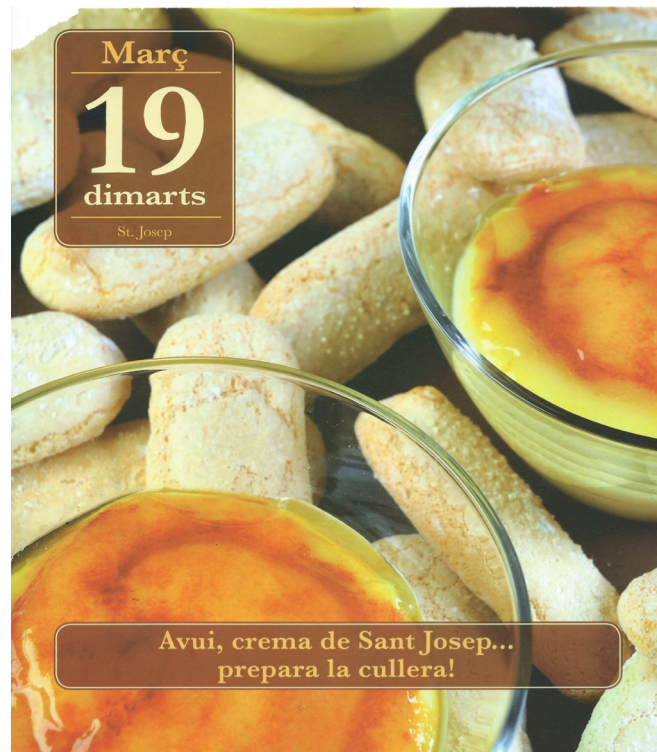


Figure 7.5: A page from the Cakemakers' Guild calendar for St Joseph's Day, advertising crema catalana. Each day in the calendar has an associated foodstuff. This calendar is present in a prominent place in most bakeries in Catalonia, continually reinforcing the ideal of the gastronomic calendar. In some ways, this is for commercial promotion, but in the case of the Crema, this is usually made at home and not bought in bakeries (Source: Gremi de Pastisseria de Barcelona).

are present in surrounding cuisines (and my informants recognized this), and *crema catalana* is almost identical to French *crème brûlée*. However, what marked them out as different was their application in Catalan cuisine thanks to the gastronomic calendar. As Nuria, the food historian, remarked, not only are *canelons* a Sunday dish, it is also associated with St Steven's Day, which is not so in Italy. Likewise, *crema catalana* has a very strong association with Saint Joseph's Day (March 19th), so much so that another name is *crema de Sant Josep*. This association is repeatedly enforced in cookbooks and adverts, such the example in Fig 7.5. For Mon, a cooking instructor, Catalan cuisine's most salient feature was the gastronomic calendar, and she explained it through the connection with St Joseph's Day and *crema*:

“For me [St Joseph’s day] relates very much to tradition...My father is called Josep (Joseph), and we never passed a Saint Joseph’s Day without doing *crema* at home... for me, since a young age I have always understood festivals by their foods. It’s something that comes together”.

Her comment shows well how the festive or religious calendar is interchanged with the gastronomic calendar. The food festival organizer in La Garriga town council took the step of claiming that this association of food with days is particular to Catalonia, and unusual for visitors:

“In no other country do you have a cake or something else for each festival. It’s something that we have clearly here. Like the *bunyols* for Lent, the Mona for Easter, the Epiphany cake. It’s the fun thing about Catalonia, it doesn’t happen anywhere else”

This tenet is therefore clearly something with which Catalans self-identify as particular to their culinary identity. At the start of our discussion, Joan made clear that, for him, the foundations of Catalan cuisine were the “cycle of the year, marked by festivals” and “products of the land”. The latter was to become a common phrase, representing ideals such as connection with locality, landscape, history, naturalness etc. Such concepts are similar to ideas related to recent food movements such as Slow Food or what Pratt (2007) calls “alternative”, yet these sentiments should not be simply classed as a sub-set of these movements. .

Moreover, while these foods are often inherently tied up with ideas about the seasonality of produce, they also have great significance in the eyes of Catalans as markers of a unique culinary identity by virtue of their exclusivity to the Principat.

For example, while many of the foods just described are not unique to Catalonia, their use on festive days is particular.

However, there is another, more pressing ideal demonstrated in the gastronomic calendar. When consuming dishes on particular days associated with the festive gastronomic calendar, there is an awareness on an individual level that throughout the rest of Catalonia, other Catalans are eating the same dishes. Pep S expressed this aspect most succinctly, during a Good Friday meal of cod with eggs I ate with him and his family (Fig 7.6). Although they were not religious, they still insisted on making reference to the continued sway of Lent until its end on Sunday, so as to respect the gastronomic calendar.⁶⁶ The dish we were preparing and consuming was one that Pep had popularized in a food television show, and he knew was consumed in several households on this day. He followed a recipe he learned from a local household, but which he knew existed in various forms in Catalonia.

In describing what this dish meant to him, he summed up the real importance, the central feature of the gastronomic calendar in nationalist culture: “There is a connection at the level of all Catalonia, you feel linked to a culture, we’re all doing the same this Good Friday”. By eating the same things that one knows others throughout Catalonia are eating, one can feel a connection with other Catalans, eating the same thing. Much like language, or the collective celebration of national days, following the gastronomic calendar creates a connection between the individual and

⁶⁶ The dish itself respects seasonality in its other ingredients, such as spinach and other seasonal vegetables, and the large quantity of eggs (both boiled and in a pancake) – spring is considered the egg ‘season’ thanks to higher quantities of eggs. Pep was also keen to point out the dish used a *sofregit*, also proof of its identification as a Catalan dish.

the greater Catalan nation through the shared consumption of the same foods. In this sense, an imagined community of the nation is created not by reading the same texts (or in B.Anderson's case, newspapers), but by eating the same foods at the same moment.

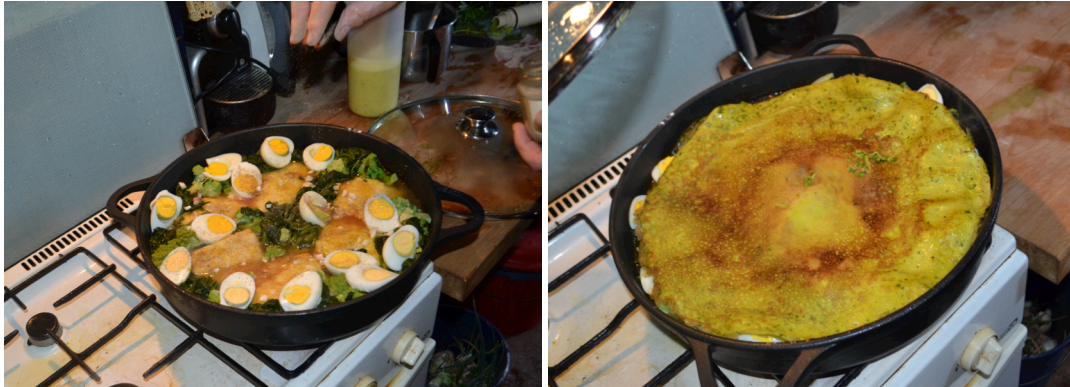


Figure 7.6: The meal described by Pep S.

7.2 Regional awareness

Related to the notion of collective national awareness through eating the same foods at the same times, I suggest that collective awareness can also be expressed through knowledge of the different foods that are eaten in other parts of Catalonia. As discussed in Chapter 5, there is a strong sense of regionality and regional identity in Catalonia. One aspect that was continually emphasised was how each county, and even individual towns and villages, had their own particular dishes. These dishes themselves made up the greater whole of Catalan cuisine, just as the counties and their particular identities made up the ideal of a plural Catalonia. Their origins are recognised and emphasised, even if they have spread to other parts of Catalonia. *Calçots*, the spring onions described earlier, are a classic example, since they began in

Valls (a town south of Barcelona), but have moved into other parts of Catalonia in the last two decades.

Catalans characterise other counties and towns by their foods. For example, if I mentioned that I was visiting a particular locale, my informants would often start listing products associated with that place. Oriol, a designer, explained it thus:

“Gastronomic understanding here is very rich... Like you go to Osona, and you have to return with a *llonganissa* or *pans de pessic*. And in Lleida you have to eat snails. And you go to the south, and maybe you’ll do a *calçotada*. People have great awareness of all the gastronomy and the diversity: the oil from Garrigues, and if not, wine from Priorat...I think [this knowledge] identifies us culturally, as an area.”

One can see here that Osona and my field site of Vic are associated with *llonganissa* sausage, and the *pans de pessic* (small, muffin-like cakes wrapped in paper), Lleida with snails, south Catalonia with the aforementioned *calçots*, oil from the western areas and particularly the county of Les Garrigues, and wine from Priorat. Later in our conversation, Oriol mentioned the *trinxat* and its association with Cerdanya, and the areas of the *xató* in the Penedés counties south of Barcelona, where a ‘*Xató* route’ has been developed in the last few years. This is a winter salad, consisting of lettuce, anchovies and other fish, and characterised by the *xató* sauce, a *romesco*-like sauce that consists of nuts, vinegar, oil, breadcrumbs and the *nyora* pepper.

Oriol's comments parallel a remark by journalist Xavier Domingo in an edited volume by one of Catalonia's most important gastronomic writers, Nestor Lujan. In describing the prevalence of sweet cuisine in the context of twentieth century national Catalan cuisine, he described how "everyone is an expert in sweet things and knows, in each village and city, who does the best *cabell d'àngel*⁶⁷ or jams" (Domingo, in Lujan, 1989). Examples of this can also be seen in the regional cakes, promoted at a



Figures 7.7 and 7.8: Examples of regional pastries promoted at a Catalan-wide level via images for public display from the cake-makers guild's calendar, showing typical pastries associated with Girona in the north-east and Lleida in the west-central areas. (Source: Gremi de Pastisseria de Barcelona)

Catalonia-wide level (Figs. 7.7 and 7.8), as representatives of other parts of Catalonia.

Gastronomic awareness is therefore tantamount to national awareness.

I found similar responses in the photo elicitation, such as with the *geganter* group who likewise explained a similar series of connections e.g. the *trinxat* for Cerdanya, *xató* for Penedés (two counties south of Barcelona), snails for Lleida, *calçots* for the area around Tarragona, which was also associated with dried fruits and rices, and

⁶⁷ A stringy, semi-transparent jam made with pumpkin pulp. Often used in pastries.

artichokes for the town of Hospitalet de Llobregat, immediately south of Barcelona. For Vic, they mentioned the familiar example of cured sausage, *llonganissa*. Other responses during photo elicitation that expressed connections between food and place referred to olive oil using the *arbequina* olive variety (of which I had included an image). This is now a PDO (Protected Denomination of Origin), associated with the town of Arbeca in the Garrigues olive oil county. Informants also highlighted *llonganissa*'s status as a PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), with pride.⁶⁸

What is important to emphasise, however, is the strong presence of an awareness of these characteristics by individuals. By showing this knowledge of the diverse and varied characteristics of Catalonia, individuals express affiliation with the Catalan nation. This also means an acceptance of variations of national staples, in the '*receptari comarcal*' (county recipe selection), and also even in individual homes. When I clarified with the food writer Pau whether the *receptaris comarcals* were all Catalan, he replied strongly in the affirmative:

“Of course, they have a series of common elements but afterwards with variations and particularities. If it's a coastal dish, or an interior dish, but this is the great richness. If you take all the counties, all the recipes, and all the localism, you have an incredible resource. A similar soup appears many times with extraordinary differences.”

Take note of the reference here to 'richness' as described in Chapter 5. Memory plays a role here too, for example in Carme Ruscalleda's recollections of childhood visits to

⁶⁸ There are 21 such products recognised by the European Union (12 PDOs and 9 PGOs), and also one Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG). There is not the space to discuss each of these products here, nor the meanings of the individual appellations, as they are not central to the discussion, but further information can be found in Appendix 5.

her paternal grandparents. She remembered very clearly how the rice and *escudella* made at her parents' and maternal grandparents' homes on the coast were very different from that of her grandparents forty miles inland. Cuisine was sometimes described as a language, highly relevant in the Catalan case where language is the founding component of a separate Catalan identity. Food historian Nuria explained dialectical and culinary variations throughout the Catalan-speaking countries in this way:

“You have a way of speaking, and every part of Catalonia has a different speech... There are singularities and many dialects of Catalan, the oriental, the occidental. So with the dishes one does the same. The same rice in Cadaqués, one goes down the map and touching Valencia it already uses saffron. And in Cadaqués one never includes saffron. It's like an accent, it changes at every piece of land, the dish and the language keeps changing.”

In this way, there is a universally accepted dish, but which has small, minute variations associated with a particular place.

This regional awareness is connected strongly with the *excursionist* ideal of knowing the Catalan territory, land and characteristics intimately. Such knowledge is acquired by travelling around and visiting other areas of Catalonia as internal tourists, be it on foot, by car, public transport etc. Sat and her mother expressed their Catalanism principally in this way, by making a conscious effort to “know the country”. In her family, they aimed to do an outing every week, normally on Sundays after mass. In this way, they got to know Catalonia, and gained comfortable familiarity with their nation's territory. It is this familiarity that leads to this “gastronomic understanding”,

since foods are strongly tied up with this experience. They may be taken away as a reminder of the visit (e.g. *llonganissa* or *pans de pessic*), or may also be the motivation for the visit (such as to visit a market, food festival or for a food-related experience). The remainder of this chapter will discuss such experiences, which must be viewed through the lens of the importance of national knowledge to national identity.

I should add here that I am not claiming this is unique to Catalan national identity. Trubek (2008) and others have likewise described how the development of the Michelin guide came about as part of a strategy to encourage French citizens to get to know regional identities via their respective *cuisine régionale* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶⁹ Caldwell (2011) also describes how the Soviet government made a concerted effort to encourage their citizens to be aware of the diverse ethnic identities in the Soviet Republics. Through cookbooks, cultural food exhibitions and travel, the diverse territorial identities were accepted through their sublimation into a greater Soviet national identity. This was even attempted by Spain in the Franco period, through the medium of cookbooks. Today, the European Union has sought to undermine state power by emphasising regional identities within Europe, to create a supranational identity of a “Europe of the regions” (Shore, 1993).

Thus the emphasis on regionality as part of the greater whole is not unique to Catalan gastronationalism. Indeed, it is a useful means of explaining away contradictions in

⁶⁹ Parallels can also be drawn between contemporary Catalan idealizations of subsistence cuisine and the regional cuisine that “subsumed traditional peasant fare...elevating the traditional notion of ‘making do with what was on hand’ to a uniquely important way to cook, one that represents the best of France as an agrarian nation” (Trubek, 2008: 33). However, Trubek does not go as far to connect such ideals to national identity in the way that I do.

culinary terms to the unified high culture so essential to nationalism (especially a cultural nationalism like that of Catalonia). What are unique here, however, are the motivations behind these sentiments today, as Catalans feel a new sense of urgency to practice what it means to be Catalan due to the sense of a threatened identity from the policies of the Spanish state. In such situations, regional identity within Catalonia, as part of Catalan identity, will also be seen as under threat from the Spanish state. Through these actions, the conversion of the regional into the national is an essential part of ensuring solidarity through troubled times.

At this stage, one could well also question whether the discussions of food and their associated produce are examples of regionalism more than of national identity. As I have explained, it is undoubtedly true that regional identity plays a strong role in Catalan identity formation, but this is because Catalan identity is recognised as being composed of these smaller building blocks. It is also through *excursionisme* in the contemporary form of internal tourism by Catalans within Catalonia that this becomes reality. Joan G, who researched Catalan culture, provided the most succinct explanations of the relationship between local and national identity – one developed

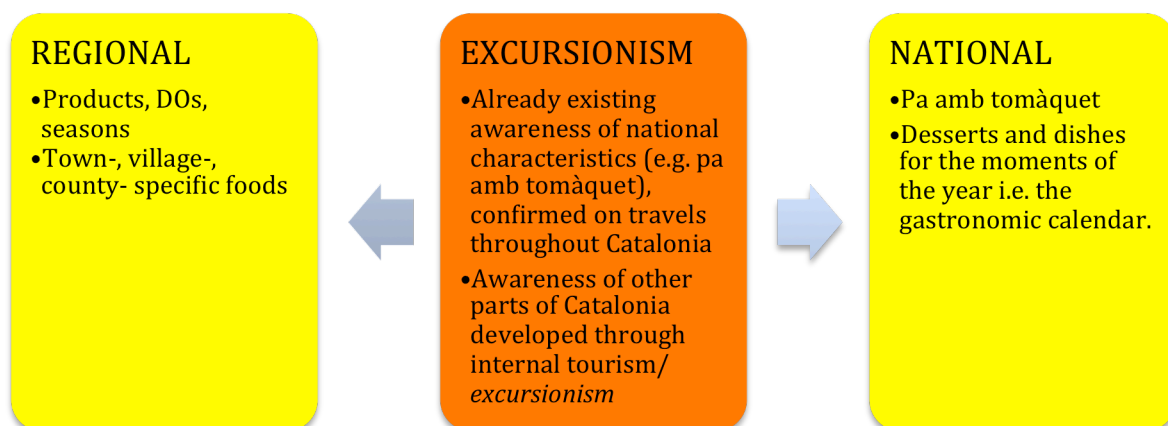


Figure 7.9: The way in which internal tourism in Catalonia connects regional identities to national, and how the national is made manifest in the regional, based on a concept first described by informant Joan G.

over several years of organising cultural events throughout Catalonia for Catalan-focused consumption. Using the example of cuisine, he saw both local and national cuisine as separate identities, linked through the experience of tourism. This can best be represented pictorially in Figure 7.9.

7.3 Market as National Space

This ideal of knowing Catalan territory can be seen in the privileged place given to markets in Catalan gastronomicalism. A classic demonstration of their importance can be seen in a tourist brochure,

Catalonia is gastronomy

(Massanés, 2010). It is

written in both Catalan and Spanish, showing that it is

aimed at internal tourism

within Catalan-speaking

areas. In the first chapter, we

see an image of a

contemporary woman with

an old-fashioned wicker

basket in the square of Vic

(Figure 7.10), picking out

robust, colourful mushrooms

and fresh vegetables from a



Figure 7.10: Image of the ideal tourist experiencing Catalan food tourism via the market in Vic (from Massanés, 2010). This is a somewhat idealized image, since the mushrooms suggest autumn, too cold for the woman's light clothing.

stall. Directly on the page opposite, the introductory text reads ‘Cuisine is geography, history and culture. Tasting the products and enjoying them is synonymous with passing through the customs of a country. We invite you to do gastronomic tourism in Catalonia’ (Massanés, 2010: 7). The message could hardly be more obvious. For the Catalan-conscious tourist, food is the best way to experience their nation and its culture, and markets are the principal medium.

The market space acts as a nexus for past and present identities, centres of interaction, through its role as a source of food. While foods that are not in season or from the local area can now be bought in markets, these locales are seen as the ideal location to see seasonality in action through purchasing Catalan-specific produce and varieties, and interact with local growers. There are two main types of market in Catalonia. One is a regular weekly market (or twice-weekly, as in Vic), many of which have continued for over a hundred years or longer. The first recorded reference to Vic’s market was in 889, followed by further mentions in 911 and 957 (Ponce & Ramisa, 2006). It is not surprising that such markets are often related to identity in the context of connectedness with the past, due to their long history. Like the *senyera*, they have their origins in mythic time of Catalonia’s founding.

The other kind is more recent, the gastronomic market that occurs as part of a food fair, or festival. Today, most such markets will be based around a single food product, particular to the region and the season. Examples include mushroom fairs or pig-based produce fairs in the autumn and winter months, chestnut fairs for All Saints, citrus fairs (mainly in the south of Catalonia) for December, olive oil picking and

pressing from October to March, and over the summer months strawberry, cherry, honey and herbs are just a few of the themes of food festivals. Other festivals celebrate specific varieties of products that are associated with area and which play on the specific associations just discussed, such as the *calçotada* in Valls, the *bufet* potato market in Orís, near to my field site of Vic, the Sausage Fair in La Garriga etc. I was unable to make accurate figures on how many there are throughout Catalonia, though certainly well over 500. Some have lasted for over two decades whilst others are more ephemeral, not lasting beyond the third or fourth year. Simultaneously, organisers may also arrange restaurant-based *Jornades Gastronòmiques* (gastronomic open days) that are run alongside these events (these will be discussed in the next section).

Most of the gastronomic fairs and similar events date from after the end of the Franco period (post 1977). However, their origin can be traced to an event that occurred in 1975, when Franco was still alive and the chef Josep Lladonosa held a ‘Catalan Gastronomic Assortment’. In his own words, the aim of the event was to give prominence to Catalan cuisine, which was difficult to find in restaurants at that time. The day itself was a moment not just to promote Catalan cuisine, but when other aspects of Catalan culture could be presented and celebrated, albeit in a controlled sense. As noted earlier, the Franco government would allow an outlet for certain expressions of Catalan culture, provided controversial issues were avoided. The event was a classic example of how a seemingly innocuous demonstration of Catalan culture (in this case cuisine) was monopolised to provide a form of covert resistance, which also included *sardana* dancing and its associated music, and also a Catalan *senyera* in flowers on the stage at the front of the event. While the regime allowed

such ‘folkloric’ demonstrations, for the organizer Josep and the Catalans taking part this was a covert way of flouting the regime and expressing a forbidden identity, an event celebrating food being the instrument through which this could be done.

In the early years of the post-Franco era during the 1980s, there was an explosion of Catalan cultural events that could now be performed openly. Somewhat inspired by Lladonosa’s lead, in 1981 the Generalitat’s Department of Tourism developed a year-long, Catalan-wide *Congrés Català de la Cuina* (Catalan Cuisine Convention), taking place in different parts of Catalonia. In the commemorative book, the councillor for commerce and tourism, Francesc Sanuy, explained that their aim was to “to recover Catalan gastronomic identity and convert it into our cultural patrimony” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1984: 3) and he explicitly connected such an event with the Catalans’ new ability to exercise their rights. In the same book, Ramon Bagó, the Director General for tourism, likewise stated clearly that Catalans had started connecting political freedoms with customs and culture, and above all their roots. For this reason, it was the job of tourism professionals to come up with ideas to exploit this newfound sentiment.

These concerted events acted as the inspiration and foundation for the food-centred festivals that developed in the years afterwards. Some annual events were even established during the Convention, such as the Valls Calçotada which continues today, and wine-related festivals in the Penedés and Garraf *cava* regions. The background and origin of these food fairs and markets is then clearly motivated by expressions of Catalan identity since the post-Franco era.

Discussing motivations for the contemporary food fairs, the same sentiments are repeated, thirty years on. An organizer of a recently developed sausage-based fair in La Garriga (established in 2012) agreed that this market was one of many that had appeared in recent years, but she made connections with the older, weekly markets. She placed both new fairs and older markets within a “Catalan model of commerce”, claiming that the desire to go into the streets to experience fairs had been a part of the Catalan people since the Middle Ages (i.e. the national Golden Age). In making this connection, she was actively linking Catalan markets and fairs (even if recently developed) with a historic identity that is the basis of a contemporary nationalism. This connection is also related to the claims of Catalans being a mercantile, business-savvy people, in line with the national ideal of *seny*. She also described it as a “Mediterranean model”, based on sociality, community, and communal eating in the market space.

The economic crisis is not a barrier to organizing such events, and in reality they are a useful income generator for the local area. My contact in La Garriga also pointed out that reduced incomes are an opportunity, since consumers will prefer to remain within Catalonia, rather than travelling abroad. They look for points of interest or activities easily reachable by car or public transport, and these newly developed fairs are a response to such a demand.

Returning to more general weekly markets, municipalities also take advantage of their touristic potential, Vic in particular. Due to its busy schedule of markets and fairs

throughout the year, Vic is sometimes called the ‘City of Markets’, a name also promoted in tourist literature. Historically, the city’s physical location was also important for the development of markets, halfway between the Pyrenees and Barcelona. The significance of Vic in the Catalanist landscape has already been discussed, and the reputation of Vic as a city of markets contributes to this perception. There are two weekly markets in Vic, on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Other markets are also held throughout the year. The most important is undoubtedly the Mercat de Rams (Palm Market) held for the weekend of Palm Sunday, and the Mercat Medieval (Medieval Market) in December. The former is a livestock fair, which also includes an extensive food market, and a market to sell Easter palm leaves (‘*Rams*’) after which the market is named. This fair has been referred to by name since the mid-nineteenth century, but there have been similar annual fairs in Vic since 1316 (Ponce & Ramisa, 2006).

The Mercat Medieval, on the other hand, is a more recent celebration that came into existence in 1995, as part of the post-Franco festival renaissance. The intention though is to ‘recreate’ the medieval Christmas fairs recorded in Vic in the Middle Ages, complete with costumed stallholders, medieval-themed meals etc. It is thus a classic invention of tradition, as my informants saw it as a descendent of past markets despite its relatively recent inception. This market in particular shows how the market is used as a space of connectedness with the past. Both fairs are popular with internal tourists, as are spaces where Catalans can also interact with other Catalans in a festive and convivial atmosphere.

At local markets, local produce is normally paramount – or at least it should be ideally. In larger annual markets, this is also the case, especially in food festivals where local producers will be given pride of place nearest to the centre of activities or food tables. However, many such markets also include stalls that travel to various fairs throughout Catalonia – these are often given a location further away from the main acts. In fact, during my stay, I came to know several stall-holders quite well, as I saw them repeatedly in each one I went to, on different sides of Catalonia. One was the Sant Antoni bakery. The original shop was based in Vic, and within the city had become something of an institution for its many different types of *coca*. The business also had its own stall however, and travelled far west as the Calçotada in Valls, in the south of Catalonia. This highlights the importance of travel to participants in Catalonia's fairs, both buyers and sellers, as these markets become spaces where attendees can become familiar with products, people and towns in other parts of Catalonia.

Moreover, it is important to emphasise that Catalan markets are spaces of commensality. Both fairs demonstrate well that even in festivals where food is not the main subject, food and its consumption play key roles. A feature shared by the Mercat Medieval and the Mercat del Ram is the sheer number of food-related stalls, which take over a large part of the old quarter of Vic, and accounted for about three quarters of the stalls present. In both markets it also became clear that a central part of the experience is buying and eating street food in each other's company, as is drinking from *purrons* left in various part of the market. Eating and drinking in the street is therefore a central experience in the lived participation of these markets.

One must remember too that these markets and fairs were a nexus of interactions between rural and urban dwellers. I suggest that the importance of this location in contributing to the development of nationalist ideas should not be underestimated. The rural ideal with its connections to land, earth, homeland, and by extension nation, could be experienced in this milieu by *excursionistes* (day-trippers), who saw the experience of travelling through and knowing Catalonia as a nationalist duty. The primary exponent of this way of life was the '*pagès*', literally 'peasant', the tenant farmer who brought his or her produce to market. The most important Catalan writer of the twentieth century, Josep Pla (1952), dedicated a whole book (*Els pagesos*) to his interactions with '*pagesos*', most of which occur at weekly fairs and markets. His aim was recording and preserving what was left of Catalan culture, and these peasants were seen as bastions of this idealised, rural, fast-disappearing identity that acted as the source of Catalan identity thanks to its connection with the land (hardly unique, as discussed in Chapter 2).

Another centre of commensality at many annual food fairs is the dining area. Most food fairs and festival organizers provide a meal, often one that allows visitors to taste the product that is the



Figure 7.11: Typical food festival meal of *botifarra i mongetes* (sausage and beans), with bread at an olive oil festival in Les Garrigues.

subject of the event. Some stalls offer small snacks, but those organized by the market

itself are generally cheaper and more filling (subsidised by grants or using produce from local stallholders). Such a meal is not free, but normally costs less than €5. The meal may also be included in the price of entry (though I only saw this twice). Food provided always included a large slab of white *pa de pagès* bread, with a tomato to rub into the bread to make *pa amb tomàquet*. Unless the meal is the focus of the event itself (e.g. the *calçotada*, or the *xató*), popular dishes at such events generally revolve around popular ‘traditional’ Catalan staples: *botifarra amb mongetes* (sausage and beans), a selection of meats and sausages for cooking on a communal barbeque that was by far the most common (see Figure 7.11 for an example), variations on *escudella i carn d’olla* or *fideus*.

These meals are associated with long dining tables and benches that can hold large groups. Such meals were originally associated with Festa Major, the annual feast day particular to

each town and village, which have also

contributed to

the more

recently

developed

festivals. The

Festa Major is

idealized as

another manifestation of the past (many do in fact have their origins in saints days



Figure 7.12: Examples of the long tables normally seen at festive events, this time for the Diada lunch organised by Omnim on 11th Sept 2012, and which imitates similar, non-political events in Catalonia.

associated with the town), and the continued celebration of these events is a continued expression of the past. While the religious element of many of these events has been toned down, the presence of Catalan symbols such as the *senyera* and/or *estellada*, *sardana*, the *gegants* or *castells* are common. Yet the most prominent feature of such events was usually food, so much so that there is a class of dishes sometimes called the ‘Dishes of the Festa Major’, which in practice were the classic dishes I have just described. Several informants emphasised how important the Festa Major was in the development of Catalan cuisine. While this is no longer done at Festa Majors, communal eating remains a strong part of the festive experience.

I should add that fairs are rarely visited alone, but often as part of a group of family or friends, who may choose to visit a particular market because of the social ties in that locale. These long tables are highly conducive to commensality, since it requires different groups of people to sit together and interact. From my experience, conversation with total strangers comes easily once one is seated at the long tables crowded with diners, bread, *purrons*, salad and of course whatever food is available. I also saw these forms of communal dining were very present at pro-independence and political gatherings, such as those on the Diada in September and Festa de la Hispanitat in October. This could be another example of how a ‘traditional’ method of commensality, associated with Catalan festive events like the Festa Major, has been appropriated and included in more politicised expressions of national identity, such as at the Diada.

The experience of walking through a market or fair with a Catalan is an instructive one for the anthropologist, since it is through this environment that one experiences a whole gamut of associations with food in a particular location, as well as appreciating the thought process associated with the act of moving through a market from the Catalan perspective. A walk through Vic's Saturday market with Concepció, a local tour guide, was revealing in this way, and is representative of similar, though less detailed occurrences with other informants. On the visit, several themes became apparent. One was the way that foods in the market were tied to the dishes they could make. For example, when we saw a selection of vegetables, Concepció immediately began explaining how she would use them in an *escalivada*,⁷⁰ broth, *pa amb tomàquet* and cod dishes.⁷¹ This sometimes led onto the ideas surrounding these foods, some of which were discussed in Chapter 5, such as the notion of *cuina d'aprofitament* (subsistence cuisine)

Seasonality and festivity also became clear during our walk, for example in the mushroom, chestnut and sweet potato stalls. She was also reminded of Catalan festive foods, such as the *calçotada* via spring onions, or Christmas in the live birds sold for fattening up for Christmas. These foods are also national foods due to their place in gastronationalism and their use in creating signature dishes – proof again of markets as the ideal source of this produce. However, Concepció's remarks also showed how place and awareness of other Catalan areas were also integral to the market experience. Products like tomatoes and onions reminded her of the many varieties throughout Catalonia, and their associated locales. She also knew that, due to the

⁷⁰ A popular dish of roasted summer vegetables, normally peppers, onions or aubergine.

⁷¹ I also found a similar pattern during mushroom-hunting, to be discussed below.

colder climate, many of these vegetables were not from Osona itself, but warmer counties. Despite this, she still described such markets as the best place to source ‘local produce’. Her remarks on the *calçotada* also pointed to an awareness of other counties, due to the vegetable’s association with Valls. While she noted that the *calçotada* had spread to other parts of Catalonia, one should really do an *excursió* to experience it in its place of origin. She also expressed distain for organic produce, since she believed its purveyors charged high prices for what was ‘normal’ food, an opinion I heard elsewhere.

Differentiating features with the rest of Spain also received mention, such as a more developed confectionary and pastry industry, or the Catalan liking of mushrooms. Passing the cake shops and stalls, she also described the way that each town in Catalonia was associated with a particular cake, sweet or dish. In the case of Vic, this was the *pans de pessic*, small, airy, flat-topped muffins wrapped in paper. Any visitor who knew (i.e. a Catalan) would buy a box of these in Vic, and Vic’s inhabitants should generally bring one when visiting friends in other parts of Catalonia.⁷² This is related to a concept I described in 7.2, that of knowing a place through its associated foods, which are often (though not always) confectionary-based.

On an aside, a feature which sometimes struck me as odd when discussing important aspects of Catalan cuisine as related to identity was the emphasis placed on desserts, cakes and sweet foods as bearers of national identity. Some Catalan informants described themselves at times as *llaminers*, sweet toothed. In terms of writers on

⁷² Oddly, native Vigatans do not eat *pans de pessic* themselves.

Catalan gastronomy, Vázquez Montalbán (1977) is perhaps the most explicit in linking sweet cuisine to national identity. He links Catalonia's public confectionary consumption with a medieval past, claiming Barcelona as the location of Spain's first cake makers, recorded in 1382. He later adds that "the popular pastry tradition and the more recent industrial pastry tradition have converted Catalonia into the sweetest country in Iberia" (Vázquez Montalbán, 1977: 194), and that it is no coincidence that one of Catalonia's two patron saints, the Virgin of Montserrat, is also the patroness of the cake-makers' guild.

Pro-independence groups are often well aware of the potential of these arenas for promotion. Stalls of many of the main Catalan cultural groups Assemblea and Omnim Cultural, as well as any local pro-independence groups particular to the region or town, were found in every one of the markets I visited, be they weekly markets or yearly events. The use of the national flag on market stalls is also very evident at these markets, and has become commonplace to denote that the products are Catalan and guarantee their 'authenticity'. Upon talking to the stallholders who proudly displayed their wares as Catalan, it became obvious that these are an excellent marketing strategy. In the Seva mushroom fair in October for example,⁷³ the *senyera* was particularly prominent on stalls, and I took the opportunity to ask their owners about their motivations. They pointed to the "sentimentalism" of the recent generation of Catalans, "now more than ever before".

⁷³ One of the principal mushroom fairs in central Catalonia, and a short distance from Vic.

7.4 Jornades Gastronomiques – gastronomic open days

Jornades Gastronomiques are an interesting phenomenon in Catalonia, one of a variety of strategies for promoting local and seasonal foods. They generally occur in conjunction with food festivals and seasonal markets. Josep S, the editor of *Cuina*, a food magazine which advertises these events, gave a good description of such events:

“*Jornades Gastronomiques* are a model of promotion, normally in towns or counties, and normally associated with a particular product or dish. So the restaurants in the town or this county coordinate themselves for a few days, a month, or 15 days one season. For example the *Jornades Gastronomiques* of the artichoke in Sant Boi de Llobregat, or if you say *calçots* then that’s the area of Valls, or in Ripollés they do *Jornades* for horse meat. They’re done throughout Catalonia. In the Terres de l’Ebre they do rice, Vic pig meat. It’s the taking of the dishes or products associated with this territory, and the restaurants of this territory incorporate these dishes. They’re local or county initiatives”.

Like many other towns in Catalonia, the Hospitality Guild in Vic instituted seasonal *Jornades Gastronomiques* in 2012. One is based on ‘pork and mushroom cuisine’, taking place in October, and the other is focused on one of Catalonia’s national dishes ‘*Escudella i Carn d’Olla*’ in February. Restaurants have a few dishes or even a tasting menu based around the theme of the *Jornades*. They were also the only *Jornades* that I was able to experience in my fieldwork. A food market also took place the same weekend, and many stallholders made promotional presentations. Indeed, speaking to Francesc, one of the main organizers, he said that the most important aspect was the market, as this allowed promotion of county products.

In Vic, the market events for the *Jornada* were held over a weekend, with the actual

‘season’ in restaurants continuing for two weeks more. On Sunday morning, in both instances there was a communal ‘*esmorzar a forquilla*’, literally ‘breakfast with a fork’ provided for passers-by in the square. These are heavy breakfasts, more like a midday meal. Concepció had shown me something similar on our visit to the Saturday market. In both contexts, I was told that this was the type of breakfast eaten by those who came up from the countryside on market days, having walked or ridden since early morning. They are meant to be “strong”, “filling” and high in calories. While the need for this sort of food no longer exists (attendees now come by car), the custom of restaurants providing a heavy breakfast on market days remains, another connection with the historical past. In the bar we visited, a large bowl of meatballs and rice rested on the counter, and Concepció remarked that the best dish was ‘*cap i pota*’ (literally head and trotters), a dish that had fallen out of favour due to its components, but is now making a comeback (as described in 5.4).

The organizers of the *Jornades* provided a similar dish for the Sunday breakfast, of ‘Mushrooms with pig’s snout and ear’. They called this a “rejuvenated” dish, that had been (supposedly) rediscovered by the Guild, and described it as “a very natural dish, very much of Catalonia and our land”. Originally such dishes would have been a much more mundane matter of making use of every morsel, but as we saw in the discussion of the *cuina de subsistència* in Chapter 5, these formerly ‘peasant’ foods have now become connected to a greater Catalan national identity. Again, a connectedness with the past becomes manifested through these foods and their consumption in the market space.

Aside from promoting historical, ‘recovered’ dishes, the choice of theme for the two open days is interesting, since both are foods that my informants described as typical (even stereotypical) Catalan cuisine. They are found throughout Catalonia, and are not really specific to the town of Vic. Pork and mushrooms, the theme for the November event, are foods intimately associated with Catalonia, mushrooms especially due to their connection with foraging, efficiency and the fact that they are less popular in the rest of Spain. The decision to celebrate the *Escudella i Carn d’olla* could well be a matter of playing up to Vic’s reputation as a Catalanist town. If one had to choose a particular dish to celebrate, then it can be no less than one of Catalonia’s signature dishes, just as Vic as a place is a landmark of the Catalan heartland.

7.5 Applying seasonality in local produce

This discussion of markets should show how essential the concept of seasonality is to Catalan food identity. While the concept of seasonality is hardly unique to Catalonia, and was once a necessity, several of my informants pointed to seasonality as the most important concept in Catalan cuisine. For Magda, a chef in Vic, she defined her approach as ‘*cuina de temporada*’, or seasonal cooking, describing it thus:

“To be able to use products of the season, in every season. Now, it’s artichokes, therefore artichokes [on the menu] until summer. Whatever is at hand in every season. I don’t want to serve cherries in January and artichokes in August. Because it’s the way of eating what’s good in a particular moment.”

Like many of my informants, she bemoaned the loss of this approach to foods thanks to the availability of foods all year round. She also connected the use of seasonal produce with proximity, “the closer the better”. Her example of black turnips, which weren’t grown in Vic, but were in the neighbouring county of Cerdanya at this time, shows how closely seasonality and place are connected. ‘Local’ in this sense meant another area of Catalonia, suggesting that ‘local foods’ do not always mean foods in the surrounding county.

Magda also described her cuisine as ‘*cuina del mercat*’ (market cuisine), an increasingly popular denomination of restaurants in Catalonia, along with ‘*cuina del producte*’ (cuisine of the product). When asked, chefs normally defined this with explicit reference to the availability of produce in a market, and the use of seasonal products.⁷⁴ Indeed, this was often another way of making the claim to follow a seasonal menu, and also to use local products where possible. This is not just linked to restaurants, as I also found this sentiment amongst non-food professionals, perhaps influenced by restaurants.⁷⁵ Joan, a chef in Vic, defined the phrase thus:

“It’s a bit of following the seasons. What the market offers every season. Also, it’s a type of cuisine, a fresh cuisine you could say. Of what you can buy every day, or every three days, and what you can elaborate. It’s not the cuisine of a product that was stuck in a freezer for three months.”

This brings home the importance of fresh ingredients in the idea of ‘*cuina de mercat*’, for which following the seasons is a necessity. Still, Joan admitted that there were

⁷⁴ Part of this may have been due to the influence of French Nouvelle Cuisine, though my informants did not mention this connection.

⁷⁵ As Trubek (2008:161) points out, restaurants are increasingly important in food-related decisions, and ideas about food are “more likely to be passed from chef to customer than from mother to daughter”.

practical problems with following seasonality entirely. Several chefs whom I interviewed, Joan included, explained that their clientele expect certain staples, even if they are out of season.

Barcelona chef Carles also called his cooking style '*Cuina de mercat*', albeit in an updated version. He sees his cuisine as the same as his mother's (he comes from a long line of restaurateurs, but made the transition to a *nova cuina* style), though hers was more 'homemade'. In describing the products they had at the time of the interview (September, so beans and artichokes), he praised the variety of food available in Catalonia. Inherent in any praise of seasonality is therefore the praise of Catalonia's variety in not just landscapes but also recipes. He also expressed the general view of most of my informants, that seasonal produce was associated with higher quality at better prices.

As I mentioned in Chapter 5, while some aspects of peasant diet might have been monotonous, seasonal variations offered some diversity.⁷⁶ Related to this is a wistfulness for certain seasons expressed in the food that would be eaten then. This of course has strong links to individual memories, particularly childhood memories, when for many of my informants following seasonality was more necessary. In this context it is not surprising that there is a nostalgia for the arrival of fresh produce at certain times of year, despite their contemporary year-round prevalence. Personal nostalgia also develops into a more general nostalgia for the past, so associating seasonality (once again) with an idealized past.

⁷⁶ Although I cannot rule out some idealization of the past on the part of my informants.

As an example, Josep, the editor of the magazine *Cuina*, grew up in a farming family and had many memories linked to both seasonal consumption and festive foods. He explained that due to the limited availability of foods according to the seasons, “Catalan cuisine of the past is one of the season”. Thus in attempting to do a ‘traditional’ Catalan cuisine, one should follow seasonal produce and their associated recipes to faithfully recreate its ethos, which creates “an illusion of the past”. Again, the emphasis on seasonality ties Catalan cuisine to visions of the past, the basis of its contemporary identity.

He also idealized the kitchen garden (*hort*) and its produce. This image was a powerful one in national Catalanist imagery throughout the twentieth century, both before and after the dictatorship (DiGiacomo, 1987). Barcelona chef Fermi echoed similar sentiments, describing the *hort* as one of Catalonia’s many varied landscapes (“you have mountains, sea and garden (*hort*) in very little territorial space”). The garden is the source of the basics components of the *sofregit*, the foundation of practical Catalan cuisine, and the place where the most common meat-giving livestock (chicken and pork) were raised.

When I asked the Barcelonan chef Carles about his attitude to using produce from Catalonia, he remarked that where possible he prefers to use it, not just for price-quality reasons, but also for “moral” reasons to help local producers. He was also keen to stress the use of autochthonous Catalan varieties of food, taking pride in the way he was working with a peasant in the Pyrenees who cultivated a wide range of

recuperated varieties. In his own words “If this peasant earns a good living, and he can cultivate other things, then he can enrich our cuisine”. He added that “In the winter, we offer beans, game, truffle, we have everything here”, emphasizing the richness of Catalan produce once more. Such use of Catalan products can sometimes be just a small gesture, for example with the Vic chocolatier, Ramon, who noted that while most of his creations use global ingredients, he likes to use, for example, the Catalan PDO Reus almonds, if possible.

An eagerness to inform clients about product origins shows another important element, that of ‘*compromís*’. A word that is difficult to translate directly into English, it can mean trust, confidence and a guarantee, and often implies all three. When buying local produce, *compromís* supposedly exists between the *pagès* (peasant farmer) who grows and sells it, and the buyer. This figure is an almost mythic character, and is part of the “cottage and kitchen garden” (‘*la castea i l’hortet*’, DiGiocomo, 1987) ideal, as encapsulating ideals of Catalan inheritance patterns. I recall several people remarking with pride that one of their children lived ‘*a pagès*’ (in peasant style) and grew things for them and their friends. In light of the economic crisis, which has left many with uncertain employment, growing or foraging one’s own produce and selling the difference provides a useful side-income.

Moreover, this activity was often seen as a way of ‘*fent país*’, literally ‘making country’, a phrase often used in the context of performing pro-Catalan activities. In this sense, both growing food in Catalonia and also buying that food is a means of ‘*fent país*’ by helping local producers and enjoying the fruits of the native land. As an

individual with this connectedness and awareness of the land, landscapes and territory, the *pagès* is an ideal candidate to embody regional, and by extension Catalan, identity. By buying through this individual, one can vicariously claim this connection with national territory and its associated ideals. It also is in line with what Filipucci (2004: 79) describes as “harmony, coherence, respect, original, natural threatened, constructing the rural as a setting which people, space and time are organically connected”.

Similarly, both consumers and producers remarked that they also liked the relationships created through foodstuffs.⁷⁷ I recall chefs often mentioning a *pagès* (best translated as ‘farmer’ here) they knew who supplied them with various products, to prove any claims they made to seasonality or use of local products. The *pagès* embodies a relationship based on trust, so that the food comes to represent people, not just land. Through using food as the principal form of exchange and basis of a relationship, connections are formulated that act as the basis for the formation of the ‘imagined community’ in Catalan national consciousness. The importance of market produce cannot be denied in this relationship, although restaurants and their chefs also come into this sphere.

Such a philosophy was expressed well by freelance chef Pep S, who had a philosophy of “food with names and surnames” (*noms i cognoms*). This concept applied to the diverse regional varieties of food and vegetables, which by virtue of the place names

⁷⁷ Parallels can be drawn with Caldwell’s (2007) ethnography of Russian natural foods, where the inherent sociality of handpicked food and its associations with people gave it a privileged place in the minds of her informants.

or nicknames associated with them are assigned an identity in a particular region. Examples include chard from Santa Teresa (*bledes de Santa Teresa*), Figueres onion (*ceba de Figueres*) or Vic onion (*ceba de la Vigatana*). Since the place name comes at the end of the name in Catalan, it is seen as the ‘surname’, placing the product within a ‘family’ and giving it an origin.

One should also consider seasonality in light of the knowledge about the nation that it represents. The capacity to follow the *temporada* requires a very deep understanding of what is available in a given time. Proponents of seasonal cooking therefore need to have a deep knowledge of the food they are eating. This is not limited to just when it grows, but its origins and where it can be grown, since throughout Catalonia the growing times of certain fruits and vegetables varies due to local climate variations. Using this knowledge, some of my informants were even capable of guessing where fresh produce was from at a given time, and how far it had travelled. This also shows how regional identities are not the only identities under discussion, since such knowledge shows an awareness of regional variations *within* the overall structure of Catalonia.

It is important to note, however, that Catalans are not against using products from outside Catalonia if the quality is better and unavailable in Catalonia. Unlike in other food nationalisms discussed in Chapter 2, Catalan chefs were usually honest about using produce from outside Catalonia. True, as we have seen, if it comes to autochthonous varieties, then these are preferred and their origins emphasised. Seasonality generally means a better quality product for a lower price, and

encapsulates the positive associations with belonging. Yet as mentioned earlier, customers expect certain products to be available, making seasonality or sourcing entirely local produce difficult.

Many of the restaurateurs I spoke to were quite willing to admit that Catalan products weren't always the best. In the English translation of his book on *paellas*, Lladonosa i Giró states that “some products that arrive from abroad can compete in quality with our own, one doesn't have to be chauvinist” (2000: 17). A venerable Empordà-based food writer, Georgina, also agreed with the importance of local products that should be protected, particularly heritage varieties, but that there shouldn't be any “nationalism of eating” by assuming that any product is better than any another by virtue of its origin, rather than its taste. Likewise Barcelona chef Fermi was very much in favour of using local Catalan produce, but explained “I'm not a Taliban” to show he was not radically against using products from outside Catalonia. He was in favour of Slow Food, and claimed that most of his produce came from less than 100 km away thanks to Catalonia's huge variety in landscapes (which he had discussed earlier in our interview). He was also in favour of using autochthonous varieties, such as oil from Les Garrigues (PDO), the *mongeta del ganxet* (PDO), and the Prat chicken (PGI). However, he also used a French breed of chicken when in season, and grouse from Scotland.

Fermi's comments refer to several Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). These appellations were developed by the European Union in 1992 to recognise and protect certain products particularly

associated with an area and manner of making. The French ideology of *terroir* acted as the foundation for this development, that is, that “food and drink from a certain place are thought to possess unique tastes” (Trubek, 2008: 18) due to certain climatic and geographical qualities, and this has been the basis for state recognition of wines in France since the 1930s. In reality, people are essential in this process, so that this relationship is more the product of a cultural system than actual natural characteristics, as Trubek (2008) and Demoissier (2011) have pointed out.

The question of the relevance of these denominations and notions of *terroir* (or better Trubek’s variation, ‘a taste of place’) to Catalan foodscapes is an interesting one. Amongst food ‘connoisseurs’ in Catalonia (generally professionals involved in the food industry), questions of taste and origin are important, and perhaps are best encapsulated in the Catalan translation ‘*territori*’. This word often appears in advertising local produce, and the phrase ‘*fer país*’ can also be altered to ‘*fer territori*’. However, in Catalonia this is not simply a borrowing of the French concept. In my interview with Pep P, he expressed the classic definition of *terroir* in relating the concept of place and cuisine, but stressed other relationships involved in the Catalan case:

“This relationship between land and cuisine is very important, and also the place...The origin of the food is the most important. It’s a vision that isn’t a Catalan invention, it’s the French who invented this concept of *terroir*, but there has been a Catalan naturalization of this phenomenon, a Catalan application of this phenomenon that is different from the French. It’s that the place, the name, the knowledge of doing it, of the tradition, the practices, these are important.”

Once more, this discussion emphasises the people involved, on a par with the actual taste of place. Comparison with attitudes in France, as discussed by Trubek (2008) are revealing in this instance. As Pep said, the taste of place is often emphasised in Catalonia, but not in quite the way that Trubek describes in France. More important are the relationships formed through food, and while Trubek, and Demoissier (2011), recognise they are key players in the development of notions of terroir, for the ideology of terroir itself they are merely the channel by which the qualities of the natural environment express themselves in food and drink.

Trubek also discusses the idealization of the peasant extensively as part of *terroir*, yet this figure is still of secondary importance to the land itself. In Catalonia, on the other hand, individuals, relationships and contributing to the economic improvement of farmers are means of '*fent pais*', or '*fent territori*' on a local level. These people are recognized as important contributors to the land and landscape, and by extension a regional identity that feeds into a national one. For example, in an introduction to a small booklet handed out at the Girona Forum Gastronomic, the element of human contribution was emphasized over place:

“Catalonia is an authentic mosaic of landscapes that attach personality to the products that it generates, differentiating them. Landscapes that, even now, are the result of inherited wisdom and of creativity that doesn't stop. *Because it's not just nature that creates a territori*. Those who live on them and in them, who harvest the surroundings and humanize it, respect its natural character. It's this symbiosis between farmers [*pagesos*], fishermen, shepherds, producers and territory that gives us a country that's a kaleidoscope of colours, forms and living spaces.” (Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament d'Agricultura, 2008, emphasis added)

Here, it is people who are recognised as the most important players in creating *territori*. In addition, the varied landscapes are connected within the overall ‘mosaic’ of Catalonia. Issues of the health of local and seasonal produce are also discussed in conjunction with taste, closer to Caldwell’s (2011) description of Russian locavore consumption. In short, while French *terroir* ideologies place less emphasis on people, and more on a “a *terroir* blessed by God” (Demoissier, 2011: 688), the Catalan version of *territori* explicitly recognizes the people and their influence on the land.

Yet there are other differences too that make Catalan ideas about the taste of place unique. As in France, and as we have seen, ideas about territory and its influence on both cuisine and produce are embedded in Catalan culture, part of “everyday assumptions about food” (Trubek, 2008: 9). However, these are based less on “discerning taste” (ibid:

12), as an explicit connection between taste and locality, than on the symbolic value of such foods. There are indeed “tastemakers” (ibid: 21), chefs, food writers and gastronomes, who may be well respected and their work quoted when the occasion suits. However, to pay special attention to the individual nuances developed by these



Figures 7.13 and 7.14: Leaflets from the pro-Catalan produce campaign (“Plus Ours: local products”) by Catalan supermarket Bonpreu. Translations are “I trust the meat of our counties”, and “When the fish is from our coasts, you notice”. (Source: Bonpreu)

tastemakers is beyond the interests of most Catalans. Questions of whether a food gives pleasure and enjoyment (i.e. it tastes good), and moreover has symbolic value by virtue of its origin, are more important to most Catalan consumers than the minutiae of gastronomic experiences.

Conversations I had with Toni, the head of Fundació Alicia, and other members of the team there revealed this attitude in greater detail. Toni admitted that he sometimes worried that Catalans were in danger of not knowing their foodways enough, since there is little popular support for organised movements associated with the promotion of such products. However, despite the lack of support at a popular level for these movements, Catalans still have great pride in Catalan-grown and –made products. Most Catalans might not know whether certain foods are PDO/PGIs or have a deep knowledge of autochthonous livestock breeds, just as they won't care about the intricacies of taste. Sometimes this status is completely forgotten for some products, such as the *calçots* de Valls, which was never described as a PGI by my informants, in contrast to the continued emphasis on the same status for the *llonganissa de Vic*. Yet if the product is associated with Catalonia, and moreover a specific place in Catalonia, then it can be an object of identity.

All in all, I suggest that Catalans have great appreciation and affection for Catalan products, be it local produce from the county, or from further afield. In a book the Generalitat published in 2003 entitled *Productes de la Terra*, the Minister for

Agriculture explained in his introduction that “the Catalan consumer⁷⁸ has a clear preference for food products with a name from here, and more so if they’re from a locale which is personally close to them” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2003: 8), showing that this buying preference had already been noticed at an official level. With popular support, there is little need for an official movement. However, as noted by Davidson (2007) in Catalonia and Di Giovine and Brulotte (2014) elsewhere, the Generalitat quite clearly uses the promotion of these foods for their own reasons: promoting Catalan identity as separate from that of Spain in Europe, promoting these foods for tourism, and also perhaps for the ruling party to solidify their credentials as defenders of Catalan symbols.

Speaking with delicatessen and food-shop owners around the Plaça de Vic, I found that there was general agreement that consumers were increasingly interested in these issues, and some had even made an effort to source Catalan produce to cater to this demand. One of these owners, Santi, explained that he saw this most in wines, where consumers now explicitly ask whether they are Catalan, and this will in turn make them more favourable towards buying them. Santi also pointed out that this had increased noticeably since 2010, a year also pointed to as the starting point for the rise in pro-independence sentiment following the Spanish Constitutional Court’s ruling against the new Catalan constitution. This connection between politicised Catalanism and the popularity of Catalan foods is unlikely to be coincidence.

⁷⁸ Written as ‘el consumidor de casa nostra’, a popular phrase which literally means ‘of our house’, but which is also used to describe the Catalan people. Such a phrase is often used in the context of shared identity in Catalonia, suggesting that house equals nation.

Trubek does, however, underline the centrality of nation-building in the creation of Protected Denomination of Origins in France as a means of both protecting economic interests and developing the symbolic and essentialist connection between soil, territory and the nation. I take her argument further by suggesting that PDOs are now an essential component of culinary nationalism, a means by which the Generalitat can prove that manifestations of Catalan culture are valued outside Spain. Therefore, while there are parallels with French attitudes to *terroir* as described by Trubek (2008), the current political situation in Catalonia has recast these in a very different light. There is great pride in the recognition of these products by bodies outside Spain. Within Spain, any similar recognition or prizes are hardly mentioned.

7.6 Locavore movements in Catalonia

It may seem surprising that Slow Food has not found real success on a popular level in Catalonia, since it might seem from the discussions of Catalan foodscapes thus far that the Slow Food movement would find fertile ground in Catalonia. It is true that Catalonia was one of the primary locales of the early Slow Food movement in Spain. There are now 46 establishments in Catalonia. I was unable to find clear information on how many Slow Food restaurants exist in Spain, to compare with Catalonia,⁷⁹ but apparently in 2011 there were sixty restaurants, of which over a third were in Catalonia.⁸⁰ One of the first conviviums (Slow Food social groupings) was established in Barcelona in 2003, named after gastronomic writer and journalist Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. In line with the rest of the movement in Spain, Catalan

⁷⁹ Spain's Slow Food website lists only 25 restaurants, and omits large chunks of the country.

Slow Food is primarily focused on the concept of ‘Km 0’, that is reduced food miles of produce and an emphasis on using local produce and heritage varieties.

This modern-day focus on the virtues of seasonality and locality is considered ironic by some of my informants. Eating food according to the season and location was rarely a self-conscious choice for most Catalans until the twentieth century, but more a decision enforced by necessity. It may be for this reason that ‘Km 0’ or organic food is regarded as irrelevant, as it simply promotes a form of behaviour that was already there before it arrived, even if their campaigns have made it trendier, and the Slow Food ‘Km 0’ label is a useful one for attracting business. ‘Km 0’ is also now a term in everyday discourse, used outside the remit of Slow Food as an organization, to signify local foodism, often in conjunction with concepts just discussed such as ‘local foods’, ‘autochthonous/heritage varieties’, ‘organic produce’ etc. Slow Food and similar concepts are often elided in the minds of my informants, who pick certain aspects to praise, apply or criticise at will. Joan Roca expressed many of these sentiments well in his attitudes to ‘Km 0’:

“When one speaks of ‘Km 0’, which I respect, it seems like a wonderful thing, that my mum did all her life, for practical reasons. There was the garden, the *masia* (farmhouse), and grandma did it too. I don’t want to make something fashionable when it’s always been here! There are some who want to be fundamentalist about it, but for me not.”

His remarks reminded me of Fermi’s claim that he was also not in favour of an extremist interpretation of local foods, and Joan later added that it’s impossible to do entirely ‘Km 0’, harking back to the sentiments discussed earlier.

According to my main informant on Slow Food, Lola, the idea for the 'Km 0' began in the mid-2000s at Slow Food's annual Terra Madre festival. Slow Food in Spain is based mainly in restaurants, and also produce markets organized by individual conviviums. Lola had a Slow-Food restaurant and hotel in Empordà in the north-east of Catalonia, one of six in that area. In Catalonia (including Rosselló in France, Fig 7.15), most restaurants are scattered around Barcelona, noticeably thinning out further from the city. There is now a Convivium Catalunya, which represents the autonomous community and each convivium within.

Lola was emphatic though that there was no connection between Catalan identity and the Convivium Catalunya. The Slow Food movement was much more global, protecting the planet and general well-being, rather than local-level politics. At the same time the

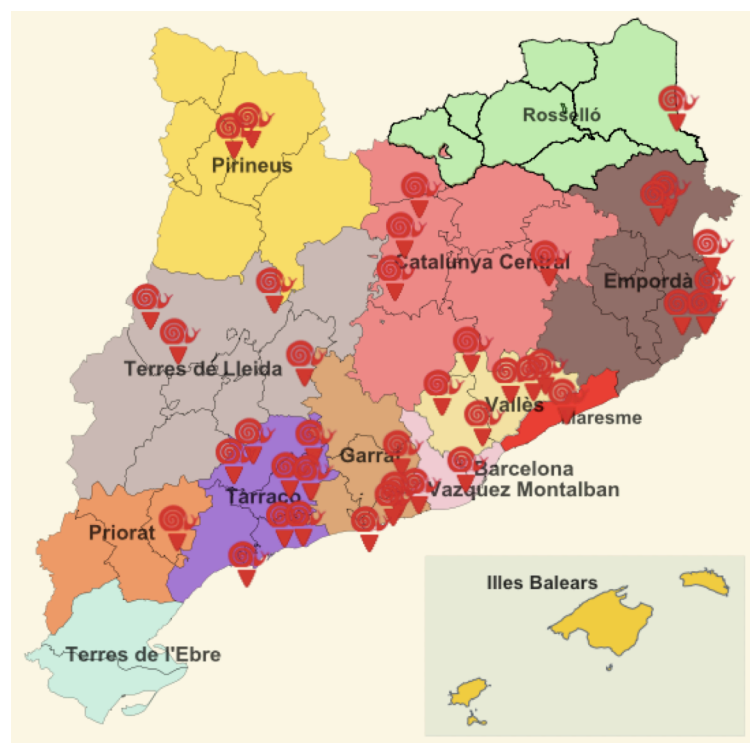


Figure 7.15: Locations of Slow Food restaurants in Catalonia (including French Catalonia). Source Slow Food Catalonia (Source: Slow food Españas)

movement is also regional, rather than national, following the ideal of the European Union. Although she was critical of the behaviour of the Spanish government to Catalonia, this in no way affected her behaviour or the Spanish Slow Food movement. This may have been the reason why it was less valued amongst some of my

informants, and the recognition of establishments as belonging to the FICCG is far more widespread, thus being more closely connected to Catalan identity.

Lola also claimed that Slow Food in Catalonia had been instrumental in saving some of the regional and autochthonous varieties of foods (contra allegedly lacklustre perceptions by Catalans themselves), such as the *Patata del Bufet*, and the *Ovella Ripollesa*. This claim is also made on the Slow Food Catalunya website, where the list of such products gives the impression that Slow Food is central to their preservation. However, most of these initiatives were separate from Slow Food, which the movement has identified as species worth preserving as local foods, affiliating with them at a later stage. Take the *Ovella Ripollesa* (Ripoll sheep), for which efforts to conserve the breed began in 1987, before Slow Food had even become an international organization.

While the promotion of these species may have increased their usage in the few restaurants that seek to affiliate with Slow Food, one should not overstate their influence on the perpetuation of these foods. When these products are discussed in general terms in Catalonia, be it by my informants or in general media, Slow Food is not mentioned in these discussions.

My first experience of the term 'Km 0' in fieldwork was in a sarcastic context, where hotel owner Roger and his father Pere joked that they had all low food miles from the county or the surrounding areas... including whatever foods were delivered to a cargo

airport nearby. Despite being strong Catalanists and very proud of their country's produce, they accepted the reality that Catalonia could not supply all their food needs.

Many were cynical of Slow Food, or at least felt it was irrelevant to them. For example Isidre, a chef in Vic, claimed that in reality the concept of 'Km 0' was a flexible concept, if not a downright lie. Seasons are often extended, and even then, customers can be fooled into thinking a product is local because it is seasonal. Like many chefs with whom I spoke, he was in great favour of *cuina de proximitat* ('proximity cuisine', another word for local cuisine), but it is easy to substitute one product found in the local area for one from further afield, and the consumer cannot know.

Nuria also expressed scepticism when it came to organic and Slow Food 'Km 0' ideologies. She attended a few Slow Food meetings, and while she enjoyed the ethos, she became dissatisfied with the refusal to recognize soil contamination as a barrier to local or organic foods. Moreover she complained it was more focused on protecting producers, and geared towards restaurateurs, not individuals. Finally,

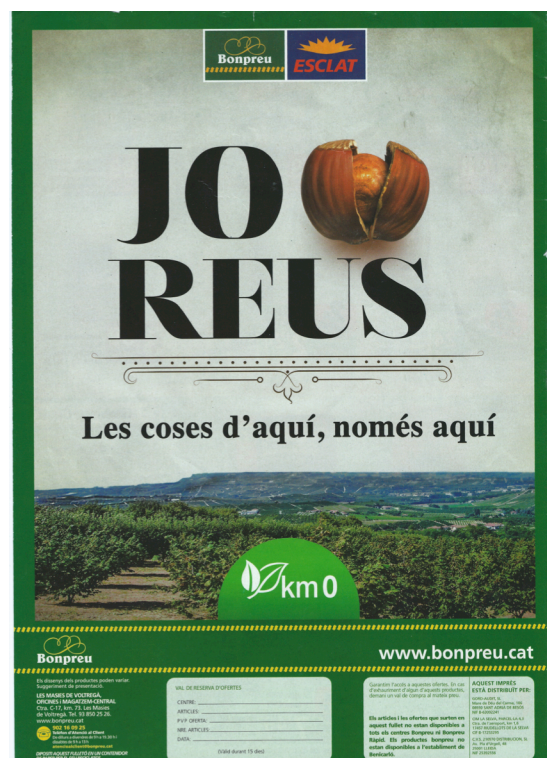


Figure 7.16: Advert for a Bonpreu campaign to promote Catalan produce, the title means “I love Reus”, but where the heart should be is a hazelnut from the area. The subtitle is “things from here, only from here”. This suggests a more chauvinistic view than the reality of Catalonia. (Source: Bonpreu)

she became disillusioned with the strict application of 'Km 0', since there are many essential ingredients used in Catalan cuisine that have to be imported, such as cod, and spices like ginger and cinnamon. Such foods cannot be 'Km 0', yet have been essential for Catalan cuisine for over a hundred years.

She believed that Slow Food was not a popular movement in Catalonia, and while there has been some attempt to apply these ideals, they are limited at a popular level. She agreed strongly though with the promotion of Catalan produce, for example referring to a campaign by the Catalan supermarket chain Bonpreu to advocate the consumption of Catalan-produced food. As evinced by Figure 7.16, which advocates Reus hazelnuts, the 'Km 0' phrase is being used, but in this instance is in no way related to Slow Food.

Nuria's comments show how the concepts and ideologies of Slow Food are often supported, but that these sentiments do not mean support for the organization.

Discussing Slow Food with the Fundació Alicia team, they were likewise in favour of it in principle, but agreed it hadn't worked in Catalonia. Like Nuria, they saw Slow Food as movement based almost on fanaticism, a rigid adherence to a set of ideas, a criticism that paralleled Nuria's.

One of the team, Jaume, referred to a Catalan philosopher, Josep Ferrater i Mora, whose theories on Catalan culture he felt held the key to understanding Catalan cuisine. For him, there were five features of Catalan character; *seny*, *rauxa*, *ironia*, *mesura i continuïtat* (some have already been discussed in the introduction). *Ironia* is

the most important one here, which is the ability not to take anything too seriously. That is not to say that Catalans cannot take themselves seriously, but they also have a sense of humour and a practical approach where fanaticism and extremism do not fit. Slow Food is therefore antithetical to Catalan gastronationalism.

In line with Caldwell (2008), then, I suggest that, while the sentiments expressed by movements such as Slow Food or ideologies of *terroir* may be similar to those expressed in Catalonia, they should not be classed as the same phenomena. As we have seen, this can draw parallels with Catalan food practices and ideologies of territorial food. While the proliferations of collectives related to promoting Catalan produce suggests some uniformity throughout Catalonia, the reality is that there is not a single unified group to promote a universal ideology which resonates with the majority of Catalans. While some Catalans will be keen to invest in ‘local’ producers, and involve themselves with the revival of autochthonous, heritage varieties and PDO-recognised products by praising them, seeking them out in markets, sampling them in restaurants etc., this is not an organised movement, nor are there conscious decisions to consume these products.

What is more, as I explained in Chapter 5, at the heart of all these discussions is the actual process of cooking that undoubtedly connects produce, cuisine and identity. While food grown in Catalonia is of course praised, food can certainly be brought from outside for use in Catalan cuisine. It is the cooking process that ‘Catalanizes’ these products and makes them part of national cuisine.

Chapter 8. Landscape in a pot

“A country’s cuisine is its landscape in a pot” - Attributed to Josep Pla

This quote is attributed to the Catalan writer Josep Pla, though it does not appear in any of the works of his canon. However, this saying is a very popular one in Catalonia and was regularly mentioned in the context of Catalonia’s food identity. The attribution is also hardly surprising considering the emphasis placed on landscape as a source of Catalan identity in his works. As the manager of the Josep Pla Foundation in Palafrugell explained, most of his works act as a vindication of landscape, such as in the guides to Catalonia he wrote towards the end of his life following his travels on foot throughout the country, and musings on cuisine such as *What we have eaten* (1972) or *Five great Catalan chefs* (1984). Valuing both landscape and its associated food in Catalonia was part of a project of preserving and recording these remnants of Catalan identity before their impending disappearance following the Civil War, the Franco era and mass tourism. Today, one of the Pla Foundation’s main activities are walks and restaurant outings on the theme of ‘Cuisine and Landscape’ and ‘Pla at the table’, following Pla’s writings about the particular area. According to Anna, the Foundation’s manager, these restaurants have to prove that the menu follows the season according to what is available in Empordà at the moment, as well as providing traditional Empordan cuisine.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there has been some consideration of the relationship between nationalism and ideas of landscape, locality or territory. It has been claimed

that ‘landscape’ and ‘space’ are things external to human interpretation, which are turned into ‘places’ and ‘localities’ through their multivocal internalization by humans as part of memory and culture, at both group and individual levels as symbols of belonging (Lovell, 1998). While I agree with that ‘place’ and ‘locality’ describes well those spaces that contribute to a sense of belonging and identity (and that is how I will use them here), I believe ‘landscape’ should also be considered as space imbued with meaning. While place and locality describe single sites spread over a small area, landscapes describe both larger areas and a visual phenomenon, an artefact in itself with contestable meanings attached to it (ibid). ‘Land’ means both native land, but also physical soil. Following this logic, ‘territory’ is likewise a cultural construct, which in this context means an area of land acculturated as a bounded entity to delineate the ‘locality’, and by extension belonging, of a shared group identity.

In the first part of this chapter I will consider first how the many varied landscapes of Catalonia have contributed to the ideal of regional variety and places associated with food, and attitudes to Pla’s attributed quote. Next I present the manifold ways in which landscape is actually recreated on the plate, particularly in the *nova cuina* style. Finally, I talk about an activity particularly associated with both Catalonia and experiences of the native land, in the form of mushroom hunting and its surrounding discourse.

8.1 Converting regional landscapes into cuisine

I was curious to delve into the attitudes surrounding Pla's attributed phrase, so I decided to include an image in photo elicitation (Fig 8.1). The reactions were almost uniformly positive, some discussing how Pla was an influential thinker for contemporary Catalan culture, while others made reference to regionality and specific associated products e.g. *llonganissa* and Vic. One participant, Santi, explicitly drew a connection with markets, explaining that "When you visit a country, the nicest thing is to go see a market. It tells you a lot about a country". Hence the connection between markets discussed earlier, seasonality and landscape.



Figure 8.1: Photo elicitation image of a phrase attributed to Josep Pla, "a country's cuisine is its landscape in a pot".

The younger *sardanista* group also drew a comparison with this quote and Joan Roca, a celebrated *nova* cuina chef who became of a national hero when his restaurant was voted best in the world in 2013. They drew parallels between this concept and his philosophy as the key to his success. They were right in this regard, as Joan Roca

does indeed see both landscape and product as one of the key tenets of his philosophy, and he himself makes reference to this saying. His application of landscape will be discussed momentarily, but in his work on his culinary approach, *El Cellar de Can Roca*, he explains clearly how landscape has influenced him:

“In the kitchen, we are seduced by the idea of ‘eating a landscape’, a landscape that as given character and essence to our people and that, in a natural way, is present on our burners and our tables. Traditional cuisine incorporates the landscape from local history, roots... We have many things in common, such as the essence of our landscape and the memories created by looking at the sea we share.

Landscapes are key to our cuisine. The revisiting of the products of seasonal changes, the lasting but expected feeling of the ephemeral product” (Roca, 2013: 183)

This extended quote expresses well many of the ways in which landscape is connected to memory, seasonality and identity in Catalonia. His words parallel nationalist literature by relating the development of a people to its landscape, but he applies it in a culinary sense. Memory (another part of his culinary ideology) unites people through shared experiences of landscape and the fruits of these landscapes in the form of seasonal produce.

As discussed extensively in Chapter 5, one of the characteristics of Catalonia according to many informants was the great regional variety in geographies and their associated cuisines, a kind of unity in diversity when it came to visualising the uniform whole of Catalan cuisine. As noted earlier, this acceptance of variety is an ideal of Catalan identity, and this applies in a culinary sense. Knowledge of this

variety is also a means of showing self-awareness of Catalonia as a cultural nationalism, based on the cultures of its constituent parts.

This connection between land, place and cuisine is applied in several ways to Catalan culinary culture. Firstly, as I described in Chapter 7, each place is associated with particular foods. This may be a dish (or dishes), or a series of products that have come into being from the climate, topography and situation of that particular region. Basic knowledge of these characteristics is a means of expressing national knowledge about one's own country, and also of experiencing the different parts of the native land. These different products can encapsulate the taste of those places (Trubek, 2008). Finally, these landscapes can even be replicated in the construction of foods and dishes themselves, which physically encapsulate the places associated with them.

As Ignasi explained when talking about Osona, the associated products were mushrooms, truffles, and potatoes. He explained the concept of place, landscape and its associated food as “identifying the landscape with the dish. The landscape gives you a lot, and finally the dish. Each landscape equals a cuisine”. His remark also makes reference to this idea attributed to Pla of putting a landscape in a pot through cooking. Regarding varieties and microclimates, Joan Roca provides some interesting views on the importance of geographical variety in his descriptions of the fundamental points of Catalan cuisine at the start of his first book:

“What we must have clearly in mind is that Catalan cuisine is not just one regional cuisine (*cuina de regió*) but also a collection of cuisines from varied

corners with great typological characteristics between them and that become very particular microclimates. In a few kilometres we can find a great diversity of cultivation, at the seashore, in the interior, and in the mountains. Each area has its own stamp of identity. There is not just one *sofregit* or one *picada*, but a group of *sofregits* or a group of *picades*, depending on the cook who is making them at a particular time.” (Roca, 2004: 11)

He then goes on to praise the particular locations of Catalonia that are especially known for their produce, for example turnips from Capmany in Empordà, and also others in Cerdanya; potatoes in Solonsa, Camprodon, Olot or those of the *bufet* in Osona; the importance of the beans of Santa Pau and Garrotxa county more generally where there is the influence of the volcanic soil, to name but a few. Awareness of locality and origins within Catalonia is therefore central to his conception of Catalan cuisine, as it is made up of many cuisines.

Joan G, of the Department of Culture, offered several ways in which regional characteristics have historically influenced localised cuisines, most particularly wood type, and the way this has led to the development of regional cooking tools and receptacles:

“The wood, it’s really important. With *calçots*, for example, there is the flame. The fire is made with pine. This is in a particular zone, which is on the south coast. But in the interior, fire is made with oak. Instead of a flame, it produces a *xup-xup* (simmering). So a *romesco de peix* from Tarragona is made over a flame, but a *suquet de peix* from Empordà is made with *caliu* [slow burning heat]. So even though the ingredients are very similar, they have nothing in common because the fuel and speed of cooking is different...That’s why the *romesco* area uses a metal pan [strong, direct heat], whereas in Empordà, they use a *cassola* [ceramic pan that slowly distributes heat]. This is what influences cuisine from the geographical point of view.”

This also had its effect on sauces, such as the *sofregit* discussed in Chapter 4, which are universal throughout Catalonia, but which themselves had regional variations in recipe and importance thanks to the effect of wood. For example, the classic *sofregit* added at the start of a meal is ideal over a slow-burning heat associated with oak in the north and centre. But with the strong, pine-based flame, a *sofregit* cooked in this way will be overdone, so there has to be a sauce added later in cooking to cool the food: the *romesco*, associated with the south.

He explained these differences primarily in the context of the difference between Old Catalonia and New Catalonia, distinguishing between the areas north and south of Barcelona,⁸¹ but his observations drew parallels with other comments about the importance of landscape in contributing to the regional variation in Catalan cookery. Other features that vary depending on landscape include the taste of meat thanks to the grass eaten by animals i.e. classic ‘taste of place’. But Joan’s ideas about regional food also introduced another concept, namely how regional cooking styles are affected by the landscape itself. Not just wood, but also climate could affect styles of cooking, and even food preservation. This is significant because, while such a ‘taste of place’ or ‘*terroir*’ has generally focused on how landscape affects food itself (for example, sunlight, nutrients, drainage, soil type etc.), there has been little consideration of how landscape and location affects cooking styles. Emphasis is placed on the *products* in the cuisine, not what is done with them afterwards.

⁸¹ This distinction is based on the history of the Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. New Catalunya constitutes all parts of Catalonia that were captured from Moorish dominion in the 10th and 11th centuries, having experienced several centuries of Moorish rule. Old Catalonia was the area north of Barcelona and new Catalonia, which had experienced a briefer occupation by the Moors.

8.2 Landscape on the plate

Mon, a professional cookery teacher, explained her conception of the two different strands of landscape in Catalan foodscapes: “cuisine of products of the land” and “cuisine that imitates landscape”, which I will call here called landscaped cuisine. The latter often occurs in confectionary in what she called the ‘*pastisseria de paisatge*’ (landscape confectionary). The former is a cuisine that uses products from the area in which it is produced. Presentation is less important than taste, as the dish represents the products that can only be found in a Catalan landscape. In this instance, place of origin is important for the dish. Thus far I have mainly focused on this type. The latter is a cuisine that tries to manifest the actual physical landscape through cuisine, and its recreation on a plate. She particularly referred to the work of Albert Adrià (Ferran Adrià’s brother), who created a line of desserts where the dishes are themselves landscapes. For example, in one of his creations called *La Terra* (the land) he tries to recreate the colour of the soil in different sections of Catalonia; red, edible ‘soil’ in the central areas, brown for the north. In another of these desserts, he places a black truffle in the middle, so that, as Mon explained, one can truly taste the land.

Mon’s description of the truffle-inspired dessert reminded me of one such dessert I had experienced at a workshop at the 2013 Forum Gastronomic Girona, given by Osona’s most well-known *nova cuina* chef, Nandu Jubany. The theme for the event was ‘Land’, so it is perhaps not surprising that examples were often demonstrated here. His idea was likewise based on truffles as the produce of the land, though Nandu connected his interpretation more explicitly with Osona’s regional landscapes. He

introduced the dish by explaining “at home, we go searching for truffles. We’re in a territory where there are truffles, and we like to get things that are real”. The truffle is a particularly emotive product where landscape is concerned, since its presence is so closely tied to localised conditions without human input. It is well-suited to represent a ‘real’, ‘unadulterated’ and ‘natural’ product of the ‘territory’ (mushrooms are similar in this regard, and will be discussed momentarily).

Nandu’s dessert focused on recreating the actual forested terrain where truffle-hunting occurred (see Fig 8.2). Yet the dish was also meant to be interactive, as the diner had to search through a recreated forest floor to find the truffles in their bowl, with the aid of an implement that imitated a truffle-hunting knife.

The ‘earth’ as Nandu

described it was made using crushed biscuits in different flavours and shades of brown, green moss from pistachio and cocoa-flavoured microwave sponge cake (a technique created, he pointed out, by Ferran Adrià, and also using a Catalan beer as a



Figure 8.2: Nandu Jubany’s interpretation of truffle hunting in a dessert.

base, Estrella Damm), chocolate twigs and leaves. During his explanation, Nandu explicitly drew parallels between the composition of the dish and the truffle landscape, for example, the leaves representing the holm oak under which truffles are found. The dessert was put in a large bowl, with no cutlery, forcing diners to get their hands dirty while looking for the truffles in their food, a parallel of the experience of the truffle hunters themselves. In this way, landscape is literally being created on the plate. By performing such landscape-based activities, the diner is encouraged to vicariously enter and experience the landscapes.

Nandu was also one of those chefs who believed that, while Catalan origins of food are ideal in some circumstances, they are not essential. So while using truffles from Osona would be ideal, so that the diner can actually taste Catalonia's landscape, this ideal can also be flexibly adapted to ideals of an open Catalan identity and practical realities. Food from outside Catalonia can be transformed into being Catalan by being converted into a Catalan landscape. This is particularly applicable to truffles in the year of my visit, since I heard from a truffle-hunter who supplied Nandu that due to a bad truffle year he had to import them from France and Italy in 2013.

It became clear during fieldwork that this imitation of the landscape was one of several strategies used by *nova cuina* chefs to root themselves in Catalan culinary heritage. Nandu Jubany had refined this strategy very well in his personal discourse, as had several other such chefs. Carme Ruscalleda, for example, has focused heavily on the seasonality of produce from local environments as the foundation of her culinary ideology, environments which also act as an inspiration for her cuisine. Like

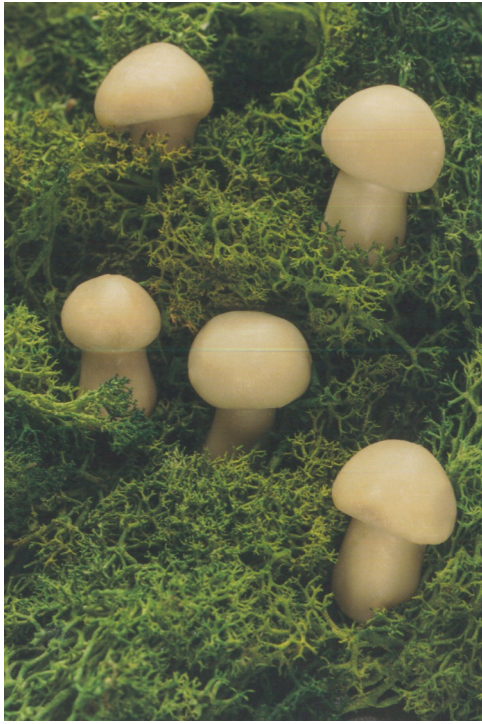
my other informants, she emphasised Catalonia's good fortune in having "garden, sea and mountain", and the fact that each territory had its own particular produce.

Ruscalleda's work is based on finding inspiration territory in this sense, "cuisine of the products of the land" to follow Mon's model.

Further examples of the 'cuisine that imitates landscape' can be found in the work of chef Joan Roca. Landscape is one of the components of his particular cooking ideology.⁸² Like Adrià and Jubany, he also had his own variations of a truffle dessert (complete with freeze-dried moss) suggesting some influence among different chefs (Fig. 8.4). During my interview with Joan, he pointed out three examples of dishes he had created, inspired by particular landscapes. For him, he understood landscape in cuisine as "reproducing something that we observe in the landscape": for example, a dish that represents the colours of the Mediterranean through taste and scent using five sauces, each representing a particular aspect of the landscape, such as pine nuts for the pines, olive for the olive trees, bergamot for lemon trees etc.

In his book *El Cellar de Can Roca* (2013), Joan and his brothers provide other examples of foods inspired by landscape, such as 'Sea Snails in Fennel', an example of *mar i muntanya* cuisine that imitates snails crawling through either through a marine or agricultural landscape, and 'St George's Mushroom Bonbon', which follows a similar concept to his truffle dessert with a 'deconstruction' of these mushrooms, where the diner has to pick them out of freeze-dried moss (Figs. 8.3 and 8.5).

⁸² The others include notions such as Tradition, Memory, Academicism, Product, Wine, Innovation, Sense of Humour etc.



Clockwise from top left. Figure 8.3: St George's Mushroom bonbon. As in Nandu Jubany's dessert, diners must pick the mushrooms out from the 'moss', imitating the real-life action of mushroom picking. Figure 8.4: Truffle in freeze-dried moss. This dish was probably the inspiration for Nandu Jubany's interpretation of the same subject. The stone bowl suggests an organic, 'natural' setting, as does the 'moss'. Figure 8.5: Sea snails in fennel. This imitates somewhat the idea described in Joan Roca's quote (Source: Roca et al, 2013)

Roca also describes his attempts to literally distil soil into edible form through new technologies, and how he and his brothers have attempted to bring the Girona landscape outside into the restaurant by the inclusion of a triangular grove in the centre of the restaurant (Fig 8.6). He later described his inspiration in landscape as:

“an abstract ideal, playing with colours that represent the Mediterranean. It’s landscape to do a dish from a walk in the month of April, you see in the same place some *corerolles* (a type of mushroom), snails, that just came out following an afternoon shower, rosemary, thyme in flower. With this I’ll do a herb soup with *corerolles* and snails. Here we’re cleverly observing the landscape”



Figure 8.6: The recreated Girona landscape within Joan Roca’s restaurant

This example demonstrates particularly well the thinking and connectivity between landscape and foods and its use in *nova cuina* settings. Such chefs were not the only ones to imitate the landscape in their own designs, and they certainly influenced many of the chefs with whom I interacted during fieldwork, even if these chefs defined their cuisine as ‘traditional cuisine’, ‘market cuisine’, ‘cuisine of the product’ etc. I spoke to several county restaurant co-operatives during my fieldwork, and most of their self-promotion centred around making the landscape manifest in their cuisine as an example of ‘cuisine of products of the land’. For example, the collective *Cuina del*

Vallés focused on promoting regional PDOs and local products. Another collective, *Noguera Cuina*, developed *Jornades Gastronòmiques* specialising not on regional foods, but on regional landscapes that inspired a set tasting menu.

The application of landscape in food is not just limited to restaurants. As I mentioned earlier, there is strong recognition of the regionality of confectionary and baked goods, each town or county having their own associated product. Confectionary is perhaps the most popular candidate, perhaps due to the combination of portability, creative potential and durability. Some of these mimic the physical landscape.

Anna, who I met through a language exchange program, explained a particularly good example of a regional food that imitates the landscape from her home village. She and



Figure 8.7: Bread representing the landscape of the Terra Alta mountains

her family had lived in Vic since she was a child, but their original home village was in the Terra Alta mountains in the extreme south of Catalonia. At the local bakery there, one could find a small, sweetened loaf, shaped in the form of the surrounding mountains (see Figure 8.7). Anna recalled fondly how they would buy one to take back to Vic after return visits. They would eat it on their return, and it acted as a way

of concluding their visit and remembering their home through consuming a symbol of the landscape.

This particular bakery was also proud to produce *coques* from cherries and hazelnuts that grew in the surrounding orchards, and formed the major part of the landscape surrounding the village. The baker was proud to point this connection out to me, stressing not just the antiquity of her cakes as ‘traditional’ to the area, but also the way in which they represented the area itself – ‘cuisine of products of the land’ in this instance. Through preparing these foods, she and the villagers were literally eating the surrounding landscape. Her sentiments show that the pride of using products from an identificatory landscape is not limited to new cuisine.

One can also compare this situating of the landscape on food with the feast day of one of Catalonia's two leading saints, Saint Mary of Montserrat, a strong national symbol even in secular Catalanism. According to Vázquez Montalbán, (1977) sponge cakes



Figures 8.8 and 8.9: Examples of the *pastissos de Montserrat*. At left, a poster from the Gremi de Pastissers, showing Montserrat's mountains replicated in icing. The tagline below is “the mountains of Montserrat on your cake”. At right, a similar cake in a Vic window, with a chocolate tile decorated with a picture of the mountain and a *senyera*. Note also the roses, symbols of both Santa Maria de Montserrat and Saint George, patrons of Catalonia.

with decoration that imitates the mountains of Montserrat are the associated food in the gastronomic religious calendar. The poster in Figure 8.8 demonstrates an example of this, and makes explicit the connection between national symbol (the Virgin of Montserrat), the landscape of its place of residence (Montserrat mountains) and the Catalan nation (*senyera*). In practice, these cakes are the same as those for Saint George, with an image of the mountains of Montserrat, or the saint herself instead as decoration (see Figures 8.8-9).

Unlike some of the better established foods associated with place, such as the *brunyols* of Empordà, or the *pans de pessic* in Vic, more recent initiatives have developed in the last few years to create place-associated food souvenirs. One is a 2011 initiative by a modern baker in the Ebre Delta to create the ‘Deltakuki’, a biscuit to make manifest the area in edible form. Located in the extreme south of Catalonia on the border with Valencia, the county is known for its rice fields, wetlands and seafood industry. The area was only settled in the nineteenth century following the reclamation of this land from the sea, mostly by immigrants from other parts of Spain,⁸³ and is still poorer than the rest of Catalonia, though the council is keen to utilise the area’s touristic potential. In terms of gastronomy, the area has a reputation throughout Catalonia for the quality of its rice dishes, and in Vic several of my informants made yearly visits to the area for an ‘*arrosada*’ (rice eating event), and to buy local rice.

This basis of rice as the Delta’s prime product was key to the young baker’s

⁸³ This background and the Delta de l’Ebre’s location have often been the reason why the county is seen as more Spanish and less Catalan than the rest of Catalonia.

inspiration for the biscuits, as he explained “basing them in the culture of the territory”. These biscuits have a map outline of the Delta de l’Ebre stamped on them. The biscuit also has a white upper and a brown lower section (see Figure 7.10), representing the landscape of the region in two seasons: the brown rice fields before planting, and the white of the ripening rice plants. Connectivity with the Delta is therefore stressed in multiple ways, including through the use of a map image, a local and emblematic product, and the landscape that the cultivation of said product engenders. This is therefore an example of both of Mon’s “cuisine of products of the land” and also landscaped cuisine.

Deltakuki’s inventor admitted that they are more popular with tourists than with locals due to their expense (though, as with other shop owners, a reputation for innovation is favorable in the eyes of local customers). As of 2015, they are still in



Figure 8.10: Display advertising Deltakuki, a recent initiative to develop a signature, portable food for the Delta de l’Ebre region. Note the two-tone colour variation on the sign, the outline the the Delta region on the biscuits and rice liqueur to the right (another recently ‘signature’ product).

existence, though not yet a distinctive and emblematic product of the county for outsiders. Time will tell if it develops into a more widespread and renowned product, or eventually disappears.

8.3 *Busca bolets* – Mushroom hunting

An important feature of Catalan culinary *excursionisme* is the *busca-bolets*, literally “mushroom finding”. Another phrase that is sometimes used is *caça-bolets* (mushroom hunting), however this phrase seems to have fallen out of fashion, being associated with Barcelonan weekend tourists who don’t take the activity seriously. The mushroom season goes from October to April, though knowledgeable enthusiasts search out the less common spring and summer varieties. The official season is from October to Christmas, when the weather should be wet and cool enough to encourage mushroom growth, but before the first frosts. In the peak season, there is a veritable mushroom mania throughout Catalonia. Stalls selling all the various varieties spring up in clumps on market squares (much like the mushrooms themselves), and they are the subject of dedicated food fairs, such as the mushroom fair in Seva discussed earlier.

Mushrooms are an obligatory presence on menus at this time, especially if the restaurant is participating in mushroom-related *Jornades Gastronòmiques*. There are other ways that the ‘mushroom mania’ will appear in public life. Food classes and courses are organised to disseminate mushroom recipes, mushrooms become the subject of newspaper and magazine articles, and didactic mushroom exhibitions

appear in town halls. The yearly showing of ‘*Caçadors dels Bolets*’ (‘Mushroom hunters’), one of Catalonia’s most loved TV series and now in its tenth year, also runs during this time.

It is only through the actual experience of the *busca-bolets* that the connection between identity, food and territory becomes apparent. I was unlucky that my fieldwork stay coincided with one of the worst years for mushroom hunting in Catalonia, since the summer and autumn of 2012 were the hottest and driest for several years. Still I managed to go on three mushroom hunting expeditions, one in the peak season in late October, then another in January, and a spring *múrgola*-finding (morels) in April.

During mushroom-hunting season, groups of *boletaires* (‘mushroom hunters’) take to the countryside to search out mushrooms in particular spots. These spots are closely guarded secrets due to the nature of mushroom growth. As such, the early riser will have the advantage, especially if others know their particular sites. Getting up in the early hours of the morning is therefore not uncommon, and there is a pointed rivalry with other *boletaires*. For the writing of this thesis, I was made to promise never to reveal in print any of the locations.

Sometimes this knowledge might be so closely guarded that it remains a secret even within families. So, while there are certainly some families that share their locations, parents may keep locations a secret even from their children. Knowledge though is transmitted via kin, but it might skip a generation. Most of my *boletaire* informants

seemed to have learnt how to recognise species and some locations from a grandparent, uncle or aunt, supplemented by their own knowledge and exploration. It is a sign of close friendship and trust to go mushroom hunting with friends in a *colla* (group), and even then, there is a nagging sense of competitiveness that pervades the meetings.

The *busca-bolets* is also an activity strongly associated with Catalans, and several of my informants throughout fieldwork remarked that other regions of Spain do not have this obsession. In the words of one of my companions during one outing, *busca-bolets* was “very much from here, a very Catalan activity, and very much our own”. His wife noted that in Spain it is much less common, though it has become more and more popular in other places, such as Andalucía and the Basque country (like other informants, she also separated up Spain into different areas, rather than considering Spain as a unified whole, as described in 6.4). In this respect, Catalans see their passion for mushroom hunting as a culinary ‘*fet diferencial*’ (differentiating feature). Some agreed that, while mushroom hunting also happens in other areas of Spain, it does not have the social significance it does in Catalonia, nor the range of recipes. Through various sources I also heard that in recent years this had become a more popular activity (apocryphally, due to the rise in mushroom-related poisonings), which may be part of a trend since 2010 of increased performance of undoubtedly Catalan activities, to get in touch with national identity in a time of perceived threat.

Just as walking through a market alongside a Catalan is a useful experience for the field researcher, so is the embodied experience of a *busca-bolet* excursion. Driving

through Catalonia's landscapes to specific locales, then searching through these areas on foot really brings home the connectedness engendered by this activity with land (both the physical soil and metaphorically), their landscapes and the territory. Trying to find mushrooms in unfamiliar and at times impenetrable woods, I realized how well successful *boletaires* need to know their country. It really hit home to me how *boletaires* must have a mental map of all the locations where they can find mushrooms. These locations might not be in the same county, but can be locales in different counties throughout a large area of Catalonia, 20-30 kilometres apart. Knowing the location is a means of refamiliarizing oneself with a landscape that might not be seen for the rest of the year, reinforcing links with diverse areas of Catalonia. Through this activity, *boletaires* are literally '*fent país*', constructing their country and national identity by travelling through it and getting to know it. The *bolets* become national objects, taken from their territory of Catalonia, grown naturally in the soil. It was also through participating that I recognized that we were doing *excursionisme*, a central part of Catalan identity since the nineteenth century. During the actual search for mushrooms, one needs to get deep into the undergrowth and close to the soil, that makes clear the physicality of the connection between *bolets* and the Catalan land.

Related to this perception of landscapes is also the way they have been socialized as places of human habitation. In two of the mushroom hunts I attended, as we drove from place to place for different mushrooms my informants would point out large *masies*, the study farmhouses and manors associated with Catalan rural areas.

Everyone in the car remarked on the resident family name, local name of the house, and stories from the family, scandals etc. Again, just as with mushroom hunting, this

activity shows that Catalans have something like a mental map of their landscapes: one that is intimately tied up with both food and the people to be found there. I also noticed this trait while driving with Catalans in other contexts. On another trip, my informants pointed out that their hunts normally took place near a town that is considered the geographical centre of the Principat. In this sense, for them the *busca-bolets* was a means not just of performing a uniquely Catalan activity, but also of travelling to the centre of Catalan territory, and by extension the area where this identity would be strongest.

The importance of landscape as a source of memory outside food also appeared when I was driving with Pere and Adelina to their mountain house. They pointed out castles and fortified towns built after 1714, as a means of controlling Catalonia. They saw them as a continued reminder of their mistreatment by Spain, and after three hundred years these places act as forceful reminders of the fraught Catalan-Spanish relationship (the anniversary of 1714 has almost certainly inflamed these sentiments). Travelling through Catalonia is therefore a means of also recalling the people within these landscapes. I am reminded of Lovell's remark that "landscape itself becomes historicised...nature becomes part of the dynamic processes which allow for movement through the very remembrance of settlement and belonging" (Lovell, 1995: 11).

As in the market, informants often discussed recipes related to the kinds of mushrooms we might find, or other fruits of the land we came across, such as wild herbs. As in the market, mushrooms or other gatherable foods became aide-memoires

for various recipes. For example, in my second trip with Concepció and Catalina, upon finding the yellow *cama grocs* ('yellow legs') mushrooms, they instantly went into discussions of how they could use them, such as in a *truita de patates* (potato omelette), pumpkin soup, or frozen for use in a plain egg omelette. When we saw some wild thyme, Concepció was reminded of a particular fish dish that she learned from her mother-in-law in her marital home.

This requires a collection of recipes, and knowledge about the best way to cook them. This then is why recipes are often explained in relation to foods: it is through cooking that national Catalan foods (national objects), with their associated inherent meanings, are ingested and embodied within Catalans themselves. At the same time, on a more visible level, the act of cooking and eating these foods together in a sociable context means that they are a catalyst for group identity development, when ideas about the Catalan nation, culture and politics can be discussed. On each of my trips, the preparation and consumption of mushrooms is an essential element to conclude a proper *busca-bolets*, as were regular food stops along the trip to eat *pa amb tomàquet* with *llonganissa*, ham and other cured sausages, ideally in the wood or a farmhouse tavern (these are also part of the mental landscape maps I talked about a few paragraphs ago). Informants noted too that Catalans are indeed "*boigos del bolet*" (crazy about mushrooms), but also "*boigos del temps*" (crazy about the season), a reference to the seasonal nature of mushrooms, and the general importance of seasonality in Catalan culinary identities that has already been discussed.

These recipes though are a means of enculturating the natural world. As this chapter should show, the natural world is in some ways the foundation of national identity. In the case of mushroom hunting, the act of picking them already is a national activity, further Catalanized by cooking them in Catalan dishes. Other dishes likewise enculture nature, through reproducing landscape in foods. Landscape is itself a symbol of Catalonia as a nation, hence it is possible to both consume the landscape through the produce of this landscape, and also through a symbolic, physical manifestation of this landscape.

Chapter 9. Catalan National Days and their Foods

As I pointed out in Chapter 7, despite my emphasis on the importance of the gastronomic calendar as a source of Catalonia's unique culinary identity, only one of Catalonia's three national days (*diades*) has an established food associated with it: the *Coca de Sant Joan*. This apparent anomaly has led to attempts to associate all these days with a particular food, generally a baked good such as the *Pastís de la Diada* or *Pa de Sant Jordi* (the Barcelonan Guild of Cake-makers has been a particular driving force). Most Catalans are quite aware of this contradiction, but they view the new-fangled attempts to attach foods to national celebrations with bemusement or even disdain.

To briefly reintroduce these national days (*diades*), the first of the year is the Diada de Sant Jordi (St. George's Day) on the 23rd April, the day of Catalonia's patron saint. Over the last century this has become a Catalan Valentine's Day-come-literary celebration, 'the day of the book and the rose', to celebrate Catalan literature on the same day as World Book Day. The next is La Nit de Sant Joan (St. John's Eve) on the 23rd June, a celebration that Catalonia shares with the rest of Spain, but which has evolved to become a celebration of Catalan identity through the *Flama del Canigó*. Finally, there is Catalonia's national day on September 11th, simply called the 'Diada' (the Festival). This provides the focus for most militant Catalanism, and in recent years has become part festive day, part political protest. It is the classic example of what Quiroga (2007: 148) describes as the "sacralization of national symbols [that] takes place in patriotic ceremonies where the nation is endowed with holy qualities

and patriotic liturgies acquire a religious character previously reserved for the deity". While one should be cautious in drawing too many parallels between national identity and religious experience (à la Durkheim, 2001, or Connerton, 1989), the Diada is a day consecrated to the unmitigated celebration of Catalanism.

St. George's Day and La Diada are the most obviously Catalan. St. George's Day celebrates Catalonia's patron saint, and the Diada is a day with unique significance to Catalonia. Llobera (2004), in his overview of Catalan nationalism, compares the differing atmospheres of these two festivals, recalling how they appeal to different expressions of Catalanism. St. George's Day is described as "popular" "universalist" (he suggests it is a festival that integrates immigrants), "profane", "present-orientated", "civic" and involved with the "culture of leisure". La Diada, on the other hand, is more serious, "official", "particularist", "past-orientated" "heroic", "sacred" and demonstrates a "culture of resistance and love and grievance" (Llobera, 2004: 124). Llobera stresses too the ubiquitous presence of the national flag and red roses (St. George's flower) in his discussion of St. George's Day, since it is these symbols that visibly mark the Catalanist nature of the day.

St. John's Eve is more problematic, being celebrated throughout the Iberian peninsula, so it could indeed have become a focus of Spanish unity rather than Catalan difference; St. John is a patron saint of Spain, not just Catalonia. However, its association with Catalanism was assured thanks to anti-Francoist activities centred on the day during the dictatorship, in the form of the *Flama del Canigó*, youth groups and *excursionisme*.

Each of these festivals has developed to represent and appeal to different aspects of Catalan identity, and they provide strong foci of identity in Catalonia, an assertion that corroborates Llobera's findings. There are of course other festivities that are almost universally celebrated throughout Catalonia (Easter, Christmas, All Saints Day etc.), but these are placed in a different category to the Catalan-specific days, being celebrated throughout the rest of Europe as well. They are still celebrated in a Catalan style (through their different foods, as described in Chapter 5 and 7), but are not unique enough to become a focus of difference.

It must also be stressed that these are not primarily family celebrations. Some families may meet for a meal together, to eat a *Pastís de la Diada* (Diada cake) or *Pans de Sant Jordi* (St George's Bread) for dessert, but this is not the norm. These are primarily public festivities that take place outside the home and in the public sphere. As such, the food associated with these days is closer to street food, especially the *Coca de Sant Joan* and the *Pa de Sant Jordi*. This is interesting from the perspective of nation-building, as these national days provide a focus of group identity in the context of Catalan nationalism in different ways. Related to the importance of the gastronomic calendar in constructing identical behaviours across the nation, I argue that, as in food festivals, public commensality becomes a means for creating Catalan community identity.

One of the main intentions of this chapter is to tease out the relationship between food and one of the most obvious symbols of nationalism: the national flags. In Catalonia, I have found these to be enduring and emotive symbols, and their presence is the

clearest visual delineation of Catalanist sentiments. In the case of the *estellada*, this is also a demonstration of leanings on the matter of independence, and the number of these flags in public places became noticeably greater during my stay (a fact commented on by my informants and the Catalan media). During two of Catalonia's national days, St George's Day and the Diada, foods emblazoned with the *senyera* (Catalonia's national flag) have come into existence, suggesting obvious nationalist associations. This has also occurred on other foods. One can find similar examples of this worldwide. In wartime Japan, the so-called 'Rising sun' *bento* lunchboxes imitated the Japanese flag by placing a red pickled plum in the centre of a rectangle of white rice, or rice in a cone to represent Mount Fuji, complete with a Japanese flag on top. These are both examples of overt means of attaching national symbols to foods, most obviously the national flag, but also landscape in the latter case (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993). As seen in Chapter 2 and 8, landscape and territory are powerful nationalist symbols in their own right.

However, the relationship between food and the national flag is not always simply one of positive associations. For example in Dominican cuisine a dish called '*La bandera*' (literally 'the flag'), became symbol of the country's poverty due to the expense of the ingredients (Marte, 2013). Hence the need to examine their existence and their associations in individual contexts: in the case of Catalonia, this can lead to some surprising findings. I was also curious to see whether adding a *senyera* (or *estellada*, which is also done) immediately 'Catalanizes' a food, particularly if it is from outside the area (in practice I found this not to be the case).

The first half of the chapter will therefore discuss the roles of food in Catalonia's three national days, followed by a more in-depth comparison of the foods associated respectively with these days. This latter section will draw greatly on interviews using photo-elicitation, especially group interviews, using photographs of some of the foods that have been discussed so far. This will be followed by a description of the role of food (specifically sausages) in Catalonia's 'anti-festival', Dia de la Hispanitat, and then of other foods in the 2014 Tercentenary Diada celebrations. The chapter concludes with a sweet dessert in the form of a discussion of nationalist chocolate, with a brief conclusion on some of the themes that have appeared so far.

9.1 St. George's Day, 23rd April

St. George's Day is perhaps the most cherished festive day in Catalonia, and it was certainly the one recalled with most fondness by Catalans. As my Catalan informants, and the variety of tourist literature, were keen to tell me, men give women a rose, while women give men a book, as a token of love. Not only has it developed romantic associations, it has also become a celebration of literature, books and by extension the Catalan language. By being a day of literature, it is the day on which the Catalan language is celebrated in the most overt way in the whole year. When we remember the significance of the Catalan language as a manifestation of Catalonia's separate identity, the importance of this day for national affirmation becomes apparent.

Commemoration began in the 1930s, due to the day's literary associations, as the birthday and date of death of Shakespeare, and also the date of Miguel Cervantes' and

Josep Pla's deaths. No reference at all is made to the religious nature of the day (unlike the Diada de Montserrat, Catalonia's patron saint, five days later), indicating a secularization of this former Christian saint's day. On the day itself, in towns and cities throughout Catalonia, booksellers, charities, Catalan cultural organisations or political groups set up their own stalls selling books and/or roses. Government institutions and buildings also open to the public. Such governmental open-days on *diades* mark Catalonia's government institutions as symbols of a separate identity and foci of loyalty – a connection that politicians are only too happy to encourage.

Until recently, St. George's Day has not been intrinsically associated with a particular food as described in Chapter 7, for example *Crema catalana* with St. Joseph's Day, *panellets* with All Saints Day. In the words of the writers of a cookbook dedicated to festival foods:

“This day has remained more marked by cultural and patriotic symbols than by gastronomy. The thing that one cannot miss about today is the rose and the book and the street shared with fellow citizens. In contrast, the menu doesn't have any obligatory or complimentary attachment.” (Sano & Clotet, 2012: 84)

Here again the emphasis on the public nature of the festival. In recent years, a food specifically developed for the festival has been the *Pa de Sant Jordi* (St. George's bread). This is a fairly recent invention, created in 1988 by a Barcelona baker Eduardo Crespo, at his *Fleca de Balmes* (Balmes Bakery). This made 2013 the 25th anniversary – a fact celebrated in packaging from that year at this particular bakery. This is a flat savoury bread, containing nuts, cheese, and *sobrassada* (a spicy

Mallorcan sausage that is often eaten like a mince).⁸⁴ As can be seen in the Figure 9.1, the most obvious characteristic is the four bars of the *senyera* flag emblazoned on the bread, the colouring from the *sobrassada* giving the red colour, and the cheese lending a yellow tinge to the other bars in the centre. This bread has now spread from its original bakery and can now be found in most Barcelona bakeries for the festival, and also in Vic.



Figure 9.1: *Pans de Sant Jordi* (left) and a *Tortell de Sant Jordi* with a *senyera* (right) in a Barcelona bakery. Similar cakes are made for the Diada.

This promotion of *Pa de Sant Jordi* is often to be found in newspapers and magazines. According to an article for the magazine *Cuina*

(19th April 2013), “To each celebration, a food. The Catalan calendar is full of festivities that are celebrated with acts, traditions and something to content the palate and the stomach. St. George *cannot be an exception*... A roundel decorated with the four bars of the *senyera*, it [*pa de Sant Jordi*] has become a classic of the Diada [my emphasis]”. We can see here, then, that again the attachment of food to festivals in the gastronomic calendar is seen as a central element in the celebration of the principal feast days in Catalonia. Any possibility that there is now *not* a food associated with a

⁸⁴ While from the *Països Catalans*, this aspect is not mentioned in any of the discussions surrounding this food

festive day is denied, in order to make the festival into a total sensory experience of national identity. Another article on the 18th April takes a similar line, claiming that “there is no festival without gastronomy and in this sense St. George’s Day isn’t an exception”, considering the *Pa de Sant Jordi* and also the use of rose petals in food are the ‘protagonists’ of the day (Magda Carlas, 18th April, 10).

In Barcelona in 2012 – 2014, *Pa de Sant Jordi* was being sold in most bakeries, as well as at stalls in the main thoroughfares in the city centre where the bookstalls are located, or outside bakeries, along with small tasters to appeal to passers-by. The *Pans* are not ubiquitous, nor are they the only foodstuffs on display, though they are the most frequently occurring. Also present were cakes in the shape of books (advertised as ‘edible books’ by the Barcelona cake-makers’ guild), another form of the *Tortells de Sant Jordi*. Sometimes these did not have the shape of books, but were instead simple cream and sponge cakes like those found the rest of the year, decorated with *senyeres*.

There is no definite context for eating *Pans de Sant Jordi*, as no Catalan acquaintances talked about buying them. In Barcelona, they were eaten as street food straight from the bag, though it is difficult to know if it was tourists or Catalans who are doing so in this context. It is impossible to know the precise level of popularity, though on questioning some of the bakers they remarked that they managed to sell most of them, and the fact that they are continually put in windows on that day suggests that they have some popularity.

As an experiment to elucidate the context for their consumption, I bought two loaves of this bread from original Fleca de Balmes in the 25th anniversary year (2013). Aside from the advertising (see Figure 9.2), little was being made of how this was a point of origin of the bread. In Vic, I gave them to two middle-aged informants, Concepció and one of her friends. The result was bemusement. Her friend had never seen them before, possibly because she hailed from Girona. Concepció had seen them, but remarked knowingly “Those are from Barcelona. You won’t find them here” (which I later found to be untrue, as Vic bakers did sell them). They were considered very new, too new to be considered really traditional for the day at the present time. Both remarked on how they were probably a good moneymaking scheme for bakers, and that this was always happening with feast days now. They are therefore more a symbol of the perceived over-commercialization of festivals that strongly representative of Catalan identity. Nonetheless, they were more than happy to accept them and thought them to be a nice idea, if somewhat gimmicky.

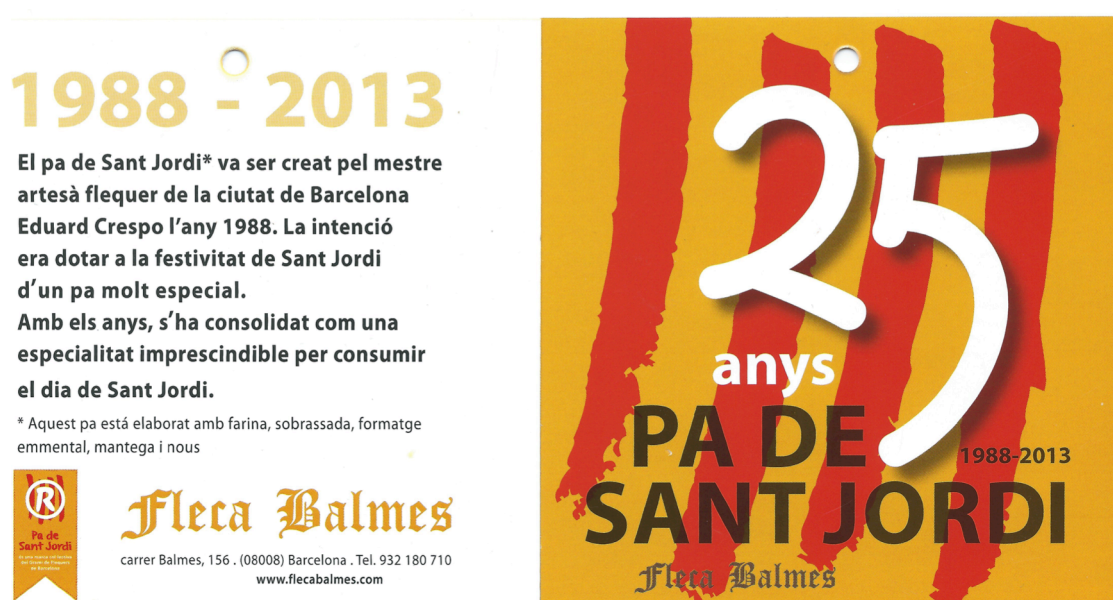


Figure 9.2: 2013 25th anniversary label from *Pans de Sant Jordi* at the original bakery that invented them.

The origins of actual cakes for St. George's Day (*Tortells de Sant Jordi*) are not as clear as the *Pans de Sant Jordi*, though they are certainly older. Due to their recentness, neither the *Pans de Sant Jordi* nor the similar *Tortells de la Diada* (Diada's cakes) are described in any of the principal books on Catalan cuisine. However, Vázquez Montalbán does make reference to a *Tortell de Sant Jordi*, as “a rectangular cake, on a thin sponge cake base with butter filling. Topped with crushed sugar, a glaze, or cocoa covering, bearing in the middle a mould of the glorious silhouette of the saint, and red roses” (Vázquez Montalbán, 1977: 206). This book, *The Art of Eating in Catalonia*, was published in 1977, suggesting that these cakes had been around at the end of the Franco period (almost forty years ago), and in a form that has changed little until today.

They still do not have the emotional and automatic connectedness with the day, however, and the cake does not seem to come instantaneously to



Figure 9.3: A *Tortell de Sant Jordi* with roses, and a stencil of the saint often put onto cakes. (Source: Gremi de Pastisseria de Barcelona)

the minds of informants. Not even the recent placing of a *senyera* alongside or instead of that of St. George has created an implicit connection. Informants might admit that they like them, sometimes straight after criticising them for not being ‘traditional’. When I mentioned the *Tortells* to Joan, a member of the commission for popular culture, in the context of well-established cakes in the gastronomic calendar, he

contemptuously replied “Oh, that’s invented. That’s an attempt to add a cake to the festival because it didn’t have one”.

This food has ‘only’ been around for twenty give to forty years (for the *Pans de Sant Jordi* and the *Tortell* respectively), and has been widely available for less. It has therefore not had the time to become deeply enough rooted to be a ‘tradition’ because the majority of the population can remember a time without it. It is not *de tota la vida*, from all of one’s life, a common maker of something legitimated by tradition. As indicated above, their origins are obscure.

Even without all the associated foodstuffs, whether considered authentic or not by Catalans, food may come into other celebrations of Catalanism that are central to this day’s commemoration. For example, Carmen, a widow who found it hard to enjoy the day, recalled fondly how she and her husband always celebrated this day through food by dining in a Catalan restaurant, where they would exchange their book and rose, and eat something typical from Catalan cuisine. This is an interesting example of how, like Christmas, a Catalan festive day is an occasion to eat ‘traditional’ Catalan food.

9.2 St John’s Eve, 24th June

The celebration of St. John’s Eve is not a unique event to Catalonia, and its observance can be found in many parts of Europe. As in other similar celebrations

outside Catalonia, Catalan celebrations of this date centre around fire, with bonfires as the principal focus of the festivities. In the Franco era this event became another celebration of Catalan identity, with the creation of the *Flama del Canigó* (Flame of Canigó) in 1966. A group of young Catalanists gathered at Canigó mountain in French Catalonia for the customary bonfire. This is a site of huge importance in the Catalanist landscape as the highest mountain in the *Països Catalans*, and the national poet Jacint Verdaguer named his first book of poetry after the mountain. Canigó is a classic example of the way natural features become impregnated with nationalist significance. From this bonfire, Catalan activists lit torches and lanterns and carried them in secret to Francoist Spain as a symbol of hope and solidarity to other Catalans across the border.

The Catalan government has now institutionalised the *Flama del Canigó* as a mass celebration and public holiday throughout the autonomous community. After a trek up to the top of the Canigó mountain, a bonfire is lit the day before St. John's Eve. From this bonfire, torches or lanterns with this flame are taken and carried to the various parts of the *Països Catalans*, lighting bonfires throughout the territories. In Barcelona, the torch arrives first in the Plaça de Sant Jaume, the governmental centre of Barcelona and Catalonia, where government representatives and Barcelona's *gegants* symbolically welcome the arrival of the flame. Rather than lighting a bonfire, the torch is placed in a brazier, and representatives of Barcelona's districts (often cultural groups) light a torch from it to take to their district. In Vic, the main fire is in the Plaça Major, with other smaller bonfires taking place in some districts.

Of the three principal Catalan festivals, La Nit de Sant Joan has a much longer association with a particular food than the other two: the *Coca de Sant Joan*, a kind of sweet flatbread, which is popular in Catalonia. The most common type is a simple flat bread, perhaps a brioche, often flavoured with the *anís* alcoholic drink, and with sugar sprinkled over the top before baking. Vázquez Montálban describes them thus:

“Incontrovertibly typical for this night are the ‘*Coques de Sant Joan*’ in diverse classes – of brioche, puff pastry, lardons – with their different stuffings and decorations: cream, angel’s hair (a stringy pumpkin flavoured sweet), sugared fruit, pine nuts etc.” (Vázquez Montálban, 1977: 207)

Other decorations can be lardons, chocolate, pine nuts, or candied fruits, the latter two of which are the most associated with La Nit de Sant Joan. The Catalan folklorist Joan



Figure 9.4: Photo of *coca* used in photo elicitation. Taken at a Barcelona bakery on St. John’s Eve 2012. Fruit *coques* can be seen in the centre, pine nuts to the left, and lardons to the right

Amades (1950-51) records the existence of *Coca* eaten for Sant Joan in his *Costumari Català*, a guarantee for many Catalans of its entrenched associations with the holiday. *Coca* is a highly commensal food in other contexts in Catalonia, for example, as a street food at fairs and markets, or a simple and economical dessert in public meals.

In order to probe attitudes to *Coca* further, I included an image of a selection of *coques* in my photo elicitation. The reactions had several commonalities, most especially the connection these foods have with St. John's Eve, which was almost immediately noted, as the *Coca* included in the photo had candied fruits. Berta's immediate reaction was "the end of the school year, Sant Joan and parties, fireworks", which was also the reaction of the *geganters* – "fireworks and outdoor parties; people in the street". The *geganters* also agreed that it was not something made at home, but bought outside: "everyone buys some *coca* and goes into the street", a statement backed up by Pere and Adelina and their family, and also Marta and my former Catalan teacher. The public nature of the festival and also the eating of its particular food become apparent in these remarks. Several respondents noted that it was "very typical...of one's whole life (*de tota la vida*)" (Pere and Adelina's family; the Assemblea group), "very Catalan" (Pep; Marta), "very traditional, well known" (Cristina).

I experienced the festival twice, once in Barcelona (2012) and once in Vic (2013). *Coca* in its various incarnations (with fruit, pine nuts, cream, lardons etc.) are described in the Barcelona festival publicity as "essential". A sign of the importance of food to the event is that, in conjunction with the Bakers Guild, the city council

organized a distribution of pieces of *coca* to the public in the Plaça Sant Jaume before the arrival of the *Flama*. The city council were also handing out rosemary plants, a reference to herbs, another seasonal product associated



Figure 9.5: *Coca* and rosemary plants handed out as part of Barcelona's 2012 celebrations of St John's Eve

with this time in the gastronomic calendar. It is the handing out of pieces of *coca* that is especially significant, as the shared space of commensality centred upon Plaça de Sant Jaume becomes a place of national identity affiliation and personal interaction through the consumption of *coca* that is provided by one of Catalonia's public institutions.

As explained earlier, the festival is very much a public celebration, taking place in the open air. In Barcelona, the usual way to celebrate is to participate in one of the many street parties around a bonfire of the particular district. In Vic, the primary focus is the bonfire in the Plaça Major. Many families take the opportunity to leave the city for a short vacation, but others who remain may hold small celebrations, preferably outside to set off firecrackers and fireworks. I was told that the most common way to celebrate Sant Joan for young people is to celebrate the evening on a beach in a group

of friends. However, I decided to stay back in Vic (in line with my original research strategy), as I had been invited to a supper gathering to eat *paella* (a *paellada*) and *coca*.

Upon arrival, the host Ignasi and a group of seven friends (all younger than 30) were setting up the *paella* dish on a gas burner. Throughout the next hour or so, various foods were added, crushed tomato and calamari first, followed by prawns, chicken, pork, rice, and clams. The *paella* was therefore the focal point of the entire evening, and the source of conversation. As we made the *paella*, my companions admitted that this was more Valencian than Catalan, but considering this was the night of the *Flama del Canigó*, they could do a dish from the *Països Catalans*. The style of the dish itself though was more like the Catalan version, still moist and with the *caldo* (liquid) still present. While this was said partly in jest, it demonstrates how ideas about the relationship between the *Països Catalans*, national identity and lived reality are played out. National holidays such as La Nit de Sant Joan become occasions when these associations are considered and expressed.

9.3 The Diada de Catalunya, 11th September

In line with Llobera (2004), my experience was that while St. George's Day is the context for less confrontational expressions of Catalan national identity, Catalonia's National Day on the 11th of September ('Diada') is an assertive celebration of Catalan pride and has become the focus of national protest. St. George's Day and the Diada in September are two sides of the same coin: they express the same sentiments, the same

sense of identity, but St. George's Day is more subdued, a working day, and more intimate. The Diada, on the other hand, has more the character of political protest, a very public celebration, in the street, and also a 'national' holiday for the Catalan Autonomy Community. The Diada marks the defeat of Habsburg forces by the Bourbon army in 1714, who entered the city on the 11th September, following the protracted fourteen-month siege of Barcelona.⁸⁵ Considering the rise in independentist sentiment over the last few years, in the tercentenary year of 2014 The Diada has become heavy with historical significance.

Like St. George's Day, The Diada has no strong links with particular foods, but food as part of Catalonia's cultural arsenal is used in multitudinous ways to prove Catalonia's different identity throughout the day. In the words of one post on a Catalanist Facebook group page on 11th September 2012, food is placed in the context of symbols of Catalan popular culture, such as architecture, *the gegants* and the *sardana*:

"I was born... where one eats *mongetes amb botifarra*, *alloli*, snails, *pa amb tomàquet*, where one drinks Cava, Vichy Catalan, water from Montseny⁸⁶ ...where there are great buildings and the *gegants* pass to the sound of music."

⁸⁵ A similar day exists in Valencia on 25th April, which also commemorates the defeat of Habsburg forces, and is also a celebration of Valencian identity with popular and some political support – though with much less force than in Catalonia (Castelló & Castelló, 2009). The irony that this day celebrates a defeat has also not gone unnoticed by Catalans.

⁸⁶ These latter two are bottled water brands. Catalan landscapes play an important part in their advertising, and as we see here, these brands are national symbols in their own right.

Cecil's account of the marching season in Northern Ireland (1997) has striking parallels with the Catalan Diada. Although the situation in Catalonia is not identical (there are not two opposed communities living side by side in quite the same way in Catalonia, and the Catholic-Protestant religious element is irrelevant there), in both cases one can see a rise in graffiti, flags, banners etc. in both Catalonia and Cecil's account at about the time of their respective celebrations. In Catalonia, one has a sense of heightened nationalist sentiment starting with St. John's Eve in June, reaching a fever pitch in September, and starting to drop off again by November (this no doubt is due to warmer weather in summer in autumn and a concurrent rise in sociability). In 2012, this fervour subsided after the snap elections on November 25th. The ruling party, CiU,⁸⁷ expected to gain a greater majority in the Catalan Parliament to push for independence. What actually happened was that they lost support to Esquerra Republicana,⁸⁸ which had firmer pro-Independence credentials, and CiU and Esquerra were forced to form a pro-independence coalition. In 2013 and 2014, on the way up to Barcelona, the landscape was dotted with *estellada* flags, flown on the back of cars, over balconies, and tied or painted onto the entrances of tunnels.

In 2013, the nature of the celebrations changed. Rather than being a protest centred around Barcelona, the day was celebrated with the Via Catalana, or Catalan Way, a 400 km human chain stretching along Catalonia's coastline. It was clear that in this year, Barcelona was no longer the focus of national sentiment, but all Catalonia from north to south. This may have been due to a discreet realisation of the irony of a focus on Barcelona, since it is here that there is the least support for independence. Those

⁸⁷ Convergència i Unió (Convergence and Union), technically two centre-right parties that have been in coalition for thirty years.

⁸⁸ 'Catalan socialist party.

who lived in close proximity to the route of the Via generally joined it there, but many (especially those in Vic) had to travel to others parts of Catalonia to take part. The 2013 Diada therefore became an opportunity for Catalans to travel to other parts of Catalonia, and the icon of the map and the Via upon it become a key image of the protest (cf. Urla, 1993). It can be suggested that this is linked with emphasis placed upon knowing the Catalan land as a means of affirming national identity through travel, as discussed in Chapter 7 and 8.

The principal act of the morning of the Diada is the offering of floral tributes at the statue of Rafael Casanovas, the leader of the city's defence at the siege of Barcelona. Offerings are given by Barcelonan and Catalan-wide cultural groups (*geganters*, choral societies and excursionists are exceptionally well represented), sports associations, and political parties. In 2013 and 2014 there was also an element of historical re-enactment, as recomposed regiments from 1714 also left tributes and provided gun salutes at the statue. Historical re-enactments also compose the principal regional celebrations of the Diada that take place in the days leading up to it, such as Vic's *Marxa dels Vigatans* on the 10th September. For this event, reconstituted regiments of the eighteenth century from the county march to Vic for a ritual burning of the *Decreto de Nueva Planta*, the document drawn up by Philip V in 1715 that dismantled Catalonia's *Generalitat*.

The 2014 Diada was expected heavy with historical significance, due to the tercentenary and political background. The recently opened Born Cultural Centre was to be the principal focus of events as a national museum, showcasing excavations carried out on the ruins of seventeenth-century houses destroyed in the siege as a

place of national memory.⁸⁹ Historical re-enactments, reconstructions, conferences and exhibitions all focused on remembering 1714 through the layout of the city. In publicity promoting these events, and in the museum of the Centre Cultural del Born, maps of contemporary Barcelona overlaid with maps of the key locations of the siege have an important place, and throughout the city the council erected information boards at these locations. This highlights the importance of notions of both territory (through the maps) and place as symbols of national memory. This theme has also been present in a dedicated exhibition at the Museum of Catalan History, ‘300 Onzes de Setembre 1714-2014’, which charts the history of the commemoration of this day.

Like the Via Catalana of 2013, the protest in 2014 consisted of volunteers arranged in the form of a “V” across Barcelona. Participants wore either a red or a yellow t-shirt, to create the effect of a massive ‘human mosaic’ representing the *senyera*. The “V” was intended

to represent both ‘Victory’ (a contradiction of the 1714 defeat which it commemorates) and ‘Votar’, as this was the last Diada before the planned referendum on the 9th November. As in 2013, regionality was once again emphasized. Rather than requiring travel to other parts of Catalonia, this time Diada celebrations ensured that

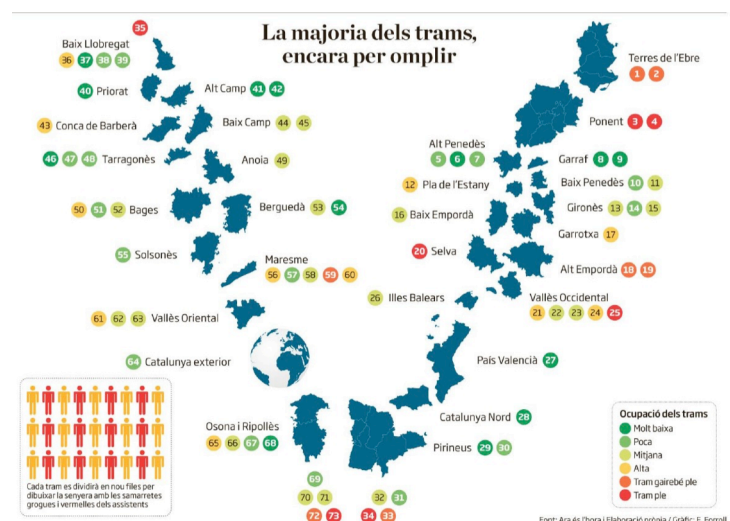


Figure 9.6: An example of the use of floating territorial maps of Catalonia’s different comarcas, and other areas. I received this image from an informant. (Source: Received via social media from an informant originally from a local newspaper)

⁸⁹ Pierre Nora (1986-1992, in Llobera, 2004: 43) in his *Les Lieux de la mémoire* considers this issue in further detail in France. While the application of his principles to Catalonia would be interesting, to do so would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

different counties were represented in different sections of the “V”, creating a microcosm of Catalonia within Barcelona itself (an example can be seen in Figure 9.6).

9.3.1 The Diada: Mercat per la Independència

The focus of the 2012 and 2013 Diada was the Arc de Triomf district of Barcelona, next to the Ciutadella Gardens. During the Diada, a market is held in this open space (Mercat de la Independència), selling principally Catalan memorabilia, as well as an area for Omium cultural, a radio studio, a concert stage, and marquees for talks and presentations on Catalan themes. The afternoon is put aside for the pro-independence demonstrations (the March for Independence in 2012, and the Via Catalana in 2013).

The market in the Arc de Triomf area deserves some discussion. In 2012, the area contained about a hundred stalls, selling a variety of Catalan memorabilia; clothing, badges, and also novelty items such as fake passports and ID cards for a future Catalan state (I included an example of one in the Introduction). Bookstalls too were popular, small specialist bookstores or stalls of larger chain stalls. Food stalls also held a strong place, and indeed approximately a third of the stalls were food related; open bars for buying local Catalan beers as refreshments, or products with their own stalls – this was almost identical to the popular food festivals described in Chapter 7. As at similar fairs, many of those attending were not from Barcelona, but had travelled from several areas around Catalonia.

In 2013, the number of stalls was noticeably greater, and took up more areas than the year before. The most interesting development this year was the creation of a food market in the central area of the Arc de Triomf area, with about ten stalls dedicated to Catalan produce. The official name for this was a ‘Demonstration of Professions and Artisanal Products’. The market was organized by an entity called Mercats d’Abans (Markets of yesteryear), a collective of stallholders and businesses that coordinates historically-themed markets throughout Catalonia. The newest is named ‘1714 History and life of a people’, a reference to the significance of 1714 and another example of a historical re-enactment. In the 2013 market, each stall showed examples of different products of the Catalan countries, with large cartoon boards next to some of the stalls showing how the product was made and examples of the implements used. 2014’s Mercat de la Independència also kept the same format of a large food market in the centre, though this time with some stalls showing ‘traditional’ crafts such as wood turning, and a *barretina* stall.

As at the popular food fairs throughout Catalonia, families bought food from the stalls and ate it as they walked through the park, so once again national spaces can be seen as spaces of commensality through the consumption of street food. The day is also an occasion for outdoor meals (*dinars populars*) organized by various cultural and political associations to promote commensality amongst participants, as at other festivals throughout the year. I attended one hosted by Omnim Cultural in 2012, which had been running since 1999. This consisted mainly of family groups, and was filled to capacity, so is evidently a popular event. The main food was a *Fideuà* a seafood dish from Valencia and the Catalan Ebre Delta in the south, now popular

throughout Catalonia. The principal ingredients are the *fideus*, small short pieces of pasta, flavoured with calamari and prawns, with the option of *alloli*.

Fellow diners commented that this was a typically Catalan dish, especially for the season and an area near the sea like Barcelona, and ideal for large groups. The inclusion of *alloli*, one of the principal sauces of Catalonia, was also ideal due to its origin in the Catalan areas, combining perfectly with the theme of the event to create this rich nexus of Catalan associations. Another popular dish at the same situation is an *arròs*, which is very like *paella*. When I asked whether the two dishes were the same, the consensus was that Catalan version is definitely *arròs*, not *paella*, which is Valencian. Much like the *paella* on St. John's Eve, the context and presence of the

paella

provided an
excuse to talk
about
relationships
with other
Països
Catalans,
specifically
Valencia.



Figure 9.7: Examples of *Tortells de la Diada* in a Catalanist cake-maker's window.

This is a relationship that has caused some controversy and resentment in the context of Spanish politics.

The dessert was the common festival food of *coca* with a bar of chocolate. The meal was punctuated by the boisterous shouting of nationalist slogans, for example the “*Visca Terra Lliure*” (Long live the free land) and the Omnium slogan for that year “I..Inde... Independència”. Also provided on the tables were salad and *pa de pagès*, with wine from Empordà. The selection of the latter two are particularly significant. ‘*Pa de pagès*’ (‘Peasant’s bread’) is a PGI food (Protected Geographical Indication), one of Catalonia’s sixteen protected foods under this EU scheme. As DeSoucey (2010) and West (2013) have pointed out, the protection of produce through official recognition is regularly part of nationalist promotional agendas. This round white bread (much like a French *boule*) is also the staple bread for both everyday and festive situations. Concerning the wine, as I have repeatedly mentioned, Empordà in the north-east of Catalonia is an area with a strong Catalan identity, and is the point of origin for *mar i muntanya* cuisine. The combination of wine from this area and the use of a bread heavy with Catalan associations, alongside the other foods, creates a combination of symbols that continually enforce and flag (Billig, 1995) the identity of the event.

As on St. George’s Day, there is no specific festival food in this case. Recently, there have been attempts to create a cake for Catalonia’s national day (*Tortell de la Diada*), but these have met with some friction, more so than for the *Tortell de Sant Jordi*. This may be because large cakes of this type are associated with family gatherings that take place within the home, whereas the Diada is a celebration that takes place in the street. This is compounded by the view that the *Tortell de la Diada* is promoted for commercial interests in order to take advantage of nationalist sentiment. *Coca* could have greater significance as a food eaten in public, but while it is eaten on the Diada

as a Catalan festival food, *coca* is already associated with St. John's Eve, so cannot change its association.

The *Tortell* has little significance to the festivities in Barcelona, or indeed the rest of Catalonia. Some bakeries remained closed, as this was the end of the holiday season. Others made no reference to the day aside from showing *senyeres* in their windows, and perhaps the calendar from the Barcelona cake-maker's guild showing the *Tortell de la Diada*. Others may adapt their current cakes on offer by placing a *senyera* or some other Catalanist decoration on top. There are still a substantial number though that will sell a variation on the *Tortell de la Diada* (Figure 8.7 is a typical shop window). Attitudes in bakeries themselves are mixed: some I spoke with fell into the latter category, and were proud to contain Catalanist products, while others considered it "something fun", rather than an expression of die-hard Catalanism.

9.4 *Tortells de la Diada, Coca de Sant Joan and Pans de Sant Jordi*: inventing national foods

Many of the new-fangled cakes made for the Diada and Sant Jordi are similar in decoration, though for the Diada flag decorations are more prominent, and they both fulfil a similar gap in the gastronomic calendar. *Pans de Sant Jordi* are sometimes sold for the Diada, since it also has the flag emblazoned upon it. The reactions of many informants to these types of cake was mixed, some appreciating the use of the *senyera*, others, like Berta, seeing them as "very consumerist. A recent invention". When asked whether she liked it, she said, "I really like everything around the Diada,

but this is an exaggeration. I wouldn't buy it. It's a business thing". In talks with Pere and Adelina and their family, they all agreed that "for the Diada, there is nothing typical". That does not mean these foods go uneaten.

A good example of the general attitude and behaviour comes from Eloi, who admitted that he liked the *Tortells de la Diada* ("it makes me really happy, all the *senyeres*, it's nice"). His father, on the other hand, dislikes *Tortells de la Diada*, since he considers them too new and untraditional (Eloi took care to point out his father is very pro-independence and takes the upholding of Catalan traditions very seriously, especially since they are originally from Empordà, so feel they have greater responsibilities to uphold Catalan

values). However, Eloi's mother will always try and buy a *Tortell de la Diada* for the day itself as a nod to the national day, which his father will grudgingly eat. This example seems to sum up well the general context in which *Tortells de la Diada* are bought.

Irene, a young woman in her mid-twenties, said that she had seen "that thing with the four bars for a few years [*Pans de Sant Jordi*], but it's not very well known". With her mother, Concepció, and Cristina, they agreed that "this is new... something that the



Figure 9.8: The *Tortell de la Diada* in the cake-makers Guild's calendar. Note the exhortation to use the cake to "make country" (*fer país*), a popular phrase to describe doing Catalanist activities that was discussed further in Chapter 7. (Source: Gremi de Pastisseria de Barcelona)

cake-makers do to make money now. It's all marketing, invented. Cake-makers and bakers want to sell, so they do this. It's not traditional".

Similarly, amongst the group from the Assemblea, the first reaction was that these were modern cakes, though undeniably they associated them with St. George's Day. As Isabel said "You can want to eat a cake like this one day, but it has no tradition at all", and another, Josep-Maria, contrasted this with Lenten *bunyols* (*bunyols de Quaresme*), which are traditional for him, a good example of a food that has a long-standing association with a calendric moment.

Marta also made a similar comparison to a better-established food product also associated with one of the yearly festivals, that of the Easter *Mona*. I described these chocolate figurines Chapter 7, given on Easter Sunday and Monday by godparents to their godchildren. Calling the *Pastís de la Diada* "total marketing", she held up the image of a selection of *mones*, saying "this, yes, this is it [traditional]", then pointing to the cakes, "this, invented". This is particularly ironic considering food history, since chocolate *mones* only came into widespread popularity in the 1930s, which superseded a much older version of the *mona*.

Other responses were that they were "commercial, from the bakeries of Barcelona, not at all typical" (*geganters*), showing a tenuous association between Barcelona and these newer confections, though in Vic these cakes were also displayed: "this is not traditional, it's very recent, from four minutes ago" (*de quatre minuts* – to underline newness), according to the older group of *sardanistes*. Even younger *sardanistes*

echoed similar statements - “You see these very little, they’re very modern”. They called them an innovation of bakers to get more money, a sentiment echoed by Berta, who saw them as an example of “consumerism” in festivals – “I really like St. George’s Day, and I really like Catalonia, but these things are an excuse to sell things”, a comment which also referred to the *Tortells de la Diada*. One can see, then, that these attitudes are not divided by generation.

It is true that there is little reference to these cakes in the gastronomic literature (for example, Vázquez Montálban’s, 1977), suggesting their recent-ness. However, even proof of the *Tortells de Sant Jordi*’ existence from forty years ago does not seem to have made them any more accepted. Talking with a Barcelonan baker during the 2014 Diada, I asked him how long he had made his *Tortells de la Diada*. In contrast to most other claims in the field, he stated that his father made them when he was a boy, at least forty years ago. Still, his comments may back up the *geganter*s’ assertion that these cakes are from Barcelona.



Figure 9.9: Photo elicitation image showing *Rosquilles de Sant Jordi* (top left), as well as further examples of *Pa* and *Tortells de Sant Jordi*.

However, one sees a difference when claiming that clever marketing might also be used for foods with more longstanding associations with festivals. For example, in response to Marta's claim that *coca* was very Catalan and had strong associations with La Nit de Sant Joan, I suggested that perhaps it was also just 'marketing', which she forcefully denied, then going on to claim that the festival had ancient links to the Roman period. It seemed that by doubting the antiquity of the festive food, I doubted the grounding of the festival itself (consider parallels with DeSoucey, 2010).

Other products used in the photo elicitation also caused controversy in respondents, such as the '*Rosquilles de Sant Jordi*', seen in Figure 9.9. *Rosquilles* are a type of donut, found in other parts of Spain and also associated with the Easter period. They are not particularly associated with Catalonia, where *bunyols* are the closest equivalent. The Assemblea and another respondent reacted negatively, claiming that they were not a Catalan food, so associating them with the patron saint was a contradiction in terms, and rather insulting.

For another respondent in Vic, Pep, the *Rosquilles* were something he would immediately associate with someone from Castile. However, he saw these in a different light, claiming that the inclusion of these pastries, which might have been brought by immigrants, was typical of the Catalan ideal of openness. As the manager of Omnim Cultural in Vic, his attitude to these foods and their integration into Catalan food culture mirrored the efforts of his organization and his desire to integrate immigrants into a Catalan identity. The *Tortells* and *Pans de Sant Jordi*, on the other hand, he didn't really find worthy of comment.

9.5 The *senyera* on food

The power of the flag as a symbol of national identity is undeniable, and emblazoned on foods, it gives them a certain appeal. Just as better known Catalan foodstuffs will include a *senyera* to show their origin and sometimes allow them to become national objects, so these *Tortells de la Diada* and *Pans de Sant Jordi* are connected to Catalan identity in a less subtle manner. In a way, it may be this that allows the survival of these foods in that, since they bear the national symbol, many Catalans will still buy them to acknowledge the national day, just as they would *coca* on La Nit de Sant Joan, *Coca de Reis* for Epiphany, or as one respondent said, *bunyols* for Lent. Yet even with the flag, these still have some way to go before they take their place as a ‘traditional’ food. Pep was also critical of what he considered jingoistic expressions of Catalan identity, the *Tortells* included, so this may be another reason why their acceptance has been difficult, in that their unsubtle Catalan-ness is off-putting.

Two respondents also made the point that there was one circumstance in which they would come to accept a *Tortell de la Diada*, and that was with the arrival of independence. Both these informants were interviewed in separate contexts, and were strong independentists (Jesus from the Assemblea, and Marta). On seeing the image of the dessert from the



Figure 9.10: David’s homemade *mona* (in old-fashioned style), an example of an acceptable use of the national flag on food. (Source: received from an informant via social media)

Diada, Jesus remarked in passing: “Once we are independent, then we’ll have to have a cake, to celebrate”. Marta also recalled, rather dismissively, that now they were doing an “independence cake”, adding, more kindly, “of course, the day we proclaim independence, we will do an independence day cake”, but not yet. The cake would therefore be acceptable if it were to celebrate a momentous event, since an appropriate foodstuff would be required for the proper celebration of a national day.

Before finishing on this topic, however, one should not totally dismiss the use of the national flag in foods. In more home-based, individualized creations, the application of a *senyera* to food is encouraged, even praised. David, one of the younger *sardana* dancers, sent round a Whatsapp photo to the group of an Easter *mona* sponge cake he had made himself, decorated with an *estellada* in yellow and red, with and the words ‘CAT’ written at the bottom (Fig. 9.10). Judging by the admiring comments, this was considered a perfectly acceptable type of nationalist cake.

In other instances, more everyday foods can be arranged to look like the *senyera*. For example, the *escalivada* is sometimes arranged so that the red peppers form four bars and the onion or yellow peppers form the yellow background. An example of this can be seen on the front cover of one of the earliest compendiums of Catalan



Figure 9.11: The *senyera* in food: Final image in photo elicitation, the background is the front cover of Lladonosa’s book, demonstrating another imitation of the *senyera* in food with Ferran Agulló’s quote, as described in Chapter 3.

cuisine by well-known chef and cookbook writer, Josep Lladonosa (9.11). Marina, a Catalan informant in Oxford, also recalled how for a *braç de gitano de patates* (a mashed potato roll mixed with tuna), something that was often made for social gatherings in summer, it had become more popular to decorate it with red peppers on mayonnaise to form the *senyera*. She remembered making this at school, to encourage children to partake of their identity by familiarizing them with the flag. However, when I asked whether this would in some way Catalanize a foreign food, she was confused. Either a food was part of the culinary repertoire, or not, and a flag emblazoned upon it might be a nice gesture, but did not make it Catalan. This also applied in the field, I found, to examples of the flags appearing on non-Catalan baked goods such as cupcakes and iced cookies that have become popular in recent years, and that were still seen as ‘American’ (or sometimes ‘English’).

9.6 ‘Fent la botifarra al Dia de la Hispanitat’: Catalonia’s anti-festival and sausages

One can see that the three principal national holidays of Catalonia are clear celebrations of Catalan identity. However, there is another extraordinary day that deserves attention, which Catalans ‘celebrate’, but in such a way as to undermine its nature as a festive day. This is Spain’s National Day on 12th October, which celebrates the anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s arrival in the Americas. Since this day is a celebration of Spanish identity, amongst Catalanists this has been transformed into a day on which anti-Spanish sentiment is focused.

One of the most visible ways that Catalanists mark this event, a national holiday in Spain, is by insisting on working during that day. In 2012, both the Assemblea and Omnium Cultural made well-publicised announcements that their offices would remain open, just as they would on normal weekdays, to show the irrelevance of Spanish festivals to Catalonia. Around Vic, shops were open as usual for the morning and most remained open for the afternoon too. Many of the shop windows also remained decked out in the Catalan flags and displays of the Diada from the month before.



Figure 9.12: A 2012 poster by the Assemblea encouraging Catalans to go to work on Spain's National Day, or to help out in their local branch of the Assemblea if they cannot. (Source: Assemblea.cat)

Despite the refusal to recognise the day as a holiday, the day is marked throughout Catalonia by pro-Catalan events, generally of a political and pro-independence nature. And like the other national days, food as an identifiable symbol of Catalan identity has been brought into play for this day. As of 2012, October 12th had become the day of the *botifarrada*, or *botiflerada*, one of Catalonia's many '-ades' (dining events focused on one particular food), designated here for the communal eating of sausages.

The consumption and association of sausages with this day is heavy with significance. Aside from their privileged position as a food particularly associated with Catalonia, to *fer la botifarra* also has vulgar connotations as an insult. The design company

Catalunyam, which specializes in Catalan food-themed T-shirts, provides a demonstration of the gesture, that of placing the left hand on the crook of the elbow, and then bending it up, so that the forearm and fist stand vertically (as demonstrated in Fig 9.13).

The common name for this is the *botifarra de pagès* ('peasant sausage', due to its obvious resemblance), but it can also be applied to certain varieties of sausage.

Catalunyam's owner, Oriol, admitted that his design was part of a more practical Catalanism that expressed its identity, but was not explicitly anti-Spanish (and indeed, he had orders for the T-shirt from Spain, where the gesture is also used). However, his designs have become one of the many militant T-shirts worn on the Diada. As he said himself, part of their intention is to say "listen Spain", and do so using the medium of gastronomy. Yet by its name, the *botifarra de pagès* image is not just a confrontation, it is also profoundly associated with the countryside, the *casa de pagès*, (peasant house) and the food produced there, powerful images in the Catalan national identity discourse (though hardly unique to Catalonia – cf. Smith, 1986; DiGiacomo, 2001 and Llobera, 2004). As Oriol said of the image on the T-shirt, "It's like the *botifarra* itself. It says it's a *botifarra de pagès*, rather like a peasant house".

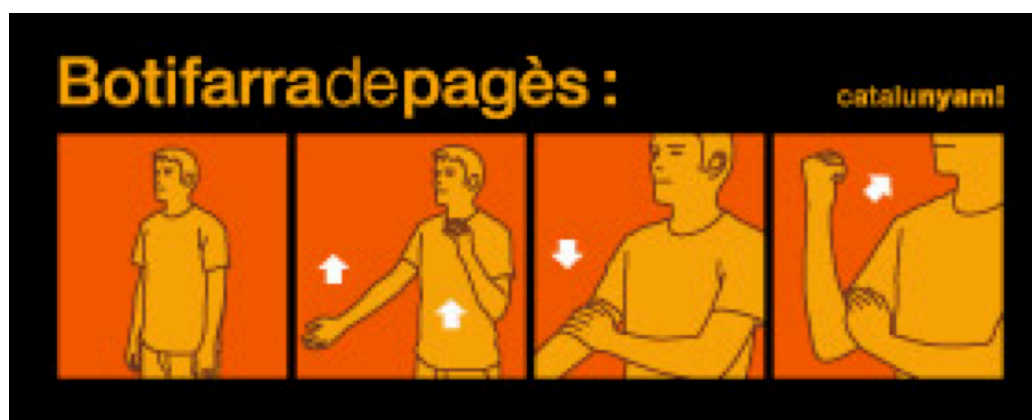


Figure 9.13: Catalunyam's T-shirt pictorial design of 'Fent la Botifarra' ('Doing the sausage'), an insulting gesture (Source, Catalunyam)

On the Diada in 2012, on one of the most prominent thoroughfares of the march was a huge sign of a sausage with the words “*A Catalunya fem botifarra*” (Fig. 9.14). Much like Catalunya’s T-shirt, through the medium of a popular saying about food, such a phrase acts not only to express a cultural fact that can be mobilised as a source of



Figure 9.14 – 9.15: Examples of food-based protests in the 2012 Diada

pride and difference for insiders, it can also be turned to a blatant insult for Catalonia’s opponents.

In the same protest, I also saw one protester carrying a placard with the word ‘*Prou*’ (‘Enough’) emblazoned across the top, with cured sausages (chorizos) hanging down. This is a reference to the expression ‘*chorizar*’ (Castilian) or ‘*xoriçar*’ (Catalan), a colloquialism that describes corrupt theft and cheating. In Vic, the verb was regularly used to describe the fiscal relationship between Catalonia and Spain, hence its use here to express ‘enough’. Once again, food metaphors act as expressions of dissent through their multiple meanings and word-play (Figs 9.15).

Returning to the Dia de la Hispanitat, it should be clear that eating this food on Spain's National Day, and also publicising this fact, becomes a means of expressing Catalan identity on a day when Spanish identity should be celebrated instead. Food is not a means of discreetly expressing group membership, but instead *botifarra* is eaten openly in gatherings throughout the day.

The 'Botiflerada' in La Garriga, organised by Omnim Cultural, was a typical type of event from this day. The day began with a talk on the future of Catalonia as a state, followed by lunch. Lunch was advertised as a salad and *mongetes del ganxet amb botifarra de la Garriga*. Both these foods (a type of haricot beans and sausage) are

varieties or products particular to the area of La Garriga in Vallès, and the *mongetes del ganxet* indeed has Protected

Denomination of Origin status. In this context, the emphasis on the local nature of the foodstuffs

placed in a Catalanist festival

shows well how such foodstuffs can be used as bearers of national identity in commensal, nationalist settings, much like at Omnim's

Diada lunch. They were also

called *productes de la terra*

**BOTIFLERADA 2012
LA GARRIGA**

12 D'OCTUBRE DE 2012
PLAÇA DEL SILENCI

12h | "La construcció mediàtica d'un relat nacional. Aquí, allà i a Europa"
Tertúlia oberta amb **Jordi Barbeta** (periodista, cap de política de la Vanguardia), **David Bassa** (president del Grup de Periodistes Ramon Barnils)

14h | Dinar
Amanida i mongetes del ganxet amb botifarra de la Garriga. Aigua, pa i porrons de vi.
Tiquet: 10€

**SOBRETAULA MUSICAL
AMB CARLES BELDA I MARÇAL RAMON**
Servei de bar amb productes de la terra

Proper acte: 27 d'octubre, 19h,
Auditori de l'Escola de Música (Plaça del Silenci)
"Gestionar el plurilingüisme en una Catalunya sobirana",
Amb Isidor Mari, sociolingüista, responsable d'Estudis d'Arts i Humanitats de la UOC

Col·labora: **assemblea.cat**
Amb el suport de: **ajuntament de la garriga**
Omnium La Garriga. Llengua, Cultura, País. www.granollers.omnium.cat

Figure 9.16: Advertisement for the *Botiflerada* (sausage eating) in La Garriga. (Source: Omnim Cultural)

(‘products of the land’). This is again a popular phrase in Catalonia in these contexts (the Mercat per la Independència, for example, uses similar phrases) that emphasises the connection between foods, land, and by extension, nation.

A few of the themes discussed at the start of the thesis in Chapters 5 and 6 were mentioned repeatedly in discussions the choice of foods with the organizers and the associations of the day. The *botifarra amb mongetes* was described as “a poor dish”, “a folkloric act” and “a Catalan dish”. One remarked, indeed emphasized, that it was the sort of thing he ate at home regularly. Its Mediterranean nature was also emphasized, as was the importance of diversity in Catalan cuisine, and also its context with other foods endowed with Catalanist associations such as mushrooms and snails. Catalan cuisine was “always different” to that of Spain. The *botifarra amb mongetes* was classed among the dishes not eaten outside of Catalonia.

This attitude highlights the importance of the perceived uniqueness of national foods in Catalonia. It also shows the at times contradictory attitude implicit in the idealization of ‘poor dishes’ as subsistence cuisine, while claiming that Catalan cuisine is ‘richer’ than that of Spain. These claims to gastronomic richness parallel in many ways the frequent statements of Catalonia’s wealth in comparison with the rest of Spain (the main source of current discontent), providing an interesting parallel between gastronomic culture and economic realities.

9.7 The Tercentenary Diada: a celebration of 1714 in food

Due to the tercentenary, this year has seen a remembering of 1714 in all manner of popular acts, for example the creation of historic guided tours, the opening of a Barcelona museum showing houses destroyed in the siege, nationalistic merchandise and memorabilia. Food too has entered into these remembrances. In the new museum (Centre Cultural del Born) one wing is taken up by a restaurant run by Moritz (Barcelona's principal brewer, and another pro-Catalan brand), called 'The 300 of the Born', a reference to the tercentenary. Moritz also designed a specific beer called 'Born 1714', produced imitating techniques from the era. The space is marketed as an area where "gastronomy converges with history thanks to an extensive menu based on historical cuisine" (Moritz, 2014).

The menu itself shows a thorough attempt to associate Catalan food of today with the siege of three hundred years ago. The food served is popular Catalan fare, indeed making references to the *Escudella*, *Esqueixats*, *Coques de recapta* etc. *Xuixos*, pastry cylinders in a variety of fillings originally from Girona, are called "Cannons...to remember the cannons that were the protagonists of the confrontation. Sweet and savoury, ideal to resist a siege". Other entries include "Historical breakfasts", "*Miquelet*⁹⁰ sandwiches"; "Historical sandwiches"; "The mounted cavalry: eighteenth century *tapas*"; "*Escabetxats*⁹¹...which do well to maintain food in a good state during the lengthy periods of the siege"; "*Bombardejats*", the name used for *bombes* (bombs), a type of stuffed croquette associated with the Barceloneta

⁹⁰ Catalan infantry regiments.

⁹¹ A dish that includes a variety of pickled ingredients.

district, “so as not to forget that Barcelona has been bombed many times”; “A land of *Escudella*. Catalunya is a land of *escudelles*, and we serve them with the utensil that gave them their name”; “Following history with our second courses”, going onto “*Platillos*⁹² with a lot of history” or “Traditional and historic *platillos*”; The bread offered includes “White bread of the French aristocracy” or the “Catalan black bread of the siege”. Many of these subsections include dishes that have been named after historical figures, places or events by the restaurant, such as “*Bombes del Comte-duc d’Olivares*”, “*Platillo d’en Rafael Casanova*” or “*Coca de recapte tradicional de Cardona*”.⁹³ On the back of the menu, one can find more detail on the background to these figures, events, and the social context etc.

The theme of September 2014’s *Cuina* also focuses around 1714. Its contents include a “Menu from 1714: with recipes from three centuries ago”, with recipes and an in-depth discussion of the historical cuisine, food culture and cookbooks, and a spread also advertising the Born 1714 beer. The magazine also organized a series of talks (*Cicle Cuina 1714*) on food in Barcelona in the eighteenth century.

There is also a food route called ‘*Gastronomia 1714*’ that has been designed by the Fundació-Institut de la Cuina Catalana (FICCG). This has led to the creation of a guidebook *La cuina del 1714: a gastronomic route through our history*. The book begins with a prologue by the Catalan president praising “traditional” Catalan cuisine of the era, followed by overviews of the cuisine of the 18th century, the route itself, and information about the selection of the recipes and recipe books entitled “A table

⁹² *Platillo* is a vegetable and meat stew.

⁹³ A flatbread with toppings, sometimes called the ‘Catalan pizza’.

that traverses time” – a title suggesting historical continuity through food between the eighteenth century and today. Finally, another section (“Returning to the essences”) considers the similarities and differences of present-day recipes to those that have been “revived” for this book and the gastronomic route. In common with other gastronomic books, this section also contains praise for the richness and variety of eighteenth-century cuisine, the importance of gastronomy in Catalan culture and the joys of cooking the recipes in a convivial atmosphere to “travel to the past to understand how our ancestors ate and lived” (Cases et al, 2014: 31).

Once again, a return to the past to recreate national memory is present here. This is continued in the principal part of the book, entitled “Monuments, Landscapes”. This details eleven places involved in the war of 1714 and the events that happened there, beginning with the El Born Centre Cultural, and where each place is associated with a particular dish or dishes. The associated website (which effectively contains the same information) also contains a list of the restaurants where one can find these foods, and there are details of the main tourist information points in the book itself.

The book is only available in Catalan, suggesting it is aimed at Catalan tourists, who will ideally use this book to travel through Catalonia, visiting significant locations in the history of the war, and in doing so relive their national past through food. The theme of travel in promoting national knowledge and creating national identity has been a recurring theme, but the ideal of visiting sites of national memory can also be found in other media surrounding the tercentenary. For example, *Descubrir*, the Catalan-language travel magazine under the same ownership as *Cuina*, also dedicated

their June 2014 magazine to “Catalonia 1714”, with the subheading “We travel through the key scenes of the War of the Spanish Succession”. What is interesting for this research, though, is that in the *Gastronomia 1714* route places are associated with tastes.

The latter half of the book is a recipe collection of the dishes associated with each place on the route, first the “old recipe” from a historical cookbook, then the modern-day recipe. Of the twenty-two recipes in the book, all but five are recipes based on older recipes from *La Cuynera Catalan* of 1853. Seven of the recipes are also identical to that provided by the FICCG’s *Corpus of Catalan Cuisine*. Quite how dishes have been attached to places is unclear, though the *Escudella i carn d’olla*, a food often considered one of Catalonia’s national dishes, is listed as associated with Barcelona, as is stuffed chicken, a popular Christmas dish. The *Coca de Recapte*, whilst now found throughout Catalonia, originated in ‘New Catalonia’ such as Tarragona and Lleida. Hence this dish’s association with the city of Lleida, whose Bakers Guild provided the recipe. This also applies to two other dishes, provided by restaurants in the locale with which the recipe is associated.

In practice, none of these recipes are really any different from those used today, and the meals are now easily found in restaurants throughout Catalonia. The organizers and promoters of these tours and gastronomic remembrances would like to see this as an example of how Catalan cuisine has a wonderful sense of continuity with the past. The reality is that dishes are cleverly selected to appeal to both contemporary tastes and also because they are seen as typically ‘Catalan’ – listed in Catalan cookbooks,

the *Corpus*, and also backed up from the general discourse. Dishes are the classic *Escudella i Carn d'olla*, *Coca de recapte d'escalivada* (thus including two favoured Catalan dishes, *Coca de recapte* and *Escalivada* in one), stuffed onions, several recipes for stuffed pigeon or chicken, examples of *agredolç* cuisine, *menjar blanc* and *bunyols*, to name a few. This is also true of Mortiz's El 300 del Born, where the dishes on offer are marketed under martial names associated with the siege or that era. The four recipes in *Cuina*'s 1714 issue likewise are familiar to today's tastes, and indeed could be placed in any other context outside of 1714. They include an example of *agredolç* cuisine, which is explicitly recalled as "going back a long way with us [Catalans]", a white fish dish, a chocolate *crema catalana* (this sort of recipe would have been impossible in 1714) and a rice dish.

Similarly, a Barcelona chocolatier, Enric Rovira, designed a set of chocolates for the tercentenary year, where he sought to recreate the taste of chocolate from that time (these can be seen in the window in Figure 9.7). Yet as he admits in the accompanying information, chocolate did not exist in solid form in 1714. However, he continues, he wishes consumers to imagine what solid chocolate would have been like considering the available ingredients. For a time, this chocolate was sold in packs (labelled as '*3 unces de xocolata*', an eighteenth century measurement) with another chocolate bar representing the year 2014, which contained the fourteen traditional spices of Catalan cuisine (the play on the number fourteen is obvious here).

However, a recent visit to the fields suggests that some of these remembrances might be out of place. Concepció, a tour guide in Vic, claimed that no one has wanted to go

on any of the routes or tours organized by tourist offices centred on importance places in the 1714 war, bemoaning the wasted time and money involved in their creation. One must presume the same of the culinary routes. None of my informants were aware of Enric Rovira's chocolates or of the 1714 Gastronomic Route – my questions about them were the first they had heard of them. I tried to attend a class in 18th century cuisine in 2013, but the class was cancelled, due to lack of interest.

Yet whatever the success or motivations of these phenomena, it is not difficult to see the current of both historiography and historical recreation passing through these developments. The repeated element in all of these manifestations of culinary identity in the tercentenary celebrations is the creation of historical continuity through food. The 11th September 1714 has become a traumatic moment in Catalan national history. The uninhibited labelling of foods in the Born 300 to associate them with the siege of Barcelona and the attempts to recreate foods from that time and place them in a past construction of a national cuisine are all efforts encouraged by the *Generalitat* and associated bodies such as the FICCG to make the celebrations and recollection of this year more immediate and appealing to Catalans. They can be considered in line with similar nationalist remembrances of 1714, e.g. the creation of a national museum, historic re-enactments, touristic routes of national memory, plays and concerts recalling the era etc.

The celebration of this tercentenary year culminated in the Consultation for Catalan independence in November 2014, the aim being to sensitize the Catalan population to this vote. One of the means of doing so with the commemoration was to remind

Catalans of conflictual moments in the relationship with Spain. Aside from the fortunate coincidence of the tercentenary, 1714 is also no longer in living memory, so was less open to contestation. It may be for this reason that the War of the Spanish Succession became a better focus of grievance against Spain than, say, the Franco period or the Civil War.

9.8 Nationalist chocolates

Enric Rovira's efforts are part of a series of chocolate-based expressions of Catalan culinary identity. The use of chocolate as heritage is hardly unique, for example, in France and the attempts to make French cuisine an example of UNESCO intangible heritage, where chocolate has been "newly reinvested with gourmet cachet and cultural authenticity" (Terrio, 2014). In the article on 1714 cuisine in *Cuina*, chocolate is mentioned as an important drink from the era (indeed, it is one of the recipes). Attention is also drawn to the fact that the first industrial chocolate factory in the world was founded in Barcelona in 1777, a fact that was also brought to my attention by more expert culinary informants in the field, such as Nuria, a food historian, and Jaume, a food writer, to demonstrate its importance in Catalan food culture. The use of chocolate as part of the *picada*, to add substance to a stew, is also something some informants considered peculiar to Catalan cuisine. Maria Martí Escayol, in her 2004 book on chocolate in Catalonia (*El plaer de la xocolata*), also sees this factory as an example of the privileged place of chocolate in Catalan culinary heritage. Ramon, a chocolatier based in Vic, also began our interview by emphasizing this fact, expressing frustration that this pioneering role was often forgotten in the global

history of chocolate. Catalonia's particular association with sweet foods, discussed in Chapter 7, has been essential for this development. In Ramon's words:

“The tradition of cake-making, the sweet world, has always been very active in Catalonia...to sell more, because it's always been an entrepreneurial [business], the majority of festive days are very strongly tied to this. *Crema de Sant Josep*, *Coca de Sant Joan*, Lent *bunyols* etc. There are many specialities, and though the festive days are the same as the rest of Spain (like All Saints, that's everywhere), there are concrete products that are associated with here.”

His views back up not just the importance of the gastronomic calendar and its contents as something that defines and differentiates Catalonia from Spain, but also an entrepreneurial spirit in promoting these foods and their associated days. The foods he mentions are well-loved foods in the calendar, and as we have already seen, informants in the photo elicitation exercise saw them as ‘traditional’ foods ‘of all one's life’. Yet here Ramon is suggesting that they too are still examples of clever marketing on the part of their purveyors. His remarks are compelling as an expert within the industry itself, and suggest that national foods that are considered ‘traditional’ may themselves have been the product of a series of efforts to make them so. These efforts may even be on-going, both for the better-established festive foods and the newer foods such as *Tortells de la Diada*.

He also takes the view that the Catalan chocolate industry is distinctive by its creativity, linking it with the *nova cuina* movements first expounded by Ferran Adrià (this is hardly surprising, considering they are close colleagues and Ramon used to provide chocolate classes for El Bulli's training staff). His ideas are also related to the

ideal of a tradition of modernity in Catalan new cuisine. He went on to suggest this was thanks partially to the Catalan ideal of openness already described, the closeness to other European countries (particularly France), and possibly a particular valuation of cuisine:

“I suppose it’s very linked with climate and the character of the people. We are an open people, curious, maybe due to the proximity with other countries. Maybe the gastronomy here is something that is very important.”

Many contemporary Catalan chocolatiers have developed a reputation for their pro-Catalanist leanings. One of Ramon’s British colleagues recalled that these views had sometimes led to heated arguments between the Catalan and Spanish chocolatiers in international events. Like other Catalan chocolatiers, however, they have sometimes had to hide their attitudes from the Spanish-wide public. Enric Rovira, on the other hand, has no such qualms, choosing to base his market squarely in Catalonia, with other product ranges such as bars with packaging showing the *senyera* or Barça colours – inspired by the *Tortells de la Diada* in his parent’s bakery. In his own words, “It [his Catalan identity] is pretty important... The link is evident and is manifested in the design of our products, the nomenclature, the concepts, the flavours. We try to hang onto the cultural Unique Selling Point”. When asked about potential problems, he admitted that in Spain it was difficult to sell his products, since he shared a surname with a former leader of the Esquerra Republicana, who was known for his inflammatory, pro-independence remarks. Rovira, however, was willing to accept the consequences for the Catalanist associations. Still, when I left the field, he was having problems with his supply chains and had been forced to close his shop.

Perhaps following a purely Catalanist marketing policy had not been beneficial, as even in Catalonia he is not well known.

Chocolate art itself has come to be used as a means of political protest in the form of the *mona*, the chocolate tableaux and figurines given at Easter. In line with the history of chocolate in Catalonia, the *mona* was originally the domain of bakers. Even before these were made in chocolate, the folklorist Joan Amades (1950-51) records that one of the earliest tableau representations of a *mona* in bread from 1875 was intended as a political statement. It represented a scene from medieval Catalan history, where a councillor of the *Generalitat* swore fealty to the city before his oath of allegiance to the Castilian kings. This had become an important moment in nationalist history, showing the Catalan governmental ideal of *pactisme*⁹⁴ as best for ruling Catalonia.



Figures 9.17-18: Examples of pro-independence *mones* with *estellades* (Source, first image: Assemblea.cat)

⁹⁴ A type of political covenant that existed in Catalonia from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, to protect the interests of the nobility by controlling the power of the monarch (Llobera, 2004).

The first weeks of 1875 had seen the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain, and the design of this *mona* was a subtle hint that the new monarch should rule Spain and Catalonia in a constitutionally correct way. In the same year one could also find *mones* representing contemporary Spanish politicians. In the Franco period, a Vic chocolatier called Quim Capdevila (also a communist activist) created a *mona* on which he wrote the four ideals of the exiled Assemblea de Catalunya: liberty, friendship, statute of autonomy, and coordination. The act earned him a prison sentence (Martí Escayol, 2004). Today, one can find chocolate *mones* bearing the *estellada* or *senyera*, and indeed the Catalan Assemblea encouraged buying a ‘Mona d’Independència’ in 2013 (Figures 15 and 16). In this instance, these Mones can be seen as similar to Marina’s *senyera*-covered *braç de gitano*, as a means of socializing children into a national identity.

9.9 National flags, foods and flavours

One can take a critical stance on the at times clumsy attempts to record the tercentenary through food. Yet it is noteworthy that Catalans are using food as a means of recreating what has become a significant moment in nationalist history. The reliving of a national past through the senses is, I suggest from these examples, a fascinating way of considering how nationalist movements are lived at an everyday level. This can be applied more generally to the food experiences from the national days, and also the Catalan interpretation of the Festa de la Hispanitat. This latter example and the gastronomic recreations of 1714 are classic examples of what MacClancy describes as an “everyday mode of nationalism”, and demonstrate very

well how “turning foodstuffs and dishes into bearers of national identity is a down-to-earth way to make an otherwise abstract ideology more familiar, domestic, even palatable” (MacClancy 2007: 68).

This is particularly applicable to the contemporary context, as the *Generalitat* seeks to raise pro-independence sentiment and political awareness among the population. The discussions of communal food gatherings also shows another aspect of this “everyday”, gastronationalism, namely that food discussions often take place in context of political discussions (as in La Garriga or at Omnium’s Diada lunch). They show how deeply food can be associated with national culture, the foundation of nationalism. Discussions of national issues often find their way into talking about food, which then themselves become a point of remembrance to act as a stepping-stone to some other national topic.

The unquestionable conclusion from the discussion so far is that national flags do not immediately make nationalist foods. The presence of the national flag does not automatically make them worthy of carrying any significance greater than the sum of its ingredients. Yet what is it that does create national foods? The answer, of course, is a combination of factors rather than a single reason. Firstly, foods that were pointed out as ‘traditional’ have a feeling of having existed since time immemorial brought about by their existence over a long period of time, such as the *Coca de Sant Joan* or the *Mones*, in comparison with the *Tortells de la Diada* or *de Sant Jordi*. All informants had grown up knowing of the formers’ existence at a time when such foods had been ubiquitous, widely available and easily consumed. The *Tortells* might not be very new, but they were not widely available until recently, and a time when

they did not exist was still very present in living memory (they are not *de tota la vida*). It appears that the older generation who remember the appearance of these foods, and their clear status as commercial schemes, has influenced younger Catalans who have (technically) grown up with them.

Thirdly, reference in texts establishes a food's standing and position in the gastronomic calendar. Once again, we can see this with the *Coca de Sant Joan* and the *Mona*, whereas one can find no such reference for the *Tortells*. Also, these *Tortells* are too blatantly commercialised, designed to take advantage of a time when consumers are more sensitive to images such as their national flag. That is not to say that more 'traditional' foods are not commercialized too, but they have the advantage of a wellspring of past history and stories to associate them with the past – frequently an essential part of nationalist cultures. The *Tortell de la Diada*, for example, could achieve this if it became associated with an independence day in the future. The non-commercial, private, and individualized examples of the addition of a national flag to a food is also considered more acceptable, and they are better received than the more commercial examples of the same phenomenon, since they are individual expressions of national affiliation that make up the greater project of Catalan nationalism.

Chapter 10. Conclusions: Cuisine as national identity

In this thesis, I have sought to demonstrate how food is used as an expression of Catalan national identity. After asking the fundamental question of whether food and national identity are connected, I have come to the conclusion that there is a rich nexus of associations bound up with food and national identity in Catalonia. I have also sought to study the lived realities of a nationalist movement, and found an in-depth study into a quotidian object such as food to be an excellent means of penetrating discourses surrounding national identity.

10.1 Recurring themes

It is notable how gastronationalist discourses mirror those of general nationalist ideals like those discussed in the literature review. The most obvious is the repetitive emphasis on historicism, that the national cuisine has a long history stretching deep into the past. In the case of Catalonia, the medieval golden age was also a golden age for cuisine. The cookbooks I described in Chapter 3 are relics of that glorified past, and national symbols in their own right. They provide proof of the historic nature of Catalan cuisine, essential for its contemporary legitimacy as part of national heritage. However, the present is also seen as a continuation of that past. Through consuming national foods and ‘signature dishes’ Catalans can indeed claim to be consuming some timeless aspect of their national past, one of the essential foundations of a separate nationalism. Other elements of cuisine related to consuming a historicised past include the idealization of subsistence cuisine and seasonality (once a past necessity).

Claims to uniqueness and individuality also play a central role. Just as Catalonia's separate language and claim to a separate culture act as the main arguments for its separate national identity, so establishing a separate food culture is essential for its gastronationalism. This is essential to the discourse surrounding the *sofregit* and the *picada* as qualities that make Catalan cuisine quantifiably different at the start of cooking, as well as *mar i muntanya* and *pa amb tomàquet*.

Claims to uniqueness are especially pertinent in instances where, looked at objectively, certain foods are shared with Catalonia's neighbours. Examples include the *truita de patates* with onion (section 4.4), or *canelons* and *escudella i carn d'olla*. It is here that the gastronomic calendar is especially essential, since it is one way of claiming that foods are unique, not in their constituent parts, but through their treatment as Catalan-specific within gastronationalism. The gastronomic calendar is also significant because it creates a unity in national consumption across space and time. As I explained at the end of 7.3, this creates the notion that Catalans are eating the same things at the same time, a culinary example of the 'imagined community'.

Also present in the historicizing discourse is the theme of Catalonia as a land of migrations, which has experienced the passing through of many peoples and contributed to the great variety of cuisines in Catalonia, as well as what is claimed to be a modern, open outlook. This is different from many nationalisms in Spain and elsewhere, which claim at least some 'purity' of race, a total contrast to Catalan nationalism.

National days are likewise essential to the practice of nationalisms, though their significance has only recently been considered in the academic literature on nationalism. In Catalonia, national days are moments when Catalan sentiment is concentrated in public displays, and public commensality. However, I would suggest that in the contemporary context, particular moments in the gastronomic calendar – originating in religious festivals as shown in Chapter 7 – can also be considered in a similar way to national days. They have become a focus of ‘traditional’ Catalan culture, a bastion of precious cultural difference that has become newly relevant with the rise of pro-independence sentiment. These communal events are also moments where national identities can be discussed and formulated with other Catalans, in a private, familial or public setting. Food therefore provides the background for the continual development and regeneration of contemporary Catalan identity.

One would have thought that the addition of the national flag to foods in this context would be a means of Catalanizing foods. However, the addition of flags to food does not make a food national, despite its prime place as a Catalan symbol. Returning to the need for historical rootedness, such foods are very new, and do not have the patina of a bygone era to make them ‘traditional’ or ‘signature dishes’. There is nothing to say though that this might not happen in the future: perhaps the foodstuffs I described in Chapter 9 are examples of traditions in the making.

The context of Spain and the areas outside Catalonia must always be considered, since this is the principal ‘other’ against which Catalan identity has been formed. It is interesting that comparisons with Spain often stress difference, and even that Spain is

not recognized as a unified entity (once again, an oft-occurring aspect of Catalanism). However, similarities or differences can be emphasised or denied depending on the context (as described in 6.4). For example, similarities between Catalan cuisine and that of the Catalan-speaking countries are emphasised when stressing the ideal of the *Països Catalans*.

The sensory context is also impossible to ignore, though I have placed less emphasis on this than other authors, such as Sutton (2001), as it appeared less frequently than other features in this discussion. As I discussed in 4.1.5, Pep P and Nuria were capable of recognizing Catalan cuisine by its smell, sight, and obviously taste. However, these details are points that only a Catalan could know, and as Jaume F remarked, a non-Catalan would find it harder to cook good Catalan cuisine, because they have not been brought up with this ancestral taste. *Pa amb tomàquet*, Catalonia's most obvious 'signature dish' (that sums up most of the essential features just described), as Oriol explained in 5.8, is something Catalans are used to doing in amongst themselves. This parallels the past practice of Catalan national culture, which had to be hidden in the Franco era. Contemporary political realities have meant that this situation is now reversed, and Catalan identity and group belonging must be self-consciously celebrated and openly promoted.

The pro-independence movement has undoubtedly caused a deep re-evaluation of cultural symbols and personal identity in Catalonia, even amongst those who are not in favour of outright independence. This has had an influence on gastronationalism. In Catalonia food has increasingly been appreciated as another Catalan cultural symbol.

It is mobilized both to engender national pride within Catalonia and also to promote that identity outside these borders. The pro-independence movement has therefore contributed to a growing awareness of, and affection for, Catalan cuisine amongst Catalans themselves. To discuss, research, consume and prepare it is now a legitimate means of national identity expression.

10.2 Community through markets

As has been mentioned several times in this thesis, a central feature of Catalan gastronomic identity has been the variety of regional food identities within the area's borders. Despite this seemingly fragmented identity, these are grouped within the general arc of Catalan cuisine. Regional variation, and expressing knowledge of this variation are key markers of Catalan identity. One can see parallels with this concept of regional variety in landscape and associated cuisines in the idealization of landscape in nationalist movements, and also the need for a territory and homeland.

It has become evident so far that the concept of travel is important in markets. Travelling to a market is a means of familiarising oneself with other parts of Catalonia, other Catalans, and especially the products of those other areas that are the most immediate means of experiencing place. Through travel to markets in other parts of Catalonia, Catalans gain an awareness of other Catalans, which helps in the creation of national consciousness. They also become aware of the landscapes and sites that make up Catalonia, and which have been integrated into national identity. I became particularly aware of the importance of this activity by travelling through

Catalonia myself. Not only did I feel a greater familiarity with Catalonia through its territory, but more importantly, my informants felt that this process was a key part of my integration into Catalan identity. I would even say that they saw my getting to know Catalonia through travel as second only to speaking Catalan as a means of assimilating.

However, unlike B.Anderson's imagined communities created through a standardised print medium (also applicable to Catalonia), the communities are not entirely imagined, but experienced through market interactions. One could perhaps say that the creation of these national spaces of interaction is a means of moving on from an imagined community to one where its members do have physical interactions with one another. Undoubtedly, even now Catalans cannot meet all members of the Catalan nation, yet in these contexts the nation is no longer purely imagined, but experienced through the commensal space of the market. This is paralleled by physical interactions at pro-Catalan and pro-independence protests, such as on the Diada, where markets and comensality also play a role.

There are times when food festivals and markets express local identity, but there are several reasons why this is no barrier to national identity. First, as I have continuously stressed throughout Chapters 5, 7 and 8, Catalans recognize that their national identity is composed of many regional and local identities. To express a local identity is to express it as a Catalan. I should also add that when I tried to tease out the differences between regional and national identity expression with my informants, they were bemused, since they see them part of the same spectrum. Moreover, if we return to

excursionist travel, even in events that are more focused on regional identities, they are also open to other Catalans from different parts of Catalonia. Catalans can visit other regional events and experience other ways of 'being Catalan'.

However, I suggest that there may be parallels between today and the early development of food festivals. They originally began in the post-Franco years as an explosion of Catalan expression after its repression to re-establish gastronomic patrimony in light of a newly optimistic era. Now, the situation has changed. The optimism that characterised the early democratic era has gone, replaced by fears that Catalan identity is under threat. This fear, coupled with the increasing support for the pro-independence movement, has lent new significance to these symbols of Catalan identity and its practice.

Still unclear is the relationship between Catalan cuisine and produce from Catalonia, or from outside of Catalonia. The situation appears contradictory. While there is a clear preference for Catalan goods, to insist completely on this ideal would be impossible. At the same time, there is definite appreciation of and pride in Catalan-produced foods, especially if they have some official recognition, for example, under the PDO/PGI schemes. While there is no organised effort, Catalans feel an emotional attachment to these products both as examples of national heritage and as national objects. I also suggest that the uncertainties that result from the political situation and economic recession have engendered an urge to protect those things that make up Catalan culture.

I should also point out that these objects will only really be valued if they can be connected to some historical past. Be they more newly invented (e.g. Vic's Mercat Medieval, or Deltakuki), or regenerated (as in the case of the Vic Guild's *cap i pota*), there needs to be some connection, however tenuous, with the past. In the Mercat Medieval, it is Vic's reputation for fairs, both today and in the medieval era (i.e. Catalonia's golden age). Deltakuki instead emphasises the landscape and the rice industry as timeless markers of Delta identity.

10.3 Creating identity through cooking

Although there is respect and pride in Catalan products as manifestations of the nation, one must be careful not to take this too far. Early in my fieldwork, I was curious as to whether notions of substance, belonging and nationalism were somehow connected in Catalonia, and if this inspired chauvinist attitudes to non-Catalan products. For example, Noyes (2003) discussed how her informants noted her weight gain from consuming Catalan cuisine in a positive sense as part of her Catalan integration.

The reality was quite the opposite. As I have emphasised repeatedly, places of origin in Catalonia are praised for their foods, but this not essential. What really makes them Catalan is the integration of such foods into the cuisine through cooking, or some kind of process that makes them into Catalan foodstuffs (e.g. sausage-making). In this way, outside foods can be catalanized and made part of Catalonia's gastronationalism.

This also applies to people. When I tried to probe whether eating Catalan foods made me in any way Catalan, I learned that, in and of itself, such behaviour would not make me Catalan. Tourists could consume Catalan food, but that does not mean they automatically adopted a Catalan identity. What needed to happen instead was an awareness of the nature of Catalan cuisine, what it meant to my informants, its background, regions of origin, history. Just as by bothering to learn the language I was already showing respect for Catalan culture and a willingness to integrate, so by being an informed eater, food would help with my integration, not through its physical substance but through the metaphors and symbolism of food I had learned. In the same way, as I remarked earlier, a flag can be put on to a food, but if more significant meanings are not associated with the food already, then this is meaningless.

This, I believe, is strongly tied to the aforementioned ideal of Catalan nationalism as an open one, and Catalonia as a 'land of migrations'. Key to this idea is the individual self-identification as Catalan by behaviour, above all learning the language, expressing solidarity with other Catalans, knowing and practising Catalan culture. One is not Catalan simply by virtue of birth, but must continually express this identity. Being born into a Catalan household is, of course, beneficial here, just as food grown in or produced on Catalan soil automatically means that it is favoured. However, Catalan cuisine is not just about origins, but about how territorial produce is used, transformed and interpreted. In the same way, Catalan identity is not just about origins or birthplace, but more about self-identification, personal agency and the performance of Catalan identity.

Just as immigrants to Catalonia can become Catalan by developing a Catalan identity and learning Catalan, so non-Catalan products can become embedded in Catalan cuisine through their use in signature dishes. Even dishes that are brought by immigrant communities can be adapted and become part of Catalan culinary culture, especially if they can conform to the requirements I stated at the start of this chapter. It is in this way that ideas about territory, national origins, and belonging show how cuisine can be used as a clear metaphor of the nation.

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Appendix 1 Map 1: Map of Catalonia, with key locations



Key

○ = Comarca of Osona with the town of Vic which was the main fieldsite

○ = Other sites where I spent an extended stay (over two weeks) for data collection

Appendix 2. Map 2: The *Països Catalans* (Catalan-speaking areas)



Appendix 3: Glossary

agredolç – See *dolç i salat*.

alloli – Literally ‘garlic and oil’, a creamy side sauce Catalonia shares with other *Països Catalans*, generally added at the end of a meal or consumed as a side with meat and fish.

alloli negat – A sauce or dip similar to *alloli*, but which has not yet reached its creamy consistency.

aprofitament – See ‘*cuina d’aprofitament*’

arros –Rice.

Assemblea Nacional de Catalunya (Assemblea, ANC) – Catalan cultural organization, with an explicitly pro-independence stance.

associacionisme – Alleged Catalan characteristic of forming social groups around a shared interest.

Barça – Barcelona football club, and a focus of Catalanist sentiment.

barretina – Red (or sometimes purple) wool or felt cap that is part of Catalan traditional costume. Was once an integral part of rural everyday wear, and strongly associated with the image of the *pagès* (peasant). *Barretines* act as a popular symbol of a Catalan.

bitxo peppers – a small, dried spicy pepper very like chili.

bledes de Santa Teresa – Saint Teresa’s chard

bolets – Mushrooms.

boletaires – Mushroom collectors

bombes - A stuffed croquette associated with the Barceloneta district.

botifarra – Sausage.

botifarra amb mongetes – Sausage and beans, a popular dish and festival food which is often referred to as one of Catalonia’s national dishes for this reason.

bunyols/brunyols – A doughnut-like pastry. Normally eaten at Easter time, but consume all year round in the Empordà region of north-east Catalonia (where they are called *brunyols*).

busca bolets – ‘Mushroom finding’, the activity of mushroom picking. Can also be called ‘*caça bolets*’(mushroom hunting).

calçotada – Calçot eating event.

calçots – Spring onions, grown in a particular way to increase the length of their tails. Also see entry in Appendix 5 for a more detailed description.

canelons – One of Catalonia's signature dishes. Minced meat stuffed into rolled-up sheets of pasta. Of Italian origin (cannelloni), they first appeared in Barcelona in the nineteenth century and became integrated into Catalan cuisine when ingredients to make them at home became available. Particularly associated with St Steven's Day (26th December) where they should be made with leftover meat from the Christmas meal the day before.

cap i pota – 'Head and trotters'. A dish composed of a pig's head (snout, ears and cheeks) and trotters, sliced into small pieces (or included whole as with the trotters) and served as a stew with other ingredients such as mushrooms, vegetables or small chunks of pork.

cargol – snail

cargolada – Snail eating event.

casa – House.

caseta – Cottage.

cassola – Pot or saucepan.

castanyada – Chestnut eating event, generally associated with the autumnal chestnut season in October-November, and with All Saints (November 1st).

castanya/es – Chestnut(s).

castell – A human tower. An example of Catalan popular culture recognized as UNESCO intangible heritage in 2010, participants create towers by standing on the shoulders of other participants grouped below.

casteller – A participant in making *castells*.

Catalanisme – 'Catalanism' or 'Catalan nationalism', the ideology of promoting Catalonia as a nation.

Ceba de Figueres/de la Vigatana – Different varieties of onions from the towns of Figueres and Vic. The former is known for its sweet taste.

coca (coca de Sant Joan) – Sweet flatbread that comes in many different varieties and flavours.

coca de recapte – A flatbread covered with toppings (sometimes nicknamed the Catalan pizza).

comarca – County. The main administrative division used by the Catalan Parliament.

Convergència i Unió (CiU) – a centre-right coalition of two smaller parties, and the current ruling party in Catalonia. Follows a more conservative and Catalanist agenda than Esquerra, and recently came out as pro-independence

crema catalana – ‘Catalan cream’, a crème brûlée-like dessert of custard and burnt sugar on the top. Also called *crema de Sant Josep* (Saint Joseph’s cream).

cuina d'aprofitament – ‘Subsistence cuisine’, where the intention is to use up any available ingredients.

cuina de mercat – ‘Market cuisine’. A description for a style of cooking generally used by restaurants to denote freshness and seasonality by buying from local markets and producers. See also *cuina de producte*.

cuina de producte – ‘Produce cuisine’. A description for a style of cooking generally used by restaurants to place emphasis on selecting high quality ingredients as the basis of the cuisine. This normally also suggests following seasonality and buying local produce that is also often organic, so helping local producers and markets. See also *cuina de mercat*.

cuina de subsistència – ‘Subsistence cuisine’. See *cuina d'aprofitament*.

cuina tradicional - Traditional cuisine.

Diada – Catalan national day, 11th September. The word can also refer more generally to Catalonia’s national celebrations (it is generally used without a capital in this instance).

dolç i salat – ‘Sweet and sour’. A style of cooking associated with Catalonia where sweet and savoury foods are mixed together in one dish.

El Bulli – A former *nova cuina* restaurant in Roses, Alt Empordà, run by chef Ferran Adrià. It is widely regarded as the birthplace of *nova cuina*, and was a lead many global trends in contemporary cuisine. It was the recipient of numerous international awards until its closure as a restaurant in 2011, and it is currently being developed as an educational foundation.

El Celler de Can Roca – *Nova cuina* restaurant in Girona run by brothers Joan, Josep and Jordi Roca. The recipient of numerous international rewards, it is now regarded as the centre of cutting-edge modern Catalan cuisine.

Escabetxats - Dishes that includes a variety of pickled ingredients.

escalivada – A roasted vegetable dish, generally associated with the summer. Consists of peeled peppers, tomatoes, onions normally, though others can be used.

escudella i carn d'olla – One of Catalonia’s signature dishes. Broth made from vegetables, meat and other animal products (leftovers can be used). The broth is eaten

first, followed by the boiled ingredients within. A former subsistence food, cheap and eaten every day, it is now a popular festive food associated particularly with the Christmas lunch. *Escudella* also refers to the type of large pot in which this dish is normally made.

Esquerra Republicana (ERC) – One of Catalonia’s major political parties, it follows a socialist, political left and pro-independence agenda.

estellada – pro-independence Catalan national flag.

estrís – tools.

excursionisme – Travel or hiking to visit Catalan sights.

excursionist – Someone who does *excursionisme*.

fent país - phrase used to describe performing pro-Catalan activities.

festa – Party.

Festa Major – ‘Main Festival’. The annual festival in a town or village, often originating in the place’s saint’s day.

fet diferencial – A characteristic that differentiates Catalans from other Spaniards.

FICCG - Fundació Institut Català de la cuina i de la cultura gastronòmica (Eng: Foundation-Institute of cuisine and gastronomic culture).

fideus – Small sticks of pasta that are boiled and used in staple dishes of Catalan cuisine (especially fish and seafood dishes).

Flama del Canigó – ‘Flame of Canigó’. Part of the St John’s Eve celebrations where torches are lit on Canigó mountain in French Catalonia, then brought to other parts of the *Països Catalans*.

Franja – ‘Strip’, the Catalan-speaking area of Aragon, directly next to the Catalan Autonomous Community.

fricandó – Also called a *flicandó*. A stew of floured veal with mushrooms, and other vegetables.

galletes – Can mean both biscuits, and also a type of pasta that is generally put with the broth of the *escudella* eaten at Christmas.

gaspatxo/gazpacho – Catalan/Castilian words for a cold soup of crushed tomatoes, olive oil, vinegar and other vegetables. It is associated with southern Spain (especially Andalucía) and the summer months, but has become popular in Catalonia following immigration of Southern Spaniards in the 1960s.

gegants – Large wooden figurines that are carried around Catalan cities, towns and villages at local and national festivals, ‘dancing’ at specific locations on the route. The figurines may represent figures from local folklore or history, Catalan culture more generally, or even contemporary individuals.

geganterers – Carriers of the *gegants*, who are also involved in their upkeep, culture and promotion.

Generalitat – Official name for the Catalan Autonomous Region’s parliament.

gremi – Guild.

havaneres – Popular song style associated with Catalan coast brought from Cuba in the nineteenth century. Now particularly associated with the north-east.

hereu-pubilla – ‘Heir-heiress’, generally used to refer to a system of impartible inheritance through either a son or daughter and their spouse.

hort/hortet - Garden or cottage garden.

iaia – Granny or grandma.

la vella de Quaresme – ‘Old Woman of Lent’, a character from Catalan popular culture who represents the period of Lenten fast.

Lliga Catalana – Main Catalan political party in the early twentieth century.

llonganissa – A type of cured sausage particularly associated with Vic, but can also be found in another areas.

macarrons – A pasta dish that uses Italian-style macaroni-shaped pasta. The pasta is often roasted with the sauce, rather than boiled, lending a particularly crispy texture.

Maonesa – ‘Mayonnaise’, sauce associated with the *Països Catalans* as it allegedly comes from Maho, in the Balearics. Sometimes included in the collection of Catalan cuisine’s representative sauces.

Mancomunitat – Catalan self-government in the early twentieth century.

mar i muntanya – ‘Sea and mountain’. A style of cooking associated with Catalonia where land meats and seafood are mixed together in one dish.

Marca Cuina Catalana – A designation for establishments who do Catalan cuisine, developed by the FICCG.

matança de porc – ‘Pig killing’. Festive occasion where a pig is slaughtered, butchered and the resulting products handed out to participants. These are normally friends, family and employees on the farm, who have helped with the process.

mercat – Market.

Mercat de Rams - livestock and food market and fair in Vic that takes place at Easter-time, and is named after the palm-leaves (Rams) sold at this time.

miquelet – Seventeenth century Catalan infantry regiments.

misèria – ‘Time of misery’. The years directly following the Civil War (1936-39) which were characterised by widespread hunger, repression and hardship.

mona – Easter food gift given by godparents to godchildren. Many designs are possible, from the old fashioned style of a sweetened bread containing one or more eggs, to a sponge cake topped with a simple chocolate figurine, or a large and elaborate chocolate figurine. The latter is now the most popular, though the old-style mones have become increasingly popular in the last five years.

mongeta del ganxet - PDO variety of beans associated with the county of Vallès.

neules – Straw-like biscuits generally eaten at Christmas.

New Catalonia (*Catalunya nova*) – Area of Catalonia south of Barcelona that was under Moorish domination for several hundred years before being reconquered in the 10-12th centuries.

nova cuina – ‘New cuisine’. Cuisine first developed by Ferran Adrià in the 1990s, now part of Catalan culinary identity with many chefs such as Carme Ruscalleda, Joan Roca, Nandu Jubany etc.

nyora - variety of small red bell peppers particular to Catalonia, dried for use in cooking.

Old Catalonia (*Catalunya vella*) – The area north of Barcelona (approximately) which was reconquered from the Moors soon after the invasion. Characterised as being more ‘traditional’ and European than New Catalonia. Has a colder climate, so a different cuisine from New Catalonia.

oli – oil.

Omnium Cultural – Catalan cultural organization.

Ovella Ripollesa – ‘Ripoll sheep’, an old breed of sheep which was in danger of being lost but has been recently revitalized to produce both meat and cheese.

pa amb tomàquet – One of Catalonia’s signature dishes. Literally means ‘Bread with tomato’. A slice of slightly hard bread, rubbed with half a tomato so that the juices soak into the slice (preferably of the ‘hanging tomato’, *tomàquets de penjar*, variety). Salt and olive oil complete the basic dish. Very popular snack or light meal. Can be accompanied by sausages and cold meats. Garlic is also sometimes rubbed in.

pa de pagès – ‘Peasant bread’, a large, white, crusty style of bread. Allegedly the ideal kind of bread for making *pa amb tomàquet*. Acquired PGI status in 2012.

pa de pessic – ‘Pinch bread’. A small, fluffy, muffin-like cake that is especially associated with the town of Vic, where it is sold to visitors as a symbol of the city. The name can also refer to sponge cake in more general contexts.

pactisme – an idealized characteristic of the Catalan character and history, a preference for compromise and discussion to reach an agreement.

pairalisme - Allegiance to the paternal house. Developed into an ideology particular to the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie in Catalanism relating family, patrimony and undivided inheritance.

paella – rice dish commonly associated with the Valencian Autonomous Community, directly south of Catalonia, but very prevalent in Catalonia. It differs from Catalan-style rice dishes by the use of a wide metal pan that allows most liquid to evaporate, so is much dryer.

pans de Sant Jordi – Small breads baked for Saint George’s Day.

pagès – Literally ‘peasant’, but better translated as farmer or smallholder.

panellets – Sweets based on almond flour and sugar which are associated with All Saints Day (1st November). Also see entry in Appendix 5 for a more detailed description.

Països Catalans – Catalan-speaking areas.

Pastís de la Diada – Diada cake. Cake cooked for the Diada (11th Sept).

Patata del Bufet – ‘Bufet potato’, an originally French variety of potato which is now especially associated with the town of Orís in the county of Osona, where it is celebrated in a festival every year.

picada – Grainy sauce added to dishes at the end of the cooking process.

pintxos – Basque style *tapas*, so-named because of the use of a tooth pick to hold the individual portions together, which are generally grouped on a slice of bread.

platillo – A vegetable and meat stew.

pollastre – Chicken.

pollastre de la iaia - Grandma's chicken.

purró – Communal drinking vessel, that takes the form of a bulbous glass bottle with a spout at the side. This spout is used to pour the wine into the drinkers’ mouths. It is considered very impolite for the spout to touch the lips or the teeth.

rauxa - The propensity to seek relief from social constraints by excess and lack of control. The opposite of *seny*.

receptari – Recipe list.

Renaixença – ‘Rebirth’, the name given to the nineteenth century literary revitalization of Catalan which led to the development of political Catalanism.

romesco - A spicy and versatile sauce, red-orange in colour and normally composed of *nyora*, dry bread, almonds (and other nuts), olive oil, *bitxo* peppers and garlic. Associated with the south of Catalonia (especially New Catalonia) it is often added to fish dishes at the end of cooking.

salvitxada – sauce eaten with *calçots*. Many variations exist, but normally consists of *nyora* pepper, breadcrumbs, oil, vinegar, hazelnuts and almonds.

samfaina – A dish of vegetables in a tomato sauce, which is almost identical to French *ratatouille*.

sardana – Catala national dance.

sardanista – someone who performs the *sardana*.

sardinades – Sardine eating events. Associated with summer, and also the *enterrament de la sardina* (burial of the sardine), which concludes the Carnival period and heralds the start of lent.

seny – An idealised characteristic of the supposed Catalan personality, a sensible, rational, down to earth attitude, a business-like and hard-working approach to life.

senyera – Catalan national flag.

seques amb botifarra – See *botifarra amb mongetes*.

sobretaula – A discussion around a table, either during or directly after a meal. Often associated with intellectual contexts.

sofregit – The starting point for many Catalan dishes, that of a slightly cooked tomato, garlic and onion, that acts as a base for further cooking.

suquet – A rice.

tapas – A cuisine composed of small dishes, or where dishes are composed of several portions for sharing. It is strongly associated with contemporary Spanish cuisine, and many of the dishes use ingredients that are integral to Spanish cuisine as a whole.

temporada – Season.

Terres de l’Ebre – The area around the Ebre Delta in the extreme south of Catalonia.

territori – Territory.

tomàquets de penjar – Hanging tomatoes, normally used to make *pa amb tomàquet*.

Tortell de la Diada – See *Pastís de la Diada*.

Tortell de Reis – Kings cake. A round cake eaten on Epiphany. Contains a bean and a king, the person with the bean pays for the cake next year, whereas the person with the king wears a crown.

Tortell de Sant Antoni – Round cake eaten for Saint Anthony's saints day. Has the same form as the *Tortell de Reis*.

Tot Sants – All Saints' Day on 1st November.

trinxat – One of Catalonia's signature dishes. A former subsistence dish from the county of Cerdanya (north Catalonia on the border with France). Consists of boiled and mashed cabbage leaves, with a rasher of bacon or ham on top.

xató – A type of salad that uses a variety of the *salvitxada* sauce, associated with an area south of Barcelona and the winter months (Jan-March). Normally contains lettuce, endive, anchovies, tuna, salted cod and other seasonal vegetables.

xocolata – Chocolate.

Appendix 4: List of Key Informants

These are the most important informants in this research, who managed to provide a large part of my data. However, there were other sources in the field who provided useful data but are not included here, often because they were too fleeting and I do not have enough information to put forward a satisfactory entry. Most of the informants I describe here I met with several times throughout fieldwork, and came to know them quite well. Others (particularly the professional chefs) I only met for a single formal interview, but I include reference to presentations or conferences of theirs which I attended, and also their written works.

Name	Information
Carles	Well-known and respected Catalan chef, based at his restaurant in Barcelona. A descendent of several generations of restaurant owners and chefs, he has owned several restaurants aside from the family restaurant, and regularly contributes to televised cooking shows and presentations with other contemporary chefs. Professes a strong Catalan identity, but must be careful about such statements to avoid alienating Spanish clients.
Carme Ruscalleda	Internationally known Catalan nova <i>cuina</i> chef, mostly based in her restaurant Sant Pau, in Sant Pol de Mar (founded 1988). Also has a restaurant in Barcelona and Tokyo, published several cookbooks, many of which emphasise health, diet and a Mediterranean identity. Professes a strong Catalan identity, but must be careful about such statements to avoid alienating Spanish clients.
Carmen	Extremaduran-born woman who had married a Catalan and lived in Catalonia for over 30 years, having learned Catalan from her husband. Now a widow, she decided to remain in Barcelona.
Concepció and her daughter, Irene	Mother and daughter with whom I met regularly in Vic. Concepció was the daughter of a self-made industrialist who had married into a local landowning family that had been involved in pro-Catalan, right-wing politics. She felt a strong traditionalist Catalan identity. Irene likewise expressed a strong Catalan identity, in line with her mother's traditional attitudes. She spent some time studying in the UK. They never participated in any pro-independence or Catalanist activities, aside from those they considered 'traditional' e.g. fairs, festivals, processions, travelling for food etc.
Cristina	Like Concepció & Irene, Cristina was part of a wealthy, land-owning pro-Catalan family. She also had some members of the Catalan intelligentsia in her family.
Francesc (Osona)	Head of communications for the Hospitality Guild in Vic, so acted as main spokesperson for the organization and presenter at events.
Isidre	Freelance chef who taught at Vic University, and also at

	cooking classes for the general public.
Ignasi	A chef in the Collsacabra mountains above Vic. He was a close friend of a late food writer, who left him his library in his will.
Jaume F	Prolific food journalist and cookbook author. Has published over 200 books on Catalan cooking based on in-depth research, and is widely considered an expert by other informants in the field. Strongly in favour of Catalan independence from Spain, and very anti-Castilian.
Jaume S	Head chef of a well known hotel and restaurant in Figueres where Catalan <i>nova cuina</i> was first developed by his father in law.
Joan	A chef from Vic, who ran Vic's oldest surviving restaurant.
Joan G	Specialist researcher in popular and traditional culture at the Generalitat's Department of Culture. Has published several books on Catalan traditions.
Josep LG	Retired professional chef from Lleida, who has acted as head chef to several of Catalonia's most well-known restaurants, including Les Quatre Barres and Sept Portes. Has also published a huge selection of Catalan cookbooks. Openly Catalanist, he sees his support of traditional Catalan cuisine as part of the support of Catalan identity more generally. Like Jaume F, he also supports a historicised view of Catalan cuisine.
Joan Roca	Catalonia's foremost professional working chef, and proponent of <i>nova cuina</i> . Owner of the Celler de Can Roca with his two brothers Jordi and Joan. Learned to cook from his mother in their restaurant, which still exists near to the Celler. Joan considers her traditional cooking his primary inspiration. The family have been innkeepers for several generations. Professes a strong Catalan identity, but seeks to avoid political associations.
Josep S	Editor of Catalonia's foremost food magazine, <i>Cuina</i> . Very knowledgeable about the situation of contemporary Catalan cuisine, which he seeks to promote through his magazine. However, he sought to avoid promoting a combative pro-Catalan or pro-independence stance in his magazine.
Marta	Strongly pro-Catalan activist who has worked in various positions in Omnium Cultural. Pro-independence and politically active in various Catalanist causes, having grown up in an activist household.
Manel	Local chef in the neighbouring town of Manlleu. Comes from a family of innkeepers.
Mon	Freelance chef and cooking instructor at Barcelona's tourism and hospitality school. She also gives regular cooking courses, which is how I met her. Having left school early, she eventually entered her current career through a course at Barcelona's Hoffman hospitality school. Feels more Catalan than Spanish and Catalan is her first language, but had not felt a strong desire to participate in Catalanist activities until

	recently. However, she has felt increasingly frustrated with Catalonia's situation within Spain and has now begun to participate in Catalan activities.
Nandu Jubany	Well-known and respected <i>nova cuina</i> chef, who is now considered one of Catalonia's top five active chefs (with Carme Ruscalleda, Joan Roca, Carles Gaig and Albert Adrià). Raised in an inn-keeping family, he left home early to travel and continue his training as a chef, particularly in the Basque country. The hallmark of his style is updating 'traditional' foods, and following seasonal produce grown in Osona.
Núria	Food historian who has published several books on Catalan cuisine. Also provides cooking classes. She participated in Catalanist activities in her youth at the end of the Franco period, but I was unsure if she was still involved.
Oriol	Co-owner and designer at a t-shirt company called Catalunyam, which designs food-themed t-shirts. Professed a strong Catalan identity that was different from Spain, and particularly emphasised the promotion of Catalan identity through his designs.
Pau	Journalist with a strong presence in the contemporary Catalan food movement. Coined the term 'techno-emotional cuisine' another word sometimes used to describe <i>nova cuina</i> .
Pep P	Well-connected gastronomic professional who organizes the Forum Gastronomic. He is himself from just outside Vic, where the Forum first began, and then moved to Girona.
Pep S	Retired freelance chef in the Vallés region just north of Barcelona. Has spent fifty years involved in the food/restaurant related projects, and in researching Catalan cuisine. He is now considered an expert on the subject across Catalonia, and has published several books.
Pepa	President of the Fundació-Institute de Cuina Catalana i Gastronomia. Heading the campaign to recognize Catalan cuisine as UNESCO intangible heritage. Takes a traditionalist approach to Catalan cuisine
Pere Q	Professor at the University of Vic, instrumental in organizing the now-discontinued Masters in Gastronomic Communication.
Pere, Adelina, Noemi, Santi & Roger	Pere and Adelina are a retired couple, with grown children, Noemi and Roger. Pere bought a large mansion in one of the outerlying villages, which his son Roger turned into a hotel. He is an excellent cook in his spare time, and a close friend of many years to Jaume F. His wife writes children's books on Catalan culture and traditions. Noemi is an economist. The family is strongly Catalanist and pro-independence. Noemi and her late husband Santi have have been strongly involved in the Assemblea and pro-Catalan campaigns and activities.
Ramon	Chocolatier in Vic, who strongly identified as Catalan.
Ramon P	An innkeeper at one of the most famous and ancient inns in Catalonia. His family have owned the inn since 1771. He has also opened a few restaurants in Catalonia that have become

	landmarks of popular Catalan cuisine. He himself is considered an expert on Catalan cuisine.
Sat and her mother, Montserrat	Two older women, one in her 70s, the other in her 90s. Sat used to have her own restaurant, but sold it several decades ago. Sat had accumulated a large library of cookbooks.
Toni, and the Alicia team	Founder and manager of the Fundació Alicia, a non-profit organization that does food research in conjunction with the University of Barcelona. The foundation also runs courses and travels round Catalonia promoting healthy eating, and information on the history of Catalan food.

Photo Elicitation

Name of group	Information
Assemblea	Five members of the Assemblea organization (2 women, 3 men), who were strongly involved with managing the Vic branch. All were strongly pro-independence, and felt deeply attached to a Catalan (as opposed to Spanish) identity. Aged between 30 and 55 approx.
Concepció, Irene & Cristina	Three personal friends whom I came to know on fieldwork. Cristina was distantly related to Concepció and Irene's family (See above)
<i>Geganters</i>	Five members of the Geganters del Carrer Riera in Vic (3 women, 2 men), the group who carry the <i>gegants</i> (large statues) at festivals in Vic and the surrounding area.
<i>Sardanistes</i> : Entre boires	The adult group of <i>sardana</i> dancers, aged between about 30 and 60 years old. About ten participants took part (some slipped in late, and some had to leave early), including the organizer of all <i>sardana</i> -based activities and groups in Vic. Many said they started because their children had begun.
<i>Sardanistes</i> : Riallera	The young adult group of <i>sardana</i> dancers, aged from 14-25. Most had been dancing since they were young children. All pro-independence, but also expressed pragmatic sentiments and concern with the current selection of politicians. All have taken part in pro-Catalan events and activities, and see <i>sardana</i> dancing as part of that.
Berta	Young language teacher whom I met regularly for language exchanges. Feels a strong Catalan identity and is not opposed to independence, and has been involved in a few of the larger pro-Catalan/pro-independence events and demonstrations e.g. Via Catalana.
Pep V	Head of the Osona branch of Omnium Cultural, and chief organizer of their events in the area. Strongly pro-independence. Particularly supports an open and integrational Catalan nationalism that accepts immigrants.
Marta	See above
Pere, Adelina, Noemi, Santi & Roger	See above

Eloi	A student at Oxford University from Barcelona. His parents emigrated to Barcelona from Figueres, a city that he considered as particularly Catalanist due to its place in Empordà. Because of their origin, the family is strongly Catalanist and moderately pro-independence. His father in particular has involved himself in Catalan cultural activities, and received an award from Omnium several years ago for his services.
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Appendix 5: Catalan Geographical Indications according to the European Union framework

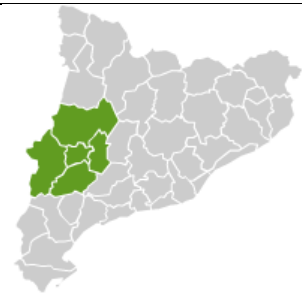
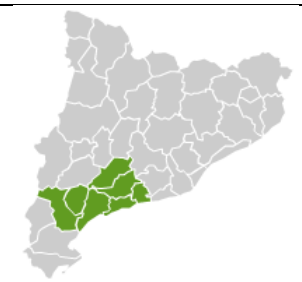
Name	Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO)	Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)	Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG)
	“Covers agricultural products and foodstuffs which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognised know-how.”	“Covers agricultural products and foodstuffs closely linked to the geographical area. At least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation takes place in the area.”	“Highlights traditional character, either in the composition or means of production”
Number in Catalonia	11	9	1

* http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/index_en.htm

Catalan PDOs

Name & description	Logo	Place of origin/production
<i>Arròs del Delta de l'Ebre</i> – Rice from Delta de l'Ebre Each grain must contain a high quantity of starch that gives it a large capacity for flavour absorption, while maintaining its texture.		 Baix Ebre, Montsià
<i>Avellana de Reus</i> – Reus Hazelnuts Hazelnuts can be present in three forms, and each must have a determined diameter.		 Alt Camp, Baix Camp, Conca de Barberà, Priorat, Tarragonès, Terra Alta

<i>Formatge de l'Alt Urgell y la Cerdanya</i> – Alt Urgell and Cerdanya cheese Made exclusively from mature pasteurized cows milk and mesophilic starter bacteria, aged but not ripened. Cream or marble colour, a creamy tender texture, with a sweet and penetrating aroma.		 Alt Urgell, Cerdanya
<i>Les Garrigues</i> – Les Garrigues Olive Oil Variety: arbequina. Fruity extra virgin olive oil, with a light fragrance of apple. Colour is like green grass and/or olive branches. The taste recalls diverse fruits (principally tomato and green almond), and is of an almond taste, and a little spicy and sweet at the end.		 Garrigues, Segrià, Urgell
<i>Mantega de l'Alt Urgell i la Cerdanya</i>– Alt Urgell and Cerdanya butter Made from pasteurized cream from Frisian cows milk. The cow's diet, the climate of these counties, and the process of production and maturation of this butter ensures this product's characteristic taste, strong overall intensity and lightly acidic, which recalls an almond.		 Alt Urgell, Cerdanya
<i>Mongeta del Ganxet (Vallès-Maresme)</i> – 'Hooked' French bean (from Vallès Maresme) Sold dry, cooked or in a preserve. A light coloured grain, flat and strongly curved. Once cooked, the bean presents a lightly roughened skin, with a persistent creaminess and an extremely mild taste.		 Maresme, Vallès Occidental, Vallès Oriental
<i>Oli del Baix Ebre-Montsià</i> – Baix Ebre-Montsià Olive Oil Extra virgin olive oils, limpid, transparent, without sediment or particles, of a colour that varies according to the time of harvesting and the geographic situation where it is produced. Of a greenish yellow and a golden yellow. Very agreeable to the palate, tasty and aromatic, with a fruity flavour at the start and a sweet aftertaste.		 Baix Ebre, Montsià

<i>Oli de Terra Alta</i> – Terra Alta Olive Oil Varieties: mostly empeltre, with arbequina, morruda and farga. The virgin oil is made only from olives gathered straight from the tree, not those that have already fallen. Milling is carried out by manual means only, and takes place in the 24 hours following the harvest. All of this guarantees a light acidity and spiciness and overtones of almonds. Fruity flavour at the start and a sweet aftertaste.		 Ribera d'Ebre, Terra Alta
<i>Oli de L'Empordà</i> – Empordan olive oil Varieties: Arbequina, as well as Empordan varieties (argudell, corivell & Llei de Cadaqués) The oil of this protected designation of origin is fruity, aromatic and tends to sweeten upon aging, with a spicy hint at the end of the palate. Virgin oils, which are very clear after filtering, have aromas of almond, tomato, anise, fennel, artichoke		 Alt Empordà, Baix Empordà
<i>Pera de Lleida</i> – Lleida Pear The characteristics of the land and rainfall in Lleida, in addition to the painstaking cultivation and selection process in the protected designation of origin give these pears even greater taste qualities, generally making them sweeter and juicier. Grown using techniques that respect the natural environment.		 Garrigues, Noguera, Pla d'Urgell, Segrià, Urgell
<i>Siurana</i> – Siurana Olive Oil Varieties: arbequina (90%), rojal i morruda (10%). Two types of oil are produced, depending on the harvesting period: fruity oil, from the spring harvest, which is green in colour, with a full body and slightly bitter; and sweet oil, from a later harvest, which is yellow and thinner.		 Alt Camp, Baix Camp, Baix Penedès, Conca de Barberà, Priorat, Ribera d'Ebre, Tarragonès

Source:

- Federació-Catalana DOP-IGP, Generalitat de Catalunya. [Online] Available at: <http://www.alimentsdorigen.cat/DOP.html>
- Catalunya: L'origen és qualitat. (2008) [Booklet] Generalitat de Catalunya: Departament d'Agricultura, Alimentació i Acció rural
- Gastroteca (2015) Generalitat de Catalunya: Consorci de Comerç, Artesania i Moda de Catalunya. [Online] Available at: <http://www.gastroteca.cat/en/>

Catalan PGIs:

Name & description	Logo	Place of origin/production
<i>Calçot de Valls – Valls Calçots</i> The name ‘<i>calçot</i>’ comes from the way they are cultivated: the white onion shoots are replanted and successively covered over with soil as they grow, an action known in Catalan as ‘<i>calçar</i>’ (to wedge). This process takes almost a year. The result is a tender white shoot around 15 to 25cm long that has a sweet, strong taste.		 Alt Camp, Baix Camp, Baix Penedès, Tarragonès
<i>Clementines de les Terres de l'Ebre – Terres de l'Ebre Clementines</i> Clementines from the Ebre delta are sweeter and have a stronger taste. The peel is bright orange and is more elastic, less thick and of a particular hardness. These juicy fruits are well balanced with a good flavour and are sweeter than the norm.		 Baix Ebre, Montsià
<i>Llonganissa de Vic – Vic Cured Sausage</i> Vic <i>llonganissa</i> is made by companies located in the towns that make up la Plana de Vic and that are on the register of the Regulatory Board for the <i>llonganissa</i> PGI of Vic. The only ingredients contained in this product are selected cuts of lean pork, with salt and black pepper. The meat is minced with diced bacon fat, pressed together and marinated for no less than 48 hours in a refrigeration chamber. Once it has been marinated, it is put into natural gut casings of differing diameters (from 35 to 90mm) and left to season in drying machines for at least 45 days. During the aging and seasoning processes <i>llonganissa</i> develops a typical fungal flora which, due to the climate characteristics of the protected area, gives this sausage a unique flavour and aroma.		 Osona
<i>Pa de Pagès Català – Catalan peasant bread</i> It is a rustic round loaf, baked in a shaped tin, containing wheat flour, water, salt and starter dough. Made using old-fashioned methods and, with slow rising techniques. It has a generous crumb and thick crust. The body of the bread is dense and rich in flavour, and it can be kept for several days providing that it is bought unsliced. It is the classic bread to be eaten with tomato rubbed		All Catalonia

into it (<i>pa amb tomàquet</i>). The bread has a certain acidity and an agreeable texture.		
<i>Patates de Prades</i> – Prades Potatoes Varieties: Kennebec. The climate, soil and altitude (over 1000m), at the foot of the Prades hills, in the Baix Camp region, in addition to the long tradition in cultivation of this tubercle bestow unique characteristics on the Prades potato. These potatoes have very smooth, hard and firm skin, of 40-80mm in diameter. The flesh is whitish, firm in texture and floury, and the flavour is sweet and persistent, with a fragrance reminiscent of chestnuts.		 Baix Camp
<i>Pollastre y Capó del Prat</i> – El Prat Chicken and Capon The Prat chicken is the only one in Spain to be recognised with this specific denomination, which protects the Catalan Prat breed. The Prat breed, autochthonous to the Baix Llobregat region, has green feathers that in the roosters have metallic highlights and in the hens are dark black. They can also be identified from the typical slate blue colour of the legs and claws. Their comb is bright red and their beak dark. Prat chickens and capons are fed on 70% cereals and reared for at least 90 days (roosters) and 182 days (capons). Growth hormones are prohibited. The outcome is meat that is delicate, tender and not too fatty.		 Baix Llobregat
<i>Poma de Girona</i> – Girona Apple Varieties: Golden, Red delicious, Gala & Granny Smith. The Golden apple is large, yellowy green in colour with smooth skin and white flesh and is firm and tasty. The Red Delicious is large, red, firm, and slightly sweet. The Gala, is two-tone, medium sized, with very firm white flesh, and is delicate and slightly sweet. The Granny Smith is bright green, large, with whitish flesh and a slightly acidic taste.		 Alt Empordà, Baix Empordà, Garrotxa, Gironès, Pla de l'Estany, Selva

<i>Torró d'Agramunt</i> – Agramunt Nougat A handmade product inherited from Arab confectionary, the Agramunt <i>torró</i> is made from a mixture of hazelnuts or almonds, sugar, honey and egg white, formed into round or rectangular tablets and layered with <i>pa d'àngel</i> wafer, in various sizes and weights. It is therefore a light golden brown colour and is fragile and brittle. The minimum percentage of almond or hazelnut is 46% for the extra category, and 60% in the superior category. It is made by roasting hazelnuts, leaving them to cool and then peeling them. For almonds this process is reversed. The honey and sugar is heated with fresh egg white or its powdered equivalent. Next, the almonds and hazelnuts are mixed in.		 Urgell
<i>Vedella dels Pirineus Catalans</i> – Catalan Pyrenees Veal Main breed: Bruna de Pirineus The calves are fattened on the farms on fodder and products such as cereals and leguminous grains. In order to ensure that the muscle is made into quality meat, the animals are slaughtered in abattoirs that are authorized and monitored by the Regulatory Board. They are transported in such a way as to safeguard animal welfare. The calves are slaughtered and butchered traditionally in order to ensure the utmost quality. The meat is pink to bright red and the fat is white to cream coloured. It contains intramuscular fat. It is aged for at least 7 days, making it more tender.		 Alt Empordà, Alt Urgell, Alta Ribagorça, Berguedà, Cerdanya, Garrotxa, Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà, Ripollès, Solsonès, Val d'Aran

Sources:

- Federació-Catalana DOP-IGP, Generalitat de Catalunya. [Online] Available at: <http://www.alimentsdorigen.cat/IGP.html>
- Catalunya: L'origen és qualitat. (2008) [Booklet] Generalitat de Catalunya: Departament d'Agricultura, Alimentació i Acció rural
- Gastroteca (2015) Generalitat de Catalunya: Consorci de Comerç, Artesania i Moda de Catalunya. [Online] Available at: <http://www.gastroteca.cat/en/>

Catalan TSG - Panellets – Marzipan sweets

Description: These sweets are part of traditional Catalan gastronomy and are the most typical dessert on All Saints' Day. They are made from a base of marzipan and almond flour to which an array of ingredients are added, resulting in a wide range of flavours.

Made into various shapes, the primary ingredients are marzipan with almond flour, sugar, eggs and, on occasion, water. This dough is left to rest for 24 hours before being made into differing shapes and flavours by adding further ingredients (pine nuts, coffee, crystallized fruit, coconut, etc.) and then baked. In order to be covered by

the TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed), the dough must not contain any starch (potato or sweet potato), apple, preservatives or artificial colouring.

Category: Bread and pastry.

Characteristic of: All Catalonia

(Source: Gastroteca (2015) Panallets (marzipan sweets). Generalitat de Catalunya: Consorci de Comerç, Artesania i Moda de Catalunya. [Online] Available at: <http://www.gastroteca.cat/en/product-details/panallets-marzipan-sweets/>)