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The EU's cookie cutter, but not the EU's cookie

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ABSTRACT

The members of the European Union have never had a common identity that has united them together beyond their geographical definition of "Europe." Since the beginning of the European Union and the introduction of the Euro, the decision makers of the Union have been pushing for a collective European identity. The need for this identity comes from the belief that in order for the Union to be economically sound, it needs an underlying homogenous culture. A unity in identity, values, and ideals is stronger than a unity based solely on a common currency as it lacks personal characteristics that people can relate to. This push for a collective unity has been met with a fair amount of resistance from the member states. This thesis will argue that there exists a great amount of resistance to the homogenization of the European Union, which is expressed through food and its surrounding culture in the European Union. Through four different cases I will explore the attitudes of citizens towards the perpetual evolution of the Union and the power these beliefs hold in its future, the evidence of a need for individuality among the nations, and the isolating effects of power play that occur when countries are singled out as sources for problems in the E.U. The four cases discussed are: Labeling-What's the Name, the Carrot Conundrum, the Cinnamon Scare, and Not the EU's E. Coli. The first case, Labeling, involves the protection of items such as the Cornish pasty of England, the smoked cheeses of Poland and Slovakia, and the snails and carrot jams of France and Portugal, respectively. These show the power behind naming, and how labeling and protection of culture provides deserved recognition but also distinguishes countries from one another. The second case, The Carrot Conundrum, presents the issues surrounding the uniform regulations placed on produce in the E.U. and follows how countries reacted

to the absurdly strict standards. The third case, The Cinnamon Scare, shows what happens when EU regulations meddle with cultural staples and overstep their boundaries. The fourth case, Not the E.U.'s E. Coli, presents a case of hasty accusations and how the use of specific names isolates and victimizes nations. Each case shows evidence of targeting a different aspect of homogenization: demanding labeled recognition for products, refusing a uniform "normality," defending centuries-old traditions against alterations, and expressing an ever-present "otherness" complex. However, in the end, each case is a part of an overall resistance to the homogenization of culture under the European Union. Countries wish to be united, but not at the cost of their cultures.

Introduction

The European Union is constantly structuring its definition of unity. A common currency in eighteen of the twenty-eight countries, open borders, and a European Union law applied to all member states are a few examples of this unification. The EU began as an economic union, and it was not until that specific unity was established that the Union started to concern itself with questions of a common identity. The European Union then addressed culture, trying to find ties between countries and showcasing said ties in an attempt to unify the European Union beyond money and borders. The Council of the European Union picks cities each year as the European Capital[s] "to highlight the richness and diversity of the European cultures, celebrate cultural ties that link Europeans together,... and foster a feeling of European citizenship" (Education and Culture European Commission). This is done to promote a sense of "Europeanness." One might wonder why a sense of "Europeanness" would need to be promoted. Is the identity of "European" not widely accepted by all the nations under the Union? No, it is not. It is the

very lack of universal ideals and values shared by all these nations that gives reason for this strong push for an agreed upon European identity. The Union was formed first, and now it is trying to form "Europeans" to fit under its new definition of Europe. "National traditions, myth, practices, assumptions, collective likes and dislikes constrain and inspire in fundamental ways"(Wood 2008). The countries of the European Union do not hold the same ideals and values.

The European Union was built on the myth that we are one people with one common destiny--an 'ever closer union,' in the words of the 1957 Treaty of Rome that founded what was then called the European Economic Community. We are now discovering that regional and national differences are not dissolving and that Europeans think and act very differently from one another. (Harding 2).

The various histories, differing political systems, and traditions have made agreeing upon universal ideals essentially impossible; there is no consensus. Trying to find common values and ideals, and coming to a consensus on what they are, however, is exactly what the European Union is trying to do.

The European Union prides itself on the diversity of the countries under it, and while the diversity is unquestionably present, the acceptance and tolerance of these diversities is not necessarily present. "The basic integration concepts that are most influential within individual member states are so varied that fundamental consensus on the EU's goals, direction, organization, and methods of operation are unattainable" (Wood 195). Agreeing on common goals and ideals is not a natural aspect of the European Union. While it is not necessarily impossible for the EU to have set of common ideals and policies, they are certainly difficult to come up with, as is evidenced through the various forms of resistance. This does not mean the end of the EU as an economic organization, they are just doing too much too quickly.

Insecurity in the precise definition of "European identity," and how prominent of an identity it is to be, has been a driving force for many "European" movements. The Union was conceived as a newly relevant and powerful organization, but as it has grown and developed, its problems have come to the forefront and have not only de-illuminated the advertised beliefs and goals of the Union, but have led people to question those beliefs and goals. Additionally this propaganda for a seemingly forced and unnatural a European identity is not accepted with open arms and without skepticism.

Criticisms known under the notion "euroskepticism" exist. In some cases it would appear that an allegiance to one's country has become even stronger since the formation of the E.U. "In opinion polls...voters today consistently identify much more with their nation-states than with Europe. As Chris Patten, former European commissioner for external affairs, has said, "The nation is alive and well--more potent than ever in some respects..." (Harding 6). The efforts put into fostering this European identity is backlashing, and a shift in the attitudes of decision makers provides evidence for this. Borders that have been advertised as being open in the E.U. are now more strictly regulated. The prized Euro, initially a symbol of the unity of nations, and the belief that "a process of economic integration would eventually lead to more political integration, i.e. some form of European nation-state" (Fligstein 135), is tainted by economic troubles. The United Kingdom has even expressed desires to leave the E.U. entirely. In June of 2014 NPR reported on the European Union summit and it was mentioned, "Because U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron and many of his fellow countrymen are so unhappy with EU policies and regulations that they are loudly talking about a possible exit. They want the EU bureaucracy, based in Brussels, to become less intrusive in member states'

domestic issues, including those involving the environment and immigration" (Geewax 2014). The United Kingdom's expressed desires further question nations' attitudes towards the E.U.

Going into the European Union, specifically becoming a part of the Eurozone, countries maintained their old spending habits. These habits did not harmonize under the common currency, and as a result, a slew of economic difficulties arose that greatly affected the E.U. The decision makers recognized that a change in approach to this collective economy was needed. What the economy was lacking that was truly hurting its stability was a collective culture, especially a collective spending culture. Fostering a collective culture is important to understanding how the E.U. expects countries to behave with regards to their spending. Because the spending and saving nature of nations is linked to their various cultures, if the EU wants to instill economic expectations that are understood and accepted by all member states, a common culture also has to be created. Without one, countries will simply continue to spend and save as they have done. Additionally, a collective culture is needed because in times of economic troubles, a community is held together by its culture and powers through difficult times. Culture is the safety net that keeps countries from falling and isolating each other.

The Euro was introduced with the intention of being a symbol of unity, but it failed to unite nations *beyond* the currency. Without a unifying culture underlying the currency, the currency will fail, as was witnessed with the great Eurozone crisis in the Union because of the spending habits of Greece. Because of their outrageous spending habits after entering the Eurozone, Greece had to be bailed out by both France and

Germany, a hundred billion dollars each time. These bailouts were of course met with mixed levels of support. On the one hand arguments in opposition of the bailouts circled around the belief that it was *Greece* who had been irresponsible with its money, and that other nations did not have a responsibility to bail them out. On the other hand, support for the bailouts was fueled by the belief that if a country had the means to help a fellow European country, they should. (BBC 2013)

The decision makers of the European Union believe that by tying the member states together beyond a superficial level, a level in which there exists a shared understanding of the goals of the union, both community-wise and economically, a common culture would be created. However, this attempt at cultivating a common culture has not occurred due to various forms of resistance to homogenization.

With the push for a more “European” identity by the European Union, it is interesting to consider the two recent cases of possible secessions: Scotland's move to secede from the United Kingdom, and Catalonia's move to separate from Spain. If the push for a more solitary European Union is one of the main focuses of the Union’s agenda, why is it that countries, or regions of countries, feel a need to separate? It would appear that this push for a homogenous union has instilled a desire to distinguish one’s country and culture from others. Both Scotland and Catalonia strongly emphasize their differing cultures and values as a primary reason for the secession movements. A pro-independence Scot said, “[I’m] tired of being represented by a conservative government in London that doesn’t reflect Scottish values...I think it will give us a chance to decide our own future and to solve our problems” (Shapiro 2014). Similarly, Catalonians claim

drastic differences between themselves and other Spaniards based on their different languages and cultures, and also on their history of the fight for independence, which was almost successful before the rise of Franco as leader.

As evidenced in the cases of Scotland and Catalonia, it appears that countries want to be *in* the Union, but as their own representative. There is an ever-present underlying desire to be themselves, distinguishable from the other nations with which they are sharing membership. They do not want their national identity to get “lost” in the process of transitioning and accepting their new European Union identity. The countries want to be separate but united. The idea of open borders and being interconnected is enticing, but the economics of the Union and the conflicting policies make countries want to limit the power of EU. These countries want to enter EU for the benefits and the title, not because of some underlying common values and ideals. The great challenge of the European Union, then, accounting for cultural and identity differences while still cultivating economic unity.

The European Union, even with its mature member states, is still a fairly novel idea. Open borders, a common currency, and Union policies apply to all member nations that would otherwise identify themselves as their respective nations before identifying themselves as "European." This is a major commitment among nations. Europe has truly taken a step in a new direction uniting countries primarily based on geography, but also culturally, all the while developing a new identity of "European" where none existed before. "European" never had a clear-cut list of defining characteristics. In Europe there existed neither a common value system, nor common political system.

Like Scotland and Catalonia, other countries have also expressed their desires to distinguish themselves from others, on a smaller scale in relation to secession, as is evidenced by their actions, reactions, and methods of handling various food cases.

Why food?

Food embodies an important intersection of politics and culture, and as a result forms a prime nexus for exploring growing changes and developments in the European Union. The political identity of food revolves around its regulations, standards, health and safety, and economics. The cultural identity of food involves its history, tradition, craftsmanship, and ties to society in general.

Food is a powerful symbol of a country's identity, engaging all five senses and so much of cultural identity. Food leaves an impression within a person, an experience, and understanding of another culture, something a national flag or anthem cannot do. Food is the unique medium in which people can truly experience different cultures on an intimate level. And while borders in the EU might be open and allow people physical access, food allows travelers to experience a culture beyond the superficial level.

Food items have a strong cultural identity. Whether it is a type of apple, like "Papierowki" (White Transparent) apples of Poland, or the recipe for croque-monsieur of France, food products are tied closely to their place of origin. These ties carry with them identity, pride, and history. With their identity, foods are able to speak for themselves: croque-monsieurs are French, strudels are German, Shepherd's pie is British, and so on. It seems basic, but the power to tie a food with a place of origin validates the food's uniqueness. The recognition distinguishes countries from other countries, adding to their

respective identity portfolio. In an ever homogenizing world where English is becoming *the* language for international communication, where single businesses find themselves spread among all continents, and countries adopt aspects of different cultures into their own, these distinguishing factors that come with food allow countries to remain somewhat individualistic.

Food is such a sensitive issue. Dietary practices, especially recipes and meals, are unquestionably glued to cultural and traditional practices. They are often centered around specific holidays and special occasions, but often hold the identity of an "average, typical" meal, and as such carry a great amount of history in the way they were made, why they were made, etc. These practices have survived years of change undergone by all countries; they have remained constants and as such are bestowed with great importance in their respective societies. Furthermore, countries are able to identify other countries by their foodstuffs, and countries are able to identify themselves by their own foodstuffs. This ability insists that certain foodstuffs are given "space" in our perception of the world. People are able to visualize, remember experiences with, and relate to countries through food.

There is something about food that makes it an especially prized form of craftsmanship. Often times years, centuries even, of craftsmanship have gone into sustaining a food item. This passing down of traditional work through the generations is seen just as much on the large scale of a culture as it is seen within families and specific recipes. Foods can carry a national identity and in that respect act as ambassadors for countries. Because food is so closely tied to a population, people are extremely protective

of it as an extension of their society and see attacks on food items as an attack on them personally.

In "Stomaching Change: Finns, Food, and Boundaries in the European Union," Pauliina Raento explores "the relationship between boundaries, national identity, and food in the European Union...empirically in relation to social trust, banal nationalism, and scale" (Raento 2010, 297). Using 212 articles concerning food safety and changes in manufacturing and retail, Raento address five issues, openness, exports, the collective, fear, and defense, and their respective juxtapositions. The articles are read as deep texts, examining the reproduction of nations with respect to changing attitudes towards nationalism influenced by changes to food regulations and culture.

The relationship among food, geography, and people is proposed as being a necessary subject to examine to understand "social trust and group-and place-specific culinary specialties strengthen bonds of belonging and sharing among Us who stand apart from Them" (Raento 2010, 297). Loyalties to national foods express a desire to remain distinguished from other nations. "Customers celebrate the domestic origin of products and defend the perceived unique national character of their practices against impersonal supranational and global actors" (Raento 2010, 298).

Finland's transition into the European Union displayed Finland's desire to distance itself from its old and unwanted identity association with the "East" i.e. connections with the Soviet Union, "the government sought to swiftly conform to the EU standards in order to shed any suspicions regarding its Finlandicized past (when Moscow influenced the political course of Finland)." The adoption of the European Union identity was a solid

step in establishing Finland's place in the European community. In transitioning, Finland was concerned with "Europeanizing" itself, "many individuals felt a pressing need to learn 'European' manners and drinking culture since the country's EU membership in 1995 as a proof of their sophistication and worth as 'European' citizens," and thus adopted standards to showcase that it *does* belong like the other member states. Finland was determined to correct their "'false location' in the East by symbolically distancing themselves from the legacy of the Cold War and by highlighting their historical and contemporary relations with Western European nations." Essentially, they wanted to claim and display an identity and way of life that was of the EU's standards, to be one with the community.

But even with a successful transition, entrance into the EU and adoption of EU food regulations, and food trade partnerships, Finland faced unprecedented issues concerning food safety, and later on food culture and loyalties to Finnish products. With new exchanges came new diseases, and for the first time Finland was Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) infected. And while measures were taken to address this issue, essentially stricter standards, it is also important to look at issues that arose regarding the "defense of Finnishness."

In the globalizing nature of the EU, Finnish products grew in popularity, the purchasing of such products symbolizing a need to defend and keep Finnish products relevant in the marketplace and home. "Place associations, national identity, perceptions of distance, and ideals of Us versus Them thus steered marketing practices and consumer behavior in a significant manner" (Raento 2010, 306). Pictures of small Finnish flags found their way onto Finnish products, proudly displaying their national origin. When the

national mustard Turun Sinappi's manufacturing was moved from Turku, Finland to Uppsala, Sweden there was uproar that a "national icon" and "Turku's name" was going to Sweden. The mustard manufacturing was given to Sweden, but "Lunden (Jalostaja), the Finnish family company that manufactured this mustard...announced it would continue mustard-making in Turku" (Raento 2010, 306). Auran Sinappi, the new mustard, was seen as "more Finnish," took sixty percent market share, and became a "popular national identity-political icon" (Raento 2010, 306). Choosing this mustard became a declaration of loyalty.

The analysis of the 212 articles regarding Finland and food allows for a detailed look into Finland's transition into the European Union that answers questions of identity, and attitude towards the EU. "The powers of the EU and views about Europeanness, Us, and Them are thus actively constructed, reconstructed, and deconstructed through popular initiatives, interests, and perceptions of trust. Food safety is an illustrative example because of its powerful role in defining and negotiating personal boundaries, national interest, and sense of safety at multiple scales." Food safety, but also culture surrounding food, where it is made and who makes it, is equally important. The actions taken towards food culture reflect member nations' attitudes towards the EU and express the nations' identity understandings.

These questions, of identity and relations to an overarching EU presence, will similarly be explored in this thesis. The use of news case studies, like the ones used in "Stomaching Change," will also be used to explore identity politics with other nations in the European Union.

LABELING-WHAT'S THE NAME?

The desire for nations to distinguish themselves from their member state counterparts is seen in the official naming of food products in the European Union. Countries, regions, towns, and other geographic entities are able to apply for official recognition and protection of foodstuffs, by the European Union. There are three types of protection: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), and Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG). According to European Commission regulations, Protected Designation of Origin "covers agricultural products and foodstuffs which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognised know-how." Protected Geographical Indication "covers agricultural products and foodstuffs closely linked to the geographical area. At least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation takes place in the area." Traditional Specialty Guaranteed "highlights traditional character, either in the composition or means of production." Items under protection can range from a specific bean grown in a city to a specific recipe in another. (Agriculture and Rural Development European Commission)

Protection of a particular food product provides, beyond authenticity, the recognition it deserves. Protection adds to the cultural significance of the food. The item was found worthy of proper identification; its history was legitimized.

Cornish Pasty

The Cornish pasty is one of the foodstuffs that falls under the EU protection of "Protected Geographical Indication." This protection is essentially a trademark that prevents persons outside of a region from making the food product and labeling it as the

authentic version. Cornish Pasties have very distinct features, all of which are officially listed under its protection documents. The Cornish Pasty has "a distinctive 'D' shape and is crimped on one side" (Cornish Pasty Association). These documents also specify the kind of filling (beef), how it is to be prepared (minced or roughly cut into chunks), and even how much of the beef should be in the filling (not less than 12.5%). The color of the ideal casing is specified as being golden, and savory. Most importantly, even with all the above mentioned specifications (there are more), the most crucial specification for a Cornish Pasty to be considered a legitimate Cornish Pasty is that it has to be made in Cornwall, England. (Cornish Pasty Association)

Aside from simply ensuring authenticity, the official status of the pasty has more importantly provided "Englishness" protection. Countries are aware of the expanding EU and how traditional foods become vulnerable in an increasingly open-border and open-market society. With these opportunities for protection, even as nations begin in theory to share aspects of their culture, there will still exist some aspects that will remain country-specific. In this sense nations are not losing bits of themselves to a greater Europe, the fear of which is clearly evidenced by the desire to achieve protection status for certain food items. With the Cornish pasty's officially recognized status, a bit of English culture has been given a permanent place.

Cheese, please.

Because protection rights can come with strict requirements like "must be made in region X," when countries with extremely similar products want protection, which country's version is granted protection? This type of problem occurred when Poland tried

to officially claim rights to its mountain cheese "Oscypek." For, on the other side of the Tatra mountains, Slovakian farmers were also crafting a smoked cheese that looked like a twin to Poland's. A formal objection was filed by Slovakia stating, "The designation of Oscypek would undermine the designation of Slovensky Oštiepok, for which Slovakia has applied to the Commission for registration as a 'protected geographical indication.'" The two member states were invited to an official European Commission consultation to discuss the matter. The consultation results are as follow:

Under this agreement, Poland and Slovakia recognise that the designations Oscypek and Slovenský oštiepok refer to cheeses that are now produced quite differently, despite the fact that they share the same history and tradition. According to Poland and Slovakia, the key differences between the two cheeses (concerning the raw material used, the production method and physical, chemical and organoleptic properties) should not give rise to confusion amongst consumers. Poland and Slovakia agree that both designations *Oscypek* and *Slovenský oštiepok* are legitimate and Poland underscores that registration of the designation Oscypek as a protected designation of origin would not undermine the right of Slovakian producers to use the designation oštiepok either alone or alongside other terms. (Official Journal of The European Union)

The decision to protect both products preserved each version in a sense Had only one been granted protection, either Poland or Slovakia would have had to rename their smoked cheese, or if it had been especially serious, been required to cease producing it completely. Renaming would result in a loss of familiarity with the product. Hypothetically, while it would be understood that the cheeses are one in the same, the stripping of an old name and adoption of a new one causes the consumer to no longer identify with the product in the same way. Traditions and familiarity were built around the name of the cheese as much as they built around the actual cheese. Having both names recognized reaffirmed for each country that their cheese had a distinct place in the world of food and culture. The desire to have both names recognized instead of just

succumbing to a new name is directly related to the two countries wanting to be distinguished from each other. There are Polish Oscypeki [sic] and Slovakian oštiepok. (Official Journal of The European Union)

Specific labeling under the EU carries an economic significance in addition to a cultural one. A certain label can determine whether or not a product receives money to be produced. Under the EU, snails are categorized as "inland fish" and carrots are now fruits. Why? Subsidies. The EU subsidizes fisheries, but France wanted to receive subsidies for snail farmers and decided to formally ask the European Commission to officially recognize the snail as an "inland fish." Fruit jams are also subsidized by the EU. Portugal produces carrot jams, but these jams are not subsidized because carrots are categorized as vegetables. So, Portugal asked for carrots to be recognized as fruits, and they succeeded. (Wasowski 2013)

In this respect it would appear that the EU is loosening its old strict standards and trying to appease nations. This could very well be to show nations that the EU is for them, not against them, as their older policies seemed to insist. This is evidence of the EU listening to the demands of the nations.

If foodstuffs can be protected, why is there a resistance to the homogenization of the European Union? It should be noted that not all foods that apply that protection receive it. Additionally, while protection does mean that foodstuffs will not be meddled with under EU regulations, the action of seeking protection is in fact the specific country's act of resistance.

CARROT CONUNDRUM

The member states of the European Union share a common food market, and the EU introduced a set of regulations for produce grown within the Union. These common food policies were intended to establish a sense of equality to the rules and to establish what is to be considered "normal," with regards to food, by all member states. The common set of food policies and definitions of proper appearances were introduced to reaffirm the commonality of the European identity. By following the same laws and regulations and accepting the same understanding for how produce should look, countries were actively participating in and embracing their common European identity.

In 1994 The European Union introduced a set of regulations for the shapes and sizes of fruits and vegetable to qualify as produce. In other words, fruits and vegetables had to meet certain aesthetic standards to be placed on market shelves. These "specific marketing standards" covered thirty-six different produce items. The curve of a banana had to meet a certain standard, specifically being "free of abnormal curvature" and at least 14 centimeters in length; Cucumbers could not be too curvy, class 1 cucumbers must be "practically straight" and bent by a gradient of no more than 1/10. A carrot dare not be too knobby if it wants to find its way to a store shelf. The "ugly" produce, the produce not meeting the set standards, was thrown away. *The Guardian* reported that an estimated "20 per cent of British farmers' produce goes to waste," (theguardian.com) because of unsatisfactory appearance, not necessarily poor quality.

The abundant produce waste experienced across the European Union definitely triggered concern among the nations regarding the necessity of such strict standards. It would appear that an attempt to uniformly qualify produce as produce, an act arguably intended for the good of the European Union, actually caused a lot of harm. As a result,

member states voiced their concerns surrounding the laws regulating the agricultural industry. Some of the regulations were lifted or altered, and rules became more lenient. Where there were once thirty-six produce items that had specific aesthetic requirements, in 2011 the Union relaxed the requirements to eleven specific produce items: bananas, apples, citrus fruit, kiwifruit, lettuces, curled leaved and broad-leaved endives, peaches and nectarines, pears, strawberries, sweet peppers, table grapes, and tomatoes. All others have to meet "general market standards." (Official Journal of the European Union No 543/2011)

News of the changes to the old law left some nations worried about the future safety of the produce rather than pleased with the removal of rather excessively strict regulations. Suddenly, the countries feared that without regulations from the European Union, they would be responsible for their own standards and that those standards would not be universal, and even drastically different, across the board. Drastically different regulations would suggest that some foods would be "safer" than others, insinuating that some countries could be cutting corners. (newyorktimes.com)

In this response, one can see the lingering perception that some countries are more mindful of food safety than others. It suggests that some countries have lower standards than other nations--that they are dirtier. In reality, some of the "high" standards in nations are superfluous, an example of overly cautious regulation. More importantly, this concept suggests a persistent idea of a mild core and periphery Europe, that more economically powerful countries at the core hold more power than those found at the periphery. And while the Union is less core-periphery intense than it was in years past, there are still examples of similar power play to this day. Comprising a large portion of

the economic backbone, Germany leads the Union financially, and with that leadership also carries a lot of influence. Countries with more influence are the ones which are able to shape perceptions of various societal characteristics.

While the case of the ugly produce was economically and environmentally impactful, it is also important to look at how the member states of the European Union responded to the case. Their responses shed light on each country's perspective on EU presence in their agricultural life, and daily life in general. Many nations outright opposed these regulations and demanded the strict rules be stripped.

France's Freaky Fruit Frenzy

France went as far as instituting a pro ugly food campaign called the "Inglorious Fruit and Vegetable Campaign" in July of 2014. Fruits and vegetables that would otherwise be thrown out were marketed in grocery stores at thirty percent cheaper than the good-looking produce. The fruits and vegetables were presented in a proud-of-their-ugliness manner, "The Grotesque Apple," "The Ugly Carrot," and the "The Failed Lemon" are a few of the names used at the displays, proudly showing their socially constructed defects. Intermarché, the supermarket behind the campaign, even made various food items (like a smoothie) out of the ugly produce to let customers sample and judge for themselves whether or not the foods were edible. The campaign was well received; the produce stand completely sold out in one day. (Galliot)

France's direct opposition to the old food standards, and subsequent actions to market exactly what had once been disapproved by the EU, clearly expressed its position on the EU's attempt to define normality in the realm of produce. France wanted the power

to define its own standards of "normality" and to not be grouped in to a collective "European" definition of it. Not only did France reinstate the ugly fruit that would otherwise have been thrown out, wasted, and created monetary losses, but they managed to sell their "trash" *and* make money. It was a direct attack on the EU's presence in member states' lives. In this way France and others are setting limits to what the EU can do; the EU is not setting limits on what they can do. The power play has changed.

Portuguese Produce Packages

A more grassroots pro-ugly-fruit initiative has also gotten underway in Lisbon, Portugal. In November 2013 Isabel Soares and a handful of volunteers decided to buy the fruits and vegetables deemed unacceptable by the EU's appearance standards and sell the foods themselves. Their cooperative was named "Fruta Feia," or Ugly Fruit, and was incredibly well received. So well received, in fact, that at the time the article introducing it was written, in addition to the four hundred twenty registered customers, there existed a waiting list of a thousand people. (Minder)

The program operates by registering customers who pay an annual five Euro member fee, and then choose to pay either three Euros and fifty cents for a three to four kilogram (of fruits and vegetables) crate, or seven Euro for a six to eight kilogram crate. The customer then picks up the crate at a specific delivery point every week. The process is simple, affordable, and incredibly appealing because it tackles issues of waste and overpriced produce items simultaneously.

Just as the French campaign was a sign of a greater desire to take the power of deeming proper produce aesthetic away from the EU, and thus fighting against a defined

collective understanding of "normal" and "acceptable," the Fruta Feia cooperative has done the same. Soares herself has called this a countercultural movement and a "backhanded slap to the overweening EU rule makers" (Minder) The misplaced regulatory intervention has induced enough outrage to create a strong movement against the shallow, appearance-based, quality regulations. Where the EU's policies would otherwise be harming Portuguese farmers, Soares's cooperative is helping local farmers, citizens who need more affordable produce, and minimizing food waste. As such, Soares and her customers' beliefs that food standards should be determined by countries themselves is a direct resistance to the EU's attempt to develop an accepted collective understanding of what is "visually-appealing."

These cases are an example of resistance to the homogenization of the EU, which is seen in the nation's refusal to allow the EU to determine what will qualify as "normal," with regards to produce. By refusing to accept the original standards, nations were refusing to have that part of their cultures regulated. If acceptance of these food standards was an acceptance of the projected European identity, then the refusal of those standards also constituted an objection to the EU's notion of European identity.

These cases show some of the many challenges of managing twenty-eight nations that have no agreement on unifying ideals, and attempting to make uniform standards on the appearance of food (essentially deeming what is and is not good-looking in the world of agriculture). The responses of the countries, some extremely excited about the more lax approach to food standards, others immediately expressing worry that a lack of uniform standards would be hazardous to the wellbeing of persons in the European Union, are an example of the perpetual uncertainty nations express with regards to how regulated they

and other member states want to and should be. The question of unity and to what extent nations wish to be united is constantly being debated.

Additionally, the case introduces the concept of the power of the consumer, the common citizen. Where common citizens cannot vote in a formal manner (like EU council members, for example), they can instead cast votes in their daily lives by purchasing the "ugly fruit" (selling it out), by strongly fighting against hundred-year-old recipe changes, by requiring proper product recognition, and so on. These votes, though they do not directly change existing laws and regulations, do point out issues with them and call to attention those areas where the European Union needs to rethink its positions. It is one of the most powerful ways citizens can express exactly what they want from the Union.

The way that nations respond to these sorts of policies sheds light on how much they want or do not want the European Union to affect their lives. The pro-ugly food campaigns that promoted what the EU had previously found unacceptable showed the EU that countries refuse to give it power to decide culturally constructed ideas like "normality." Culturally constructed concepts will remain created within the countries and societies themselves, and will not be determined and defined by an overarching body.

With calls for drastic alterations to existing EU laws like these, the member states are in fact voicing their opinions on how the Union itself should be shaped and run. These informal voting processes have just as much impact as formal ones. Importantly, the views expressed on these issues go beyond just food law; they reflect what states want from the EU, more broadly.

THE CINNAMON SCARE

The case of the controversial Danish Cinnamon Bun gives readers reason to pause. In December of 2013 the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration determined that based on European Union laws, cinnamon twists "kanelstang" and buns "kanelnegel" contained too much coumarin, a "chemical compound in the most common variety of cinnamon" (bigstory.ap.org). The cause for concern stems from apparent findings that the intake of large amounts of coumarin could lead to liver damage. As such, Danish bakers were asked to lower the amount of cinnamon added to cinnamon treat recipes. Predictably, there was uproar, from Danish. This seemingly bizarre information was received with much confusion. How, after years of making these traditional sweet treats, in many cases with the same respective recipes, could they be meddled with in such a way that could potentially mean a complete alteration to the recipe? Danish bakers protested, saying, "...the EU limit is too strict, and would make it hard, if not impossible, to make their cherished pastries" (bigstory.ap.org). Danish bakers have been making these buns and twists for years, and in all of those years the health advisory board never found fault with cinnamon.

It is because of the European Union's spice limit and regulations that the Danish sweet treats have gone under the health agency's microscope. "The EU limit for so-called "fine baked goods" is set at 15 milligrams of coumarin per kilogram of pastry. The Danish agency found last year that more than half of the 74 food samples it took from bakeries, supermarkets and importers contained more coumarin than that"

(bigstory.ap.org). What really bothered the Danish bakers about the news that their desserts might be in danger was that other countries, like Sweden for example, were not required to follow the same regulations when crafting their cinnamon rolls, even though they use "three times as much coumarin in their cinnamon rolls" (bigstory.ap.org). Why was this? What loophole did Sweden use? A technicality in categorizing the baked goods. While the Swedes listed their cinnamon sweets under "traditional and seasonal bakery," the Danes did not. This category has less strict rules and regulations, and as a result the Swedish cinnamon rolls were left alone. The Danes did not list their baked goods under this category since, "The Danish food agency didn't use that classification because 'it didn't consider the "kanelnegle" as a pastry sold primarily for Christmas or other holidays, said agency spokesman Henrik Nielsen'" (bigstory.ap.org). Nielson went on to say that officials would meet to discuss and decide which sweet treats would be classified under "traditional and seasonal" and which ones would not. (bigstory.ap.org)

An outcry over the ridiculousness of the rule circled around the understanding that for the "bad" effects of coumarin to even take place, "A grown man like me could eat like 10 'kanelnegle' every day for several years and not even get near the limit of what's dangerous to my liver," said Anders Grabow, a spokesman for the Danish Bakers' Association. "I would probably get too much sugar in my body before that." It is the very absurdity of these cases and the reports about them that fuel the protests of citizens, and direct attention to faults in policies. This due attention brings to the forefront issues that the European Union needs to, once again, resolve.

This case of the cinnamon bun illustrates some of the downfalls of the technicalities of words and categories. How the categorization or miscategorization--

though the Danes did put their pastry in an appropriate category--of a food almost lead to its demise--that is powerful. Again, the influence of words and labeling is seen.

The reactions of the bakers and public at large for one show just how much they care about their cinnamon bun, and also their position against the homogenization of culture. Their strong fight against any reform to the recipes shows the position the bun has in Danish culture. It would have been easy to, say, alter the recipe a bit, if it meant it would comply with EU regulations. But they did not. By not submitting themselves to the regulations of the EU and altering a recipe they are actually expressing that they will not alter an aspect of *their*, Danish, culture to fit into the boundaries of European culture. Essentially the Danes were insisting that it was in fact the EU who had messed up, not the Danes, and that they, the Danes, will keep their recipe. If anything the EU should change their policy or do whatever other political action to ensure the safety of the buns as they are. The Danes are fighting the homogenization of the EU in that they are fighting what the *European Union* deems a "daily pastry." For the Danes this cinnamon bun *is* a daily (available) pastry. The Danes will not "give in" to the EU's definition of "daily" when they have been calling this bun a "daily" option for centuries. The Danish bakers strongly stood by their rolls with the belief that the European Union had overstepped its bounds.

Craftsmanship is a sensitive issue to meddle with as the issue is personal, both to the bakers and to the buyers. The thought of a beloved food being banned or trifled with stirs up feelings of self-preservation. A critique of a potentially centuries old recipe, an extension of the Danish culture, is likewise seen as a critique of Denmark. Issues of this nature are not taken lightly because years of tradition and national spirit are invested in these food items, and any attacks on them will be met with a greater defensive force. The

Danes were defending Danish-ness just as much as they were defending the actual cinnamon bun.

NOT THE EU'S E. COLI

The E. Coli-contaminated-cucumber case that occurred in Europe in 2011 was an especially traumatizing event for Germany and Spain's respective images in the Union. It was a case of hasty decision making, blaming, failure of proper communication, and equally hasty broadcasting of false information that left an economically hurt and perceptively contaminated Spain.

Spain-Germany Tensions

The 2011 E. Coli contaminated cucumbers were first identified by authorities in Hamburg and the sources of the outbreak were pinned on Spanish cucumbers. This claim, as it was later discovered, was wrong and resulted in a strong argument between Spain and Germany (bbc.co.uk). Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero of Spain commented on the situation saying, "There is not the slightest indication that the origin of the serious infection is any Spanish product,"(bbc.co.uk) which leads us to believe that Spain was not even notified of the supposed E. Coli findings before they were broadcasted by German authorities. Spain received news of their contaminated cucumbers with the same surprise as other countries.

Wrongly accused and suffering from the aftermath, Prime Minister Zapatero sought compensation. And while Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel regretted the damage caused by the broadcast she defended the authorities in Hamburg by stating that

they had acted according to German law (bbc.co.uk). On the 22nd of May, Germany informed the European Commission's Early Warning and Response System, a "confidential computer system allowing Member States to send alerts about events with a potential impact on the EU, share information, and coordinate their response," of "a significant increase in the number of patients with hemolytic uremic syndrome and bloody diarrhea caused by enterohemorrhagic *Escherichia coli*" (COMM ESPRESSO European Commission). Information regarding the outbreak was quickly broadcast to all twenty-seven member states via the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed. On June 1st an official report concluded that the Spanish cucumbers were not the source of the E. Coli and alert notifications were finally lifted. As it turns out, on June 11th a press release from the European Commission confirmed that the E. Coli source was sprouts, from one small farm just south of Hamburg, Germany.

One of the more disturbing parts of this case is how the whole situation was handled by Germany. Yes, they were in compliance with their German laws, but they went about the matter secretly, not informing Spain of the accusations before they were presented to the European Commission. As a member of the European Union, should Germany not also consider its fellow member states' wellbeing? This is an example of the sense of a united identity, that the EU has been trying to promote, failing. This whole case could have been dealt with more quietly in the sense that after German authorities had found traces of E. Coli in cucumbers, they could have taken the liberty to first contacted Spanish authorities and tried to have handled the situation just between the two nations. A warning notification could have made a world of difference. Spain should

have been involved with the case seeing as the cucumbers had been identified as theirs. Spain should have been consulted. Instead, Germany chose to broadcast it widely.

Another interesting aspect of the case was how Germany proposed to make up for its mistaken accusations. Mrs. Merkel insisted she will push for EU compensation for Spanish farmers, and while this seems admirable at first it is important to notice that Germany was asking the European Union to fix the mistake that *Germany* made. Why the EU should have to pay for this mistake was not made clear. Germany caused this damage. In its "sourcing" of the contaminated cucumbers Germany also managed to contaminate Spain to the rest of Europe. One can draw similarities between this kind of labeling and that of restaurant health inspection's. Restaurants are evaluated by health inspections and given a number grade that is displayed in their store, immediately labeling the quality of the institution. Say that the day a restaurant was evaluated was an "exceptional" one, in the sense that the conditions of the restaurant on that day were not true representations of how the restaurant normally is. The number they were given remains and people immediately judge the restaurant based on that number. In essence Spain was also given a number by the false accusation. It was established in the minds of other nations that "Spain has dangerous produce. Do not buy produce from Spain. "Germany's request to have to the EU help with the damages seems somewhat unreasonable since Europe nations were simply acting in accordance with the scare (not buying produce) because of what Germany had reported.

Here, we once again see the picking and choosing of "E.U. collective identity." Spain (note that a specific country's name was being used) was targeted as the one responsible for the E. Coli cucumbers; it was Spain's issue. But once it was discovered

that the source of the E. Coli was in fact *not* Spain's cucumbers, the responsibility to resolve the issue was suddenly handed to the entire European Union, it was then the E.U.'s responsibility. The collective identity was pitched and picked up again by Germany when it benefited or at least lessened the fiscal pain for Germany. There was a shift in attitudes towards identity. The attitude transitioned from “them, not me,” to “us/our.”

At the end of the day, the blame is placed on the individual country and the pain of the loss is felt by the individual country (primarily). So even with this homogenizing and union-ness it seems to go back to the individual country. It is very important to once again point out the power of labeling in this specific case. The EU pushes unity "EU this, EU that, you are European..." but the cucumbers were labeled "Spanish" cucumbers, not "the European Union's cucumbers." It seems small, but that labeling, and finger pointing as it were had detrimental effects. The EU was not seen as contaminated and something to be wary of, *Spain* was.

This case shows a downside to the European Union. When one country with a lot of power, typically economic, broadcasts news concerning another country and a problem with it, as in this case, the rest of the Union is bound to hear about it. A panic of sorts ensues and people act dramatically, in the E. Coli case cucumber sales plummeted, as would be expected from a contamination scare. "The damage had been done: 150,000 [tons] of cucumbers went unsold in Spain. The cost to business is put at more than 200 million Euros a week" (bbc.co.uk). The effects of the contamination scare severely hurt an already struggling Spain what with having the highest rate of unemployment in the European Union. "Stories of workers being laid off. This is unusually sensitive because

the agricultural sector is vital to a Spanish economy where over 20% are unemployed-- the highest rate in the E.U. Prime Minister Zapatero is seeking compensation" (bbc.co.uk). The results of the E. Coli outbreak broadcast went beyond economic troubles, the country of Spain itself was marked as "contaminated." Because food is often seen as an extension of a geographical place (country, region, town), the perception of food is able to completely alter a person's perception of said geographical location. Names and labels attributed to food items from those places are also placed on the location itself.

The case illustrates just how difficult it is to find the source of a problem in a Union which is so closely connected. "The E. Coli outbreak in Europe shows just how hard it can be to pinpoint where things go wrong in such a labyrinthine system" (Hewitt). Mis-sourcing, even if under the premise of good intentions such as alerting nations of dangerous contamination to food, causes more severe problems than are probably anticipated. This case shows just how sensitive matters of food are and how specific language used in sourcing, and in labeling, carries significant power and the ability to completely alter perceptions of countries.

Additionally an issue seen in this case that coincides with the aforementioned is that there is no evidence of there having been any sort of communication between Spain and Germany before Germany decided to vocalize its concerns with Spanish cucumbers. Spain was not able to defend herself before the news hit the media, and was in a sense unjustly attacked. Yes, Germany found E. Coli in cucumbers supposedly from Spain, and yet people's health is more important than economic troubles that could arise from false classification, but the issue still stands that they acted too quickly, failed to confer with

Spain, and Spain with its E. Coli-less cucumbers was marked with a big X. People stopped buying Spain's produce and Spain lost 200 million Euros because of it.

It would appear that nations are more than willing to rejoice in the perks of the Union and claim their European identity when it rewards, or at the very least does not harm, them. However, the member states are quick to drop the collective European Union identity and spirit in times when troubles arise. Suddenly the hypothetical problem is country X's fault. Specific names of countries are used instead of a collective "European Union" one. It is easy to accept and promote an identity that benefits one's country, accepting such an identity, and refraining from isolating a specific nation as the source of a problem, during times of trouble proves to be difficult for many member states

Resistance to the homogenization of the European Union is seen in this case through Germany's language. By saying the contaminated cucumbers are Spain's, they are also saying it is not *Germany's*. That Germany and Spain are not one in the same. Even if they are tied together by this overarching identity of "European," in the end Germany is Germany and Spain is Spain.

CONCLUSION

The European Union is ever changing, shaping and reshaping its structure. Member states are connected by open borders, a common currency, and an interconnected market. The push for a common collective identity comes from the insecurity the EU feels from lacking an organic, accepted across the board set of ideals and values that tie the member states together beyond the superficial level of currency

and highways. The economic issues faced by the European Union lead to a collective culture initiative. It was believed that by fostering a common culture, something that Europe lacked, problems would stop arising because all nations would have the same understanding economic expectations. As has been illustrated by the cases introduced throughout this thesis, the collective culture initiative has been met with much resistance and not been successful.

Resistance to the homogenization to the European Union has been showcased through the different food cases presented, each expressing the ever-present desires of nations to be individualistic. With the power of labeling, the Cornish pasty case serves as an example for what it truly means to have a food item be legally protected. Protection not only guarantees authenticity, but also legitimizes the food item by giving it an official place in an ever homogenizing world. The Cornish pasty given a permanent place in Europe, but more importantly, "Englishness" is given a permanent place. With the smoked cheese case of Poland and Slovakia the ultimate decision to allow each country to label their respective cheeses as they wished preserved each version. This confirmed that each cheese was unique, and that neither country would have to give up rights to their traditional food. Each was granted specific recognition, and a piece of each country's culture as well. The snail and carrot cases of France and Portugal, respectively, display a different example of labeling in that they sought special recognition of their food items, because existing labels inhibited traditional dishes. The EU's understanding of jams did not match Portugal's understanding of jams, so Portugal requested a re-labeling of carrots to be "fruit." Snails had no official place in the EU's understanding of food items. After France's request, they were granted the grand title of "inland fish."

These food items' new labels allowed Portugal and France to fit their specialty food items into the EU's categories. The responses to the ugly produce case presented by both France and Portugal illustrate member state's desires to keep their own definitions of what is considered "normal" or "visually-appealing." They do not believe the EU should have the power to define, for *every* state as a whole, what is and is not considered aesthetically appealing. That concept will remain culturally constructed, not EU-ly deemed. The Danish bakers' protest to change their "daily" cinnamon bun recipes to fit under the EU's understanding of "daily," was an objection to allowing the EU to have control over that cultural understanding. By defending their cinnamon buns, the bakers did more than just save a pastry, they saved a bit of Danish-ness. The E. Coli case showed that the "European Identity" is only accepted when it is beneficial to a nation, it is not a constant acceptance. The language used by German authorities, contaminated *Spanish* cucumbers, which left Spain isolated was just as much of a sourcing mechanism as it was a separational one. It was vocalized that Spain and Germany are not one in the same.

Whether it was defending a national food item, ensuring its protection, or completely disassociating one's self from one, each of the cases in this thesis illustrate the perpetual desire of states to remain culturally different from one another. Generalized understandings of "normal" or "acceptable" with regards to culture is a power that states do not wish to bestow upon the decision makers of the EU. The states want to remain distinguishable from one another and decide for themselves any culturally constructed concepts, rather than have an overarching body decide for them.

FURTHER RESEARCH

In future research it would be interesting to explore what happens with imported foods, how they are treated, if they will be treated differently with regards to regulations. Exploring to see how this would affect the economy would be beneficial as well. If imported foods from other nations are cheaper, because those countries do not have to abide by the EU rules, are they hurting EU nations? Will nations continue to stand by their own foods, and other member states? Or will they start purchasing the cheaper imported foods?

Additionally, when countries introduce food chains from other nations, for example McDonald's, what guidelines does it follow? And what does the introduction of the restaurants mean for a nation's food culture and identity?

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