

Edited by Atsuko Ichijo, Venetia Johannes, & Ronald Ranta

THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONAL FOOD

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The Emergence of National Food

The Dynamics of Food and Nationalism

Edited by Atsuko Ichijo, Venetia Johannes,
and Ronald Ranta

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Introduction

Atsuko Ichijo, Venetia Johannes, and Ronald Ranta

Over the past two decades food has emerged as a “mainstream topic of research” (Counihan and Van Estrik, 2008). This should not come as a surprise—not only is food essential to life, it also is an important part of the political world, both materially and symbolically. Given that the contemporary world is based on nation states as the dominant form of political power and organization, and given the utility and importance of food, two of the editors, Atsuko Ichijo and Ronald Ranta, choose to examine the relationship between food and nationalism. They argued that the “food and nationalism” axis, as a paradigm of analysis, is an exceptionally useful one through which to investigate the world we live in. This is because it enables us to investigate politics—who gets what, when, and how—from the everyday level to the national and global ones (Ichijo and Ranta, 2016).

The current volume takes a more historical lens to the food and nationalism paradigm. It investigates the circumstances and processes under which national food emerges (or does not emerge) through a wide range of comparative case studies. This is important precisely because “the history of any nation’s diet is the history of the nation itself, with food fashion, fads, and fancies mapping episodes of colonialism and migration, trade and exploration, cultural exchange and boundary-marking” (Bell and Valentine, 1997: 168). Through trying to understand the emergence, and non-emergence, of national food in a comparative setting, the volume sheds light on a number of perennial questions in the study of nations and nationalism, in particular the when, why, and how of the emergence of nations. The focus of the investigation in the volume is on nationalism and the interaction between food, as something essentially political, and a range of forces and processes that accompany nationalism. Since the relationship between food and identity has been examined by a large number of scholars mainly from anthropology and social history (see, for example, Counihan and Van Estrik, 2008), this introduction concentrates on identifying and examining key issues in the exploration of food and nationalism.

National food, cuisine, and food culture

Before launching an inquiry into theoretical and conceptual issues in food and nationalism, the term we have chosen, national food, needs to be discussed. In this

volume, the expression “national food” is used as an umbrella term to capture a variety of dimensions food displays in reference to nationalism: food in nationalism is not just a cuisine. Let us briefly examine a selection of terms that are used to describe food before demonstrating why the term “national food” is useful in our query of the relationship between food and nationalism.

Cuisine

If food is discussed in relation to nationalism, the most frequently used term would be “cuisine” as in “French cuisine,” “Chinese cuisine,” and so on. In fact, when the term “cuisine” is used, it is almost always expected that it has national, if not regional, affiliation as seen in “Caribbean cuisine” and “New England cuisine.” In other words, the term “cuisine” almost always contains reference to a group of people such as a nation. This is because cuisine is a cultural product inherently linked to a common language and a specific geographical space (Ferguson, 2004).

As is always the case in social sciences, cuisine is a contested concept. Is cuisine a clear set of constructed social food behaviors, specific food items, particular ingredients, tastes and textures that are understood or accepted by the imagined community? Or is cuisine, or national food, always problematic, a “holistic artifice.” as Mintz (1996: 104) describes it? Food ingredients after all are often not native to the cuisines that claim them, and in some cases are not even produced in sufficient quantities locally. Does cuisine require an acceptance from the imagined community? Do people need to eat or cook it on a regular basis? Or does that not count? In this regard cuisines are always fragmented, regional, class-based, etc. It is therefore clear that “the term covers widely, and often wildly, divergent referents” (Ferguson, 2004: 23). What makes cuisine “national” becomes an issue, and this is what Rachel Laudan’s definition drives at:

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)

A cuisine is therefore something that represents the essence of the nation. In early twenty-first-century social science, we all know how problematic it can be to make an essentialist/primordialist claim without being accused of being unscientific. Alternatively, we can consider cuisine merely as a construct that takes raw ingredients and uses them to create cultural boundaries and distinctions, to differentiate through the creation of a culinary “self” and “other” (Fischler, 1988; Ray, 2008). If we take this view, cuisine becomes just yet another tool for boundary-making, which is probably more in tune with the dominant instrumentalist paradigm in social science. However, this purely instrumentalist view of cuisine would not neatly fit with how people feel about their cuisine. Some people do genuinely feel that their cuisine represents the essence of their nation/group, a view which social scientists need to take seriously.

Foodways/food culture

If not cuisine, terms such as foodways and food culture are often used. They can be seen as sub-categories of or alternatives to cuisine and as an attempt to address some commonalities in terms of practices, traditions, methods of preparation, and economic and political dimensions of food. The word “foodways” has become a popular buzz word in the sociological study of food, and is particularly prevalent in the discussion and study of the heritagization of foods and their recognition by bodies such as UNESCO (see, for example, Di Giovine and Brulotte, 2015). However, a satisfactory definition has rarely been given in this arena to explain what, exactly, is meant by this catch-all term. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, foodways (in plural, a foodway in singular is the oesophagus) represent “the eating habits and culinary practices of a people, region, or historical period” (Meriam-Webster, 2018). This is the definition that we will follow in this volume.

This definition shares much with the term “cuisine” above, however without the emotional associations and feelings of ownership, attachment, and even primordialism that “cuisine” implies. It is perhaps for this reason that “foodways” has been preferred in academic literature because it is a less contested term, associated with the objective study of food’s role in an economic and social system. “National foodways” seems a less emotive, controversial, and contested term than “national cuisine.” The word “foodways” also implies movement, as a process, the way a food moves through a food chain or an economic system. Di Giovine and Brulotte (2015) use the term to suggest transformation, a route that foods travel through to become heritage. Nevertheless, the term is still used to describe the performance and social relations of groups: “foodways bind individuals together, [and] define the limits of the group’s outreach and identity” (Keller-Brown and Mussell, 1984: 5).

Some scholars, uncomfortable with the duality of the term encompassing both cultural and material practices and process, have instead turned towards using the term food culture (for example, Mendel and Ranta, 2014). In practice, this means separating the economic and political dynamics of the food system (foodways) from the social and cultural (food culture). In a sign of the growing confusion of terminology and definitions, food culture has also been used as an umbrella term to denote the entirety of a society’s food culture, encompassing national, regional, and ethnic foodways and cuisines.

National food

In order to overcome these terminological issues, we choose to use a more neutral and flexible term, namely “national food.” The advantage of the term “national food” is that it can transcend many of the difficulties associated with terms such as cuisine, foodways, and food culture. It signifies food that is seen as national by at least some members of the nation. It is of course contested, but it does not make any essentialist claims. National food simply provides a description of what is being considered as national. Because it captures the way food is seen and experienced by people, it respects their agency in defining what is national and what is not.

In this volume, the flexibility of the term national food allows investigation into the relationship between food and nationalism in a variety of ways. Some chapters focus on a particular food item: Tominc and Vezovnik focus on *potica*, which has come to represent the Slovene nation. Nancheva analyzes the rise of a particular strain of yoghurt producing bacteria that is seen as a Bulgarian national symbol. Sobral looks at the processes through which salt cod has been defined as the “faithful friend” and a symbol of the Portuguese. Fraser and Knight show how two food items, haggis and deep-fried Mars bars, have come to symbolize the Scottish nationhood of old and present in reference to Scotland’s relationship with England as well as explain the intersectionality of class and nationalism. In these examples, it is not a cuisine that helps define a nation but a particular food item or dish that comes to represent the nation.

However, a particular food item or dish does not always become national as is described in two fascinating and very different case studies. Fabien-Ouellet details why *poutine*, a dish originating from Quebec, should not be seen as a Canadian dish, in reference to the multicultural principles on which the Canadian nation is built. Similarly, Abbots looks at the ways in which *cuy* (guinea pig) is claimed by various groups of people in the Andean region of Ecuador as their own food and shows why there is no *national* food in Ecuador. If there is no agreement about particular dishes or food items, the possibility of having national food diminishes.

The looser definition provided by the term food culture is taken up by Ranta and Prieto-Piastro in examining the relationship between food and nationalism in Israel. They argue that, while Israelis lack a cuisine, there are clear culinary practices and traditions that are nationally shared, at least by some members of the nation (Jewish-Israelis). The idea of food culture is also made use of in Givon’s chapter which documents practices associated with traditional Palestinian cuisine that are now increasingly abandoned by professional and aspiring Palestinian women in Israel. For them, the traditional way of preparing food does not represent the essence of their being; rather it is seen as a hindrance to their efforts to join modern Israeli society.

The idea of food culture is also found in chapters by Simpson-Miller and Aguilera. Both argue that national food culture, let alone national cuisine, is impossible in Ghana and Chile respectively. In the Ghanaian case, the legacy of colonialism and political economy of cocoa prevents food from being used as a symbol of national unity. In Chile, the legacy of dictatorship emphasizes diversity and multi-culturality in many spheres of life which has led to a vibrant food scene, but it has also made it more difficult for any food/food culture/cuisine to be presented and accepted as national.

Food and theories of nationalism

The current volume follows the tripartite classification of theories of nationalism—modernist, primordialist/perennialist, and ethno-symbolist accounts—first proposed by Anthony D. Smith (1998) and further developed by others (Ichijo and Uzelac, 2005; Özkirimli, 2017). The classification hinges on the nature of the nation as a form of human grouping and that of nationalism as an ideology which drives or shapes social

action, and therefore it is a fundamentally sociological endeavor. In this section, we review how the “food and nationalism” axis emerges in different strands of theories of nationalism.

Modernism

Those who are labeled modernists hold that nations are a form of human grouping which can only be found in the modern period (roughly the eighteenth century onwards) because they are the product of nationalism, which is in turn a response to certain modern conditions, be it industrialization, the rise of the nation-state, the Enlightenment, or the decline of sacred authority. According to Ernest Gellner, whose definition of nationalism is perhaps best known, nationalism is a societal response to industrialization. Gellner holds that premodern agrarian communities existing in a high degree of isolation with a correspondingly high level of cultural particularity cannot meet the demands of industrialization. Industrialization requires concentration of labor, effective communication, administrative devices, all of which in turn require a degree of cultural homogeneity—the standardization of language, sharing of cultural understanding and so on. The modern state, with its centralized system, is best placed to carry out homogenization that is demanded by industrialization, thus, his definition of nationalism: “primarily a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent” (Gellner, 1983: 1).

When examining the relationship between food and the modernist account of nationalism, the focus is often placed on cookbooks and recipes because they play an important role in fixing the contour of a nation. Concepts of national food started to appear at about the same time as the centralization of the nation-state’s power, the industrialized food system, internationalization, and urbanization came into existence (Laudan, 2013). The role of cookbooks in nationalist projects has been explored by Igor Cusak (2000, 2003, 2004) and Arjun Appadurai (1988), among others. In this volume, Bak-Geller traces the ways in which cookbooks have contributed to the formation of the idea of “Mexican-ness.” The cookbooks are closely tied to various aspects of modernization: the development of the printing press, the improvement of literacy rate (according to Gellner, in response to the functional requirement of industrialization), the standardization of language, the expansion of trade, market activities and distribution system, commercialization and tourism, to name but a few. What cookbooks do in this context is to identify and fix what is “national” about a particular food item, cuisine, or food culture. This can be carried out in a top-down as well as bottom-up manner. The case of Indian cookbooks under colonialism discussed by Appadurai (1988) can be seen as describing a bottom-up movement in that middle-class Indian women were actively engaged with an act of reclaiming their “national” space in the colonial context, if it is accepted that “middle-class women” constitute the bottom layer. Another example of cookbooks which occupy an ambiguous position between top-down and bottom-up movement is the case of Catalonia discussed by Johannes in this volume: in the case of Catalonia, cookbooks were at some point used in a clearly top-down manner by the pro-Catalan intelligentsia and regional politicians to define and fix the boundary of the nation, but under the authoritarian regime, they

were used as a means of resisting oppression (Johannes in this volume). As seen in the Israeli case by Ranta and Prieto-Piastro covered in this volume, governments and national movements have used cookbooks to build, develop, or shape the nation. As the Israeli case study shows, it is not always successful.

Primordialism/Perennialism

Strictly speaking, primordialists and perennialists do not have the same understanding of what a nation is and what nationalism is, but in contrast to modernists, they share a commonality: both of them reject the intrinsic linkage between nations and nationalism on the one hand and modernity on the other. And for this reason, they are put together under the same sub-heading in this piece. For primordialists, including prominent nationalists such as Herder and eminent scholars such as Clifford Geertz, Edward Shills, Pierre van den Berghe, and Steven Grosby, a human grouping called a nation is a biological fact: humans by their nature organize themselves in a nation, and the nation is implicitly, if not explicitly, understood to be a given (or in Geertz's words 'cultural givens,' something that is understood as being given by actors involved), which cannot be overridden by human agency. Because the nation is a given, attachment to the nation and acting on behalf of it—nationalism—is experienced as irresistible and overwhelming making nationalism one of the most powerful driving forces of human action, according to the primordial account of nations and nationalism. Some primordialists understand a nation as extended kinship focusing on the intergenerational aspect, which then gives a certain moral aspect to the grouping called the nation (for the account of a nation as extended kinship, see van den Berghe, 1981, 2005; Grosby, 2005; for moral psychology of the nation, see Yack, 2012).

In contrast to primordialists who try to identify the "cause" of the phenomena of nations and nationalism, perennialists can be seen as "descriptive" in that their claim is that a form of human grouping called a nation has repeatedly appeared in human history across the globe, and that as such nations and nationalism are part and parcel of humanity. Theorists such as Adrian Hastings (1997) and John Armstrong (1982) have treated nations and nationalism as a permanent fixture of human society without seeking biological justification.

The primordialist and perennialist accounts of nations and nationalism can be seen as uncritical acceptance of nationalist ideology or unreflected conservatism, which is unsurprisingly not very fashionable in a "progressive" environment of post-Second World War scholarship. It is clear that the modernist account of nations and nationalism is dominant and hegemonic in today's scholarship, but both primordialism and perennialism direct our attention to one of the puzzling issues in nationalism: why do people get so worked up about nationalism? The modernists would turn to some kind of manipulation such as the state/elite's control of masses to explain why nationalism could invoke such a level of passion. The primordialists and perennialists provide a different take on this—because nations are seen as given, because nations represent kinship, because the nation is a moral community, and because nations have been part and parcel of human existence. Both of them appear to point to the effects of the perceived or experienced "oldness" of nations and

nationalism on human behavior: the attraction of nations and nationalism does not lie with novelty as modernism suggests; it is with the sense of continuity that the perceived or experienced “oldness” of the nation brings.

When approaching the question of national food from the primordialist/perennialist perspective, the relationship between how national food is talked about and Romanticism comes to the fore. It is generally held that in reaction to the Enlightenment which placed rationality at the helm of human intellectual activity, Romanticism reasserted the supremacy of the subjective, the irrational, the emotional and so on in human experiences. Because its focus on the individual has been translated into a search for the foundation of originality of different peoples, Romanticism as an intellectual movement is associated with the surge in interest in folk culture, which in turn is held to have facilitated nationalism in the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. Folklorists inspired by Romanticism look for the soul of the nation, which was believed to be found among ordinary people, typically peasants, who had not been “contaminated” by the march of science and modernity. Romanticism has also shaped the way the relationship between human beings and their environment is understood. The appreciation of natural beauty and prioritization of senses and emotion exalted in Romanticism have forged or strengthened the link between the environment and people in our understanding; pure air of the mountain range makes mountain people pure; wind-swept lands covered with heath make people sturdy, and so on. As industrialization gathered pace, repulsion against urban pollution and squalor led to the idealization of the rural, which was aided by Romanticism.

In this regard, food becomes an important item to unite people and the land. As discussed in the Israeli chapter, the Zionist movement attempted to turn diasporic Jews into Jews grounded in Palestine. The connection between the people and the land as a primordial, non-negotiable factor can also be found in the Slovene chapter which describes the ways in which the premodern, rural past was invoked in the promotion of *potica* as a way of rejecting the socialist—modernity-oriented—past. The Canadian chapter picks up on the organic connection between the people and the land, which is widely accepted at the level of common sense, as a reason why *poutine* cannot be a Canadian dish. In Catalonia, visiting and experiencing different Catalan regions, and consuming the food products associated with those different geographic areas, is a crucial part of national identity performance. In exploring the influence of Romanticism in the emergence of national food, the Palestine chapter provides a telling analysis. Liora Givon reports young Palestinian working women in Israel are abandoning traditional cooking in order to become “modern,” to be more like Israelis, and eating like Israelis is their method of achieving it. This example is very interesting because these women are defying the primordialist logic of nationhood; they are apparently resisting and desisting what is supposed to be the overwhelming force of Palestinian nationhood.

Ethno-symbolism

The third category of ethno-symbolism has emerged as a critique of both modernism, which has become the orthodoxy in the study of nationalism, and primordialism/perennialism. This perspective prioritizes the historical dimension of human existence

by emphasizing the symbols from the ethnic base of the nation and by examining nations in the continuity and disruption between them and ethnic communities. Nations are therefore neither novel nor biological, but the product of history in which human agency has interacted a variety of symbols according to scholars such as Anthony D. Smith and John Hutchinson, two most known theorists of ethno-symbolism (Smith, 1986, 1991, 2008a; Hutchinson, 1994, 2005).

Given that the ethno-symbolist account of nations and nationalism emphasizes the role of symbols, the perspective should provide an ideal context in which the role of food in forming or maintaining nations and in nationalism is examined. However, apart from the works on the role of cookbooks, which tend to follow the modernist account, there is not much work done on food and nationalism from an explicitly ethno-symbolic viewpoint. Some of the approaches which have affinity with ethno-symbolism would be the everyday nationhood approach or a bottom-up approach to nations and nationalism. Although inspired by Michael Billig's banal nationalism thesis (1995) in that Billig has drawn attention to the workings of nationalism which are taken for granted in "advanced" democracies, those who look into everyday nationhood are interested in investigating the ways in which ordinary people—not the state or the elite—subjectively engage with the nation by selecting from an existing reservoir of symbols or creating new ones and by enacting them (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008). Anthony Smith once expressed reservations about the focus on "here and now" of those studying everyday nationhood (Smith, 2008b) and thus, ethno-symbolism and everyday nationhood might be seen as incompatible. However, the historical dimension can be introduced in the analysis of everyday nationhood relatively easily (Ichijo and Ranta, 2016) without losing the focus on the bottom-up dynamic of nationalism.

There are some other dimensions examined in the chapters assembled here which have not been addressed so far. They are geography matters, the role of modernity, and the tension between universalism and particularism.

Geography matters

Some of the chapters in this volume highlight the enduring power of geography/topography in nation-formation without alluding to the influence of Romanticism. In the age of globalization, the influence of geography/topography tends to be overlooked. As we are increasingly aware, information and communication technologies and the instantaneous financial market cannot eliminate physical distance in the twenty-first century, let alone in the nineteenth century when communication technologies were in their infancy. The invention of telegraph in the Victorian era is said to have had a more profound impact on society than that of the arrival of the Internet in terms of shortening the amount of time required for communication (Standage, 1998). Amy Trubek in this volume places the vastness of the United States as the main reason why there is no "American" cuisine. The geographical expanse as a reason for the absence of national food is also hinted in Nicolas Fabien-Ouellet's chapter on why *poutine* cannot be a Canadian dish. Emma-Jayne Abbot points to a slightly different aspect of physical conditions: topography. She argues that the absence of Ecuadorian national

food despite postcolonial efforts of nation-building can be attributed to the deeply entrenched regionalism underpinned by topography. The country is made up of islands, the coast, Amazonian lowlands, and Andean highlands, and each has developed its own system of symbols which cannot be easily shared; a similar claim is also advanced by Simpson-Miller with regard to Ghana and its geographically diverse regions. The size of the country or the topography are not well-integrated in the discussion of nation-formation or the development of nationalism, but these chapters show that geographical and topographical conditions need to be factored in more rigorously in the study of nations and nationalism because they shape the ways in which symbols and culture are formed and maintained. In the Catalan case described by Johannes, extensive regional variation can exist even in a fairly small area and has the potential to contradict claims to the unity of Catalan cuisine. In this instance, the issue is only sidestepped by embracing and celebrating this “unity in diversity” as a characteristic of Catalan cuisine and is another way to contrast with the “other” (i.e., Spain), which is characterized as homogenous and unaccepting of variation.

In discussing the issue of geography in an investigation into food and nationalism, the concept of *terroir* cannot be neglected. Most prominently featured in the discussion of wine production, *terroir* describes an unbreakable link between the soil and the crop, and therefore the food products that are made from the crop. While the idea has been developed away from Romanticism, one can easily see affinity between *terroir* and the Romantic view of nations and their homeland. Though the meaning of *terroir* can become “all encompassing,” in recent times the term has come to represent both the unique environmental qualities of the land and the particular methods of production, reflecting “the interdependence of natural and manmade factors” (Camerlenghi, 2016: 25). The term is also used to differentiate between modern, industrial food that “favors consistency” and “foodstuff that is inherently variable in composition” and reflects that particularity of a particular locale (Abbots, 2017). Nevertheless, and with a clear link to our discussion of theories of nationalism, Trubek (2008: 22) notes that, though the term has been in use for centuries, “its association with taste, place, and quality is more recent, a reaction to changing markets, the changing organization of farming, and changing politics.”

The role of “modernity” in the emergence or non-emergence of national food

According to the modernist account of nations and nationalism, nations are the product of modernity and nationalism is its function. However, the chapters in this volume paint a much more complex picture of the relationship between nations and nationalism on the one hand and modernity on the other, which could be the starting point for further exploration of the role of modernity in nationalism.

For example, Nancheva’s chapter on Bulgaria presents a textbook case of affinity between nationalism and modernity in that the legitimacy of the Bulgarian nationhood has been asserted and secured by embracing various aspects of modernity, in particular, the advances in science. The authenticity of the Bulgarian nation is confirmed by a

unique bacterium which is then actively used to “sell” Bulgaria in the form of yoghurt. In this case study, a variety of modern forces—the centralizing state, the advancement in science, the development of economic and production systems and world trade—come together to define, legitimize and project Bulgarian nationhood across the world. While the chapter hints at some domestic discordance in reference to the Bulgarian-ness of the yoghurt, on the whole, it paints a clear picture of a nation being created by those in power—politically, commercially, and scientifically. In contrast, the way the idea of modernity has been dealt with in the promotion of *potica* in Slovenia, as examined by Tominc and Vezovnik, shows a rejection of modernity as aligned with industrialization and socialism. *Potica* is promoted by a variety of forces to make Slovenes unique but not to make them modern. Rather, rejection of socialist modernity and invocation of the preindustrial and rural past comes to the fore in a manner that reminds us of Romanticism. Here the essence of the Slovene nation is linked to the rurality and premodern matriarchal family life in which the grandmother kept everything together. Modernity is not what makes Slovenes Slovenes; it is their (mystical) rural past and extended families. The contrast between the two cases is interesting in that both Bulgaria and Slovenia are postcommunist countries. In the Bulgarian case study, modernity is more associated with science (which backs up the autochthonous nature of the Bulgarians) and commercial activities to sell yoghurt; in the Slovenian case study, modernity is linked to a broader idea of modernity, industrialization, in particular the socialist version of it, and the *potica* is presented as an antithesis to it.

Another interesting chapter in discussing the relationship between modernity and nationalism is the study of Palestinian citizens of Israel by Givon. In her chapter, the modern, working young Palestinian women want to become modern by appropriating how mainstream Israelis eat. They still want to keep tradition but in their everyday practice, preparing and eating traditional Palestinian meals have been dropped from their routine so as for them and their children to be modern. It appears these women are not overtly concerned with protecting and promoting their “nation”—presumably the Palestinian nation—because Palestinian nationality does not provide means of upward social mobility in Israel, though eating like Israelis does not guarantee membership of the mainstream Israeli nation.

Perhaps one of the points here is that the idea of modernity and processes of modernization have different relationship a with nations and nationalism. In order for a nation—no doubt a much larger human grouping than a local community—to be formed, tools that modernization brings such as the centralized state, mass communication and transport, the expansion of the market and so on are essential. However, the idea about what it is to be modern does not necessarily relate to nationalism.

Tension between particularism and universalism

This is a tricky theme to discuss since it can be approached from various angles. If nationalism is seen as universalism, regionalism is seen as particularism as in the case of Spanish nationalism and Catalan nationalism. However, nationalism can be seen as a movement pursuing the particular in reference to cosmopolitanism or multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is a universal principle that decrees that the particularity of every unit should be preserved and promoted, not homogenized. The point at which the regional becomes the national or why this transformation does or does not occur are interesting questions, though they lie outside the remit of this volume.

The tension between nationalism as a universalizing/homogenizing force and regionalism representing particularity is examined in most of the chapters in this volume, but it is particularly salient in chapters looking into Latin American experiences and the case of Ghana in West Africa. Abbotts's examination of who claims *cuy* as their food sheds clear light on the tension between Ecuadorian nationalism and pan-national, Andean regionalism. Aguilera argues that in Chile efforts are made to overcome this tension in the realm of cuisine by celebrating diversity (which according to Fabien-Ouellet in his Canada case study would not work). Nikolić reports on the incongruence of perceptions of what constitutes Costa Rican cuisine depending on the region. What is interesting here is that in these "original" postcolonial societies, which arguably have had more time for nation-building than societies in Asia and Africa—after all, nationalism was born in colonial Latin America according to Benedict Anderson—regionalism has not been overcome and continues to exert influence on the cultural and symbolic systems the nation as a community have to have in order to achieve cohesion. From the modernist point of view, this is probably explained as a consequence of incomplete modernization; primordialists would focus on the artificial nature of borders in postcolonial societies.

In reference to the tension between nationalism and multiculturalism, the Canadian case study by Fabien-Ouellet provides a number of fascinating insights. Fabien-Ouellet points to the inability of Canadian multiculturalism to identify/create national food. What the Canadian government has been presenting as Canadian food appears to come down to either what is produced or eaten in Canada. As Fabien-Ouellet's chapter demonstrates, the idea of multiculturalism cannot transform *poutine* from a Québécois food item to a Canadian food item, and emphasizes the particularist aspect of nationalism. Nationalism retains its power because it makes a group of people special and unique; multiculturalism values individual differences but cannot turn this into an integrating symbol.

While globalization cannot be seen as an ideological movement on a par with cosmopolitanism, some of the consequences of globalization are often seen as "universalizing." The assumption is that globalization is strongly linked to homogenization and standardization. The alleged homogenizing power of globalization has been widely challenged and this volume is no exception. In particular, Nikolić sees the efforts to construct national cuisine in Costa Rica and its impact on regional cuisines as forms of resistance to cultural globalization. Aguilera's focus on the redefinition of Chilean cuisine as that of the urban poor shares the aspect of resistance.

A brief comment on methodology

Both nationalism studies and food studies are inherently interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. As such, the chapters collected in this volume draw from a variety