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Breaking the Norm: Negotiating Individual vs. Group Identity in Food Culture in France and Spain

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in Food Culture in France and Spain**

Catharine Youngs

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Abstract

“Food identity”, a term created by the author of this study, was based on Phillip Smith's (2001) definition of the term culture, which includes the customs and way of life of a people, and identity as posited in social identity theory. In social identity theory, a person has several selves and is a member of several groups as a result creating in-group and out-group categorizations. From these two ideas, theorizing one identity at a national level (food culture) and one identity on an individual level (social identity), the idea of “food identity” was formed.

The concept for this project is a result of the author's experiences as a gluten free American living in France and Spain. These two countries have distinct cultural and food identities. Problematically, when an individual who identifies with these cultures chooses or requires a dietary difference outside the normative cultural framework, in this case not eating gluten, the group can react negatively. Subsequently, the thesis focuses on researching these two cultures' reactions to gluten free diets in relation to their historical identities of food and culture.

Through the historical background of each country with an emphasis on bread, an examination of the personal blogs of seven food bloggers from both countries, and an analysis of five survey results, new information has been uncovered about the role of bread in France and Spain. Additional new information includes the food identity of average individuals in these countries and how gluten free nationals have to negotiate their personal food identity in relation to their culture's identity. The differences and similarities between the experiences of the nationals in these two countries further highlight the fascinating negotiation required when an individual is identified as outside of a culture's normative food identity.

Research Questions

This thesis seeks to answer four main research questions through the different sections of the paper. The questions are as follows:

- What is the normative food identity in France and Spain?
- What is the individual's food identity in relation to the culture's food identity?
- How do individuals relate to food and culture?
- How does being unable to eat gluten change how one relates to one's culture and therefore negotiates one's identity?

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

The concept for this thesis is a result of the author's experiences as a gluten free American living in France and Spain. After her time abroad, she began to question how gluten free French and Spanish individuals negotiate their identities as gluten free nationals living in cultures where bread is so important. In order to analyze the connection between identity, food, and culture, the author created the terms "food identity" and "food culture" to describe the interactions between food, identity, and culture. The following section will define these terms as they will be used in the rest of this study.

To examine the relationship between food, identity, and culture, this project will first establish the definitions of identity and culture that will be used throughout the paper. These two words are used in many contexts, but the way this study will use them is specific to the work done in this thesis. Further, the words will often be used in relation to one another and this section will help explain their usage together. First, this section will provide a definition of culture, followed by a definition of identity as well as the definitions for food culture and food identity. Together, these definitions provide the framework for this study to answer the research questions of this thesis.

“Culture” is a word that contains several meanings and is used differently in many contexts. As a starting definition *The Oxford English Dictionary* provides, “The distinctive ideas, customs, social behaviour [sic], products, or way of life of a particular nation, society, people, or period” (“Culture, n.”). Entering into a more contextualized definition of culture, Philip Smith, in his book *Cultural Theory: An Introduction* provides the following information about culture:

“According to one expert, Raymond Williams, ‘culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language...because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct systems of thought’” (Smith 1). While *The Oxford English Dictionary* can provide a basis for what culture means, each field of study establishes its own meaning of culture that is most relevant to the discipline. Since there is no well-defined, pre-established field for food identity studies, a new definition must be forged by drawing from elements of other definitions of culture.

The introduction of *Cultural Theory: An Introduction* gives a longer definition of how the word “culture” can be narrowed down into three categories:

...to refer to the intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development of an individual, group, or society./ To capture a range of intellectual and artistic activities and their products (film, art, theatre). In this usage culture is more or less synonymous with “the Arts”, hence we can speak of a “Minister for Culture.”/ To designate the entire way of life, activities, beliefs, and customs of a people, group, or society.

(Smith 2)

This paper will predominately work with the third use of the term culture: the way of life of a people or group. This third use of the term encompasses the customs of a people, which would include their food. The way of life of a people would also designate the culture surrounding their

food and the importance of food in their daily life. Thus, the third definition of the word “culture” is the most appropriate as it is used in this paper.

Smith continues discussing the origin of the word culture as a way to access a current definition. He writes, “In its early use in English, culture was associated with the ‘cultivation’ of animals and crops and with religious worship....From the sixteenth century until the nineteenth the term began to be widely applied to the improvement of the individual human mind and personal manners through learning” (Smith 1). Although the word culture used in its broadest sense today—as recounted by *The Oxford English Dictionary*—is not closely associated with these two older definitions, it is interesting that the definition originally involved food. Although this paper will not refer to culture as in the cultivation of food and animals, it does relate back to food and back to the roots of the word.

The use of “culture” in this paper encompasses the customs and ways of life of a group of people as drawn from Smith's third definition of culture. Food is present in the customs and way of life of a people— food plays into rituals, daily life, and representations of the culture. Thus for the author of this paper, food is a natural inclusion into the definition of culture. The use of the term “food culture” in this paper therefore refers to food as a part of culture and the importance it holds therein.

To define the word “identity” it is most useful to reference social identity theory. A basic definition of social identity theory is that, “In the Social Identity Theory, a person has not one, ‘personal self’, but rather several selves that correspond to widening circles of group membership” (“Social Identity Theory”) and further this “group membership creates in-group/self-categorization and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group” (“Social Identity Theory”). As this theory applies to the research contained in this paper,

every person has several identities that relate to a number of group memberships, specifically, his or her culture's food identity. Each person categorizes him or herself as part of the in-group of their culture's food identity and thinks less positively of those outside of the in-group. For the purpose of this study, the standard in-group is the people who live in either France or Spain and eat gluten. Conversely, the out-group is the natives of each of the countries who do not eat gluten. However, these categorizations shift depending on situations: for example a large group of gluten free people together may become the in-group and those who eat gluten become the out-group. These shifts will be seen later in the paper.

From these definitions of culture and identity, the author of this paper proposes the term, "food identity". A culture has a food identity—generally composed of the foods typical of a culture which the culture uses to represent itself to those outside of it. Further, each individual person has a food identity that relates to his or her culture's food identity, but many other facets contribute to an individual's food identity such as preference, family history, and eating restrictions. These additional influences make an individual's food identity different from a culture's food identity.

The research in this paper looks to discover the relation between a culture's food identity and an individual's food identity when the individual's food identity is vastly different from the cultural norm. In order to examine this relation, this paper explores the lives of individuals who partake in a gluten free diet in France and Spain. How do these individuals negotiate their food identity in relation to their culture's food identity? As the history sections will show, since gluten is so prominent in the cultures of France and Spain, these individuals may no longer be part of the in-group of the food identity of their culture.

A person can choose to eat gluten free for many reasons—for example an allergy, an intolerance, a disease such as Autism whose effects are diminished by this diet, or Celiac Disease. Although some people choose to be gluten free and others are medically necessitated, this research will study those who eat gluten free in general. No distinctions will be drawn between those who eat gluten free by choice or by necessity.

In order to look at gluten free eating in France and Spain today, the paper will first offer a brief history of food in each country. The focus of each history will be on bread and products that feature gluten, but other products that have great historical and cultural significance will be discussed as well. At the end of each historical section, the paper will provide information on modern eating habits in France and Spain. After the presentation of both of the histories, there will be a section synthesizing the two histories and a section concerning the statistics relevant to gluten free in France and Spain. Before discussing modern day individuals in each of the countries, a description of the methodology used to conduct the study of modern bloggers is provided. The paper then moves into examining seven bloggers in order to study their negotiation of identity and their reactions to living gluten free in their countries. After the broader discussion of the bloggers, there is an additional section which highlights five individuals who completed a survey on living gluten free in France and Spain. In the final section, the author will provide her reflections on living as an American abroad and what implications the research in this paper may hold for the future.

Bread in French History

In order to answer the research question of what is the normative food identity in France, this study first focuses on the food history of France with an emphasis on bread. Bread, in fact,

proves to be the main sustenance for the French, and during times of famine peasants would rather mix potentially deadly ingredients into their bread than eat fruits and vegetables.

This thesis will establish France's food identity through an examination of the most commonly consumed items as seen in the food history of the country. By looking into the history of bread specifically, the normative identity can be better established in relation to those who cannot eat that bread. The later historical section on Spain aims to answer the same question in a parallel way—providing a history of food with a narrow focus on bread. For this section, the author consulted several historical works on France as well as works on the broader food history of Europe and finally articles and books on modern French food trends.

C. Husson, in her book, *Histoire du pain à toutes les époques et chez toutes les peuples*, written in 1887, discusses the history of bread throughout the ages. She begins with a discussion of the importance of bread in the Roman Empire. There was a great emphasis on farming and using the grains and vegetables that the Romans grew themselves. In fact, "...agriculture was so honored that wheat was called the adored grain" (85).¹ It was during times of famine that the Romans used grain to make a type of porridge, called "puls". It was originally made of fermented barley flour, but later sausage and vegetables from their gardens were added to the mixture (85). Throughout the rest of the book, she focuses on France and states that wheat did not natively grow in the region that we know of as France, but was brought to the area by Celts²(91).

All translations in this thesis are the work of the author unless otherwise noted.

¹ Original text: "...l'agriculture était tellement en honneur qu'on appela la graine *adorea* de *ador*, blé" (Husson 85).

² The original text uses the word, "Gaëls" to describe the people. The research was unable to provide the information on whether the author is referring to the Gaul or the Celtic people.

The Gauls had several different types of bread, originally unleavened, and dipped in sauce made from the juices of meat. The first leavening happened when they replaced water with beer while making the bread and the yeast in the beer worked as a leavening agent (94-5). During this period, bread was not the most important part of a meal, “Bread, gruel, and meat were not the only components of the diets of the Gauls, vegetables and fruit were also present in their meals” (95).³ However, bread was most important to the diets of the peasants and the slaves, since they were unable to afford as much meat and vegetables as the upper classes. Unable to buy their food, they made great progress in farming (95-6). The presence of the booming agriculture attracted the Romans, who were lacking grain in their own fields, and the Gauls were soon overtaken by Caesar’s army (85).

It was during the Gallo-Roman period when the presence of bread increased in the area that we now consider France (85). Unfortunately, the Gallo-Roman emperors were weak and could not keep their empire together. Under the emperor Diocletian in the late 3rd century, wealth was poorly distributed, thus the poor could not afford to buy food. Famine fell upon the people and the poor had to steal their bread or pillage other people’s homes in order to have food (97). A series of emperors tried to ameliorate the situation in France, but before they could, the land was conquered by the Franks.

During the Frankish and Merovingian periods from approximately 500 to 900 CE, the Catholic Church began to play a larger role in the life of the people. Massimo Montanari, in his book *The Culture of Food*, describes the importance of bread in Catholicism during the time of the Franks in the 4th century. He notes that the rising importance of bread was not only a break from Judaism which saw bread as “leavened and so somehow ‘corrupt’” (46), but also as an

³ Original text: “Le pain, les bouillies et la viande, ne composaient pas les seuls aliments des Gaulois, les légumes et les fruits entraient aussi dans les repas” (Husson 95).

integration of religion into Roman culture since bread was so important in Roman food culture. Wine and oil were vital parts of Roman food culture as well and both a part of Christianity, but neither held the same status as bread. In Catholicism, bread is seen as the body of Christ, “The essence of bread was, however, Jesus Christ himself, ‘planted in the Virgin, fermented in the flesh, kneaded in the Passion, baked in the oven of the sepulchre [sic], and seasoned in the churches where every day the holy Host is served to the faithful’” (17).

Husson emphasizes the role of the bishops during the Frankish and Merovingian periods. The emperor Clovis brought Christianity to this era and with it, a new Catholic ideology. This ideology demanded equality and liberty and the freeing of the serfs so that they could eat. The ideology is evidenced in the Lord’s Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread...” (99).⁴ In the church, the priest was seen as a friend and the bishop was seen as the defender. Members of the church, who would later be canonized as saints, performed works of charity giving bread to the poor (99-100). In this time period, there was a growth in organizations that cared for the poor, even amidst political disagreements, “Under religious influence, many organizations were founded to defend ‘le pain quotidien’ [translation: the daily bread] that was so often absent during political wars [wars between Church and State], sustained by the intrigues of women or by the jealousy of the powerful” (101).⁵ The church at this time was playing a kind role towards the poor, their works of charity focused on giving bread or food to those less fortunate.

During the Frankish and Merovingian periods, there was a turn towards industry and away from crops and farming. Formerly, families made bread in their own houses, even the palace bread was made in the palace (103). Originally, the millers were the people who provided

⁴ Original text: « Donnez-nous aujourd’hui notre pain de chaque jour » (Husson 99).

⁵ Original text: « Sous l’influence religieuse les associations se multiplièrent pour défendre le pain quotidien si souvent enlevé pendant ces guerres intérieures, suscitées par les intrigues de femmes ou par la jalousie des grands » (Husson 101)

baked bread for the families who could not make it themselves. However, under the new industrial influence, the first bakers began to emerge.

In times of famine when flour was in short supply, many things were added to bread in an attempt to make it more substantial, such as grape seeds, hazelnuts, ground plant roots, green wheat, and herbs. Some of the add-ins were dangerous and instead of staving off death as intended, the bread poisoned people (104). People would rather pay exceedingly high prices for bread than eat vegetables and only as a final choice would they would turn to fruit. Montanari adds that the peasants would rather add these ingredients than eat grass like animals, even if the bread might kill them (49). Bread was so important to the citizens that they continued to try to make and eat it, even though it killed them. The value they put on bread was so great that they would rather eat bread that could harm them than eat food that was known to be safe.

Throughout the Middle Ages, many famines occurred and peasants were forced to use their dangerous innovations as substitutes for flour to make bread. In the early 1000s peasants were advised to eat the “dirtiest” of animals (likely pigs) and mix powdered marble with their bread in order to obtain the desired light colored bread. However, this marble powder did not do much to satiate their hunger and killed many people (115). Interestingly, during the time of the Crusades, bakers started adding herbs to bread to make it more flavorful, the complete opposite of what was done just a few hundred years before—adding herbs to bread in order to survive. It was during the 12th century that bakers started to emerge and form their own corporations. Baking was considered to be a real trade and the art of “la panification”, or bread-making, was born (125). There was an increasing number of varieties of bread during the 12th and 13th centuries and during the 12th century, the average man ate 240 pounds of bread a year (127).

In 1560, corn arrived from the Americas, but it was thought of as suitable only for the animals to eat so that they would get fatter faster (137). Then in the 1700s, potatoes were introduced but they were also for pigs and not to be eaten by humans (158). Although both of these foods were safe for human consumption, they were relegated to animal food and deemed inappropriate for humans to eat. These two foods could have been eaten during times of wheat famine, but once again, the French chose to eat bread over all else.

Bread played an extremely important role in inciting riots and revolutions in France. France had experienced several famines and droughts from the 700s until the 1900s. For example, “In France in the year 843 men mixed earth with a little flour and ate this in the form of bread. Did not the strength of grain come out of the earth? Was not the earth the mother of all things?” (Jacob 148). As previously seen, it was almost commonplace for peasants to add whatever they might be able to find to their bread in order to have bread to eat. However, bread with the inedible add-ins only did so much, “In France and Germany cannibalism is mentioned for the first time by the chronicler Rodulfus Glaber as occurring in the year 793. From then on the unnatural horror increased steadily, until it ceased around the year 1000” (Jacob 149). The peasants of France often lacked sufficient nourishment, especially their beloved bread, and supposedly turned to cannibalism.⁶ After some instability in France, especially after the Hundred Years’ War, peasants were once again wanting for food, “In France itself, where barons and king had been almost ruined by the English, they indemnified themselves by plundering and setting fires in the villages. In the spring of 1358 the peasants rose in revolt against this terrorization, and the famous *Jacquerie* began” (Jacob 175). The masses fixated on bread—bread was what

⁶ It is unclear how likely it is that cannibalism was widely practiced during this time. The only source found that it is mentioned in is Jacob’s book and even he notes a bit of skepticism in his account of it.

they wanted from the ruling class, “*Le pain se lève*’ [translation: The bread will rise!] –this was the watchword of the French peasants” (Jacob 175).

An attempt was made to introduce potatoes into the French diet. However, after Switzerland, the progress of the potato fizzled—”but here its course was halted, for it ran up against too great psychological obstacles, and did not proceed very far” (Jacob 213). Thus, potatoes could not be used to stop the impending doom of the French monarchy. During the 17th century, France was again suffering from hunger

In 1698 various governors reported that the people of France were beginning to die of starvation; famine swept over it unchecked. Around 1715, according to Taine, a third of the population—six million persons—had died. Such was the opening of the eighteenth century, France’s greatest century and one of the greatest in the world’s history! (Jacob 239)

Six million people had died of starvation. Unfortunately for the ruling class, a rumor had begun—one that a conspiracy was to blame for the lack of grain, “...some people must have made up their minds to exterminate the French nation! What did the Court, the rich, the aristocracy, care about the continued existence of so many human beings who merely wanted to eat?” (Jacob 246). This conspiracy was called *Le Pacte de Famine*. This pact was an agreement between the government and the merchants to create a famine in France, “It was said that Louis XV had already earned ten millions pounds as a result of this murderous conspiracy. The society was alleged to be buying cheaply all the grain in France, secretly exporting it, buying it again from abroad, and importing it back into France at tenfold the original prices” (Jacob 246). There were attempts to introduce new foods into the French diets to quell the impending uprising; however, “For centuries the Parisians had been monomaniac eaters of bread. They would not

touch macaroni, that Italian invention which was so economical and filling. They did not like the smell of maize flour, and oats were feed for horses. All they wanted was wheat bread, and there was not enough bread” (Jacob 251).

The lack of bread and the conspiracy circling among the peasants added fuel to the fire of revolt. Jacob claims that the peasants stormed the Bastille, not looking for arms, but looking for bread. They believed that the monarchy had wheat and bread stockpiled somewhere, thus they stormed the Bastille to find it. However, once there they unfortunately found nothing but prisoners. Jacob also writes that the peasants’ march on Versailles was also an attempt to find wheat. On arrival the peasants were disappointed, seeing that not even the fabled fountains of the gardens of Versailles were working—France was in a drought. Consequently, the monarchy had just a bit more bread than the peasants did (250).

Perhaps then, the Revolution was not due purely to politics. Presumably, the peasants did not have a great interest in politics; all they wanted was enough bread to live. If whoever was in power would provide them with bread, then those were the politics they wanted. However, the famine conspiracy, potentially fueled by the slightly higher class who was looking for a political revolt, spurred the peasants into action with the rumor that there was bread at the palace. Jacob adds that it was simply luck that the revolutionaries were able to provide bread to peasants after the revolt, or perhaps the revolutionaries would have been overthrown by hungry peasants as well (Jacob 253-4).

Jacob's assertions, while plausible, are not often reflected in French history taught in schools. There are, however, other sources that have reflected similar ideas about the role of bread in the revolution, but research has yet to yield a satisfactory conclusion. Leslie F. Miller, in her book, *Let Me Eat Cake: A Celebration of Flour, Sugar, Butter, Eggs, Vanilla, Baking*

Powder and a Pinch of Salt discusses the famous quotation, “Let them eat cake!” which is frequently misattributed to Marie Antoinette. The phrase, which would have been at the time, “Qu'ils mangent de la brioche!” does not even mean, “Let them eat cake!” Brioche is a “fancy round bun with a silly little topknot” (Miller 20), but scholars differ on what brioche was at the time. It could have been the brioche known today, a bread made with Brie cheese, or a bread originating from Brie, France. Further, some say it could be related to the German verb for “to knead” and some etymologies of the word point to it being a paste that was inside the bakers' ovens (Miller 20). Not only does the phrase not mean its English translation, but it is almost certainly not from Marie Antoinette.

The most definitive evidence for the quote not having been said by Marie Antoinette was that it is derived from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book *Confessions* in which he attributes the quote “Then let them eat pastry!” to a “great princess”. But when the book was written, Marie Antoinette was only fourteen and just getting married to the king. It is unsure who actually said the famous quote, but one of the more popular ideas is Marie-Thérèse, who “...upon learning that some peasants didn't have any bread [said]: '*Mais, mon Dieu, que ne mangent-ils de la croûte de pâté?*' (Good God, why can't they just eat the crust from a meat pie?” (Miller 19). Her intentions behind saying this were likely not cruel either, she probably did not understand that if there were no bread for them to eat, they could very well not eat the crust of a pie either. Miller reflects similar assertions as Jacob, saying that “In 1775 France, peasants were, indeed, rioting in the streets because they had no bread.... The result was... aforementioned cries of bread, a time dubbed the Flour Wars, which precipitated the French Revolution” (Miller 20). No matter if bread was the peasants' primary motivation for the revolution or not, it certainly still had a

significant impact at the time. Although its historical importance is undeniable, what relevance does bread have in France today?

The Role of Bread in Modern France

In modern day France, bread consumption is decreasing, “Only a century ago, each person ate 500 grams (on the order of a half-pound) daily. Today, about three or four slices of bread is average” (Abramson 42). But Abramson continues and highlights the continued importance of bread in today’s society, “Bread—no matter how small the quantity, makes a meal complete. In cafés, bistros, and restaurants, slices of bread are placed on the table in a basket to accompany food, as a matter of course” (Abramson 42). She adds that bread is always present on the table during meals and that a bread or pastry product features in every meal of the day—breakfast, snack, lunch, and dinner—with the exception of the morning coffee break (Abramson 105).

This decline in bread consumption is a worry in France. L’Observatoire du Pain, or the Observatory of Bread, created a movement called, “Coucou! Tu a pris le pain?”, or, “Hi! Did you get the bread?”. This campaign placed ads throughout France in the hope that they will remind people to pick up bread and bring it home to create a sense of family around the dinner table (“Coucou, tu as pris le pain?”). In a New York Times article by Elaine Sciolino concerning France’s bread consumption, she writes that “The decline is so worrisome that Observatoire du Pain, the bakers’ and millers’ lobby, started a nationwide campaign in June that champions bread as promoting good health, good conversation and French civilization” (Sciolino 4). She adds reasoning for why France felt that “Coucou, tu as pris le pain?” was necessary, “Bread is ceding its place on the table to rivals like breakfast cereals, pasta and rice. France may still enjoy the

highest density of independent bakeries in the world (32,000), but in 1950 there were 54,000” (Sciolino 15).

Both Abramson and Sciolino point to similar social factors that may be the causes of the decrease in bread consumption. “Women, still the main shoppers in most families, eat about a third less than men, and young people almost 30 percent less than a decade ago” (Sciolino 3). Abramson comments on the changing ideologies in youth, adding that

Especially in the younger generation, freedom from the ritual of the family meal may be experienced as an opportunity to develop a more individual lifestyle, although others worry about a decline of traditional ways and a deterioration of the social fabric. Nonetheless, the family meal or a full meal with friends or colleagues is a central feature of daily life. (Abramson 105)

If young people are no longer eating as many meals with their families, their families may be consequently consuming less bread. A statement from the website for “Coucou! Tu as pris le pain?” reflects these ideas as well

97.6% of French eat bread, but certain people consume it less frequently than others. Why? The rhythms of modern life, competition with other products, as well as unfounded nutritional beliefs. To remind them that bread is a partner of daily life, the French are posed this simple question: “Hi, did you get the bread?”⁷ (“Coucou! Tu as pris le pain?”)

⁷ “97,6% des Français mangent du pain, mais certains en consomment moins fréquemment que d’autres. Les raisons ? Les rythmes de vie modernes, la concurrence d’autres produits ou encore des craintes nutritionnelles souvent infondées. Pour leur rappeler que le pain est un allié du quotidien, les Français sont interpellés avec question simple : « Coucou, tu as pris le pain ? » (Coucou ! Tu as pris le pain ?).

Although the Observatoire du Pain has a vested interest in increasing bread consumption, the numbers are declining and continuing to do so. Even though bread seems to hold an important place in history, perhaps it is becoming less important today. However, according to “Coucou! Tu as pris le pain?” 97.6% of French people eat bread, thus bread is obviously still important in France.

Throughout France’s formative history and into modern times, bread plays a significant role. The incredible effects that bread, or lack thereof in times of famine, had on French history puts into perspective the status of bread in France. Lack of bread potentially contributed to the French Revolution, which was one of the largest political upheavals in France. France’s notorious gastronomy was so popular in the 1600-1800s, that Spanish cuisine was influenced by French dishes. However, in modern France, the consumption of bread is decreasing. Is bread facing the same troubles in Spain as it is in France? The later section on Spain will reveal the ways in which France’s cuisine did and did not have a lasting impact on Spanish cuisine, especially as it relates to bread. Although the two countries are geographically close, how similar are their cuisines? Do Spaniards of the past value bread enough to poison themselves trying to eat it?

Bread in Spanish History

This section which probes the history of bread in Spain, like the previous section on France, seeks to answer the question of what is the normative food identity in Spain. By researching bread, this study hopes to establish bread’s importance in the culture, thereby enabling further questions to be asked about the negotiation of identity for those who cannot eat gluten, and therefore, bread.

Bread has played an important role throughout Spanish history. Today in Spain, bread is served at every meal although, “The texture and quality of the Spanish breads vary from region to region with the quality of flour and water” (Walker 231). However, before taking a look at the state of bread today in Spain, it is important to discuss the historical role of bread and wheat. In several ancient civilizations in Europe, “[wheat] was probably the first crop planted by man, perhaps about ten thousand years ago on the upper Tigris. There is evidence of wheat in Spain from Mesolithic sites, although it is impossible to know whether it was wild or cultivated” (Walker 17). Wheat was a vital part of the Mediterranean agriculture, along with olives and grapes (Walker 17). However, since this region depended so much upon wheat, the societies started to crumble when wheat was unavailable.

The Moors, who were Muslims from Africa, invaded Spain in 711 and lived there, bringing their own practices with them. However, in the 15th century, the Spanish monarchy fought the Moors and reclaimed Spain as Christian. Unfortunately, “When the Christian Spaniards took the land from the Moors, in their ignorance they permitted the irrigation system to decay. Great droughts were the result, and soon the ‘gardens of the West’ looked like the rest of Spain: like the landscape of Don Quixote, where ‘nothing grows but folly and poverty’ ...” (Jacob 213). The Moors knew the importance of water and irrigation and were able to sustain the crops, but when the Spaniards took back Spain, they did not keep these irrigation systems in tact as the Moors did and their crops began to fail and Spain entered into a famine. Thus, Spain was in need of a new crop and a new way to feed the country, especially the peasants and farmers whose way of life was not supplying them with the food they needed.

When Columbus arrived in America he discovered that the natives there ate corn, not wheat. He returned with the corn and

...he showed the Spanish royal couple ears of maize. Though maize was cultivated in Andalusia thirty years later, it was intended only as a cattle feed—for the pride of the native Spaniards forbade their eating such stuff. It was more than pride. The sense of smell—frequently standing guard over man’s nutrition—warned the wheat-eating gentry against the strange oils in the maize kernel.

(Jacob 202)

Despite the initial trepidation that the Spanish had for corn, they soon began to adapt to it since, “A grain that grew in only three months and that needed neither plows nor oxen for its cultivation inevitably converted the Spaniards to itself...” (Jacob 202).

During medieval times, bread was also of high importance. Antonio Gázquez Ortiz, in his book *La cocina en tiempos del Arcipreste de Hita*, discusses the importance of various foods during the 14th century. He states that “A meal without an abundance of bread was inconceivable. It was in this way that bread became synonymous with food, a significance that has continued to present day” (69).⁸ The importance of bread and the substitutes used in place of flour to make a bread-like substance is seen repeated throughout history. Rice was used during the mid to late 14th century to make bread during times of food shortages (69). However, wheat was most valued and most important in the daily diet. Even during the 14th century, the whiter that the bread was, the more expensive and prestigious it was (75). Conversely, “It has been argued that the darker bread was the bread of the lower classes” (69).⁹

⁸ Original text: “...para hacer **pan**, el alimento básico y diario de la población del XIV. Una comida sin abundancia de pan era inimaginable. De tal forma, que ‘pan’ llegó a ser sinónimo de alimento, significado que ha llegado hasta nuestros días” (Ortiz 69).

⁹ Original text: “Se puede decir que [el pan más oscuro] era el pan de las clases menos favorecidas” (Ortiz 69).

French cuisine and culture had a large influence on Spanish society and cuisine during a large part of the 17th through 19th centuries. The French influence was seen in the names of Spanish dishes in the Courts during the 19th century, "...sauces, stews, etc. had French names which were evidence of the influence on Spanish cuisine..." (Simon Palmer 146). Names such as, "à la Provencale" or other "à la" plus the name of a city were common to see on Royal menus. However, not all of Spain accepted or appreciated the French influence. Villages, although they were not at the heart of high society culture changes, felt the influence of French culture and they "...maintained a quiet aversion to France and all things French..." (Llopis 323).¹⁰ However, this proclaimed overrunning of French culture leaves a question—where is the bread? As evidenced in the French history, bread was of the utmost importance and there is not a period of time during French history where bread is not present, no matter how much poverty there was. In the resources consulted, there was little evidence of bread being present in everyday Spanish life or in the courts. Bread products, such as croutons are mentioned, as well as flour in certain desserts, such as cakes, but bread as an accompaniment to the meal appears to be absent in large part.

In the 4th edition of a cookbook from 1837, entitled *Manual del cocinero, cocinera, repostero, pastelero, confitero y botillero*, the lack of bread is obvious. Interestingly, there is a note early in the cookbook that mentions that it has been translated from French. Unfortunately, it is unknown if the book was published in France for French people or in French for Spanish people, or something else entirely. This information would surely provide interesting information to the analysis of the cookbook and the influence of French food on Spanish food. However, without it, it is impossible to know the origins and original audience of this book.

¹⁰ Original text: "Aunque el pueblo era en el fondo refractario a los nuevos modos y en su corazón se mantenía latente la aversión hacia Francia y todo lo francés..." (Llopis 323).

The introduction of the cookbook frames it as a book that celebrates the healthy aspects of food. It instructs the reader on how to eat—which foods are good for digestion and which ones are harmful to the body. It also includes tips on personal hygiene, such as reminding the cook and the diners to wash their hands. The book proclaims itself as a book for young people who are just learning to cook, but also for mothers and families who need economically friendly recipes.¹¹ However, the book is not directed at too low of a class, because whoever was using it needed to know how to read. This poses interesting questions about what resources would be available at the time and to whom? There is a tension in the qualifications for the audience of this book—since they would have needed to know how to read, but not have access to all of the best ingredients, as some of the recipes suggest.

There are only three recipes directly containing bread in the entirety of the cookbook. The first is a recipe for “Panatela ó sustancia de pan”, which translates into “gruel”. It consists of water combined with bread to make a mushy porridge. The recipe states that it is, “...an excellent food for children and seniors. Be very careful to cook and season it well, because if it is bland, instead of aiding digestion, it will do no more than damage it” (de Rementería Y Fica 35).¹² This recipe seems to be a comfort food and a simple meal to prepare to serve to children or older people. The other recipe is, “Migas”, or “crumbs”. The instructions are to, “Make normal sized crumbs out of everyday bread, heat animal fat in a dish and when it is sufficiently warm, add the bread crumbs. Fry until it reaches a good red color, drain and serve” (de Rementería Y

¹¹ Original text: ““Los jóvenes que entran en la sociedad y quieren ensayarse en una mesa, aprenderán con su Manual á trinchar bien cualquiera pieza que se les presente. El autor indica todos los métodos usuales: las madres de familia hallarán las recetas mas económicos...” (2).

¹² Original text: ““...alimento escelente para los niños y los ancianos. Debe cuidarse mucho de que esté bien cocido y sazonado; porque si está insípido, lejos de ayudar á la accion del estómago, no hará mas que debilitarlo” (35). All spelling errors in the citation appear in the book.

Fica 86).¹³ At the end of the recipe is, “(D.D.D.)”, which according to the code in the introduction means, “Dificles de digerir”, or difficult to digest. The recipes are marked according to whether the ingredients are good or bad for digestion. Finally, one of the “tortas”, or cake, recipes is a recipe for, “Torta de miga de pan” or a cake made of bread crumbs. The recipe calls for fresh bread crumbs and is listed with a “B.” for a recipe that is “buena” or when the quality and property of the ingredients used are good. Aside from these three recipes, the other most notable bread or flour instances are in the dessert section. Approximately half of the dessert recipes include six to twelve ounces of flour in the mixture (de Rementería Y Fica 244-50).

In the description of the courses and what to put out at each course, there is no mention of bread (de Rementería Y Fica 14-15). However, in the list of instructions of what not to do at a polite table, there is one bit of advice listed that says that you should not dip your bread into the common serving dish like a spoon (de Rementería Y Fica 20). Thus, somehow the bread is on the table, but it is not explicitly stated. From this, it can be proposed that either bread was so commonplace and present that it was not even mentioned and just taken for granted or that bread was scarce, thus the cookbook did not want to draw attention to scarcities, but instead concentrate on what was available to eat. Throughout the centuries, bread and lack thereof had large impacts on society.

During the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, much of Spain experienced food shortages. Most of the parts of Spain that produced cereals were under the control of the nationalists, but the cities were controlled by the republic, or “loyal Spain” and suffered major food crises, especially in Madrid (Richardson 218). In fall 1936, ration cards were handed out to Spaniards,

¹³ Original text: “Con miga de pan comun se harán migas de un tamaño regular, se echa manteca en una cazuela, y cuando tengan un calor suficiente se ponen las migas, se dejen freir hasta que hayan adquirido un buen encarnado, se escuren y sirven. (D.D.D.)” (86).

“Each citizen was allowed, per day, a total of 100 grams of lentils or beans, one-fourth of a liter of milk, half a kilo of bread, 100 grams of meat, 25 grams of tocino [translation: fat or bacon], half a kilo of fruit, 50 grams of soup, and one-fourth kilo of potatoes” (Richardson 218). The government did not think that the war would last long, so they did not plan provisions for food for the cities that were not under fascist control and according to one newspaper, that Richardson notes was probably biased, 400 to 500 Madrilenians were dying per week from starvation. They were able to survive that long by living off of rice and oranges from Valencia, horsemeat, cat meat, along with chickens that they kept in their attics and vegetables that they grew on their roofs. Food was bought and sold on the black market, the *estraperlo*, where people purchased or bartered for loaves of bread, bags of flour, and liters of olive oil. Even after the war ended, food shortage continued due in part to a drought in 1941. *Gachas* became very important at this time. *Gachas* was a thin porridge that was prepared with the flour of the almorta, which is related to the lupine (*lathyrus sativus* – grass pea). However, this grain is a neurotoxin when consumed in large amounts, “It contains a toxin which if consumed excessively over long periods can lead to muscle weakness, trembling, and paralysis of the limbs” (Richardson 222). Unfortunately, due to a shortage of wheat, many Spaniards ate *gachas* and only *gachas* for weeks on end.

When taken in comparison with the French history, it seems that bread was not held in the same esteem in Spain as it was in France. When the French peasants ran out of wheat, they found substitutes for the wheat to use in the bread making, leading to toxic breads that did more harm than they did good. Throughout Spanish history on the other hand, while bread is important, during times of famine and starvation, the peasants turned to other foods, such as oranges or horse meat. However, Spain’s *gachas* seem similar in principle to the toxic breads of France. Although people were not benefitting from the *gachas*, they continued to eat them, using

the toxic grain in place of wheat. Unlike the French, the Spanish were not attempting to make bread with the flour from the almorta, instead they made a porridge. As Richardson quotes, “One really would eat almost anything... We ate things we hadn’t seen before” (Richardson 218).

The Role of Bread in Modern Spain

In present day Spain, eating habits have changed significantly from hundreds of years ago and even just a few decades ago, especially as it pertains to bread. As there is a shift away from older customs, bread could be declining as well. Spain has an interesting daily schedule that was followed for many years, “Traditional mealtimes reflect the practices of a rural society and the Mediterranean climate, and seem strongly resistant to the pressures of modernization and change” (Jordan 139). The traditional schedule consisted of a light breakfast of coffee and a pastry at 8AM, a mid-morning coffee break at 11AM, lunch around 2PM, a siesta until 4PM or 5PM, a *merienda*, or snack, for some after the siesta, tapas before dinner, and dinner at 9PM or later. However, some of these customs are disappearing as the more modern and fast paced lifestyle of much of the Western world enters Spain. For instance, the *merienda* is declining, with only 1% doing so every day. This decline is apparently linked to the push for women to work (Jordan 141-2). Another example that Jordan cites, is the decline in time spent on meals, “Here in Madrid, it seemed less about being in a genuine hurry to get back to the office, and more about needing to demonstrate to the world that, as a modern person, you were fashionably short on two faintly embarrassing traditional commodities: appetite and time” (Richardson 224). The traditions that were so prominent in Spain before seem to be declining in modern Spain. Thus, is bread declining as well?

According to Jordan, yes, the quantity of bread consumed is decreasing. The amount of money spent on “traditional staple items such as bread, pasta, cereals, potatoes, vegetables, eggs and oil has halved from 41.8 per cent of food purchases in 1958 to 20.1 per cent now” (Jordan 88). One third of Spaniards say that they are trying to consume less, thus, “More fruit, dairy products and vegetable are consumed, while less bread and potatoes are eaten” (Jordan 88). This is a significant decrease in Spain’s alimentation. Bread and potatoes are historically a large part of Spain’s diet. However, due to the increase in awareness of health and weight loss, Spaniards eat less of the traditional fare. Conversely, fast food is becoming more popular across Europe, including Spain. There is no clear evidence of why there is a rise in awareness of health but a rise in fast food consumption as well. Perhaps, fast food is related to the idea of modern living and Americanization, but the contradiction still remains. “There is substantial evidence that the consumption of fast food is rapidly displacing the traditional ‘Mediterranean diet’, especially among the young generation” (Jordan 81). If the youth of Spain are turning away from traditional Spanish foods, it is possible that bread may start to lose its importance in Spanish cuisine.

Bread in France and Spain: A Comparative Perspective

In both France and Spain, bread played an important role in history. However, in France, during times of famine peasants would try to make bread by replacing flour with sometimes poisonous substances such as dirt or marble. Bread was so vital in France that some speculate that lack of bread was a cause of the French Revolution. Contrastingly, in Spain when there was a bread shortage, the lower classes made porridge or gachas with what available food they could find.

Throughout history and in modern times, bread is present on the table in both countries. Its presence is explicitly mentioned in the sources pertaining to France, but not in the ones

pertaining to Spain. Even though bread is there in both France and Spain, it is not explicitly mentioned in Spain as it is in France. The exact reason for that lack is unknown, but as previously mentioned, bread's presence is perhaps so obvious that it needs not be mentioned or it is just not as important in Spain as it was in France and thus goes unmentioned. The decline in tradition is reflected in both France and Spain with a decline in family meals and consequently bread. Interestingly, Spain does not have a revival effort for any food in the way France does with "Coucou, tu as pris le pain?". Bread is still on the table, although in smaller quantity, but how many people in each country cannot eat that bread?

Current Demographics of Gluten Free in France and Spain

The statistics for the number of people with Celiac in France and Europe vary greatly. According to Valpiform, a gluten free food manufacturer, every 1 in 300 people have an intolerance to gluten and currently 60,000 people know they have Celiac, but 600,000 could have Celiac but are yet undiagnosed ("Maladie coeliaque : Définition et mécanisme") However, there is no date provided on their website of when these statistics are from. A second site, Intégrascol, which provides information to teachers and educators about sick or disabled children, lists fairly different statistics. They claim that 1 in 1000 children in France have Celiac disease and that 1 in 5 has a genetic predisposition (FicheGluten). This information they provide is from 2012 and appears to be very different from the Valpiform information. Although Intégrascol is claiming that 1 in 1000 children have Celiac, Valpiform claims that 1 in 300 people have a gluten intolerance. However, Valpiform uses the phrase "gluten intolerant" instead of directly referencing Celiac, so it is possible that this is the reason for the large discrepancy, since gluten intolerance includes Celiac as well as other medical conditions. According to a Swiss website, Santeweb.ch, 1 in 100-500 people in Europe and North America have Celiac and that experts

estimate that the number of people with gluten intolerance will rise and affect between 1 in 66 and 1 in 300 by the end of the 21st century (“Maladie cœlique, intolerance au gluten”). The statistics from Santeweb.ch are from 2010.

Two of these sources cite that Celiac affects approximately 1 in 300 people in France. There is no readily available information on the change of that number over time aside from the small bit of information provided by Santeweb.ch. It seems that 1 in 300 is a fairly reliable approximate statistic for the number of Celiacs in France. These statistics, though not entirely reliable, do prove that Celiac and gluten intolerance affect a sizeable portion of the French population.

In Spain, the statistic for the number of Celiacs varies as it does for France. An article from *La Nueva España*, from 2013 states that there are about one million Celiacs in Spain, but only 20% have been diagnosed. The prevalence of Celiacs is somewhere from 1 to 3 percent, which according to this article is a high rate for a disease (“Todos podemos ser celíacos”). Federación de Asociaciones de Celíacos de España, or FACE, provides correlating statistics: about 1% of Europeans have Celiac disease, but 75% are undiagnosed (“¿Qué es la Enfermedad Celíaca?”). However, the FACE site lists no date for their statistics. Several other sites list the same information since they use the facts from FACE which is regarded as a reputable resource for information on Celiac. The statistics of the prevalence of Celiac in Spain indicate that it is not an uncommon disease and that there is a sufficient number of people affected by it.

Despite the decline of bread in both countries, it still holds a place of importance in both cultures. The number of people affected in France and Spain is very similar. This similarity leads to the idea that neither country should consider the disease more or less important since approximately the same number of people is affected. This study will examine if this is true or

not. Does Celiac seem more or less important in either France or Spain? This question of importance is examined in the experiences of the gluten free bloggers as they handle the repercussions and challenges of being gluten free in two bread-heavy cultures.

Overview of Blogs and Methodology

Having addressed the first research question through the discussion of the place of bread in modern France and Spain—What is the normative food identity in France and Spain?—we turn now to the three remaining questions of this study. These questions are going to be discussed explicitly and are interconnected in the following blog section and the section on the survey results.

- What is the individual’s food identity in relation to the culture’s food identity?
- How do individuals relate to food and culture?
- How does being unable to eat gluten change how one relates to one’s culture and therefore negotiates one’s identity?

In order to answer these questions, this study examined several blogs from France and Spain. In looking at the blogs, the study hoped to learn how people today eat gluten free in each country. Early in the research process, a simple Google search was conducted. Keywords such as “blog”, “sin¹⁴”, “gluten”, “sans¹⁵”, “France”, “España”, “français”, and “español” were entered into Google in combinations that logically pertained to each country and each language. Unexpectedly, the searches yielded several results of the most popular gluten free blogs in France and Spain. Each blog needed to be looked at to verify what the country of origin of the blog was. For example, there were several blogs in French that were based in Canada and several blogs in Spanish that were based in Latin America. The next most important aspect of the blogs

¹⁴ “Sin” being the Spanish word for “without”.

¹⁵ “Sans” being the French word for “without”.

was the date of the most recent entries. In order to narrow down the blogs, blogs with newest entries from over seven months ago were discarded. When the author visited the blogs that came up from the Google search, she also looked at the blogs they listed on their sites and visited those blogs, which is from where the core blogs were aggregated. While there were several blogs of gluten free organizations that were listed under the search, those were not included in the study. One of the most important criteria of the blogs chosen was that they be personal blogs run by citizens of each of the countries.

Based on previous knowledge of gluten free food blogs in English from America, the assumption was made that blogs in different countries written in different languages would have similar formats. For example, along with providing recipes for the dishes they create, bloggers often share stories of their personal lives. It is in those personal stories where the importance lies—not in the recipes. After analyzing the blogs, the assumption that the blogs from France and Spain are similar in format to the blogs from America holds true.

Of the seven bloggers, all of them are female. Four of those seven bloggers are from Spain and three are from France. They have been blogging for a minimum of one year and a maximum of six years. The length of time as a blogger is unknown for one of the bloggers. For six of the seven bloggers, the ages are unknown. One of the bloggers is 37 years old. Three of the four Spanish bloggers have Celiac disease and the last blogger from Spain has a daughter with Celiac. Of the French bloggers, one has Celiac disease, one has gluten intolerance, and one has a daughter with Celiac. In total, four of the seven bloggers have Celiac disease, two have daughters with Celiac, and one has gluten intolerance.

Dany Faccio – Spanish, female with Celiac, age unknown, author of *Sin Glutenismo*,
blogger for unknown amount of time

Iza – French, female with Celiac, age unknown, author of *Iza Kitchen*, blogger since 2013

Lorena – Spanish, female with Celiac, age unknown, author of *La Larpeira Sin Gluten*, blogger since 2011

Marga – Spanish, female with Celiac, age unknown, author of *Mundo sin Gluten de Marga*, blogger since 2009

Natacha – French, female with gluten intolerance, age unknown, author of *Ma Cuisine sans Gluten*, blogger since 2007

Perrine – French, female with daughter with Celiac, 37, author of *On Mange sans Gluten*, blogger since 2010

Lourdes Santos – Spanish, female with daughter with Celiac, author of *La cocina de Pikerita*, blogger since 2008

Blog Analysis

With the histories of France and Spain grounding the blog analysis, this section will explore the research questions:

- What is the individual's food identity in relation to the culture's food identity?
- How do individuals relate to food and culture?
- How does being unable to eat gluten change how one relates to one's culture and therefore negotiates one's identity?

By looking at individual bloggers in each of the country, this study is able to get closer to actual people in the cultures that cannot eat gluten. The histories of bread illuminate the importance of bread in each of the countries, so what happens to these individuals when they cannot eat the bread?

The discussion of the blogs will begin with several points shared in common by blogs in both countries. These similarities will be categorized as out-grouping, or how they feel different from those who eat gluten, and in-grouping, or how they feel together as a unified group who does not eat gluten. The out-grouping section includes the desire to reformulate recipes into gluten free versions, increased sensitivity to others with eating restrictions, navigating eating with friends and family, and restrictions when traveling. The in-grouping section includes experiences with others who understand the gluten free lifestyle or are themselves gluten free and the community that forms around them. After discussing the commonalities between the blogs, blogs from both countries will be analyzed by country.

Out-Grouping

One of the overarching themes found in the blogs from both countries is the desire to recreate recipes. All of the bloggers are food bloggers, so presumably they are each somewhat of gourmands. They like creating and eating good food. But going gluten free is a significant culinary change and gluten free food is sometimes associated with dry, tasteless food. These food bloggers are fighting against that stereotype of bland gluten free foods. As Natacha writes, “A pleasant saying that I’ve taken to heart is: those who cannot eat gluten aren’t condemned to bland recipes! Of course not my friends, this blog is proof!” (Natacha “Emission”). For her, her blog is proof that gluten free food does not necessarily mean bland or undesirable food.

Many of the bloggers had favorite foods or ate foods as a child that they can no longer eat because they cannot eat gluten. They look to recreate these foods as gluten free foods so that they can eat them and share them with their families. One of the bloggers, a woman who goes by the name of Lorena writes about her initial sadness at discovering that she could no longer eat gluten and her later happiness when she realized that she could make her own versions of her favorite

foods. However, she is still torn by the idea that she will never be able to truly eat “real” empanadas again.

One of the first things that I thought about when I learned that I had Celiac, something that caused me many tears, was empanadas... my optimistic side told me I could probably try to make do with the ingredients I had on hand no matter the results, but my pessimistic side told me that I could never really eat true empanadas again (Lorena “Empanada”).¹⁶

One of the French bloggers expressed the same sentiment of wanting to recreate a favorite meal. A woman named Perrine makes multiple references to this sentiment in her blog and her recipes. In her entry for saucisson brioché, or sausage baked inside a brioche, she relates it back to her childhood saying, “As a child, my mother often made this meal during the winter and it is with great pleasure that I have finally made it so that I can introduce it to my gluten free life” (Perrine “Saucisson”). Several more of her entries focus on making things gluten free not just for her enjoyment, but so that her children can enjoy it as well.

Perrine writes that the “Browkie” (a combination of a brownie and a cookie) has been making its way around blogs. Although this is not a food that holds any nostalgia for her, she wants to recreate it for her family. Since it is usually made with gluten ingredients, she decides to make a gluten free version for her family, “Then like a UFO, the Browkie descended on the “Yum” blogs and even though I’m a bit removed from the culinary blogosphere, its arrival did not escape me and I wanted to create a gluten free version for Romane [her son]” (Perrine “Browkie”). The desire to make either popular foods or nostalgic foods for those who cannot eat gluten is an interesting part of creating a new identity as an out-group. They adopt the gluten recipes and make them into gluten free recipes for either themselves or their children. This is an

¹⁶ The original text of every quote used can be found in Appendix I at the end of the paper.

interesting creation of a new culture since the foods are gluten free, as well as an adoption of an already present culture since they appropriate part of an already established culture. The identity of the gluten free group is being formed partially around making their identity out of the normative culture, or the culture of the masses.

Foods that may have been easy to prepare before, become more difficult to make. The bloggers' identity as bakers or cooks might even be threatened by this change in their life. Foods that were once easily accessible—especially lighter, fluffier pastries—become difficult to make. Perrine created a recipe for a brioche and introduces it saying, “A myth for most, a crusade won for the most part only by some, I offer you today a very easy version of this brioche. But be careful, when I say easy, I don't mean fast—you need to have a bit of patience (but just a little), but like they say, the longer the better” (Perrine “Brioche”). She introduces to her readers a recipe to make a good brioche without gluten, presumably one that would be comparable to a brioche made with gluten.

Several of the bloggers in both countries discuss the transition to eating gluten free and what is the most important, what makes the process easier, and what is the most difficult. Dany Faccio, a Spanish blogger wrote a post about her second anniversary of going gluten free. In this entry she writes, “Gluten free rule number one: you have to have foresight. Rule number two: gluten free is EXPENSIVE [capitals in original]” (Faccio “Segundo aniversario”). She follows these two rules with,

Going gluten free wasn't that difficult: it's easier if you liked to cook before you were diagnosed. But it's a bit frustrating to learn that the flours don't respond the same, but with so much information on gluten free cooking on the internet, things are much better than they were. (Faccio “Segundo aniversario”)

As a writer of a food blog, she is presumably someone who likes to cook. But she had to make changes and adapt to cooking and baking gluten free where the ingredients used do not always respond the same way. For many of the bloggers, as well as many people who eat gluten free, the change is not easy to adapt to. Iza Kitchen, a French blogger writes,

The establishment of a routine isn't very easy at the beginning because you have to get rid of your old ways and food habits entirely.... You have to read and learn how to decode the labels and look for possible traces of gluten in the manufacturing facilities. (Iza Kitchen "La Maladie Coeliaque")

After being told to eat gluten free, the way people live has to change drastically and almost immediately. All of their habits need to change—what they eat, what they buy, how they shop, and how they interact with others. These changes contribute to the formation of a new identity for those who eat gluten free, since the way they live their everyday lives is now so different from the average person.

Another predominant theme was that of having an increased sensitivity to others with eating restrictions. One of the French bloggers, Natacha, was reflecting on children who cannot eat gluten who need to pack a lunch for school, "But I was thinking about the gluten intolerant children... since gluten free bread in general is very dry and thick" (Natacha "Un délicieux sandwich"). Even though her children do not eat gluten free, she is used to thinking of the needs of others who cannot eat regular, everyday foods. So she looks to recreate a sandwich with better bread. Lourdes, one of the Spanish bloggers whose daughter cannot eat gluten, was throwing a party for her daughter and asked her if anyone else in the class had any eating restrictions. Her daughter responded, "I knew it, I knew it! Moms who have kids with problems are the ones who ask about the other kids! Yes, mom, one of the girls is diabetic" (Santos "Donetes sin gluten").

This heightened awareness of others with differences comes about from having to negotiate a new identity. Someone who had the normative food identity of the country might not think to consider eating restrictions since they themselves do not have any eating restrictions. However, those with eating restrictions understand that they are not part of the in-group as it pertains to eating, so it follows that there would be others who belong to other out-groups.

The bloggers write about their experiences not just in the kitchen, but also their interactions with others who would be considered the out-group—those who do not eat gluten free and are not sensitive to the issue. Some of these experiences take place during interactions with friends and family, some with strangers, and some in foreign countries. A large component of Dany's blog is activism to get more representation and equality for people who eat gluten free. One of her posts is information for people who eat gluten on how to host their gluten free friends at their houses

I'm sure that I'm not the only one who has taken Tupperware to my friend's house before. It's also happened that some of my friends have been hesitant to invite me over since they don't know what or how to cook for me. Since then, I've always assumed that they've had the best intentions at heart: to not accidentally poison me with gluten. (Faccio "Invitar")

She has to be cautious around her friends, who are normally people whom you think you would be able to trust. Her friends do not have bad intentions, they do not want her to be sick, but they do not know how to give her food without the possibility of it making her sick. Her social group, which is one of the in-groups to which she usually belongs, she is now no longer a part of. She forms a different group from her friends and becomes an out-group in relation to them, a member

of a group who cannot eat how they eat. She is different, she eats differently, and her friends are not sure how to navigate her eating restrictions safely.

Lorena also discusses her experience of being gluten free and the difficulties of navigating the world with this eating restriction. In this post she talks about how hard it is to go to the grocery store and see the delicious gluten foods everywhere and continue to avoid them because she knows it will make her sick. She adds,

And then there are foods with family, foods with friends... I'll end up being an old hermit who lives alone in her lair, stirring aromatic concoctions and collecting roots and berries... because going to restaurants where they assure you that everything is gluten free, then returning to your house with a new cross contamination... oooooohhhh ... it's a pleasure... reliving that contamination during the next ten days each time something goes in my mouth... uuuhhhhhh awesome!!! Sublime!!!! (Lorena "Bizcocho")

She uses humor and sarcasm to talk about how not being able to eat gluten free upsets her. Laughing it off is her way of negotiating the world as someone who is gluten free. She does whine about the circumstances, but she does it with humor. It is hard for her to refuse gluten foods and eat around her family and friends, so she follows that with saying that she will just be a hermit instead. She finds it difficult to go to restaurants because cross contamination can make her sick and continues to make her sick for the next ten days. The sarcasm at the end of the quote with her use of exclamation points displays how upset and frustrated she really is because she cannot be sure that a dish at a restaurant is gluten free, even when they assure her that it is.

Lorena and Dany's entries both touch on the problems of being gluten free, but more specifically how hard it is to trust that a food is actually gluten free. Friends, family, and restaurants all have to be questioned even when they seem trustworthy. The women are forming their identities as people who have to be very cautious and wary of people they ought to be able to trust. They become the out-group in relation to people that they should be the in-group with—their friends and families.

One of Lorena's entries highlights very clearly the in-group/out-group experience and the us versus them mentality that can be present between these two different groups.

But don't pay attention to me, I have celiac, and I heard a lady saying that "those people" have a disease "of... of the mind" (I don't know if she was talking about something in the brain or something even further below the brain... and I'm not talking about the duodenum [a part of the intestines] haha ;)). (Lorena "Pan de molde")

The quote refers to "those people" which is an obvious lexical categorization of an "other", as in, they are people who are not like us. Further, the woman referred to "those people" as people who have a disease that might be imagined and she does not believe that it is a physical disease, but all in their mind.

Two of the bloggers—one from France and one from Spain—discuss their experiences with eating gluten free abroad versus eating gluten free in their own country. Lourdes, one of the Spanish bloggers, was taking a trip with her family, including her daughter who has Celiac. She wanted to bring a milkshake through security for her daughter because she knew there would not be much for her to eat in the airport. However, they ran into trouble at security

...and there was no attempt to understand us in English... Then our son who speaks German at an elementary school level tried to explain that my daughter has Celiac. But they asked him how old she was and when he said 7, without a glance, the milkshake went into the garbage. (Santos “Un celiaco en un avión”)

Lourdes was unable to bring food through for her daughter, despite the fact that her daughter has a medical condition that restricts her eating. Although the daughter herself was not communicating with the security people, her daughter was negotiating an identity—as was the family as well. In a family, when someone in the family is different in some way, the whole family is affected. Lourdes tried to explain the problem and then her son tried as well. The daughter was witnessing the exchange and what she likely took away from it was that she was not allowed her food. Although everybody else around her, all of the normal people, got to go through security and eat in the restaurants and shops there, she was denied her food. The security agents, in throwing out her food, categorized her as not needing her food and in a way, invalidating or belittling her disease. Her identity, which was already different from that of her family’s, her friends’, and her country’s—is now denied its legitimacy.

Natacha comments on traveling as well and what she must do to prepare, even when traveling in her own country, “My life without gluten... before leaving for Vendée, I made a mini survival kit with a few cracottes [a type of cracker] and some gluten free bread...” (Natacha “Une nouvelle adresse”). In her preparations to leave for Vendée, a city in France, she makes what she calls a “survival kit”. Her decision to call it a survival kit is amusing, but telling, at the same time. It indicates that she needs to bring some foods along with her when she travels in order to be able to eat, or to survive, in a city other than her own. Unlike people without Celiac, she cannot just leave for a new place and assume she will be able to find food there to eat. She

has to be prepared for the eventuality that she cannot find any food and has to provide it for herself. Her identity as a Celiac changes every part of her life, including travelling.

Natacha and Lourdes' experiences indicate the extent to which those who do not eat gluten have to be cautious and carry their identity with them wherever they go. Whether travelling within their own country or not, they have to be prepared to provide their own food. In the case of Lourdes' daughter, the food they brought for her was denied. The denial of her food was indirectly a denial of the legitimacy and importance of her daughter having Celiac and the fact that she needed to eat. Natacha having to bring a survival kit, albeit a mini one, indicates that she needs to be cognizant of her ability to find food no matter where she travels. The identities they each form travel with them wherever they go.

Bloggers from both France and Spain have their identities confronted in out-grouping experiences. They seek to recreate recipes as gluten free for themselves and their families so that they can once again enjoy foods they ate when they were younger or foods that hold certain nostalgia for them. As members of the out-group in relation to each of the cultures, they have cultivated sensitivities to others with eating restrictions, others who are part of out-groups as well. The bloggers who cannot eat gluten and the others with eating restrictions together form an in-group as a type of counter to the fact that they have been categorized as the out-group by their culture. Finally, the bloggers must travel and manage their eating restrictions, navigating their identity as French or Spaniards who are gluten free now in relation to the other cultures. These three occurrences taken together form a picture of the out-grouping that gluten free nationals experience.

In-Grouping

In both France and Spain, the bloggers have positive experiences when their identity is part of the in-group. They form their identities in relation to each other as other members of the in-group against the out-group of those who eat gluten. Dany highlights the importance of living a normal life and that having Celiac does not mean not being able to do things

Above all, the most important thing is normalcy [formatting in original]. To be Celiac shouldn't at any point stop you from doing anything (except eating gluten). Having this intolerance shouldn't stop us from visiting people, going out with friends, travelling and enjoying ourselves like everyone else, and it is important that those around us see it the same way (Faccio "Sin gluten")

Dany stresses that having Celiac should not prohibit someone from doing something or cause someone to act any differently. Her negotiation of her identity is very pronounced in that she promotes "normalcy". She does not want herself or others with Celiac to be perceived as different or to not partake in activities. However, as seen in the out-grouping section above, Celiac, by nature, prohibits people from being entirely normal. The dynamic with friends and family has to change and food while travelling must be considered ahead of time. Dany's emphasis on normal may be an attempt to avoid being part of an out-group and make herself part of the in-group of the normative food identity of her culture despite her differences.

The author of Iza Kitchen writes of her very positive experience while travelling to Bretagne. She travelled to Bretagne with her family and was served a crumble that she found so delicious, she attempted to recreate the recipe. "This crumble was served to us in a little restaurant by the oceanfront of Bretagne. The owner was very familiar with the 'gluten free' problem. He even put on the menu several desserts marked as 'without [gluten]'" (Iza Kitchen

“L’improbable crumble”). Although she does not state whether or not the owner of the restaurant was himself gluten free, this positive experience she had was one where she discovered an in-group she could belong to. The restaurant was able to safely serve her and she did not have to worry or argue for the importance of her eating restrictions. For her, this in-group was formed of people who understood the restrictions of gluten free and because of that, she felt safe and happy eating there.

Marga, a Spanish blogger, created a Facebook group for those who are gluten free to share their experiences in everyday life. She writes about it on her blog:

What’s going on in the group?! There’s more than 1,400 members! We share good moments of our days, remembering our adventures and misadventures that being Celiac creates for us, we try to take on life with humor without losing sight of the idea that the gluten free life isn’t easy and while we still have a long way to go to get full integration for Celiacs, and we’re in this together. (Marga “Anécdotas”)

This excerpt shows an in-group made by the actual creation of a Facebook group. The Facebook group is a representation of the in-group of Celiacs and gluten intolerant in Spain. They post in the group and share their experiences with each other. They form a group metaphorically and somewhat tangibly by means of social media. The last bit of the excerpt, “...and we’re in this together” is a perfect example of the formation of a group that is banded together by a shared difference.

The blogs from France and Spain collectively show the out-grouping and in-grouping that the Celiacs and gluten intolerant in both countries experience. From navigating meals with friends and families to creating shared groups, the bloggers from each country form their food

identities as gluten free people by interacting with others who eat gluten as well as others who are gluten free as well. However, the two countries are slightly different in what was thematically repeated throughout the blogs. The French bloggers discussed gluten free France in comparison with other countries, especially Spain. On the other hand, Spanish bloggers were concentrated more on the social activism of gluten free, much more than the French bloggers did.

French Bloggers

Natacha and Perrine, two of the French bloggers, bring to light the difficulties of being gluten free in France. While there are only two bloggers who mention this outright, there was no noticeable mention of a similar situation in Spain. Natacha, while travelling around Europe, notes that, “They say that France is behind in comparison to other European countries, but let’s remember some of the efforts made in recent months...” (Natacha “Une nouvelle adresse”). The way she chooses to write this indicates that it is not just her, or not just one person who thinks that France is not up to par with other gluten free countries, but it is a somewhat widely shared opinion. She does, however, point out that France has made efforts recently to ameliorate the gluten free situation in France, such as several new brands and new products that have come to grocery stores. This entry is dated 2009, so it is possible that the situation in France has improved even more since then. However, Perrine, in an entry written in 2012, discusses how she thinks that Spain is superior to France as it pertains to being gluten free.

Perrine writes about her trip to Spain and her observations about getting gluten free food there as opposed to France.

For several years, I’ve noticed that Spain has always been more advanced than us poor French when it comes to gluten free. But, I have to admit that according to

what you guys are saying on the Facebook page, that it's not just Spain in particular, but the majority of European countries. (Perrine "Espagne")

Her observations, like Natacha's, are backed by what other people say. She is not the only person who thinks that France is behind in being gluten free. They are not just behind Spain, but also behind many other European countries according to Perrine and the comments on Facebook. The formation of this identity is in relation not just to being gluten free, but being French as well as gluten free. Each of the two bloggers negotiates her identity based on her individual eating restrictions as well as the country where she lives.

Spanish Bloggers

The most noticeable difference between the Spanish and the French bloggers was that the Spanish bloggers focus on activism for gluten free and trying to get equality for those who eat gluten free. In the French blogs there was no significant mention of this fight for equality. Marga has an entire entry about the fight for gluten free titled, "Si hoy no luchas, mañana no llores", or in English, "If today we don't fight, tomorrow we don't cry". In this entry she writes,

And us Celiacs have to stop conforming and starting fighting so that we can eat in more restaurants, so that we can have reliable labeling, to reduce the price of gluten free products, and so that we can have adequate medical attention. (Marga "Si hoy no luchas")

For Marga, being able to live her life like someone who is able to eat gluten is important to her. Being able to pay a lower price for gluten free products, being able to eat in more restaurants, and getting appropriate medical attention are things she values and believes she should fight for. Dany also writes on this point saying, "However, in many occasions we encounter things that aren't the way we would like them to be and we have to fight for it more" (Faccio "Sin gluten").

In both of the original texts, the authors use the word, “luchar” which means to fight and can sometimes convey the sense of a struggle. The use of this word reflects the mindset that to get better representation and equality for Celiacs is not an easy thing, but it requires force and effort.

In another entry, Marga comments on her displeasure with a cooking show. On the show there was a chef who was gluten free and one of the judges had very negative comments about him based on the fact that he had Celiac and ate and cooked gluten free. The judge made reference to the idea that gluten free food does not have as much flavor, that flavor is very important in cooking, that she was scared of the flavor of gluten free food, and displayed a general ignorance of the disease. Marga was very upset by this and wrote,

Put yourself in our place! And just to be clear... we don't want preferential treatment, no! We want to not be discriminated against, that a Celiac participating in a program of this type can demonstrate that they know how to use the products that are gluten free, that sadly we have to use (and pay an arm and a leg for), because our health is worth it. (Marga “Carbón”)

Once again, the theme of fighting for gluten free rights is repeated. Marga and Dany fight for gluten free representation and in a way fight to negotiate their identity as well. Since eating gluten free is a large part of their food identity, the fight for gluten free rights can easily be seen as a fight to have their identity as someone who eats gluten free represented.

These four Spanish bloggers represent a very small portion of the people with Celiac in Spain. As the statistics earlier in this paper state, approximately 1% of the population of Spain has Celiac, or 400,000 people with the majority of them undiagnosed. However, the bloggers are activists for Celiac and fight to have their disease recognized as more legitimate and to receive more equality. From the information gathered, it is impossible to say if the Celiac activists make

up a large portion of Celiacs in Spain since the number of bloggers surveyed is so small. Two of the four bloggers explicitly discuss their activism for Celiac, thus it is entirely possible that this 1:2 ratio is reflected in the larger celiac population in Spain.

This leads to the question of gluten free life in Spain and how it differs from gluten free life in other countries, including France. The French bloggers mention that Spain is more gluten free friendly than France, but the Spanish bloggers are fighting to have gluten free be well represented and respected in their country. Perhaps the difference is just in each of their perceptions, coming from different countries. Or maybe Spain seems better to the French because the Spanish have spent so long fighting for better representation.

In order to examine more in depth the question of how gluten free individuals in France and Spain live day to day and negotiate their identity, the author of this thesis constructed a survey intending to target this negotiation and their experiences. Using the information gathered from the blogs in conjunction with the survey results to be explained below, a more complete picture can be made of gluten free life in France and Spain.

Individual Cases Reflecting Identity Theory – Survey Results

In August and October of 2013, as part of this study, two surveys were sent out to bloggers in France and Spain who provided contact information on their blogs.¹⁷ For each survey, three responses were received. However, one of the French results was from Canada, so for consistency, that response is not part of the evaluation. The surveys contained questions intended to probe at what daily life is like as someone who eats gluten free in each of the countries, such as the reactions of their friends and families, times when being gluten free is most difficult, and where they buy their food. Similar to the structure of the blog section, the

¹⁷ For the full text of the survey questions in French, Spanish, and English – please refer to Appendix II.

individual cases will be compared with both countries together, then each country separately, France then Spain, to highlight the differences.

By examining individuals on a case by case basis, this study is able to see more precisely the results of not being able to eat gluten in France and Spain. The survey questions aimed to target negotiation of identities by the individuals in relation to his or her culture. This portion will look to answer the same questions as the previous section:

- What is the individual's food identity in relation to the culture's food identity?
- How do individuals relate to food and culture?
- How does being unable to eat gluten change how one relates to one's culture and therefore negotiates one's identity?

When asked how they managed food when around friends and family or at a large gathering, all of the participants in both countries answered that they often have to bring their own food. Some of them cook with their friends and families to make sure the food is safe, but they all responded that they bring food so as to be able to eat something and to feel safe that they are not accidentally eating gluten. These results are consistent with the earlier discussion of out-group experiences, such as the quote from Dany's blog, that she can never feel entirely sure that her friends are not accidentally feeding her gluten. It reinforces the idea that even with people with whom they should form the in-group, their friends and family, they are part of the out-group, especially when they have to bring different food to parties or gatherings. All of the respondents agree that special occasions, such as weddings, are the most difficult places to find gluten free food. Lastly, they all responded that eating at restaurants is not easy and consequently they do not go out to eat often.

The Spanish respondents, following the activism trend from the Spanish blogs, were somewhat defensive in their responses to the survey. They all emphasized that eating gluten free was not a choice and that they eat the way they do because they are medically required to. One of the participants answered that they will only eat out in restaurants if they have been approved by a gluten free association—so when they go out to eat with friends and family, they have to eat at one of the approved restaurants.

Different from the French respondents, two of the three Spanish respondents reported that their friends and family do not believe that it is possible to be happy eating gluten free or do not believe that having Celiac means eating gluten free forever. They have to negotiate the disbelief and ignorance of the people they interact with. One of the Spaniards answered that people can be very cruel in certain situations when they find out that she cannot eat gluten. All three of the respondents answered that the place they find gluten free foods most often is the grocery store in the designated gluten free aisle. For more particular foods, they go to specialty stores or shop on the internet, but for the most part they can shop at regular grocery stores.

In contrast to the Spanish respondents, the two French respondents answered that they get most of their food from the “bio”, or organic/specialty stores and from the internet, rather than the grocery stores. Out of the two participants, one is gluten intolerant and one has Celiac. Unlike the Spaniards, the French were not as defensive in their answers; they did not repeat that gluten free was not a choice, but a necessity, even though it is just as necessary for the French as for the Spaniards.

One of the French respondent’s family members did not believe that her gluten intolerance was a real medical problem. She responded that her family finally accepted that her food intolerance was not just a psychological problem. The same woman also answered that her

family is the least understanding of the idea that she cannot eat the typical French foods. Once again, the in-group/out-group dynamic is reflected as difficult when dealing with families, whether in France or Spain.

Unfortunately, this survey returned no results of those who choose to eat gluten free from either country. Perhaps, the results would have been different if the food eaten was chosen and not medically required.

The largest shared theme from the survey results was the difficulty of going out to eat or going to a large gathering with friends or family. Based on this evidence given by gluten free people living in France and Spain, there is a definite negotiation of identity that takes place. Eating foods that are different from those of their country, their families, and their friends causes them to need to defend their medically necessitated food restrictions. Their identities are created partly in defense to the way they eat and are certainly shaped by their interactions with the world around them, by their acquaintances, and by their culture as a whole.

Author's Reflections

As the author of this paper, I would like include my experiences in France and Spain as an American with Celiac. From February to May of 2012, I spent a semester abroad in Aix-en-Provence in the south of France. In the summer of 2013, I spent four weeks abroad in Madrid, Spain. Although I am not a native of either France or Spain, I feel it appropriate to add my experience and reflections on what it was like as someone who could not eat gluten in either of the countries. First, information on France will be provided, followed by Spain, and then a synthesis of the two.

While in France, I lived with a host family comprised of a man and a woman in their sixties. The father was the one who did the cooking in the house and he was incredibly adaptive

to my eating restrictions—I am a vegetarian by choice in addition to having Celiac. One of his friends owned a restaurant in the town that served several gluten free foods, so that friend was able to tell my host family what I could eat and where to find it. When I went shopping for my own foods, I shopped at the organic store, called a bio, near my house as well as the midsize superstore in town. The superstore, called Monoprix had a small gluten free section where I was able to buy bread, crackers, cookies, and other similar items.

In town there was a shop dedicated to macarons, which are small pastries or confections typically made with almond flour instead of wheat flour. I was able to ask the shop keeper for the ingredients of the macarons and she informed me that they did not use wheat flour. I had similarly pleasant experiences in all of the restaurants I went to. The wait staff was able to answer my questions about the dishes and was often able to make substitutions for any bread. The majority of the negative reactions I received were in response to the fact that I am vegetarian and do not eat seafood, because seafood is an important part of the diet of southern France.

In Spain, I stayed with a host mother in her sixties. She had never heard of someone not eating gluten before and had a hard time understanding what I could and could not eat. At the dinner table, she would occasionally make comments about how I could not eat the bread that everyone else at the table was eating. Although I do not think she meant the comments to be mean, it was a frequent reminder of the fact that my eating habits were different from those around me.

In Madrid, just a few metro stops away from my house, there was a gluten free bakery that I frequented during my time in Spain. The bakery had a café layout, so you could order a dessert and a drink then sit at a table where they would bring it to you. Every time I was there, I observed that the bakery had a decent number of people there. Closer to dinner, during the

merienda time in Spain (later in the afternoon, after lunch but before the late dinner), there were often families and children in the bakery sitting together and eating. All ages and all types of people seemed to frequent the bakery. This experience was somewhat contradictory to what I experienced with my host mother, which leads me to wonder if awareness of gluten free is less common among the older generation.

Although three meals per day were provided for me by my host mother, I bought myself snacks. The small grocery store near my house had a gluten free section big enough to get some cookies and crackers. There was an organic/health food store, but it was a forty five minute metro ride. At restaurants, the wait staff was often confused by the concept of someone not eating bread or wheat flour. However, it was harder to find food that did not have meat in it in Spain since Spanish dishes often use meat as a large component of main dishes. Thus, the majority of my problems eating in Spain came from not eating meat, with not eating gluten as a secondary concern.

In comparing my experiences abroad with those of the bloggers, I find that I had the opposite experience. The French bloggers praise the merits of gluten free in Spain, but I found that France was more adaptive than Spain was. However, the regions in which I was studying differed from where the bloggers live and visited and thus might be coloring their reactions as well as mine. My experience was also based strongly on that of my host families. My host family in France was so accommodating to my dietary needs, while my host mother in Spain was not as accommodating to the same extent. In both countries I shopped in grocery stores for the majority of my food. In Aix-en-Provence there was no gluten free bakery like there was in Madrid. In Madrid I saw several restaurants that were certified by various gluten free organizations which

leads me to believe that Spain has more of an organizational awareness of gluten free than France does. However, in Aix-en-Provence there was more adaptability to my eating restrictions.

My negotiation of identity in both of the countries was obviously different than that of the natives studied in this thesis since I am American and not French or Spanish, but there were certainly similarities in our experiences. As an American, I did not have to negotiate my identity as a member of those countries who did not partake in their traditional fare. However, I was seen as outsider being a non-native and in being a non-native I sometimes felt as if it was even ruder for me not to eat their food. Not only was I a member of the out-group by not being French or Spanish, but I was further an out-group because I did not eat their iconic and cherished food. When I explained why I did not eat their food—because I am a vegetarian and because I have Celiac—the explanation of having Celiac was more accepted than being a vegetarian since I have to eat gluten free but choose not to eat meat. I did not often belong to an in-group related to food while in France or Spain. The only time that I felt like a member of a food in-group was in the gluten free bakery in Spain where presumably the others there ate gluten free as well. However, I did not have any similar experiences in France. Thus, as it related to food, I was often a member of the out-group.

Conclusions

As highlighted in the history sections on France and Spain, bread played a vital role in the development of both countries. Throughout French history, bread was so valued that poisonous substitutions were made to the recipes which caused those who ate it to die. The French people refused to eat other food that would nourish them and instead chose to eat their deadly bread. In contrast, although bread was important in Spanish history, the Spanish people

would eat food other than bread, such as gachas. While the French were willing to die for the bread, the Spanish adapted and ate other foods.

This importance is reflected in the bloggers' experiences and negotiations of their identities. The bloggers from both France and Spain recounted experiences where they were the out-group. They reformulated favorite recipes, were more sensitive to others in similar out-groups, and had to navigate eating with family and friends as well as in foreign countries. All of these circumstances contribute to the formation of the bloggers' identities as gluten free natives of each country. However, the bloggers also wrote of pleasant times when they were part of the in-group and encountered others in the gluten free community or others who sympathized with the gluten free community. In these particular cases, although the gluten free individuals would be considered the out-group by the majority of the population, when they were gathered with others similar to them, their out-group became an in-group experience.

Activism for the rights and equality for those who eat gluten free was a predominant theme in the Spanish blogs that was not present in the French blogs. Several of the French bloggers held the opinion that France is behind other European countries, specifically Spain, as it pertained to the availability of gluten free foods and the rights of gluten free people. From this point of difference, however, arises a key question and two follow up questions. Why do the French believe that Spain is better for gluten free if the Spanish feel the need to fight so hard for equality? Do the efforts of the Spanish make enough of a significant difference so that the French see the Spaniards' efforts when they visit? Or is France actually markedly behind so that even though the Spanish consider Spain to be behind, Spain is a paradise compared to France? Unfortunately, the author has yet to find conclusive answers to those questions; however, based on her own experiences in France and Spain it is likely that France is not vastly behind Spain. It

is entirely possible that Spain is more advanced in gluten free than France, but it is improbable that in all of France it is as difficult to live gluten free as the bloggers say that it is.

Further, it is very important to note that regionality likely plays a large role in the experiences of someone living gluten free. One region of France or Spain probably differs significantly from another region. Thus, the number of bloggers and survey respondents studied reflects only a small portion of people and regions of the two countries. The conclusions of the history sections of the thesis correlate interestingly with the conclusions from the blog section. In the history section, it was discovered that the Spanish people found other foods to eat besides bread, while the French people were stubborn in their ways and ate bread mixed with dirt even though it ended up killing them. The conclusions of the blog analysis state that the Spaniards fight for gluten free rights, while the French lament their lower status. These conclusions play into very broad stereotypes of each country—while the Spanish adapt and fight, the French are unchanging and lament that their country is not as accessible to gluten free people as other countries are. While these are just stereotypes, the correlation between the conclusions of the histories and blog sections in relation to the stereotypes is interesting to note.

The author of this paper considers her experiences from her time abroad in France and Spain to be different from what the bloggers express in their blogs. Her status as a non-native of the country set her apart as the out-group simply by not being French or Spanish. She found that while in France, she was able to assimilate more easily into the food culture by way of her host family and accommodating restaurants. In Spain, she felt more alienated by the food and like more of an outsider in the country because she was unable to eat the bread products. However, in both countries, she had more experiences as a member of the out-group, being unable to eat their traditional fare.

As the author predicted before beginning this thesis, bread has a large role in the culture and history of both France and Spain. However, the number of challenges the French bloggers reported that they faced and the activism of the Spanish bloggers were unexpected. While in Spain, the author did not observe this activism, thus it was very much a surprise to discover it in the blogs. The general hardships faced by the survey respondents, such as having to bring food to large gatherings, were expected. On the other hand, the resistance several of them faced when dealing with their families was a completely surprising response. The author's surprise is certainly affected by the fact that she grew up in a family that was very supportive of her gluten free lifestyle. From the information gathered, there are no conclusive results to say whether or not the familial acceptance is due to the broader cultural context or individual experience.

The normative food identities in France and Spain rely on bread as a large and integral part of many dishes. Individuals who cannot eat gluten must negotiate their identity as a native of their country who is part of the country despite the fact that they cannot eat gluten. The blogs examined reveal that indeed, the individuals' identities do shift in relation to their culture and depending on whether they are participating in an in-group or out-group. The group they are categorized in at the time affects the way they represent and change their identities. The individual responses to the survey questions support the themes that came from the blog readings and added the personal aspect of families and the difficulties of navigating familial and friend interactions when unable to eat gluten. While the bread consumption may be decreasing in France and Spain, through an investigation of the historical importance of bread, an analysis of native food bloggers, and an examination of survey responses, this thesis has shown the relevance of bread and its role in the negotiation of identities of gluten free individuals.

In two countries where bread was so historically significant and continues to be, is there a hopeful future for those who eat gluten free? The bloggers faced challenges but had their personal triumphs as well. The Spanish bloggers are fighting for better gluten free lives for themselves in their countries, so it is very possible that in the future, it will be even easier for Spaniards to live gluten free. There was no specific note of progress in France, thus at this time predications cannot be conclusively made about the future of gluten free in France. However, as the author noted in her time abroad, Aix-en-Provence was a welcoming place for her as a gluten free individual. It is possible then that it is easier to live gluten free in some cities rather than others and that change could affect the country as a whole. Additionally, if various countries in Europe have better food availability and pricing for gluten free individuals, perhaps France will as well. With widespread education about the disease and the challenges of those who lead a gluten free life, the hope is that life will be better for future generations of gluten free people in France and Spain.

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Appendix I

Blog Quotes in Original Languages

- “Una de las primeras cosas en las que pensé al saber que era celíaca, y por la que salieron muchas lágrimas de estos ojitos de topo míos, fue por las empanadas... mi lado optimista me hace lanzarme y probar con aquellos productos que tengo a mano, sin embargo los resultados y mi parte pesimista me dicen que nunca volveré a comer una empanada de verdad” (Lorena “Empanada”).
- “Enfant, ma mère en préparait souvent l'hiver, c'est avec un grande plaisir que j'ai pu enfin faire connaitre ce plat à la Miss sans gluten” (Perrine “Saucisson”).
- “Mais j’ai alors eu une pensée pour les enfants intolérants... Car le pain sans gluten est en général plutôt sec et ‘étouffe chrétien’” (Natacha “Un délicieux sandwich”).
- “Puis tel un OVNI, le Browkie a débarqué sur les blogs “Miam” et même si je me suis éloignée de la bloggosphère culinaire, il ne m'a pas échappé et j'ai voulu réaliser une version gluten free pour Romane” (Perrine “Browkie”).
- “- Vaaale... ¿Hay algún otro niño en el grupo con algún problema de alimentación?
- ¡Lo sabía... lo sabía!.. Si es que las madres que tienen hijos con problemas sois las que os preocupáis por los demás niños (Me suelta cada razonamiento). Sí mamá.. hay una niña diabetic” (Santos “Donetes sin gluten”).
- “Une phrase sympathique que j’ai pris pour moi: les intolérants au gluten ne sont pas condamnés aux fades recettes! Ben non les amis, ce blog en est la preuve!!!” (Natacha “Emission”).
- “Regla número 1 del singlutenismo aprendida: hay que ser previsor. Regla número 2 también: el singlutenismo es CARO” (Faccio “Segundo aniversario”).

- “La adaptación al singlutenismo no fue tan difícil: no te cuesta tanto si ya te gusta cocinar de entrada. Es un poco frustrante ver cómo las harinas no responden igual, pero con tanto maestro singlutenero en la red, las cosas se llevan mucho mejor” (Faccio “Segundo aniversario”).
- “La mise en place du régime n'est pas si facile au début car cela demande de revoir entièrement ses pratiques et habitudes alimentaires. De plus dans un premier temps, il est conseiller de supprimer également le lactose. Il faut bien lire et apprendre à décrypter les étiquettes et chasser les traces dans la composition des aliments manufacturés” (Iza Kitchen “La maladie Cœliaque”).
- “Un mythe pour beaucoup, une croisade plus ou moins réussie par certains, je vous offre aujourd'hui une réalisation très facile de cette brioche. Mais attention facile, ne veut pas dire rapide, il faut un peu de patience (mais si peu...), et comme on dit que plus c'est long plus c'est bon” (Perrine “Brioche”).
- “Estoy segura de que no soy la única que se ha llevado alguna vez el tupper a casa de unos amigos. También me ha pasado que amigos míos tuvieran ciertos reparos en invitarme a comer a su casa porque no sabían qué ofrecerme ni cómo hacerlo. Desde luego parto de la base de que todos ellos tienen siempre la mejor de las intenciones: no contaminarme” (Faccio “Invitar”).
- “Y luego están las comidas familiares, las comidas con amigos... acabaré siendo una vieja ermitaña que vive sola en su madriguera, removiendo aromáticas cocciones y recogiendo raíces y bayas... porque lo de volver a restaurantes donde te aseguran que todo está libre de gluten, para luego volver para casa con tu nueva contaminación cruzada... oooooohhhh... es un placer... revivir esa contaminación durante los siguientes 10 días

cada vez que algo entra en mi boca... uuuhhhhhh formidable!!! sublime!!!!” (Lorena “Bizcocho”).

- “Pero bueno, no me hagáis caso que soy celíaca, y oí a una señora decir que “esos” son unos que tienen una enfermedad “de esas.... de esas de sesso” (no sé si se referiría a algo de la cabeza, o a algo de más abajo del mentón.... y no hablo del duodeno jiji ;))” (Lorena “Pan de molde”).
- “...y nada de intentar entendernos en inglés... A eso llegó nuestro hijo con su alemán de primero de academia y le entendieron que la niña es celíaca pero preguntó por la edad de la niña y a la respuesta de 7 sin ningún miramiento el batido fue a la basura” (Santos “Un celíaco en un avión”).
- “Ma vie sans gluten... Pour partir en Vendée, j’avais pris un mini kit de survie, quelques cracottes et du pain sans gluten...” (Natacha “Une nouvelle adresse”).
- “Ante todo, lo esencial es la **normalidad**. Ser celíaco no es ni debe ser en ningún momento un impedimento para nada (salvo comer gluten). Tener esta intolerancia no debe frenarnos de visitar a gente, salir con los amigos, viajar y disfrutar como todos los demás, y es importante que nuestro entorno así lo vea. Sin embargo, en muchas ocasiones nos encontraremos con que no todo se puede plantear lo idealmente que se desearía y hay que batallar un poco más” (Faccio “Sin gluten”).
- “Ce crumble nous a été servi dans un petit restaurant de bord de mer en Bretagne. Le patron connaissait bien le problème des “sans gluten”. Il avait même mis sur sa carte quelques desserts en précisant ‘sans’” (Iza Kitchen “L’improbable crumble”).
- “¿Qué está pasando en el grupo? ¡¡¡Qué somos más de 1.400 miembros!!! Pasamos buenos momentos a diario, recordando nuestras aventuras y desventuras que nuestra

condición de celíacos nos hace vivir, intentamos tomarnos la vida con humor sin perder de vista que la vida sin gluten no es fácil y aún nos queda mucho camino por andar para conseguir la integración del celíaco, y en ello estamos” (Marga “Anécdotas”).

- “On dit que la France est en retard par rapport aux autres pays européens, mais soulignons les efforts faits depuis quelques mois... ” (Natacha “Une nouvelle adresse”).
- “Depuis plusieurs années, j'ai constaté que l'Espagne avait toujours de l'avance sur nous pauvres français en ce qui concerne le sans gluten. Mais force est de constater, avec vos témoignages sur la page Facebook, qu'il ne s'agit pas de l'Espagne en particulier, mais de la majorité des pays européens ” (Perrine “ Espagne ”).
- “Y los celíacos tenemos que dejar de ser unos conformistas y luchar para que podamos comer en más restaurantes, para que tengamos una etiquetado fiable, para que baje el precio de los productos sin gluten, para que tengamos una atención médica adecuada...” (Marga “Si hoy no luchas”).
- “Sin embargo, en muchas ocasiones nos encontraremos con que no todo se puede plantear lo idealmente que se desearía y hay que batallar un poco más” (Faccio “Sin gluten”).
- “¡¡Póngase en nuestro sitio!! Y que nadie se confunda... no queremos trato de favor, ¡¡no!! Queremos que no se nos discrimine, y que si un celíaco participa en un programa de este tipo pueda demostrar lo que sabe con los productos sin gluten que lamentablemente tiene que utilizar (y pagar a precio de oro), porque su salud va en ello” (Marga “Carbón”).

Appendix II

Survey Questions in English:

1. What is your first name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where do you live? How long have you lived there?
4. Why did you choose to eat gluten free/vegetarian/vegan?
5. How do your peers react when they hear you eat gluten free/vegetarian/vegan?
6. How do you manage eating out at restaurants with friends and family?
7. How do you handle family situations where gluten and non-vegetarian food items are served regularly (think holidays, celebrations...)? Do your family and/or friends treat you differently or ask you questions about your eating choices?
8. When at a restaurant or family gathering, how do people react when you can't eat traditional/typical Spanish/French foods?
9. Can you describe a situation in which you had to defend your food choices or a situation in which you were made uncomfortable by others about your food choices? What do you think were the causes of the problem that you encountered? Or have you never encountered any problems of this nature?
10. Where do you find alternative food? For example, a health foods store, a grocery store, or a local bakery?

Survey Questions in French:

1. Comment vous appelez-vous ?
2. Quel âge avez-vous ?
3. Où est-ce que vous habitez? Depuis combien de temps y habitez-vous ?

4. Pourquoi avez-vous choisi de manger sans gluten? Pourquoi êtes-vous un végétarien(ne) / végétalien(ne) ?
5. Depuis combien de temps ne mangez-vous plus de gluten ? Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous végétarien(ne)/ végétalien(ne) ?
6. Comment vos amis réagissent-ils quand ils apprennent que vous ne mangez pas/plus de gluten / de viande/ de produits animaux ?
7. Comment vous organisez-vous lors des réunions de famille (fêtes, célébrations...) où on mange normalement du gluten et des produits d'animaux ? Est-ce que votre famille et/ou vos amis agissent différemment ou posent des questions à propos de vos choix ?
8. Pourriez-vous décrire une situation où vous avez dû défendre vos choix alimentaires, ou, quand vous avez été mal à l'aise à cause d'eux?
9. Normalement où trouvez-vous votre nourriture alternative, par exemple, un supermarché, un magasin spécialisé (boulangerie, pâtisserie...), une coopérative... ? En commandez-vous par Internet ?
10. Puis-je vous contacter pour communiquer plus? Si oui, quel est votre courriel pour vous poser encore des questions au cas où j'en aurais?

Survey Questions in Spanish:

1. ¿Cuál es su nombre?
2. ¿Cuántos años tiene?
3. ¿Dónde vive? ¿Hace cuántos años?
4. ¿Por qué eligió comer sin gluten - ser vegetariano - ser vegano?
5. ¿Hace cuánto tiempo que come sin gluten- es vegetariano- es vegano?

6. ¿Cómo reaccionan sus pares cuando descubren que come sin gluten o que es vegetariano o vegano?
7. ¿Cómo maneja en los restaurantes con sus amigos o su familia?
8. ¿Cómo maneja en las situaciones de familia donde hay gluten y comida no vegetariana o vegana (como las fiestas o las celebraciones)? ¿Su familia o sus amigos lo tratan de una manera diferente o lo preguntan sobre sus selecciones de comida?
9. En un restaurante o una reunión con su familia, ¿cómo reacciona la gente cuando no puede comer la comida tradicional de España, por ejemplo el pan, la carne, o el queso?
10. ¿Puede describirme una situación donde necesitaba defender sus selecciones de comida? ¿O una situación cuando otras personas lo han hecho sentirse incómodo causa de sus elecciones de comida? En su opinión ¿cuáles serían las causas del problema que había encontrado? ¿O no ha encontrado un problema de ese tipo?
11. ¿Dónde encuentra la comida alternativa? Por ejemplo, en el supermercado, en una tienda de la comida alternativa o en una panadería especial...