CHAPTER 2

Western food cultures and traditions

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Introduction

Early 21st century Western European societies can widely be seen as prosperous and plural social entities marked by a copious food offer, low grocery prices and personal liberties. Individuals can no longer be considered as parts of social classes, social orders and ranks exerting social constraints; they rather have to be seen as members of loosely organized lifestyles and fluid social scenes. Presentations of self have become increasingly important in social contexts dominated by heterogeneous world views (Katschnig-Fasch, 2004). Hunger and supply shortages, which dominated European countries for centuries and shaped cultural coping techniques, gave way to an affluent society where there are predominately problems of overweight, consumer confusion in consequence of oversupply and the availability of global foods at any time with no regards to seasonal and regional aspects. Due to an increasing globalization of food systems, traditional food patterns seemed to be on the decline in the last third of the 20th century. In the early 21st century, food and eating habits play an important role regarding the representation of self. In this context, consumers often make use of constructed traditions, which they regard as deeply rooted in history (Königs, 2014, p. 14; Müns, 2010, p. 15). Due to digitalization and globalization, the "foreign" has increasingly become perceived as a threat (Beck et al., 1996, p. 11; Albrow, 1996). Therefore, the perspective on food shifted toward aspects of heritage and identity (Trummer, 2009, pp. 9–10; Brulotte and Di Giovine, 2014, pp. 1–6).

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In general terms, food-systems are coined by climate and environmental resources but also by economic, social, educational, cultural and religious conditions (Hirschfelder and Pollmer, 2018, pp. 45–46). Western European food systems and cultures have evolved over hundreds of years. This chapter aims for an understanding of central historical processes and transformations of the culinary systems of France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the British Isles including Ireland.

With regard to Western Europe, one may carefully claim that since the Paleolithic period environmental factors played the biggest role in shaping the supply of food available. Thus, within hunter and gatherer communities, food supply was limited to what could be hunted or gathered with the help of particular cultural techniques. From the Neolithic period onwards, new technological possibilities arose. The knowledge of agricultural and animal farming enabled an expansion of planning reliability which resulted in an emergence of social stratification. Leaps in technology within the early Neolithic societies led to increasing cultural dynamics that even accelerated at the end of the 1st pre-Christian millennium. The cultural practices in the context of food and nutrition, which have been developed by the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Greece, represent the foundation of the cultural setting of the later Roman Empire (Hirschfelder, 2005).

Standardization and diffusion of food knowledge in the Roman Empire

At the point of its greatest expansion around AD 117, the Imperium Romanum was ranging from Britain to the Caspian Sea and from Egypt up to Mauretania. The spatial division into provinces shaped the thinking about the European area substantially and laid the foundation for the subsequent political as well as cultural segmentation of the continent.

In the course of conquests, incorporations of territories and the further development of the infrastructure, innovations spread across the Mediterranean area to Western Europe (Schneider, 2007, p. 147). With this came not only a spatial diffusion of single phenomena but at least to some extent a standardization of daily life alongside the main trading roads.

This was also due to the large impact of sovereigns, senatorial nobility, the roman middle class and the military within the very secularly oriented Imperium Romanum up to the peripheral provinces (Alföldy, 1984, pp. 101–141). In this "culinary centralism" (Hirschfelder, 2005, p. 79) literary traditions played an essential catalytic role.

The picaresque novel "Satyricon" of Titus Petronius (c. 27–66 AD), an author whose work gained wide popularity, may serve as an example here. The story about a master chef who, by serving a pig udder as fish or a knuckle of pork as chicken, designed

creations whose ingredients could hardly be identified anymore, lead to a spread of the urban Roman cultural pattern throughout Western Europe (Petron, 1968, p. 81).

In the Roman Empire, many domains of food production and food trade converged. The same holds for grain farming which also did not show many regional specifics. Barley and wheat were the most commonly cultivated grain types (Sallares, 2007, p. 31).

Mills run by waterpower or muscular power served for grain processing and with the *beehive oven*, a new furnace technology was introduced to the baking process (Curtis, 2010, pp. 373–379). Due to these inventions, new bread and bakery businesses emerged in Roman urban environments that were selling professionally manufactured white bread made from wheat flour (Curtis, 2010, p. 379; Margaritis and Jones, 2010, p. 170).

Apart from those technical aspects as well as viticulture and the production of olive oil (Oleson, 2010), two important cultural patterns emerged and diffused across the continent and stood for a Roman style food culture: *cena* and *taberna*. The former constituted the third, latest and most important meal of the day besides *ientaculum* and *prandium*. Here, *puls* was served which was made out of barley porridge that was refined in accordance to social status. Over time, it gradually evolved into a multi-course dinner. However, its significance is not limited to its influence on culinary arrangements. Beyond this fact, *cena* was a social event and a societal highlight of the day (Dupont, 1993, pp. 272–278; André, 1998, pp. 51, 61).

The diffusion of *taberna* meant a spread of professionalized hospitality manifesting in, for instance, inns, wine taverns or cook shops. This form of gastronomy originated in the Mediterranean centers of the Roman Empire but soon spread along the central trade routes across the empire. The number of taverns decreased with growing distance to the city of Rome (Peyer, 1987, pp. 14–15, 18). For the non-Roman areas and those areas not facing seaward, a different setting has to be taken into account. Instead of grain farming, vegetable cultivation was of greater relevance. Here, meat obtained through hunting, fishing and animal farming constituted the core of food supply. Even in regard to beverages, clear differences can be observed until the early Middle Ages: In the northern regions, wine, beer, mead and drinks out of fermented wild fruits dominated the picture. In the course of the early Middle Ages, however, food patterns of Germanic-Celtic origin increasingly incorporated Roman influences. This resulted in a nutritional behavior based on both meat and grain.

Another important aspect is the proceeding Christianization of remote provinces linked to the expansion of the Roman Empire. The diffusion of the Catholic church is responsible for the later diffusion of the sacral glorification of food: Bread and wine became symbols for the body and blood of Christ and handling food became associated with miracles like in the parable of *Jesus feeding the five thousand* (John 6:1–13). Increasing foundations of monasteries made viticulture liturgically relevant (Montanari, 1983, p. 2162) and led to long-lasting changes of the cultural landscape.

Middle ages

The progressing Christianization more and more replaced hierarchies of Roman cultural values (Harries, 1992, p. 96) and Old Testament ideas gained increasing relevance. An example that shows the close connection to food culture can be illustrated with the biblical passage Gen 3,19 "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Here, food is considered as a gift from God and its production is associated with hard work. Therefore, life and in this regard also nutrition were supposed to be created in accordance with God. In addition new socio-cultural standards developed: The division of the year into Sundays and public holidays on the one hand and work days on the other, as well as the implementation of fasting rules and fasting meals prevailed since late antiquity (Bynum, 1987, pp. 31–47; Düring et al., 1989, pp. 304–307). For Western Europe, this meant a convergence of food systems leading to greater structural overlaps.

The Imperium Romanum caused Western Europe to grow together more closely. In this way, it also caused it to shape a culinary texture, which, to a certain degree, brought a process of homogenization with it. In the 4th post-Christian century the empire was facing high military pressure and de facto fell apart in the 5th post-Christian century. Roman traditions increasingly eroded, especially on the British Isles and in continental Germania, whereas they structurally remained south of the lake Loire in Western France. About the everyday diet of the early Middle Ages relatively little is known, due to only rudimentarily existing evidence. However, in regard to our topic, we can state that roman patterns of tradition and identification for the most part disappeared. The socio-cultural models of the Catholic Church with its monastic body (Melville, 2012, pp. 23–30) can be considered as a weak and loose cultural fundament, whereas the food culture of early medieval *gentes*, the tribal societal compounds, was primarily characterized by shortage. In consequence of a decline of infrastructure, high mobility and a climatic pessimum, the main concern of nutrition shifted toward mere survival. In general, joint drinking played a much more important role than the cultural system of meals. At least not in regard to identity formation. Therefore, we cannot speak of a connective European or national food culture for this period of time, but rather of different tribal patterns.

At the same time an intensified spatial diversification can be observed. In contrast to the standardization of bread grain in the Roman Empire a diversification of grain types took place. Low maintenance grain types like rye and oat were predominant and regional soil qualities had been taken into greater account (Montanari, 1983, p. 2162). At the end of the first post-Christian millennium structural conditions within Europe had changed. An interval of comparably warm climate, the Medieval Warm period, which is also known as the Medieval Climate Anomaly, brought about periodic irregularities, e.g. droughts. Most important, however, a significant temperature rise was recorded that began shortly after 900 and peaked between 950 and 1250 (Brázdil et al., 2005, pp. 388–396).

As a result, agricultural farming obtained much higher yields, which again led to a wave of city foundations since the 11th century (Humpert and Schenk, 2001, p. 52).

Soon a differentiated artisan food production emerged in these newly founded cities (Isenmann, 2012). Within continental Europe the feudal corporation system (Kluge, 2007, pp. 21–22) provided an organizational model, which, in the case of France, is denoted by the term *système des corporations*. On the one hand, this implied social security for artisans like butchers or bakers; on the other hand, recipes and methods of preparation were systematically handed down and passed on (Herborn, 2003). In the context of sausage and ham products today people often refer to this period of time when historical evidence is needed for labeling meat products as traditional or regional, e.g. *Mortadella*, *Nürnberger Bratwürste* or *Jambon de Bayonne*.

The rapid urbanization in the Middle Ages brought about further tendencies of homogenization and cities developed as the most important cultural frames of reference. International traders led to the emergence of a new lifestyle accompanied by an open attitude toward nutritional innovations from foreign places, especially in the case of spices, tropical fruits and wine. This marked the beginning of a Western European urban culinary identity rooted in closely interwoven urban centers, such as London, Paris, Bruges, Antwerp, Cologne, Frankfurt or Nuremberg. However, relict areas of the low mountain range and structurally weak regions remained rather detached (Selzer, 2010; Hirschfelder, 1994). Eventually in the late Middle Ages elementary developments arose that had significant impact on Western food cultures. From the end of the Hundred Years' War until the middle of the 15th century England and France more and more transformed into centralized national states. Royal courts and especially those of the capitals Paris and London became trendsetters shaping traditions and lifestyles (Moraw, 1985). They contributed significantly to the development of much more homogeneous culinary cultures and thus prepared the ground for the establishment of separate national cuisines in general. In Germany, on contrary, central power fell apart after the disempowerment of the dominion of the Staufers in the year 1254 and even before a national cuisine could arise regional patterns emerged, that increasingly isolated themselves.

Early Modern Era

During the early Modern Era Western food culture underwent significant transformations since the beginning of the 16th century. The invention of letterpress printing in 1453 facilitated the distribution of cookbooks as well as table manners and knowledge of foodstuff in general. The conquest of the Bosporus metropolis Constantinople by the Ottomans is among other things highly connected to the disruption of trade routes to India. In 1492, in the search of new routes America was discovered, which in turn led to the introduction of a variety of new foods due to the following Columbian Exchange in Europe. With the Reformation beginning in 1517 a revaluation of food and drink

practices was initiated, as well as a series of confessional wars peaking in the Thirty Year War. The Enlightenment finally led to a breakup with medieval thinking patterns and effectuated the French Revolution in 1789, accompanied by a transformation of ruling systems at the End of the Early Modern Age. Apart from that, climatic conditions and population development represented important influencing factors in regard to the supply situation of this era (Hirschfelder, 2005, pp. 147–153).

The events and processes outlined here were all part of an overall political and societal transformation. Changes within food culture, that were linked to this transformation inevitably occurred delayed and did not evolve abruptly. Today's diversity of food is inconceivable without the increasing process of globalization, but also cannot be thought of as a mere result of the last decades.

It is rather the case that many of today's staple foods are linked to historical developments in the Early Modern Era. In particular the "exchange of diseases, ideas, food crops, and populations between the New World and the Old World following the voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1492" (Nunn and Qian, 2010, p. 163), for which the historian Alfred W. Crosby coined the term "Columbian Exchange" in the 1970s (Crosby, 2003). The "Old World" in this case designates Europe as well as Africa and Asia.

At long sight, the Columbian Exchange revolutionized both food cultures and landscapes of Western Europe. Many of today's commonly prepared meals could not be imagined without potatoes, tomatoes, cocoa, different sorts of beans, yam, pumpkins or corn (Nunn and Qian, 2010, p. 163; Crosby, 2003, p. 170). They are nonetheless often labeled as "traditional" foods for specific regions or countries.

Crosby notes that in a global perspective, especially "maize, potatoes, sweet potatoes, beans and manioc have been most abundantly cultivated and eaten in the last four hundred years" (Crosby, 2003, p. 170). This shows that foods from the New World reached global significance in regard to the alimentation of mankind. And also in the case of coffee which presumably originated from the Ethiopian Upland it were the improved cultivation conditions within the "New World" that strongly increased its availability (Ball, 1991, p. 11; Nunn and Qian, 2010, p. 164).

However, the broad acceptance that the mentioned foods receive today does not apply to the time of their introduction in the Early Modern Era. On the contrary, their gradual acceptance as staple foods was rather caused by famine or political measures (Hénaut and Mitchell, 2018, p. 175). In Germany for example a high energy, high calorie and meat based diet was regarded as a symbol of healthy nutrition. Within England and France, in contrast, exotic ingredients rapidly entered the upper class cuisine and symbolized a distinguished way of dining. Due to their status as luxury products, many of them only became affordable for wider parts of the population on an everyday basis after long-lasting diffusion processes. In the case of colonial powers, these processes mostly took course much faster because returnees often brought ingredients and

relating knowledge of how to prepare them with them. Thus, they contributed to an exotization of their homeland cuisine. Out of the diverse newly introduced food plants some reached particular significance, e. g. beans, corn and especially potatoes. The success of potatoes is linked to the fact that they are comparably easy to cultivate and produce, regardless of different climatic conditions. According to Crosby "several times as much food per unit of land as wheat or any other grain" (Crosby, 2003, p. 171) could by produced. In spite of the great significance potatoes gained over time their wide spread diffusion took quite long. There is not enough evidence to reconstruct the whole process of their diffusion (Ottenjann and Ziessow, 1992; Teuteberg and Wiegelmann, 1986, pp. 93–114), however, some basic tendencies can be stated: Potatoes were brought to Europe since mid 16th century by conquistadores. In the beginning, potatoes were only to be found as botanical rarities. As foodstuffs potatoes became accepted in different places at the same time. In Spain, potatoes were accepted around the end of the 16th century and for the case of Germany there is evidence that potatoes were agriculturally cultivated in Western Germany in the 17th century (Kleinschmidt, 1978). Around 1700 potatoes could be found in southern parts of the Netherlands, which today are belonging to Belgium. This fact can be linked to the political affiliation to the House of Habsburg, which has also been predominant in Spain at that time (Hirschfelder, 2005, pp. 157–158).

Before the widespread diffusion of the potato, the daily food supply of wide parts of the population was based on grain. In rural Germany, for example, meals often consisted of grain porridge, which was served together with lard, bread and sometimes meat (Hirschfelder, 2018, p. 5). The introduction of potatoes led to grain porridge slowly being replaced (Teuteberg and Wiegelmann, 1986, p. 93). Even although potatoes, since then, occasionally were part of everyday meals, it was shortage and poverty caused by poor cereal yields in a number of bad harvest years coupled with the growing of the population that led to their breakthrough (Hirschfelder, 2005, pp. 158–159). The beginning hesitation can be explained with the fact that "in matters of diet, especially of the staples of diet, [people] are very conservative, and will not change unless forced. No coercion is as generally effective as hunger" (Crosby, 2003, p. 169). This is why potatoes were considered as a food of the poor or animal food, especially in agriculturally low yielding regions (Wiegelmann, 1967, pp. 75–111), where potatoes noticeably improved the food supply situation.

In Ireland the integration of potatoes as an everyday food took place comparably early. It is recorded that they have already been agriculturally cultivated in 1640. They complemented existing stock foods, such as dairy products, grain and pulses (Lysaght, 1997, p. 72). In 1684 potatoes were considered as stock food of the poor. The climatic conditions of Ireland with plenty of rainfall provided very good cultivation conditions. With potatoes much better yields could be gained than with any other commonly cultivated sort of grain (Kolbe, 1999, p. 34). Combined with lower land usage, food supply hence was improved for a long period of time.

On a structural level, changes in the context of the Reformation movement also had an impact on food culture. The implementation of Protestantism and Calvinism in different European areas led to an abandonment of catholic dietary laws: Holidays were dropped, together with the opulent feast associated with them. Fasting periods and their respective fasting rules gave way to a sparse and more abstinent diet, although, in some protestant areas, for example in Switzerland, people stuck to fasting rules (Schärer, 1992, p. 17). However, Reformation also gave rise to military conflicts. Hunger, poverty and hardship forced people to break with food conventions and traditions and so heritage had to be subjected to the functional aspects of nutrition in order to survive.

In many rural and especially alpine regions, diets were characterized by food poverty and an overall alimentary pragmatism. This development, for instance, can be well observed in the case of Switzerland: In the upland and almost alpine region *Hirtenland* dairy products strongly dominated daily food supply, whereby carbohydrates from grain were missing. In the lower region *Kornland*, on the contrary, grain-based foods were very common, but protein and animal fat was missing. And since grain often had to be imported, shortages frequently caused price increase leading to temporary impoverishment (Hofer and Stalder, 2000; Schärer, 1992).

Transformation processes occurring within early Modern Era can also be observed in the context of beverages: The climatic changes of the Little Ice Age oftentimes caused frost damages, which, for example, highly affected the cultivation of grape vines. In the area of Frankfurt this led to a transition from vineyards to fruit cultivation and the production of apple wine. In other regions viticulture was fully abandoned (Schreiber, 1980, pp. 290–292). In comparison with today, vegetation periods were around 20 days shorter at that time. This led to a general decline of quality for many agricultural products (Glaser, 2012). In the beginning, the demand for wine then was answered by supraregional imports instead. In the long run, however, a shift from wine to beer can be observed that highly influenced festive culture. At the same time, this promoted an orientation toward commercial breweries (Hirschfelder and Trummer, 2016).

Another prominent beverage, whose spreading was initiated in the Early Modern Age and has become almost indispensable from today's European daily life, is coffee. Probably only very few foodstuffs have had such a major and lasting impact on people's daily routines and habits like coffee (Ball, 1991, p. 11). Presumably stemming from Ethiopia, "coffee had become a popular Muslim drink from the thirteenth century onwards when the method of roasting the beans and infusing the powder was developed" (Burnett, 1991, p. 35). Around mid 17th century coffee finally reached Europe. At first, its taste had been perceived as very unusual and rather unpleasant, even within aristocratic circles (Hirschfelder, 2005, p. 154). When it comes to the distribution of new foodstuffs, in general, nobility functions as an important role model, which especially holds for the case of England and France (Reif, 1987, pp. 35). The beginning of the spread of coffee, therefore, is connected to the court of French King Louis XIV. It was an ambassador, who

delivered his message together with a cup of coffee. The beverage evoked curiosity and after a while became increasingly fashionable due to its exotic taste. The habit of coffee drinking, which was slowly established, functioned as a symbol to distance from bourgeoisie (Lansard, 1991, pp. 129–135).

At that time, the French Court had been very influential in regard to cultural patterns in the domain of food and nutrition in general. Table manners, social manners and the "good" taste have been adopted and imitated by many other nobility courts in Europe (Elias, 1997, p. 12). French cuisine evolved as a symbol of upper class dining. Nevertheless, regional cuisines, too, continued to exist, which can be exemplified by looking at the letters of Elizabeth Charlotte of the Palatinate from Western Germany. During her stay at the court of King Louis XIV she wrote about how she disliked upper class French cuisine—she neither liked coffee nor the food served to her. Her letters tell of her missing her homeland Palatinate cuisine, which was characterized by a great amount of sausages. For this reason, her relatives sent recipes, sausages and cabbage back to Versailles (Mattheier, 1997, p. 151; Hirschfelder, 2005, p. 154).

Industrialization and Modern Era

For Western Europe the end of the 18th century brought a triad of intellectual, political and technical revolutions: The processes involved in the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Industrialization led the pre-modern era to collapse. The huge transformational processes setting in at that time can be very well traced by looking at Western European food cultures.

First of all, Industrialization put an end to famine within Europe. Technical and industrial progress made it possible to finally ensure proper nutrition for a growing population. Here, specific achievements were of particular relevance, e.g. the successful breeding of sugar beets in regard to sugar production or the development of fertilizer of a more and more scientifically oriented agriculture (Jones, 2016, p. 10). Apart from that, the transport system had been considerably improved by the extension of the railroad network since the 1830s. Furthermore, in 1840, Justus von Liebig published his book "Chemistry in its applications to agriculture and physiology," which became a standard reference work in agricultural chemistry (von Liebig, 1840). The mentioned processes all took part in a massive increase in productivity during the second half of the 19th century. This secured basic food supply for wide parts of the European population for the first time.

Another important aspect relating to this was the improvement of methods for preserving food. Metal cans, for example, allowed to tin food and other technical innovations established new products, such as margarine, baking powder or milk powder (Den Hartog, 1995). The industrial production of canned foods, pasta, marmalade and Liebig's meat extract, as well as the invention of cooling machines by Carl von Linde in 1874

unleashed a powerful dynamic and severely accelerated industrialization (Brock, 2002; Schwenk, 1999; Hård, 1994; Spiekermann, 2018).

At the same time, due to the replacement of sailing boats by steam ships, new colonial goods, like spices, coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar or rice became increasingly accessible for a wide range of people and domestic trade expanded through the extension of the railroad network. Since then foodstuff could be traded nationally on a large scale.

Especially within industrial areas a new food culture established, that could neither be characterized as rural, nor as bourgeois. Since the early 19th century the class of factory workers emerged: At first in Northern England, with Manchester being the world's first factory city, later in Northern France, the later Belgium as well as within Western Germany's *Aachener Revier*, Saxony and a little later also within the Ruhr area (Griffin, 2010). With the Industrialization along came a separation of the working place and the living environment and thereby eating places. The machines dictated a rhythm to the lifeworld of the workers and their nutrition was characterized by monotony and rush.

Since women were involved in production, too, meals often gained the quality of snacking. In the early period of factory systems the food supply of the working class was sufficient in comparison to that of farmers, at least in times of economic upswing. Food supply was mainly based on potatoes and meat, accompanied by one of the most popular beverages of the industrial age: wine spirits (Tappe, 1994, p. 55). Male and female workers more and more spent their free time in pubs. In the course of the 19th century industrial forms of commercial hospitality gained great importance, especially in England and Germany. The development of gin-palaces in England and beer-palaces in Germany can be seen as a symbol of high industrialization (Hirschfelder and Trummer, 2016).

In the Northern England Lancashire the industrial factory system had evolved greater and faster than anywhere else (Burchardt, 2002, p. 14). By looking at the case of Lancashire, the formation of the workers as a new social class can almost be observed as if under laboratory conditions (Hylton, 2003; Hirschfelder, 2003). Concerning eating habits, factory work resulted in the loss of practices that had been engraved deeply into food culture. Not only eating rhythms, meals and the social situation of eating itself eroded, but also its internal chronology. Especially in the context of early industrialization, eating had been degraded to a side issue. As a minor matter, it had to be taken care of fast and in a functionally oriented way, that was first and foremost constrained by time.

In the 1860s fish and chip shops started to pop up in Lancashire. Fish fries and potato-chip fries had already existed as single products before. Due to the improved availability of industrially produced fat, yet their combination is assumed to have taken place in this specific context. The number of shops went up very fast so that in 1888 the number is already estimated at about 10,000–12,000 and even 25,000 in 1910 (Walton, 2000, pp. 5, 23). John K. Walton sketches the rising social importance of the fried fish dish among working class members: "Fish and chips became ubiquitous, mundane, inescapable and taken for granted in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. It was at the

heart of a multitude of daily and weekly routines and social rituals" (Walton, 2000, p. 162). Nowadays, fish and chips have ascended out of the context of the working class up to a national symbol for Britain itself.

In early industrialized Germany, some areas profited from the process of Industrialization. For example, a medicinal topography of the Rhineland *Jülich* from 1839 indicates that meat and other animal products dominated daily food supply. Only almost 50 km southwards, in contrast, the daily food supply of textile workers had been much more sparsely and mainly vegetal. Poorly topped rye bread and salted potatoes dominated their everyday diet (Hirschfelder, 2005, p. 170).

Beginning at the end of the 17th century and particularly in the 18th century the upper middle class coffee houses were institutionalized (Ball, 1991, p. 12). Coffee remained a high-priced and highly rated product, which imparted exclusiveness. Due to that, coffee houses "[were] acting increasingly as clubs or catering for exclusive groups like lawyers and stockbrokers" (Fenton, 1991, p. 94). The bourgeois adoption of coffee drinking from nobility, however, altered its social status. As a result, coffee had been taken on by wide parts of the population, which created the basis for today's use of coffee as a daily companion (Teuteberg, 1991; Ball, 1991, p. 11).

The increasing degree of urbanization gave rise to a growing number of cafés, restaurants and bars. In Brussels, the capital of the young Belgium, for example, the number of inhabitants between 1800 and 1900 nearly exploded and grew from 70,000 to 630,000 (Scholliers, 2005, p. 74). A wealthy upper class formed, who wanted to outwardly communicate their wealth, e.g. by visiting gastronomic establishments. Upper class restaurants mostly devoted themselves to the French *haute cuisine*. In France itself, many chefs had lost their job as a consequence of the loss of power of nobility. Oftentimes they then settled down in other large European cities and opened up their own restaurants. The former cuisine of nobility, which originally was specifically characterized by not being accessible for the general public and consisting of non-domestic ingredients, now advanced as a symbol of belonging to upper social circles and being distinct from working class (Mennell, 1997, p. 459; Scholliers, 2005, pp. 73–75; Möhring, 2012, p. 100; Trummer, 2009, p. 18). In the case of Brussels, social differentiation could even be observed in the context of the differentiation between French and Belgian cuisine: "A luxury restaurant may have employed foreign personnel, while more modest places might have used local people, which would imply the existence of a dual labour market. A segmented diffusion of knowledge and skills would be the consequence of using international staff in fashionable eating-places with a cosmopolitan cuisine, and local staff in the modest ones with local dishes" (Scholliers, 2005, p. 81).

Summing up, Industrialization and the massive migration movements associated with it brought with them a fundamental transformation of Western European culinary systems. Within the centers that had been affected the most, such as England and Germany, premodern patterns fell apart and the cuisine of the working class shaped its way into food

culture. In the case of Germany, food culture became more and more bourgeois at the end of 19th century. England on the other hand, developed a particular working class food system characterized by a stronger differentiating line between nobly and bourgeois patterns.

Peripheral European Ireland experienced a spiral of impoverishment in the 19th century, which led to the cultivation of potatoes in monoculture. About a third of the agriculturally areas were used for the cultivation of potatoes (Lysaght, 1997, p. 76). Potato blight, a plant disease, caused a series of bad harvests between 1845 and 1852. The catastrophe of the so called *Irish potato famine* (Irish: An Gorta Mór) has engraved deeply into the cultural memory of Ireland. Approximately one million people starved and two million left the country, mostly heading toward Northern America (Kinealy, 2006). As a consequence, constituting elements of Irish cuisine were imported into the United States and became one of the most important components of a developing "New World cuisine."

The extensive transformations of the era also had a crucial impact on bourgeois cuisine: It emancipated itself from nobility cuisine, especially in the case of France. It then became the main role model for all European cuisines in regard to both, *haute cuisine* and in the context of restaurants becoming more and more bourgeois and slowly replacing the historically older forms of restaurants and pubs. Thus, Industrialization and the bourgeois era initiated a process of homogenization, as well as an increasing social segregation within Western Europe at the same time.

Food cultures in the age of extremes—The 20th century

The universal historian Eric Hobsbawn coined the term "Age of Extremes" for referring to the 20th century (Hobsbawm, 1994). This also, particularly applies to Western European food cultures: In the 20th century, traditions were broken down and newly invented. The loss of traditional frameworks happening in that period mirrors the change of and the search for identity. In the 20th century, Western European food cultures at first developed separately from each other for quite a long time and then again converged.

This dynamic was determined by three main factors: World wars, ideologies and modernization and with them came great migration movements. Around 1900, the world presented itself in a turmoil: England, having experienced the peak of its economic power, slowly lost its supremacy in favor of the United States. In France and the Netherlands colonialism stood at its zenith: Spices, sugar, tea, coffee and cocoa were flowing into Europe in enormous amounts and could be afforded by a majority of the population (Hobsbawm, 2017, p. 88). Culinary identities had increasingly been shaped by colonial goods. The German cuisine participated in this exchange of goods at least to some degree, whereas Switzerland or rural Ireland benefited much less. Within agricultural regions, people ate in the slipstream of global trade, which is why in these areas traditions have been preserved much more profoundly.

Another tendency that could be observed, pertains to the distinctive function of *tradition* and *heritage* as an interpretative pattern of national differentiation. And this has also been increasingly performed within the kitchen. Identity politics operating in the domain of what was construed as national cuisines sometimes took up former food patterns and in addition to that, many of the young countries also made use of "inventions of tradition" (Hobsbawm, 2012).

France and England experienced waves of nationalism (Alter, 2016), whereas in Germany a kind of "plain German cuisine" had established itself since the Imperial Era. Regional traditions were considered as overcome patterns and as an inevitable evil by those, who were not able to afford to partake in the world of consumption.

Concerning food cultures, the First World War did not entail many structural changes, but it drastically changed the amounts of food consumed and thus brought back famine. The total provision of calories dropped dramatically for the majority of the population, whereby regions that were based on subsistence economy suffered much less than urban centers (Roerkohl, 1987, pp. 325–357).

During the post-war period, for instance, a comparison between Germany and France yields interesting insights: While France took on culinary patterns of the pre-war period, German cuisine modernized extensively during Weimar Republic (1919–33), especially with regard to the material domain of meals, as well as in the context of the liberalization of restaurant culture.

With the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, within Germany a culinary turning point occurred. International influences from then on had been discredited as "un-German," pushed back and soon even were prohibited. The Nazi dictatorship aimed at ideologizing the entire food culture. This went so far as to even different types of bread became associated with national stereotypes. Hence, allegedly German dark bread was conceived as "good," whereas French-style white bread was conceived of minor value.

With the outbreak of the Second World War this ideologization led to a war of annihilation in Eastern Europe, which made use of famine as weapon of war. The occupation policy within the Benelux region and France also led to a drastically deteriorating provision of calories (Hirschfelder, 2005, pp. 222–223).

As a consequence of the Holocaust, Jewish culture and Jewish food systems had been eradicated from areas under German control. The Jewish cuisine fundamentally differs from its Christian influenced variants. Some examples are the prohibition on the consumption of pork, or the adherence to the 613 Kashrut laws, which, for instance, prohibit the combination of dairy and meat products. Furthermore, the weekly holiday Sabbath is supposed to be spent within the circle of the community or family (Schostak, 2014, pp. 327–330). This way, the Sabbath holds a strongly identity forming culinary function, where the weekly holiday acts as a guarantor of tradition. Even after the liberation from the Nazi oppression, the impact of fascism on food culture could still be observed: Until 1933 there had been a lively exchange of goods and ideas within

Europe. After the Nazi era cultural patterns from Germany had been rejected completely.

Parallel to this, another ideology came to revolutionize food culture. In 1945, Eastern Germany stood under the influence of Soviet communism. Russian-style community meals, foodservice industry and proletarization served as role models and estranged Eastern Germany from the West (Kaminsky, 1999, pp. 12–20; Schlögel, 2017, pp. 398ff).

With the liberation of fascism, a period of seemingly unlimited economic growth was initiated within the Western World. This, too, can be classified as an ideology, insofar the free individual is faced with an imperative to consume. In this cultural framework, social recognition is achieved through consumption. The most accessible and affordable way to do so was by consuming foodstuffs and luxury goods, which had been intentionally produced to fulfill this purpose by brand-name manufactures.

In regard to food culture, the United States more and more became a leading nation for Western Europe. On the one hand, this related to the material aspect of food manifesting in hamburgers, chewing gum or cola-drinks. On the other hand, this was related to social aspects of eating. The pioneering character of the consumption of food outside of fixed meals represented by fast food or takeaway food had been accepted long since. Transmitted via motion picture films and television series these cultural patterns had slowly been adopted within everyday life of Europe (Hirschfelder, 2005, pp. 249–253).

The postwar period in general brought with it an improvement of food supply. This led to the first incidence of oversupply in the course of the 1950s (Teuteberg, 1986, pp. 236–252), e.g. in Great Britain, France and especially in Switzerland, the Benelux area and Germany.

By an intentional turning away from its Nazi past, Germany had even more been subject of modernization, than its neighboring countries. New food patterns adopted in this period, can be regarded as indicating the attempt to turn away from its past. This tendency enforced the abandonment of long established traditions, while countries like England or France rather tended to maintain former patterns of food culture.

Where traditional European food patterns and the identities coming with it had survived, they underwent a fundamental paradigmatic shift since the 1940s. As a consequence of decolonization, England, France and the Benelux area took in many people from former occupied territory (Reinhard, 2008, pp. 310–374). This also meant the import of new cuisines, which soon became part of European food cultures. In the case of England, for example, Indian and Pakistani influence was of great importance, whereas France was influenced mostly by Northern African and partly Western African cuisines. These influences particularly manifested in gastronomy, complementing the already existing pubs and restaurants. Economic growth and the increase of out of home eating functioned prerequisites for this development. In Switzerland and Germany Southern European and later also Turkish influences dominated.

The increasing automation of housekeeping and a rising acceptance of convenience food more and more drove out older patterns of food culture (Königs, 2014, pp. 125–132; Spiekermann, 2018, pp. 733–742). In this context, the symbolic-esthetic quality of food products became highly important. Hence, the packing of food soon gained increasing relevance (Cross and Proctor, 2014; Elpers, 2005; Stickel and Tröscher, 1998; Spiekermann, 1997, pp. 116–117; Schulze, 1992).

Food had already been presented in supermarkets and intentionally placed for advertising purposes. In this context, the consumption of food stuffs also meant a consumption of symbols. At least from an iconographic point of view, the symbolic quality of foodstuffs transported the idea of an ideal world in regard to long established traditions and cultural heritage.

However, in wide parts of Europe, the label "traditional" had been associated with backwardness for a long time. This interpretation was the most widespread in the Benelux area and in Germany, the least in England and Ireland. In addition, in the 1980s, exotic food obtained greater importance. Especially within gastronomy, and out of home and convenience eating but also within private spaces. This gave rise to Asian and Tex-Mex, as well as American cuisine (Möhring, 2012). The middle class *restaurant* in France, the *public house* in England and Ireland and the *Gaststätte* in Germany had downsized considerably in their number and relevance.

Current food cultures

We consume identity through food. Whenever culinary systems change very fast, identification processes may be disrupted. That is one of the main reasons for the upswing of traditional national cuisines around 1990 (Königs, 2014, p. 14; Müns, 2010, p. 15). Invented or newly interpreted traditional food patterns, such as "The full Irish Breakfast" or "Irish Stew," German "Currywurst" or "Bouletten," and French "Bouillabaisse," returned as key components within gastronomy. Along with that came a tourism-related marketing concerning foodstuffs that transported the alleged idea of highly valued tradition. This especially counts for England and Germany, less for the Netherlands and France. Commercialized traditional dishes, however, were not conceived as symbols of national demarcation, but rather as national variants of positively valued national cuisines (Brulotte and Di Giovine, 2014).

In this respect, this process can be interpreted as a European coping strategy in reaction to increasing globalization. The coping mechanism exhibits structural similarities between the different European countries, but also shows individual particularities.

Hence, within France, an enhanced desire to reach a certain quality of meals can still be recognized, whereas England is rather focused on folklorization and Switzerland, for example, more strongly operates with the use of the colors of its national flag or the Swiss Cross as symbols of nationality (Gyr, 2009). Despite the rich variants to be currently

found in Europe, there are also tendencies of homogenization becoming visible (Ritzer, 2004; Trummer, 2009, pp. 132–134; Prahl and Setzwein, 1999, p. 59). They convey individual world views and life styles trough food stuffs and cuisines (Brunner, 2011; Poulain, 2017, p. 174; Barlösius, 2016, pp. 119–127).

Against this background, individual preferences like a vegetarian diet or a more pleasure-oriented diet can be regarded as ways of reducing complexity. They offer the individual an alleged way of "eating properly" in regard to different value systems. Apart from that, of course the differentiation of eating practices in Europe also is a result of a global labor market within a digital world. Here, optical aspects of the body play an important role. Eating is no longer only to be considered as a means of representing social status but also as a means of shaping the body (Franken and Hirschfelder, 2016; Prahl and Setzwein, 1999, p. 102). Especially the younger generation tends to express the demanded need for achievement and willingness of work through body performance. Hence, this is heavily influencing food cultures. However, food consumption has also become a means of compensating boredom, social exclusion and frustration within a world of rapid cultural transformation. In this way, the consumption of cheap and high calorie food has also to be regarded as a coping strategy.

New forms of nutritional education, the trend of personalized eating in a digital world and rising living costs might reverse this process in the long run (Königs, 2014, pp. 381–385). When it comes to food and nutrition, humans will always be a product and mirror of their cultural environment.

After all, globalization and digitalization have made mobility an integral part of society. This has far-reaching consequences for food cultures. Whenever people are confronted with enormous cultural distress they seem to cling to old and proven cultural patterns and diets as a means of stabilizing their identity (Barlösius et al., 1997, p. 18; Augustynek and Hirschfelder, 2010). Arabic supermarkets or Turkish greengrocer's shops in Germany indicate this process as well as African food shops in Brussels or Polish delicatessen shops in London do. In the context of national negotiations of heritage and identity, by now, life realities of migrants only play a minor role. The question, if integration and normalization will take place on the level of national cuisines, or if migrant food patterns will obtain a more strategic meaning in functioning as opponents to hegemonic figures of thought in the context of what counts as traditional and belonging to different nations, will show in the future.

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