

**“IT’S LIKE HAVING YOUR CAKE
AND EATING IT TOO”**

**THE FATE OF CULINARY TRADITIONS IN
THE MODERN WORLD**

HELEN BENNY

SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy for the School of Health, Arts and Design at
Swinburne University of Technology

March 2018

Abstract

Food scholars agree that what people eat, and the ways in which they produce and prepare it, have been radically transformed by modern food systems. For some, the industrialization of food production and the globalization of food markets have led to homogenization and standardization; for others these processes have resulted in a proliferation of consumption choices. Underlying these divergent views, however, there is a broad consensus that traditional cuisines rooted in agrarian practices are being eroded. The seemingly paradoxical explosion of appeals to ‘traditional’ and ‘authentic’ food, recipes and home-style cooking in popular culture and in supermarkets, it is argued, reflects a nostalgic longing for some kind of meaning in a world in which it appears to be more and more elusive.

This study argues that traditional culinary cultures and practices are more resilient than is generally believed. Based on in-depth interviews with 31 people from diverse backgrounds residing in a multicultural suburb of Melbourne, a key finding was that culinary traditions retained important symbolic and practical significance for the participants. The study found that culinary traditions remain important emblems of cultural heritage and family origin, and that the participants continued to practice their culinary traditions, albeit in transformed ways. Crucially, the study also found that the participants saw their use of ‘convenience’ products and experiments with their own and others’ traditions as innovations which unfolded alongside their continued identification with their inherited traditions. Finally, the study found that while a ‘traditional’ gender division of labour around domestic meal provision was present among the participants, the revaluation of the status of cooking that has been occurring in Western popular culture was influencing the meanings and status associated with domestic cooking.

The thesis draws on sociological theories of ‘living’ traditions to argue that rather than leading to the erosion of culinary traditions, modern foodways are providing a way of sustaining them. Drawing on the work of John Thompson, Barbara

Adam, and others it problematizes the notions of ‘detraditionalization’ and the ‘invention of tradition’ in food studies and proposes a notion of ‘authenticity’ that recognizes the mutability of traditions. The thesis concludes that culinary traditions are more resilient than many commentators suppose, and modern food systems are less corrosive than some of its critics suggest.

Acknowledgments

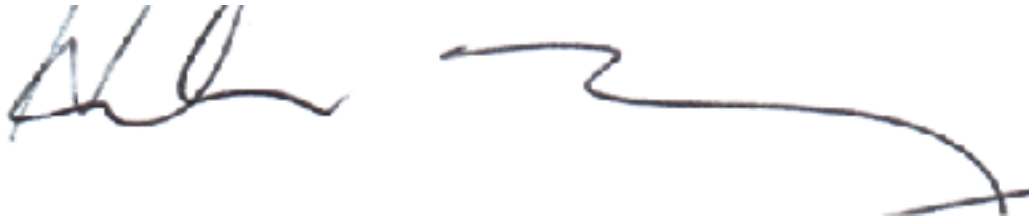
First acknowledgements must go to the participants who so generously shared their stories, kitchens and recipes while taking part in this study. I hope my humble effort describing their culinary traditions has done them justice and in some small measure reciprocates their collaborative gifts. Many thanks are also owed to Glenda Ballantyne for her supervision. Her constancy and clarity have been a source of inspiration throughout. To the little group of fellow researchers who met to discuss the joys and frustrations of writing a thesis, thank you for your sustaining conversations and convivial support. For their unceasing patience, many friends also need thanking.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to Ella Chalk – a tireless cook who taught me a great deal about food traditions but also offered some insight into how and why they change.

Professional copy-editing services were provided by Vlora Hoti, in accordance with the university-endorsed national ‘Guidelines for editing research theses’.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a series of loops and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that ends in a small hook.

Signed _____

Dated 4/06/2018 _____

PREFACE

Early one morning some years ago I saw a man leading a small sheep towards a soccer field in Brunswick, an inner suburb of Melbourne. He was accompanied by two young children. They took the lamb to the greenest part of the field and sat by it while it grazed on the grass growing there. In the weeks following this first encounter, I came across the little group several more times and eventually, led by curiosity, struck up a conversation with the man. What I had naively thought might be an unusual choice of pet was nothing of the kind. Easter was approaching, and he was fattening the animal before killing it to roast in celebration of the end of the Orthodox fasting period. Wouldn't it be easier just to buy a lamb already slaughtered from the market, I remember asking. *No*, he laughed in response, *it's important to do it like this; we have always done it this way.*

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	III
DECLARATION	III
PREFACE	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VI
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION	1
Research design	5
Interdisciplinarity and multiperspectivity	5
The concept of tradition	6
Aspects of food traditions	9
Conceptual framework	10
Findings and argument	13
Limitations	14
Why study the fate of food traditions?	14
Outline of the Thesis	15
CHAPTER TWO	
LITERATURE REVIEW	18
Background	18
The invention of food traditions	19
The impact of modernization on food traditions	21
Homogenization	21
Pluralization, individualization and choice	23
Glocalization	27

Preservation through modernization	28
Hybridization	29
The meanings of food traditions	30
Food and cultural identity	30
Food and multiculturalism	32
Everyday cosmopolitanism	33
Food traditions and mobility: migration and settlement	34
The authenticity of tradition	36
Research questions	37
CHAPTER THREE	
THE FATE OF TRADITIONS	40
Invention	41
Rationalization	41
Detraditionalization	44
Retraditionalization and coexistence	47
Conclusion	51
CHAPTER FOUR	
METHODOLOGY	53
Introduction	53
Context of the study	55
The physical setting	55
Local/global dimensions: the interconnecting ‘flows’	57
‘Cultivating communities’	59
Recruitment	59

The participants	62
Cultural background	62
Age and Generation	63
Language issues	64
Gender and foodwork	65
Further sensitivities in qualitative research	66
Collecting the data	68
Setting up the interviews	68
Designing interviews as conversations	69
Conducting the interviews	71
Further observations in the field	73
Analysis of the data	73
The first step	73
Transcribing the interviews	74
Coding the data	76
Reflections on the research process	77
Participant-researcher relationships	77
Ethics and research agendas	80
Conclusion: contribution to knowledge	81
 CHAPTER FIVE	
CULINARY IDENTITIES	83
Emblems of Cultural identity	84
British food: The bland and the boring	84
Migrant food: Culinary pride	87

Sharing food	91
Commensality	91
Hospitality and reciprocity	92
Festive foods and ritual events	96
Re-approaching traditions	101
Tradition as boundary markers	104
Conclusion	107

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

AND COMMODIFICATION109

Transforming traditions	109
Abundance and variety	110
Convenience	113
Maintaining traditions	117
The convenience of traditions	117
Homemade and home grown/artisanal	119
Growing food	119
Foraging	122
‘Making do’ – frugality and thrift	123
Shopping locally	127
Conclusion	131

CHAPTER SEVEN

OTHER PEOPLE’S TRADITIONS.....133

Media	133
Zones of contact	138

Settlement strategies _____	138
Communities of practice _____	140
Recognition and incorporation _____	142
Reception: The long-time Australian experience of encountering migrant food _____	144
Intercultural exchanges _____	147
Blended families _____	150
Travel _____	152
Conclusion _____	154

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONFLICTING TRENDS: INDIVIDUALIZATION AND SOCIAL IMPERATIVES156

Individualization _____	156
Adding a personal touch _____	157
Creolization and fusion _____	159
Gender: the more things change... _____	163
Justifying the continued division of labour _____	163
Learning to cook _____	166
Sorting yourself out _____	173
Cooking as pleasure _____	175
Conclusion _____	176

CHAPTER NINE

LIVING TRADITIONS178

The lived experience of traditional cuisines _____	178
Embodied cuisines _____	179

Insiders and outsiders: attributing authenticity to people	181
The future of food traditions	183
Challenges to traditions	184
Sustaining food traditions	187
Authenticity	187
Nostalgia for home-grown and homemade food	187
Better taste	190
Better social and economic relations	191
Better health: the benefits of traditional food	194
Better for the environment	198
Traditional meanings	200
Intergenerational transmission	201
Conclusion	203
 CHAPTER TEN	
RESILIENCE THROUGH TRANSFORMATION	205
The meanings of food traditions	205
Emblems of cultural identity	205
Refusing the badge	206
Issue-driven culinary identity	208
The impact of modern food systems on food traditions	208
Deskilling and re-skilling	209
Commodification and convenience	210
The convenience of traditions	212
Individualization	213

Anxiety and uncertainty	214
Relieving repetition	215
Resisting industrial food	216
Other people's traditions	217
Mechanization or migration?	218
Migrant settlement	219
Meanings of culinary cosmopolitanism	221
Gender	223
Feminism and foodwork	224
Generational differences	227
Conclusion	229
 CHAPTER 11	
CONCLUSION	231
Contribution to knowledge	234
Limitations of the study and scope for future research	235
Concluding remarks	236
POSTSCRIPT	237
REFERENCES	238
APPENDICES	260
Appendix 1: The flyers	260
APPENDIX 2: the participants	261
Appendix 3: The conversation topics	264
Appendix 4: The consent form	265
APPENDIX 5: Ethics approval	266

RESULTING PUBLICATIONS	267
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

'Food is never just food'

(Caplan 1997: 9)

Open any of the recipe books flooding bookstores, or watch any of the cooking shows that have flooded the airwaves, and you are bound to come across 'traditional' recipes that, it is claimed, have been inherited from a grandmother, or discovered in the wild back blocks of some far-flung region. And if you browse through the supermarket shelves, you will find 'tradition' invoked there too, with thousands of products marketed as made from 'traditional' recipes.

Food scholars have been very attentive to this mushrooming presence of the traditional in contemporary popular culture and food marketing. In their efforts to understand these seemingly paradoxical appeals to tradition in late modernity, they have identified a range of social, cultural, and economic trends that have fostered a renewed salience of tradition. Industrialization and globalization, they suggest, have profoundly changed not only what people eat, but also the ways in which food is produced and prepared. Cynical marketing exercises, commentators suggest, exploit a widespread longing to find certainty and reassurance in a world from which they have been largely eliminated (Fischler 1999; Leitch 2003; Srinivas 2013). Frequent promotions of home cooking, local produce, and identification with national or regional styles of cooking in the recipe columns of

the women's magazines prey upon an underlying "search for some kind of coherent meaning in culinary life" (Warde 1997: 184).

References to 'traditional' food are also found in contemporary societies in farmer's markets, 'alternative' food venues, and in the literature of movements such as Slow Food. In contrast to the appeals to tradition claimed on supermarket shelves, in these places, there are calls for a return to 'traditional' ways of food production, preparation, cooking and eating. In these contexts, pleas for a return to tradition are connected to interest in sustainable food practices, and concerns about the consequences of the industrialization of food production (Crocombe 2008; Pollan 2008).

Food scholars have also begun exploring these calls for a return to 'tradition'. In this case, too, a powerful sense of nostalgia has been highlighted. Some highlight a yearning to reconnect with traditional foodways in the face of what are seen as harmful effects of industrialization (Belasco 1993; Buchler, Smith & Lawrence 2010; Fiddes 1997). Others suggest that they are mostly the preserve of middle class elites seeking culinary novelty and new forms of cultural capital (Donati, K 2005; Duruz 2001; Naccarato & Lebesco 2012). Often ignored in both cases, it is pointed out, is the labour that these foodways require (Laudan 2001), and the hardships upon which they were based (Kingston 1995).

These studies offer important insights into the factors shaping food practices and choices in the contemporary world. Notably, they align with the observations of influential sociological theorists who suggest that the structures of modernity have eroded the social bases of tradition in the contemporary world (Giddens 1991; Ritzer 2008). This breakdown of traditions, such theorists further argue, has fostered nostalgia for the past and its supposed certainties. In these circumstances, the idea of tradition has been ripe for commercial and ideological manipulation.

However, when I walk through the streets of Brunswick, the inner urban, multicultural suburb in Melbourne where I live, I encounter examples of

traditional food production and provisioning that call these conclusions into question. There are examples of the domestic cultivation and production of food which have retained links to their artisanal origins in pre-industrialized communities. In backyards of this suburb there are fruit trees and vegetable beds, apparatuses for cooking food, such as clay ovens, and animals being raised for food. In the shopping strips there are 'ethnic' restaurants and cafes that serve meals from a diverse range of traditional cuisines. Retailers also sell traditional utensils and equipment. Here, 'traditional' foodways are 'part and parcel' of everyday life, far removed from the heavily mediated and commercialized presentations.

This manifestation of food traditions has also been investigated by scholars. Interest in these phenomena has been evident in particular among researchers of migration and multiculturalism. In migration studies, researchers have pointed out that food traditions continue to generate loyalty and adherence to collectivities, and that they remain potent markers of identity for migrant groups (Duruz 1999a; Thomas 2004; Wise 2009). Traditional food practices are seen as an important part of migrant settlement strategies, because practicing food cultures 'from home' is a means to feel 'at home' in a new country (Hage 1997; Kittler and Sucher 2004; Savas 2014; Zevallos 2003). In multicultural studies, researchers have also explored the role that food traditions play in the construction and maintenance of collective identities (D'Sylva & Beagan 2011; James 2005; Karaosmanoglu 2007; Kittler & Sucher 2004). These studies stress the role that food plays in the way people recognize similarities and differences, and how it expresses social belonging and social boundaries (Duruz 2005; James 2004b; Koc & Welsh 2001; Newman & Gibson 2005; Noble 2009; Wise 2005).

This literature has also offered important insights about food practices and choices in the contemporary world. In these accounts, however, inherited food practices and cultures have a continuing and significant presence.

For the most part, the two broad approaches to food traditions outlined here have unfolded in isolation from each other. Dialogue between researchers exploring the corrosive impact of industrialization and globalization on inherited food practices and cultures, and those exploring the continuing salience of food within migration and multiculturalism studies has been limited.¹ Yet these contradictory trends are unfolding co-temporally and co-spatially. It seems clear, therefore, that a full account of the influences shaping contemporary foodways requires an understanding of how they interact with each other, as well as of how they are experienced in the lives of individuals. A sustained account of how dynamics eroding food traditions intersect with those sustaining their influence is yet to be undertaken.

This thesis seeks to address this gap in the literature. The primary research question it poses is: how do the socio-economic dynamics corroding food traditions intersect with the practices and meanings sustaining their influence? In particular, it investigates how and why 31 people living in Brunswick cook and eat in the manner they do.

This question is explored through three subsidiary questions:

1. What, if any, significance do inherited food traditions hold for the participants?
2. What impact has industrialization and commodification had on the food cultures and practices of the participants?
3. What impact has living in a multicultural society had on the food cultures and practices of the participants?

The inner urban area of Brunswick is a useful site for a study of the multiple dynamics influencing food traditions. As part of a major metropolitan city,

¹ There are notable exceptions to this: among them are David Bell and Joanne Hollows (2007); Jean Duruz (1999b; 2001; 2005) and Amanda Wise (2005; 2011).

Brunswick lies within the industrialized and globalized networks of food production, distribution and consumption. Primarily occupied by descendants of British colonists until the early years of the 20th century, the area quickly became a place for migrants from a range of backgrounds. The successive waves of migration have brought many culturally diverse food traditions into a foodscape previously dominated by the British culinary culture that was transported to Australia during early colonization (see Santich 2012; Symons 1982). Brunswick now boasts many ethnic restaurants and shops, as well as an array of conventional supermarkets. Specialty wholesalers, retailers, and fresh food markets provide the necessary ingredients and equipment to reproduce food from a wide range of homelands.

Individuals from a number of cultural backgrounds were recruited to participate in this study. This included people of Italian, Greek, British, Chinese, Turkish, Egyptian, Croatian, Spanish, Macedonian and Syrian backgrounds. Nineteen women and twelve men, aged between 26 and 78, took part in semi-structured, in-depth interviews that explored the topics of shopping, cooking and eating practices.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Interdisciplinarity and multiperspectivity

This study sits primarily within the sociology of food. However, taking heed of Alan Beardsworth and Teresa Keil's injunction that sociologists should "be prepared to think more flexibly about the traditional boundaries of their discipline" when dealing with questions of food, this thesis incorporates research and concepts from neighbouring disciplines, including anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, and health. Like many others, Beardsworth and Keil see the need for interdisciplinarity on the basis that "eating lies at the point of intersection of a whole series of intricate physiological, psychological, ecological, economic, political, social and cultural processes" (Beardsworth & Keil 1997: 6).

However, as pointed out by John Germov and Lauren Williams, a comprehensive theoretical paradigm in the field of food sociology has yet to emerge (2008). Alan Warde sheds some light on why this might be the case, noting that there is no singular social logic that can explain the way people eat, because “some evidence can be found to support every competing theory of consumption and every account of contemporary trends” (Warde 1997:181). Germov and Williams speak for many, however, when they emphasize the importance of looking at both structural factors and individual or personal preferences in determining what people eat (2008: 9). Therefore, a multi-perspectival approach is central to this research.

The concept of tradition

The terms ‘tradition’ and ‘traditional’ are used widely in food studies. However, their meanings are often taken for granted, and rarely clarified. They are also used to refer to a range of quite distinct phenomena.

Richard Wilk draws a distinction between the idea of tradition as a folk concept (an idea people use to understand their culture and the world around them), and an analytical concept used by those trying to explain and analyze a culture from a distance (Wilk (2006: 106-7). This study is concerned with both. The participants frequently invoked the idea of tradition to describe their food practices and their associated meanings, while the study uses an analytical conception of tradition to interpret these practices and meanings.

As an analytical concept, the core associations of the terms are generally agreed upon among food scholars. First and foremost, a tradition is understood as something that is transmitted across generations. In food studies, a tradition is seen, as in Edward Shils’ classical sociological definition, as something that is ‘handed on’ from the past across generations (1981: 12). The longevity of traditions is seen as an important source of their authority. For instance, Beardsworth and Keil, suggest that food traditions were “derive their authority

and their legitimacy from their long-established status” (1997: 67). Similarly, Michael Symons argues that longevity bestows legitimacy on food traditions because “numerous generations have worked day after day on getting dishes just right” (1993: 57).

A second association of traditions is also prominent in food studies: traditions are typically viewed as being deeply rooted in their place of origin. Local climatic and geographical conditions are frequently seen as foundational to the development of distinct cuisines (Anderson 2005; Farb & Armelagos 1980; Mintz 1996; Symons 1982), and for this reason, traditional cuisines are seen as being the food of a place. For example, Peter Farb and George Armelagos argue that the ‘elegance’ of Japanese culinary traditions is based, in part, on adapting what is eaten to the scarce fuel resources available for cooking (1980: 10). Thinly sliced meat or fish could be cooked quickly over high heat or eaten raw, which helped to conserve fuel. Similarly, Sidney Mintz (2007) argues that the environmental conditions of a place are related to the prominence of specific starches or carbohydrates in traditional cuisines; in Asia, rice holds a similar place as what wheat holds in Europe. For others, it is location-specific aromatic agents that play the key role in creating the culinary signatures that set regional dishes or cuisines apart (Anderson 2005; Kittler & Sucher 2004; Rozin 2006; Sutton 2001).

However, there are important differences in underlying meanings of ‘tradition’. The first is between understandings of tradition as a discursive construction, and as an empirical phenomenon. In the first usage, ‘tradition’ is seen primarily as a rhetorical construction (see Sassatelli 2010; Slater 1997; Warde 1997). In this usage, scholars are referring to spurious discursive appeals to the longevity and origins of supposed food traditions. For example, historian Panikos Panayi (2008) notes that the quintessential English meal of ‘fish and chips’ is a combination of elements from Jewish and French traditions, respectively. Margaret Visser notes that the tomato, which is frequently represented as the trademark of traditional Italian cuisine, was introduced relatively recently, and was unknown in Europe

prior to the ‘Columbian Exchange’. In fact, Visser writes, “spaghetti waited patiently for the arrival of a sour and copiously juicy berry... and enthusiastically embraced the tomato when it came” (1999: 121)². In the second usage, a tradition is an empirical phenomenon. In this usage, scholars are referring to empirically observable transmission of food cultures and practices. In such cases, the focus is on culinary practices and repertoires, and their related meanings.

The second difference in underlying assumptions, closely tied up with the first, concerns what constitutes an ‘authentic’ tradition. Writers focused on ideological and commercialized appeals to food traditions stress the spurious notions of authenticity that are mobilized for commercial benefit (Long 2004; MacCannell 1973; Diamond 1995; Lu & Fine 1995; Heldke 2005; Naccarato & Lebesco 2012; Sassatelli 2010; Sutton 2001). They point out that ‘authentic’ is used to convey meanings that range from ‘ethnic’ and ‘original’ to ‘natural’ and often comes with premium pricing (Warde 1997) and or is invoked as part of projects to ‘invent’ tradition’ (Cook and Crang 1996). Those concerned with the transmission of food practices, in contrast, focus on the question of the extent to which a tradition changes before it can no longer be said to be authentic. Some suggest that only food produced in the manner of agrarian societies (Symons 1993) or which remains free of contamination or hybridization is authentic (Heldke 2003; 2005; Symons 1993). Others insist that change is part of tradition. They point out that culinary systems never remain in any sort of ‘original’ state (Bell & Valentine 1997; Sutton 2001; Wilk 2006), and that there are no cuisines that have not been affected in some way by “outside influences” (Heldke 2005: 388).

This thesis is concerned with ‘tradition’ in both rhetorical and empirical senses. Its aim is to explore how the social, economic and cultural forces which have created a context in which ‘tradition’ is often rhetorically constructed and commodified,

² As cultural geographers David Bell and Gill Valentine note, critiques of uncritical associations of food traditions with nations are important, because ‘the foodstuffs we think of as definitionally part of a nation’s sense of identity often hides complex histories of trade links, cultural exchange, and especially colonialism’ (1997: 169).

have impacted the meanings and practices that participants associate with their inherited food cultures and practices.

Aspects of food traditions

The terms ‘tradition’ and ‘traditional’ are also used variously to refer to pre-industrial modes of production, cuisines with roots in agrarian societies and the transmission of mundane and domestic practices of cooking and eating.

The first meaning of tradition is invoked when Symons notes that before industrialization, “people collected, grew, stored and cooked almost all their own food” (Symons 1993: xi). An associated connotation is that a relatively large proportion of the population was directly engaged in all aspects of food provision, and that its products were distributed largely within local kinship systems (Beardsworth & Keil 1997: 33). These types of food practices are often referred to as a ‘peasant’ style of production (Symons 1982; Mennell 2008).

The second meaning of tradition is invoked when Fernandez-Armesto refers to cuisines which originated in agrarian societies when food began to be produced, rather than simply collected (Fernandez-Armesto 2002). They are thought to bear long-established signatures of a “creative interplay between society and the soil” through the gradual domestication of plants and animals (Symons 1982:10). They are also thought to be the food of a people. As Sidney Mintz, (1996) puts it “a genuine cuisine has common social roots; it is the food of a community” (1996: 96). Different types of regional and geographic scales are used to describe traditional cuisines (Appadurai 1988; Bell & Valentine 1997). ‘Alsace’ cuisine is

an example of a ‘regional’ cuisine, but it is also part of a ‘national’ French cuisine (Mintz 1996: 96)³.

The third meaning of tradition is invoked by writers who focus on the intergenerational transmission of food practices, tastes and meanings (Beoku-Betts 1995; Bradby 1997; Braun & Beckie 2014; Cardona 2004; Kwik 2008; Moiso, Arnould & Price 2004; Murcott 1997; Wallendorf & Arnould 1991). This usage is differentiated from *cuisine*, in that many of these cooking practices are customary and performed without reflection, whereas cuisine is more often an “overt and conscious aspect of food” (Wilk 2006: 106). It can refer to transmission, often orally, across as few as two or three generations.

All of these aspects of food traditions will be central to the analysis in this study. To refer to them collectively, I use the term ‘food tradition’. To refer to traditional modes of producing and cooking food, I use the term *artisanal*. To refer to longstanding, demarcated styles and repertoires of dishes, I use the term *traditional cuisine*. To refer to transmission of mundane and domestic practices of cooking and eating, I use Sutton’s term *stock of knowledge and skills* (Sutton 2001: 129).

Conceptual framework

To explore the intersections of trends that scholars have identified in relatively independent bodies of literature, this thesis critically draws on concepts from a number of theoretical perspectives.

To refer to the broad structural dynamics affecting contemporary foodways, it adopts George Ritzer’s theory of *McDonaldization* (2008). However, while

³ The idea of cuisine is used more generally. Symons applies it to describe the “entire complex by which food is produced and processed, and the attitudes which surround its consumption” (Symons 1993: xi). In a similar line of thought, Farb and Armelagos (1980:10) use the term to refer to “the sum total of nutritional resources, the technology of their preparation, and the taste preferences entailed”. In this broader usage, a cuisine may or may not be ‘traditional’. Distinctions between ‘high’, ‘low’, ‘national’, ‘international’, or ‘modern’ cuisines have also been made (Mintz 1996).

recognizing this undeniable trend, it also acknowledges the capacity of people to resist its homogenizing dynamics, as well as countervailing trends (Caldwell 2005; Rinehart 1998; Waters 2006; Watson 2006).

To refer to the erosion of the influence of tradition in the lived experience of people, analyzed in terms of ‘detraditionalization’ by Anthony Giddens (1994) and Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (1996), it adopts their concept of *individualization*. However, while recognizing the widespread presence of individualizing trends, it also recognizes the countervailing, continued influence of group affiliations (Warde 1994a, 1994b).

To refer to the mobilization of discursive appeals to ersatz ‘traditions’, it adopts the notion of the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm 1983). However, while acknowledging that many appeals to tradition are inauthentic and commercially motivated, the study also recognizes the empirical phenomenon of complexes of meaning and practices that are handed on from generation to generation.

To conceptualize the transmission of such meanings and practices, it adopts a concept of tradition drawn from John Thompson (1996), Barbara Adam (1996) and Timothy Luke (1996). These scholars, in a volume edited by Paul Heelas, Scott Lash and Paul Morris (1996), criticize the kind of fixed and unitary understanding of tradition that is widespread in both general sociological debates and food studies. Such conceptions by definition, they argue, *assume* that traditions are eroded in the modern world, and appeals to them are constructed or ‘inauthentic’. They propose instead a notion of multifaceted and mutable traditions that makes the presence of tradition in the contemporary world an open, empirical question.

Thompson provides a useful framework for understanding the multi-dimensionality of tradition. He argues that there are four distinct aspects of tradition. The first is the ‘hermeneutic aspect’, which refers to the “set of background assumptions that is taken for granted by individuals in the conduct of

their daily lives” and are transmitted from one generation to the next (Thompson 1996: 91). The second is the ‘normative aspect’, which refers to the, often ritualized, forms of belief and patterns of action handed down from the past that “serve as a normative guide for actions and beliefs in the present” (Thompson 1996: 92). The third is the ‘legitimation aspect’, which refers to ways in which “tradition can... serve as a source of support for the exercise of power and authority” (Thompson 1996: 92). The fourth is the ‘identity aspect’, which refers to the symbolic materials that contribute to identity. It encompasses both ‘self-identity’, referring to a “sense of oneself as an individual with certain characteristics and potentialities” (Thompson 1996: 93) and collective identity, referring to the sense of belonging to a group or being part of a collectivity. This multifaceted conception has the advantage of allowing for the possibility that the four aspects are affected differently in the modern world. Thompson argues that the normative and legitimation aspects of tradition have declined as the grounds for action, behaviour and authority in modern societies, but that “tradition retains its significance in the modern world ... as a means of making sense of the world ... and as a way of creating a sense of belonging” (1996: 93).

All three scholars also emphasize the mutability of traditions. Thompson notes that traditions are “interwoven in complex ways with other trends and developmental characteristics of modern societies” (1996: 103) and Adam points out that *creativity* is always involved in the handing down of traditions (1996: 137). She argues that tradition is an *active process* that requires creativity and renewal in its engagement with the past in the present. Every act of ‘handing down’ a tradition is a “moment of active reconstruction of past beliefs and commitments” (Adam 1996: 137). Timothy Luke similarly argues that it is problematic to conceive tradition as ‘changeless’. In his view, tradition consists of much more than a prescriptive authority for telling people how things *should* be done (1996: 116). For him, a more dynamic notion that sees tradition as something “continuously sent and chaotically received throughout all the generations” through the agency of people who make them live is necessary.

Crucially, he also points out that traditions convey meanings and values that can be, and are, interpreted differently.

This understanding of tradition has a number of advantages. First, it is broad enough to encompass both rhetorical and empirical usages of the term. Second, it is broad enough to encompass the diverse angles from which the vexed question of the ‘authenticity’ of traditions arises. Thirdly, it is broad enough to pose the question of the ongoing presence of tradition in the contemporary world as an empirical question, rather than conceptually pre-determining it.

FINDINGS AND ARGUMENT

The study found that identification with inherited cuisines remained strong, and often functioned as an emblem of cultural identity.

It also found that the variety and commodification provided by the global-industrial food system has had a strong impact on the food practices of the participants. Although these changes were typically embraced for their convenience and array of choice, both artisanal modes of food production and inherited cuisines continued to be highly valued. While participants recognized the difficulties involved in returning to artisanal modes of production on a large scale, they were attuned to the dangers they saw as inherent in the industrialization of foodways. The findings also revealed that their food traditions have been transformed by borrowings from other traditions, and by personal experimentations. The participants saw these changes as an internal evolution of their culinary traditions, rather than an erosion of them.

The thesis argues that while industrialization and globalization have dramatically transformed the production, distribution and consumption of food over the past two hundred years, culinary traditions are more resilient than many commentators have claimed, and that modern food systems are less corrosive than some of its

critics suggest. Paradoxically, modern foodways are providing new ways of sustaining food traditions.

LIMITATIONS

From the outset, it is important to acknowledge some of the limits of this study. Firstly, the study takes place within a developed country, and its conclusions about the fate of food traditions in the modern world apply primarily to this context. Secondly, while the main focus of this study is the impact of industrialization and globalization on inherited food practices and cultures, there are many additional factors which shape contemporary food choices. There is a vast literature that explores how food choices are shaped by class. There is also a large literature on the gendered character of food practices. Factors associated with both class and gender are important influences on food choices in the contemporary world; however, they are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, while not the study's main focus, the issue of gender is not ignored. As gender plays such a central role in food practices and meanings it is virtually inevitable that it would arise. It arises in this study because 'traditional' gender norms and expectations around food remain an enduring axis around which food cultures and practices are organized. Finally, no claim has been made that the participants in this study are a representative sample of the Australian population. Nonetheless, the attitudes and practices reported here are representative of a significant part of the population in Australia, and as such are indicative of certain demographics in multicultural communities more generally.

WHY STUDY THE FATE OF FOOD TRADITIONS?

A study of the fate of food traditions in the contemporary world offers both empirical and theoretical insights. In the first case, the preservation of food traditions has the potential to ameliorate the most detrimental effects of the industrialization of modern food systems. Scholars and lay commentators alike point to the environmental damage caused by the profligate use of fossil fuels and

chemicals, risks involved with genetic engineering of food crops (Knight 2006; Lawrence & Grice 2008; Leahy 2008), the dominance of agri-businesses in determining the modern diet (Patel 2007; Visser 1989) and the health implications of fast food consumption and highly processed products (Schlosser & Wilson 2006). Traditional cuisines and practices are seen by many such scholars and lay commentators as more environmentally sustainable (Pollan 2006; Roberts 2008), healthier than manufactured modern foodstuffs laden with sugar, fat and salt (Keane 1997; Nestle 2003), and as a repository for important culinary knowledge and skills (Lang & Caraher 2001).

In the second case, a study of the fate of food traditions can shed light on broader debates in contemporary sociology about the role of tradition in the contemporary world. This theme has emerged as a key issue in recent sociological debates, especially in characterizations of the far-reaching consequences of globalization (Giddens 1994; Tomlinson 1999; Warde 2000). There is a pervasive tendency in these debates to see tradition simply as the opposite of modernity, doomed to disappear as societies modernize (Ritzer 2008, Beck 1999; Giddens 1991; 1994; Bauman 2001). However, this view has been contested by scholars arguing that tradition and modernity coexist, and that traditions are transformed rather than eliminated (Adam 1996; Luke 1996; Sutton 2001; Thompson 1996; Wilk 2006). By studying the fate of food traditions in the contemporary world, I hope to contribute new empirical evidence to this debate.

OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapters 2 to 4 explore how the literature has engaged with the research concerns of this thesis, how social theory has been used to frame these concerns, and the methods used to investigate them.

Chapter 2 deals with the burgeoning literature on food. Its examination of studies across a number of disciplines situates the present work and identifies gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3 outlines the broader theoretical debate about the fate of tradition in modernity in order to contextualize the arguments about food traditions presented in the thesis. It also gives more detail on the key concepts framing the study.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the methods used to conduct the study. I have dwelt on the methodology at some length because it demonstrates where this project fits within the broader field of food studies. It provides justifications for my use of semi-structured interviews and ethnographic reporting, and outlines the reasons for avoiding other methods of data collection.

Chapters 5 to 9 present the findings from the interviews.

Chapter 5 explores the participants' identifications with food traditions. Both everyday practices and celebratory occasions are explored, in order to understand the role that food plays as a marker of cultural identity, and continues to operate in delineating boundaries of belonging.

Chapter 6 explores the impact of industrialization and commodification on the participants' culinary practices. The impact of these developments on both traditional modes of production and traditional cuisines are examined.

Chapter 7 explores the impact of multicultural 'flows' on the participants' culinary practices, particularly through the migrant experience.

Chapter 8 explores two notable, but divergent, trends occurring in the food traditions of the participants. The first of these is a trend towards individualization. The second is the enduring hold of gendered norms and practices.

Chapter 9 explores the lived experience of tradition. It examines the embodied nature of food traditions, and considers the challenges posed to traditions by modern lifestyles as well as their resilience.

Introduction

Chapter 10 offers a discussion of the findings. It discusses the continuing meanings of inherited traditions, and the impact of modern, pluralized foodways and multicultural settings on traditional cuisines. A further two findings– related to generation and gender – are also discussed.

Chapter 11 concludes the thesis. It observes that the participants see their traditions as an incarnate part of their lives, embedded in sensual memory and enacted in daily repetitions. It concludes that food traditions are mutable and evolving, and that paradoxically, the modern food system is sustaining rather than eroding food traditions.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

‘Food is a highly condensed social fact’

(Arjun Appadurai - cited in Belasco 2002: 2).

This chapter reviews the multifaceted literature that offers insights into the role of food traditions in the contemporary world. Food scholars agree that modern systems of production and distribution have radically transformed how food is produced and consumed. In particular, they agree that the foods people eat, and how they eat them, has been reshaped by the mechanization of agriculture, the industrialization of food processing, and the intensified commodification and globalization of food systems.

BACKGROUND

Prior to industrialization “people collected, grew, stored and cooked almost all their own food” (Symons 1993: xi), which meant that foodways were characterized by small-scale production, limited exchange, and pronounced environment constraints, and that their style and composition was ‘local’ (Anderson 2005). In contrast, modern food production is highly mechanized, and occurs away from the view and without the participation of the majority of the population (Beardsworth & Keil 1997). Developments in preservation, processing and transportation, and more recently in world-wide supply chains, have reduced seasonal fluctuations, largely eliminated shortages in developed countries, and have opened up novel eating opportunities in the forms of increased availability of pre-prepared foods.

One undisputed outcome of these developments has been the ‘delocalization’ of foodways. As Alan Beardsworth and Teresa Keil note, industrialization and globalization have provided the conditions for the ‘disembedding’ of cuisines,

making “it possible for an increased proportion of the daily diet to be drawn from distant places” (1997: 158). John Tomlinson stresses that globalization has “undermined the close *material* relationship between provenance of food and locality” (1999: 123 original italics). Eating habits have been further transformed by the increase in global ‘flows’ of people (Bell & Hollows 2007; Cook & Crang 1996). There have been large-scale movements of people around the world, who often bring their culinary traditions with them. The result, in some cases, is multicultural societies which celebrate the diversity of cuisines found among their inhabitants

However, there is significantly less agreement over *how* food traditions have been impacted by these processes more broadly.

This chapter reviews four bodies of literature with a bearing on food traditions in the contemporary world. First, it reviews the literature on tradition primarily as a discursive or rhetorical construct. Second, it surveys the literature on the impact of modernization and globalization on food traditions. One sub stream argues these developments are eroding food traditions, through homogenization or pluralization. Another argues that they are at the same time provoking reactions which reinforce traditions. Third, it surveys the literature that focuses on the role of food in collective identities. This work underlines the continuing currency of food traditions. Finally, it reviews the debates that have arisen over the ‘authenticity’ of tradition.

THE INVENTION OF FOOD TRADITIONS

The field of food studies has been strongly influenced by the idea of the ‘invention of tradition’, an idea coined by Eric Hobsbawm (1983). This notion suggests that many ‘traditions’ do not have the seamless continuity with the long-distant past that they are thought to have. Hobsbawm contends that many so-called traditions have been invented to serve a calculated purpose for those in power. Even though invented traditions have only a tenuous continuity with the

past, they may still provide some sense of symbolic association, such as shoring up nationalist sentiment.

Food studies scholars have identified cases of the relatively recent ‘manufacture’ of supposed food traditions (Abarca 2004; Ashley et.al 2004; Wilk 2006). A particular focus of this work is in line with Hobsbawm’s main theme of invented nationalist traditions. Rachel Laudan notes that many dishes that are thought of as originating from distinct and ancient cultures have relatively recent histories. For example, tempura and sushi appeared in Japan only after the middle of the 19th century; Balti curry dishes were invented in Pakistani restaurants in Birmingham during the 1980s; Indonesian *padang* food was introduced for a tourist market (Laudan 2001: 39).

The invention of ersatz traditions for commercial purposes is also widely commented upon. These cases point to the logic by which modern food manufacturers commodify an idea of tradition, for example, by labelling industrially produced items as ‘traditional’ in attempts to convince consumers to buy their products. (Cook & Crang 1996; James 2005; Mintz 1996; Wilk 2006). It has been pointed out that ‘the past’ these strategies appeal to has been idealized, and bears little resemblance to the traditional cuisines or practices found in their original domains. David Sutton argues that cookbooks claiming to represent the timeless tradition and authenticity of many ‘ethnic’ cuisines are frequently based on “nostalgia for a lost Eden” (2001: 144-8). The impression of tradition that these cookbooks convey is one of harmonious communities and happy families who produce carefully crafted food using an abundance of local produce. This picture of tradition is often steeped in a distrust of modernity and in reality, never actually existed.

Scholars have also examined the social and cultural shifts which have made the invention and commodification of tradition a prominent feature of contemporary societies. Alan Warde notes that appeals to the ‘traditional’ is a common marketing strategy used to imbue products and practices with moral and aesthetic

value. He studied recipe columns from British women's magazines, and found that home cooking, local produce, and national or regional styles of cooking were promoted as highly desirable associations with traditions that counterbalance the "fleeting and contingent character of modernity" (1997: 184). Appeals to tradition offer a semblance of authenticity and certainty by providing reassurance of the stability and social embeddedness that modernity takes away.

Rachel Laudan calls the nostalgia for a time of authentic tradition 'Culinary Luddism' (2001). She points out that cookbooks will often valorize peasant cultures, and promote them as ideals while failing to mention that these 'traditional' diets were actually monotonous and scant (2001). The images in these cookbooks, of happy peasants baking bread and brewing beer, often elides a harsher reality of slaves or serfs who had little to eat, mostly of poor quality. More broadly, the commodification of tradition is seen to feed upon a nostalgic longing for 'authenticity' (Bell & Hollows 2007; Duruz 2001; Moisio, Arnould & Price 2004; Srinivas 2013; Sutton 2008).

THE IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION ON FOOD TRADITIONS

This section reviews the literature which focuses on the impact of industrialization, commodification and globalization on food traditions. While there is broad agreement that longstanding cuisines and practices are being eroded, there is a range of views on precisely *how* they have been affected.

Homogenization

One of the most influential lines of thought in this field argues that food traditions have been undermined and replaced by increasing industrialization and commodification. George Ritzer's concept of 'McDonaldization', as he has developed it in the *McDonaldization of Society* (2006a; 2006d; 2008), is a key notion in this approach. For Ritzer, the erosion of tradition is an outcome of rationalization, which, as a powerful and conspicuous society-wide process, has

standardized production and homogenized consumption in general, and food practices in particular. These processes have not only overthrown traditional authority, but they have also led to widespread disenchantment (Ritzer 2005; 2006d). Emblematic of these processes generally is the fast food chain, McDonald's, where the food is identical whether served it is served in New York, London or Tokyo (2005: 91). These types of food outlets are often a central component of shopping malls where highly commodified and standardized foods, produced en masse, have replaced traditional cuisines. The standardization that Ritzer highlights is also evident in the tourist industry. The 'authentic meals' proffered in many tourist spots are increasingly being replaced by mass produced, ersatz dishes that are neither 'true' to the local region, nor integrate local products (Ritzer 2008: 177).

Ritzer also argues that there has been a largescale dismantling of artisanal modes of food production and provision is (2008: 61). Many of the labour-intensive, time-consuming aspects of 'traditional' food preparation have been replaced, by the both the mass production of food commodities and the introduction of appliance and technologies, such as domestic refrigerators, freezers, stoves, and microwaves. These developments have made it more convenient and efficient to provide meals, rather than having to start 'from scratch' each time. But despite this convenience and efficiency, Ritzer stresses that they have intensified risks, such as the health costs caused by the consumption of cheap, high-fat foods, and increased chances of food-borne bacterial infections. Furthermore, rationalized food systems are associated with environmental deterioration including "land degradation, climate change, water and air pollution, water shortage, and a decline in bio-diversity", as agricultural practices are further industrialized (2008: 150). Another important issue that Ritzer has identified is widespread decline of values such as thrift and moderation that stemmed from pre-industrialized, localized systems (2006a).

In the Australian context, Michael Symons also sees food traditions as being eroded by the processes of mechanization, industrialization and commodification, and resulting in their homogenization, with similarly negative consequences (1982). Symons is primarily focused on the unique features of Australia's path through these developments, which have taken place outside the context of a traditional cuisine that is rooted in an agrarian legacy. Arguing that "our history is without peasants" (1982: 10), he notes that Australia moved directly from a pre-colonial hunter-gatherer society to an industrial society, without experiencing the agrarian phase, which he credits as being important for the rise of 'great cuisines'. (1982: 10).

Symons identifies three stages in this process. In the first stage, early Australian farming practices replicated the contemporary practices from England, where recently invented machinery had accompanied agricultural reforms. A second stage saw the development of food manufacturing and preserving industries in Australia, in which processing, canning and freezing techniques allowed food to be transported from the country and sold in the cities and, eventually, around the globe. The third stage, which began in the 1940s and extends to the present, concerns the increasing industrialization of the domestic kitchen, in which new technologies, in addition to an astounding array of pre-prepared food products or 'convenience' foods, continue to be designed to reduce the amount time that is needed to cook. Symons, like Ritzer, deplores these developments and argues they have brought with them critically negative outcomes, such as the deskilling of domestic cookery, threats to the environment, poor health outcomes and the "wringing out of taste and its pleasures" (Symons 2007: 327).

Pluralization, individualization and choice

Another body of literature, which also argues that the hold of food traditions has been weakened by the effects of industrialization and globalization, sees the outcome as access to a greater variety of foods that has resulted in the pluralization of food cultures.

A key figure in this school of thought is Stephen Mennell. Mennell's central argument, in his now classic text *All Manners of Food* (1996; originally published in 1985), is focused on transformations *within* traditional cuisines, specifically comparing developments in English and French eating cultures from The Middle Ages onwards. It holds relevance for understanding the impact of modernization processes on the coherence and resilience of the cuisines in question and in general. He argues that the widespread diffusion of industrialization processes has greatly increased the variety of available food available. Mennell argues that the main trend in contemporary culinary cultures is the gradual erosion of distinctions between the eating habits of different social strata, and in the proliferation of consumer options. It is a trend he describes as "diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties" (1996: 316). Historically, food was one of the means by which elite groups distinguished themselves on the social scale, but over time these contrasts have been reduced and culinary exclusivity has decreased. At the same time as social differentiation has diminished, it has also been accompanied by a trend towards 'increasing variety' in the foods available for all. According to Mennell, these changes take place amidst "many swirling cross-currents" (1996: 322), including cultural shifts that saw dining outside the home become more popular and affordable, and a diminution of the contrast between professional and everyday cooking.

Mennell also notes that "cultural and culinary blending has produced many varieties and nuances of cuisine" (1996: 332), and argues that the new "culinary pluralism" is characterized by the "loss of a single dominant style" (ibid: 329). He writes:

Overall the trend is towards more people... having the opportunity for *more* varied experience in eating and to develop *more* varied tastes... If commercial interests serve to make people's tastes more standardized than they conceivably could be in the past, they impose far less strict limits than did the physical constraints to which most people's diet was

subject for most of the period we have studied⁴ (1996: 321-2 *italics in original*).

Mennell also argues that culinary pluralism is encouraged by manufactured goods and new technologies. It is also heavily influenced by fluctuating fashions and 'stylistic mixtures', in addition to 'foreign' influences that are largely associated with migration (1996: 329). Culinary pluralism is also evident in the pre-occupation with variety and diversity in cookery books and in the recipe columns of mass-circulated women's magazines. Furthermore, eating outside the home (both locally and while travelling abroad) means people are now more accustomed, and have access to, a wider range of eating experiences than what they did in the past. This has contributed to a 'growing diversity of motivation', as interest in cooking and eating is motivated by more than just the mere necessity of eating in order to survive.

Working in the same perspective, Beardsworth and Keil also see the range of choices as being the most significant difference between traditional and modern food systems. Their concept of the 'menu', which refers to the "sets of principles which guide the selection of aliments from the available totality", contrasts greatly with both 'traditional menus', which refers to the patterns of eating which "draw their recommendations and rules of food choice and combinations from customary practice", and with the range of menu options that appear in modernity (Beardsworth & Keil 1997: 67-8). Traditional menus have a 'taken-for-granted' status, and their legitimacy is acquired by the authority of many years of intergenerational transmission, whereas modern dietary practices are more likely to be 'rational' or chosen with a specific purpose in mind, such as optimizing health outcomes. Traditional cuisines are undermined by the emergence of 'menu pluralism', because "many alternative schemes to structure food choice and eating patterns are on offer" (1997: 67)

⁴ As noted, Mennell is concerned with the period from the Middle Ages

For other writers, the emergence of modern culinary pluralism is tied up with broader processes of the ‘individualization’ of social life. This line of argument suggests that consumption choices, including food selections, are now more or less freed from the external constraints of traditional hierarchies and authority, and are becoming increasingly ‘individualized’ (Bauman 2001; Crouch & O’Neill 2000; Fischler 1988; Giddens 1991). These writers believe that individuals in contemporary societies must make decisions for themselves, rather than relying on traditional authority and custom to determine their choices.

A key theme in this body of work is focused on the extent to which identities can be constructed through contemporary consumption choices, which has been made possible by post-Fordist niche-markets and by ‘singularizing’ commodities to suit their own purposes (Ashley et.al. 2004; Edwards 2000; Featherstone 2007). Mira Crouch and Grant O’Neill argue that eating in a post-industrial consumer culture where the influences on food choices are detached from the traditional and relatively stable bases of the past:

“... may be an identity-acquisition and validation strategy that can be employed both expressively, for impression-management purposes, and reflexively, for self-assurance.” (2000: 183)

In this context, food and eating conveys messages to others about who we are – ‘foodie’, ‘health-conscious’, ‘vegetarian’, and so forth – and about what we value. For writers like Crouch and O’Neil, individual identity has superseded group identity, and terms like ‘tradition’, ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ are no longer reliable.

Writers who stress pluralization and individualization mostly see these developments in a positive light. Mennell sees a greater variety and accessibility of food products and styles of eating becoming available for everyone; others also argue that the new culinary pluralism has democratized formerly restrictive food systems (Germov & Williams 1999; Laudan 2001). There has been a reduction in the pronounced inequalities between the diets of the rich and the poor. The

consumption studies literature stresses that it is the desire and capacity of individuals to decide for themselves what to select and eat. The freedom to choose is also often viewed in a positive light (Slater 1997)⁵.

Glocalization

Another body of literature argues that globalization is not only an homogenizing dynamic, but also provokes processes of (re-)localization (Ashley et. al 2004; Arce & Marsden 1993; Cook & Crang 1996; Sutton 2001; Waters 2006; Wilk 2006). Writers in this field argue that cultures adopt and adapt external influences to fit with local customs and traditions, and that the flow of ideas and practices, including styles of food, leads to the interpenetration between local identities and traditions with global markets (Robertson 1995), rather than just the one-way ‘Americanization’ envisaged by Ritzer’s view of globalized mass culture.

Similar ideas are found in analyses of local receptions to global brands. For example, there are small, but not inconsequential, differences between the foods served at different international McDonald’s restaurants, illustrating attempts to cater for local preferences (Ashley et.al. 2004: 97). James Watson’s study of the variation in consumer engagement with McDonald’s in Hong Kong, Taipei and Beijing shows that patrons bring their cultural heritage with them when they embrace new forms of consumption. For instance, while customers in these locations have had to learn to fulfil the self-service elements that fast food restaurants demand of their patrons, they have, in turn, ‘localized’ the system to suit their needs. Teenagers treat the venues as a place to hang out, and retirees enjoy a well-lit, air-conditioned space where they can “retreat from the loneliness of urban life” (Watson 2005: 79). Melissa Caldwell also reveals ‘localization’ processes in her study of McDonald’s in Moscow (2005). Caldwell discovered that Muscovites integrated older practices and customs into the newly imported

⁵ The distinction between ‘choice’ and ‘preference’ in some food studies is often very cloudy. While the former is used to indicate freedom, the latter is more likely used to suggest something still ‘governed’ or imposed by the habitus. However, it has been noted that consumption choices are never entirely free nor entirely determined (Sassatelli 2010: 163).

transnational settings. McDonald's restaurants have been 'domesticated' for use in specifically Russian ways that would be discouraged in America, where customers are moved through the restaurant quickly and efficiently. In Moscow, customers frequent McDonald's for social gatherings, to study or just linger with friends, and for the homeless it is often used as a place to sleep. This indicates that "Muscovites have drawn McDonald's into the very processes by which local cultural forms are generated, authenticated and made meaningful" (Caldwell 2005: 181).

Preservation through modernization

A number of writers have pointed out that in some circumstances, commodification has facilitated preserving and disseminating food traditions that would have otherwise been endangered. For example, Rachel Laudan argues that commodification processes have made food more palatable, safer and accessible than it has ever been in the past, and have made possible the global distribution of 'traditional' products and dissemination of the knowledge of their use. Laudan contends that modern commodification has made it possible for consumers all across the globe to enjoy food products that were formerly associated with specific or local food traditions such as extra virgin olive oil, Thai fish sauce or Udon noodles (2001:42).

Along similar lines, Donna Gabaccia (1998) suggests that commodification is a primary means through which many elements of traditional cuisines move from migrant 'enclaves' into the mainstream of multicultural societies, thereby at least potentially ensuring their continuation. However, Gabaccia acknowledges this movement does not occur without significant transformations and creolization of the food traditions. In the US, there have been many cases when large, national and multi-national, companies have taken over the production and distribution of 'ethnic' foods, and made them much more 'Americanized' (1998: 151).

Claude Fischler points out that rather than inevitably undermining food traditions, some modernization processes and techniques can actually improve local specialties (1999). He argues that some features of regional traditions – for example, camembert cheeses– have benefited from newer technologies, and that as a consequence, these traditions have been preserved through their revivification for global markets and consumers, rather than falling into disuse.

Hybridization

Another stream of literature argues that a prime outcome of globalization has been *hybridization*, which melds, without destroying, food traditions. Tomlinson suggests, on the broader cultural level, that “the dissolution of the link between culture and place” (1999: 141) has led to a *mélange* or intermingling – ‘a bit of this and a bit of that’ – that produces new hybrid forms of culture (1999: 142-9). Evidence of hybridization in contemporary foodways is found in popular ‘fusion’ food, where selections from various cuisines are combined, often into one dish (Gabaccia 1998: 207; Mennell 1996: 329; Sokolov 1991: 237).

Such melding, it is argued, has always been part of the food traditions. Wilk notes that cross-currents, borrowings and appropriations between societies have not only been happening for many centuries, but they have been necessary for the survival of many cultures (2006: 8). Furthermore, Tomlinson points out that all culture is hybridized⁶, and that they are the product of constant flux, where the processes involved cannot be reduced to a simple meeting two ‘pure’ cultures (1999: 143). In this body of research, it is argued that hybridization is an inherent aspect of the way that cultures absorb outside influences and utilize them in accordance with their own history and identity. Writers from this perspective argue that cultural food imports have long been ‘appropriated’ or ‘indigenized’, making them compatible with local traditions and taste preferences. The *nyonya*

⁶ Tomlinson also notes there have been imbalances in this as a result of the conditions under which some hybrid cultures emerge. Colonialism is an obvious example, as Mintz explores in charting the transformative effects sugar has had on a number of cuisines (1997; 1999).

cuisine of the Malay Peninsula is an example of this (Tan 2007; Choo 2004). Many such interpenetrations between 'local' and 'foreign' elements are also noted in the literature on *glocalization* (see Caldwell 2005 Waters 2006; Watson 2005). For these writers, hybridization is part of the process of tradition, and it does not render them as inauthentic.

THE MEANINGS OF FOOD TRADITIONS

This section reviews the literature, influenced by anthropological perspectives, that focuses on the connection between food and collective identities. The idea that there is a strong connection between shared beliefs and practices surrounding food with group membership and identity is taken up in particular by researchers of migration and multiculturalism.

Food and cultural identity

The anthropologist Claude Fischler notes that all cultures have an inventory of what is good to eat and what is not; it is these classificatory rules that sanction a cuisine as belonging to a particular culture. Moreover,

... not only does the eater incorporate the properties of food, but, symmetrically, it can be said that the absorption of a food incorporates the eater into a culinary system and therefore into the group which practices it, unless it irremediably excludes him. (Fischler 1988: 280-1)

For Fischler, the significance of this is underlined by the discursive use of food as an emblem of cultural identity: it can indicate both inclusivity ('we eat this; they eat that') or exclusion, as in the case when food is used in derogatory slang terms for 'others' such as 'beefeaters' to describe the English, or 'frogs' as an epithet for the French (ibid).

Sidney Mintz also notes the recognition people have of a cuisine as *theirs* is at the core of the identificatory role that food plays in social groupings: we eat the same food; we belong together. As Mintz puts it:

... ‘a cuisine requires a population that eats that cuisine with sufficient frequency to consider themselves experts on it. They all believe, and *care* that they believe, that they know what it consists of, how it is made, and how it should taste. In short, a genuine cuisine has common social roots; it is the food of a community’ (1996: 96, emphasis in the original).

A range of scales are used to describe how people identify with their culinary traditions. Some see culinary traditions as belonging to specific ethnic groups (Kittler & Sucher 2004), while others see demarcations imposed by religious taboos (Douglas 1997; Farb & Armelagos 1980; Harris 1997). In the context of this review, the literature that links food and representations of national identity is of greater relevance (Mennell 2008). David Bell and Gill Valentine have used a number of scales, including home, community, city, region and globe to map the interconnections between food and identity (1997).

The metaphorical strength of these connections between food and collective identity is also underlined in the literature. Certain dishes, or the core complexes of cuisines, can come to represent a nation, region or community, and at which point they can become not only a staple foodstuff, but “a memory aid, religious object, symbol of value, segment of political front lines” (Reinschmidt 2007: 98). Ohnuki-Tierney points out that rice⁷ is *the* central symbol of cultural identity in Japan, and that its sacralized status resides in widely-held beliefs that rice has a soul, while its more practical roles in gift exchange and commensality are also thought to be powerfully symbolic of ‘Japaneseness’ (cited in Bell & Valentine 1997: 180).

Others point out that the roots of such identification with food lie in early socialization. Joanne Ikeda’s research (1999) demonstrates that children primarily first learn what is (and is not) culturally appropriate to eat through early commensal practices in the home. Since parents usually provide the food eaten in

⁷ Core carbohydrates like rice, potatoes, or corn often figure as the mainstay of traditional or national diets (Friedberg 2005; Kittler & Sucher 2004; Visser 1999).

these circumstances, it is generally accepted that children ‘inherit’ their foodways through early eating experiences (Rozin 1990). These inherited foodways are often culture-specific (Xu et.al 2004). For Pierre van den Berghe, this is profoundly significant because the food preferences and practices learned early in life are amongst the most fundamental forms of sociality and bond formation (1984: 309). Many see the depth or ‘second nature’ character of culinary identity stemming from its ‘embodiment’ (Beoku-Betts 1995; D’Sylva & Beagan 2011; James R 2004; Kittler & Sucher 2004; Koc & Welsh 2004; Vallianatos & Raine 2008).

Food and multiculturalism

The connection between food and identity is a major theme in multicultural studies. There, a broad body of work is concerned with the reception and popularization of ‘ethnic food’ in multicultural societies (Cook *et.al* 2008; Donati 2005; Duruz 2004, 2007; Edwards, Occhipinti & Ryan 2000; Han 2007; Highmore 2008; Koc & Welsh 2001; Narayan 1995). Food is also a prominent theme in discussions of multiculturalism itself, especially when food has figured in official discourses of multiculturalism.

In the context of highly charged controversies surrounding the politics of multiculturalism, there have been two main approaches. The first sees official celebrations of culturally diverse foods as shallow and diversionary – ‘polka and pizza’ (see discussion in Symons 1993) – and as masking underlying power relations. The focus on food in official multicultural discourse is seen as, at best, a “benign version of accommodating cultural difference” (Gunew 2000: 227). It is further argued that ‘ethnic food’ is appropriated by the mainstream without any real cross-cultural engagement.

Ghassan Hage (1997) has proposed that using food as an indicator of multicultural interaction is superficial, and even exploitative. Hage argues that the experience of dining out in ethnic restaurants is more often used to enrich the cultural capital

of the (mostly middle class) diners than establishing any real interconnections between migrants and the mainstream. Hage sees this as a distant and distancing relationship, that can be described as “multiculturalism without migrants” (1997: 118) in which extant power hierarchies in the relationships between the centre and periphery are left undisturbed. Ben Highmore also warns that although attraction to the food of another culture can be seen as a form of learning, it does not necessarily equate to a positive attitude towards multiculturalism more broadly (2008: 292).

In contrast, the second approach sees encounters around food as an important part of ‘the lived experience’ of diversity. Scholars from this ‘everyday multiculturalism’ perspective show how “social actors experience and negotiate cultural difference on the ground” (Wise & Velayutham 2009: 3) and emphasize the ‘micro-moments’ or ‘people-mixing’ that occur around food in mundane situations such as at workplaces, around neighbourhoods or in schoolyards (Noble 2009). Writers coming from this angle argue that sharing of traditional food between neighbours can contribute to dialogue and exchange between different cultures, which can help the people involved in these exchanges recognize the similarities and differences of their respective cultures. From this perspective, it is argued that sharing food with someone from another culture can be an introduction to learning about the dense layers of meanings associated with their traditions (Morgan, Rocha & Poynting 2005). It is further argued that intercultural sharing of food has the capacity to transform interactions between people in a multitude of ways, in which

... identities are not left behind, but can be shifted and opened up in moments of non-hierarchical reciprocity, and are sometimes mutually reconfigured in the process. (Wise 2009: 23)

Everyday cosmopolitanism

Scholars in this strand of thought suggest that exchanges around food can create forms of ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ that are characterized by a willingness to

embrace the food of others, and by an openness towards different cultures. For them, there is meaning in the ‘banal’ or ‘vernacular’ expressions of cosmopolitanism that are evidenced in the bringing together of food traditions in intercultural exchanges ‘on the ground’ (Jonas 2013; Noble 2009; Wise 2009). From this perspective ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ means: “openness to cultural diversity, a practical relation to the plurality of cultures, a willingness and tendency to engage with others” (Noble 2009a: 48). Uma Narayan expands on this, suggesting that

...gustatory relish for the food of “Others” may help contribute to an appreciation of their presence in the national community, despite ignorance about the cultural contexts of their foods – these pleasures of the palate providing more powerful bonds than knowledge. (1995: np)

Mustafa Koc and Jennifer Welsh also argue that emerging cosmopolitanism in Canada has contributed to “symbolic awareness of diversity” and has helped overcome narrow definitions of belonging (2001). Nevertheless, many of these writers also caution against romanticizing cosmopolitanism, and point out the risks of reinforcing fixed notions of identity, the possibilities of exploiting difference, and the dangers of idealizing poverty (Newman & Gibson 2005; Noble 2009a; Valentine 2008; Wise 2009).

Food traditions and mobility: migration and settlement

A related body of literature in migration and mobility studies explores how food plays a role in maintaining cultural identity by constructing a sense of belonging in diasporic communities. Jessica Kwik argues that maintaining traditional food knowledge is:

... especially important to immigrant cultures... by providing a self-identifiable bridge between the geography of their past and their present. (2008: 61)

The emphasis in this body of work is on how food traditions play a part in alleviating the challenges of upheaval and re-settlement (Hage 1997; Jamal 1998; Thomas 2004). Many migration scholars draw attention to the attempts people make to maintain food traditions, despite these challenges (D'Sylva & Beagan 2011; James R. 2004; Koc & Welsh 2001; Vallianatos & Raine 2008; Zevallos 2003). As Tulasi Srinivas sees it, food traditions continue to be a “symbolic anchor” for maintaining connections to a homeland⁸ because they are powerful reminders of the past and former cultural attachments (Srinivas 2013: 366).

In Australia, this theme has been explored by writers who have found that connections to food traditions play a role in overcoming the trials of migration by establishing a feeling of being ‘at home’ in the new setting (Hage 1997). Mandy Thomas’s study of Vietnamese people who have settled in Australia highlights how compelling and resilient food memories can be for migrants. She notes that businesses established by Vietnamese migrants continue to cater for the tastes of those seeking to maintain their memories of food in Vietnam. Importantly, Thomas also points out how the rise in popularity of Vietnamese restaurants provided a means for many Vietnamese to be “incorporated into life in Australia” (Thomas 2004: 61). In another Australian example, George Morgan, Cristina Rocha & Scott Poynting (2005) point out that backyard practices such as growing traditional homeland foods are also helpful settlement strategies for many migrants. This is because they are maintaining connections with traditions, focused on the future as much as the past. The same writers note that “not only do migrants recall and relive past experiences, but most importantly they are also able to dwell in both the homeland and the new country” (2005: 97).

⁸ Srinivas also suggests that the idea of homeland is sometimes an ‘imagined’ construct, useful for identification in a world where so many people have been either willingly or forcibly removed from their cultural roots.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF TRADITION

The final body of literature that is relevant to consider here is that which addresses questions of the authenticity of food tradition. For those focused on the invention of food traditions, traditions are by definition inauthentic. However, for other writers, the key issue is what constitutes the authentic continuation of a tradition.

The point of contention in the latter case is how much change is compatible with the idea of authentic continuation of tradition (Beckstein 2017). For some, ‘authenticity’ applies to sets of practices and repertoires that existed prior to the introduction of modern, industrialized food systems. Symons sees a peasant-based, pre-industrial or self-sufficient approach to food as ‘honest’; more pleasurable, healthier, and more suitable for the environment (1993: xi). From this perspective, ‘authentic’ food is seen as something that is produced using small-scale, local, and artisanal or craft skills (Ashley et al 2004: 87). However, others contend that authenticity does not depend upon unchanging, immutable reiterations. Shun Lu and Gary Alan Fine argue that authenticity is always contingent, because culture is ‘in continual flux’ and that within any culture, there are “different acceptable models exist for the same practice” (1995: 538). Similarly, Richard Wilk argues that authenticity is not an immanent characteristic of food traditions, because:

...there is no culture where everyone cooks the same way; all cooks have their own particular way of doing things learned from people who also had different ideas about tradition. (2006: 122)

Meredith Abarca notes that authenticity must be continually reinvented because culture, of necessity, is constantly changing, and that a fixed definition of authenticity would stifle the very creativity upon which all culture depends (2004: 2). This point adds an important qualification to the idea of the invention of tradition. This is demonstrated by Arjun Appadurai in his description of how contemporary Indian cookbooks render a conglomerate of different regional traditions into a standardized form for an audience that is Anglophone, middle

class, and increasingly cosmopolitan. Where some might see this as a case of inventing traditions, Appadurai does not. Rather, he sees it as a process of “culture in the making” (1988: 22). It is a new cultural artefact, built on several existing traditions. In the process, the moral and religious taboos and prohibitions that once defined quite heterogeneous approaches to food are now overlooked in favour of portraying a sense of national Indian culinary unity, even though such a thing doesn’t really exist.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This multifaceted literature has provided important insights into many aspects of food traditions in the contemporary world. What has been missing, however, is an account of how the divergent dynamics and trends they identify intersect in the lives of individuals. Consequently, the literature has also provoked a number of research questions. The literature that looks at the invention of tradition and rhetorical constructions does not sufficiently explain some of the practices that are apparent in the contemporary world. Likewise, the literature on massification focusses on a narrowly defined set of parameters that do not account for many current trends. Furthermore, many food studies tend to ignore the ongoing influences that identification with a common culture exert over food practices and, in an extension of this, how these are shared in new settings following migration.

This thesis seeks to address this gap in the literature. The primary research question it poses is: how do the socio-economic dynamics corroding food traditions intersect with the practices and meanings sustaining their influence? In particular, it investigates how and why 31 people living in Brunswick cook and eat in the manner they do.

This question is explored through three subsidiary questions:

What, if any, significance do inherited food traditions hold for the participants?

What impact has industrialization and commodification had on the food cultures and practices of the participants?

What impact has living in a multicultural society had on the food cultures and practices of the participants?

CHAPTER THREE

THE FATE OF TRADITIONS

'Tradition is crafted, just as much as modernity is manufactured'

(Wilk 2006: 155)

The previous chapter surveyed the diverse literature on food traditions in the contemporary world to show how it has shaped the research questions for this project. This chapter outlines current sociological debates about the fate of tradition in the contemporary world to establish a context for my central argument.

Like the empirical studies on food traditions which draw on them, broader sociological debates have divergent views about their role in contemporary societies. One pervasive idea is that of the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm 1983). This idea has been used to suggest that the links between tradition and the historic past are often manipulated. Other debates concern the extent to which traditions continue to have significance in the modern and late modern world. Two influential currents of thought point to the erosion of traditions in the contemporary world. George Ritzer's *McDonaldization* thesis suggests that traditions are being undermined by the homogenizing influence of rationalization. Anthony Giddens' theses of reflexive modernity suggests we are now entering an era of detraditionalization, where the guidance and authority of tradition has significantly declined. On the other hand, several theorists have argued that the contemporary world is characterized not by the erosion of traditions, but by the

interpenetration of traditional and modern elements (Adam 1996; Campbell 1996; Heelas 1996b; Kellner 1999; Thompson 1996; Tomlinson 1999).

All of these perspectives offer insights for an analysis of the fate of food traditions. I argue, however, that the ‘interpenetration’ framework is more comprehensive, and therefore better able to grasp the paradoxes surrounding culinary traditions in the contemporary world.

INVENTION

The notion of invention is often raised in considerations of the continuing and changing nature and role of traditions (Giddens 1994; Thompson 1996). This notion suggests that some traditions have only a ‘factitious’ continuity with the past (Hobsbawm 1983: 1). However, there are many qualifications that apply to this thesis. Hobsbawm himself does not claim that all traditions are invented⁹. Conversely, as Giddens points out, in some senses, all traditions are ‘invented’ (Giddens 1994: 94). Thompson has argued that it is irrelevant to dwell on distinctions between authentic and invented traditions (1996: 102-3), because traditions have become increasingly bound up with communication media, and as a consequence are now somewhat removed from face-to-face interactions in specific locales (1996: 103).

RATIONALIZATION

Ritzer’s concept of ‘McDonaldization’ has been very influential in food studies; there is no doubt that this influence is due to the use of McDonald’s restaurants as its paradigmatic exemplar. However, Ritzer’s rationalization thesis addresses social trends in late modernity more broadly. Updating Weber’s argument that formal rationality has overwhelmed substantive rationality in the modern world,

⁹ Anthony Giddens rebuts the whole idea of invention as he notes that ‘*all traditions, one could say, are invented traditions*’ (1994: 93-4 original italics). Giddens adds that establishing the authenticity of a tradition is problematic because it depends on the connections between ‘ritual practice and formulaic truth’.

Ritzer argues that the spread of rationalization is leading to sweeping, relentless standardization in production, and in the homogenization of consumption habits across the globe (2008: 1). He identifies four core principles of rationalization – efficiency, calculability, predictability and technologic control – and traces their impact on labour practices, industrial and agricultural production, and, in particular, on consumption habits. He argues that due to the increasing specialization of work, products have become standardized, and people's consumption habits have become increasingly homogenized as the trend towards 'massification' continues to take hold around the world.

Ritzer further argues that as rules and regulations associated with these transformations become institutionalized (for example, in bureaucracies and fast food restaurants), they constrain people in a variety of ways. Once again, he draws from Weber, and takes up the latter's notion of the 'iron cage' to stress that there are fewer and fewer alternatives to rationalized systems, and that it is difficult to escape from the uniformity and conformity that they promote. For individuals, this means there is little genuine choice of means to ends since "virtually everyone can (or must) make the same, optimal choice" (Ritzer 2008: 25).

Moreover, Ritzer believes that globalization is intensifying and extending these trends. As he sees it, globalization is driven by corporations that are focused on increasing profit margins, power and influence. Ritzer also contends that globalization is unidirectional, and that it amounts to the imposition of American modes of consumption onto local settings around the world (2005: 38). This means that more and more, the settings and structures in which people consume goods and services come to resemble those found in America. From this perspective, globalization means that products and processes will be identical, no matter where in the world they are found, resulting in – as succinctly put by Jean Baudrillard, "the hell of the same" (quoted in Ritzer 2005: 183). Furthermore, Ritzer argues that this eliminates the *desire* for diversity, because the predictability and homogenization of outcomes in globalized rationalized systems, dispels,

limits and destroys “the human craving for new and diverse experiences” (Ritzer 2008: 152).

It is important to note that Ritzer is not completely against rationalization, and he acknowledges that it has brought about some useful developments. He points out that efficiency is a ‘generally good thing’; that a rationalized system of commodification is profitable for manufacturers and distributors; and, that standardization allows consumers access to more goods which are made available more cheaply and conveniently than at any time in the past. He also recognizes that many people appear eager to embrace products emerging from rationalized systems not only because of their affordability, but also because of their familiarity, which may help allay concerns that the world is an unruly or unregulated place (2006d). However, Ritzer finds that the overwhelmingly negative aspects of rationalization outweigh the presumed benefits because rationalized systems “inevitably spawn irrationalities that limit, eventually compromise, and perhaps even undermine their rationality” (2008: 141).

In the context of this thesis, the most important aspect of Ritzer’s overall thesis is that these forces are undermining tradition, and all of its guises, in the contemporary world (2005: 56). Rationalization fosters formal solutions or guidance in place of the authority that had previously been engendered through traditional value systems. As rationalization increasingly pervades social life, the belief in ‘the way things have always been done’ is undermined, and tradition loses much of the authoritative power it once had. Moreover, globalization is eroding traditions associated with specific locations and many of the practices that are invested with distinct sets of values and beliefs (Ritzer 2008: 147). As a result, the world is “growing increasingly similar” (2008: 168), while “distinctive local customs are dropped and replaced by those that have their origins elsewhere” (2008: 183).

A number of criticisms have been levelled at Ritzer’s McDonaldization thesis. For instance, Martin Parker argues that Ritzer is coming from a conservative and

elitist standpoint which promotes nostalgia for a pre-industrial past. Parker believes that Ritzer fails to recognize the complexities of mass culture, and that he has overemphasized the impact of rationalization, and that he underestimates the ability of consumers to find different meanings in different situations (1998: 12). Similarly, Jane Rinehart argues that Ritzer's pessimism ignores the agency of social actors, and she rejects what she sees as Ritzer's view of people as "passive victims of social forces rather than engaged participants in constructing social meanings" (1999: 24).

Ritzer's unidirectional conception of globalization has also been criticized. Roland Robertson coined the term 'glocalization' to reject the idea that 'the local' and 'the global' are always and completely in opposition to each other. By exploring the intricate 'complementary and interpenetrative' forms this relationship can take, Robertson underlines "the flow of ideas and practices from the so-called Third World to the seemingly dominant societies and regions of the world" (1995: 38-9). In doing this, he emphasizes the extent to which global mass culture has been influenced by local traditions. Douglas Kellner takes a similar position, arguing that even though globalization imposes a degree of homogeneity, it has also brought a "proliferation of difference, hybridization, and the expansion of consumer and lifestyle choices" (Kellner 1999: 202).

DETRADITIONALIZATION

The second theoretical approach that stresses the decline of traditions in the contemporary world is that of 'detraditionalization'. The thesis that contemporary societies are characterized by detraditionalization is associated most strongly with the work of Giddens (1991; 1994), but variations are also found in other work (Bauman 1996; Beck 1999; 2002; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1996).

As Giddens sees it, recent developments have decisively weakened traditions to the extent that the current phase of modernity is 'post-traditional' (1991: 20). He identifies globalization and the "excavation of most traditional contexts of action"

(1994: 95) as the twin processes leading to, what he calls, the “disinterring and problematizing of tradition” (1994: 57). These processes undermine, or ‘evacuate’, the sense that local culture and customary practices are handed down from the past through generations. For Giddens, the expansion and intensification of the changes wrought by these processes mean that local communities are increasingly being ‘reshaped’ by distant agencies and events (1994: 101). As a consequence, the authority of the cultural meta-narratives that once governed social life has been undermined. When the authority of tradition is challenged by non-local forces and pervaded by uncertainty, its status changed as it ceases to play a dominant role in late modernity.

Giddens is not arguing that traditions will completely disappear in modernized societies. To a limited extent, traditions can continue to hold appeal as a way of coping with the demands of modern social life and a “return to sources of moral fixity in day-to-day life” (1991: 207). However, Giddens overwhelmingly sees traditions as ‘relics’ that firmly belong in pre-modern societies. They persist only in the forms of a “discursive defence”, which must be ‘justified as having value in a universe of plural competing values’ or as fundamentalism[s] in which they amount to a reassertion of formulaic truth (1994: 100).

There are some parallels between the conceptualization of detraditionalization with Weber’s work on rationalization (Giddens 1994: 69). However, in contrast to Ritzer’s application of Weber, the metaphors of a ‘steel-hard cage’ are not relevant for Giddens, who sees high modernity as “much more open and contingent” than what these metaphors would suggest. Giddens’ view is based on the idea that the demise of traditional bases of authority has led to a social world in which *reflexivity* plays a prominent role (1994: 58-9). Giddens’ account of detraditionalization is premised by his argument that high modernity is characterized by intensification of reflexivity. For Giddens, a significant outcome of detraditionalization is that responsibility of choosing actions and behaviours has shifted from the tradition/al onto the individual; behaviour is no longer

dictated by the way things have always been done in the past (1994: 65). As he sees it, the erosion of traditions necessitates a “reflexive project of the self”, or the “process whereby self-identity is constituted by the reflexive ordering of self-narratives” (1991: 244).

This reflexive project of the self is at the core of detraditionalization. Paul Heelas offers a concise account of the implications of this perspective:

...detraditionalization ‘involves a shift of authority: from ‘without’ to ‘within’. It entails a decline of the belief in pre-given or natural order of things. Individual subjects are themselves called upon to exercise authority in the face of the disorder and contingency which is thereby generated. ‘Voice’ is displaced from established sources, coming to rest with the self (Heelas 1996a:2).

Consequently, for Giddens, at the centre of this project are the choices made in everyday life which aggregate as a *lifestyle*. Since high modernity has eroded traditional prescriptions for life, individuals have found themselves confronted with the need to make manifold decisions. As daily life is progressively restructured through the increasing interplay of the local and the global, individuals are more likely to be “forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options” (Giddens 1991: 5).

Moreover, Giddens asserts that lifestyle choices – people’s everyday decisions, such as what to wear or eat, the company they keep, or how to behave – form the core of the reflexively organized biography; that is, their self-identity (1991: 14). Rather than being ‘handed down’ as in traditional cultures where options are limited, the everyday lifestyle choices an individual ‘adopts’ from among the plurality on offer in late modernity become central to the way they establish an identity for themselves (1991: 81). A lifestyle, then, is:

a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity (1991: 81).

These narratives are continuously revised in response to the ongoing pluralization of choices offered to the individual in post-traditional settings, particularly given the increasingly diverse consumption options available.

Giddens accepts that there are also “standardizing influences” involved in the current phase of modernity, “most notably, in the form of commodification, since capitalistic production and distribution form core components of modernity’s institutions” (1991: 5). In Giddens’ view, commodification also “attacks tradition” through “its imperatives of continuous expansion” (1991: 197). Moreover, he insists that the more post-traditional the setting, the more pertinent lifestyle choices become for establishing self-identity. The key concept here is choice. Because “the signposts established by tradition are now blank” (1991: 82), lifestyle choices are now the bases from which individuals seek the ontological security that tradition formerly provided (1991: 85). Given the multiplicity of choices now confronting individuals, together with the more diverse settings in which they occur, the rise of uncertainty is inevitable and yet, importantly, “we have no choice but to choose” because this is how narratives of self-identity are constructed (1991: 81).

This emphasis on the increasing significance of individuals’ choices in late modern life is shared by a number of other influential social theorists (Bauman 1996; Beck 1999; 2002; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1996). For these commentators, ‘individualization’ is intricately and inevitably tied up with the diminution of tradition. Like Giddens, they believe that the current epoch is characterized by the decline of normative constraints on individual action, which have been replaced by the proliferation of alternatives, and that as a result, institutionalized traditions no longer provide a complete roadmap for how to negotiate the life-path.

RETRADITIONALIZATION AND COEXISTENCE

Despite the influence of the McDonaldization, detraditionalization and individualization theories, their ultimate conclusions have begun to be rejected by

a growing school of thought. Many of these theoretical alternatives have been collected in a volume edited by Paul Heelas, Scott Lash and Paul Morris (1996), and is devoted to debates over the extent to which tradition can be said to have disappeared. In this volume, a range of scholars criticize the binary conception of the relationship between tradition and modernity that underlines views of detraditionalization, and they provide various alternatives to it (Adam 1996; Campbell 1996; Heelas 1996; Luke 1996; Thompson 1996). Between these alternatives, it is agreed that the relationship between tradition and modernity is more dialectical than what is suggested by an 'either-or' dualistic analysis framework. They are united by the aim of transcending the 'conventional contrast' between tradition and modernity (Thompson 1996: 91), and offer various theories about the interpenetration of tradition and modernity. Crucial to this is the recognition of ways in which traditions are refashioned in modern circumstances.

Referring to this interpenetration as the 'co-existence thesis,' Heelas proposes that traditions do not disappear to the extent that has been suggested by the theorists who see a definitive break between tradition and modernity. Rejecting the notion of a linear trajectory in which the past, dominated by tradition, is being replaced by a present in which tradition has no role, Heelas argues that "[t]raditions come and go and come" (1996b: 201), and that it is more important to look at how theories of detraditionalization play out in combination with "theorization of tradition-maintenance, construction and re-construction" (Heelas 1996b: 216).

Barbara Adam also questions the 'either-or' frameworks in which detraditionalization is positioned as the 'other' of tradition (1996: 135). Adam argues that, tradition and modernity should not be conceptualized in oppositional terms, as Giddens and Beck do when they suggest the order and control of tradition has been replaced by reflexivity and uncertainty. Rather, she contends that it should be understood in terms of interpenetration. The 'then-now' distinctions between tradition and modernity, she argues, ignore the way tradition continues to exert powerful influences in the present "age of uncertainty,

contingency and flux” (Adam 1996: 136). While not denying that detraditionalization is occurring, Adam insists that interpenetration is taking place. It is not necessary to choose between notions of “authority based on tradition *or* reflexivity, located without *or* within, in pre-given *or* (self-) constructed orders” (1996: 136, italics in the original).

John Thompson (1996) also shares this view, seeing the thesis of detraditionalization as being little different from the “rather tired controversies about rationalization and secularization” (1996: 89) based on the polarization of tradition and modernity. As many commentators have noted, there has been a widespread tendency in social thought to *define* modernity as a break with tradition. Thompson points out that, notwithstanding some conceptual innovation, the literature on detraditionalization tends to use the idea of tradition as a “kind of blanket term to refer to beliefs and practices which were allegedly widespread in the past” (1996: 90). Most importantly, it is presupposed that detraditionalization is a “one-way process (modernity destroys tradition, not vice-versa)”. This formulation prejudices the nature of tradition in modernity: the persistence of traditional beliefs or practices can only be understood in terms of regression or reaction (1996: 90). Such perspectives fail to see that while some aspects of tradition are eliminated or eroded, others remain current in modern societies. Thompson argues that for most people, the persistence of tradition and the adoption of modern lifestyles is not a mutually exclusive, ‘either/or’ choice. Rather, it is the nature and role of tradition that is changing (1996: 94).

Thompson argues that the mediatization of contemporary life is key to this transformation. The development of modern communication media has transformed relationships with the past, because these technologies have allowed individuals to uncover and create connections outside their local community. Long ago, face-to-face oral interactions would have been the only vehicle for transmitting traditions across generations, whereas now, this transmission can be facilitated by books and newspapers, television and telephone, and more recently,

the internet. The development of communication media has allowed people to experience a world that is beyond their immediate locale, and has transformed the ‘sense’ of the past. The transmission of symbolic material and information across space and time by modern media establishes connections that would not have been possible in the past and helps to form “social relations between individuals who do not share the same spatial-temporal context” (1996: 96). Thompson argues that in this context, tradition is “reshaped, transformed and perhaps even strengthened through the encounter – partly through the media – with other ways of life” (1996: 95).

These developments in communication media have transformed traditions in a number of important ways. (1996: 97-9): Firstly, tradition has become *de-ritualized*. Whereas oral, face-to-face traditions need to be repeated time and time again in ritualized form to give them temporal permanence, once traditions can be communicated in a material way, they no longer need continual re-enactment. Thompson contends that it is therefore a mistake to see the decline of some rituals as signifying the demise of tradition; it may simply be the case that maintaining the tradition no longer requires ritualized re-enactment. The key example that he cites is church attendance.

Secondly, tradition has become *de-personalized*; that is, it is “detached from individuals with whom one interacts in day-to-day life” (Thompson 1996: 98). Thompson argues that the rise of mediated forms of communication has allowed traditions to become ‘autonomous’, and that their ‘authority’ is no longer simply attached to individuals who, in the past, would have been responsible for their transmission.

Finally, tradition has become *de-localized*. Prior to the development of media, traditions were situated or ‘moored’ in particular places; they were:

... rooted in the spatial locales within which individuals lived out their daily lives... [and] were integral parts of communities of individuals who interacted with one another. (1996: 99)

Under the impact of mediatization, this is no longer the case. However, this has not led to the demise of tradition or to the destruction of connections between traditions and place. Rather, it has fuelled their extension, and they have reached further through time and space under conditions that have allowed them to be “re-embedded in a multiplicity of locales and re-connected to territorial units that exceed the limits of face-to-face interaction” (Thompson 1996: 99).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the main themes of sociological debates relevant to the fate of tradition in the contemporary world. The ideas that populate these debates have frequently been mobilized to suggest traditions no longer have relevance in contemporary societies where the spread of rationalization processes has become a powerful factor and the rise of individualization is a burgeoning influence on everyday life. These debates have been taken into account for framing this research project and for pointing out the theoretical tensions they generate.

However, such perspectives are countered by those who suggest that, rather than being eroded by rationalization or individualization, there is evidence that traditional and modern elements co-exist in the current era. This latter perspective, it is argued here, provides a particularly valuable approach to culinary matters where paradoxical influences bearing on individuals and collectivities are manifold. In sum, this chapter shows that while influential theorists have argued that tradition is declining in the modern world, there are persuasive countervailing arguments emerging that demonstrate tradition and modernity remain intricately intertwined. It concludes that perspectives focusing on this interpenetration provide more encompassing frame for considering the fate of food traditions in the contemporary world.

Chapter Four

Methodology

INTRODUCTION

This study is primarily concerned with empirically assessing how traditional and modern influences intersect in contemporary foodways. To conduct the study, qualitative methods were adopted from the tool-kit associated with interpretive and critical ethnography¹⁰ (Geertz 1993; Foley & Valenzuela 2005). These methods included in-depth, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and interpretations of data based on the voices of the participants. These methods were particularly suitable for this project because they can reveal the multiple influences that are at play as people go about their everyday practices (Denzin 2001; Tedlock 2003). Ethnography also commits researchers to ongoing, reflexive consideration of how theory, data and interpretation are interwoven in their work (Ezzy 2002; Hammersley & Atkinson 1983). As a result of these strengths, ethnography has become increasingly popular in sociological studies that address questions of cultural practice, such as cooking and eating (Gregory 1995).

These methods were chosen in part because they underpin two important methodological influences in the thesis. Firstly, there was a snug fit between the topics investigated and an “ethnographically oriented approach” used in the “everyday multiculturalism” perspective (Wise & Velayutham 2009) that forms a central point of reference for the study. An everyday multiculturalism approach emphasizes the quotidian; the small moments of ‘being together’ that are frequently negotiated in practical terms, including many of the mundane interactions around food (Noble 2009). These types of moments have been underutilized in the sociological literature, but they are more recently providing ideal ways for looking at food and foodways, and at the meaningful interconnections between people in diverse societies (Duruz 2005; Wise 2011).

¹⁰ Ethnography means “to write about people”, from the Greek *ethnos* and the Latin *graphei* (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005: 162).

This approach is also useful for revealing how the meanings people invest in their ordinary, everyday practices reflect broader structural processes (Wise & Velayutham 2009). Therefore, this methodological approach was conducive in shedding light on the continuities and changes in the food traditions of modern, diverse societies.

Secondly, they are compatible with feminist methodologies. The ongoing gender imbalance associated with domestic foodwork remains an important issue in research in food studies (Bugge & Almas 2006; Lupton 2000). Although the question of gender is not the primary focus of this thesis, it is impossible to ignore the extent to which inequities still operate in the domestic provision of in any study of food traditions. Mindful of this, I have taken into account the major contributions made by writers who have provided varying feminist standpoints on research methods (Reinharz 1992; Skeggs 2002; Stacey 1988). This ensures that the voices and perspectives of the people who took part in this project are heard throughout.

With these concerns in mind, the aim in this chapter is to chart and clarify how decisions were made at each stage of the empirical investigations and reportage of this research project. This is not only important for maintaining transparency and rigour in both the design and execution of the study (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005); it also facilitates a reflexive analysis of the results (Ezzy 2002). As methodologists point out, many parts of the research process can be “untidy” (Minichiello et al 1995: 157). I have therefore discussed the steps I took to ensure my research was undertaken in a manner that matched the questions posed. First, I sketch out the setting of the study, and outline my reasons for choosing this location. Next, I discuss recruitment strategies and their efficacy. Included in this section are details of interviewing techniques, construction of the ‘conversation’ topics, and the problematic experiences encountered during and after talking to the participants. Following this, I outline the data analysis methods and reflect on the

research process. Finally, the chapter concludes with observations on the limitations of the study and the scope for future research.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

“Ethnography rests on context” (Long, 2004:12), and the context for this study was Brunswick, an area in Melbourne’s north¹¹. Brunswick was chosen as a setting because it offers a rich example of the interrelated dimensions under investigation: the physical setting as a particular location for gathering data; the interconnecting local-global features found in that space; and, the individuals, their homes and where they prepare and eat food.

I am not suggesting that this setting typifies a larger national picture, or that it represents ‘culinary life’ in comparable modern cities around the globe. Rather, I am presenting an ‘ethnographic miniature’ (Geertz 1993: 21), in which the people I interviewed and their practices in this specific location remain the central focus. The choices made in relation to my approach illustrate the flexibility of qualitative methods and underline the necessity of explaining them fully (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 24).

The physical setting

Brunswick is approximately five kilometres from the city centre of Melbourne, Australia. Its northerly location, relative to the city centre, became a passageway for early migrants arriving to pursue their dreams in the goldfields of Central Victoria during the 1850s. The ornate and elaborately designed buildings along the major thoroughfare, Sydney Road, reflect the optimism that flowed back to the metropolis after the gold rushes.

A walk along many of the residential streets in Brunswick offers glimpses of aspirations of both past and present residents. The southern half of the suburb is dominated by single fronted, semi-detached ‘workers cottages’. This

¹¹ It is important to reveal that I have lived and worked in Brunswick for many years.

neighbourhood is where Hoffman's brickworks operated for many years, and where several other factories still remain. In the northern precincts, double fronted, more elaborate Federation-style homes on more spacious blocks are prevalent. There are also many large, modern brick residences which were built during the relatively prosperous years of the 1960s and 70s, and bear witness to the kind of investment that people made in settling here.

Despite the relatively small size of the blocks of land in Brunswick, compared with those from suburbs further north, many houses in the area boast well-established and extensively cultivated gardens that can often be easily seen from the streets and laneways. In the early evenings, the air is filled with the waft of diverse aromas, testifying to the variety of cuisines being prepared. In some streets, you can still see traditional cooking apparatus being used, such as the simple clay ovens once used for bread-making, which have enjoyed a revival of popularity in 'foodie' circles. On verandas, or in the open carports facing the street, there are large communal tables used for al fresco dining or workspaces for preserving the annual harvests of fruit and vegetables. Often, there are abundantly productive grapevines hanging over these spaces. One participant in this study recalled that the cuttings from these grapevines, which were long ago brought into Australia from 'home', were prized in her community and often given as gifts to relatives and friends.

At the time of writing, the principal thoroughfare, Sydney Road, was undergoing gradual and patchy redevelopment. There were a growing number of retail outlets that cater for young, upwardly mobile families with infant or primary school age children. This marks a distinct shift in the suburb's population profile from the ageing, 'empty-nester' working class residents who had been the dominant residential group in the previous three decades. Gentrification in Brunswick is accompanied by a special irony: stylized patios and 'designer' gardens in front yards have replaced the lemon and olive trees of earlier decades, while, 'trendy' grocers down the road are selling preserved lemons and marinated olives.

Local/global dimensions: the interconnecting ‘flows’

The people

Local historians stress the cultural and ethnic diversity of Brunswick and surrounding areas (Barnes 1987; Donati L. 2005; Penrose 1994). Population statistics from Moreland City Council, under whose scope Brunswick falls, show that at the time of this study (2009), 41.6% of the population was born overseas (Moreland 2009).

Historical patterns of migration to Brunswick reflect those of many parts of Australia, especially in larger cities (Donati, L 2005). The Chinese were early arrivals; initially attracted to the goldfields, they established market gardens upon their return to Melbourne. Later, the need for labour in a burgeoning industrial landscape was an instrumental factor in relaxing migration policies, which had restricted non-English speaking migrants. Large numbers of Maltese, Italian and Greek migrants came to Australia during the ‘forties and ‘fifties, and were followed by a succession of Turkish, Lebanese and others from the Middle East. More recently, Asian and African migrants have also found a place.

Brunswick was a ‘natural’ catchment area for newly arriving migrants, particularly after the Second World War because of its proximity to the city and links with other established ‘enclave’ suburbs and affordable housing. Employment opportunities for new arrivals were abundant in this period. Brunswick’s deep clay substrata meant that the Hoffman’s brickworks thrived and the suburb became an important centre for the Australian textile and clothing trades (Barnes 1987). The Ford Motor plant, just a few kilometres north in Campbellfield also attracted many migrant workers. As Lauren Donati points out, these workplaces provided more than just employment; they were places where migrants could learn English and become familiar with the peculiarities of the Australian cultural landscape (2005).

As assimilation-era programs fell from favour, positive attitudes towards migration developed, changing the social landscape in Brunswick and more broadly. Brunswick's multicultural makeup came to be seen as a distinctive asset, not the least of which was the diverse culinary scene that accompanied multiculturalism (Penrose 1994; Moreland 2009).

The food

The progression of food retailing in Brunswick has followed similar patterns to those seen across Australia during the 20th century (Symons 2007). These patterns began with strip and cluster shopping precincts that were largely comprised of small family-run businesses, including a number catering for specific ethnic communities. These were followed by the gradual arrival of larger company-owned and operated businesses (Barnes 1987). It was not until 1982 that a 'mall' opened at the southern end of Sydney Road, housing two major supermarkets, along with K-Mart and a number of smaller specialty stores, delicatessens and takeaway food shops. This mall has recently been extensively renovated, and it now includes several 'ethnic' cafes trading alongside multinational 'fast-food' chains.

Today, small, family-owned fresh food businesses remain prominent and popular¹², providing a contrast with the 'mainstream' supermarkets that are situated at various locations in the suburb. A largish greengrocer that trades in a central part of Sydney Road is well-patronized as is a 'wet market' further north. There are many wholesale outlets, trading in imported products that are otherwise unavailable in Australia. A woman I spoke to in one of these shops told me that she is able to buy 'exactly the same' canned or preserved food products that she used to buy in her home country, Egypt. There are also many specialty shops, including stores that sell wine-making equipment and traditional pasta machines; butchers offering products that have been prepared in accordance with cultural

¹² This may be partially linked to low car-dependence in the area. The amount of 'foot traffic' is closely correlated with the survival of local shops, restricting those without the mobility a car affords to shops near their houses or easily accessible by public transport (Dixon et al. 2007).

specifications, and, as seasons dictate, trucks bearing loads of freshly picked olives ready for pickling or ripe tomatoes for making *passata* can be seen parked in various locations, selling directly to the public.

‘Cultivating communities’

Most of the data from this study was gathered in the kitchens of the participants. Kitchens reveal a lot about the cooking and eating practices of people; they are also sites where more than meal preparation and consumption takes place. In the domestic setting, kitchens are probably the most ‘social’ site, being the place in which a lot of interaction between family members takes occurs. By interviewing participants in their kitchens, I was able to observe a number of the elements of the culinary practices they described.

Gardens and backyards were also important sites for this study (Morgan, Rocha & Poynting 2005). The participants always offered a tour of their gardens, and I was often surprised by both the variety and amount of food grown in these spaces which were sometimes quite confined. One young woman, Anita, who lives in a small flat, has cultivated a garden that measures no more than a few square metres, and it includes three different fruit trees, dozens of perennial herbs and an impressive range of vegetables.

RECRUITMENT

If the data generated is to be relevant, recruitment processes must be attuned to the objectives and sensitivities of the research questions (Fine 1998; Patton 2002). My goal was to find people who have ideas about food and cooking that would link with my research questions. Initially, I focused on purposive and theoretical sampling (Ezzy 2002: 74; Minichiello 1995: 159), and aimed to find people from diverse backgrounds whose culinary practices could either lend support or challenge the arguments I explored in the literature review. However, the

strategies used to recruit participants for the project had varying degrees of success.

To find prospective interviewees, I first sought permission to post flyers advertising the project at several public venues: community and health centres, sports facilities, and libraries. The flyers were simple invitations to contact a researcher to discuss cooking and eating practices (see Appendix 1). However, although these flyers were placed prominently on notice-boards and at reception desks, no-one responded.

There were two problems with this method. The first was the wording of the recruitment flyer. In my enthusiasm for getting ‘out into the field’, I had assumed that everyone else would approach questions about food using the same categories found in the literature. Food has attracted substantially more media attention in Australia over the recent decades, and cooking and eating have been reported as popular pastimes (Huntley 2008). Of course, this doesn’t mean that everyone is interested in the *sociology* of food! As Victor Minichiello and colleagues point out, people rarely think about their lives in sociological terms (Minichiello et al 1995: 83).

The second problem was the indirect nature of the strategy, which relied on using flyers to recruit people in the first place. My primary research goal was to talk to people about their food, but instead I had distributed printed flyers and asked potential participants to make the effort to contact me. This immediately limited the potential recruitment field to those who could read English and were also willing to contact a stranger to take part in a study.

Another avenue for recruiting participants occurred to me when chatting with a shopkeeper¹³, who asked what kind of work I did. In response, I told him I was researching what food people ate when they were young, and how they thought these foods had changed over their lifetimes. I asked him if he cooked, and even

¹³ Not a food vendor

though he said no, the conversation continued, and he told me, quite wistfully and in some detail, about the food traditions from his homeland, Syria. When I asked his permission to return and record another conversation about food, he was amused that anyone would want to know about what he ate, but he appeared to be quite enthusiastic about taking part. This encounter completely changed the way I went about recruiting participants.

The most effective method of recruiting proved to be an extension of this ‘talking’ approach which I ‘discovered’ it in a crowded butcher’s shop on Sydney Road one morning. Everyone in that shop was doing exactly what I wanted to write about in this study: they were buying food to take home, cook and eat. I turned to the people standing just behind me and asked if anyone could offer me some tips for cooking the goat meat I had just purchased. Several people stepped forward, offering special recipes, cooking tips and lively conversations about how they like to prepare goat meat. Within a short time, I had several interesting cooking suggestions, along with the names and phone numbers of three possible participants. All of these contacts proved fruitful and were followed up by interviews over the next few days.

Asking people to be part of a research project requires confidence and clarity (Patton 2002). Following the success in the butcher’s shop, I found that simply stating what the interviews would involve was the best way to invite people to take part. In addition, approaching people while they engaged in food shopping avoided the problems inherent in my first attempts to recruit participants via flyers. This worked well: the non-academic sound of an invitation to ‘talk about what you cook and eat’ put people at ease from the start, and it began the relationship with prospective interviewees in the all-important relaxed manner, as Patton recommends (2002). Importantly, it also meant I did not inadvertently convey a ‘position’ regarding what I wanted to discuss with them, which could have become problematic at the interviewing stage, prompting respondents to give

answers they believe the interviewer wants to hear (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005; Rubin & Rubin 2005).

From that point on, I recruited participants in visits to a variety of food stores in Brunswick, including ‘ethnic’ food shops and wet markets, as well as conventional supermarkets. Conversations about food are commonplace in such venues and I found that once people were talking about the items they were buying and how they were going to use them, the request for an interview could be introduced as an extension of that conversation. Ideally in a study of this kind, recruitment would continue over an extended period of time and allow for a long-term exploration of continuity and change in people’s food habits and traditions. However, the research schedule allocated six months for interviewing and transcribing, which limited the number of participants that could be recruited. The interviews took place over the period from November 2008-April 2009.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Thirty-two people participated in recorded interviews; twenty women and twelve men, ranging in age between 26 and 78 years (Appendix 2). I interviewed several people multiple times. In one case, this amounted to over three hours of recorded data. Biographical details of the participants are threaded throughout the findings chapters, but it should be noted that most of this information was voluntarily offered during the course of the interviews, and not directly solicited. A brief discussion of issues concerning the participants follows.

Cultural background

Given the cultural diversity of Brunswick, the recruitment of the participants was bound to reflect that diversity. The cultural backgrounds of the participants included Italian, Greek, Cypriot, British, Chinese, Turkish, Egyptian, Croatian, Spanish, Macedonian, Maltese and Syrian backgrounds. Fifteen participants were first-generation migrants, three of whom arrived in Australia as children under ten

years of age; nine identified themselves as second-generation migrants; seven described themselves as either ‘Anglo’¹⁴ or a hyphenated version of ‘Australian’, with an ethnic or cultural connection that dates back several generations. Seventeen of the participants were raised in households where English was not spoken as a first language.

The particular importance of food in ethnic identity construction has been noted in the literature (see especially James, R. 2004; Gabaccia 1998; Heldke 2003). In relation to this aspect, John Stanfield (1998) notes an important methodological point. He argues that celebrations of ethnic diversity may be positive, but that researchers should be careful not to generate knowledge that can marginalize some participants. Other researchers of multicultural foodways have also stressed the need for culturally-sensitive approaches in projects involving people from diverse backgrounds (Cassidy 1994; Duruz 2005; Ikeda 1999). I have taken this into account by allowing the participants to steer the way the data was collected to a large extent, and I have used their voices as the content to explore my research questions, with the interpretation and analysis being drawn directly from this content. These points are discussed further below.

Age and Generation

The participants ranged in age from 26 to 78. The range in ages provided interesting profiles of different experiences of modern food systems as well as broader socio-cultural trends in the population composition of Australia. For those under 50, their experience was marked by having always known an abundance of food and a wide variety of products. They were also the generation that had little experience of the mono-culturalism that was evident in Australian society prior to the middle of the 20th century. Those aged above 50 had far fewer choices in their

¹⁴ ‘Anglo’ has become a common term in Australian public and social life to describe the majority ethnic group. It refers to the decedents of the first waves of British colonists. This group is seen and sees itself as the mainstream of Australian population, although it is rapidly declining as a proportion of the nation’s total population. The term ‘Anglo’ elides the presence not only of Celts but also of Welsh, and for this reason the term ‘British-descended’ is used in the analysis. ‘Anglo’ is retained in reporting of participants’ self-definition.

youth and had experienced the greatly increased introduction of many pre-prepared foods.

Language issues

As Claire Cassidy (2004), and Barbara Kamler and Terry Threadgold (2003) have pointed out, researchers need to be aware of the possibilities of misinterpreting spoken data, particularly when working with people whose first language is different from their own. In this study, many of the participants came from non-English speaking backgrounds and it became apparent that some did not read or write English¹⁵. As I speak only English and as the sole interviewer, I was aware this may have presented a number of problems, especially in the transcription phase of the project. As a precaution against the possibility of misinterpreting responses to questions, I asked questions from several different angles. This ensured I was gathering the responses the participants intended. There were only a few times when I found it necessary to ask for words or phrases to be repeated or translated so that I could be certain I had understood the participant's intention.

A further issue about language arose somewhat differently, as a specific example illustrates. During one of the interviews, a participant referred to his favourite traditional food several times, and I had asked him if he would give me the recipe for how he cooked it. He hesitated, and then changed the subject completely. Later, I asked him for the recipe again and was met with the same response. I was puzzled by his reticence and began to worry that I had overstepped some boundary of politeness. Then, it occurred to me that he thought I was asking him to write the recipe down and it was possible he could not translate the ingredients into English. On my third attempt, I asked him again rephrasing my request as 'could you tell me how to do that' instead of 'can you give me the recipe', which he was happy to do.

¹⁵ This highlights the difficulties many people may have when they move to a new country and are confronted with food packaged and labelled in a language they do not understand.

GENDER AND FOODWORK

Despite plenty of evidence suggesting a gendered division of labour surrounding domestic foodwork still operates in most households, Debbie Kemmer notes that researchers need to be mindful of assuming that this is the case in every household, and thereby reinforcing this notion by choosing only to interview women (Kemmer 2000). Therefore, I decided to include men in my search for participants. As with the women I had recruited, the men I approached in markets and shops were already engaged in performing foodwork – figuring out what to buy, thinking about how to cook it, and so on. They were easily drawn into conversations about food when I casually asked them introductory questions, such as, ‘how are you going to cook that?’

Whilst it is possible that some of the men I approached were doing little more than accompanying their partners to the shops¹⁶, their enthusiasm for discussing food might also be partially explained by the emergence of trends that point to a change in the status of domestic foodwork (Kemmer 2000). While increasing media space devoted to food in general has meant that cooking instruction – once considered to be closely bound up with feminine concerns (Lupton 1996) – is now more widely accessible for both genders. The increasing number of mostly male ‘celebrity chefs’ in televisual and print media has transformed cooking into a form of entertainment and leisure, possibly lending it more ‘legitimacy’ as a masculine pursuit even in domestic settings (Hollows 2003b; Huntley 2008; Naccarato & Lebesco 2014).

Feminist methodologists warn of another gender issue arising in qualitative research: finding a way to deal with the likelihood of encountering opinions or beliefs running counter to, or conflicting with, those of the researcher (Sprague & Zimmerman 1989: 76). In this project, I was expecting a range of opinions to be expressed that differed from my own views on the role of women in relation to

¹⁶ One shopkeeper told me the men in his culture ‘always’ take charge whenever money changes hands.

foodwork. This occurred in several instances, and I believe it could not have been otherwise, given the topics covered and my personal viewpoint about them. There were times when I found the views of the participants challenging, but if this had *not* happened, I would have suspected that I was not pursuing the topics fully enough.

Further sensitivities in qualitative research

As Pranee Liamputtong and Douglas Ezzy note, ethnography invites participants into the research process to teach us about their culture and experiences (2005: 162). How the relationship is established between the ‘conversational partners’ in a project – the researcher and the researched – bears significantly on the outcomes of the research process (Rubin & Rubin 2005; Foley & Valenzuela 2005). Researchers need to be aware of how much control they have in this relationship. To begin with, researchers occupy positions of privilege, in that they are from universities (Punch 1998), and their questions are likely to be motivated by their own reasons that are not necessarily going to benefit those who are interviewed (Foley & Valenzuela 2005). As a researcher, one has the power to selectively question participants, and to direct how interviews are conducted. It is the responsibility of researchers to be aware of these things at every stage of their project; not just during interactions with the participants, but also while interpreting the data. This means that as a researcher is asking questions and recording responses, they also need to respect the fact that for the participants, this process involves sharing parts of their lives (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005: 32).

Qualitative research cannot, and does not pretend to, be neutral (Reinharz 1992; Patton 2002; Rubin & Rubin 2005). It is inevitable that researchers will bring their own assumptions, beliefs and experience into their work, which creates a methodological challenge of recognizing the difference between their own perspectives, and those that they uncover from their participants. An effective way to negotiate this challenge is for the researcher to occupy “a middle ground between becoming too involved, which can cloud judgement, and remaining too

distant, which can reduce understanding” (Patton 2002: 50). Michael Patton suggests this is achieved by developing ‘empathetic neutrality’ in conversations with participants, creating a space that is respectful and non-judgemental.

Some methodologists favour an approach that casts the participants as ‘experts’ and themselves as ‘naïve inquirers’, in an effort to overcome some of the moral and political dilemmas that might arise (Reinharz 1992: 24; Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). However, while I certainly wanted to learn all I could from the participants, and I made decisions to always allow them to steer the conversations we had, I could not and did not adopt this position in its entirety. Of course, the participants were experts! I was asking them to tell me about what *they* cook and eat and, as Lucy Long notes, everyone is an expert on their own eating habits (2001). But to pretend that I no knowledge of food and cooking from other cultures would have been duplicitous, and the participants would have easily detected it as such. I found that ‘sharing knowledge’ was a franker approach, which also enabled me to ask whether my understandings of different cuisines were correct in their interpretation. Efforts to find engaging and convivial ways to exchange information, such as swapping recipes, were especially helpful here.

The question of how to extend respect to participants is managed primarily by establishing this kind of open rapport with them (Rubin & Rubin 2005). Putting participants at ease with an informal description of the research and making this accessible in non-academic terms was beneficial in this regard. I also remained aware that, while cooking and eating are mostly mundane and routine activities in everyday life, there are times when people’s relationship to food may be problematic. Eating disorders, past deprivation, and negative memories of food can all surface when discussing food habits (Lupton 1996). These possibilities were taken into consideration when designing the project and, more importantly, when engaging with the participants.

The literature on methodology referred to in this chapter informed and suggested ways of proceeding with the empirical research for this project. It provided

guidelines for making decisions about how to sensitively gather and report on participant contributions and especially highlighted the relationship between the interview material and the theoretical background of the study.

COLLECTING THE DATA

People love to talk about food and eating (Lupton 1996; Backett 1992; Long 2001). One of the participants, Rosalea, told me that her family *only* enjoy talking because they can talk about food! The enthusiasm that the participants brought to the interviews meant the interviewing process, conducted over a six-month period in 2008-2009¹⁷, was an enjoyable and intellectually rewarding task.

Setting up the interviews

The procedure for setting up the interviews followed a simple basic pattern: after making initial contact with a prospective participant, I asked if I could call at their house, or if there was another meeting place that they would prefer. When possible, I suggested scheduling meetings in mid-afternoons, as this would not interfere with meal preparations, but might coincide with times when people were thinking about what to prepare for their evening meal. All but three participants invited me into their homes. In those three cases, two interviews were held at workplaces and the other at a café.

The interviews were designed to take approximately one hour, and most were recorded on a small unobtrusive device. Generally, the main interview session was bracketed by an informal discussion consisting of introductory greetings, explanations of the ethics procedures, a tour of the garden and so on. These informal discussions were instrumental for establishing rapport and finding a suitable place to hold the interviews. Although interviewees were asked for one

¹⁷ There has been a significant gap between the collection of the data and the final submission of this thesis. This delay occurred as the result of unforeseen personal circumstances. I do not feel the data is less relevant to the research questions because of this delay.

hour of their time, there were several instances where two or three hours were given.

Where it was possible, I asked participants if they could be interviewed in their kitchens, as I believed this would make them feel more comfortable during the process. As this is also the setting where most food preparation is performed, this also allowed observation in these sites to form part of the data sets.

Designing interviews as conversations

Ethnographies require a collaborative effort between the researcher and participants, and the most effective way to achieve this partnership is by using semi-structured interviewing techniques (Rubin & Rubin 2005). This technique's major strength lies with promoting 'conversations' between those involved in the project, thus providing room for multiple understandings of the topic to emerge and develop (Minichiello et.al 1995; Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). This allows the participants to tell the stories that they want to tell, whilst it also maintains a convivial relationship where participants feel secure in introducing their own ideas and controlling the direction of the discussion (Stacey 1988). This approach fits very well with the themes of the research questions because the primary focus was to uncover the influences people see affecting their culinary practices. This would not have been achieved by using a tightly structured questionnaire or survey design.

I constructed open-ended 'conversation topics', framed in non-academic language, to encourage free-flowing responses from participants (see Appendix 3). I avoided phrases that were too directly indicative of my research interests, and instead I introduced basic themes, such as learning to cook, growing produce, shopping and sharing, special occasion foods, and adaptations and shortcuts in recipes. These topics not only gave the participants a broad variety of options to respond to, but they also roughly correspond to the areas of food traditions that my research questions were based on.

Within the broad groups of questions I developed, I included sub-sets of questions that could be used to drill deeper into the ways people think about their food. I reasoned that using probes such as, ‘why is it important for you to cook in the way you have described?’, or, ‘have you always done it that way?’, would give the participants opportunities to recall more details about their own history of cooking and eating. In turn, this would lead into discussions about the things that had changed in their culinary practices and how these changes had occurred.

The research questions of this project are premised on two broad themes: the meaning of tradition, and the impact of change. I introduced these themes early in the conversations, so they could be referred back to again throughout the interviews and also because responses from the participants would influence the direction the rest of the interview took. Rather than ask blunt questions, and thereby risk receiving blunt answers, I wanted to use these topics as devices for the participants to anchor their stories about the food in their lives, from both the past and present. At various intervals, I asked, ‘would your grandparents recognize the types of food you eat today?’, ‘what has changed about the food you cook and why?’, and ‘do you think food is better or worse than before’. These types of questions solicit reflections from participants that cannot be uncovered through direct questions that can be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses.

Not long after I had begun interviewing, I noticed people often introduced ‘favourite’ recipes to illustrate the point that were making, and they were usually described with a custodial inflexion, such as ‘my goulash’ or ‘mum’s cake’. Asking participants to contribute a recipe became a regular part of the interview schedule, as it became apparent these descriptions could provide insights into the practice of ‘doing cooking’ (Sutton 2001) that otherwise might not have been forthcoming. Those participants who offered a recipe mostly chose a dish that they prepared regularly. In offering these particular recipes, they also incidentally described dispositions and attitudes about their approach to cooking, thoughts about health and diet, special treats or luxury items, and their willingness to adapt

or experiment. Parts of these recipes are referred to throughout the findings chapters where relevant; others will be used in a forthcoming paper.

Conducting the interviews

At the beginning of each interview session, I outlined the privacy issues that might arise and extended a guarantee of anonymity to each participant. To this end, I provided each person present with a consent form (Appendix 4) and a verbal reiteration of the security measures I would undertake to guarantee their data remained confidential. The participants were assured that if they wanted to do so, they could call a halt to the interviews and could withdraw their participation at any time. None of the participants raised concerns about these issues before, during, or after the interviews. In fact, when asked to invent pseudonyms for themselves, most responded that they were happy to use their own names. However, I have not used anyone's real name in this study, nor have I included any personally identifiable data ¹⁸.

The interviews were recorded on a small, unobtrusive electronic device¹⁹. This meant I was not pre-occupied with taking notes, and therefore I could listen carefully for key words related directly to the broader research topics and use those opportunities to probe deeper along these directions. Recording the interviews also ensured I was free to observe body language, note when people became more or less animated, watch the interaction between partners if present, discern when people appeared to be holding something back, or made other small gestures that influenced the flow of conversations. Furthermore, it enabled me to

¹⁸ There is some discussion in the literature on methodology regarding changing attitudes towards privacy issues (Patton 2002: 411). In the past researchers were advised not to identify their participants, but more recently some have argued that using real names can empower those who contribute and that their stories should be recognized as their own when the researcher is given permission to do so.

¹⁹ Two interviews were not recorded. In one case, I forgot to take the recording device with me; in another, the recorder was positioned too far away from the three participants to pick up their voices clearly. In both cases, I wrote up each interview in as much detail as I could recall immediately following the session.

familiarize myself with the layout of the kitchens. All of these aspects enhanced the data in valuable ways.

I began the interviews by asking the participants what they had eaten the previous evening, and who had cooked it. Introducing the interviews in a convivial, casual tone put the participants at ease, and it paved the way to explore further issues, such as where the food was bought, whether a recipe was used, of it was a ‘new’ dish or something they frequently ate. However, conducting interviews as free-ranging conversations risks occasional flights into irrelevancy. Therefore, strategies to deal with tangential digressions were sometimes necessary. The most effective way I found for getting the interviews ‘back on track’ was to ask the participants to remind me how to cook something. Towards the end of each interview, I asked if the participants felt I had overlooked anything, which gave them a chance to add issues they thought were important.

The first interviews were somewhat exploratory, but they provided salutary lessons in both framing questions sensitively, and in listening to participants’ stories. As I learned more about interviewing processes, I found that the major strength of qualitative research – the pursuit of depth and free-flowing range – has a corollary weakness. While it is vital to listen for key words that relate directly to the research question and to ensure the data is useful for the overall project and addresses the relevant themes, it may only become apparent during the transcribing processes that some contradictory statements have been made, including discrepancies between what people described as their intentions and their actual practices. Soon after completing the first couple of interviews, I replayed them and was surprised to hear things that were clear on the recordings, but which I had failed to recognize as being of direct relevance at the time. These two issues – not hearing things and overlooking contradictory responses – were disappointing results in the early phases of research. With further practice, this became much less of an issue.

Further observations in the field

A journal was kept during the data-gathering phase of this project where I entered supplementary observations and insights about the interviews that would not have been apparent from the recordings. Immediately after each interview, I noted the length and location of the meetings, commented on the ‘feel’ or atmosphere of the interview, and the demeanour of the participant during the conversation. I also included my reflections on the interviewing process and how it could be improved or finessed. I sketched the kitchens of each participant, including notes about food preparation and storage areas, cooking equipment and the types of food products I was able to observe. The hospitality extended to me during my visits was also recorded in this journal.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The task of analyzing qualitative data starts as soon as one steps into the field (Patton 2002; Minichiello et.al 1995). A constant review process occurs at each stage of the project: methods are questioned, theoretical insights are held up for inspection, participant’s contributions are reviewed, and interpretations of data are scrutinized.

The first step

After each interview session, I listened to the recording, noting frequently used words and ideas, and I added them to the journal under the heading of ‘folk categories’ (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983). This is the prime reason we interview people – to uncover ‘emic’ or insider perspectives (Patton 2002: 267). This initial summary of attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and descriptions about cooking and eating, would later be helpful for emphasizing the participant’s own understandings of their food cultures.

As I listened to each successive interview recording, I searched through the journal summaries to see which categories had recurred, and I created new ones as

different themes emerged. The most common categories to emerge in this initial exercise were related to identity and ‘cultural pride’; individual and collective taste preferences or ‘likes and dislikes’; a number of different views about the industrial food system, which I separately categorized under headings of ‘risk’ and ‘trust’; and, the very common concern with value for money and ‘thrift’. Although these themes were expressed in ‘lay’ terms, they could be directly correlated with the outside (‘etic’) categories that were brought to this study from the literature and theoretical perspectives. As the interviews continued, this correlation of themes became increasingly worthwhile and, comparisons between the interviews revealed valuable similarities and differences across all of the interviews.

Entering the data into computer programs, such as N-Vivo, is a common practice in this type of analytical work. However, I did not use computer assisted analysis in this project because I felt that it would only provide “uncertain benefits” (Ezzy 2002: 117). My concern was that the point of view of the participants, along with the subtleties of cultural meanings, could have been lost or rendered invisible following computer assisted analysis. As Patton points out, “making sense of multiple interview transcripts and pages of field notes cannot be reduced to a formula or even a standard series of steps” (2002: 57). Therefore, I decided against using computer analysis, on the grounds that the people involved in this study were describing practices and perceptions that needed to be unpacked by emphasizing their complex, nuanced, and sometimes contradictory, character. However, I did not eschew computer help altogether, and in the next section I discuss the utility of creating several types of documents while transcribing the interviews.

Transcribing the interviews

People bring a great deal of enthusiasm to discussions about ‘their’ food, and this was most apparent while transcribing the interviews. This phase of the project was at once enjoyable and arduous. I transcribed the interviews verbatim, retaining all non-lexical expressions, colloquialisms and hesitations, because I found these

important for capturing the different light and shade in the interviews. I assigned a pseudonym for each participant to the transcript to ensure anonymity²⁰.

The interviews were transcribed as soon as possible, in order to retain the freshest perspective on the setting and tone of each one. As my skill at close listening improved, the later interviews provided more material, because I became more adept at pursuing lines of questioning that had proved most worthwhile in earlier interviews. These interviews not only yielded deeper data, but they also enriched the reflexive experience of transcribing. Transcription immerses the researcher fully 'into' the data, and it offers an opportunity to pause, make notes and think about what has been recorded in a way that cannot be done during the actual interviews. It is a means of 'getting to know' the participants better. The rhythm in people's voices is often heard more clearly while transcribing and can therefore suggest new emphases. While transcribing one interview, I found a particular line of conversation had commanded all of my attention, and it had overshadowed equally interesting discussion of another topic that was expressed as strongly. In this case, I requested a second interview and gathered a further hour of interview material.

As the transcription stage of the project progressed, links between the interview data and the research questions began to emerge, allowing analytical categories to be established. For example, if a participant mentioned 'throwing things together' or using 'shortcuts', I attached marginal notes to the document, labelling these as 'convenience' or 'time-saving', and further categorized them as 'traditional' or 'modern'. Some people directly described how their home-made preserves and products made meal preparation times easier; others discussed the availability of commercially pre-prepared products. These categories bridged etic and emic understandings together (Patton 2002).

²⁰ I asked the participants to make these up for themselves and have used their suggestions where appropriate and where it does not identify them.

Coding the data

People talk about aspects of their lives in the context in which they see them; they do not use sociological categories (Long 2001). Coding data forges links between the folk categories in people's descriptions, with the "sensitizing concept" drawn from the theory and literature (Patton 2002:456; see also Wilk 2006:106). After transcribing each interview, I printed the transcript, and using marginal notes and annotations, I began a more thorough coding procedure that was aimed at generating a thematic analysis of the data. Each interview response was marked with a term to categorize it. For instance, when a participant used phrases such as 'I don't have time to cook everyday' or 'it gets pretty busy round here during the week', I coded these as relating to 'time' and 'time management'. Similarly, when the prices of food or family budgets were mentioned, I coded them for 'domestic finances' and 'economy'. These categories were then broken down further into various subcategories, such as the difference between affording everyday items compared to the cost of once-in-a-while special treats.

This method produces some very complex data sets. To deal with the growing complexity emerging from coding the data, I employed the hermeneutic approach described by Douglas Ezzy (2002). This approach entails moving back and forth between the interview data and the themes found in the literature, and it is used to facilitate comparisons between etic and emic understandings. It can be used to compare data from a single interview, and across a range of interviews. During this part of the coding procedures, I also prepared separate documents for each coded category, and I extracted the relevant matching quotes from each of the interviews. These documents revealed links between the interviews, which in turn provided opportunities to refine the codes, as similarities and differences were identified in the data sets (Spiggle 1994).

REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Designing an empirical project is especially useful for reflecting on research processes, and for the generation of knowledge more broadly. Throughout this chapter, I have touched on general issues that are fundamental in this regard. In this section, I discuss specific especially relevant in this project in greater detail.

Participant-researcher relationships

It is generally accepted that the nature of the relationship between participants and researcher will have an effect on the data collection, as well as on the analysis, regardless of whether qualitative and quantitative methods were used (Fine 1998; Foley & Valenzuela 2005). Positivist methodologies, which insisted on detached observation and supposedly objective, scientific standpoints, once dominated sociological research, but they have since been rigorously questioned, and more collaborative approaches dealing with subjective meanings are now favoured (Denzin 2001). The use of these newly favoured approaches means it is important to clearly acknowledge the influences on, and the boundaries of, the relationship between participants and researchers (Fine 1998).

This project involves people from different cultures, which makes ‘insider/outsider’ status issues relevant (see Patton 2002; Reinharz 1992; Rubin & Rubin 2005; Stanfield 1998). I have mostly British heritage (and speak only English) but I consider this in relation to a number of issues in what follows.

Some writers on methodology argue that cultural, ethnic, class or gender differences between the researcher and participants can help build richer data, because the researcher will be beholden to ask participants to explain how these differences can be understood or negotiated (Rubin & Rubin 2005: 88). Similarly, Reinharz (1992) argues that outsiders will collect fuller sets of data, because they will not take their interviewees for granted.

Nevertheless, the issue of ‘outsider’ researcher status still does present its own special problems. As Renato Rosaldo cautions, “there are no innocent ethnographers” (cited in Fine 1998: 140). It is therefore important to acknowledge the historical and cultural position that researchers occupy in relation to the people they invite into their projects. For Michelle Fine, this means rejection the assumption that researchers are from ‘nowhere’, or that they will portray the subject from some kind of abstracted, ‘neutral’ distance (1998: 138). One way of achieving this is by taking care not to presume the homogeneity of ‘others’, or by creating distinctions that do not exist. In this project, this problem has been avoided by recruiting people with very diverse food habits and customs.

Marginalizing participants can also be avoided by allowing them to tell their own stories using their own words (Fine 1998: 139). On this basis, I decided to use open-ended ‘conversational’ methods, thereby giving the participants their own voice and the power to choose the direction of the interviews. Claire Cassidy emphasizes that these kinds of respondent-driven methods invite ‘warm’ responses such as story-telling, and that they often elicit volunteered information that may not have been gathered using other methods such as surveys (Cassidy 1994: 194). This approach has proven to be fruitful in much feminist research (Skeggs 2002), and it is also recommended for all those working in multiethnic societies (Stanfield 1998: 343).

On the other hand, some writers argue that ‘better’ data may be collected by people who belong to the communities that are being study (Foley & Valenzuela 2005: 219), because they will be accepted more easily than outsiders. While this point needs to be taken into account, my experience over the course of this project offers a contrasting view of ‘inclusion’. While collecting the data, the participants invited me ‘into’ their lives, in ways that might be particular to projects about food. Some of the participants generously invited me to cook and eat with them: I was invited to take part in a Passover meal at the house of one participant, where I was asked to read aloud from the *Haggadah*, the religious text that accompanies

the meal. On another occasion, a participant suggested we meet on the Sunday of the Orthodox Easter calendar so that we could eat together while talking. Two participants insisted on cooking elaborate meals for me while I was at their house, and others offered cakes, snacks, and fruit from their gardens. I also shared endless cups of tea and coffee during the interviewing process, quickly learning the depth of the collaborative effort ethnographies demand.

Furthermore, I do carry a particular kind of ‘insider’ status, as a long-term resident of the suburb where the study was conducted. Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin note that people will more readily agree to take part in research if they the researcher is somewhat known, or if they are even slightly recognized from familiar situations or contexts, such as neighbourhoods (Rubin & Rubin 2005: 89). Being a ‘local’ immersed in the same landscape as the participants, I was afforded some credibility when I invited the people I had met while shopping for food to take part in the project. The everyday setting, my role as a fellow shopper, and by engaging with people in casually inquiring ‘how are you going to cook that?’ proved to be very effective for familiarizing people with the research. These ‘culinary chats’ (Abarca 2004) are a common and accepted interaction for women in food settings, such as shops and markets (Duruz 1999a), and they are probably becoming increasingly so for men as well (Huntley 2008). In this project, culinary chats were an important means of building the trust and rapport necessary for establishing a good ‘research partnership’.

The familiarity of belonging in a shared neighbourhood extends into the familiarity that is inherent in the research topic itself. As I have already noted, food and eating are popular topics which appear to engage most people. When I invited people to take part in research about these things, very few declined. The relationships that developed over the relatively short period of an interview seem to have had lasting effects and benefits. Following the series of interviews, and because I still live in the community, I have often bumped into some of the participants and we have shared further stories. At first, these conversations were

centred on the topic of food, with participants offering more recipes or suggestions for cooking, or making enquiries about how the research was progressing. More recently, some of these conversations have broadened into other areas of interest. However, I remain mindful of Maurice Punch's emphasis on maintaining confidentiality and respect after fieldwork is completed (1998).

Ethics and research agendas

The process of applying for approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee was very useful for thinking through questions about the relationship that forms with the people taking part in this or any research project. The process requires much reflection on the position of a participant, and on the questions the researcher intends asking. Careful consideration about what type of information will be solicited during the interviews, and of the nature and extent of the participation, underlines the importance of maintaining rigorous ethical standards while conducting the research. It is for this reason that Minichiello and colleagues (1995) urge us to constantly ask, 'who and what is this research for', when constructing new projects. When a researcher poses questions, they are asking people to share their knowledge and skills. In the case of this project, these people were also asked to share their history and cultural background, and to provide insights into how they live their lives. These questions can lead to quite intimate details being related, even when seemingly mundane topics like food and cooking are discussed. This brings the nature of 'trust' in collaborative research into focus, since talking about food can elicit range of difficult responses, such as memories of hunger, issues about the body, health concerns, confusion about received nutritional advice, problems related to caring for children, feelings of loss or deprivation, and so on. Therefore, when considering the potential ethical implications of this project, it reinforced my decision to use a methodology of open-ended questions that would allow the participants to choose, or avoid, what they wanted to talk about.

CONCLUSION: CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The qualitative methodology, and in particular the use of participant observation and semi-structured interviews to draw out everyday meanings of food traditions were chosen in an attempt to move this research beyond a project that simply adds light or shade to the discourses of loss that often characterize studies of the fate of food traditions. Since many food traditions remain unwritten and are often transmitted orally, this approach is sometimes described as “salvage ethnography” (Adapon 2008). Qualitative interviews gave me a chance to observe these dynamic aspects of tradition and provided opportunities to explore what it is that keeps tradition alive. As a record of the stocks of knowledge and skill of the participants it provides a unique glimpse of everyday practices that are overlaid with deep reservoirs of cultural meaning.

Given the small number of participants who were drawn from one specific setting I do not claim that the data generated from this has veracity for a wider population. However, I do not think this is a weakness in the methodological framework, but rather a product of the time constraints of the study, and the consequential limitations on how long the participants ‘eating lives’ could be followed for. A longer-term study, enjoying wider recruitment and involving people across several generations, would enrich the findings presented here, and they would enhance this field of sociology more generally. Longitudinal studies reveal some of the changes in food habits that cannot be elicited from shorter studies such as this one, as they would sift the passage of fashions and trends from the more indelible forces that shape foodways.

In addition, aspects of the methodology may have limited the study in a second way. By recruiting primarily, but not exclusively, in venues where fresh food was sold, I may have selected people who were already thinking about preparing food ‘from scratch’. To some extent, this was intentional, since I wanted to include people who came from backgrounds where this type of approach to food was considered the norm. However, it also raises the possibility that I was biased in

recruiting people who had some intention of maintaining at least some aspects of traditional food cultures. This was not borne out in analysis of the data, where the heterogeneity of the ‘sample’ and their eating practices became apparent quite early. Again, these issues could be accounted in a wider study with recruitment from more diverse zones.

To conclude this chapter, I reiterate the three most salient features of the qualitative research methods I have incorporated into the design of this project: according respect and empathy to the contributing participants, acknowledging insider and outsider perspectives, and recognizing that all research is rooted in social observation.

Chapter Five

Culinary Identities

This chapter introduces the voices of the participants and is the first of five in which the findings from the study are presented. The participants were questioned about their past culinary practices, their current cooking and eating habits, and their on-going food preferences. Specifically, they were asked to describe the styles of food most familiar from childhood, how they had learned to cook, and whether they cooked in the same way as their parents and grandparents. Participants with children were asked about their children's culinary preferences, and if they had taught their children to cook in the same styles that they had learned, using the same ingredients. These questions were designed to draw out: the participant's understandings of the origins of their food practices, the meanings they associate with them, and the extent to which these practices continue to be transmitted across generations. This chapter, along with the following four, presents the responses of participants verbatim. By allowing the participants to speak directly to the reader in this way, it helps to build thematic layers of description and understanding that are in line with the conceptual framework, and the ethnographic methodology, that have guided this research project.

This chapter explores the multiple meanings and significance that food traditions hold for the participants in relation to their identity. The interviews revealed that the idea of tradition is prominent in the meanings (and in many of the practices, as is shown in the next chapter) that participants associated with their food. In particular, the findings reveal that food traditions are strongly associated with cultural identity, even in cases where the actual food is seen as somewhat uninspiring or lacking in substance. The participants' culinary cultural identities were expressed in terms of national, regional and ethnic collectivities, and were sustained both through everyday practices, and in ritual occasions that bring people together. For some participants, a connection to their familial traditions

came only after a period of having rejected them. Finally, many participants experience food traditions as markers of cultural boundaries that function as a means of both inclusion and exclusion.

EMBLEMS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

Most of the participants described broad national and regional styles of cooking when asked about the background of their food habits and preferences. Typical among these depictions were phrases such as, ‘I come from Italy so I eat lots of pasta’, or ‘our food was always the classic English diet of meat and three veg’. As these comments suggest, this tendency was true of people from both British and migrant backgrounds. However, those of British descent viewed this connection very differently compared to those from other backgrounds. Overwhelmingly, those from Anglo backgrounds saw their traditions as repetitive, or simply just ‘boring’, and something that could be enriched or improved. In contrast, the participants from other backgrounds generally did not depict their traditions in a negative light, and instead saw their food traditions as worth preserving. Importantly, however, the identification with inherited food traditions remained strong even among those who thought their food traditions to be uninteresting.

BRITISH FOOD: THE BLAND AND THE BORING

Matilda was one of the first participants to describe British food traditions as ‘bland and boring’. She is a forty-three year-old nurse, and lives with her partner and two young children. She grew up in a small town, in an agricultural district of Victoria, where a ‘large Italian population’ had settled after the Second World War. Matilda confessed that she envied her Italian classmates, whose food was ‘more exciting’ than hers. Her description of what her family ate at home during the 1960s suggests that she sees it as having been monotonous and repetitive, through her use of disparaging terms such as ‘quite bland’ and ‘nothing special’:

Well it seems like now, quite bland food. I think it was, yeah. Definitely just meat and three veg and probably a roast a week... But we would have sausages, chops, you know, mashed potatoes, carrots: very basic. And you know the vegies were probably boiled with some salt in them, to the brink of [indistinct]. But I guess as a treat we would have fish and chips on a Friday night usually. And lots of barbecues in summer. Just the meat barbecues with salads; but again the salads were pretty much lettuce, tomato, egg, maybe some cucumber, nothing special.

Matilda's experiences are typical of the 'Anglo' dietary regimen that was reported by several other participants who also had British backgrounds. Simone is in her late sixties, and is a retired public servant of Anglo-Irish descent. She lives alone in a small semi-detached cottage, which she bought after her five children moved away from home. As Simone recalled the rotation of dishes in her childhood home, her recitation of the 'the menu' describes the 'meat and three veg' regimen that was commonly found in Anglo-Australian households until well into the twentieth century. These styles of eating – the same meals served in weekly rotation, often using leftovers from a Sunday roast – are based on British traditions of frugality and avoiding waste (Kingston 1996).

Well, you start off on Sunday with roast lamb, roast potatoes, parsnips and pumpkin. And usually green peas cooked with mint and soda so they stayed a nice bright green. And then we had apple pie and cream... Sunday night we had scones and we picked at the leftovers. Monday night would be more cold meat, turned into a fritter, or maybe we'd just have it cold with hot vegetables... Tuesdays we'd have a grill... a chop and a sausage was common and again, boiled vegetables – not very adventurous ones – beans, peas, potatoes, pumpkin. The desserts left a lot to be desired [laughter]. We might have sago or tapioca... And then Wednesday night we'd be up for a stew or a casserole... Thursday was mystery night, it could be a

shepherd's pie or, you know, braised steak or something like that. Friday night, usually it was fish and um... Saturday night I really liked. Usually you had a salad which was the classic Australian salad with chopped lettuce, and sliced tomatoes, and a bit of beetroot and a [laughing] rolled slice of orange and maybe some cucumber if you were lucky!

Another participant, Faye, also recalled the rotation of dishes served in her family with the same precision. Faye is in her late fifties, a life-long resident of Brunswick with Anglo-Scottish heritage, and describes herself as a 'homebody'. She is the partner of another participant, Lazar. The similarities between Faye's and Simone's 'menus' are striking, and both included fish served on Fridays. The only significant difference was that Faye did not mention vegetables:

Oh, the basic roast on a Sunday... If it was winter, you'd have scones and jam and cream and of a summer you'd have fruit salad. And then if there was any of that left over on the Monday, you'd have that. Then Tuesday you'd have sausages. And then you'd have tripe. And then lamb chops. And Friday night would be fish and chips... And then Saturdays you'd have pies and pasties.

Georgina is a busy woman in her early forties, and works in the health sector. At the time of the interview, her home (which she shares with her husband and two sons) was undergoing extensive renovations. The changes to her home include the fit-out of a very modern kitchen (complete with a walk-in refrigerator,) a bright and colourful dining area, and a space for an espresso coffee machine. When asked to describe the food she remembers from her childhood, Georgina began by saying:

In a word? Bland, and very, very unadventurous. Ah, always meat and three veg and no amounts of spice. If there was garlic in there it was 'oh' [miming surprise]. It was, you know, very, very standard. If I

could visualize a plate it would have mashed potato, frozen – well cooked, frozen – peas, and probably sausages or some kind of meat and some kind of orange vegetable.

Alethea tells the same story, but from a different perspective. Following her emigration from Greece, she found that the typical food in Australia was profoundly different from the food served in her home. From the following quote, it is very obvious that the food in Australia was definitely not to her liking when she first arrived:

Well, when we first came to Australia in the 1960s I mean, what I felt was, well if someone said to me “describe Australian food”, I would say boiled peas, mashed potatoes, then a grilled chop and usually vegetables being overcooked to the point where there was no nutritional value left. I hope this is not rude of me to be making these comments!

MIGRANT FOOD: CULINARY PRIDE

Repetitive menus are not always seen as bland and boring. In contrast with the statements above, some of the participants with non-British heritage (including both first- and second-generation migrants) regarded their food traditions positively, and were notably more attached to them. They also often spoke broadly of ‘national’ cuisines, and of the rotation and repetition of series of dishes, but these references to regional cuisines were more appreciatively toned. In addition, there was a more immediate sense of connection to a particular place of origin. These participants identified with the primordial ‘home’ of their food traditions much more than the British-descended participants. This was apparent even in cases where their families had emigrated from that place long ago.

Anita is a teacher in her mid-twenties. Her father is originally from Sicily and came to Australia with his family as an adolescent. He briefly returned to his

homeland during his early twenties ‘to find a wife’. He met Anita’s mother, they married and travelled back to Australia to raise a family. Anita described her parents as being ‘very Italian, very traditional’ in their food tastes, and was enthusiastic about the recipes and food she ate with her family.

Like, I grew up having pasta con salsa, that’s Sicilian. It’s just pasta and sauce, passata. Every night! That’s like five nights a week. Saturday we would have our homemade pizza, once again with all the homemade ingredients. And then Sunday we would have some leftovers. That was it; that was like the staple diet and it was great.

In another part of her interview, Anita expressed satisfaction with the food of her Sicilian heritage, but in a different way. Whilst visiting relatives in Italy, she was surprised to find that the dining ‘scene’ there lacked the variety of opportunities for eating out that are offered in Melbourne. She told me her aunty expressed a marked disinclination for trying ‘foreign’ (non-Italian) food or going to restaurants. Anita had asked her aunty about this, and she had replied: ‘*I don’t go to them, you know, I’m happy eating what I eat. Why? Why try them? I’m sure they’re lovely but I don’t go*’. This topic was discussed further with Anita, who clearly agreed with her aunt when she added:

‘But she was just completely satis-[fied] and that was a mentality I found a lot. People were just really satisfied with what they always had. And it tasted bloody good!’

Alethea (who was mentioned above) came to Australia aged seven and described a profound attachment to Greek food. Now in her mid-forties, Alethea works in the community sector. She is widowed and lives with her teenage daughter, who is also an enthusiastic cook. Although she has few memories of the food from when she lived in Greece, Alethea strongly identifies with the culinary traditions of her country of origin. She is not alone in identifying with these traditions:

I really love the Greek food and my mother is an excellent cook, very discerning and she has a wealth of knowledge about food preparation and so the influences were there from the onset you know. Everyone in my family is passionate about food and cooking, um, so you know it is something I have inherited from my mum. It is not something she imposed but Greek food to me is very important.

The influences of Greek traditions were prominent in Alethea's descriptions of her current food preferences and cooking practices. For her, the flavours and ingredients that she regularly uses are more than just reminiscent of signature dishes from her homeland; their 'Greekness' also underscores her culinary identity:

It's very traditional, home-style provincial-Greek cooking. You know, the Mediterranean diet and it features legumes and lots of vegetables and fish... Legumes, legumes, legumes again! "Farki" [laughing] – it sounds like something dirty, doesn't it? It means 'lentils'. And you always add the garlic and the oregano for the Greekness.

Nadia, who is of Italian heritage, also referred to the style of cooking she grew up with as 'very traditional', and strongly associated it with her parents' homeland. She described her mother as 'from a certain area', and that 'she has to do it like that 'cos [they have been] making the same dishes for so long'. Nadia's parents arrived in Australia towards the end of the 1960s, as part of Australia's post-war European immigration program. Nadia is in her mid-forties and married to Dragan, a Macedonian man she has known since her school days, who is also a participant. They run their own small business and have three children. During her interview, Nadia described the competitiveness between her aunties as to who has the best recipes:

Yeah, yeah and they all believe that their food is better. They do!
[Laughing] They go, “our food is much better than them, I wouldn’t
worry.”

Sara is also noticeably proud of the culinary background of her parents. She is forty-nine, an artist, and a musician. Her parents migrated to Australia from Croatia in the mid-1960s. They settled in Carlton, while they worked towards establishing their own business, and eventually their family moved to Brunswick. Sara still lives in the area, not far from where she grew up. When she related how her parents first met, she noted that they came from separate regions with significantly different food traditions, and that she ‘loves both’:

Yeah, [my parents] are from different parts of Croatia. My mother is from... just outside of Zagreb and she grew up on a farm where her father had grapevines and they had a few animals and grew vegies and stuff... [and] everyone had their own chooks. My father’s food... is more like the Dalmatian type of cuisine which is a little bit more like the Italian style of cooking whereas hers is much more Eastern European influenced, Hungarian influenced. [It is] a lot heavier because she is from the mountain areas... My father’s cuisine is much fresher – closer to the seaside, milder climate.

Hezan is of Turkish origin, and he is well-versed in the country’s history. He is also proud of the culinary cultures that developed in Turkey, and underlined some salient regional differences. Hezan is a writer and researcher, and when he related the history of early nomadism and trade in Turkey, he stressed (as did Sara above) that the diets were dictated by the accessibility of ingredients within a particular region. In the following excerpt, this point is elaborated in explanations of the many different influences that led to the development of distinct regional food cultures throughout Turkey:

In our kitchen in Turkey, it depends on which region you came from. For example, in south-eastern Turkey they are having too much spicy, and chilli and they are using many different spices because they are a neighbour of Arabs and probably came from there. North, the Black Sea region for example, they base their meal on fish 'cos most of them are fishermen. And vegetables, corn. Corn is the main [vegetable]... and Chinese cabbage, all sorts of things.

The connection that was drawn by the participants between their culinary traditions and their cultural identity extends beyond the repertoires of dishes. The traditions associated with commensality, hospitality and reciprocity, were also important.

SHARING FOOD

The findings align with observations in the literature that sharing food with others is universal in human societies, and is part of the social bond (Ikeda 1999; Kittler & Sucher 2004).

Commensality

All of the participants saw commensality²¹ as a central part of their food traditions.

Rosalea is in her early fifties, single, and lives with one of her two teenage children. Her mother lived with them until recently, before moving to a local aged care facility. Although Rosalea grew up in Brunswick, she is proud of the agrarian roots in her Italian ancestry. For her, coming together to eat symbolizes the pivotal role that family meals play in food traditions:

²¹ Amanda Wise notes that while 'commensality' has etymological foundations based on 'eating at the same table' the term now takes on a more general meaning as 'it describes the practice of living together with others' (Wise 2011: 82).

So the table means having food. [It] is a very social thing and it's not just about food, but it's about family life. It's about a family, with children being born and um, I think that's what it means. It signifies the traditional family.

For Abby also, eating together as a family is important. She noted that it was a significant part of her own upbringing, and that it provided the opportunity to learn acceptable table manners. She hopes that is giving her own children that same experience and appreciation. Abby grew up in a small mining village in Wales before leaving to study at a London university at eighteen. Following her graduation, she travelled extensively, and lived in Hong Kong, Thailand and Malaysia, until she married an Australian and moved to Brunswick. She is 39 years old, has two daughters aged 4 and 8, and works part-time in publishing.

Eating together, that's really important for us... Yeah, and I've got really happy memories of doing that, which was great when I look back. If we were home we always sat round [the table], in the same places, and we talked about everything, which was great when we were teenagers because mum and dad were really open, they were really honest with us... and I really hope we will be that honest with our kids. And we were shown how to hold our knives and forks properly and that was big for us... And we weren't allowed to get down from the table until we'd asked. We couldn't just finish our food and run off. So that's really important to me and to [my partner] now too.

Hospitality and reciprocity

Traditions of hospitality and reciprocity featured in the participant interviews. Traditions of hospitality and reciprocity are seen as characteristics of most food cultures (Anderson 2005). Miranda, who traces her culinary identity through her Greek-Cypriot heritage, noted the central role of hospitality in that community.

Miranda is in her mid-forties, and works as a senior public servant. She is very proud of her working-class background and admires her parents for their perseverance in providing for their young family. Her mother has migrated on her own at sixteen and Miranda has made several trips to Greece and Cyprus to re-establish ties with her aunts and cousins who remain there. Miranda's memories of her mother cooking for guests '*at the drop of a hat*' remained fresh:

Food is very central with the Greeks. I remember barbecues were a big thing, of course. You know, any opportunity – if somebody popped around, they would get the coals going and all of a sudden, you know, a lot of food would appear. Mum was magical... Mum always over-catered in case people dropped in. It was a very communal sort of arrangement.

Another participant, Robert, was especially animated when the topic of entertaining guests arose. Robert is a fitness instructor in his late forties. He has lived in Australia for fifteen years, but regularly returns to his country of origin, China. During these visits, he often compares the traditional 'rules' of hospitality from his homeland with how he has observed them being practiced in Australia. He joked that, despite having lived in Australia for so long, he still finds requests to 'bring a plate' when invited to dinner or a barbecue²² as both 'weird' and 'rude'. He further explained that in China, this type of request would be seen as treating guests with disrespect, and as a major transgression of hosting responsibility:

You take dish to my place – that means insult; I am insult. That means I can't cook or I haven't prepared enough food.

²² This is a common, and frequently misinterpreted, request at Australian food functions. Although it appears to be unique to Australia, it has similarities with the 'potluck' invitations that are found in other cultures.

Robert also described Chinese traditions that demand hosts provide abundantly for their guests. He reported the host must ensure that (among other things) the food is ‘fancy’, and that a ‘correct’ number of dishes are served. By this, he meant that the number must be equal to the number of guests and family members present – at the very least. He said that this is directly proportionate to how the host’s generosity and hospitality are perceived by others:

You know the face thing in China? So without guests, you would eat simple stuff. When others come over, you cook some fancy stuff. So that’s the idea. You have special stuff and you cook really complicated; big deal, banquet. Or you just have simple food, but even simple you never cook less dish than the heads. Has to be.

Robert’s partner, June, (who is a Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner) elaborated on the obligation of guests to display ‘good manners’ during these occasions. She noted these are very much a part of customary social practices around food in China:

If the person is not eating, you have failed as a host. So you have got to at least sit there with your chopsticks. You can’t put ‘em down or [it looks like] you are bored. You know? Not being looked after. You have to have something in your bowl... and you can roll it around and around but... Everyone says ‘eat more, eat more!’ You don’t really have to eat more. You just put some on your plate because if your bowl is empty, that’s really bad. So you’ve gotta have something in there. You can go along for an hour with it like this, pushing it around with chopsticks, ‘cos banquets can go on for four hours. It’s not just about eating... it’s about socializing.

In explaining the difference between ‘simple’ food within the family, and ‘special stuff’ for guests, Robert and June have done more than delineate the difference between everyday cooking and cooking for others. They have also drawn attention

to some of the ways that the traditions of sharing food can impact how we appear to others. Entertaining guests, and sharing gifts of food, promotes social acceptance and graces the giver with a reputation for generosity (Sutton 2001: 50). However, the ‘face thing’ that Robert referred to is not only a reference to individual status or character, but it also reflects collective identity. The couple demonstrated this aspect by drawing a connection between the manners and customs involved in sharing food and with Chinese cultural identity more broadly. As June stated, *‘it’s nothing to do with communism; it’s long time, old culture’*.

As anthropologists have long noted, sharing food is almost invariably accompanied by the expectation of reciprocation (Douglas 1997; Farb & Armelagos 1980; Sutton 2001). Even within families or among close friends, there are implicit obligations to return the generosity (Lupton 1996: 53). With good humour, Nadia said she always expects that people who often eat in her home will reciprocate her hospitality with gifts. She said: *‘when they go away, they always buy me a present. [They say], ‘oh, you cook for me all the time’ and [I say] ‘Yeah, I know, now where is my present?’*

However, measures of hospitality are strictly differentiated, and Nadia explained its limits in another light-hearted moment. For her, offering food to guests is organized on a scale that distinguishes between close friendships and more distant relationships:

Being Italian, food is sharing. With us, it’s like, if you invite someone or have someone in your home you share what you’ve got and what you’ve got is your food and its personal... you’ve made it with your own hands. Even biscuits, you’ve rolled them with your own hands; you haven’t bought them in a packet so it’s more personal. So people you don’t like, you give them the packet ones [laughter]. And people you do like, you go ‘oh, I made this today, would you like to try?’

For these participants, sharing food is intertwined with their ethno-cultural identity; it is a way of ‘being Italian’ for Nadia, in the same way that for Robert and June, it is part of their Chinese culture. But interestingly, the last extract from Nadia also highlighted how food can be used to create distance between people. Offering visitors food made ‘with your own hands’ is inviting them to taste your culture, but for those ‘not-so-well-liked’ guests, the offering of store-bought biscuits is a definitive means to maintain a line of exclusion.

Festive foods and ritual events

The importance of food as emblems of collective identity was especially evident in participants’ reports of celebrations and ritual events. The participants noted that celebratory events are always associated with ‘traditional’ foods. These types of foods are important because signify shared cultural values, beliefs and meanings. For many, the memories of food traditions associated with religious festival remain deeply affecting.

Sargon explained that he fasts for more than forty days before Easter, and that it has always had a significant bearing on his life. Sargon is a shopkeeper— a Christian man in his mid-forties, who came to Australia from Syria in the early 1990s. He is a unique participant because he has never cooked anything – ever. However, this does not preclude food traditions from being important for him. He said he finds the Easter fast meaningful, because ‘*it makes me think about sacrifice*’ and strengthens his devotion. His attachment to *pacha*, a traditional dish served at Easter in Middle Eastern countries, stood out when he described the food. In his interview transcript, mentions of *pacha* are suffused with nostalgia, and although he described it as ‘*too heavy now*’ because it is a dish more suitable for colder climates, his reminiscence about *pacha* was the only time he became animated about food:

Pacha is whole lamb. Meat plus legs, tongues, made like soup, chopped, plus the tummy skin, filled up with rice and meat and spices

and cooked together. [My] favourite meal would be pacha...that's nice!

Rosalea, who is named after a saint, also indicated that she finds food can be helpful for thinking about religious and ritual traditions. She related her mother taught her this connection in Italy:

... they would definitely have their rituals and traditions about certain saints. Yeah, well, my mother just recently said to me when there was a drought or something wrong in the country, they would always pray to this saint to bring goodness to the country... So it's, like, on Santa Lucia's day you don't eat pasta or rice... It's about saying positive things, like chants or meditations. They have so many saints; that's why there is so many feast days in Italy!

These particular types of food traditions have a powerful presence in the participant's thinking that goes beyond subjective or personal tastes. Festive occasions impose a certain 'authority' on food traditions, because these occasions are seen as timeless and are external to any individual preferences or contributions made towards their maintenance. Among the participants, some made it clear the broader symbolic values they perceive to be attached to festive traditions are *a given*, and they remain outside the compass of their individual influence. That is, the traditions associated with the feast predate their own inclinations and dispositions and will continue regardless of whether they heed them or not.

This is evident in Bea's confidence about the resilience of kosher traditions. Bea said she liked the idea of Jewish food traditions continuing regardless of her own contribution. They provide her with '*precious memories*', and she added:

But those things will continue; you don't have to work to make that carry on, 'cos that's not going to stop. So, Passover, matzoh and things like that you know you don't have to do any work with... I think

that it's nice. You want someone to know, you want it to be possible to know, you don't want it to be lost. Yeah, you don't want it to be lost.

When I asked her to explain what she thought about maintaining these rules, her response suggested she sees kosher food traditions as obedience to a timeless authority:

The only real reason to keep a kosher house is because it is some kind of covenant with God... There are a few religious things that are food things, like Passover, bitter herbs. Well we have a fast at Yom Kippur. It's Jewish New Year, just before Jewish New Year. It's just a day, twenty-four hours. You don't eat anything; you don't put anything in your mouth. You don't even brush your teeth. No water. You don't have anything.

She elaborated:

My mother's rationale isn't so much to do with religion as discipline. My mother feels that it is good for you to have to do stuff. That you've got to do it like this, that you've got to clean it like that, that you've got to separate this from this. There are rules and you keep the rules and that in itself has value... I have some sympathy with all the lights and everything, I find all that quite interesting. I love it.

Food practices connected to religious teachings and rituals remained strong for the participants, even when they reported diminishing religiosity. For Alethea, the Easter fast is an important festive tradition for the devout in the Greek community of Melbourne. Although she admitted that her religious observance is 'not strict', she was respectful of these traditions and described the food in extensive detail:

Um, I'm not governed by religious norms but I do have great respect. Easter is a particularly important occasion on the Greek Orthodox

calendar and there are many wonderful dishes and sweets that characterize that period particularly when the fast is being broken. The fast is when people are abstaining from eating meat and dairy products and any animal that has blood. So you, for instance, can eat squid because it has ink; it's acceptable. But you can't eat snapper because it has blood rather than ink... [The Easter fast] goes for forty days and then the fast is broken with the resurrection of Christ on Easter Saturday and there is the traditional roasting of the lamb that takes place on Sunday. So that's a very festive time. We do that – we invariably do the lamb. And there are lovely sweets like revani and they're [indistinct] because it's a time-consuming sweet [to make] ... Things like that are made on special occasions like Christmas and Easter. And I try to, I make kourabiethes which are those little half-moon shaped sweets with the sugar and the almond slivers... Those traditions are certainly maintained – dyeing of red eggs and so on. It's lovely.

Alethea clearly finds enjoyment, and is comfortable in continuing, the food traditions associated with Orthodox Easter, despite her admission that the 'religious norms' have become less important to her. The findings from this study suggest that this is a common feature; there is a disjuncture between the religious aspects of festive events, and the food associated with these celebrations. In the same way as Alethea did, other participants made it clear that the food traditions remain deeply embedded in understandings of cultural attachments, even though they no longer paid as much attention to the more formal or ritualized religious aspects associated with such occasions.

Anita's interview took place in the days leading up to Christmas. During this time, her family was involved in preparing for several festive meals that were to be enjoyed over the course of the season. For Anita, this provides an opportunity to spend time with her family while they prepare the food for these meals. This

aspect of the season is more important for Anita than anything else connected to the celebration. Like Alethea, Anita has mixed feelings about the more ceremonial aspects of the festive occasion, but she is enthusiastic about the food that her family prepares.

Hmm, um, [we are] not that religious, even though we do all the things like Easter and Christmas... Tomorrow I'll go over and I'll help and I'll make some tiramisu and we'll make some fresh pasta and sometimes we'll do a gnocchi. Like, I'll associate panettone with Christmas time but I don't think I make too many associations only with that; but I do associate that with family. It's good; oh yeah, it's good.

Nadia's interview also indicated that food traditions associated with religion can maintain significance after religious belief has declined. She reported that religion plays a much less significant role in her own family, than it did in her parent's generation. Nevertheless, although she no longer attends to religious ritual, she believes it is important that her children learn some of the symbolism conveyed by traditional foods. Her words below show how some food traditions might outlast their origins in faith, yet still be of substantial value in a more secular era.

Even though we're not religious – the kids aren't baptized or anything which is a real no-no in Italian families – you're going to go to the devil you know – we still make them give up something for Lent; for Easter that is. And for Easter we make these biscuits – where my mum comes from – we make these biscuits, they are like plaited and you put the eggs in there and then we make other biscuits in the shape of birds. Doves, for peace you know? Peace doves. And the kids decorate them – their eyes and stuff.

Food traditions are also important at celebrations that mark the passage of seasons and time. Robert's account of New Year celebrations in China demonstrates this

as he described the connections between people (community), season (time), and ritual (tradition):

This is the Chinese way...So what you do, you save up the whole year and you have a celebration at New Year. So the people all go home... You cook a big banquet, everybody sitting down until midnight. [It] has to be roast – the pig. Everybody went out. Firecrackers and gyozas... People go to each other's house to say Happy New Year so forget about all the bad things that happen in the old year... You sit down, have one lolly and say "how's family, very good, make fortune, good health, see ya".

Robert's depiction of these events clearly links the three dimensions of this occasion to an overarching meaning of collective identity. For he and his partner, June, who regularly return to China for this celebration, the food is not only central to how the New Year is welcomed, but also to the 'Chinese way' of doing things. The banquet, the dumplings, and the sweets are all special foods that are intrinsic to the seasonal goodwill extended throughout the community. Combined with the visiting of neighbours, there are useful metaphors evoked in celebrating the season just past: the rich bounty of the pig, sweets to ameliorate hardships endured, and the hopeful well-wishing for prosperity in the approaching New Year. By insisting it 'has to be' a roasted pig, it is ensured that the occasion (and the midnight visits with neighbours serve to 'forget about all the bad things') has a specialness to it. These traditions reinforce Chinese identity because they are done in 'the Chinese way'.

RE-APPROACHING TRADITIONS

For some participants, the value and appeal of traditions have become more apparent only with hindsight, and a number of reasons for this were cited. As Miranda reflected on her teenage rebellion against her family's food-gathering

forays, she expressed regret about her reluctance to join her parents on these trips. Since then, she has reassessed the place of traditional culture in her life:

Yeah, I'd sort of begrudgingly go when we went 'cos you know, I'd want to catch up with my friends and stuff... Although that was the stuff I fought against, now I go back to those things and think, "oh you silly bugger". It was like me not wanting to learn Greek, you know... 'cos I didn't want to be called a wog.

Rosalea, now in her fifties with grown children of her own, recently had the opportunity to learn more about Italian culinary traditions when her mother came to stay with her. Rosalea said that when she was younger, her mother was ‘*the dominant force*’ in the kitchen and did not spend much time showing Rosalea how to cook. This situation has since changed:

I learnt much more now 'cos there was a time to do that... sitting down and just listening to these recipes just coming out of her mouth when you talked to her that were extraordinary. You wouldn't think of putting these two things together – like anchovies and blackcurrants together and, and you've got this sweet and sour thing with broccoli and a bottle of sauce. It's like a lumpy sauce that you eat with this pasta; it's just amazing... Having mum here was good too because I learnt a lot about Italian cooking and I got some really good recipes in my head and I put them on the computer.

Abby was also given an opportunity to learn more about food traditions with the arrival of her mother, Meg, who was visiting from Wales at the time of the interview. Meg also consented to a separate interview, which provided a good chance to compare approaches to food between two generations of the same family. Abby's doubts about buying pre-packaged foods from supermarkets are explored in Chapter 9 but in the following extract, she describes how she relies on

her mother's knowledge and skill to learn more about how to prepare food without resorting to such products.

So, things like if I wanted to do a slow cooked stew or casserole I can ask 'cos mum knows the difference between chuck steak, braising steak, skirt steak. You know, she knows all those different cuts and how they are meant to be cooked.

Kon, a writer, is in his fifties, and although he was brought up in Australia, he identifies strongly with his Cypriot heritage. His parents worked in hospitality and catering industries when they first came to Australia in the 1950s, and they introduced him to a variety of cuisines and styles of cooking during his childhood. Although he was exposed to this broad range of tastes, the food served at home (which included his maternal grandparents) was 'mainly Greek-Cypriot'. He has taken the opportunity to draw on his mother's and grandmother's knowledge about food recently, and described how he mines their recipes to enhance his own culinary skills. In particular, he is enthusiastic about learning from their Greek and Cypriot traditions:

And I started asking my mother and my grandmother how to cook dishes, so I would also ask them for advice... Absolutely, I get [my mother] to write out recipes from time to time. And I do use them... I've got a recipe that she bought over last Christmas which is sitting there for me to try. It's a dessert; it's a traditional Greek dessert and it's one I've never made before and it's one that we all love and it's one that I'd like to learn to make. I've got everything ready; I've just got to get around to doing it!

The recipe for this dessert is important in Kon's family because it carries reminders of family origins, and the comfort of home cooked food. Although it did not appear that Kon was in a great hurry to reproduce this dessert, its value resides in the knowledge that recipe is recognized and loved by everyone in the

family. For this reason, it is a tradition that is worth preserving so that it can continue to retain an important place in the family repertoire.

TRADITION AS BOUNDARY MARKERS

In the same way that participants have revealed how food traditions can define inclusion in a group through shared meanings and practices, the interviews have also shown that traditions can be deployed as markers of difference and otherness. Different culinary traditions have long been thought of as a means of distinguishing between groups of people, and the use of food as a means of exclusion has been noted in the literature review. A number of participants (particularly first-generation migrants and those who arrived in Australia as young children) said that they have felt excluded or distanced because of their food preferences and practices. However, discussion on this topic was not focused on just listing the differences in taste. A number of the participants were confronted with obstacles to inclusion, which were intimately bound up with the strategies required for negotiating a new culture and finding a way to belong, while at the same time not letting go of the traditions they already identified with.

In a discussion of how her parents grappled with a new-found food culture when they first arrived in Australia, Nadia said her mother initially had been:

'... very afraid of Australian food. Not afraid, but she didn't understand it... The meat has got nothing on it, no sauce ... The vegetables are just boiled; it's got nothing there, no garlic. So she found that foreign'.

Nadia's father, who came here under an indentured labour scheme, had particularly troubling experiences in the migrant resettlement camp:

My dad didn't like the food... And he used to catch like wild birds; skin them and make sauce... He was only young and he didn't like the rest of the food. He preferred this wild pigeon or whatever it was that

he was eating with pasta or whatever. And they used to call him 'savage' you know?

For those who arrive as young children, early encounters with the host culture can be especially ostracizing. Several participants developed strategies – such as hiding their food, disposing of it altogether, or tried to fit in by eating ‘Aussie food’ so that they could avoid being teased at school.

Kuai is a medical professional in his forties who arrived in Australia from Hong Kong when he was seven. He said that up until this time, his diet had consisted largely of boiled rice and steamed vegetables, with an occasional ‘treat’ of milk. A few years after arriving in Australia, his parents opened a café in Brunswick where an expansive Chinese menu was offered. But at school, as Kuai explained, *‘bullying a scrawny tall Chinese kid was fair game’*. The contents of his lunch box brought ridicule from fellow students, who taunted him about *‘eating giant insects’*, which were just the leftover crabs and prawns from the café. Consequently, he dealt with this by making attempts to ‘fit in’ by trying the food from the school tuck shop:

My lunch diet alternated between ‘Four and Twenty’ pies and sausage rolls. Any deviation would attract attention from bullies. Unfortunately the quality of Four and Twenty did not improve... [they were] thin brown gravy wrapped in hard burnt cylindrical pastry.

Kuai had felt torn by these choices: on the one hand, he disliked the food he felt bullied into eating, but it was a way to ‘avoid trouble’. His eventual solution to this dilemma was to go to his parents’ café during the lunch break, where he happily ate spring rolls and abalone soup.

Alethea created a complicated game to avoid being teased about what she ate for lunch at school. She encouraged her classmates to sit at quite a distance away

from her, in the hope that she could elude attention from her peers about the fillings in between her bread:

I would say to friends, 'why don't you sit over there, and I'll sit over here'... And they would say, 'what's that?' and I would say, 'it's lettuce with Vegemite' when I did in fact have the roasted eggplant. But I thought I could get away with that because there is a vague resemblance if there is twenty feet separating you [laughing].

Alethea's stories of alienation were, like Kuai's, also accompanied by efforts to 'fit in', as is indicated in her remarks about her first tastes of what she then thought was typical 'Australian food':

I tried to eat sausage rolls! I did but I couldn't eat the filling it was such an undiscerning, messy thing and I thought 'what has gone into this?' I was highly, highly suspicious! But in an effort to fit in, I would buy a sausage roll and just nibble at the pastry and discard the rest, you know. Just have some fruit. But as time went on I became increasingly more comfortable [taking Greek food to school]. But my experience was not unusual because I found out later many people felt that way.

Nadia's attempts to fit in at school also illustrate how eating 'different' food can lead to exclusion. In her case, this is also the bemused revelation (and disappointment) when she encounters the food in the mainstream culture of the time.

...when I was a school, I used to beg my mum for white bread and something in the middle that looked like a colour. I didn't know what it was, you know, what people had. 'Cos mum used to give me the big ciabatta rolls with salad and salami and it took an army to eat it. You

know, I just wanted whatever other kids had ... But it ended up being just jam sandwiches what my friend had!

Bea's story also reveals the way food traditions can mark out 'otherness'. Bea is a computer scientist, aged fifty-two. She arrived in Australia twenty years ago. She grew up in a predominantly Jewish area of London. Her parents and many of her relatives, who are of Russian and Polish descent, observe the dietary laws of Kashrut at home, and to a somewhat lesser extent, when dining out. As one of few Jewish children at her English primary school, a teacher's ignorance was a striking reminder of difference and still rankles:

When I was a child, we had to write and draw pictures of our favourite food. Mine was kosher chicken but I didn't know how to spell 'kosher' so I asked the teacher but she didn't know either. My parents were pretty appalled actually.

Stories of exclusion because of food have been well-documented elsewhere (Hage 1997; Han 2007; Hynes 2000; Jamal 1998), but there are hopeful signs they may be disappearing (Noble 2009; Wise 2005, 2010). Both Alethea and Nadia noted that their school-age children did not feel the same ostracism that they had experienced during their own schooldays. In addition, Alethea reported that her daughter, a self-described 'foodie' who is adept at preparing Greek dishes, is envied by many of her school friends and is often asked to share her lunch.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the close relationship between food traditions and identity. Most of the participants cited in this chapter spoke about their cooking and eating practices as something they had inherited. While some of the participants now regard the food of their forbears with a degree of diffidence, others remain strongly devoted to particular dishes and flavours. However, all of the participants heard from in this chapter saw certain dishes or the rotation of

particular menus as representative of their origins and many had re-approached the food traditions of their parents after reconsidering their value. In addition, the participants saw sharing food with others as an important component of their overall food practices and part of how they defined their belonging. For those who had felt the sting of rejection because their food was ‘different’ there were hopeful signs this was a thing of the past. Importantly, none of the participants who had experienced being teased or ostracized because of what they ate had led them to reject their food traditions.

The findings in this chapter make it clear that participants regard the food that they eat as something that represents where they came from, where they now belong, and with whom. Food traditions, including many of the ideas around national and regional cuisines, remain an important marker of collective belonging. These findings are explored further in the next chapter, which is focused on how industrialization and commodification have partially transformed the participant’s practice of traditions, but have not eliminated them.

Chapter Six

The Impact of Industrialization and Commodification

This chapter traces the influence of industrialization, commodification and the globalization of food markets on the participants' food traditions. The literature suggests that these aspects of modern food systems have heavily impacted traditional foodways (Beardsworth & Keil 1997; Symons 2007). The availability of pre-packaged commercial products has removed the necessity of self-provisioning and preparing meals from scratch, which were salient features of traditional foodways (Warde 1999). At the same time, it is also argued that mass production and global distribution networks have impacted culinary repertoires, because they have made a wider and varied range of foods available (Mennell 1996).

The findings from this study also show that while the participants have embraced these new opportunities for consuming food, they have been integrated into their existing food traditions, rather than radically dismantling them. Even as participants adopt new aspects of modern foodways, they maintain a strong attachment to the idea, and to a certain extent, the practice, of the artisanal dimensions of food traditions and repertoires. The participants have embraced the choices that are offered by the new abundance of food, and use prepacked and pre-prepared food commodities for the convenience they provide. Many of the participants see this as a way to continue their food traditions.

TRANSFORMING TRADITIONS

Undoubtedly encouraged by a marketplace that promotes variety above all else (Robertson 1995), the expansion in the range of food choices has become impossible to ignore (Mennell 1996; Symons 2006). Market processes have brought the world to everyone's doorstep – or rather, to their kitchen table (Cook & Crang 1996). The findings from this study are in line with the literature, where it was suggested that the availability of produce and products from around the

world encourages people to try food from different cultures, whilst also offering the opportunity to experiment with, and incorporate, new ingredients into their usual cooking practices (Heldke 2003). These findings also concur with the observation that the availability of ‘foreign’ food is now taken for granted and unremarked; the exotic has become ‘routinized’ (Warde 1997: 61).

Abundance and variety

One of the most outstanding changes that the participants noted was that there was now a greater amount of the types of food available, compared with what there was in the past. This is one of the prominent features of modern, globalized food systems, and is evidenced by the year-round availability of fresh produce, as well as a greater array of pre-prepared convenience foods that has appeared in the shops. Kon succinctly noted that the availability of more variety had increased significantly over the course of his lifetime. For him, this was a positive:

Oh, hugely for the better. Much more variety and not just the processed and imported foods; it's also the fresh produce. There is a much greater variety of fresh produce available now.

Faye, Lazar's partner, also expressed appreciation for this newfound variety:

I reckon we are very lucky because we've got that much variety. And we can just go and get it when we want it, you know. And if you don't know where to get it, then someone will tell you where to get it. And you just go.

Sara was more expansive when she explained how her mother's cooking was influenced by the introduction of more variety:

Oh, I think it has changed dramatically. And that's because my mother's cuisine – even though she [still] does things that are traditional – she's changed it. Like she will cook things that would

never appear in her traditional, um, that her mother never will have made. Like fried rice and like, um, what's another one? Like her mother never would have made seafood dishes. Whereas here, because seafood is an abundance, she buys fish regularly. She buys calamari and prawns and things like that because she loves it and yet her mother never would have cooked that.

As Sara continued to think about this, she added a comparison with how she approaches the variety that is now on offer. This includes continuing to use some of the more traditional foods from her mother's repertoire, whilst also taking advantage of the fresh products that 'wouldn't have existed' [in Croatia] in her grandparent's day:

So, yeah, there has been a big change and they wouldn't have had as much a variety of fresh vegetables and fruits. I think the cuisine would have been a lot simpler. And a curry paste wouldn't have existed. And they never would have used things like coconut milk or fish sauce or even coriander didn't exist. Pineapples, avocados, mangoes – you know things that I would have most days of the week... So in that sense, yeah, I think from two generations ago... the only thing they would probably recognize would be the traditional meaty stuff, which I still love. And the things like the preserved meats which my mother was very big on – that hasn't changed. Like she'll buy a ham hock, a smoked ham hock, to put into a soup and that's something you have for the whole week in winter. And that, I suppose, is a very traditional thing that I would still do. You know, buy some smoked meat to put in a soup or a stew.

Sara recognizes that being able to enjoy things like pineapples and avocados on 'most days of the week' has only been made possible relatively recently, and that these items would not have been available for her Croatian forebears. However, Sara was also keen to point out that these tastes sit quite comfortably alongside

her love of a traditional soup made with smoked meats, rather than displacing them.

Veronica is also appreciative of the expanded variety, and said it had made access to traditional ingredients easier for her mother. In particular, Veronica noted that access to olive oil was difficult to get for her mother:

I think my mother used to cook with Greek ingredients but, you know, they were pretty hard to get... And particularly I think people find things much more accessible now. You know, things that you couldn't get that used to be really exotic you know? And the oil thing comes up a lot.

Like many of the participants, Kuai is also happy with the variety of ingredients and flavours that he is able to incorporate into his cooking. Although he made it clear that he does not jettison those things he considers as the traditional styles of cooking from his parents 'arsenal', he loves using many of the other foods and styles that he has since discovered:

There are dishes that I do cook exactly as my parents did. Soya chicken wings – add oil, garlic, ginger – when brown add chicken wings – stir fry till wings brown, add dark soya sauce, stock, water, rice wine, bring to boil, lid on wok, simmer till meat comes off bone. Roast pork slices with prawn paste on top and steamed in a dish. Stir fried beef – scotch fillet – black beans and bitter melon...The traditional dishes mentioned are from the village they originated from... and demand ingredients like prawn paste and preserved bean curd to be authentic and which I use. Because of my exposure to a bigger variety of cuisine, the range of ingredients I use is much bigger in my cooking. Cajun pepper, lavender, paprika, oregano, basil, butter, wasabi, mustard, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, Worcestershire sauce are all absent from my parents' arsenal.

Convenience

The participants used a wide variety of convenience products. ‘Time-poverty’ was the major reason offered to explain these choices, which some commentators have singled out as a significant determinant of consumption practices in the affluent world (Shove, Trentmann & Wilk 2009; Wilk 2009). In this arena, the participants also saw incorporating industrially-produced convenience products into their foodways as a being reflective of a change in priorities, rather than as the diminution of tradition. Most of the women interviewed for this study worked outside the home and the time they had available for preparing labour-intensive, traditional dishes was often curtailed by their work schedules. ‘Shortcuts’ were welcome in these circumstances. For others, using shortcuts was more about not being ‘bothered’ with the effort of long preparations.

For Androula and her family, cooking practices have been shaped by the pressures of limited time and energy.²³ Androula is an educated, well-travelled woman in her mid-seventies who treasures the food of her Cypriot youth. She took great pains to point out that it differs from Greek cuisine, because the two countries had very different formative influences. She recalled how, after she came to Australia, she catered grand dinner parties for new-found friends. Androula laughed while remembering that it once took her all day to roll enough vine-leaf dolmades for her dinner guests. Now, she no longer has the energy or inclination to entertain in this way: *‘I can’t be bothered’*, she said. When prompted by her children, Eva and Dimitri, who acknowledged that they buy ready-made dolma from a local delicatessen because they rarely have enough time to make them at home, Androula further explained that she also now *‘settles’* on using some pre-prepared foods, rather than making everything from scratch. While her children buy these foods because their work commitments impose time constraints, Androula indicated that she makes this compromise simply because they save her effort.

²³ Androula is the mother in the Cypriot family who were interviewed before it became apparent the microphone was not picking up the sound properly (see methodology section). The quotes are approximate.

In the following account, it is clear from Sara's reverie about her mother's pastry-making skills that traditional means of preparing food is strongly associated with her recollections of childhood comforts and the security of home life:

That was hand made from scratch... and when my mother was making it, as a child, you know, eye-level to the top of the table, I would just look through the layers of pastry as she flicked them up and they would be like these pillows. Clouds of air that would be trapped until it settled down and... it was transparent. At eye level, if you looked underneath it, you could see the light coming through the bits that were thin.

However, when asked if she makes her own pastry in the same way, Sara exclaimed, 'oh my god, no way', and added 'who's got that sort of time?' Despite the nostalgic tones she used in reminiscing about her mother's pastry-making, Sara said that she buys a ready-rolled product. She is happy to re-create her mother's strudel recipe using this and assures me that, although the theatre involved in the rolling of the pastry is missing, the end product is sufficient for her needs.

In both of these cases, however, the participants found the 'convenience' they were looking for in being able to buy the types of food that means they can still enjoy their traditions. In these instances, the modern food system has provided a way to sustain traditions; they can be bought as commodities (Duruz 2001). Ready-made dolmades and pre-rolled pastry are handy alternatives to the time-consuming and often monotonous work that is involved in preparing these items from scratch. When the required amount of time and effort is reduced, traditions can still be retained alongside the pressures of other commitments.

Abby has observed a trend towards 'convenience' among her peers. In her late thirties, she said that several of her friends use convenience products and take up the options available for buying 'fast' food. Abby acknowledged that while this is

a priority for people with limited time, but she also thought it was closely linked with economic resources:

Now, I think people have either got more disposable income or it's more of a priority for them to not to have to cook. I think a lot of people do do the fast food option because of time and they've got a bit of extra money.

It was clear that Robert also understood that his busy work schedule intruded on his ability to spend time in the kitchen. He said that this has forced him to take short cuts and make adjustments as necessary, but that he is still tries to ensure that some of the valued aspects of tradition remain; namely, that the food is nutritious and tastes good. In Robert's case, this has meant simplifying meals so that they are more efficient to prepare.

Of course, to cook this gourmet food is [a lot of] preparation... But for us now, [we] don't spend the whole day cooking. I am thinking nutritionally, if tastes all right and efficiency really. You know what I mean?

Meg had noticed several benefits that 'instant' meals have brought for the elderly. At the time of her interview, Meg was seventy-three, and had recently retired from her role as a nurse and moved to Australia from Wales, so that she could be closer to her daughter, Abby, and her grandchildren. In the small Welsh township where she had lived since childhood, Meg had been a volunteer with the elderly for several years. Meg said she found that having a stock of ready-made convenience meals alleviated the burden of daily cooking, which might have been too strenuous to do, and therefore neglected:

They find it a godsend because you've only got to put it in the microwave. And you buy a stack, buy a week's supply and put them in the freezer and they can manage to take it out. At least they are having a meal.

Miranda reflected on her own change of view, because she has now realized that these products provided much-needed relief for her mother, who juggled the demands of work and family:

And I remember mum she started off doing everything from scratch – cakes and everything, you know. But then she, because of work I think, and convenience, things started to come into play like White Wings bloody cake mixes. I can't believe she got hold of those and thought they were the best thing since sliced cheese. But I can now understand because for her, she had to juggle a million things so, yes, it was bloody magic for her, you know.

Veronica's interview also spelled out the balancing of preparing home-cooked meals with the limits on time imposed by working outside of the home. When the family first arrived in Australia, Veronica's mother worked long hours at a factory, yet she still managed to prepare elaborate meals for the household. It is only now as an adult and having been a working mother herself, that Veronica has fully recognized the effort that would have been involved for her mother and grandmother:

I now wonder at it – she used to come home from work and she would cook these very complicated meals from scratch... You know, things... like if she made the meat balls, she would make them and then she would make the sauce to go with them and then if it was pasta that went with that or if it was vegetable, she would make all that. And my grandmother was even more traditional... they even used to mince their own meat!

The generation that Meg, Miranda and Veronica referred to is now in their late seventies and eighties; for this generation, in their youth, there would have been few alternatives *other than* cooking from scratch. However, they were also the generation that saw the introduction of mass-produced, convenience products,

such as the packet cake mixes that Miranda mentioned. Even Sabine²⁴, who was nearing this age-bracket, and frequently mentioned the benefits of eating fresh food during her interview, acknowledged that she always uses a commercial powdered stock product when making soup. For this older generation, the attraction of easing the everyday burden of domestic cookery using ‘shortcuts’ is just as inviting for them as it is for the time-poor, younger generations – albeit for slightly different reasons. When Veronica related an account of her mother’s more recent shopping habits, she noted that as she is now in her eighties and no longer has dependent children to cook for, her mother is much more willing to incorporate ‘instant’ or pre-prepared products into her diet:

Whereas she used to cook everything from scratch, she now leans towards buying processed food... cutlets and things like that that are prepared and crumbed and all that sort of convenience food. I took her shopping the other day and she was pulling things off the shelves and asking me if I ever buy this or if I ever buy that.

MAINTAINING TRADITIONS

The participants saw many advantages in sustaining their traditions. They retained a strong identification with what they saw as ‘their’ culturally defined cuisines, and they placed greater value on artisanal modes of food provision and preparation than industrialized food systems.

The convenience of traditions

A notable finding was that traditions themselves often provided their own form of convenience. For some participants, labour-intensive artisanal modes of provisioning, such as preserving home-grown produce, ultimately made life easier. Nadia described the annual preserving rituals her family undertakes, and noted how these activities provided a well-stocked larder for use over the

²⁴ See further biographical details below.

following year. At the same time, it is worth noting that she also stressed the communal aspect of the preserving rituals, which also mark the passage of seasons:

You see, I come from a family where you did a lot of preservatives (sic). The tomato sauce – we did that every year... my mum still does. And salami, prosciutto, and wine. Yeah, every year, we had the whole pig... All the relatives would come. It was a big day. Every winter, you do that. And then you do your wine. You make your vinegar; same barrel every year. They put starch in it – the pasta in the wine and age it [in the] same barrel every year. Yeah, you do all that.

When I asked Tony if he used ‘convenience’ foods, he nodded and replied that a lot of his wife’s cooking relied on these types of products; it made the work ‘quick’ he said. When I asked him if he could be more specific about the types of convenience products they used, he said ‘easy!’ and showed me a variety of homemade preserves and sauces from this pantry.

Georgina’s interview revealed another type of convenience that traditions can afford. As was noted in Chapter 5, Georgina had described a meal from her inherited British food tradition, sausages and mash, as ‘bland’ and boring, and had since embraced other options. However, later in the interview Georgina spoke again about the same meal, but this time described it as a ‘*family favourite*’. Georgina said that she regularly serves this meal because it is easy to prepare and she doesn’t need to refer to a recipe.

Although her comments suggested some kind of disjunction between belief and practice, they also indicated that traditional repertoires can provide convenience in certain circumstances. Georgina’s interview showed that these types of dishes are reliable; they are well-regarded, not always for their taste, but for their general expediency. In this instance, Georgina regards this traditional dish as convenient because it is easy to prepare, and her children like it. As noted in the literature, the

same dishes will often be recalled in different lights, depending on the circumstances that they are made under, and for whom (Mintz 1996; Sutton 2001).

Homemade and home grown/artisanal

A second notable finding was the extent to which the participants valued – and retained – artisanal modes of food production and provisioning. Practices such as growing food and making meals at home were seen as an integral part of their food traditions. Home-grown produce was also accepted as being ‘good’ food, and it was regarded as superior in taste and value to processed, commercial products. Homemade meals were described as not only healthier, but also as more affordable. In addition, sharing home-grown produce helped to cement community ties and reinforce cultural identity. Importantly, many traditional practices were seen as providing a valuable counterweight to the environmental problems and risks associated with heavily industrialized food systems. Many participants discussed their practices around food with pride, and noted how they continued to persist despite no longer being demanded by necessity.

Growing food

The sheer quantity of food grown by some of the participants was surprising, and more widespread than anticipated. This was particularly evident in Anita’s garden. Even though her tiny backyard measures no more than a few square metres, there is a staggering variety of fruit and vegetables cultivated in this space, which are used throughout the year. On the day I visited, Anita showed me eggplants, zucchini, tomatoes, strawberries and a variety of herbs growing side by side, as well as three espaliered fruit trees trained along the perimeter of the little space. With pride, Anita reported that with her father’s contributions from his more extensive yard, she is almost self-sufficient for fruit and vegetables. For her, buying food at markets or shops is more likely to be a question of topping-up supplies between seasons, rather than as the primary source of food.

Yeah, so I try to have lots of the home-produced produce. I'm a bit finicky about freshness. So, the beans and zucchini, tomatoes and potatoes which are a big part of my diet... yeah, I'd say eighty to ninety percent of the time it would be home grown.

Anita added, *'That's how it should be'*, when she told me that choosing seasonal produce not only guarantees its freshness, but also delivers more flavour. This imperative was also evident when she described her mother's eggplant recipes elsewhere in the interview, and she said: *'Oh, I haven't made it since last year 'cos it hasn't been in season'*.

Other participants expressed similar preferences for home-grown produce. Like Anita, Alethea's father also supplies food for his children who have limited space of their own for gardening:

I can't grow where I am because I'm on the first floor and I don't even have a balcony but... my father, um, he has a very large vegetable garden and he is eighty and although he has got many health problems, he insists on cultivating the garden and he is able to supply his three daughters as well as feed my mum and himself from that garden. Which is wonderful... it's important.

While recalling the types of food her parents grew when she was younger, Miranda enjoyed talking about the extent her parents went to for the sake of cultivating their lemons:

So I remember a fair bit of growing food at home. Always we had fruit trees: nectarines, figs, lemons – always lemons. We weren't allowed to wee inside half the time 'cos we had to go and wee on the lemon tree²⁵ you know. They would say, "oh don't waste it" [laughter]. And they

²⁵ A 'traditional' practice widely regarded as beneficial for citrus fruits.

never bought the herbs like coriander and continental parsley. Yeah, they always grew food.

For these participants, self-provisioning satisfies more than the need to be frugal, or to know the provenance of food. This study also found that home-grown produce is a source of cultural identity and pride. This was evident from when Nadia described the following:

'Italians have a garden that is self-seeding. Like, they'll have their rocket for their salads that you cultivate all the time. It's kind of different to other gardens I think.'

Nadia and Dragan grow many of the items that Nadia uses in her cooking, including the plums she used in the cake she made the morning of her interview. They have an extensive garden, consisting of several large vegetable beds surrounded by fruit and olive trees. Echoing Anita's sentiment, as reported above, that fresh, home-grown food is '*how it should be*', Dragan pointed out:

It is time-consuming keeping the seeds, but it's the right thing to do. You find the variety you like, you keep the seeds.

Dragan, who is in his mid-forties, was born in Australia, but his family had been profoundly affected by the events in [the Former Yugoslav Republic of] Macedonia during WWII, and the period that followed. Many of his relatives came to Australia during the fifties and sixties and built their new homes on large blocks of land, where they could garden. Dragan mentioned that these gardens were often necessary, because most of them had arrived in Australia without much economic capital. He recalled that as a child, he had spent a great deal of time helping out in the gardens and learnt how to grow a variety of food:

You see [Nadia] and I both grew up in... houses where our families had gi-normous gardens. There was enough stuff in the gardens where you could supply other families. And there was leftovers too so you

supply things, you know, there was always enough to give away. And so we are used to the taste of the garden... We had a variety of tomatoes last year that was so fantastic and it reminded me of the stuff that dad used to grow.

Foraging

A less common, but by no means isolated, form of self-provisioning is foraging. For Tony, foraging has survived as a regular pastime, which began with childhood trips into the Greek mountains to collect wild leaves and greens. Tony left the remote village of his childhood at 16, moving to Athens to find work in the building trade and, not long afterwards, migrated to Australia to work as a cabinet maker. As there is limited space in his own garden, Tony said that he cannot grow as much food as he would like, and so he regularly takes trips to the country where he collects ‘weeds’ or *horta*:

I was up in Kinglake with [my wife] and with another couple of neighbours. And we picking the things and a farmer comes, you know, he had horses there. He says, “what you picking?” I say, “nothing, just weeds”. He says, “what do you do with ‘em?” I say “boil ‘em, a bit of oil, it’s a salad you know, like you do the silver beets”. [Tony laughs]. “Ah, that’s why my horses are smart” he said. I learnt a few of those things from my mother you know.

Alethea attributes her parent’s survival during the Second World War to foraging, which was helped by their knowledge of the land and some divine intervention:

People who lived on the land did not perish in the same way that people who lived in Athens did during the Depression and war. They could always rely on the land; that Nature would yield something. My mother recalls that during the war there were constant rains that they took as a blessing from the gods so they were able to eat endive all the

time and they always had olive oil because there were so many olive trees... And that really sustained them.

For Miranda, the memory of her grandfather picking wild food has remained quite vivid:

We used to eat anything that generally was edible... My grandfather used to come and visit us and we lived across the road from a vacant block of land with lots of 'prickles' they were called – you know, wild artichokes and thistles and stuff... I'd remember he would come while we were at school. And he would take a lot of the thistles and the wild artichokes and by the time we got home, he would have made something out of them.

As Miranda expanded on this theme, noting that she is now an enthusiastic 'mushroomer' herself, she explained that her motivation for foraging comes from her preference for seasonal produce, as this ensures freshness and quality. Her family were keen 'foragers', as is evident in the following:

I remember lots of foraging trips... And it was always, "oh it's mushroom season" so we'd go off and it would be three or four families like as in dad's brothers and sisters... So we'd go mushrooming or "its walnut season" or "its almond season" so we'd go. Wherever they were, we'd go and same with we'd go to Mildura to pick oranges. I mean, like, things like that [it's] always for the season...

'Making do' – frugality and thrift

The value of 'making do' was also evident among the participants. In this respect, the findings gelled with the literature that suggested traditional practices are often maintained as habits of thrift (Braun & Beckie 2014). For some of the

participants, artisanal practices were linked to either personal past experiences of scarcity, or that of their forebears.

Altair grew up in Alexandria during the 1950s and said that his early experience of food shortages that still influence the way he cooks and eats. He came to Australia from Egypt as a young adult to study, and now in his sixties, is a well-received artist. As he recalled how his grandfather often hunted for desert deer to supplement the restrictions that were in place during his childhood, Altair noted:

And there [were] strange restrictions like we could only have meat like three times a week. You know, the butchers were only open three days a week. Most people only had ice-boxes so the idea of taking meat home and freezing it was not really on. And the meat was pretty ugly; it was Argentinean frozen meat.

When I visited his house, Altair showed me the preserves made from his garden produce –there are salted lemons, olives, pickled vegetables, among other things – and he confided they this is his way of allaying fears that the shortages he experienced in Egypt could happen again. Altair’s descriptions of the food of his youth revealed a lasting memory of want:

It was all these stewy things. Yes, like youvetsi and noodle type of things. And it was always beans, you know. It was also really hard times food-wise. The food sources were limited. It was American Aid bought at the black market. It never went to the people it was meant to; it went straight to the black market. You bought it in the street... The flour was always dirty so the bread always looked like brown bread. But it wasn't brown bread; it was just dirty.

Robert prefaced his description of some of the meals he cooks with stories of the widespread starvation in China during the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s. In particular, he mentioned a soup that he still often makes, using a recipe handed

down from his grandmother. Robert described this soup as ‘rough food’, noting that he likes to make it because it is ‘very cheap’ and that it is a good way to use leftovers that would otherwise to waste. He said that this was how people survived the economic reforms in China during difficult times. Robert, who lives in far less straitened circumstances than his grandparents, considers his reproduction of this soup as part of his traditional repertoire, as it pays homage to the skills that he inherited from his grandmother.

For other participants, practices that stem from historic experience of scarcity have now been incorporated into how they perceive their national or ethnic food cultures. Summing up her own efforts towards frugality, Nadia remarked that the cake she had cooked on the morning of her interview was made using windfall fruit from her garden. She added: *‘Italians don’t like to waste anything, you know’*.

Sabine and Franjo both reported past experience of hardship in their respective countries of origin that have clearly left lasting marks on their approaches to food. Sabine, aged seventy at the time of the interview, came to Australia from Spain when she was in her early twenties. Her husband Franjo arrived from Croatia at a similar age and they married soon after they met. In the years that followed, they both worked very hard to establish and run several businesses, and the bought a number of properties. Now retired, the house they live was built by Franjo and is richly furnished in a Spanish style. The kitchen is spacious and has many modern features, including a ‘walk-in’ refrigerator.

The size and aesthetic of their house gives the impression of affluence, but both Sabine and Franjo mentioned many food-related ways to save money and economize. They told me that they always look for special discounts when shopping, and that they go to markets late in the day when the price of produce has been reduced. Sabine showed me around the kitchen, and pointed out the numerous jams and preserves she makes while recalling how her childhood in

Spain was marked by scarcity. These frugal traditional practices appear to be a clear indication of the long-lasting effects of former hardship.

A background of hardship has also contributed to long-lasting attitudes about wasting food for other participants. As Dragan vividly remembered, wasting food was seen as a serious transgression of cultural values during his childhood:

I mean you couldn't leave anything on your plate. It was a sin and they would brand you. Like, mum was very superstitious because, if you leave something on your plate, you are basically giving it to the devil. And we feared the devil as kids... Nothing was wasted; everything was put into the stews again

Dragan further said that he continues to carry aversion to wasting food, and emphasized the point when he and Nadia cannot afford to buy 'top shelf', they make do with more economic options, whilst also tailoring their cooking to take into account their concerns about environmental issues:

We don't do Atlantic salmon because of the farming you know and the mercury levels and all that; plus the price... But there is the Australian salmon. It's not a table fish if you're buying it from the market. If you are catching it from the surf and you're gonna be eating it within an hour or two – you bleed it, eat it within an hour or two – you can't beat it. But with salmon at the market, we buy that to make fish cake. [It is] time-consuming, but for four dollars fifty you eat a big plate of fish cake and we love it.

In some of the participant reports, it was demonstrated that sharing food can be a way to manage hardships and scarcity, and often relies on practical, traditional skills and knowledge. Meg, Abby's mother, recalled the rationing era in Britain following the Second World War. In her account of the food shortages, Meg described how the exchange of seasonal gluts provided relief for many. At the

same time, she has also described traditions that are reminiscent of much older, pre-industrial cultures of gardening and breeding domestic livestock for food.

So you had this bartering system that – well, say my father used to breed rabbits, and so he would give rabbits to someone and they would give a dozen eggs to someone... And then they had this swapping system where one man might have had an excess of, say, beetroot; and my father would have an excess of potatoes and they would change.

Sabine's mother grew vegetables and kept chickens on a small plot of land, which had been made available to the families of miners in the village where they lived. With seven children to feed, she managed by preserving produce from the garden. At the same time, she was often called upon to provide for others from the area who were experiencing similar hardships. As Sabine remembered her mother's generosity in these circumstances, who would say that '*a couple more doesn't matter*', and noted:

'She was very good my mother. You know, if anybody comes, she always had food. You know this Helen: food is about sharing.

Shopping locally

When it came to procuring provisions that could not be personally gathered or grown, many participants made thoughtful choices and opted to buy their food from small, local shops. Although most people in Australia have little recourse but to buy a large proportion of their food from supermarkets (Dixon 2006), Brunswick offers a variety of relatively accessible alternatives. For example, there are many small greengrocers and butchers, and two long-established fresh markets – one that caters for the less affluent, and another (which was more recently introduced) that appeals to those with more resources and want locally-grown organic produce. Overwhelming, the participants said that they favoured local shops and markets over supermarket options. For most, this was because they

valued the personal service, and the knowledge and advice that is offered in smaller, independent food shops. In comparison, the large supermarkets were seen as anonymous and impersonal, and any convenience that they offered was negated by the perceived reduction of quality.

Close connections with food providers is one of the hallmarks of traditional foodways. Although this was demonstrated in the study's findings, it is not exclusive in people who felt a strong connection with specific food traditions. Many participants reported their preferences for shopping locally with regard to developing relationships with shopkeepers or market stall-holders. In conjunction with this, the participants were confident in their own ability to judge the quality of the food, and were reluctant to leave decisions in the hands of the larger supermarket chains.

Alethea provided several reasons for why she chose to shop at local stores and markets, rather than at mainstream shopping venues. The reasons she cited included: the importance of ongoing relationships with sellers, providing support for small businesses, spending judiciously, and being able to make immediate, sensory-driven judgements of quality.

I like going to markets and forming some relationship with the owners and they know you. And it's very rare for me to buy meat and chicken and those sort of products from supermarkets. I don't like shopping like that. I just prefer to support small business and the local community. And also better prices – I find in supermarkets they are inflated – and in terms of quality, I'm judging quality better than most people [indistinct]... so I prefer things that aren't pre-packaged. I want to pick up something, handle it, smell it – you know, having my own sort of tactile experience.

The active voice that Alethea used above is a significant feature in how she described her shopping: she spoke about 'forming' relationships, 'judging' quality

and ‘having’ the sensory experience of touching and smelling the food. This clearly demonstrates Alethea exercise of control over her shopping experience. At the same time, it also makes apparent the kind of factors that have influenced her decisions. These consist of a range of necessary, practical skills for organizing all the various activities that are involved in order to bring food to the table (see Sutton 2001: 21).

Sabine also said she likes to be in control of what she buys and views ‘interference’ with food – products that are pre-cut, pre-packaged, or in some other way partially prepared – very negatively. Sabine said that she is ‘*very fussy*’ when selecting her food; she trusts her ability to judge quality and freshness and preferred not to rely on the options available at the supermarket:

You know some people they go to the supermarkets and they buy the calamari, ring ones? I wouldn't buy them. I have to go to Victoria Market, buy, and clean and cutting. It's like the fish. When it's already sliced, you couldn't see what you buy. I'm very fussy... I want to see. I like to go to the market and see in the aisles and see if it is fresh or not. If it no, I don't want it.

Altair does most of his shopping locally and referred to ‘food miles’ as one of the reasons for this. Also implied in his response is an appreciation of the choices on offer near his home:

Well, it's becoming more and more local. I think partially it's this idea of food miles. But I always did a lot of the shopping in Brunswick, so nuts and pulses, straight from the Lebanese wholesalers. I've been doing this for thirty years. There used to be only one company; now you've got the choice of six, seven: one better than the other, one neater than the other, one more diverse than the other. And then, as Victoria Market has become more and more touristy, I find myself seeking out more and more of my stuff down here.

Sara also prefers to ‘shop on foot’ at smaller, local businesses: ‘cos I like choosing the fresh food’. She described the reasons she favours shopping in this way:

Gangemi’s greengrocer down at Barkly Square, if you are there on a Saturday, they are just giving away bags of things for a dollar. A dollar for a bag of Roma tomatoes that are just ripe and they’re the best things to make your own tomato sauce from... And then, [when] I was working in Bacchus Marsh and they have all the growers selling directly by the roadside. [I] love to stop and see what they are doing. So I buy a box of something; so if it’s summer and there are boxes of cherries – just love them!

The trust that is placed in small, independent shops, rather than in the larger supermarkets, is predicated on the relationships that participants formed with small-scaled vendors. The participants saw these relationships as special and something that does not happen in supermarkets. Miranda said:

Yeah, so if I could go to a Farmers Market every week, I’d do it... because I like the connection with the people who actually grow it and it’s a problem when I go to the markets ‘cos I spend hours there and I know everyone too... And I like [our grocer]. He’s an Italian grocer and I like to support him ‘cos he’s had a bit of a hard time with his family and I’d go there and get certain things and talk to him... And I hate supermarkets; can’t stand ‘em. I wouldn’t get fruit and vegie very often at all from a supermarket.

Nadia expressed similar loyalty through the utmost trust in the skills and knowledge of her butcher. The way that her butcher cuts the meat is more than just to her liking, as she inferred that it is also pertinent to the values she wants to see perpetuated. The butcher is one of the ‘guardians’ of the traditions she values, in the sense that they ‘just know’, which gives her the confidence she seeks.

And then I've got my butcher; the Italian butcher on Victoria Street. I always buy my meats only from him. They cut it the way you like it. They're Italian too so they cut it – well, they just know how to cut it.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has traced the impact of industrialization and commodification on the modern food system. The participants were clear about the influence that abundance and convenience had provided for them, particularly in relation to expanding the repertoire of what they eat. They see a greater variety of foodstuffs available now than was offered for previous generations and view this as a positive outcome of modern food systems. For most of those interviewed, the widespread availability of fresh produce from around the globe is seen as a benefit that allows them to continue their traditions and also to explore different tastes, adding to their knowledge about a variety of cuisines. In addition, some newer products in the market place have helped to make meal preparation an easier, less time-consuming task. Both busy-ness (time-constraints) and ageing (energy-expenditure) were factors influencing the participants' decisions to use pre-prepared convenience foods. Notably for some, these products actually enable the continued enjoyment of what they see as 'traditional' foods when time and energy restrict their ability to prepare dishes from scratch.

At the same time, this chapter has also highlighted how these aspects of modern food systems intersect with the participants' commitment to traditional modes of production and culinary repertoires. Many of the participants continued to use artisanal methods of food production, preservation and preparation. In particular, there was extensive evidence of the domestic cultivation of food with an emphasis on the guaranteed freshness this ensured. Further, many participants referred to habits of thrift and their loyalty to local shops and the relationships they had developed with food vendors.

In further explorations of these intersections, in the next chapter I examine the influence that exposure to other culinary traditions has had on the foodways of the participants.

Chapter Seven

Other People's Traditions

This chapter explores how encounters with other people's traditions have changed the foodways of the participants. The literature on food credits structural developments, such as the globalization of food chains, for making experiments with 'other' food traditions not just possible, but also probable (Fernandez-Armesto 2002). Additionally, commentators point to the media's popularization of food – much of which is focused on 'multicultural' and 'exotic' cuisines (Naccarato & Lebesco 2012). In contrast, researchers from the everyday multicultural perspective stress the importance of 'people mixing' (Noble 2009).

The findings from this study align with the literature and show that participants have willingly embraced other people's traditions. Several reasons were clearly evident. Participants cited the availability of the expanded range of food options, including commodities that have introduced flavours and styles drawn from different cultures, as evidenced in the previous chapter. They also referred to the popularization of other cuisines in the media as motivating their interest in other traditions. However, by far the most significant influence came from everyday encounters with people they are connected to.

MEDIA

The participants reported an extensive engagement with food through mediated sources. For most, these sources (which included television, magazines, recipe books, and the internet) were used to discover new recipes and ideas that could be incorporated into their own cooking practice, or to view food-related content as a form of entertainment.

When Matilda was asked where she gets cooking ideas and inspiration from, television was the first thing she mentioned. Matilda's partner also likes cooking, and she said that they enjoy watching cooking shows on television together:

Yeah, we watch cooking shows and we'd see something like pork belly with cracked eggs and he'll be like "oh, I'm gonna cook that" and then he'll go off and do that. Which is usually quite nice 'cos, you know, they are usually interesting, tasty things that he'd see. That 'Food Safari'²⁶ is the favourite and I think it's like a combination because it's not the food but it's the whole way it's presented – like the photography, and the colours and the food and the people and the stories... which is always exciting.

Miranda also said that that she watches cooking shows on television, but not frequently: '*occasionally, yeah, yeah; but I get a bit jack of them*'. When she was asked to qualify this, she offered her opinions about the rise of celebrity chefs and how this plays out in the conscription of traditions into 'modern' repertoires:

I don't know, it's almost like food in terms of the media and our culture and other Western cultures has become, I feel, really, um, a bit religious. It's like a cult almost. Well, it's not religious but there is this awe of – you know – this celebrity status... I think there's a connection between the sort of capitalizing on something that has always been there... And, you know, salted cod was because there was no fridges. You know, you had to salt it; you had to keep preserving it. And now it costs an arm and a leg to have it in anything. And Ossa bucca, you know? Shanks! They're shanks! Like I go, "oh not another chef and another fuckin' cooking show". Oh look, they've discovered something new – yeah, that we've known for thousands of years [laughing].

Dragan was more circumspect in discussing his use of media to keep up with news about food and cooking, but like many other participants, he liked to share new information with friends:

²⁶ Food Safari is a cooking program aired on the SBS network in Australia. Its focus is on multicultural foodways featuring recipes and interviews with both professional and domestic cooks.

Oh, well, Radio National has great programs and information, and a little bit of reading. But we talk a lot too. To other people like our friend who is big on food, big on fish and big on cooking. There is a lot of information that gets passed between each other.

Georgina also said that she likes sourcing ideas about food from the media:

I listen to the radio a lot. I love that Triple R program, 'Eat It' – yeah love that show, so whenever I can I listen to that. I used to subscribe to 'Delicious'²⁷ but it got too expensive. Um, talk a lot to people, you know. My community of friends are pretty much all into good food and, you know, [my friend] has always got some idea. She's practical and um, yeah, that's probably it.

Simone's reflections echoed the commentary in the literature that traces the changes to Anglo-Australian diets during the 1960s. Susan Sheridan (2000) notes that during this decade, there was a significant trend towards more 'ethnic' eating, and the media portrayal of food in Australia started to change. Sheridan argues that some of these trends can be directly linked to the intensification of global-industrialized food systems and the increasing diversity of the population. As Simone noted, it was the media that brought '*all sorts of adventurous things*' to the attention of young women who were setting up house at that time:

When I got married and set up home The Australian Women's Weekly was the cooking bible! And they had all sorts of adventurous things in there... Well, there seems to be a recipe in everything these days. You can't pick anything up without getting a recipe. In the paper, or even in these magazines, or, um, I've had a few recipe books as presents. And I often buy recipe books... at one stage I bought two recipe books when I was on a diet. One of them was 'Simply Healthy' – that's the

²⁷ *Delicious* is an Australian food magazine featuring recipes and articles about food, cooking, and travel.

Victor Chang book. It's terrific. And I still dip into those every now and again.

The appeal of printed recipes is not as strong for Matilda. She told me she has 'a cupboard full' of cookbooks but added:

It's quite funny because – this frustrates my partner – but I use recipes just as a guide. And I know there are some things you can't... like cakes, I've learnt the hard way [laughter]. And you know, yeah, I do read Epicure²⁸ – I mean I just glance, I'm not hard-core.

Surprisingly, there were relatively few mentions of the internet in the interviews. One exception was Sara, who said it provides an easy way to find recipes that are beyond her experiences:

Now if I don't know how to make – like, it was my turn to make the Christmas pudding last year and my friend who is fifth-generation Australian or something said, "if you get stuck, just ask your mum". And I went, "my mum's never made a traditional boiled pudding in her life. It's not on her cuisine list of things to do" ... So what did I do? I got on the internet. And suddenly you've got five thousand sites and you can have vegan versions and you can have blah, blah, blah. And, you know, that access to that information never used to exist. It didn't even exist when I was a teenager but now I'm getting into it... It's just really easy to look something up.

Louise also referred to her use of the internet, and also cited the ease of access to information as her reason. The internet allows Louise to find 'different' recipes to try, but she noted that she still uses other sources and returns to 'old ones':

²⁸ Epicure is a weekly lift-out about food and cooking in Melbourne newspaper The Age. It has recently been renamed 'Good Food'.

Other People's Traditions

Well, if I haven't got any idea I might click around for a recipe. Actually, I do it a lot more now... it's so easy and there are so many different things. But I'm sort of more comfortable with books. I love recipe books. I've still got all my mum's old ones and they are coming back into fashion!

When Sara describes some of her other avenues for exploring good, her interest in food from other cultures is of particular note:

So I've incorporated things like Indian cooking, Thai cooking, [and] Middle Eastern cooking just as I've met friends who are teaching me different ways of doing stuff. But [also] partly through going out or seeing something on the telly... you know, someone's preparing something that looks fantastic or having something somewhere in a restaurant and then saying "oh, that's obviously got ginger and garlic and chilli and mint and lemon and all this stuff in it. Let's see if I can do it at home". So sometimes it's my own investigation. And I do buy cookbooks now and again.

Kuai also mentioned mediated sources as well as a number of different influences that have inspired his cooking adventures, which include eating at restaurants. When he spoke about new recipes, he said:

...over the years, from reading 'Epicure' and, before, discussions on food with classmates or I would experiment with ingredients... The rest comes from the last place I ate... These days, every restaurant visit results in changing my way to cook. Subconsciously, I would work out the ingredients of the dish with each mouthful and register it for cooking future meals.

These findings are in line with suggestions that media can help strengthen traditions, by way of stimulating the imagination and encouraging public interest in different cultures (Thompson 1996: 95).

ZONES OF CONTACT

The study found encounters with other people played a striking role in introducing participants to the different food. Most of the participants said their cooking and eating styles had been significantly transformed by getting to know people from different backgrounds. The participants reported on a variety of encounters, but the most prominent were the mundane, often incidental, everyday experiences that bring people into contact

The findings from this study indicate that intercultural exchange has played a role in the food choices of both migrants and the predominantly British-descended community into which they entered. However, there are two stories to tell about this experience. For the migrants, particularly in the early days of their migration journey, food was important as a way of establishing a feeling of 'home'. For the receiving society, the expansion of the Australian foodscape offered opportunities for new and unfamiliar experiences.

Settlement strategies

Many researchers have noted that, in the context of migration, the continuation of food traditions is a common strategy for creating a 'home away from home' (Hage 1997; Koc & Welsh 2001). They argue that the upheaval of moving to a new country is ameliorated if migrants can find sources of traditional foods and people who share the same food traditions. This was the case for many of the participants in this study.

The participants who migrated to Australia often spoke of 'bringing' their food habits, recipes and preferences with them. For Hezan, his foodways are part of the 'cultural luggage' he brought to Australia:

When I came from Turkey to Australia, I brought my cultural luggage with me. I brought my language, I brought my food habits, you know?

Hezan described the way this worked:

Brunswick was a migrant's place. In '70s when I came to Brunswick, probably ninety percent of the population was migrants. Greeks, Italians, Arabs... they have their own butcher; they have their own fruit shop. They go in and speak their own language and they buying their own food.

In Veronica's recollection, her migration to Australia as a child was marked by relatives who provided the family with 'welcome plates' in celebration of their arrival:

When we first came to Australia, we had quite an extended family here already. So when we came, it wasn't that we were just coming as a new family and we bought my grandmother and grandfather with us from London and my mother's sister was already here. And so we had lots of aunties and all of that. Well, I can remember for the first few years we were here, we would go to parties – firstly they were in our honour for coming here – where all the women would cook and we would go into this room, the lounge room or whatever, and there would be this huge table just laden with food. And it was what people now call tapas, you know, or mezze, you know? It was all small dishes – dips and things like that – that could be eaten cold mostly... Yeah, and that's a Greek thing... well, that's whatever my mother's tradition is.

Nadia also pointed out the importance of such 'home-making' strategies:

The lady across the road, she's Italian... makes bread, 'cos, you know, in the early days when the Italians come here, they couldn't find

bread. You know, it's really basic but you couldn't get good bread so a lot of them started making their own bread. 'Cos, like, where my parents come from, you would have a certain baker that has a wood oven and you go there and every family makes their orders. And you go and you pick up your bread every three or four days. But you couldn't get that here so they built their own wood oven.

Communities of practice

For a number of migrant participants, these settlement strategies unfolded within 'communities of practice'. Communities of practice²⁹ involve sharing communal resources and establishing support networks, and they are often based on traditional knowledge and skills (Braun & Beckie 2014; Huntley 2008; Morgan, Rocha & Poynting 2005).

Dragan's story exemplified the role of food traditions in these types of communities when he described the extensive efforts involved in building homes for members of their community. Dragan said that the initial aim of these projects was to help people deal with the suffering they had endured before leaving Macedonia, but he emphasized that '*there was always food*'. These houses have long since been built, but the food aspect has endured, and Sunday barbecues are frequently organized. Families contribute a variety of food: home grown vegetables, livestock that has been personally raised and butchered, or rabbits, fish and ducks that have been hunted. For the older generations in this group, these are food traditions closely resembling those from their homeland. From Dragan's account, it is clear these occasions remained as vital fixtures in the calendars of that first-generation, and that these communities continue to provide support for its members. Dragan's observations underline the importance of the communal nature of these traditions:

²⁹ Although by no means confined to migrant communities, the most explicit examples I found in this study were related by migrants or children of migrants.

Sundays was barbecues. It made no difference what the weather was like – and see, that was the great thing. No matter what's going on, twelve o'clock was always a barbie, a tradition. Everyone had to be there. And if it rained, it was in the shed and the shed would all smoke up [laughs] and we'd all be choking and would get down really low... Even though a lot of the kids aren't there now, the barbie still happens on the Sunday.

In Dragan's experience, communities of practice were quite literally home-building exercises; but they also fulfilled a metaphoric sense of homebuilding that was aimed at overcoming feelings of displacement and alienation. In this context, food traditions provide "strategies of belonging" (Savas 2014) because they blend familiar practices into new settings. The imperative tone that Dragan used demonstrates that food traditions play an important role in these strategies.

Communities of practice also served as a buffer against want, as they provided resources that might otherwise not be easily accessible for individual members of the community. This is apparent when Hezan said that in his early experience in Australia, the members of his community often pooled their resources in an effort to achieve a better life here. As noted by Hezan, in this context food traditions enhanced solidarity, in that it helped define a collective identity and improved (what were sometimes quite difficult) material circumstances:

Because, you see, before, people are living together, especially migrants. They have extended family, they were buying big houses, they had a garden, [and] they were growing everything in that garden. They were eating together. Working together and eating together.

Many of these practices have persisted, even when they are no longer demanded by necessity, because they continue to offer a sense of inclusion and belonging. This is demonstrated in Nadia's observation about her neighbour's traditional methods of making bread, sauce and wine:

Other People's Traditions

She's seventy now and she still makes her own bread and when she makes it, she always gives me a loaf. And when she makes her wine, she always gives me a bottle; when she does her sauce, she gives me a couple of bottles; when she makes her salami, she gives me a couple... It is part of their sharing. They are like you and I think that's why they make so much.

For Nadia, being included is partly accounted for because 'they are like you', and as she further noted there are always reciprocal gestures to consider:

... And it always comes back. Other families go 'here, have some of my sauce,' and you give them some of yours. It's all just like musical chairs.

For Rosalea ties to the community are also cemented through food traditions. In her own compact garden, she tries to recreate some of the self-provisioning and preserving her parents practiced, and she makes a habit of distributing seasonal gluts to neighbours and others in the Italian community. As she recalled a recent day spent gathering and preserving peaches with her neighbours, Rosalea said that she feels this is part of 'the Italian way of life', which is about more than 'just the food':

So, this tree here bears amazing fruit; the peaches. I had to bottle them and it was ... so lovely because I asked my next door neighbour [to help] because we had so much produce. We did manage to get them all in that day; it was a lot of work. That's one thing about the Italian way of life... So it's not just the food. It's the sharing of food, the celebration of food, and who you celebrate it with.

Recognition and incorporation

For some participants from migrant backgrounds, one change in the broader Australian foodscape has been particularly significant. As the arrivals of foods and

products associated with their countries of origin have been adopted into the mainstream, it has made access to them easier as well as enhancing their feelings of belonging. Previously, people from migrant backgrounds were unable to buy many traditional products³⁰ and had to improvise, or go to elaborate lengths to reproduce their culinary traditions. This has since changed, and many of these traditions have been adopted into the broader food cultures of Australia. For Nadia's aunt and her family, finding traditional Italian food at a major supermarket, even if in commodified form, came with a sense of being culturally accepted in a way that they had not previously felt:

My aunty was so excited when she went to the Coles and saw the sundried tomatoes in the jar. [She said] "We don't have to work so hard now; we don't have to do all that work!" Yeah, you can buy 'em in the shops here, like you can buy 'em in the shops in Italy. They were so excited you know. It's almost like an acceptance of them being part of this country 'cos a lot of these women, they came out here when they were eighteen, nineteen; they're in their sixties now. They don't even remember Italy any more you know. So to them seeing that, [meant] it is our country. We can go and off the shelf, buy our food in Coles. We don't have to go to an Italian supermarket; we don't have to go to Lygon Street. And that was a big thing for them, I think... That's almost like an acceptance; like they are Australian.

Nadia's story about her aunt's joy at finding sundried tomatoes in the supermarket was a confirmation of the how just dramatic these types of changes have been for some people:

I feel that Italian food has become Melbourne food. It's like everyone has caffè latte and everybody has focaccia and everyone eats pasta. Yeah, I think Italian culture has amalgamated into Melbourne... Yeah,

³⁰ Stories of olive oil once being only available in chemist shops in Australia are now well-known and were mentioned by several participants.

so now I think there are many faces of Australia. Not just that white Australia. But that was a learning curve I think you have to go through. And when you go to someone else's house these days it's not like it used to be... You can go to anyone's house and they will bring out the ciabatta. They will bring out the sundried tomatoes, you know?

In contrast to some of the commentary from that literature where it is argued that commodification can dilute the identificatory meanings of food for many (see Gabaccia 1998), Nadia has found that Italian food has become an essential part of Melbourne culture now. At the same time, Nadia also pointed out that the host culture – following a ‘learning curve’ – willingly accepted this change.

Reception: The long-time Australian experience of encountering migrant food

In the Australian context, changes resulted from successive waves of migration from diverse regions. Before the arrival of significant numbers of non-British migrants, Australian cuisine predominantly reflected its origins in English cooking. Although it can be assumed that the relatively small, non-Anglo population ate foods that were aligned with their own traditions in their homes, public recognition of these traditions was limited to the longstanding presence of Chinese restaurants, where food had been adapted to local tastes (Symons 1982: 81). The expansion of migration in the post war period brought a far wider range of cuisines into the country, at a time when mass consumption and globalization created market forces that were responsive to new demands. The outcome was a complex process of adjustments to, and interactions of, multiple cuisines.

This study found that arrival of new foodways was welcomed and embraced by people from (but not exclusively) British-Australian backgrounds in this study. Many of the participants were introduced to new culinary practices, which they had adopted, by getting to know people from different cultures and becoming familiar with their traditions. Matilda welcomed the arrival of new cuisines into

the culinary landscape of Australia, and her description of the changes that she has noticed is exemplary of the general consensus among participants that these changes were greeted with enthusiasm:

I think it's more the influence of the people, so like its migration has definitely got to do with it. Because when we grew up, in my youth, there was only really Italian; there was a big Italian population and a few Greeks. But I think now that migration is bringing many different people to the country so they have brought with them their food and restaurants. ... I think we are just exposed to everything more; yeah, definitely more.

For many Australians of British descent, the large-scale arrival of migrants and their cuisines was a revelation. Simone said:

I can remember when I was about eighteen and I was taken out to dinner... I can remember what I had; I had veal scaloppine... And I thought, "Hello, how long has this been going on?"

Georgina had a similar story when she was asked what had prompted her to change the 'meat and three veg' from childhood to something that was more varied. She said that the plainness of the food served in her home had never been appealing, but that when she left home to go to university, her eyes were opened to a range of new possibilities:

It's possible that I never really liked it in the first place. It's just what you got. I was never into food as a kid. Well, probably because it was so bland. I grew up in a very white, Anglo-Saxon, Catholic, suburban community so everyone ate like that, you know. But meeting other people I guess and other cultures and realizing that... I was like 'where have I been?' And yeah, probably going to Uni and changing

your network and it just went from there and then I realized that I have been missing out all my life.

The experience of talking with people who have different food traditions, coupled with wider availability of foods from 'other' cultures, is now commonplace in Australia. Abby said that from these ordinary exchanges, she often finds a source of inspiration for her own cooking.

I think talking to people more or less... Like I met [an Italian friend] down at the pool yesterday and I said, 'what are you having for dinner, I need a bit of inspiration' and a lot of the time she'll say 'oh, we're having risotto' and I think, oh we haven't had risotto for ages so we might have it the next night.

The expansion of Simone's repertoire owes a debt to her neighbours. She said that her discoveries of different food and new ways of cooking have come from meeting and mixing with people from diverse backgrounds and sharing ideas with them:

Italian and Greek food was the first different food that I had and I owe my neighbours a lot for that. I can remember discovering olives... And I started, you know, trying things with oil and I remember the revelation of cooking cabbage with a little bit of oil and vinegar and what a difference that made.

Simone further explained that she has is interested in the different approaches people have to food. She is often invited to share meals with her daughter's Sri Lankan husband and his family, and she has found some of their food traditions quite different from her own:

I see them on a regular basis and I also see the way they eat which is a different way. You know, they eat with their fingers a lot. They are not absolutely dedicated to hot food the way Australians are. They are

happy to cook food and leave it for a couple of hours and then wander over and eat it then, yeah.

Intercultural exchanges

Discovering new tastes was not confined to the Anglosphere. Participants from migrant backgrounds also widely appreciated the arrival of 'new' or 'other' food. The findings from this study support the literature that shows the experience of 'different' food traditions is often incidental – part of the myriad ordinary, everyday encounters that occur in multicultural societies (Noble 2009). This 'people mixing' often involves an exchange of ideas about food, as well as the food itself, and takes place in casual settings, in contrast to the more formal exposure to new foods from going to restaurants or travelling.

Among the stories of learning about 'different food' is Hezan's amusing anecdote. On a trip back to Turkey, he brought a food product that is regarded as an Australian 'tradition' that was met with surprise:

We took once a bottle of Vegemite to Turkey and kids thought it's chocolate and they eat it and "oh, oh" [grimaces and laughs]. When I ate Vegemite the first time I said "oh how can people eat this" but then, slowly, I tried it and I find out its nice. If you don't put too much on the bread, no problem.

Although he joked about Vegemite's reception in Turkey, Hezan's anecdote demonstrates how items from different cultures are often introduced casually, and that they become adopted into broader food routines through gradual habituation.

Lazar is always enthusiastic about opportunities to explore different tastes and develop his own knowledge and skills, and explained that he believes the best way to do is this by exchanging ideas. For Lazar, and the friend he mentioned in the following extract, it is the relatively ordinary practice of 'talking to people' that has provided opportunities to learn about food from different cultures.

But there are things you've got to learn by talking to people. The big thing you find with food is just word of mouth, talking to people, particularly older people. Different nationalities and things like that... And [my friend] was a plumber and he used to do plumbing for the local milk bar and they were Greeks. Anyway, he mentioned to the lady one day that he liked Greek food. Well, of course, that was it – here we go! Every time he'd walk past the place, there was homemade dolmas and all this wonderful, homemade, beautiful quality food. And he learned a bit about how to do it.

In Alethea's opinion, the Australian culinary landscape has generally been very welcoming of different culinary traditions:

... And as time went on with lots of different ethnic groups, I think Australians in particular are very open and receptive and embracing... Maybe some, an eighty year-old Australian woman who lives in Colac who is used to eating a certain kind of food might regard eating grilled squid as either exotic or disgusting to contemplate... But the average intelligent Aussie would say, 'that's fantastic' and they are very open.

As Alethea continued to speak about the changes she has seen in Australia's foodscape, she described one of the mundane ways people are introduced to foods from other cultures as she recalled inviting friends to visit her home:

I remember when we were at university we would ring mum and say, "Can we bring Helen, can we bring Joe, can we bring Miranda³¹ there with us" and she would say "of course". She never said no. And sometimes the meal may have just been legumes and salad and a plate

³¹ Alethea is not referring to 'our' Miranda here; these are names she plucked out of the air to illustrate the point she was making.

of feta cheese and olives and crusty bread and so on. So we were introducing our friends to Greek food and sharing it.

Alethea was also enthusiastic about the expansion of choices she sees around her, which she regards as an outcome of increasing diversity in the population. For her, having access to ingredients from different ethnic traditions is a major benefit of modern food systems. Food from many different sources and cultures has allowed Alethea to pursue her interest in cooking. She acknowledged that having a ‘range of things’ has enabled that pursuit, and was grateful:

A lot of my shopping is in Brunswick – where I had the pleasure of meeting you – and there is such a wide range of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean and Asian. It suits me completely because I get very excited about food and having a range of things at my disposal. I think Australia is quite unique in that regard, you know, with the range of foods that represent different sorts of cultures and so on. We are very lucky here.

In the same vein, Tony said he was impressed by the way migration has helped to diversify these choices:

New Australians bring a lot of different things here. Like the Greek feta, ah, or other different cheese, kefalotyri³² or olives or, whatever, you know. Italians or Spanish, you know, Chinese bring different things from their own countries.

During her undergraduate days, Miranda’s interest in food led to several stints of work in restaurants, but she said it was more often through shared households and gatherings with friends that she discovered other traditions and cuisines:

³² Kefalotyri is a hard cheese made from goat or sheep’s milk and according to Tony is often home-made.

There'd be a group of us who would just love to cook something and then invite people – so we'd do a sardine festa or a timbale and you know we'd have some people who had some experience around timbales and the Maltese would say, 'we do them like this'. And the Italians would make 'em like this and so we'd get together and we'd make our different ones and share them... It got bigger and bigger – everyone wanted to join in!

At several times during the interview, Miranda made it clear that she treasures traditional Greek food, but she also made a point of saying she is willing to try different styles of cooking:

I love the Asian stuff as well. I mean, that's the thing that is really good about living in Australia and being able to get anything you want.

Workplaces are also among the 'ordinary' sites where intercultural exchanges are facilitated through sharing food or swapping recipes. Anita, a teacher, offers co-workers simple Sicilian recipes and sometimes takes arancini for them to try. They reciprocate by offering to teach her some of 'their' dishes:

At work [there are] a lot of Anglo-Aussie women and they have taken me under their wing and they find it amusing that I won't know about these Aussie traditions. Oh my god, they taught me to make – it was golden syrup dumplings! And I'm like, "what?" Yeah, but they take great delight in sharing these things'.

Blended families

For some of the participants, exposure to other cuisines occurred in the first instance because they had become part of 'blended' or culturally-mixed families. Some of their cooking stories were illustrative of alternation between catering for the taste preferences of partners and extended kin. Others portrayed great

enthusiasm about sharing their own traditions with others. For example, Sara explained how she adapts her cooking to accommodate her partner by alternating between two styles of preparation:

Oh and things like polenta and stuff which mum taught me to cook. Yeah, now [my partner] had a different version because being Italian, his mother did it a different [way]. My mother usually did it as a soft polenta. But I've adapted to that; sometimes we have it as a soft polenta, sometimes we have it as a hard polenta and fry it.

Her mother also made these sorts of adjustments a generation earlier, as Sara further explained:

At sixteen she went off to the big city to work, so obviously she learnt to cook beyond her mum's little village cooking. And when she met my father, at seventeen or eighteen, she learnt to cook all sorts of things that he liked to eat as well.

For Sabine and Franjo, with their respective Spanish and Croatian backgrounds, the food that Sabine decides to cook is determined by who is coming to dinner, and from which side of the family. Both Sabine and Franjo have siblings with numerous children living in Australia, and when Sabine spoke about the approaching Christmas gathering, she said that about forty people, mostly from 'the Spanish side' would be present. She has decided to serve seafood:

This year I am more with the Spanish. You know the Croatians have different style. You know because with the garlic prawns they wouldn't touch. They wouldn't like this. They wouldn't eat it. For them the Christmas has to be the ham like they do in the Australian one; which I don't use the ham. Only use the seafood.

Androula and her children were also anticipating an extended family gathering for the approaching Christmas celebration, and their plan for catering the event. They

were intending on having a 'Curry Christmas', an intention which is reflective of their guests' background. An uncle from the Cypriot side of the family married into a Sri Lankan family as a young man, and he then raised a family in India. Although he later divorced and remarried to a Scottish woman, his first wife and their children will be preparing several Sri Lankan dishes for the upcoming festive meal. Androula will prepare Cypriot desserts, and the uncle's Scottish wife will be making a plum pudding. Dimitri joked that *'the Australian contribution will be the beer'*. While these types of 'mixed table' menus are now common and popular in multicultural societies, Androula's upcoming Christmas feast was notable for its lack of creolization or 'fusion', with each dish maintain its distinct cultural base.

It is sometimes necessary to take into account underlining sensitivities, as was the case with Nadia and Dragan's family, in which Italian and Macedonia cultures have come together. Nadia is aware that serving Greek food might be problematic for some of Dragan's relatives, as it could be an emotional trigger or those who witnessed inter-ethnic rivalries in the past. However, while she said that she avoids serving Greek dishes for particular people, she does not exclude serving Greek food on other occasions.

I also cook like [Dragan's] family, like his mother cooks. And also sometimes the Greek comes in there even though his family don't cook anything that's Greek. But because you're here and there are Greeks everywhere, you know? Like [they] would never have dips, but we do.

Travel

Travel experiences, and an increase in the number of opportunities for eating outside the home, have also provided avenues for trying 'new' or 'foreign' food. This was evident in the experiences of both British-descended and migrant participants. Several participants noted how they had been inspired by their overseas travels and had subsequently investigated food traditions from other

cultures. As Dragan said, '*travel broadens the waistline as well as the mind*'. He and Nadia spent their honeymoon backpacking in Thailand, and he reported that it opened their eyes to other styles of cooking and eating:

All we thought about was two things – what are we doing for the day, and what are we going to eat. And I think the main thing was what are we going to eat came first and where are we gonna go, which street vendor, what do we like. It was fabulous.

Travelling has also inspired Dragan to change the way he eats at home. As he continued to think about the food they ate in Thailand, Dragan said that when they eat out, it is generally to recapture the tastes they encountered in Thailand. Interestingly, he noted that there is no 'sense' in going out to eat what is often served at home.

So basically it is that – the Thai and the Asian food. We never go out for Italian; that wouldn't make any sense. We eat so much pasta here. There is a lot of pasta being cooked here.

Lazar reported how the experiences of his grandparents have had a 'trickle down' effect, because they introduced him to the new tastes they had encountered whilst travelling:

My grandmother was a superb cook but she didn't just do Hungarian stuff. She was doing honey and soy chicken when I was ten. Over forty-five years ago! Yeah, 'cos they'd been to China and everything 'cos my grandfather was in the Communist Party, right.

However, Matilda acknowledged that some cross-cultural encounters while visiting other countries can be difficult. She is a keen traveller who spent some years in South-East Asia, before she returned to Australia and had children. As she compared her experiences there with those of the arriving asylum seekers she now

works with, she noted that there are times when the lack of sophisticated language skills can be a problem:

Quite often I couldn't communicate what I wanted so I would just, you know – I tried to stay a lot of the time with vegetarian stuff. But you would find bits of offal and stuff and you would think, 'oh well, it was boiling'. And really, much of that was for health, you know, just thinking "am I likely to get [sick]" ... And I suppose it's really interesting for me now looking at it from where I work and getting the other perspective which is people coming here and having no idea, like, when they go to markets and that. And the importance of that; people not understanding the foods that are here. So it's quite interesting to think of it in reverse.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this chapter illustrate the impact of a number of different factors on the participants' foodways. Above all, this chapter has highlighted several ways multiculturalism has changed Australian foodways. The participants who came here as migrants and those from the host culture have contributed different views of these changes. There were, however, also a number of areas where these intersected and were the same for all participants. Among the arrival and receptions of changes, those that are most relevant here are the ones that involve learning about traditional food from other cultures through incidental and ordinary contact with other people. Talking to and mixing with people, browsing different types of media, eating out and travel experience are among the most prominent factors that prompted the participants to change the way they eat. While not discounting the influence of market forces in promoting these changes, as was examined in the previous chapter, it is clear that multicultural influences in Australia are now a major part of many participants' everyday engagement with food.

Nevertheless, despite the widespread welcoming of 'other' traditions, the participants retained a significant connection to certain aspects of their own traditions. As in the previous chapter where it was seen that the arrival of abundance and variety did not disrupt or diminish traditions, this was also the case in the findings presented here. However, this does not point to inflexible or necessarily conservative retention of traditions and in the next chapter, the findings reveal how participants made the effort to be creative with their own traditions. Also in the next chapter, there is evidence presented on an aspect of food traditions that has been retained in the face of these changes, specifically, the continuing gendered division of labour surrounding domestic foodwork.

Chapter Eight

Conflicting Trends: Individualization and Social Imperatives

This chapter examines two notable, but divergent, trends occurring in the food traditions of the participants. The first of these is a trend towards individualization, seen in participant's accounts of making adaptations and innovations in their food traditions. In these scenarios, an individual's creativity, and their lifestyle, has a strong bearing on the outcomes of food traditions. The literature on consumption also refers to this as 'singularization': food is seen as being 'singularized' once it has been "purchased as commodities and then transformed by often extensive domestic labour before being finally consumed" (Warde 1997: 194).

The second section examines an aspect of food traditions that appears to remain firmly in place. This thesis has been focused on the fate of culturally defined cuisines. A significant part of this picture, however, concerns the gendered nature of food preparation. The literature consistently shows that women perform the major share of domestic food provision, pointing out that as a consequence, women are regarded as the main agents for preserving, transmitting and protecting culinary cultures (Beagan et al. 2008; Beoku-Betts 1995; De Vault 1997; Lupton 1996; Murcott 1982). This study found that a gendered division of labour persists in the accounts of domestic foodwork arrangements in participant households. However, there is also evidence in the data that suggests changes are emerging in the approach to foodwork and in the patterns surrounding the transmission of cooking knowledge and skills. These are examined in the final section of this chapter.

INDIVIDUALIZATION

The participants reported that the reason they made changes to their food traditions was so that they could be enriched and enlivened. In the interviews, opinions were expressed about how traditions can be improved by, or adjusted to

accommodate, newer opportunities and experiences. In addition to the factors explored in the previous two chapters, the participants identified a range of factors that have led to reinterpretations of food traditions, including the desire to be more creative in their cooking, greater affluence, the sometime-necessity of using substitutions, and the need to make adjustments due to dietary requirements.

Adding a personal touch

The participants reported that they loved adding creative touches to their cooking. Miranda said that she likes to challenge, and build upon, her knowledge of Greek traditions in creating her own style:

I do do some Greek dishes, but I do a variation. Or, I'll mutate the recipes a bit to suit my creative bent, you know? I was always very experimental in trying different influences. So where Greeks are probably, um, they wouldn't combine a lot of fruit – well, my family anyway didn't combine a lot of fruit and meat dishes or anything, but I would go down that track now.

Alethea also mentioned that she adds her own touches to traditional recipes. For Alethea, lentil soup typifies the Greek cuisine she loves, but she acknowledged that she is able to adjust and enrich the recipe because she has greater access to ingredients and more affluence than her forebears did:

But today we can take a lot of liberties with those recipes. If you are making a lentil soup which traditionally has bay leaves and rosemary and, obviously, the lentils and garlic and onion, you can add carrots and celery to it to enhance the flavour even more... And the reason why people didn't do it was because there was not an abundance of carrots and they couldn't afford, you know, because of the war and depression and civil war and you know.

Rosalea explained that when she doesn't have the right ingredients at hand, she adapts her recipes. These adaptations retain the wholesomeness that she sees as a defining feature of 'traditional' cooking, but her willingness to 'experiment' by substituting different ingredients suggests a more pliable approach than what her mother might insist on.

I might experiment; I try to, yeah. I might go "well, I've only got this, this, and that so what can I do with this, this and that?" And it's still wholesome and it's still quite nice. I might use Chinese noodles instead of Italian ones or I might – well, I didn't have garlic for instance yesterday so I just used sweet onions and white onions instead of garlic. But mum's very fussy – she'll know! I didn't put garlic in, I put Spanish onion and it was still quite nice.

Sara also noted that she sometimes finds it necessary to adapt traditional recipes, and she cited a recent case where she needed to accommodate suit her friend's dietary needs at a dinner party she had held the week before her interview. The centerpiece of the meal was 'chevapcici', a 'traditional Croatian' dish, but Sara also took into account the numerous 'special requirements' of her guests:

Half the crowd were vegetarian, two of them were actually vegan and the rest were red meat eaters. And there was one vegetarian who ate fish and there was somebody who didn't eat fish at all so I just took fish off the menu. So we did a combination of some traditional Croatian chevapcici; obviously the meat eaters loved that! Homemade. To balance the chevapcici for the vegetarians, I did the falafels. Which are kind of the same thing but in a different vegetarian form. And then I made a big roast vegie salad and left out the honey because the vegan wouldn't have honey... So I just adapted the whole thing so everybody could have something.

Adding a ‘twist’ to traditional recipes, however, does not undermine their perceived place in a canon of ‘authentic’ traditions (Abarca 2004). Hezan is proud and grateful that his mother taught him how to prepare traditional Turkish dishes when he was very young, but he also noted that he loves to experiment. As his comments show, he sees his innovations as an extension or interpretation of his culinary tradition – it remains ‘Turkish food’:

I’m cooking in different ways. Once I cooked rice to my mum in Turkey with the oregano and she said to me, “how you can cook rice with oregano?” I said, “why not?” you know... And I cooked it and she ate it, she loved it. But they don’t add anything. The rice must be white because they saw from their ancestors like that and they didn’t add anything to there.... I’m cooking Turkish food but I’m creating new.

Adding a personal touch to a dish can often betray the cook’s identity. Nadia enthused over her mother’s ability to identify who has made individual plates of food brought to family parties. Her mother is also proud of her ability to use each person’s style and taste in identifying who has made what:

Like when the family has parties and everyone brings dishes and my mum looks at them and goes, “Oh yeah, Zia A--- made that one, and Zia G--- made that one” just by the way they’ve done it... [and] everyone knows which one is mine when we have family functions. Everyone knows, “oh [Nadia] made that” and I did! And you can tell which one my sister makes. There is something about the dishes, the way they arrange them and their taste.

Creolization and fusion

The participants were also enthusiastic about ‘creolization’ and ‘hybridization’. Menell suggest that a ‘stylistic mixture’ defines modern food (1996: 329), and is popularly referred to as ‘fusion’ food. It involves combinations of different styles,

ingredients and fashions into the one dish, and has become a staple in many restaurants. This study found that creating fusion dishes was common in the home cooking of the participants.

Altair hesitated about using this word, but after being inspired on recent trip to Japan, he said:

But it is, that's all one can call it. One of my favourite cross cultural dishes for example is the good old-fashioned chick pea salad, Middle-Eastern chick pea salad, but adding a good handful of nicely soaked hijiki in it. Putting a totally Japanese element into it works very well.

Kuai's cooking is also inspired by a variety of sources, which include flavour profiles drawn from different cultures and traditions. The combination of products, – some of which are 'modern' such as the ready-made pasta sauces he refers to – is novel and innovative, and certainly fit the description of 'fusion' food. The meal clearly appealed to him because of the speed and efficiency in their preparation. This, and his understandings of the chemical processes of cooking, also lie comfortably beside the 'traditional' stir-fry methods he has taken from his Chinese heritage.

I would stir fry pasta with Campbell's pasta sauce with meat, adding prawns and Char Sui and finish off by drizzling light soy sauce, sesame oil and a touch of curry powder. Try it. It should take no more than ten minutes to do. I applied chemistry to cooking when I did Form 5 and 6 Chemistry. Every time I cooked, I tried to imagine the chemical reactions taking place with each ingredient added.

The appeal that 'fusion' cuisine holds for consumers are also demonstrated when Sara spoke about a visit to a local restaurant:

It's fantastic... and they are really into the indigenous stuff and really beautiful fresh food. I had this most amazing dish. The chef came out

'cos we were asking so many questions... and she said, "Oh this is actually a combination of an Australian bush pepper and I've used some finely shredded lime leaf" and she told us all the combinations that she'd put in it. And the camel tagine! My friend had the camel tagine! Sorry, but I just love food. But what they are doing is indicative of what is happening in food in Melbourne especially. Oh, yummy.

However, fusion food was not always met with the same relish. Some of the participants were wary about the hybridization of styles and traditions, and for different reasons. In one example, Bea saw the combination traditional and modern styles and ingredients on the same plate as encroaching on, what she considers to be, *'proper Jewish food'*. A visit to a restaurant in London undermined her definition of traditional dishes, because in her view, these dishes should still make sense within the tradition itself³³. Bea's experience of eating at this particular restaurant failed to meet her expectations, not because the food wasn't kosher – it was – but because doesn't associate *'proper Jewish food'* with modern food:

We went to a fancy restaurant in London, when we were there last time... it was a very good restaurant attached to the oldest synagogue in London... But its claim to fame is "Our food is so good you wouldn't know it is kosher" [laughing]... But it kind of defeated the object because, if that was true, it wouldn't need to be as good as non-kosher food of the same type...

[Interviewer: what type of food do you mean?]

³³ Cf. Lu & Fine (1995: 547) who found a different response in their study of restaurant patronage. They suggest people dining in restaurants are less concerned with tradition than with the sensual satisfaction of eating.

Modern, modern food. So the things that you wanted weren't on the menu. Things like gefilte fish. None of the things you think of as proper Jewish food – well it wasn't there.

In another example from the interviews, Nadia described how her mother's attempt to cook a Chinese meal amused her family, because she had insisted on using traditional Italian ingredients. According to Nadia, this was a fusion dish that did not work well:

She reaches out and makes other stuff but it always tastes Italian. You know, she makes stir fry and you go, "this is Italian!" I think 'cos she uses olive oil and she puts the garlic and the basil. The way she makes it! She goes, "it needs more tomatoes". You know, we say "it's not really a Chinese meal mum"!

These two examples indicate that, for some people, adaptations and fusions are only appealing and appropriate up to a point, and are often limited by the need for the food to maintain some sort of connection with tradition, or with the meanings associated with that tradition. In a further example, Alethea's willingness to incorporate dishes from other cuisines into her cooking practice was tempered by her beliefs surrounding the effects of food on the body. She is selective when it comes to particular ingredients, and often adjusts recipes in accordance with her ideas about healthy eating by removing items that she believes are not necessary:

I also prepare other cuisines – Japanese, Chinese and Italian as well – and omit any substances like MSG you know [laughs]... Yes, at home I have low salt soy you know, organic products etc. etc. I adopt a cuisine but if I feel that there is an offending agent I will remove it entirely. I'm not gonna dismiss an entire cuisine for the use of for instance, MSG, but you just don't need that.

GENDER: THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

The findings demonstrated that although modern food systems have transformed many aspects of food provisioning and preparation, the ‘traditional’ gendered division of domestic foodwork remains strong. This entrenched division of labour was most apparent in the variations between the amount of cooking, and food-related shopping and cleaning work that women do in comparison to their male counterparts. The literature on the relationship between gender and food is very broad and covers a diverse range of themes (Beagan et al 2008; DeVault 1997; Hollows 2003a; Lupton 2000; Murcott 1982). In the context of this study, the most useful angles from which this issue can be approached were found in the experiences of learning to cook, and in the justifications that were used to explain the gender imbalance.

Justifying the continued division of labour

The data showed that a variety of explanations were used to defend and accept the continued division of labour in foodwork. The explanations that participants used echoed the rationales about unequal distribution of domestic foodwork exposed by Deborah Lupton (2000). She found that people cited ‘expertise’, ‘enjoyment’, and ‘fairness’ as reasons for why women did more domestic cooking than men. In this project, only three of the households surveyed had a male who took prime responsibility for the majority of cooking work³⁴. In one of these households, June, who is Robert’s partner, said that she doesn’t need to cook because, as she put it, *‘I live with a Masterchef!’* Hezan said that he enjoys cooking much more than his partner does and so he willingly does most of the foodwork in his household. Kon is a single man who lives alone, and obviously needs to cater for himself, but he also said he that he does enjoy cooking. However, in all other households, the women were responsible for the majority of the domestic food chores, including buying, preparing and cooking the food, and clearing away after meals.

³⁴ This number takes into account that Miranda and Bea both live in same-sex relationships.

Several male participants offered explanations for the gendered division of labour in their household using reasons that appeared to be based on assumptions that women are somehow ‘naturally’ more proficient at organizing and preparing meals, or that it is part of their ‘traditional’ role. There is a great deal of literature that has found similar assumptions (see Beagan et al. 2008; Lupton 2000; Sutton 2001: 25).

Sargon was the only participant who did no cooking at all. He simply stated that in Syria, where he is from, that *‘it’s traditional’* for women to do all of the household cooking, and that this is the role his wife performs in their family. When he was asked to expand on this point, he said it is because he works full time and she is at home all day.

Tellingly, Dragan casually mentioned:

Who cooks in this house? Oh, my wife does. Oh you can’t even think about it. I mean, I like cooking; I cooked a lot for myself before I met her. ‘Cos that’s just how it was in my family too, my mother worked... Well, I don’t even think about food because by the time I even get an appetite to think about food, it’s already done. It’s already done and it’s always done so well. And we love her cooking. And her friends love her cooking!

Tony made his feelings about the division of household responsibilities particularly clear. He said he that had used to cook his own meals after he left his village in Greece at the age of fourteen and moved to Athens to find work. However, despite describing himself as a competent cook, he expected his wife to provide the meals once he married. He offered the following reflection on his beliefs about women’s ‘duty’:

It's enough work for a woman, the house... The men was responsible to bring money; then the woman her duty to [do the] cooking, housework, everything. It's enough work in the house.

As he continued, he also noted that:

Even my son, he loves our food but the girls he used to mix, at the clubs whatever, they never stay at home to cook... I think before it was a lot better because the woman stays home. Not like for today's woman, they not here for the housework, dishes, whatever, you know. They different. Those days, even in Australia, you know, they stay home.

The women interviewed for this study were mostly accepting of this sort of 'taken-for-granted' organization of domestic tasks. Several made allowances for their male partners in this regard, citing differences in the amount of time that is spent at work outside the home. For example, explanations such as *'I've got more time than he has'*, as offered by Matilda, were seen as fundamental reasons for the way foodwork is delegated. Elsewhere, justifications such as *'his job is harder than mine'*, as noted by Sara, were used by women as a reason to accept their greater share of the cooking work. Louise summed up how these rationales about domestic foodwork are commonly negotiated in households, when she commented on her daughter's situation as a new mother:

All these guys were brought up to do their bit, yeah? But once you have children, it all changes... You are home all day, so it's part of the package you know?

Overall, as intimated in the quotes above, the perception that women have more time to cook and prepare food was the rationale behind most of the justifications that were made. Some of the women interviewed added qualifications to why this was the case. During the interview with Androula and her adult children, Eva and

Dimitri recalled how their grandmother was a gifted cook. Androula was quick to add that this ‘gift’ may have been because her mother didn’t work outside the home, and had could devote entire day to making food for her family.

Robert is the main provider of meals in his home and is very proud of his cooking ability. He also noted that time is an important ingredient in the distribution of cooking labour. As he shared his memories of foodwork in China, he began with the following scenario:

If you go to my father’s home town, women still doing old duties. They don’t work; they stay at home and cook; that’s their job. They did have boil meat from the morning. They put it on, do everything else then turn it off. Then it’s ready.

Later, he compared it with another view of how important the availability of time can be:

Mao’s decree – he raised the status [of women]. He put up a slogan said men and women equal and women is half of sky. Nicely put, ‘holds up half sky’. So women started working and stopped cooking!

Learning to cook

The findings indicated that the ‘traditional’ gender divide is also apparent in the variations how the female and male participant had learnt how to cook. In line with the large body of work on gendered role expectations of domestic foodwork (Beagan et al 2008; Bugge & Almas 2006; De Vault 1997; Lupton 2000; Murcott 1982), this study found pronounced differences between women and men in how culinary skills were acquired. between men and women. Aside from a few exceptions, female participants said that they were inducted into domestic cooking routines from an early age, and were almost always called upon to help prepare family meals. By observing and imitating an older family member (who, in most

cases, was female) prepare and serve food, the traditional gender divide in household cooking tasks was preserved.

The assumptions that learning to cook and providing meals is ‘women’s work’ were also made apparent when female participants noted that it had fallen to them, rather than male family members, to fill in when their mother was unable to cook. This was demonstrated by Miranda, who said:

I cooked from as soon as I was tall enough to reach the stove... which I sorta begrudged at the time. I had, you know, friends to see after school... but it stayed with me. My younger brother never really got the handed-down responsibility.

Since it was not ‘traditionally’ expected that male children assist in the provision of meals, it was not surprising to find that most of the men interviewed were not taught to cook during childhood. Although Lazar doesn’t do all the cooking in his household, he now prides himself on his competency in the kitchen. As is shown in his comment that follows, the assumption that female members of the family would do the cooking was simply ‘the way things were’:

It was the classic case of if Mum wasn’t doing the cooking, my sister did the cooking. The boys never did anything, you know? That was the way things were.

Nevertheless, some participants provided exceptions to the overall findings. One such exception is Hezan, who said that he enjoys cooking and that he performs the major portion of foodwork in his household, explaining that his mother taught him to cook at ‘maybe ten or twelve’. However, as he noted the reasons, it became clear this may not have been the case if had there been female siblings:

Only two brothers; we didn’t have a sister. Usually in Turkey... they never taught to boys the cooking, or sewing, or ironing. Probably

because we didn't have sister, that's why my mum taught us cooking, sewing, ironing, doing dishes, cleaning the house.

Robert was another exception; his grandmother taught him to cook during the Cultural Revolution in China. She had been responsible for most domestic tasks in his family, including taking care of him and preparing food, because his parents were busy with government work. Now, Robert has become responsible for most of the cooking in his household, and was very animated in recounting his introduction to cooking:

One person make for whole family. Sometimes women cooking look after the kids. What do they do? They just get the kids participating there. Give a little dough, play with it! It's like a toy. You remember the dumplings? The big balls, you put the stuff in there... and you make your own noodles. No machine. It's all beautiful. Takes time, but you've got time. People have got time in China. So that's how we learn.

When the female participants related stories of how they were taught to cook by female relatives, usually their mothers, they described processes akin to what Sutton calls “embodied apprenticeship” (2002: 130). This refers to the informal, routine, and largely ‘unnoticed’ means, by which the skills and knowledge required for cooking are absorbed by taking part in its practice. The findings showed that the participants were socialized into acquiring these skills in an unconscious, mimetic way, and that it often reinforced traditional gender roles. For example, when asked how she learnt to cook, said: ‘*I don't know, you grow up and it just happens!*’ Veronica, in responding to the same question, replied:

My mother didn't teach me; not formally, no. I can't remember her actually sitting down with me and showing me how to do anything and I think that's because she wasn't at home a lot so... I think the thing with her was that she was just so busy and so strapped for time –

when she came home all she was trying to do was get the meal on the table as quickly as possible. But I learned how to do things from watching her. So when I said not formally, I meant she never actually took me to one side and said, “this is how you make this” sort of thing.

Simone characterized these informal processes of skills acquisition as ‘*like osmosis*’ and added:

I suppose I learnt the basics of cooking from just being there and watching and helping and cutting up... And I think one of the difficult parts of cooking and why it is important to watch people is that a lot of it is about how the stuff looks at certain stages of preparation. So you know by looking at it that you have mixed it enough, or that you’ve kneaded it enough or that it’s cooked enough. So that visual thing, that’s really quite important... and cookery books can’t really tell you that. Even the photographs don’t kind of work.

As Meg also pointed out, much of this casual education happened through observation at an early age:

My grandmother lived opposite me; my aunties lived down the road. So you saw your grandmother cooking; I saw my mother cooking... then you start to cook too. My father never cooked. I never saw my father cooking until my mother couldn’t cook [any longer]. The men never cooked.

A similar process of ‘embodied apprenticeship’ stood out in Nadia’s account of learning to cook. During the interview, I had noticed there are no cookbooks in Nadia’s kitchen. When I asked her why, she said that she doesn’t need them. She replied with, ‘*I come from Italy, so I eat lots of pasta*’, as though she had explained why she eschews written recipes. As she said this, her children arrived

home from school. They interrupted our conversation and asked for fruit and nuts to eat, ignoring the cake on the table. I asked her if they all take part in the household cooking:

In the Italian families, everybody cooks! From day one, everybody cooks... you are with your mum and you cook with her. It's what you do.

It is worth noting here that Nadia sees her sons as also being involved in these ventures. But further questioning revealed that although Nadia encourages all of her children in learning to cook, the assumed responsibility for this does fall to a female member of the family. These assumptions were highlighted when she elaborated on her mother's gnocchi-making with the children:

When they go to my mum's house now, mum would say "oh what would you like to eat?" 'cos you don't pre-prepare... and the kids would say "I wanna eat gnocchi" ... they cook 'em and they make the sauce and stuff. It's the whole day. Not a whole day, but at least three or four hours of an activity. But that's just what they do; especially grandmothers. It's just what they do.

Sara was taught to cook by her mother and described the instructions that she received, which also included broader instructions about food:

What she gave me was the basics, you know – to be confident with how to brown off an onion, how to caramelize things, how to thicken a sauce... um, how to make stocks from scratch, how to choose your ingredients, how to choose your fish and your vegies and your chicken and all that stuff.

Alethea also said that her mother has 'shaped' her learning about food:

From my mother predominantly. She has been the greatest influence; she has shaped the way I approach food, the way I prepare it.

However, not all of the women interviewed were taught to cook by female relatives. For example, Bea's mother actively discouraged her from taking part in the cooking:

I had a fear of the kitchen when I was an adolescent... because I thought I was always in the way when I was in the kitchen. And because I felt I was in the way it became a place that I didn't wanna be. And I felt I was in the way because my mother hated it and so I was in the way.

Georgina's was also discouraged by her mother from taking part in the cooking at home, and she was told: '*you just make too much mess and you never clean up*'. The reluctance of these mothers to involve their daughters suggests they saw cooking as being a dull and uninteresting chore. Building upon this interpretation, it might have been the case that some mothers actively discouraged their daughters from taking part in kitchen work, in a gesture to protect them from adopting those roles,

Abby said that she learnt to cook, '*just from experience I think*', which again suggested that learning to cook can be a piece-meal process, or "inadvertently gathered know-how" (Short 2006: 52). Abby's statement about how she learnt to cook is interesting when compared with her mother's experiences. Abby's mother, Meg, gained her cooking knowledge from watching her grandmother, mother and aunties cook. Clearly, this wasn't how Abby acquired her cooking skills, who noted that she relies on other sources for information:

I'm still learning. I need a book to show me all the different cuts and how they are meant to be cooked ... I'd never cooked a roast before I came to Australia. When I left home I was living in London for five or

six years and it was just pasta that I used to cook... so I think [my partner] and I sort of discovered cooking together.

While many of the participants learnt how to cook through the unconscious absorption of knowledge and skills in the home, some participants received formal instruction. Kuai's parents ran a restaurant when he was at school in the seventies and he helped out when needed. Remembering it as hard work, Kuai's tone also betrayed his pride in taking part in food preparation:

I learnt to cook watching my father at the restaurant because I was involved in the preparation of ingredients at the restaurant. Homework would start after chopping up cabbage and peeling potatoes by the sack load!

Given that Georgina had been discouraged from cooking at home, she learnt how to cook in classes at school³⁵. Georgina noted that learning to 'actually create food' came as a revelation:

So the basics I probably learnt in Home Eco. Yeah, from Cookery the Australian Way³⁶ which [a friend] has still got. ... I remember being able to make a white sauce, which I've carried with me all my life; you know, the whole flour and butter thing? It's very, very handy that one. Um, what else do I remember? No, I do remember going "wow, I can actually create food." Yeah, there was a distinct, you know, a wow moment.

Matilda said her mother taught her to cook 'a little bit', but further training at school stood her in good stead when family circumstances meant she was called on to cook when she was still quite young:

³⁵ In the period Georgina is referring to, cooking was taught to female students only, part of a subject known as Home Economics (see Kingston 1996).

³⁶ A cookery textbook used in Australian schools during the 70s and 80s.

I suppose a little bit, she did. But I did it at school, I did Home Eco. I think it was two or three years, but I did enjoy it, I always enjoyed cooking and I guess I did help and then it was because of circumstances that I started to cook quite early.

Sorting yourself out

In contrast, as noted above, only a few of the men interviewed learned to cook under the tutelage of their mothers, and in these cases, it was chiefly because there were no females to fulfil that role in the household. For the most part, male participants noted that they had learned to cook only when they left home, or if there was some other circumstance where it became necessary or desirable. In the case of Matt, his keen interest in cooking was never encouraged at home but he found an outlet for it as an apprentice and is now a professional chef.

For Dragan, learning to cook was described as necessary to ‘*sort yourself out*’. With his usual humour, Dragan explained that his mother was too busy to spend time teaching the children how to cook. Of interest in this vignette is the fact that his sister wasn’t burdened with the responsibility to cook for the family in the same way that Miranda was in hers:

No, mum never taught anyone what the meals were made of. You know, she worked and so, um, she didn’t have the patience... [She] cooked two or three times a week. Other times, there would just be food in the cupboards, so you’d sort yourself out... My sister didn’t pick up hardly any cooking – she’s good at toast! I enjoyed cooking for myself ...and my brother has picked up some things ‘cos he was interested.

Among those who were not expected to cook while at home, some of the men described their experience of having to learn once they left. For example, Kon noted that his sister *had* learnt to cook at home, and he acknowledged the

difference in the ‘gender thing’. For him, it was necessary to find alternative sources of information about cooking:

I didn't learn to cook at home. I left home at age eighteen... And then I had to cook for myself. So then I started buying cooking books and the first book I bought was a book of Greek cooking which I still have... So I didn't actually learn at home and that was a difference; that was a gender thing because my sister did.

Lazar is an interesting example of a ‘self-taught’ cook. His account below provides an insight into the way people who leave home without culinary skills can subsequently acquire them, with the help of their peers:

I moved into a communal house in Carlton when I was about nineteen or something... there were about twelve of us living in the house. So you'd go to the Vic Market and buy heaps and heaps of stuff. And the other thing you'd do – because we had the bakery over the road – and you'd go there at three o'clock in the morning and get stacks of the stuff they'd throw out and then you'd go and exchange that for vegies with someone else and all that sort of stuff... But then we had the big, um, community casserole sort of thing that could feed an army you know. It was just all fresh vegetables and cheap stewing steak from the market. That's how I started cooking, you know.

It was not only the men who had to ‘sort themselves out’. For example, Androula said that her mother was a ‘dominating woman’ and that she wasn’t allowed to cook when she was young. As a consequence, she was ill-equipped to cook for the family when she first married. The family agreed Androula has since become an excellent cook, and she attributed her talents to ‘just having to get on with it’. Dimitri noted that Androula is so enthusiastic that she often arrives at his house with a suitcase of cooked food!

COOKING AS PLEASURE

Cooking is often seen as a pleasurable activity, rather than drudgery, and many of the participants shared their enthusiasm about cooking. This supports Lupton's findings that foodwork is not always seen as "uniformly unpleasant", as is sometimes implied in critiques of the inequality inherent in the relegation of domestic tasks (2000: 185). The four excerpts from the interviews below illustrate different ways cooking is regarded as enjoyable.

Nadia made it clear that she enjoys the culinary work she performs for her family and friends, and even described herself as 'a bit of a crowd-pleaser'. As Nadia spoke about, it showed (at least in some women's experiences) even the taken-for-granted expectations about cooking practices can be positively inflected as enjoyable tasks:

Yeah, I do cook all the time and I do like to cook. The thing with cooking is that I'm a bit of a crowd-pleaser. I like to make others happy with food. As in, I just cook what... well, you want the acknowledgement of [people] saying 'that's good' or [indistinct] but it's part of what I enjoy... Some people feel it's a chore, I think. But for me it's an extension of me, of my kind of caring and sharing. So if you love someone, you can share what you've got.

In Abby's case, when she involves her two young daughters in cooking tasks, she portrays it as a 'treat' rather than a chore:

Yes, they really love it. Like last night the girls made themselves omelettes... So they can do the crack the egg in and then whisk it up and then grate the cheese and [the older daughter] chops her own tomato and so she cooked her own. I let her cook her own... And I think if they cook it themselves, they are bound to eat it. Yeah, and they choose what goes into it and take a bit of responsibility... You

know, that's a real treat for them too, to get up on the bench and help chop the mushrooms and put all the stuff on.

Miranda said that she loves cooking. Although her work means 'keeping it simple' during the week, she said that weekends are different:

But during the weekend I cook more thoughtfully, more for enjoyment. I've always loved food; I always thought it was really important in terms of bringing people together... unifying.

Matt, a chef who also teaches commercial cookery at a TAFE college, provided a different perspective. He noted that many students used to be focused entirely on job prospects and finding a place in the trade. But he said that recently, more and more students are excelling in the classroom because of the pleasure they take in cooking:

I taught a woman from Eritrea ... In class, everyone had to cook something special from their own culture and what she made were these little meat samosas and they were beautiful. And then she mentioned something else and it sounded fantastic. And this woman, even though she had umpteen kids and in the face of adversity... but she could cook. You know, I think that was because she wanted to cook; it wasn't because she had to cook.

CONCLUSION

The participants described many changes they saw as influencing their experience and practice of their food traditions. Individual creativity and inventiveness have seen them introduce different ingredients or styles to their cooking. The arrival of different products and ideas enable much of this creativity. Furthermore, everyday cooking is no longer regarded as drudgery by all and some men are taking a more active role in domestic foodwork.

Chapter Nine

Living Traditions

This chapter explores ‘living traditions’. The idea of ‘living traditions’ is found in the literature on food that describes mutability and change in traditions (Abarca 2004; Heldke 2003; Lu & Fine 1995). Importantly, scholars also note that traditions only exist and persist because they are enacted by people (Luke 1996; Shils 1981). The first section of this chapter traces two aspects of the participants’ experiences of *living* their traditions: the first is the embodiment of tastes preferences associated with inherited cuisines; the second is the association of cuisines with ‘insiders’ or custodians of a culture, and the ‘authenticity’ of those cuisines.

In the second section of this chapter, consideration is given to the participants’ thoughts about the likely future of their traditions. This study has noted many developments that are transforming food traditions, as well as the participants’ continuing allegiance to them. To explore the participants’ ideas about the future of food traditions, this section asks what would constitute the authentic continuity of their traditions.

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF TRADITIONAL CUISINES

The participants reported the lived experience of their traditional cuisines through three facets: embodiment, custodianship, and nostalgia. This is in line with studies that suggest the sensory aspects of food memories play a vital role in the resilience of traditions (Sutton 2001). The interviews provided evidence that food traditions are embodied, in the ways that participants recalled certain foods, the associations that were made regarding the people who cook, and in nostalgia that was expressed for the food of the past.

Embodied cuisines

Most of the participants experienced their taste preferences as inherited and visceral; in other words, they are ‘embodied’. Many of the participants were able to elicit vivid recollections of past meals, and recalling the flavours and styles of ‘their’ traditional cuisines stimulated intense sensory memories. For Anita, it was her mother’s Sicilian cooking:

...the magic combination of eggplant the way my mama does it! And I'll have it the traditional way, with garlic and olive oil. And the same with chick peas and, um, just simple verdure where you have lots of leaves and you blanch them and once again add garlic and olive oil. Yeah, I do eat a lot of that simple peasant food.

Echoing similar sentiments, Kon also drew an association between his current preferences for certain flavours and the imprint that has been left by the memories of the foods from his heritage. Kon is a well-travelled man who has lived in a number of different countries. He reported that it was only during his first trip to Cyprus, his parent’s homeland, that he experienced a recognition he had not felt previously. Kon said, ‘*for once all the people looked like me*’ and went on to note that he didn’t ‘*have to find different food all the time*’. In Cyprus, he had found *his* food. The predilection for the dishes that he identifies with his Mediterranean ancestry has continued to remain central to Kon’s diet, and he described this affinity by saying, ‘*it’s in my blood*’. The repetition of the word ‘always’ in the following extract suggests that the sensory aspects of food preferences are permanently imprinted and timeless.

So I'll use, and I've always used, a lot of, um, what people would have traditionally I guess called the Mediterranean type vegetables, such as eggplant, and, um, courgettes and that sort of stuff. And I've always cooked with a bit of rosemary when I've cooked fish, for example. And then I've always used cumin in a lot of the food as well. So, if I'm

going to cook chicken livers, it'll be chicken livers with onion and pine nuts and cumin... Oh, and now my mouth is watering!

In another Proustian moment, Dragan recalled what he described as a ‘family tradition’. As he described the breakfasts that his father used to prepare for this family on weekends, it was remarkable that the description stirred up such a strong olfactory response for him:

And his thing on a Saturday was, he would get up early and he'd take this frypan – the biggest frypan, and the deepest – and he would add eggs, probably like eight to ten eggs, and feta – Bulgarian feta – and the green peppers, tomato, onions. You've got to go and find the Bulgarian feta. So you need that, it's gotta be Bulgarian feta. Just let it cook away; cooking, cooking... And by the time we woke up at eight or eight thirty we would be [sniffs the air]. We would wake up to Dad's – um, there wasn't really even a name for it. We would call it the eggy, peppery, dip. 'Cos it would go into the middle and we would get our bread – which was the Italian style bread with the hard crust – and we'd be scooping it in with our bread. It's funny because this morning I woke up and I could smell it!

The findings also suggest that sensory memories are embodied in the participants' ability to intuitively prepare dishes from traditional cuisines. Many participants reported that they learnt to prepare dishes by ‘osmosis’, as was noted by Simone in the previous chapter. This instinctual style of cooking was also apparent when Anita discussed how she uses recipes. Anita described how she has a ‘feel’ for her traditional dishes and their preparation, compared with how she might need instruction for less familiar dishes:

For me it's just Sicilian... so my mum didn't do much rice and stuff. Well, we had arancini but not much in the way of risotto. Like, I approach risotto in the same way as I guess Anglo folks would. Like,

I'm using a recipe book rather than going by feel whereas if I'm making a pizza or if I'm making pasta, why would I look at a recipe book?

Anita does not need a recipe to recreate these foods, or any other further reminders. For her, they are '*just Sicilian*', and therefore part of who she is.

Insiders and outsiders: attributing authenticity to people

For many participants, the *enactment* of food traditions was a crucial marker of their authenticity. The participants saw the authenticity of a cuisine as residing with insiders to a culture. According to these participants, it is not the dish so much as the cook that makes food real or authentic: the food must be prepared by people to whom the cuisine 'belongs'.

As pointed out by June, this can sometimes be quite nuanced, when she noted there are *insiders within insiders*. In the example that June provided, being Chinese was not enough. June despaired about what she perceives as a lack of authentic Beijing food in Melbourne restaurants, pointing out that '*it's only authentic if your benchmark is Hong Kong*'. She and Robert only eat out if they know the food is made by '*real Beijing people*'. Their favourite haunt is a place where:

There is a mum and dad out the back. The gyozas are exactly like [Robert's] mother makes; exactly. So if we want to go and eat anything, we go and eat that because they are real Beijing people.

Lazar also made a connection between the idea of authenticity and who has made the food, as he insisted that it is always a good idea to listen to people from within the culture:

Little tricks like, um, people wanna put paprika in something? Well you don't just go and chuck it in, cos you'll burn it. Mix it with oil first then put it in. If you read – this is a good test for a cookbook – look up Hungarian Goulash and if it says one teaspoon of paprika, you know they haven't got a clue what they are talking about... Ask a Hungarian! You use half a truck load!

Rosalea also attached her ideas about authenticity to the person who cooks the food. She suggested that authenticity is a quality of the person doing the cooking, rather than of the food itself:

I've got a few meals up my sleeve. There is something about – well, you can never really copy someone else's way of cooking. There is something about the authenticity of the person. So when Japanese [businessmen] travel they always take their chefs with them, these business people. Because that person might be the same trained as that person but there is something about that person, they'll know it is that person's cooking. Ha! And I don't know whether it's got to do with the person's aura, or it's got to do with the person's thinking, but they put the love into the food. I've had people saying... 'I can taste the love in that'. So it must be the way you think about cooking.

Several participants felt that because they are outsider in other cultures, they are unable to accurately identify the cultural authenticity of associated foods. For example, Rosalea said that she doesn't possess enough knowledge to decipher which spices are authentic:

I really don't know anything about spices. Spices are an absolute mystery to me. I go to the shop and there is this jar and it's full of spices and then you meet people who come from that culture and they say "oh that's not the authentic stuff and it's not good enough".

Louise also noted that she is not qualified to judge the authenticity of food from other cultures, but she did insist that *'real food doesn't come in a jar'*. As was noted in Chapter 7, Louise said she will use a jar of ready-made sauce to prepare a curry, because she feels that she does not have sufficient ability to replicate a curry paste that tastes *'like you are expecting it to'*. These mass-produced products are 'good' in her estimation, and an improvement on the curries her mother once made, which were *'just a stew with the standard curry powder'*. Nevertheless, Louise also recognized that she and her mother lack the confidence and insider knowledge that is associated with belonging to a culture where curry is a food tradition.

THE FUTURE OF FOOD TRADITIONS

The second aspect of 'living traditions' concerns their continuity into the future. This study has noted many developments that are transforming food traditions as they are practiced by the participants. This section explores the factors that participants cited as having the potential to undermine food traditions, alongside other factors that could facilitate their continuation.

Firstly, it is necessary to ask *what* would challenge the continuity of their traditions. The idea of living traditions suggests that change is a normal part of traditions (Shils 1981). However, to be meaningful, a tradition must retain some degree of connection with its origins, which raises the question of how much change a tradition can undergo and still be considered authentic (Beckstein 2017). In food literature, notions of authenticity are raised to problematize static views of tradition, and to contest views that see change and variation leading to the diminution of tradition (Heldke 2003; Leitch 2000; Lu & Fine 1995; Wilk 2006). These authors say that mutability is an essential part of tradition. In order to retain currency, traditions need to be adapted to the context in which they are practiced.

Challenges to traditions

The participants acknowledged a number of trends that could undermine the practice and longevity of their food traditions. The prevalence of fast food was a mentioned by the participants as prominent challenge to these traditions.

Fast food was almost always seen as inauthentic, in the same way that most industrially-produced commodities and goods generally were. Even fast foods with specific ethno-cultural genealogies that might suggest they are ‘traditional’, such as pizza, souvlaki or sushi, were considered to be inauthentic by participants. In contrast with homemade versions of the same items, fast foods are seldom regarded as authentic; they were seen as homogenous and ‘bad’ in terms of nutrition because they are mass-produced and contain additives. Alethea expressed concern about the consumption of ‘junk’ food, as she felt that might be replacing reliable and trustworthy food traditions. When she spoke about her last visit to Greece, she noted:

I haven't been since '81 so it's been a particularly long time and I know from people who have been back that in the cities the authentic, traditional Greek cuisine has not been retained to the extent that it has been retained in villages and on the islands where traditions have a tendency to be passed on and are respected more. And younger generations are influenced by trends and, you know, the adoption of Western eating habits which can be very damaging to people's health. The same happens with Asian cultures you know. Japanese young people are eating a lot of junk food as well. The same would apply to younger people in Greece and 'specially in major cities.

Alethea noted that the popularity of fast foods is a world-wide phenomenon that comes with a risk to the health of the younger generation. She expressed worry that these foods are encroaching on, and threatening to replace, traditional cuisines.

In facing the ubiquity of ‘junk food’, Abby said that she sometimes struggles to convince her children what ‘real food’. She reported that a recent conversation with one of her daughters left her worried about how the knowledge of ‘real food’ is being lost:

And [younger daughter] said recently, when I think I served up bangers and mash, “I don’t like potatoes”. And I said “well, you eat hot chips” and she said, “yeah, that’s not potatoes” and we had to convince her that it was a whole potato and you had to peel it and you had to chop it up... I don’t want them getting to the age of ten and eleven and not knowing that sort of stuff.

Participants also cited lack of economic resources as another challenge to traditions³⁷. For many, this largely came down to a matter of being able to afford the type of foods they would prefer to eat. For example, a significant number of participants said that they would buy more organic food, which is commonly associated with ‘traditional’ and more ‘authentic’ food, if it was more affordable. Nadia reported that she would always buy organic food if it was cheaper, and that she often buys products in smaller quantities so that she can afford the ‘good; version.

Hezan cited broader material changes to lifestyles as a further challenge for traditional foodways. He discussed the new apartment developments that have begun to appear within the Brunswick area, and he expressed several concerns about how this type of housing can have an impact on food habits.

The new apartment, if you go and visit one of them, they have kitchen but they don’t have stove. They have microwave, kettle and a little fridge. They buy frozen food, put into the fridge and when they are hungry, take out from the freezer, put into the microwave and eat.

³⁷ I have not addressed the issues surrounding economic resources and class in this study, because it has been elsewhere in great detail, and it is beyond the scope of this study. and there is not room here. Possible future study....

That's new generation food. When you are changing economically, your social life is changing too. When your social life is change, your culture, your food is change too... Then people are going and eating outside. Now, they are working very hard. All of a sudden, people are working very hard and long hours. They don't have time to cook. And that's the easy way – just put in the microwave you don't need the dish and just chuck [the rubbish] you know. That's the main thing.

Tony also expressed concern for how modern lifestyles could challenge traditions. For Tony, who is now in his sixties and retired, the busyness of the younger generation is one of the differences he sees between his own attitude towards cooking and those of 'the young generation'. In his sixties and retired, Tony saw the differences between his attitude towards cooking and that of the younger generations as being a result of their busy lifestyles.

It's different now. You can't say to the young generation now to cook. They go off and [eat] fast food. Most of the time, they cook easy meals at home because they all got the things to do... they do adaptations now. They run; they work, work, work; they don't have time to cook. Yeah, they're not so, how can I say, like us. They want to [eat] out. They don't cook much, just boiling beans or they just microwave whatever. It's not for me. I want to from scratch when I cook for myself.

As Tony continued discussing the issues that he thinks are at stake here, he noted how the lack of time infiltrates important occasions such as 'name days'. He acknowledged that this concern isn't limited to Australia, as he suspected it was a similar case in Greece.

We used, like the other Greeks, used to celebrate name day. Used to celebrate with people too, with relatives, friends you know – I mean they getting together to celebrate. Now, not so much. Now the young

ones don't do nothing about the name days. [When] they have birthdays, they go with the kids to McDonalds. Still, they're Greeks too but they are not... ah... they are different. They're probably different in Greece now too.

Sustaining food traditions

A number of findings pointed to the participants' ongoing investment in and practice of their traditions. In the first case, while many participants adopted numerous products that have been made available through modern food systems, they also expressed feelings of distrust and suspicion about them. Crucially, they saw traditional, and especially artisanal, practices as a way of avoiding the downsides of modern foodways.

Authenticity

The participants determined the authenticity of food using a number of factors. As previously noted, the key criterion was whether the food was made by an insider of a culture. Participants found this factor to be important because they felt that insiders had the necessary specialized knowledge and skills to recreate traditional cuisines.

The artisanal production of food was cited as being equally important for authenticity, as it was seen as being more 'real'. The participants attributed qualities to traditional cuisines that were seen as being in juxtaposition to the qualities that they saw as lacking from, or unable to be replicated by, modern, industrial foodways. In particular, the participants believed that authentic food was home grown and homemade.

Nostalgia for home-grown and homemade food

Many participants used terms like authentic and traditional when they referred to home-grown food or food made by hand. These participants venerated their

cuisines because they associated artisanal modes of production with meanings relating to domestic culture, caring, and family. Sabine's account of home-grown produce was redolent with nostalgia for '*beautiful and real food*', as she recalled:

But you know they had to grow their own pigs at home; the pigs, the chickens, the rabbits. My father he worked very hard; he [was] working in the mine. And after coming home [he was] looking after all this... And they grew the beans, the cabbage, the potatoes, everything. What do you think? And in the summer were cooking the chickens with the tomato and oh, beautiful and real food!

The nostalgia in Sabine's recollection is highlighted when these comments are contrasted with her initial description of the hardship and deprivation that had marked her childhood. Further examples of nostalgia were evident from the comparisons that participants between what they see as the 'real' or authentic food of the past, and the manufactured foods of today. For example, Louise said:

What do they do to tomatoes? I haven't tasted a real tomato for years! Even the ones you grow don't taste right anymore; they're tough and tasteless. I think they are mucking around with the seeds.

Simone had the same sort of questions when she asked:

What do they do with the milk? They put things in, they take things out. What's wrong with just milk?

Anita also questioned the authenticity and taste of commercial products, when she declared she was experiencing a '*passata emergency*' on the day of her interview. She was forced to buy a commercially-made product because her family's homemade supply had been exhausted, and she sounded nostalgic for '*the home-made stuff*':

I was very disappointed... it's plastic. I don't feel like it is real food. No, I think that they are different. I think the sauce is different. I don't think that [ready-made] passata is very good. I prefer the home-made stuff.

Some participants were more expansive about what they saw as nostalgia for the home-grown food of the past. Miranda has seen the appeal to nostalgia through her involvement with the Slow Food movement, which she feels taps into a widely-felt longing for 'something real', especially among people who feel that there is something lacking in their own food culture:

Well, there's all sorts of people who get attracted to Slow Food and I think there is a sort of a, I dunno, a sort of a yearning. Some that think it's another eastern suburbs, you know, twin-set-and-pearls sort of thing and others that, um, I guess want a dining experience and some authenticity or something. You know that sort of labelling? And so they want to partake. There's also some people who perhaps had an upbringing that food was not that much of their life or they were less connected about where it came from and so that whole thing about culture and season and so on is something they are so unfamiliar with.

As she continued, Miranda said she felt some of the current nostalgia about artisanal modes of production has become trendy or fashionable. She pointed out, however, that returning to these traditional practices would not necessarily be welcomed by many with previous experience of them:

You know, I'm not putting it down; I think that's probably a really genuine wanting to connect with that but when you get together with people who have always had food in their lives through their cultures, in one way or another, it's a sort of a bit of a giggle about what people make a big fuss of... ...But do y'know, there's a sense of taking some

things for granted but it's more about how it gets magnified to status what was really about poverty for a lot of us.

Better taste

Almost all of the participants thought that home-grown and homemade food had flavours that cannot be replicated in mass-produced products.

Boundary marking (Chapter 5) through food traditions is also apparent in more benign circumstances which are principally concerned with taste preferences. After Anita detailed how her mother prepares her eggplant dish by roasting it with garlic, oil and salt, she also mentioned that her mother occasionally tries other styles of cooking eggplant. Anita's description of this is far less passionate compared to her exclamations about the 'magic' eggplant belonging to the Sicilian repertoire, and she makes it clear where her preferences lie:

But she learnt this other way... Oh yeah, she's got an Italian buddy who's from a different region, I've forgotten where but they do it in slices? Like under a grill with a little bit of oil, then afterwards you add vinegar and I think it is mint. It's okay too.

In Simone's experience, there was no substitute for home made products. Simone has found that it necessary to recreating the marmalade her mother once made, because there are no commercially available products that offer the same taste:

But the thing is, the more you start making for yourself, the more you have to. Making marmalade is now a virtual chore for me 'cos I love marmalade on my toast and I can't buy anything like what I make so I am forced to make it. Same with bread; I started making bread and now I can't stand ordinary bread! It just drives me insane.

Simone's rejection of store-bought bread and marmalade extended to other foods. In particular, she enthused over the homemade Sri Lankan dishes recipes that her

son-in-law had shown her how to cook. She contrasted this with pre-prepared ingredients:

I've tried doing a few of the Sri Lankan recipes. For example, there is a beautiful chickpea curry that he makes with all these different spices. Now, when you taste that, you can't imagine even thinking one of those bottles is going to give you anything like it.

Many participants also said the superior taste of traditional foods comes from the care and effort that is taken in its preparation. This was evident in Dragan's commendation of his mother-in-law's minestrone:

You can't buy the minestrone [Nadia's] mother makes. She's a cook and she does fabulous meals... You know, we would drive for an hour for it; half an hour there, half an hour back. Basically, you are on the road for an hour for her minestrone. That's how much we love it and that's all to do with taste.

Dragan and Nadia's willingness to spend an hour traveling so that they can savour this soup is a clear indication that they have judged shop-bought alternatives as being inferior to home-made options. Dragan insisted that the taste of the minestrone made by Nadia's mother can't be reproduced by industry.

Better social and economic relations

Many participants also said that they actively avoid the economic structures impinging on contemporary foodways, due to the negative light in which they were viewed. For example, Simone expressed a series of doubts about the value of big food retailers, and she felt that their 'dominance' is sending the smaller shops in her neighbourhood out of business. These doubts are not only fuelled by her concerns about the price and quality of the food that is sold at supermarkets, but also by the expertise and advice that that is given at smaller venues.

Yeah, well I worry about the dominance of the supermarket and the way I watch people, probably on budgets, buying fruit and vegetables at the supermarket when there is a fruit shop next door where the fruit is fresher and cheaper. I don't understand that. I know it's all [about] how you go there and you get it all in the one basket, get a petrol docket, or you put it on your credit card which is probably offsetting your mortgage and is a very sensible thing to do. Um, that kind of system and the way it gets people in and I worry that I'll lose my fruit shop and I'll lose my butcher... And that's another thing! When I was young, the butcher was a great source of information. He would sell you things and tell you how to cook them. And he would, you know, have you sussed as a young mother on a budget or whatever. I remember him selling me a tongue once and telling me how to make pressed tongue and that was quite successful. And I still talk to my butcher.

Simone's observation of the different needs and expectations that people have of food systems reflects the push-and-pull between more traditional styles of shopping, and of recent consumption trends, in which convenience and efficiency are valued more than face-to-face interactions. As Simone observed, the convenience of supermarkets and the 'perks' that they offer 'get people in'. Despite these benefits, Simone was still worried that they come at the cost of the 'great source of information', and the personalized service smaller, face-to-face shopping venues can provide. Her loyalty towards these experiences stands out here.

The examples of distrust towards modern food systems that appeared in the interviews were inversely proportionate to trust in traditions. Sara's doubts about supermarket food were typical of the widespread questioning by the interviewees of the quality of food available from supermarkets:

Only at a push will I buy vegies at the supermarket. I tend to find the fruit and veg there goes off faster. And they must refrigerate their tomatoes... they never taste the same.

Abby also said that she avoids supermarkets whenever she can. One of her reasons for this was because had become frustrated by the product placements in supermarket, in addition to other marketing ploys that are designed to entice children³⁸. Her children have acted in ‘demanding’ ways in response to these marketing ploys. Consequently, Abby has joined a community-run food co-op that delivers dry goods to her home, which gives her more free time to shop at a large fresh market in a nearby suburb.

I now belong to a food co-op which we get all of our tinned foods, rice, pasta and all of our dried fruit and nuts and things like that from. All of that comes from the food co-op. I go to Preston Market once a week for fruit and veg. I get milk and eggs delivered by the milkman. And so now I am more or less supermarket-free.

Another reason that Abby gave for making concerted efforts to stay away from supermarkets sprang from an incident she had witnessed:

I went to the supermarket once and this bloke put some celery down... and the [checkout] girl said, ‘what is it?’... That really disturbed me... So I thought, nup, that’s it, I’m taking the kids to the market and they can find out about real food.... That was really important for me to take them to the market and get them to count me out six onions and, you know, a couple of red ones and a cucumber.

Abby acknowledged that her efforts to teach her children about real food have been successful partly because she was no longer in full-time employment. This

³⁸ Discussion of children as a market niche shows that a great deal of food marketing is now directed towards children because they are the group of consumers least likely to have developed permanent attachments to traditional foods (Coakley 2003: 337).

had given her the opportunity and time to travel to Preston Market once a week with her children, where she was able to buy directly from people who own the stalls there.

For many, better taste and better social relations went hand in hand. For example, Tony mentioned these two factors together. When he voiced his concerns about food ‘from outside’, by which he meant supermarkets and large chain grocers, it was evident that Tony strongly preferred with the quality of home-grown produce:

I'm not touching the fruits I get from the fruit shop. I love fruits but I don't eat the skin. I love apples, pears, but that's for the birds now. It doesn't attract me – I don't eat the fruits from outside. You can give me some apricots, whatever you got there from your garden, 'cos it's harmless. But from outside, it looks nice but taste? No taste, nothing, just straight preservatives or apples from last year. They're rubbish, they are still not fresh. When they cut, the farmers pick them, tomatoes, everything, they're green. They are not red. After sending out from the freezers they become red. But it's not natural. That's why all the fruits the same, no taste – look nice, but no taste.

Better health: the benefits of traditional food

In addition, many participants believed that traditionally produced foods are healthier than modern, industrially produced food. Alethea saw traditional practices, such as home-grown produce, as giving greater health benefits compared to ready-made or ‘corrupt’ goods:

In fact I often say that the average ‘Maria’ in Brunswick, you know, of my mother's age, is a far better cook, much more health conscious, has her vegetable garden and would not give that up. Unlike the people who might be richer and can afford so many things, you know, don't necessarily give their children healthy things to eat... If you're on the land and your father is a subsistence farmer, you know, he is

cultivating his own organic produce. You are more likely to find that landing on your table and eating that, rather than having the more corrupt influences.

Rosalea believes that her diet has provided significant health benefits, which can be attributed to the ‘goodness coming from the earth’. She sees the fruition of this in her mother’s wellbeing and longevity:

Well, look at my mum. They come from a culture where there was a big thing about goodness coming from the earth. Fruit, vegetables, nuts and legumes and Mediterranean diet and wine and everything was made in the home. So that’s why I think they live so long. Their health clearly didn’t happen by itself. You can’t live on fresh air... In my own home in the last four years, I clearly focussed on what [my mother] was eating. So her medication went down... She enjoyed looking out in the garden – it made her feel good about life because she could see things growing and flowering. So her attitude started to change. And once her attitude started to change, she felt better about life.

Trusting traditional food as much better for health is exemplified in the following story from Nadia’s interview, where she recalled an incident from her teenage years. When a former boyfriend had refused to try her mother’s sun-dried tomatoes and salami, she admonished him with an appeal to the longevity of the traditional practices, arguing that the food is not only ‘much nicer’, but also safer:

My mum would make them but they’re not like the ones you buy; the ones you make are much nicer. My mother stuffs them with anchovies or basil in the middle and he wouldn’t try them! He wouldn’t try them. I said, “they’re great, try these.” And the salami, the home-made salami, he wouldn’t try that either. He thought that could be poisonous... I said, “They’ve been making this for centuries; they know what they are doing!”

The use of additives, and their associated health risks, was another common reason that participant cited for their lack of trust in industrially produced foods. Matilda, a nurse, said that some of her concerns about this have emerged from her experiences with her daughter:

I do think you see a difference in kids that eat a lot of preserved foods. Maybe not all kids but I do think that... so much stuff you get in packs, snack pack things and sweet little yoghurts and juices and things and I just think if they are having that all the time. It's hard to know, but if you are in a situation where you are giving kids lots of snacky fast foody things is that why their behaviour is a little bit erratic and a little bit, you know, because they are actually full of these preservatives and sugar and colourings? I try not to do that a lot but I do think you notice it and I do notice it with my younger one's skin. Like, she gets eczema and if she's tired, stressed and her diet is not good, her eczema will flare up, that's for sure.

Some of Sara's suspicions about food produced by modern food systems are also related to health concerns. She had experienced food allergies when was younger, and believes that said that she believes they largely were a reaction to the additives found in processed food. She is now very careful when purchasing products, and her preference is to buy foods that have had less interferences:

I have to take my glasses to the supermarket if I'm buying anything. As soon as there's a list of about twenty-five ingredients, I know it's just going to go back on the shelf. So the bread I buy for example has flour, water, salt. That's it. Sometimes I will buy tinned tomatoes but it's gotta be tomatoes, water, bit of salt is okay. But once they start adding thickeners and preservatives and all that stuff, I just put it back in case I react to it.... There's no need you know. Tomatoes preserve without preservative! There's no need to add things to it.

In other cases, specific aspects of traditional cuisines were seen having medicinal qualities. Sabine, a spritely seventy year-old grandmother, noted that in Spain, her country of origin, many food traditions have remained because they are inscribed as preventatives of certain conditions. She recalled how the older people in her village ate a paste that was made from raw garlic, parsley and various spices, which they believed to be useful for overcoming ‘*the high blood*’ (hypertension). She has followed this same regimen every day, and she reported that this practice, along with the large amount of fish she includes in her diet, has kept her in good health. Sabine took care to point out that as well as believing there is a strong relationship between the foods she eats and her good health, she also finds the garlic paste is pleasant to taste and frequently adds it to her cooking as a flavour enhancer.

Kuai also said that he values the medicinal aspects imparted by the traditional foods in his diet; in his case, these aspects are based on a ‘humoral’ system, from which Kuai made distinctions between foods that heat the body, those that have a cooling effect, and those that are neutral.

There will always be soup; the ingredients depending on the occasion... Pork brain at exams; liver and Dong Kwai³⁹ when ill; Ginseng to cool the system in summer; Prunella⁴⁰ on sweaty days; bird's nest monthly for the immune system... Yes, this cooking has some tradition. I guess no other culture can stand prawn paste!

June is a Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner, and she is knowledgeable about the medicinal and restorative properties in food. She outlined some of the basic tenets of her profession, which sheds some light on the connections she has drawn between food and health:

³⁹ A medicinal plant similar to ginseng

⁴⁰ Another plant widely used in traditional Chinese medicine

Food is the source of your major energy. There's air, then food, and your energy that you inherit from your parents. That's the three sources of your energy. So one is what you inherit and when you get older it all dissipates and when it is all gone, you're dead. It can be supplemented a bit by air and by food through your life if you eat well and breathe well and live in a clean environment. And you can fix people's problems with food. That's the first way you can fix people if they are ill. If that doesn't work, then you need medicine.

Her partner, Robert, added to this, with somewhat more prosaic observations of the relationship between Chinese food traditions and health. He noted that most food in China is eaten cooked, and not raw, and he outlined why this is a good idea:

I was always told you don't eat raw dish. When I was a child, they said 'It's not clean' so you don't eat raw dish. As soon as it's washed, must be cooked. And also, we're not supposed to eat cold food. When it's cooked, it is easier to digest. If your food is not cooked, it won't be good for the health because it's got bugs in there.

Better for the environment

Finally, the findings indicate that the participants saw artisanal food production as better for the environment. They expressed worry about the environmental consequences of food production, and the consequently often organize their food practices around these concerns. Home-grown and homemade food is regarded by participants as a way of avoiding the negative aspects that they perceive to be endemic in modern modes of production. Homemade food is seen as more natural, less contaminated, than industrially-produced food, and as a counterfoil to the uniformity of mass-produced and commodified food items.

During his interview, Altair explained that his work as an artist is motivated by a keen commitment to sustainability and the environment. Altair noted that his art is

influenced by his extensive collection of books on cooking and the history of food. The view from his well-equipped kitchen opened directly onto an abundant garden, where he and his partner grow much of the food that they consume. He described his kitchen table as a ‘place of ideas’, because it is a space where he develops the themes in his artwork, reads about food, and entertains guests.

Dragan shared similar concerns about the environment by pointing out that home-grown food is better for the environment. For Dragan, the ‘*right thing to do*’ involves teaching his children about growing food, even though it sometimes means he has to do extra work:

It is time-consuming keeping the seeds, but it's the right thing to do. You find the variety you like, you keep the seeds. My father does that. My father keeps the seeds. And he provides for us. He gives them to the kids and the kids get involved. They have their own section of the garden that we've allocated to them. Although they know it's theirs, they don't always put the effort into it so I'm the one out there watering it and worrying. But it's their crop.

Matilda said that she uses a food co-op as her main source of food supply, and she had found that it is a good way to assuage some of her worries about modern food production:

We're in a food co-op. No, it's not organic... but look, the philosophy behind it is “no packaging or low packaging” and trying to buy Australian and of course we have a meeting every now and again so you get really good conversations out of it because some people talk about the use of the energy to freight things here so it's quite good, it makes for good conversation. And some of the members – one woman is a dietician so she is very conscious of any additives or colourings – and she'll bring that to the table.

Matilda described her shopping as being ‘*usually local*’, and cited environmental considerations in her reasons for shopping this way:

I try not to use the bigger chain supermarkets for fruit and veg and meat and stuff. But every now and then I will but I’m sort of picky, so it’s usually only if it’s something I need. And meat, well I do buy a little bit of organic meat from the IGA up there. They have an organic supplier from Leongatha which is near where I grew up. And it’s quite reasonable so I might try a bit. Well, it seems to be. It’s certified and it’s Leongatha and a lot of people rave about the produce that comes out of those hills. But yeah, the kind of meat I buy is generally diced lamb or mince and things... And also I use one of the halal butchers just up in Sydney Road, the Istanbul. I just find their meat fresh and they are really helpful.

Traditional meanings

The resilience of tradition has been spelled out in several chapters that explore the findings. However, Bea’s faith in the continuation of the Jewish food traditions suggests that they have some sort of timeless authority that is beyond any individual adherence:

Those things will continue; you don’t have to work to make that carry on, ‘cos that’s not going to stop. So, Passover, matzoh and things like that you know you don’t have to do any work with... I think that it’s nice. You want someone to know, you want it to be possible to know, you don’t want it to be lost. Yeah, you don’t want it to be lost.

Bea said that Jewish food traditions have given her ‘*precious memories*’, and that was confident about their resilience. She has no children, but likes the idea that these traditions would continue, regardless of her own contribution, adding:

The only real reason to keep a kosher house is because it is some kind of covenant with God... There are a few religious things that are food things, like Passover, bitter herbs. Well we have a fast at Yom Kippur. It's Jewish New Year, just before Jewish New Year. It's just a day, twenty four hours. You don't eat anything; you don't put anything in your mouth. You don't even brush your teeth. No water. You don't have anything.

When I asked her to explain her thoughts about maintaining these rules, her response suggested that she sees kosher food traditions as obedience. She elaborated:

My mother's rationale isn't so much to do with religion as discipline. My mother feels that it is good for you to have to do stuff. That you've got to do it like this, that you've got to clean it like that, that you've got to separate this from this. There are rules and you keep the rules and that in itself has value... I have some sympathy with all the lights and everything, I find all that quite interesting. I love it.

Intergenerational transmission

A final finding to consider concerns the ongoing transmission of food traditions among the participants. The participants had all spoken about inheriting their traditions. Many also spoke of their attempts to pass them on.

As previously noted, Dragan said that getting the children involved in growing their own food is '*the right thing to do*'. He has taken what his father had taught him, and he has since become dedicated to passing on these same values to his children. Even though garden work labour-intensive, Dragan would like to teach his children how to produce food using traditional means, and how to care for the environment, which includes keeping the seeds and tending to their crops.

Kuai also noted the importance of teaching his own daughter about food, and has begun by setting a *'foundation for her to build on'*:

Knowing when an ingredient is cooked adequately is judged by feel and instinct developed from those years [learning to cook in his father's restaurant] My cooking is built on that framework and I am already talking to my six year-old daughter each time I start a wok. She eats with us even at formal work-related functions and hears our analysis of foods. I aim to set a foundation for her to build on because I know the ingredients available in ten or twenty years' time will be different to today.

Abby's main concern is to teach her children where the food they eat comes from. She stresses stressed that she doesn't want her daughters thinking food as something that *'just appears'*. Abby has a crowded yet comfortable kitchen, with a shelf of cookery books along one wall, next to a high-end food processor on the bench. There are footstools lined up for the children to stand on while they watch and take part in the cooking. Abby said:

I think it is really important to let kids know what things are. Like my mum asked [my older daughter] when she was a baby, like 'where does milk come from?' And she said, 'the fridge'. And mum said, 'no it doesn't. It comes from a cow; the milk we drink comes from a cow'. And [my daughter] was like 'oh'.

Rosalea's adult son does not live with her, but he visits often – especially at meal times! Her efforts to teach him the special virtues of *'those Italian traditions'* were framed by health and aesthetic considerations. But she does see that handing on her food traditions is worthwhile, because they will help him become self-sufficient in the kitchen:

Like I can do it for him for the rest of my life but I prefer to think taking care of self is doing it for yourself. And he'll look in the fridge

to see if there's leftovers because he knows I've always got leftovers. So with a bit of pasta you've got leftover you can tell him how to make it beautiful and nourishing – in the evening with a bit of crusty Italian bread... You know, it's good to hand him those Italian traditions.

Rosalea added that she wants to ensure these food traditions aren't lost, that she records her mother's recipes on her computer and send them to her son. Anita expressed similar imperatives, and her comments revealed the importance of taking practical steps to record and preserve tradition⁴¹:

And now I'm thinking I've gotta start taking responsibility! My nonna died last year and um, you know, I'm thinking – oh, and then there's my mum and me and my sister and I've got a niece and everything but if we don't make an effort to learn these things then they won't exist 'cos they are not written down

CONCLUSION

Much of the literature from anthropological studies suggests that the most important content of food traditions that is passed on consists of symbolic, especially religious and ethno-cultural, values and meanings (Beoku-Betts 1995; Harris 1997; Kittler & Sucher 2004). This has been noted in previous chapters. In addition, this chapter has pointed out stories from participants that demonstrate the inheritance of practical knowledge and skills is just as highly prized. For some, this came in the form of being taught how to grow and preserve food; for others, it was the understanding of using food to enhance health and well-being. The importance of practical advice was also noted by participants when learning the flavour combinations and recipes from the generations that went before them. Because of the value placed on this knowledge and these skills, the participants were confident that their traditions would continue.

⁴¹ It is notable that in Anita's case, this responsibility falls *only* to female members of the family.

Chapter Ten

Resilience Through Transformation

Traditions are indispensable; they are also very seldom entirely adequate

(Shils 1982: 213)

This chapter discusses the major findings from this project. The overarching question the study has pursued is: How do the socio-economic dynamics corroding food traditions intersect with the practices and meanings sustaining their influence? The sub questions investigated were: What, if any, significance do inherited food traditions have for the participants? How have industrialization and commodification of food production transformed the food cultures and practices of the participants? Has living in a multicultural suburb transformed the food cultures and practices of the participants?

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to each of these questions, relating them to key debates in the relevant literature. The first section discusses the findings which relate to culinary identity; the second discusses the impact of modern foodways on the participants' food practices and repertoires; the third discusses encounters with other people's food traditions. Two further notable findings – related to gender and generation – are also discussed.

THE MEANINGS OF FOOD TRADITIONS

Emblems of cultural identity

The findings from this study about culinary identity show that the participants made enduring associations between food traditions and their ancestral ethnic and cultural origins. *Everyone* interviewed referred to a national or regional heritage when discussing their culinary-cultural identity. This occurred regardless of how far in the past actual connections with ancestral homelands lie or how much importance people currently place on traditions from those locations. These

findings are in line with other studies that report food traditions retain their significance as markers of cultural heritage and continue to be a significant ‘emblem’ of cultural identity (Bisogni et al. 2002; Duruz 2002, 2004; Gvion 2009; Hamlett et al 2008; Han 2007; Savas 2014; Zevallos 2003).

The findings also show that the participants spoke of their food traditions as a way of distinguishing themselves from others who have different traditions and preferences. This in line with the research that argues that food traditions create a sense of belonging and solidarity among those with common histories or origins (Beoku-Betts 1995; Cardona 2004; D’Sylva & Beagan 2011; Koc & Welsh 2001; Vallianatos & Raine 2008).

However, an important finding of the study was that the participants did not think of ‘others’ in negative terms. As many writers have pointed out, food traditions are often a way that people distinguish themselves from others with different traditions (Baggini 2014; Harris 1997; Kittler & Sucher 2004; Mintz 1996), often in derogatory ways, such as “they eat horse, we don’t; they eat grasshoppers, we don’t” (James 2005: 374) and the slang terms once commonly used to define groups of people by what they eat (Fischler 1998: 280). The participants in this study, in contrast, saw their own food traditions as something that can be, and often are, shared with others and food traditions from different cultures as something to be enjoyed. Indeed, many participants were proud that their traditions were appealing to other people.

REFUSING THE BADGE

At the same time, the findings show that the participants identify with food traditions to different degrees and in different ways. Some participants saw their food traditions as central to their cultural or ethnic identity, while others did not.

Notably, not everyone regarded the food from their cultural heritage as grounds for a display of culinary pride. This was an example of what John Holtzman has

noted, when he pointed out that “everyone has origins and ancestors, but not everyone performs them through food” (2006: 366). In the context of this study, this attitude was primarily found among British-descended participants, who themselves made disparaging remarks about the food that is seen as representative of their traditions. None of these participants displayed the sort of pride and satisfaction with British traditions that were clearly apparent in discussions of other types of cuisine. This view of British food as relatively plain and uninteresting was widely shared among all of the participants, and while most participants eagerly embraced multiple cuisines on offer in Australia, British foods were not among them. As noted earlier, this almost universal view of British cuisine has been attributed to the fact that industrialization of food began earlier in Britain than elsewhere, with deleterious consequences (Mennell 1996).

However, it was striking that this ‘refusal of the badge’ often occurred in tandem with a degree of nostalgia about, and attachment to, the very food traditions being disparaged. In seemingly contradictory statements, several participants showed that food traditions continued to exert a strong influence, even when they were not valorized. Although they were keen to dismiss some aspects of their culinary heritage, when actual cooking practices were reported, several people revealed that remnants of acceptance still operate beneath such criticism. None of the British-descended participants, including those who were most critical of the ‘*classic meat and two veg*’ meals routinely found in Australia during most the 20th century, rejected the dishes from those regimens altogether. Indeed, several participants who described dishes as ‘boring’ or ‘ordinary’, or in other ways currently out of favour, in one part of their interview, identified them as ‘family favourites’ in another part of the same interview.

Although not to the same extent, some non-British participants also found that their cuisines were wanting at times. Some participants from non-British backgrounds also noted that they found the repetitive menus and meal regimens of their traditions boring after a while. And for them, too, the hold of even

disparaged traditions was evident. In seemingly contradictory statements, they recalled many of the same items with affection and sentimentality when telling stories about where that food was placed in family histories.

In these cases, the participants were not rejecting their traditions. However, they were indicating their awareness that their own traditions are now one among many. ‘Knocking’ some aspects of one’s own food traditions is one way that people might use to indicate their openness to other cuisines.

ISSUE-DRIVEN CULINARY IDENTITY

The study also showed that identification with traditional foodways plays a role in culinary identities that are not culturally defined. A number of participants identified themselves as ‘greenies’, and they emphasized their concerns about the sustainability and environmental issues connected to food production. These participants made conscious efforts to use alternatives to the industrial food systems, by engaging in artisanal food practices and using organic produce when possible. For these participants, conscious efforts to make use of artisanal food practices and organic produce provided alternatives to the industrial food system. Many of them said that they would buy organic produce more often if it was more affordable. In addition, many of those with children were eager to pass on a legacy of traditional skills and knowledge, which included an ethic of care for the environment in line with their beliefs.

THE IMPACT OF MODERN FOOD SYSTEMS ON FOOD TRADITIONS

The study found that industrialization and commodification of food production and globalized food chains have transformed the food cultures and practices of the participants in multiple ways, and to a significant extent. However, despite the changed forms their traditions often took, the study showed that food traditions remained coherent and meaningful sets of practices and repertoires for the participants.

These findings contribute to a number of debates surrounding the outcomes of modernization in food systems.

Deskilling and re-skilling

The diminution of traditional food knowledge and skills has been a central focus in commentaries about the arrival of modern food systems. For some writers, deskilling is an inevitable outcome of the increasing rationalization and industrialization of food industries (Ritzer 2005; Symons 2007). As industrial products and equipment further colonize domestic kitchens, replacing much of the labour of meal preparation, it is claimed that people lose sight of the practical arts and sciences that are fundamental aspects of cooking from scratch. The literature in which these claims are made sees the combination of these two factors as constraining people's abilities to prepare food and, more importantly, as creating an avenue through which people become dissociated from the meanings of a food culture.

Furthermore, some researchers have observed that women are often implicitly 'blamed' for the perceived decline in cooking skills because of time demands associated with their work outside the home (Lang & Caraher 2001). The deskilling argument, in this case, appears to be a thinly disguised call for women to return to their roles as family-meal providers. Several commentators note that the increasing reliance on pre-prepared products and short cuts is often portrayed as a woman's failure to fulfil her traditional role of caring for her family (Kingston 1996; Warde 1997).

The findings of this study suggest that de-skilling is not as prevalent among its particular demographic as it is in other sectors of the community. The majority of the participants had much closer connections to the pre-industrialized origins of their traditions. These participants were confident in their cooking skills, and in their ability to prepare meals from scratch. Many eagerly shared stories of having prepared elaborate dishes that required quite advanced techniques. Their cooking

knowledge, which includes combinations of ingredients, timing, equipment and techniques, was a mixture of traditional and modern knowledge and skills. This supports Frances Short's questioning of the assumptions associated with deskilling arguments. She notes that issue raised about deskilling are often premised on an inflexible dichotomy between the traditional and the modern. Because there is no determinate line that can be used to classify which skills are traditional and which are modern, the idea of deskilling "is immediately made problematic by the cook who reheats ready meals during the week but makes an effort to "cook properly" at the weekend" (2006: 100).

Commodification and convenience

A related and influential current of thought sees the commodification of food as a powerful force that is eroding food traditions (Pollan 2008; Ritzer 2005; Symons 2007). It argues that commodification has led to an explosion of pre-prepared 'convenience' foods that make food preparation easier, but in the process degrade and erode traditions. A major strand within the food literature focuses on how pre-prepared, convenience food products are marketed and adopted. Convenience products have been marketed as means to alleviate the burden of having to start every episode of cooking from scratch. This has been identified as a powerful factor influencing the way people approach cooking, especially women with young families who are also employed outside the home (Caraher et al. 1999; Huntley 2008; Lupton 2000; Short 2003). This trend is especially significant in an era where time-poverty⁴² has become a salient factor in consumption practices in the affluent world (Shove, Trentmann & Wilk 2009; Wilk 2009).

In contrast, other commentators have argued that commodification is a means of preserving traditions. They argue, for example, that commodification does not necessarily spell the end of tradition but "instead underlines tradition's flexibility" (Duruz 2001: 22). In another example, it has been observed that traditions that

⁴² Time poverty is a phenomenon largely associated with women's greater participation in the workforce since the end of WWII, leaving less time for them to perform the 'caring' work of traditional meal preparation (Lupton 1996).

otherwise may have disappeared as artisan skills were replaced by machines, and have been improved by modern techniques and production processes (Fischler 1999).

The findings reported here suggest that within the home, convenience commodities have been introduced into food practices that remain shaped by traditional cuisines. The study found extensive, although discretionary, use of commercial convenience foods, primarily for their times-saving qualities.

A striking feature of the findings, however, was that the use of convenience products did not significantly detract from the participants' experience of 'doing' or identifying with what they see as intact food traditions. Far from feeling that using convenience products has hollowed out their traditions, participants who lacked time or resources for preparing every meal from scratch found that using these products was a way of maintaining their traditions. For example, Sara will use ready-made filo pastry when making strudel, but she still thinks of this dish as part of her mother's traditional repertoire and as part of her own culinary heritage.

Similarly, while the participants continue to see fresh food as more 'authentically' traditional and the preferable choice in most cases, their desire for speed and efficiency sometimes took priority. This did not detract from the traditional meanings that the participants attached to their food traditions. Preparing a dish with modern convenience products, which were not available for their forebears, did not obscure the food's place in the canon of traditional fare that associated with home or heritage. Shortening the time and effort of cooking didn't make a difference to people's relationship to tradition.

However, almost all of the non-British-descended participants had limits when it came to convenience foods. Regardless of age, some participants were only happy if the 'authentic' homemade flavours of certain of their traditional products were maintained. One younger participant, Anita, will avoid buying manufactured passata, because she finds it inferior; an older participant, Simone, finds it

necessary to make her own marmalade, because she cannot find a commercial product that tastes like the ‘real thing’.

The convenience of traditions

A further, notable but unexpected, finding from this study was that for many participants, food traditions have their own built-in forms of convenience. A prime example was the annual preserving rituals which rely on proto-mechanized methods of food provisioning and preparation, such as the Italian tradition of making tomato passata. The products of these activities, which are often the basis of many dishes within the participants’ traditional cuisines, are consumed over the course of the following year. Collective efforts ensure that the process is efficient, allowing preserves and products to be turned out on a large-scale and shared between everyone who has helped.

Traditions can also be convenient in other ways. The participants who were responsible for household meals indicated that their day-to-day routines frequently (although not exclusively) relied on their food traditions. Their reliability is based on the fact that the required ingredients are often just ‘staples’, and that they are easy to prepare because they are familiar. Since these meals are regularly prepared, the ingredients are usually at hand, and a recipe is rarely needed. This is in line with Sutton’s (2001) observation that familiarity means that because many recipes are learned by rote, absorbed by repetition and memorized for the future, a traditional repertoire can be reproduced without further reference. In this sense, food traditions become convenient and efficient – attributes more likely to be associated with ‘modern food’.

This is not to say that food traditions are performed without reflection. Participants offered substantial, and considered, reasons for their daily reliance on food traditions. The ability to save time and energy is one of the reasons that participants saw traditional dishes as a solution to the constant question of domestic food provision. Other factors also needed to be considered, such as

maintaining a supply of necessary ingredients, organizing people to be present, being aware of each family member's likes and aversions, and so on.

Individualization

The influence of individualization on consumption choices, including food, has been discussed across a number of fields (Bauman 2001; Crouch & O'Neill 2000; Fischler 1988; Giddens 1991). Influentially, Giddens suggests that because traditions no longer play the role they once did as a reference for "what should be done" (1994: 65), it is now up to individuals to make choices and decisions about "how to be and how to act", including, among other things, what to eat (Giddens 1991: 81). Others, such as Warde, have argued that shared social and cultural determinants still remain at the forefront of how people make their food selections (1997). Importantly, Bugge and Almas found that there are clear limitations on how much individual choice women are able to exercise when they prepare family meals (2006).

This study found some evidence of individualization. In the participant's recollections, their parents and grandparents ate 'traditional' or 'authentic' food because it was the *only* option available to them. Participants generally acknowledged they had more choices than their predecessors, and they welcomed these choices. This 'freedom' to choose from the greater variety of options in the marketplace has been embraced by all the participants. Many participants also took pride in tweaking traditional recipes and in being creative in their cooking repertoires. Up to a point, these findings support Giddens' thesis that individual choice is the major factor contributing to the construction of lifestyles in a post-traditional society (1991: 81-2).

However, the degree of individualization that these findings represent is open to question. The findings show that when the participants tweaked or customized a dish (by accommodating different tastes, compensating for missing ingredients, or simply being creative), they retained a recognizable relationship to a pre-existing

understanding of national or regional food traditions. While industrial innovations and a globalized food system have encouraged people to be creative when preparing food, the participants have mostly, although not always, done so within the parameters of their traditions. They took what they liked from the available array and added it to a traditional dish to make it special in some way.

These findings suggest that being creative in cooking is an important aspect of maintaining food traditions as it allows people to reinterpret traditional recipes and thereby keep them up-to-date. Adding a 'twist' to dishes does not necessarily undermine their perceived place in a canon of 'authentic' tradition (Abarca 2004). The decision to change an aspect of a tradition is better understood as part of the ongoing mutability of living traditions, since innovations are seldom introduced without acknowledging and accommodating the shared, underlying basis of that tradition.

Anxiety and uncertainty

It has been argued that another outcome of individualization is an increase in anxiety and uncertainty. It is suggested that anxiety is caused by the responsibility of having to decide, as individuals, from a surfeit of choices, because of the decline in many of the social cues that tradition once provided (Bauman 2001; Giddens 1991). Making the wrong choice can result in disapproval or condemnation. This argument has been applied by many scholars to the domain of food. Influentially, Fischler argues that the absence of guidance for determining food choices, which tradition had provided, has led to widespread 'gastro-anomy' – a deep uncertainty about what 'should' be eaten (1980: 948).

However, this study found little evidence of anxiety or gastro-anomy. The choices that the participants are confronted with are not accompanied by the sense of a profound existential anxiety that some theorists claim is inherent in modern lifestyles (Giddens 1991: 81). Instead, the study found that participants' food traditions were often regarded as the template against which other food

consumption is measured. For these participants, their inherited food traditions still provided trustworthy guidelines. In this regard, food traditions continue to provide the benchmark for what is safe, healthy and, above all, good to eat. The participants saw these values as being inherent in the recipes and cooking practices that were handed down from previous generations, and that have since become embodied through constant repetition. These recipes and practices are trusted because they are thought of as belonging to a timeless repertoire, and they are therefore imbued with historical provenance. While many of the participants expressed deep concerns about how food is currently grown and manufactured, they were also confident in selecting what and how to eat. They counterbalanced their wariness about the risks involved in modern food production with perspectives that brought traditional knowledge and skills into play. Duruz, sees ongoing negotiation between the security of traditions and the allure of the new is one of “everyday life’s fragile balancing acts” (Duruz 2002: 384-5). For the participants in this study, a strong sense of equilibrium between caution and acceptance was common.

Relieving repetition

Repetition is a key attribute of tradition (Giddens 1994: 62). As commentators have noted, however, this is a double-sided feature of traditions; it can be a source of boredom and frustration, or of reassurance and comfort. The impulse to diverge from a repetitive or ‘usual’ diet is well-recognized in the literature on food (Conner & Armitage 2002; Fischler 1988; Rozin 1999; Warde 1997). On the other hand, the comfort that can be derived from familiar food is also well recognized (Fischler 1980; Srinivas 2013; Sutton 2001, 2008).

While none of the participants reported that they ate only ‘traditional’ food, participants across all the cultural groups represented in this study reported the regular rotation of dishes that are typical of their food traditions. Both of the responses identified in the literature were reported. Some found that the repetition of familiar, identifiable dishes, embedded in beliefs about their longevity,

provided a sense of reassurance and comfort. For others, repetition brought boredom and frustration. These negative feelings were not exclusive to those accustomed the commonly disparaged ‘meat and three veg’ styling of British meals.

The participants who found repetition frustrating took advantage of the choice now available to incorporate variation into their diet. This meant incorporating recently discovered ingredients into well-rehearsed styles of meals, or introducing pre-prepared commodities into their routines. Notably, however, these participants were judicious in choosing these variations, and often relied on their traditional bases of knowledge and skills to judge the ethical and environmental consequences of adopting new products and foods.

Resisting industrial food

While the study found considerable evidence of the use of industrially produced and commercialized food products among the participants, it also found a deep ambivalence about it. The participants expressed strong views about risks they saw as inherent in the modern food system, with many believing industrialization of food production (especially over-processing and chemical additives) has reduced the nutritional content and palatability of many food items.

Suspicion of industrialized food has been identified as a significant trend in contemporary advanced societies (Beardsworth & Keil 1997: 34). Scholars argue that the ever-widening gap between production and consumption found in modern food systems is responsible for widespread public fears about risks to health and environmental degradation (Fiddes 1997; Lawrence & Grice 2008; Umberger, Scott & Stringer 2008). Previously, people were primarily concerned about food scarcity or poisoning, whereas current concerns relate to genetic modification of crops, contamination of the environment, and the side-effects of chemical additives (see Buchler, Smith & Lawrence 2010).

Usefully, Deborah Lupton suggests that one of the ways that people allay fears about food risks is by turning to “well-established and acculturated strategies of confidence” (2005: 465). She argues that an awareness of these risks operates on a (to at least some extent) taken-for granted and non-reflexive level, and that because food choices are made on the basis of pre-established trust, the need to assess the safety or risk of a good is negated.

The participants’ response to the risks they perceived bears out Lupton’s argument, suggesting that traditions are used as significant criteria to evaluate risk (2005). In the context of heightened risk-consciousness, the participants described traditional methods of food cultivation as ‘better’ than modern forms of production, in relation to consequences for both the body and the environment. This confidence was particularly evident in how Nadia responded to a dinner guest who refused to try the home-made salami, because he thought it would make him ill: *‘They’ve been making this for centuries; they know what they are doing’*.

OTHER PEOPLE’S TRADITIONS

The study found that exposure to other people’s traditions in the multicultural setting in which they live has led to a significant diversification of their eating habits. The participants sought out traditions from other cultures as a way of enhancing the knowledge and skills they brought to their cooking practices. The study also found that this was a major departure from previous generations in the participants’ families. When participants were asked if the food that they eat would be recognized by their grandparents, many participants noted substantial differences between the way they now eat now the experiences of past generations. Almost all the people interviewed (with little variation according to age) reported that until as recently as the generation before them, no one that they knew had regularly cooked, or even eaten, foods that were not part of their cultural culinary heritage. These findings contribute to a number of key debates.

Mechanization or migration?

There is a key debate in literature about whether economic or cultural factors are most important in fostering encounters with ‘other people’s’ traditions. Susan Sheridan argues that the impetus to change food practices comes primarily from material and economic sources, including industrial and technological innovations, media, altered labour arrangements (especially for women), and the transformation of eating into a leisure activity (2000: 320). Other writers in this vein stress that modern, global food systems have broadened access to different ingredients and products, especially in the affluent West (Arce & Marsden 1993; Belasco 1993; Friedberg 2005). There are many ‘exotic’ foods that transported far from their point of origin, and they are available all year round, instead of being subject to season and location constraints (Ashley et al 2004: 93). It is argued that the use of these ‘global’ products becomes absorbed into customary cooking and eating practices, losing some of their novelty as ‘foreign’ food. As a result, “routinization of the exotic” is now a dominant trend in contemporary eating patterns (Warde 1997: 61). This trend includes the commodification of many ‘traditional’ food products for world-wide distribution (Gabaccia 1998; Sokolov 1991).

On the other side, commentators argue that changes in dietary choice patterns are primarily led by cultural developments (Cook, Crang & Thorpe 1998; Gabaccia 1998; Heldke 2003; Highmore 2008; Ikeda 1999; Jamal 1996, Wise 2010). These writers argue that changing food choice patterns are driven by flows of people, rather than marketing forces. In this line of thought, marketing follows migration (Gabaccia 1998) as the demand for different foods and products is created by the increasing diversity of populations.

This debate has been prominent in the Australian context. Michael Symons argues that industrialization has been the key factor in the changes to Australia’s foodscape (1993). In his reasoning, Australia inherited an already largely industrialized food system from the British settlers, and that the menu diversity

that arrived in the latter part of the twentieth century is an extension of that industrialization. Others have suggested that migration and multiculturalism was the driving factor behind changing eating patterns in Australia. These writers argue that growing cosmopolitan tastes were heavily influenced by the changing composition of the population, after people from diverse backgrounds migrated following the Second World War (Duruz 2004, 2005, 2007; Noble 2009; Wise 2011). They agree that intercultural interactions and exchanges have been instrumental in changing the approach to food and cooking in Australia.

The findings of this study contribute new support the argument that migration and multiculturalism were the most influential factors in the emergent menu pluralism in participants' diets. The participants all thought that their culinary practices had been influenced through contact with other cultures. They overwhelmingly noted that meeting people from different cultural traditions had led them to eschew their former sole reliance on their 'traditional menu'. While many participants said they were quick to take advantage of different products as they came onto the market, they also remarked that the move beyond the confines of their own repertoires mostly came about as a result of intercultural interaction in everyday situations such as work, universities, or in their neighbourhood. These interactions were cited as the most common avenue for discovering new tastes and cuisines, and for prompting the experience of 'something different', as several participants put it.

Migrant settlement

This study also contributes new evidence for the significant body of literature that shows food traditions play a pivotal role in settlement strategies in migrant communities (Hage 1997; Morgan et. al 2005; Savas 2014). It is argued that the difficulties of 'home-building' in a new location are substantially eased when the fundamentals of culture – beliefs, values and practices – can be shared with others who have similar backgrounds and traditions (Bottomley 1997; Savas 2014; Xu et. al 2004; Zevallos 2003). It is also argued that because communities of practice are founded on commonalities, they reinforce cultural and culinary identity

through the sharing of traditional knowledge and skills, and thus provide a ‘glue’ for social groups (Braun and Beckie 2014).

In this study, the role of communities of practice was particularly significant. Such communities were always organized around food, and were instrumental for establishing a sense of belonging for newly arrived migrants. The difficulties associated with migration are alleviated by finding other people who share traditional food knowledge. It also ensures that traditions are not abandoned, because there is a lack of information or access to resources. From simple things, such as sharing a communal oven, or collectively preserving home-grown produce, this study found that communities of practice were instrumental in keeping ‘uprooted’ culinary traditions alive.

These findings were also in line with observations about the shock of non-recognition that can greet migrants when they return to their homelands. The participants with migrant backgrounds in this study had two quite different experiences in this regard. Some who revisited, or visited for the first time, the country of their familial origin, noticed the contrast between the cosmopolitan tastes of Australians (including themselves), with what appeared to them as quite insular food cultures of these homelands. Some, like Anita, were surprised by the differences between Australia, where her food traditions are just one option among the variety available, and Italy, where her relatives refused to try new or different foods. Another participant, Robert, said that food in China was changing much more slowly than other consumption choices like fashion or media, and he was surprised by people he knew hesitating to try ‘foreign’ food.

Others noticed the radical changes being wrought by modern food systems in their identified homeland. In particular, some of the older participants said they hadn’t expected to see such widespread commodification of the food culture in their countries of origin. For example, Sabine was surprised to find out that her sisters, who still live in Spain, regularly using packet cake mixes. Tony also noted that

modern ‘tavernas’ in Greece had replaced the traditional restaurants he remembered.

Meanings of culinary cosmopolitanism

The findings also contribute to debates about what the adoption of ‘other people’s’ traditions signify. The term ‘culinary cosmopolitanism’ is widely used to describe the phenomenon of eating across cultures, but interpretations of it vary. Some writers stress the exploitative nature of so-called cosmopolitan interactions. They argue that the traditions of ‘others’ have been manipulated for commercial gain or raided to enhance the cultural capital of mainstream consumers (Hage 1997; Heldke 2005; hooks 1998). Others are inclined to see the pursuit of ‘difference’ as a move towards inclusiveness (Duruz 2005; Heldke 2003). For example, Uma Narayan (1995) says that awareness of food from other cultures opens up relationships between people, helping to break down divisions and thereby contributing to people’s understandings of diversity. According to those coming from an everyday multiculturalism perspective, it is an important part of “the lived experience of diversity” (Morgan, Rocha & Poynting 2005; Wise & Velayutham 2009: 3). The ‘micro-moments’ that occur around food, such as swapping recipes or exchanging samples of dishes, are helpful for establishing intercultural understandings (Noble 2009). At the same time, writers who emphasize the positive side of culinary cosmopolitanism warn against the risk of exploiting difference and reinforcing notions of fixed or static identities (Newman & Gibson 2005; Noble 2009; Valentine 2008; Wise 2009).

The findings of this study are in line with this picture of intercultural engagement. The study found that the participants were curious about ‘different’ food traditions, but also respectful of their origin and integrity. As already noted, the majority of participants credited other people for broadening their food horizons. For these participants, culinary cosmopolitanism helped to diversify their repertoire largely through interactions with people who had different traditions from their own. This was especially the case for participants from mainstream and

Anglo backgrounds. For example, Simone learned that olive oil can be used for cooking only after being taught by her Greek neighbours. This was not just ‘routinization of the exotic’ provided a globalized food system (Warde 1997), nor merely ‘habituation to strangers’. It was rather, a result of ‘people mixing’ (Noble 2009).

Migrant participants saw the arrival of cosmopolitan eating patterns from a different perspective. When Nadia’s aunty noticed Italian-style sundried tomatoes had become an everyday item on mainstream supermarket shelves, she had already been living in Australia for decades. Nevertheless, this heralded an acceptance for her that she had not experienced before. Nadia described this as representing an ‘amalgamated culture’, where Italian traditions – even in commodified form – have been absorbed into Australian foodscapes. These examples illustrate that the arrival of menu pluralism can be experienced in different ways, and that it impacts traditions in different ways for different people.

A different expression of food cosmopolitanism among the participants was evident in the openness to hybridization. Almost everyone said that they incorporated new ingredients into their food, and experimented with ‘fusion’ dishes, combining ingredients from different cultures and experimenting with different flavour mixes. The impetus to do so was often spontaneous and encouraged by the marketing of ‘exotic’ produce and messages found in different media.

Importantly, the participants did not believe that their food traditions were being eroded by the arrival of a plurality of choices or the hybridization of their cuisines. In their minds, the outcomes of these innovations did not mean traditions have been lost or replaced. Their own traditions were still regarded as reliable and important. Indeed, while they noted their enjoyment of blending and tweaking food styles and ingredients, the results were sometimes a little disappointing in comparison with ‘tried and true’ food traditions. These findings point to both the

flexibility of food repertoires and the people who practice them, and to the enduring hold of inherited food traditions.

GENDER

Results from a range of literature finds that domestic foodwork, including passing on traditional knowledge and skills, remains disproportionately the responsibility of women (Braun & Beckie 2014; Kingston 1996; Sutton 2001; Wallendorf & Arnould 1991). In these studies, and others, it is found that ‘traditional’ normative expectations that cut across both class and cultural boundaries serve to instil and maintain a deep-seated gendered division of labour around food provision in the home. (Bugge & Almas 2006; Caplan 1997; De Vault 1997; Huntley 2008; Lupton 1996, 2000; Murcott 1997).

The findings from this project are in line with previous studies. A major point of contact is with Deborah Lupton’s findings in her study of heterosexual couples living in rural regions of Australia (2000). In her study, the participants used rationales to explain the unequal division of domestic labour, which included ‘expertise’, (the notion that women are better cooks than men); ‘fairness’, (women have more time to cook than their partners); and ‘enjoyment’ (women like cooking more than men do). Participants from this project employed the same justifications for the unequal division of foodwork. Notably, similar reasons were offered by both women and men in this study. In one example, a female participant said she did most of the cooking simply because she only worked part-time, whereas her partner worked fulltime. In another, a male participant said the family meal was usually prepared before he had even thought about what he *‘felt like eating’*.

The findings also confirm Brenda Beagan and her colleagues’ argument that, while at first these justifications appear to be ‘gender-neutral’, deeper analysis reveals that they are underpinned by the assumption that foodwork remains largely women’s responsibility (2008). This assumption is part of the broader

‘gender positioning’ discourses that associate femininity with caring 2008).⁴³. Annechen Bugge and Reider Almas found that women who do not cook are typically judged to be inadequately fulfilling their caring role (2006: 209-10). As surmised by Marjorie DeVault, “caring work is optional or exceptional for men while it is obligatory for women” (1997: 189).

The finding reported here also confirms recent research on food that suggests that gender expectations restrict the ambit of the individualization thesis. Bugge and Almas found that “[c]ooking dinner is an important part of the symbolic production of socially and culturally acceptable feminine subject positions” (2006: 206). The same writers note that social and cultural ‘codes’ impose limitations on the scope that women have for individualization. Normative expectations mean women often subordinate their own taste preferences to those of others, which cuts across the predominant discourse of individualization and free choice (Bugge & Almas 2006). Similar findings have been found in other studies, including in Australia (Caplan 1997; Lupton 1996; Moisio, Arnould & Price 2004; Murcott 1997).

Feminism and foodwork

As Ashley and colleagues have noted, cooking occupies an “uneasy, and frequently underexplored position” in feminist theories, since it is associated with women’s domestic servitude (2004: 136). But as Susan Sheridan notes, any discussion of food needs to take account of gender analysis (2000: 326). Feminists have questioned whether the convenience supposedly offered by modernization in the food system has been ‘good’ for women. Some writers stress that the benefits of industrialization have enabled women to escape the drudgery of domestic foodwork by providing products and technologies that ease their burden (Kingston 1996; Laudan 2001; Short 2003).

⁴³ Moreover, although cooking is still perceived to be part of women’s ‘domain’ it is still not regarded as ‘real work’ because much of the effort of planning, organizing and producing family meals is hidden from view (De Vault 1997).

Another central theme in feminist debates concerns the widespread view that there is a 'natural' affiliation between femininity and food, and the way these assumptions have been used to support the expectation that women should do the major share of household foodwork (see Lupton 2000). Caring for others is a central aspect of these assumptions, and in the context of food, is considered as being the responsibility to prepare and serve 'proper' meals, that are nutritious and culturally appropriate (Beagan et al. 2008; Murcott 1982). They are perpetuated by culinary traditions where 'handing on' food knowledge and skills to the next generation is seen as the responsibility of women, alongside the task of socializing children into the manners and collective norms of a culture or society.

These assumptions were widespread among the participants in this study. However, it was notable that for many, the association of food preparation with caring was a positive value. For some participants, the preparation of food from scratch and its associations with 'homeliness' and care outweighed other considerations, such as speed and convenience. This is in line with evidence from studies that show women resist excessive commodification in domestic cooking practices because it runs counter to their investment in their role of providing care for others through food (Warde 1997: 152; see also see Moisio, Arnould & Price 2004). Participants in this study also found pleasure in cooking, and in the sociability and conviviality of the meal. Many of the participants noted that a positive reception for their cooking gave them great pleasure, especially if they had made an effort to impress friends or family.

Many commentators would argue that these attitudes and beliefs alone do not mean that women have been 'liberated' from their traditional roles (Huntley 2008; (Kingston 1996; Lang & Caraher 2001; Murcott 1997; Warde 1999). As noted above, there is little evidence of any significant decline in the amount and proportion of foodwork that women do in domestic situations. Moreover, it is also argued that women's *responsibility* for providing family meals often occurs in settings where they do not *control* the decisions about what types of foods are

bought, or in how they are prepared (Bugge & Almas 2006; DeVault 1997; McIntosh 1996: 75).

However, Deborah Lupton (2000) offers an alternative perspective on the gendered nature of foodwork. She argues the gender imbalance surrounding domestic foodwork is not necessarily as much about inequality as is sometimes thought. Despite the gap that exists between a prevalent discourse of egalitarianism, and the official figures that show women still perform the major portion of domestic foodwork, Lupton found little conflict about the issue in the heterosexual households she surveyed. Rather, the women in her study reported that they gained more enjoyment from cooking, compared with their partners (Lupton 2000: 185). Researchers from a variety of fields found that although women are still expected to do most of the cooking, it the most enjoyable of domestic duties (Adapon 2008; Bugge & Almas 2006; Hollows 2003a; Warde 1997). Such research highlights how what was once seen as an obligation or duty for women is now being reframed as a pleasant and rewarding task. In this light, cooking is a creative and enjoyable activity that encourages women to display their culinary ability as a “positive form of feminine subjectivity” (Lupton 2000: 185).

The findings from this project support Lupton’s suggestion that a shift is taking place in the perception of foodwork. Among the women interviewed who were part of heterosexual couples, most took it for granted that they will do the major proportion of the cooking, and this assumption was generally shared by others in their households. At the same time the majority of these women interviewed, as did women in Lupton’s study, that they performed the greatest load of foodwork in their households principally because they enjoy cooking. Further replicating Lupton’s findings, there appeared to be relatively little or no conflict between partners over such apportioning of preparation and cooking tasks⁴⁴. Lupton rejects

⁴⁴ Some mild ‘complaints’ were heard but no overt conflict was reported. Lupton has suggested that people are often unwilling to report marital conflict in interviews (2000: 184) but this did not appear to be the case in this study.

attributing this lack of conflict as the attempt to preserve marital harmony, instead suggesting that women may be unwilling to cede control over the one place in the home where they hold the most power: the kitchen (2000: 183).

However, the data from this study suggests that the pleasure of cooking reported by the participants, both male and female⁴⁵, seems more likely to indicate an elevation in the status of cooking, which has been influenced by range of factors. There is a considerable literature suggesting that cooking is seen as one of the most creative of household chores. As Warde notes, cooking has become more popular recently, because of its promotion through television shows and a notable increase in published cookery books (1997: 146). Other writers also note that cooking has become ‘entertainment’, as people view televised cooking shows for amusement or diversion rather than for instruction (Hollows 2003b; Naccarato & Lebesco 2012; Short 2006). Many of the people interviewed for this study who said they enjoyed cooking said these factors have added to the pleasure they take in creating meals. Some described the strong influence that the media has had on their cooking repertoire, citing popular television programs and recipe books as inspirations. For some, travel experiences and the discovery of new flavours and ingredients has increased their desire to cook. Closer to home, some people reported their enjoyment of cooking came from attempting to replicate unfamiliar dishes they had eaten in restaurants and cafes.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Differences between generations in relation to food traditions have not been a primary focus of this study. However, a number of differences did emerge which are worth noting. The participants, as noted previously, ranged in age from 26 to 78. Among them, there was a recognizable difference in experience of food markets between those on either side of 50. The cohort that was younger than 50

⁴⁵ Among others, Joanne Hollows (2003b) argues that cooking is often a form of leisure activity for men while it leaves intact the ‘duty’ of regular family meal provision for women.

had only known ‘consumer society’. Those over 50, in contrast, had personally experienced the introduction of convenience products on a large scale.

One of the noticeable differences between these cohorts concerned the reasons for resorting to convenience products. Perhaps surprisingly, both younger and older participants availed themselves of these products, and to roughly the same degree. However, they had different reasons for doing so. The younger cohort considered the artisanal methods used by parents or grandparents, such as hand-rolling fine pastry or mincing meat, as too time-consuming to fit into their busy lives. Older participants, on the other hand, said that they found the labour involved in cooking everything from scratch was now too much effort, particularly ‘fiddly’ things such as handmade dolmades. These generational differences are similar to those that have been found in other studies that highlight the generational variations in food habits (Jamal 1998; Moisio, Arnould & Price 2004; Rozin 1990).

Another generational difference was evident in different modes of attachment to foods associated with special or celebratory events. The food that is served at these occasions is usually conspicuously more elaborate than ordinary or everyday food, and it often calls for highly ritualized performances (Farb & Armelagos 1980: 144). This was the case in relation to religious celebrations. These festivals symbolize stories and events that are important aspects of a religion. In most cultures, major feast days require the preparation of special foods that symbolize and reflect the culture’s beliefs and values (Anderson 2005; Kittler & Sucher 2004).

Most of the younger people interviewed revealed that they no longer held the same beliefs as their parents do regarding festive events. However, they continued to prepare traditional dishes to celebrate these occasions. In this sense, these traditions have been partially ‘de-ritualized’ (Thompson 1996: 98). For these younger participants, food has remained an enduring and, sometimes the *only*, reason to continue the tradition.

Generational differences in relation to other festive occasion were also apparent. As one older participant reported, Name Day celebrations for his grandchildren are now being held at McDonald's restaurants.

CONCLUSION

Some writers argue that the key forces that ushered in 'menu pluralism' (Beardsworth & Keil 1997) have flattened food traditions. These writers believe that the global spread of industrialization has led to the loss of distinctions between food traditions and has disrupted the coherent collections of dishes which are their bedrock (Ritzer 2005; Symons 2007). According to these writers, a pervasive homogeneity has emerged which has destroyed the authenticity of many food traditions. Others argue that the same forces have introduced new forms of culinary cosmopolitanism that provide opportunities for the cross-pollination of cultures while important distinctions between different traditions are maintained.

This study found evidence of both. In the following, final chapter, I sum up the conclusions that can be drawn from this evidence.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate how the dynamics of modern food production and consumption have influenced the inherited food cultures and practices of the people who took part in the project. The study discovered abundant evidence of food traditions ‘going on’ in the lives of the participants. But this was only a part of the picture that emerged. The study also found major transformations in the ways these food traditions were seen and enacted. This chapter reflects on the conclusions that can be drawn from these findings.

The first research sub-question asked what, if any, significance inherited food traditions carry for the participants. The study has found that the food traditions the participants had been inducted into as young children, and which they considered to be ‘theirs’, remained a potent marker of cultural identity. Shared food traditions were notable ‘emblems’ of cultural attachment and, particularly for migrant participants, provided a sense of belonging to community. It further found that food traditions were in important respects ‘embodied’ and as a consequence were ‘second nature’ for them. Even participants who disparaged their food traditions see key dishes as comfort food.

The second research sub-question asked what how industrialization, commodification of food production and the rise of global markets have impacted the food traditions of the participants. This study found that these developments had transformed the foodways of participants in multiple ways, and to a significant extent. The participants enjoyed the advantages offered by modern food systems, especially the variety and abundance of produce. They also

Conclusion

appreciated how commodified goods can be used to eliminate much of the time-consuming labour involved in cooking from scratch.

However, while far from everything eaten by the participants could be classified as a food tradition, the continued influence of inherited tastes and traditional cuisines was evident both on festive occasions and in the usual - the mundane and routine - cooking and eating practices described by the participants. The ritual practice and symbolism attached to food traditions were prominent at festive occasions.

The third sub-question asked if and how living in a multicultural setting had transformed the food cultures and practices of the participants. The study found that participants sought out traditions from other cultures as a way of enhancing the knowledge and skills they brought to their cooking practices, but also as a form of intercultural engagement. This was true of British-descended and first and second generation migrant participants.

A series of conclusions can be tentatively drawn from these findings.

First, they suggest that the dichotomy which emerged from the literature between homogenizing and pluralizing trends should be rethought. The study suggests that the homogenizing impact of industrialization, commodification and globalization has been overstated Ritzer's (2008). At the same time, the study challenges the conclusion often drawn from accounts of the pluralization of food choices that the abundance of choice inevitably breaks down food traditions.

Second, the findings suggest that food traditions may retain a powerful influence after other forms of tradition have waned. In the face of social processes which have the power to erode adherence to traditions, the study revealed how deeply ingrained they are in people's being. Food has a special ability to transport us to other times and places (Lupton 1996; Sutton 2001; Wise 2010). Tastes and smells are frequent reminders of where we have eaten and with whom we have shared

food in the past. This has been especially important immigrant experience (Choo 2004; Thomas 2004) but sensual recollections have an important place for everyone (Wise 2010).

Third, they suggest that food traditions should be seen as inherently open and mutable. Conceptions which tie the authenticity of tradition to immutability and purity cannot grasp their lived reality. Despite the many transformations wrought by processes of individualization, hybridization and pluralization, the participants' food traditions remained for them identifiable, coherent and meaningful sets of practices and repertoires. The participants saw the 'non-traditional' or modern features of contemporary foodways as compatible and interwoven with traditional repertoires and means of cooking and eating. In addition, participants' curiosity about new trends and fashions did not change their sense of belonging or identification with their traditions.

Fourth, they suggest that the agency involved in negotiating competing dynamics in social life should be taken into account in studies of food cultures and practices. This includes the 'enactment' of traditions as well as responses to the modern food system. The participants' judicious selection of commodified goods demonstrated that people exercised their agency when engaged with the modern food system. Moreover, the findings show that identification with a food tradition was not simply a matter of culinary conservatism. The participants' identification with and practice of their food traditions were sometimes motivated in part by a desire to respond to contemporary social issues around environmental sustainability and the ethical treatment of animals. The possession of traditional knowledge and skills provided the means for avoiding aspects of the modern food systems that they perceived as negative (Huntley 2008: 79).

Fifth, the findings suggest that critiques of food-related official descriptions of multiculturalism as 'multiculturalism-lite' (see discussion in Gunew 2000; Sheridan 2000; Symons 1993) should not obscure the potent role that food does play as a bridge across cultural differences. For most of the participants in this

study, everyday interactions initiated around food later extended into deeper relationships. Almost all of the participants noted that their food had changed as a result of meeting and mixing with – and sometimes, marrying – people who had food traditions that were different from their own. This went beyond both the ‘routinization of the exotic’ created by a globalized food system (Warde 1997) and ‘habituation to strangers’ (Noble 2009). It was, rather, a result of ‘people mixing’ based on ‘on-the-ground’ intercultural exchanges in mundane circumstances of the kind described as ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ (Noble 2009).

Sixth, the findings suggest that approaches to gender in food studies need to be nuanced. The study showed that gendered expectations surrounding the provision of domestic meals remained prominent. Nevertheless, there was evidence that the status of cooking has been raised in recent decades. Domestic food provision is no longer solely the work-like duty of care associated with feminine subject positions; it is now regarded as a more pleasurable pastime (Hollows 2003a; Lupton 2005). Participant responses suggested that this shift has been influenced by media and the presence of discourses of egalitarianism.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes empirical evidence to debates about the impact of modern social processes on food traditions in the contemporary world. An important contribution is the evidence it provides of the presence of food traditions in the cooking and eating patterns of the participants. Perhaps more important, however, is that it presents evidence that the persistence of food traditions occurs through the transformations that are unfolding within them, not in spite of them. In this, it aligned with observations that transformations in food cultures are not new (Tomlinson 1999: 123; Visser 1999; Wilk 2006), that creativity and renewal have always been a necessary part of the survival of food traditions (Anderson 2005; Sutton 2001), and that the vitality of food traditions depends on “continuity through change” because merely preserving traditions will lead to their ossification (Baggini 2014: 113).

The study also contributes to more general sociological debates about the fate of tradition in the contemporary world. This thesis contributes to the knowledge in this field by calling into question some of the prevailing works on the dissolution of traditions in contemporary society. The data presented provides empirical evidence for the thesis, put forward by Adam (1996) and Thompson (1996) and Luke (1996), that rather than being binary opposites, traditional and modern aspects of social life are interwoven. One indication of the complex ways in which they can co-exist was evident in the way discourses of choice, experiment and diversity – notions generally regarded as part of the vocabulary of reflexive modernity or postmodernity – intersected with those of tradition in the narratives of the participants.

The study also, up to a point, supports Thompson's differentiated argument about the fate of tradition in the contemporary world. His argument that the hermeneutic, and especially the identity aspects, of tradition persist have been borne out. However, the study suggests a qualification to his argument that the legitimization and normative aspects of traditions have been most seriously eroded. The findings from this project suggest a degree of resilience in both aspects in relation to assumptions about gender and food. The study found that the ideas that food preparation, emblematic of caring roles more broadly, are the responsibility of women retain a strong degree of normative power, and are not fully disconnected from the sanctification which accompanied them in premodern times.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was limited in several ways. The first concerns the limited sample from which it draws its data. The study took place within a developed country, and its findings and conclusions are therefore limited to this context. They are, furthermore, based on participants recruited from a location with very specific characteristics, and do not represent the demographics or experience of

Australians generally. Most notable was the high proportion of first and second generation migrants. The study only glancingly considered the experience of people under the age of 26, through the reports of their parents. Secondly, gender and class influences on food choices were either considered in a limited way, or bracketed. Factors associated with both class and gender are important influences on food choices in the contemporary world; however, they were beyond the scope of this thesis.

In view of these limits, future research into food traditions would be enhanced by longitudinal studies. In particular, research agendas looking at cross-generational food patterns would shed new light on the impact of changes in cooking and eating. In the fields of migration and multicultural studies, research that explored the outcomes of ‘nomadic’ traditions would be especially useful for comparative research. And finally but importantly, further study of shifting gender roles in domestic food provision is timely and necessary.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis set out to explore the ways that the divergent dynamics influencing contemporary foodways have played out in the lives of the participants. The overarching conclusion to be drawn is that they have done so in complex, contradictory ways. In this, it resonates with Warde’s observations about the “ambivalence of modernity” which is often played out in people’s lives in a tension between wanting, simultaneously, individual freedom and the security of collective belonging (Warde 1997: 67). In the contemporary world, he argues, the “unceasing, restless search for the possibility of novelty coexists with an equally insistent quest for the security and certainty that can be derived from belonging and routine” (Warde 1997: 173).

However, I argue that the idea of ambivalence is misleading in one respect. The data from this study suggests that the participants did not experience the tension between the imperatives generated by the contradictory social forces shaping their

Conclusion

foodways as emotionally problematic. Rather, they saw their individualizing innovations as part and parcel of the ‘aliveness’ of their food traditions. In the main, the participants felt that their food traditions could be enhanced or enriched, without undermining or abandoning them. Additions and innovations to time-worn practices served to alleviate the boredom that sometimes accompanied repetitive menus, but they did not supplant the food traditions from, and in which, they were enacted. The fruits of consumer capitalism have been embraced to make preparing meals easier and more efficient, but traditional practices such as ‘laying in’ a store of homemade preserves play the same role. As Altair put it, “it’s like having your cake and eating it too”.

The thesis concludes that culinary traditions are more resilient than many commentators suppose, and modern food systems are less corrosive than some of its critics suggest.

Postscript

Occasionally I run into the man I first met while he was grazing his sheep on the soccer field long ago. Recently I asked him if he still raises his own lamb for the Easter celebration. He replied that one of his now grown children has taken over responsibility for preparing the festive meal. The younger family members prefer to buy a side of lamb from a butcher instead of raising their own animal, he said. He also told me that they cook it inside rather than on a spit as he had always done. Is it the same, I asked him. *It’s different*, he shrugged, *but it’s still good!*

REFERENCES

- Abarca, M E 2004, 'Authentic or Not, It's Original', *Food and Foodways*, vol. 12, pp. 1-25.
- Adam, B 1996, 'Detraditionalization and the Certainty of Uncertain Futures', in Heelas, P, Lash, S and Morris, P (eds), *Detraditionalization*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, pp. 134-148.
- Adapon, J 2008, *Culinary Art and Anthropology*, Berg, Oxford.
- Anderson, E N 2005, *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture*, New York University Press, New York and London.
- Appadurai, A 1988, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 3-24.
- Arce, A & Marsden, T K 1993, 'The Social Construction of International Food: A New Research Agenda', *Economic Geography*, vol. 69, no. 3, pp. 293-311.
- Ashley, B, Hollows, J, Jones, S & Taylor, B 2004, *Food and Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London.
- Atkins, P & Bowler, I 2002, *Food in Society*, Arnold, London.
- Backett, K C 1992, 'Taboos and excesses: lay health moralities in middle class families', *Sociology of Health and Illness*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 255-274.
- Baggini, J 2014, *The Virtues of the Table: How to Eat and Think*, Granta, London.
- Barnes, L 1987, *It Happened in Brunswick*, Brunswick Community History Group, Brunswick.

Conclusion

- Bauman, Z 2001, 'Consuming Life', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 9-29.
- Beagan, B, Chapman, G E, D'Sylva, A & Bassett, B R 2008, 'It's Just Easier for Me to Do It': Rationalizing the Family Division of Foodwork', *Sociology* vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 653-671.
- Beardsworth, A & Keil, T 1997, *Sociology on the Menu: An Invitation to the Study of Food and Society*, Routledge, London.
- Beck, U 1999, *World Risk Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Beck, U 2000, 'The cosmopolitan perspective: sociology of the second age of modernity', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 51, no. 1, pp. 79-105.
- Beck, U 2002, 'The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 19, no. 1-2, pp. 17-44.
- Beck, U & Beck-Gernsheim, E 1996, 'Individualization and 'Precarious Freedoms': Perspectives and Controversies of a Subject-orientated Sociology', in Heelas, P, Lash, S and Morris, P (eds), *Detraditionalization*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, pp. 23-48.
- Beckstein, M 2017, 'The concept of a living tradition', *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 491-510.
- Belasco, W 1993, *Appetite for Change*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London.
- Belasco, W 2002, 'Food Matters: Perspectives on an Emerging Field', in Belasco, W and Scranton, P (eds), *Food Nations: Selling Food in Consumer Societies*, Routledge, New York, pp. 2-23.
- Bell 2002, 'Fragments For A New Urban Culinary Geography', *Journal for the Study of Food and Society*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 10-21.
- Bell, D 2007, 'The hospitable city: social relations in commercial spaces', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 7-22.

Conclusion

- Bell, D & Hollows, J 2005, 'Making sense of ordinary lifestyles', in Bell, D and Hollows, J (eds), *Ordinary Lifestyles: Popular Media, Consumption and Taste*, Open University Press, pp. 1-21.
- Bell, D & Hollows, J 2007, 'Mobile Homes', *Space & Culture*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 22-39.
- Bell, D & Valentine, G 1997, *Consuming Geographies: We are where we eat*, Routledge, London.
- Bennett, T, Emmison, M & Frow, J 1999, *Accounting for Tastes: Australian Everyday Cultures*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne.
- Beoku-Betts, J 1995, 'We Got Our Way of Cooking Things: Women, Food and Preservation of Cultural Identity among the Gullah', *Gender and Society*, vol. 9, no. 5, pp. 535-555.
- Bisogni, C, Connors, M, Devine, C & Sobal, J 2002, 'Who we are & how we eat: A qualitative study of identities in food choice', *Journal of Nutrition Education Behaviour*, vol. 34, pp. 128-139.
- Bottomley, G 1997, 'Identification: ethnicity, gender and culture', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 41-48.
- Bradby, H 1997, 'Health, eating and heart attacks: Glaswegian Punjabi women's thinking about everyday food', in Caplan, P (ed) *Food, Health and Identity*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 213-233.
- Braun, J & Beckie, M A 2014, 'Against the odds: The survival of traditional food knowledge in a rural Albertan community', *Canadian Food Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 54-71.
- Brillat-Savarin, J-A 1994, *The Physiology of Taste*, Penguin Classics, London.
- Buchler, S, Smith, K & Lawrence, G 2010, 'Food risks, old and new: Demographic characteristics and perceptions of food additives, regulation and contamination in Australia', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 353-374.

Conclusion

- Bugge, A B & Almas, R 2006, 'Domestic dinner: Representations and practices of a proper meal among young suburban mothers', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 203-228.
- Caldwell, M L 2005, 'Domesticating the French Fry: McDonald's and Consumerism in Moscow', in Watson, J L and Caldwell, M L (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Maldon, MA, USA, pp. 180-196.
- Campbell, C 1996, 'Detraditionalization, Character and the Limits to Agency', in Heelas, P, Lash, S and Morris, P (eds), *Detraditionalization*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, pp. 149-170.
- Caplan, P 1997, 'Approaches to the study of food, health and identity', in Caplan, P (ed) *Food, Health and Identity*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 1-31.
- Caraher, M, Dixon, P, Lang, T & Carr-Hill 1999, 'The state of cooking in England: the relationship of cooking skills to food choice', *British Food Journal*, vol. 101, no. 8, pp. 590-609.
- Cardona, E T C 2004, 'Re-encountering Cuban Tastes in Australia', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 40-53.
- Cassidy, C M 1994, 'Walk a mile in my shoes: culturally sensitive food-habit research', *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 59 no. 1 (suppl), pp. 190S-7S.
- Cheung, S C H & Chee-Beng, T 2007, *Food and Foodways in Asia: Resource, tradition and cooking*, Routledge, London.
- Choo, S 2004, 'Eating *Satay Babi*: sensory perception of transnational movement', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 203-213.
- Coakley, A 2003, 'Food or 'virtual' food? The construction of children's food in a global economy', *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 335-40.

- Conner, M & Armitage, C J 2002, *The social psychology of food*, Open University Press, Buckingham, UK.
- Cook, I, *et al.* 2008, 'Geographies of food: mixing', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 32, no. 6, pp. 821-833.
- Cook, I & Crang, P 1996, 'The World On a Plate: Culinary Culture, Displacement and Geographical Knowledges', *Journal of Material Culture*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 131-153.
- Cook, I, Crang, P & Thorpe, M 1998, 'Biographies and geographies: consumer understandings of the origins of foods', *British Food Journal*, vol. 100, no. 3, pp. 162-167.
- Crocombe, A 2008, *ethical eating: how to make food choices that won't cost the earth*, Penguin Books, Melbourne.
- Crouch, M & O'Neill, G 2000, 'Sustaining identities? Prolegomena for inquiry into contemporary foodways', *Social Science Information*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 181-192.
- Denzin, N K 2001, 'The reflexive interview and a performative social science', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 23-46.
- DeVault, M 1997, 'Conflict and Deference', in Counihan, C and van Esterik, P (eds), *Food and Culture: A Reader*, Routledge, New York and London, pp. 180-199.
- Diamond, R 1995, in *Bad Subjects*, Vol. 19.
- Dixon, J 2006, 'Adding Value(s): A Cultural Economy Analysis of Supermarket Power', in Germov, J and Williams, L (eds), *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 96-115.
- Dixon, J, Banwell, C, Hinde, S & McIntyre, H 2007, 'Car-centered Diets, Social Stratification and Cultural Mobility', *Food, Culture and Society*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 131-147.

- Donati, K 2005, 'The Pleasure of Diversity in Slow Food's Ethics of Taste', *Food, Culture and Society*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 228-242.
- Donati, L 2005, *Almost Pretty: A History of Sydney Road*, Laura Donati, West Brunswick.
- Douglas, M 1997, 'Deciphering A Meal', in Counihan, C and van Esterik, P (eds), *Food and Culture: A Reader*, Routledge, New York, pp. 36-54.
- D'Sylva, A & Beagan, B 2011, 'Food is culture, but it's also power': the role of food in ethnic and gender identity construction among Goan Canadian women', *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 279-289.
- Duruz, J 2004, 'Adventuring and Belonging: An Appetite for Markets', *space & culture*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 427-445.
- Duruz, J 2005, 'Eating at the borders: culinary journeys', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 23, pp. 51-69.
- Duruz, J 1999b, 'Food as Nostalgia: Eating the Fifties and Sixties', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 30, no. 113, pp. 231-250.
- Duruz, J 2007, 'From Malacca to Adelaide: Fragments towards a biography of cooking, yearning and *laksa*', in Cheung, S C H and Chee-Beng, T (eds), *Food and Foodways in Asia: Resource, tradition and cooking*, Routledge, London, pp. 183-200.
- Duruz, J 2001, 'Home Cooking, Nostalgia, and the Purchase of Tradition', *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, vol. XII, no. II, pp. 21-32.
- Duruz, J 2002, 'Rewriting the village: geographies of food and belonging in Clovelly, Australia', *cultural geographies*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 373-388.
- Duruz, J 1999a, 'The Streets of Clovelly: food, difference and place-making', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 305-314.

Conclusion

- Edwards, L, Occhipinti, S & Ryan, S 2000, 'Food and Immigration: the indigestion trope contests the sophistication narrative', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 297-308.
- Edwards, T 2000, *Contradictions of Consumption: concepts, practices and politics in consumer society*, Open University Press, Buckingham, UK.
- Ezzy, D 2002, *Qualitative Analysis: Practice and innovation*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
- Farb, P & Armelagos, G 1980, *Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
- Featherstone, M 2007, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, Sage, London.
- Fernandez-Armesto, F 2002, *Food: A History*, Pan, London.
- Ferrero, S 2002, 'Comida Sin Par: Consumption of Mexican Food in Los Angeles: "Foodscapes" in a Transnational Consumer Society', in Belasco, W and Scranton, P (eds), *Food Nations*, Rutledge, New York and London, pp. 194-219.
- Fiddes, N 1997, 'Declining meat', in Caplan, P (ed) *Food, Health and Identity*, Routledge, London, pp. 252-266.
- Fine, M 1998, 'Working the Hyphens: Reinventing Self and Other in Qualitative Research', in Denzin, N K and Lincoln, Y S (eds), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, SAGE, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 130-155.
- Fischler, C 1980, 'Food habits, social change and the nature/culture dilemma', *Social Science Information*, vol. 19, no. 6, pp. 937-953.
- Fischler, C 1988, 'Food, self and identity', *Social Science Information*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 275-292.
- Fischler, C 1999, 'The "McDonaldization" of Culture', in Flandrin, J-L and Montanari, M (eds), *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 530-547.

- Foley, D & Valenzuela, A 2005, 'Critical Ethnography: The Politics of Collaboration', in Denzin, N K and Lincoln, Y S (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 217-234.
- Freidberg, S 2005, 'French Beans for the Masses: A Modern Historical Geography of Food in Burkina Faso', in Watson, J L and Caldwell, M L (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, USA, pp. 21-41.
- Gabaccia, D R 1998, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Geertz, C 1993 *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 2nd edn., Fontana Press, London.
- Germann Molz, J 2007, 'Eating Difference: The Cosmopolitan Mobilities of Culinary Tourism', *Space & culture*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 77-93.
- Germov, J & Williams, L 2008, Exploring the Social Appetite: A Sociology of Food and Nutrition, in Germov, J and Williams, L (eds), *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 3-23.
- Giddens, A 1991, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.
- Giddens, A 1994, 'Living in a Post-Traditional Society', in Beck, U, Giddens, A and Lash, S (eds), *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 56-109.
- Gregory, S 1995, 'Using qualitative research for the sociology of food', *British Food Journal*, vol. 97, no. 7, pp. 32-35.
- Gunew, S 2000, 'Introduction: multicultural translations of food, bodies, language', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 227-237.

- Gvion, L 2009, 'What's Cooking in America? Cookbooks narrate ethnicities: 1850-1990', *Food, Culture and Society*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 53-76.
- Hage, G 1997, 'At home in the entrails of the west: multiculturalism, 'ethnic food' and migrant home-building', in Grace, H, Hage, G, Johnson, L, Langsworth, J and Symonds, M (eds), *home/world: space, community and marginality in sydney's west*, Pluto Press, Sydney, pp. 99-153.
- Hamlett, J, Bailey, A R, Alexander, A & Shaw, G 2008, 'Ethnicity and Consumption: South Asian food shopping patterns in Britain, 1947-75', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 91-116.
- Hammersley, M & Atkinson, P 1983, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, Routledge, London.
- Han, A 2007, 'Can I Tell You What We Have to Put Up With?': Stinky Fish and Offensive Durian', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 361-377.
- Hannerz, U 1990, 'Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture', in Featherstone, M (ed) *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, Sage Ltd., London, pp. 237-251.
- Harris, M 1997, 'The Abomindable Pig', in Counihan, C and Van Esterik, P (eds), *Food and Culture: A Reader*, Routledge, New York, pp. 67-79.
- Heelas, P 1996a, 'Detraditionalization and its Rivals', in Heelas, P, Lash, S and Morris, P (eds), *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, pp. 1-20.
- Heelas, P 1996b, 'On Things not being Worse, and the Ethic of Humanity', in Heelas, P, Lash, S and Morris, P (eds), *Detraditionalization*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, pp. 200-222.
- Heelas, P, Lash, S and Morris, P (eds), *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, pp. 1-20.

- Heldke, L 2003, *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer*, Routledge, New York and London.
- Heldke, L 2005, 'But is it Authentic? Culinary Travel and the Search for the "Genuine Article"', in Korsmeyer, C (ed) *The Taste Culture Reader*, pp. 385-394.
- Highmore, B 2008, 'Alimentary Agents: Food, Cultural Theory and Multiculturalism', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 381-398.
- Hobsbawm, E 1983, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Hobsbawm, E and Ranger, T (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 1-14.
- Hollows, J 2003a, 'Feeling Like a Domestic Goddess: Postfeminism and Cooking', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 179-202.
- Hollows, J 2003b, 'Oliver's Twist: Leisure, Labour and Domestic Masculinity in The Naked Chef', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 229-248.
- Holtzman, J 2006, 'Food and Memory', *The Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 35, pp. 361-378.
- hooks, b 1998, 'Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance', in Scapp, R and Seitz, B (eds), *Eating Culture*, State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y., pp. 181-200.
- Huntley, R 2008, *Eating Between the Lines: Food & Equality in Australia*, Black Inc., Melbourne.
- Hynes, L 2000, 'Looking for Identity: Food, Generation & Hybridity in Looking for Alibrandi', *Australian Screen Education*, vol., no. 23, p. 30.

- Ikeda, J P 1999, 'Culture, Food, and Nutrition in Increasingly Culturally Diverse Societies', in Germov, J and Williams, L (eds), *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 149-168.
- Jamal, A 1996, 'Acculturation: the symbolism of ethnic eating among contemporary British consumers', *British Food Journal*, vol. 98, no. 10, pp. 12-26.
- Jamal, A 1998, 'Food consumption among ethnic minorities: the case of British-Pakistanis in Bradford, UK', *British Food Journal*, vol. 100, no. 5, pp. 221-227.
- James, A 1997, 'How British is British food?' in Caplan, P (ed) *Food, Health and Identity*, Routledge, London, pp. 71-86.
- James, A 2005, 'Identity and the Global Stew', in Korsmeyer, C (ed) *The Taste Culture Reader: experiencing food and drink*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 372-384.
- James, R 2004a, 'Halal Pizza: Food and Culture in a Busy World', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 1-11.
- James, R 2004b, 'The Reliable Beauty of Aroma: Staples of Food and Cultural Production among Italian-Australians', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 23-39.
- Jonas, T 2013 'Eating the Vernacular, Being Cosmopolitan', *Cultural Studies Review*, v.19, no.1, pp.117-137.
- Kamler, B & Threadgold, T 2003, 'Translating Difference: questions of representation in cross-cultural research encounters', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 137-151.
- Karaosmanoglu, D 2007, 'Surviving the Global Market: Turkish Cuisine "Under Construction"', *Food, Culture and Society*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 425-448.

Conclusion

- Keane, A 1997, 'Too hard to swallow? The palatability of healthy eating advice', in Caplan, P (ed) *Food, Health and Identity*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 172-192.
- Kellner, D 1999, 'Theorizing/Resisting McDonaldization: A Multiperspectivist Approach', in Smart, B (ed) *Resisting McDonaldization*, Sage Publications Ltd., London, pp. 186-206.
- Kemmer, D 2000, 'Tradition and Change in Domestic Roles and Food Preparation', *Sociology*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 323-333.
- Kingston, B 1996, 'When did we teach our girls to cook?' *Australian Cultural History*, vol. 15, pp. 89-101.
- Kittler, P G & Sucher, K P 2004, *Food and Culture*, 4th edn., Wadworth Thomson Learning, Belmont, USA.
- Knight, A J 2006, 'Supersizing Farms: The McDonaldization of Agriculture', in Ritzer, G (ed) *McDonaldization: The Reader*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, California, pp. 183-195.
- Koc, M & Welsh, J 2001, 'Food, Foodways, and Immigrant Experience' *Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Conference* Halifax.
- Korsmeyer, C 2005, *The Taste Culture Reader: experiencing food and drink*, Berg, Oxford.
- Kwik, J 2008, 'Traditional Food Knowledge: A Case Study of an Immigrant Canadian "Foodscape"', *Environments: a journal of interdisciplinary studies/revue d'études interdisciplinaires*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 59-74.
- Lang, T & Caraher, M 2001, 'Is there a culinary skills transition? Data and debate from the UK about changes in cooking culture', *Journal of the HEIA*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 2-14.
- Laudan, R 2001, 'A Plea for Culinary Modernism: Why We Should Love New, Fast, Processed Food', *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 36-44.

Conclusion

- Lawrence, F 2008, *Eat Your Heart Out: Why the Food Business is Bad for the Planet and Your Health*, Penguin Books, Melbourne.
- Lawrence, G & Grice, J 2008, 'Agribusiness, Genetic Engineering and the Corporatisation of Food', in Germov, J and Williams, L (eds), *A Sociology of Food & Nutrition: The Social Appetite*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Australia, pp. 78-99.
- Leahy, T 2008, 'Unsustainable Food Production: Its Social Origins and Alternatives', in Germov, J and Williams, L (eds), *A Sociology of Food & Nutrition: The Social Appetite*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Australia, pp. 58-77.
- Leitch, A 2000, 'The social life of lardo', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 103-118.
- Leitch, A 2003, 'Slow food and the politics of pork fat: Italian Food and European Identity', *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 68, no. 4, pp. 437-462.
- Liamputtong, P & Ezzy, D 2005, *Qualitative Research Methods*, Second edn., Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- Long, L M 2001, 'Nourishing the Academic Imagination: The Use of Food in Teaching Concepts of Culture', *Food and Foodways*, vol. 93, no. 3-4, pp. 235-262.
- Long, L M 2004, 'Culinary Tourism: A Folklorisitic Perspective on Eating and Otherness', in Long, L M (ed) *Culinary Tourism*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, pp. 20-50.
- Lu, S & Fine, G A 1995, 'The Presentation of Ethnic Authenticity: Chinese Food as a Social Accomplishment', *The Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 535-553.
- Luke, T W 1996, 'Identity, Meaning and Globalization: Detraditionalization in Postmodern Space-time Compression', in Heelas, P, Lash, S and Morris, P (eds), *Detraditionalization*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, pp. 109-133.

Conclusion

- Lupton, D 1996, *Food, the Body and the Self*, Sage Publications Ltd, London.
- Lupton, D 2000, 'Where's me dinner?': food preparation arrangements in rural Australian families', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 172-186.
- Lupton, D 2005, 'Lay discourses and beliefs related to food risks: an Australian perspective', *Sociology of Health and Illness*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 448-467.
- MacCannell, D 1973, 'Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 79, no. 3, pp. 589-603.
- McIntosh, W A 1996, *Sociologies of Food and Nutrition*, Plenum Press, New York and London.
- Mennell, S 1996, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*, Revised edn., University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago
- Mennell, S 2008, 'Culinary Cultures of Europe: Food, History, Health and Identity', in Germov, J and Williams, L (eds), *A Sociology of Food & Nutrition: The Social Appetite*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, pp. 245-263.
- Mennell, S, Murcott, A & van Otterloo, A H 1992, *The Sociology of Food: eating, diet and culture*, Sage, London.
- Minichiello, V, Aroni, R, Timewell, E & Alexander, L 1995, *In-Depth Interviewing: Principles, Techniques, Analysis*, 2nd edn., Longman, Melbourne.
- Mintz, S 1996, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*, Beacon Press, Boston.
- Mintz, S 2007, 'Asia's contributions to world cuisine: A beginning inquiry', in Cheung, S C H and Tan, C-B (eds), *Food and Foodways in Asia: Resource, tradition and cooking*, Routledge, London, pp. 201-210.

Conclusion

- Moisio, R, Arnould, E & Price, L L 2004, 'Between Mothers and Markets: Constructing family identity through homemade food', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 361-384.
- Moreland 2009, *Moreland City Council*, viewed April 2009 www.moreland.vic.gov.au/aboutmoreland/demographics/suburbprofiles/brunswick.html.
- Morgan, G, Rocha, C & Poynting, S 2005, 'Grafting Cultures: Longing and Belonging in Immigrants' Gardens and Backyards in Fairfield', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1-2, pp. 93-105.
- Murcott, A 1982, 'On the social significance of the "cooked dinner" in South Wales', *Social Science Information*, vol. 21, no. 4/5, pp. 677-696.
- Murcott, A 1997, 'Family meals - a thing of the past?' in Caplan, P (ed) *Food, Health and Identity*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 32-49.
- Naccarato, P & Lebesco, K 2012, *Culinary Capital*, Berg, London & New York.
- Narayan, U 1995, 'Eating cultures: incorporation, identity and Indian food', *Social Identities*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 63-86.
- Nestle, M 2003, *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Newman, F & Gibson, M 2005, 'Monoculture versus multiculinarism: Trouble in the Aussie kitchen', in Bell, D and Hollows, J (eds), *Ordinary Lifestyles: Popular Media, Consumption and Taste*, Open University Press Maidenhead, UK, pp. 82-98.
- Noble, G 2009, 'Everyday Cosmopolitanism and the Labour of Intercultural Community', in Wise, A and Velayutham, S (eds), *Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 46-65.
- Panayi, P 2008, *Spicing Up Britain: The Multicultural History of British Food*, Reaktion Books, London.

Conclusion

- Parker, M 1998, 'Nostalgia and Mass Culture: McDonaldization and Cultural Elitism', in Alfino, M, Caputo, J S and Wynyard, R (eds), *McDonaldization Revisited: Critical Essays on Consumer Culture*, Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, pp. 1-18.
- Patel, R 2007, *Stuffed and starved: markets, power and the hidden battle for the world food system*, Black Inc., Melbourne.
- Patton, M Q 2002, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd edn., Sage Publications, Inc, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Penrose, H 1994, *Brunswick: One History, Many Voices*, Victoria Press, Melbourne.
- Pilcher, J 2002, 'Industrial Tortillas and Folkloric Pepsi: The Nutritional Consequences of Hybrid Cuisines in Mexico', in Belasco, W and Scranton, P (eds), *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, Routledge, New York, pp. 222-239.
- Pollan, M 2006, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Search for a Perfect Meal in a Fast-Food World*, Bloomsbury, London.
- Pollan, M 2008, *In Defence of Food: The Myth of Nutrition and the Pleasure of Eating*, Allen Lane, Melbourne.
- Punch, M 1998, 'Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research', in Denzin, N K and Lincoln, Y S (eds), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Reinharz, S 1992, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Reinschmidt, M 2007, 'Estimating rice, agriculture, global trade and national food culture in South Korea', in Cheung, S C H and Chee-Beng, T (eds), *Food and Foodways in Asia: Resource, tradition and cooking*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 96-110.

Conclusion

- Rinehart, J A 1998, 'It May Be a Polar Night of Icy Darkness, but Feminists Are Building a Fire', in Alfino, M, Caputo, J S and Wynyard, R (eds), *McDonaldization Revisited: Critical Essays on Consumer Culture*, Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, pp. 19--38.
- Ritzer, G 2005, *Enchanting a disenchanted world: Revolutionizing the means of consumption*, 2nd edn., Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Ritzer, G 2006a, 'An Introduction to McDonaldization', in Ritzer, G (ed) *McDonaldization: The Reader*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, pp. 1-21.
- Ritzer, G 2006b, 'Precursors: Bureaucracy and Max Weber's Theory of Rationality, Irrationality, and the Iron Cage', in Ritzer, G (ed) *McDonaldization: The Reader*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, pp. 26-30.
- Ritzer, G 2006c, 'Islands of the Living Dead: The Social Geography of McDonaldization', in Ritzer, G (ed) *McDonaldization: The Reader*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, pp. 32-39.
- Ritzer, G 2006d, 'Cathedrals of Consumption: Rationalization, Enchantment, and Disenchantment', in Ritzer, G (ed) *McDonaldization: The Reader*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Ritzer, G 2008, *The McDonaldization of Society 5*, Revised new century edition edn., Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks.
- Roberts, P 2008, *The End of Food: The Coming Crisis in the World Food Industry*, Bloomsbury, London.
- Robertson, R 1995, 'Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity', in Featherstone, M, Lash, S and Robertson, R (eds), *Global Modernities*, SAGE Publications Ltd, London, pp. 25-44.
- Rozin, P 1990, 'Development in the Food Domain', *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 555-562.

- Rozin, P 1999, 'Food is Fundamental, Fun, Frightening and Far-Reaching', *Social Research*, vol. 66, no. 1, pp. 9-30.
- Rozin, P 2006, 'The Integration of Biological, Social, Cultural and Psychological Influences on Food Choice', in Shepherd, R and Raats, M (eds), *The Psychology of Food Choice*, CABI, Guildford, pp. 19-40.
- Rubin, H J & Rubin, I S 2005, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 2nd edn., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Santich, B 2012, *Bold Palates: Australia's Gastronomic Heritage*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, South Australia
- Sassatelli, R 2010, *Consumer Culture: History, Theory and Politics*, Sage Publication Ltd, London.
- Savas, O 2014, 'Taste diaspora: The aesthetic and material practice of belonging', *Journal of Material Culture*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 185-208.
- Schlosser, E & Wilson, C 2006, *Chew On This*, Penguin Books, London.
- Sheridan, S 2000, 'Eating the Other: food and cultural difference in the Australian Women's Weekly in the 1960s', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 319-329.
- Shils, E 1981, *Tradition*, Faber and Faber, London.
- Short, F 2003, 'Domestic cooking skills - what are they?' *HEIA*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 13-22.
- Short, F 2006, *Kitchen Secrets: The Meaning of Cooking in Everyday Life*, Berg, Oxford; New York.
- Skeggs, B 2002, 'Feminist Ethnography', in Atkinson, P, Coffey, A, Delamont, S, Lofland, J and Lofland, L (eds), *Handbook of Ethnography*, Sage, London.
- Slater, D 1997, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Smart, B 1999, 'Resisting McDonaldization: Theory, Process and Critique', in Smart, B (ed) *Resisting McDonaldization*, Sage Publications Ltd., London, pp. 1-21.

Conclusion

- Sokolov, R 1991, *Why We Eat What We Eat: How the encounter between the New World and the Old changed the way everyone on the planet eats*, Summit Books, New York.
- Spiggle, S 1994, 'Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data in Consumer Research', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 491-503.
- Sprague, J & Zimmerman, M K 1989, 'Quality and Quantity: Reconstructing Feminist Methodology', *The American Sociologist*, vol. 20, pp. 71-86.
- Srinivas, T 2013, '"As Mother Made It": The Cosmopolitan Indian Family, "Authentic" Food, and the Construction of Cultural Utopia', in Counihan, C and Van Esterik, P (eds), *Food and Culture: A Reader*, Routledge, New York, pp. 355-375.
- Stacey, J 1988, 'Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?' *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 21-27.
- Stanfield II, J H 1998, 'Ethnic Modeling in Qualitative Research', in Denzin, N K and Lincoln, Y S (eds), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 333-353.
- Sutton, D 2001, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory*, Berg, Oxford & New York
- Sutton, D 2008, 'A Tale of Easter Ovens: Food and Collective Memory', *Social Research*, vol. 75, no. 1, pp. 157-180.
- Symons, M 1982, *One Continuous Picnic: A history of eating in Australia*, Duck Press, Adelaide.
- Symons, M 1993, *The Shared Table: ideas for Australian cuisine*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Symons, M 2006, 'Grandmas to gourmets: the revolution of 1963', *Food, Culture and Society*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 180-200.
- Symons, M 2007, *One Continuous Picnic: A gastronomic history of Australia*, 2nd edn., Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

Conclusion

- Tedlock, B 2003, 'Ethnography and Ethnographic Representation', in Denzin, N K and Lincoln, Y S (eds), *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 165-213.
- Thomas, M 2004, 'Transitions in Taste in Vietnam and the Diaspora', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 54-67.
- Thompson, J B 1996, 'Tradition and Self in a Mediated World', in Heelas, P, Lash, S and Morris, P (eds), *Detraditionalization*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, pp. 89-108.
- Tomlinson, J 1999, *Globalization and Culture*, Polity Press, Oxford.
- Umberger, W J, Scott, E, M. & Stringer, R 2008, in *American Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting* Orlando, Florida.
- Valentine, G 2008, 'Living with difference: reflections on geographies of encounter', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 323-337.
- Vallianatos, H & Raine, K 2008, 'Consuming Food and Constructing Identities among Arabic and South Asian Immigrant Women', *Food, Culture and Society*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 355-373.
- van den Berghe, P L 1984, 'Ethnic cuisine: culture in nature', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 387-397.
- Visser, M 1989, *Much Depends on Dinner: the extraordinary history and mythology, allure and obsessions, perils and taboos, of an ordinary meal*, Penguin Books, London.
- Visser, M 1999, 'Food and Culture: Interconnections', *Social Research*, vol. 66, no. 1, pp. 117-130.
- Wallendorf, M & Arnould, E 1991, '"We Gather Together": Consumption Rituals of Thanksgiving Day', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 13-31.

Conclusion

- Warde, A 1994a, 'Consumers, identity and belonging: Reflections of some theses of Zygmunt Bauman', in Keat, R, Whiteley, N and Abercrombie, N (eds), *The Authority of the Consumer*, Routledge, London, pp. 58-74.
- Warde, A 1994b, 'Consumption, Identity-Formation and Uncertainty', *Sociology*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 877-898.
- Warde, A 1997, *Consumption, Food and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture*, Sage, London.
- Warde, A 1999, 'Convenience food: space and timing', *British Food Journal*, vol. 101, no. 7, pp. 518-527.
- Warde, A 2000, 'Eating Globally: Cultural Flows and the Spread of Ethnic Restaurants', in Kalb, D, van der Land, M, Staring, R, van Steenbergen, B and Wilterdink, N (eds), *The Ends of Globalization: Bringing Society Back In*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, Lanham, Maryland, pp. 299-316.
- Waters, M 2006, 'McDonaldization and the Global Culture of Consumption', in Ritzer, G (ed) *McDonaldization: The Reader*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Watson, J L 2005, 'China's Big Mac Attack', in Watson, J L and Caldwell, M L (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Maldon, MA, USA, pp. 70-79.
- Watson, J L 2006, 'Transnationalism, Localization and Fast Foods in East Asia', in Ritzer, G (ed) *McDonaldization: The Reader*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Watson, J L & Caldwell, M L 2005, 'Introduction', in Watson, J L and Caldwell, M L (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Malden, USA, pp. 1-10.
- Wilk, R R 2006, *Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists*, Berg, Oxford; New York.

- Wilk, R R 2009, 'The Edge of Agency: Routines, Habits and Volition', in Shove, E, Trentmann, F and Wilk, R R (eds), *Time, Consumption and Everyday Life: Practice, Materiality and Culture*, Berg, Oxford & New York, pp. 143-154.
- Wise, A 2005, 'Hope and Belonging in a Multicultural Suburb', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1-2, pp. 171-186.
- Wise, A 2009, 'Everyday Multiculturalism: Transversal Crossings and Working Class Cosmopolitans', in Wise, A and Velayutham, S (eds), *Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 21-45.
- Wise, A 2010, 'Sensuous Multiculturalism: Emotional Landscapes of Inter-Ethnic Living in Australian Suburbia', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 36, no. 6, 2010, pp. 917-937.
- Wise, A 2011, 'Moving Food: Gustatory Commensality and Disjuncture in Everyday Multiculturalism', *New Formations*, vol. 74, pp. 82-107.
- Wise, A & Velayutham, S 2009, 'Introduction: Multiculturalism and Everyday Life', in Wise, A and Velayutham, S (eds), *Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 1-17.
- Xu, J, Shim, S, Lotz, S & Almeida, D 2004, 'Ethnic Identity, Socialization Factors, and Culture-Specific Consumption Behaviour', *Psychology & Marketing*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 93-112.
- Zevallos, Z 2003, 'That's my Australian side': The ethnicity, gender and sexuality of young Australian women of South and Central American origin', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 81-98.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: THE FLYERS

Do you think about the food you eat?									
<p>I am a researcher at Swinburns University looking for volunteers to be interviewed about the food they eat. I am interested in finding out: how people buy and prepare the food they eat and what influences these decisions.</p> <p>The interviews will last for approximately one hour and will take place at the location of your choice. The questions will mostly be about how culture, family, religion and the media influence what we eat. The study will benefit the individuals who participate by giving them a voice in research that aims for a better understanding of the importance of food and its place in people's lives. The research will also help promote the way different cultures enhance each other.</p> <p>Participants should be aware that the interviews will be recorded but no personally identifying details will be included in the study. Also, they will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. All the material collected during the interviews will be kept in locked filing cabinets to which only the interviewer will have access. Your privacy and anonymity will be guaranteed at every step of the study.</p> <p>If you are interested in being part of this exciting project, please give me a call...</p>									
Food Study	Food Study	Food Study	Food Study	Food Study	Food Study	Food Study	Food Study	Food Study	Food Study
Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]	Helen [phone number]

APPENDIX 2: THE PARTICIPANTS

Conclusion

Name	Age	Years in Australia	Stated cultural background	Occupation
Abby	39	10	Welsh	Publisher
Alethea	45	38	Greek	Community worker
Altair	59	41	Egyptian	Artist
Androula	78	54	Cypriot	Retired; home duties
Anita	26	26	Sicilian	Teacher
Bea	52	18	Jewish	IT
Dimitri	55	55	Cypriot	Community worker
Dragan	42	42	Macedonian	Second-hand dealer
Eva	59	55	Cypriot	Artist
Faye	55	55	Anglo-Scottish	Home duties
Franjo	71	48	Croatian	Retired builder
Georgina	39	39	Anglo	Social worker
Hezan	60	unknown	Turkish	Writer
June	55	unknown	Chinese-Anglo	Traditional Chinese Medicine
Kon	52	52	Cypriot	Audiologist
Kuai	48	41	Chinese	Veterinary surgeon
Lazar	58	58	Hungarian	Retired labourer
Louise	56	26	Anglo	Librarian/editor
Matilda	43	43	Anglo	Nurse
Matt	46	46	Anglo	Chef
Meg	73	1	Welsh	Retired nurse
Miranda	43	43	Greek-Cypriot	Public servant
Nadia	41	41	Italian	Second-hand dealer
Robert	46	10	Chinese	Sports trainer
Rosalea	51	51	Italian	Home duties
Sabine	70	49	Spanish	Retired
Sara	49	49	Croatian	Artist
Sargon	45	17	Syrian	Hairdresser

Conclusion

Simone	67	67	Anglo-Irish	Retired public servant
Tony	62	38	Greek	Retired builder
Veronica	50?	44	Greek-Maltese	Lawyer

APPENDIX 3: THE CONVERSATION TOPICS

- What did you eat last night and who cooked it
- In what ways does that differ from what you ate as a child
- Who taught you to cook
- Do you still use their recipes
- Do you cook food exactly as your mother or father did
- Do you use the same ingredients they used
- Would your grandparents recognize the things you eat now
- Will you teach your children to cook in the way you were taught
- What is a typical meal in your household
- Where do you get most of your ideas about what to cook from
- Where do you buy most of your fresh food
- How do you see food as part of your culture
- What do you think of as traditional food
- Is food a significant part of religious celebrations for you
- When eating away from home, what and where do you eat
- Do you think your eating habits are typical in Australia today
- What shortcuts do you use when preparing food
- Is time or money more important when considering what to eat
- If neither of those, what other things are more important
- How do you think the majority of people in Australia eat
- How do you think the 'food scene' in Brunswick has changed recently
- Do you think food is better/worse now than it used to be
- Do you still enjoy the same tastes you did as a child
- Where do you get information about food from
- Would you like to share a favourite recipe with us

Note the repeating of several questions = aiming for double checking

APPENDIX 4: THE CONSENT FORM

Informed consent: The role of tradition in food habits

1. I consent to participate in the project named above. I have been provided with a copy of the project information statement and this consent form and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. Please circle your response to the following:

• I agree to be interviewed by the researcher	Yes/No
• I agree to allow the interview to be recorded	Yes/No
• I agree to make myself available for further information if required	Yes/no
3. I acknowledge that:
 - a) My participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation;
 - b) The project is for the purpose of research and not for profit;
 - c) Any information which is gathered in the course of and as the result of my participating in this project will be (i) collected and retained for the purpose of this project and (ii) accessed and analysed by the researcher for the purpose of conducting this project
 - d) My anonymity is preserved and I will not be identified in publications or otherwise without my express written consent.

By signing this document I agree to participate in this project:

Name.....

Signature & Date.....

APPENDIX 5: ETHICS APPROVAL

Page 1 of 1

Anne Cain - SUHREC Project 2008/121 - Ethical Clearance

From: Anne Cain
To: Ballantyne, Glenda
Date: 27/11/2008 2:26 PM
Subject: SUHREC Project 2008/121 - Ethical Clearance
CC: 6258065@student.swin.edu.au; Wilkins, Keith

To: Dr Glenda Ballantyne and Ms Helen Benny - FHCL

Dear Glenda and Helen

**SUHREC Project 2008/121: Intergenerational transmission of food cultures in ethnic communities
Dr Glenda Ballantyne, FHCL, Ms Helen Benny
Approved Duration: 27/11/2008 To 27/12/2010**

I am pleased to advise that the Chair of SHESCI (or delegated member) has approved the revisions and clarification as emailed by you on 19/11/2008 in response to previous communication (SHESCI email 19/11/2008). Unless otherwise notified, human research activity in the project may commence in line with standard or any special conditions for on-going ethics clearance.

The standard conditions for ethics clearance include the following:

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the current *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.
- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.
- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/ clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.
- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project can be undertaken at any time.

Please contact me if you have any queries or concerns about on-going ethics clearance. The SUHREC project number should be cited in communication.

Best wishes with the project.

Yours sincerely

Anne Cain
Secretary, SHESCI
Swinburne University
RBE Research Office 4H96
Lvl 6, 60 William St
Hawthorn, 3122
Ph: 9254 8605
acain@swin.edu.au

file:///C:/tmp/XPpypwise/492EAEA31winst31601757763155C21/GW/00001.HTM

27/11/2008

Resulting publications

Benny, H 2012, 'When traditions become innovations and innovations become traditions in everyday food pedagogies', *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, vol. 52, no. 3 pp. 595-616.

Benny, H and Ballantyne, G 2010 'Borne and Bread: McDonaldization, Individualization and Ethnicity', *The Annual Conference of the Australian Sociological Association*, Sydney, Australia.

Benny, H and Ballantyne, G 2009 'Kitchen Matters: Ethno-cuisines & Contemporary Foodways', *The Future of Sociology, The Annual Conference of the Australian Sociological Association*, Canberra.