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## Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in contemporary food culture?

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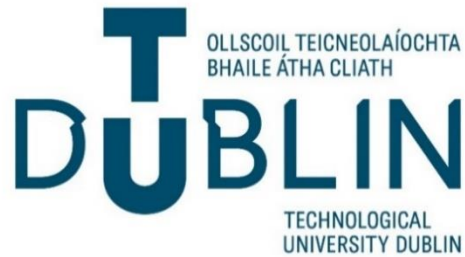
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# **Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in contemporary food culture?**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of  
M.A. in Gastronomy and Food Studies.

Presented to the School of Culinary  
Arts and Food Technology, Technological University Dublin, City Campus.

By  
Sinéad Reil

May 2020

Supervisor: Dr Kathleen Farrell

## **Declaration of Authorship**

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of *Masters in Gastronomy and Food Studies* is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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## **Abstract**

*“Everybody eats and drinks; yet only few appreciate the taste of food”*

Confucius (551- 479BC).

This research study examines contemporary food culture in Ireland through the phenomenon of foodism and the habits and traits expressed through the subculture of foodies. Elements and actors of the Irish foodscape are also considered. Other topics it discusses are Irish food history, Ireland’s gastronomical global position and the modern Irish chef.

The thesis defined foodism as: “A keen or exaggerated interest in food, especially in the minute details of preparation, presentation, and consumption of food” (‘Foodism’, 2018a). In order to answer the five sub-research questions posed, it applied qualitative research which featured a selection of six in-depth interviews with experts from the tourism sector, educational sector, food sector and a state food agency.

The study draws insights from the fields of sociology and cultural studies. It adopted a philosophical standpoint from the paradigm of interpretivism. Thematic analysis was used as part of the methodology process, from which five themes developed from the data findings.

The research data established that, in 2019, food industry experts and academics concur that Irish food culture has ‘evolved’ and is evolving, from a more traditional Irish cuisine. In addition, it was noted that there is a ‘hunger for food’ amongst a small but growing cohort of the population, in relation to access to information through food media and for food experiences such as culinary courses, gastro tours and food festival events.

The research offers a perspective of perceptions formed around Irish foodism and the psyche of the foodie persona. There are a number of avenues from the findings of this study that could be explored for future research.



## Acknowledgement

I want to thank my father; a fervent food-lover of his time, who passed on to his family his love of life, of country, cooking, and laughter. Thanks to my mum, who taught me, “variety is the spice of life” and that “too much of any one thing is not good for you”. Her love and life-long dedication to the writings and recipes of Maura Laverty proved to me that you should stick with what works for you and to always share your culinary finds; I share this with you both x.

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My fellow students, from Years 1 and Years 2 (it’s a long story!). What a rollercoaster ride it has been! It was a wonderful experience to get to know you all. I just hope our paths crisscross again on this small island, until then...*go n-éirí an bóthar libh!*

*The local and the global, community and society, tradition and modernity, are not forms of life that supersede one another in linear historical progress. They exist contemporaneously and interpenetrate, collide and collude with one another, in the time and space of contemporary Ireland*

(Kuhling and Keohane, 2002, p.104).

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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.0 Introduction to Research Study**

### **1.1 Working Title**

Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in the country's contemporary food culture?

### **1.2 Introduction**

The interest for this thesis study developed from previous undergraduate research undertaken, in relation to Irish Food Media. In 2013, Reil observes; the popularity of gastronomy and food continues to increase: "With a vast array of food writers, critics and bloggers adding to the mix" (2013, p. ii). Previous to this, (Messer, Haber et al., 2000) recognise that, "there has been a growing interest in culinary history and gastronomy in the last three decades" (cited in Mac Con Iomaire, 2009, p.22). Also, de Solier points out how, "the current popularity of cooking and food programs around the world indicates that foodism is a global phenomenon propagated by mass media" (2005, p.465). "The increase...illustrates both the seriousness and the popularity of food as a cultural interest" (Collins, 2015, p.277).

Albeit a small country on the outer peripheral of Europe, Ireland was not exempt from the deluge of food centric television shows, cookbooks, blogs and podcasts, similar to that experienced by other Westernised countries. These media gathered momenta when the nation experienced its boom time years, from the early nineties to 2008, and showed no sign of waning during the latter, ten years of recession. Deleuze (2012, p.1) notes that, "the interest in food in Ireland is not new, but it seemingly has reached a level never reached before. One could say that Ireland is turning into a foodie nation". Since then, greater action by Irish food authority figures, such as industry chefs and food critics, and contribution by educational and state organisations, and tourism bodies has come to light. This has piqued further interest and presented an opportunity to explore, via this research study.

### **1.3 Rationale for the Study/Definition of the Topic**

While a broad focus of this thesis is the concept of foodism, a narrower focus is to investigate the foodism phenomenon occurring within the scope of Ireland. The

research will examine foodism in Ireland, which encompasses the subculture of foodies, but which also includes other actors within Irish food culture spheres. Cultural theorist, Paterson suggests: “Food is one way that the body is experienced and situated in a cultural context” (2006, p.98). By applying a cultural studies lens, the researcher hopes to unearth insights into the country’s contemporary food culture and discern if foodie subculture has transformed, over time.

Themes that will be examined are, ‘cultural and subcultural capital’, ‘taste and distinction’, ‘elitism’ and ‘class aspirations’. Topics that will be discussed include, foodism, the contemporary foodie, Ireland’s food history, Irish food culture, Ireland’s global gastronomical position, and the contemporary Irish chef. The researcher will venture to distinguish between the two terms ‘foodism’ and ‘foodie-ism’. Also, define the separate but somewhat inter-linked sets of Irish food culture actors and decipher how these individual actors contribute to Ireland’s contemporary food culture. Ethnologist Lucy Long defines food culture as: “The practices, attitudes, and beliefs as well as the networks and institutions surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food” (Lexicon of Food, n.d.). She states that, “food culture is similar to foodways but tends to be larger and more encompassing of the historical forces shaping eating patterns” (Long, 2015, p.3).

#### **1.4 Justification of Thesis**

The researcher believes the current food interest phenomenon in Ireland deserves further examination, as there appears to be a gap in published knowledge, on a national level, in relation to the topic. The researcher expects this study would make a valuable contribution to the area. Further examination should provide valuable insight into contemporary food culture in Ireland and forge some understanding of what the Irish foodie currently represents. Writings by journalists and reviewers, such as (Myers 2011; Poole, 2012; Deresiewicz, 2012; Ferdman, 2016; O’Conghaile, 2018; Clark, 2018, 2019; Livingstone, 2019) are also considered as they reside within contemporary cultural and societal spheres and provide valuable critique and observations of the subject matter.

## **1.5 Aims and Objectives**

### **Research Aim**

To investigate foodism in Ireland during 2019 and to determine whether a shift has taken place in contemporary food culture.

### **Main Research Question**

Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in contemporary food culture?

### **Research Objectives:**

- Explain the foodism phenomenon.
- Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food.
- To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen?
- To establish whether foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture.
- Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture.

## **1.6 Outline of Research**

The research study adopts a qualitative methodology approach. The reasoning for this is discussed in chapter three, which outlines methodology practice. The methodology includes semi-structured interviews. Interviews were held with a selection of participants chosen from specific food and gastronomy related sectors such as culinary education, the Irish food industry, tourism, and from the state body sector.

## **1.7 Outline of Chapters**

The body of the dissertation is made up of six chapters. A summary of each are as follows:

**Chapter 1** This chapter introduces and defines the research topic. It lays out the research objectives that form the basis of the thesis' main structure and it gives an

outline of the research method used and also argues a reason as to why an investigation should be undertaken.

**Chapter 2** Analyses the main body of literature covering the topics of foodism and foodie culture. It sets out to define foodism, foodie subculture, and the characteristics of the foodie persona. It further examines Irish food history, Irish food culture, gastronomy in Ireland and the role of the Irish chef.

**Chapter 3** Outlines the philosophical stance of the research project and the research methodology that was considered and implemented.

**Chapter 4** Reports the findings of the primary research, which are presented via colour coding groupings of the sub-research objectives and visually by mapping codes and then themes formulated when applying thematic analyses to the data.

**Chapter 5** Analyses the findings presented from primary research, in chapter four. In this chapter, the researcher discusses these while also returning back, to consider, concepts arising from the literature.

**Chapter 6** In this chapter, the researcher draws their conclusions by connecting both sets of data with the aims and objectives originally laid out in chapter one. And finally offers further recommendations for research.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

“The meanings, discourses and practices around food and eating are worthy of detailed cultural analysis and interpretation” (Lupton, 1996, p.1). Foodie culture has previously been studied in the United States by Canadian sociologists, Johnston and Baumann (2010), cultural theorist Collins (2015) and in Australia by material culture theorist, de Solier (2013). In Great Britain, the subculture has been explored and satirised by authors Barr and Levy (1984). Plus, Marjorie Deleuze in her paper titled, *A New Craze for Food* (2012) examines whether Ireland has turned into a foodie nation: “The Republic is definitely writing a new page in its culinary history and this new phenomenon cannot go unnoticed” (Deleuze, 2012 p.1).

### **2.2 Recognising Foodism**

These days the word foodism, barely features in many people’s vocabulary nor is it a concept that many ponder or contemplate its origins. Even those who label themselves as foodies draw a blank stare at the mention of this ‘ism’ and instead offer to correct, that the proper word to use is ‘foodie-ism’. Presently, this buzzword is the trend and relates how the word in its original state has metamorphosed according to its usage within popular culture. Dictionary definitions define it as: “A keen or exaggerated interest in food, especially in the minute details of the preparation, presentation, and consumption of food” (‘Foodism’, 2018a), and it is also deemed as: “An enthusiasm for and interest in the preparation and consumption of good food” (‘Foodism’, 2018b).

Historically, a letter written to the *British Gazette* in 1727 describes: “A new vice of modern society so contagious that it had recently ‘grown to a greater Excess than ever’” (Mandelkern, 2013, p.1). This letter documents: “The present luxurious and fantastical manner of Eating, which many of our “People of Quality and Taste are fallen into’” (Ibid). Mandelkern maintains that, eighteenth century foodism, “opened up a Pandora’s box of new gastronomic possibilities that threatened to destroy the bonds of common culture” (Ibid). Two centuries later, the topic of foodism is discussed by doctor Frank McCoy, in a health article in the *Oakland Tribune* Newspaper from 1927, in relation to vegetarian and raw foodism.



During the eighties, the concept of foodism comes to the fore again, as Barr and Levy in *The Official Foodie Handbook* (1984) note how, “foodism crosses all boundaries and is understood in all languages” (1984, p.6). From its front cover sleeve, it proclaims: “Foodism is fun”. The book was intended as a satire and reflects ‘a play on’ other similarly titled books published during that decade, in the style of handbooks, guides or bibles, i.e. *The Yuppie Handbook* (1984) and *The Cake Bible* (1988). Presently, in the twenty first century, Mandlekern (2013, p.1) maintains that, “the specter [sic] of foodism still haunts us”. She contends:

Foodism altered the cultural meaning of food by separating the act of eating from its innate biological purpose of ‘filling you up’...aestheticizing food however rendered eating into a solipsistic form of distinction, and assertion of the ‘I’ who had little need for the community (Mandlekern, 2013, p.2).

### **2.3 The Foodie Defined**

“The slang term ‘foodie’ was coined in 1982 in the British style magazine *Harpers & Queen*” (de Solier, 2013, p.7). Here it describes: “A ‘cuisine poser’ who used cultivated culinary consumption as a mode of social distinction (Woods et al., 1982). However, it has been proposed that restaurant reviewer, Gael Greene referenced the word in a 1980’s article she wrote for the *New York* magazine (Levy, 2007; Poole, 2012; Livingstone, 2019). Whomever its creator, it is probable, the term was originally fashioned on another eighties’ slang word ‘yuppie’ (prevalent at that time). In 1984, *Harpers & Queen* then published *The Official Foodie Handbook*; its authors Barr and Levy describe foodies as, “children of the consumer boom [who] consider food to be an art, on a level with painting or drama” (1984, p.6). The word ‘foodie’ is frequently used in popular culture today and defines: “A person with a particular interest in food; a gourmet” (‘Foodie’, 2018). Johnston & Baumann (2010, p.67) maintain that, foodies are confident and learned individuals who, “see themselves as well positioned to talk about and distinguish worthy food from unworthy food”.

While Barr and Levy (1984, p.7) specify how, “the gourmet was typically a rich male amateur to whom food was a passion [and] foodies are typically an aspiring professional couple to whom food is fashion”. Fast forward to the twenty-tens, here, de Solier (2013, p.12) concurs that, “historical identities such as gourmand and the gourmet were more masculine [but] the category of the foodie encompasses both men and women”.

Similarly, Poole (2012, p.3) recognises: “Foodie has now pretty much everywhere replaced ‘gourmet’”. De Solier (2013, p.13) proposes that the foodie identity of the twenty-tens “is a product of globalization and transnational flows of food, tastes, media, capital, and people”.

#### **2.4 Foodie – for and against**

British food writer and self-proclaimed foodie, Sue Pigott announces: “I am proud to be a Foodie and absolutely not afraid of the F-word” (2006, p.6). However, cultural theorist Collins (2015, p.271) maintains that, “some balk at the term foodie. Its meaning is misunderstood and controversial and a vigorous debate has ensued”. Collins (2015) points out that, several terms exist presently to describe food character types such as gourmand, gastronome, epicure, connoisseur and even more specific terms describing the more activist personalities like locavore or chowhound. She claims, “none of which seems to be acceptable or useful alternatives to what ‘foodie’ might have strived” (Collins, 2015, p.272). Deleuze proposes, “nowadays the term has progressively lost its negative meaning” (2012, p.1). However, Ferdman contends that, “there is no shortage of public ‘foodie’ resentment” (Ferdman, 2016). “Despite the heaping piles of expertly deglazed vitriol, the word persists” (Ibid). He speculates that, “using the word ‘foodie’ is like wearing an outfit that was fashionable years before”, one that is, “no longer in style” but not so unfashionable for “some to mistake it as still being cool” (Ibid). While Livingstone (who envisions ‘the foodie’ as a female persona) maintains that, “35 years on from Levy and Barr’s book, the foodie is ubiquitous, she has never been harder to define” (Livingstone, 2019).

#### **2.5 The Foodism Discourse**

Another subterranean-like debate that goes on within the world of gastronomic writing is the quandary of which to select? – either the ‘foodism’ or the ‘foodie-ism’ word when reflecting on the phenomenon. In relation to foodism as a term, theorists such as (Deleuze, 2012; De Solier, 2013), journalists like (Deresiewicz, 2012) and (Poole, 2012) and food writer (Mandelkern, 2013) have adopted it. Words that end in ‘ism’ (for example; Marxism or Buddhism) are: “Used as a productive suffix in the formation of nouns denoting action or practice, state or condition, principles, doctrines, a usage or characteristic, devotion or adherence” (‘Definition of ism’, 2018).

Foodie-ism is a neologism which derived from the older and more established word, foodism. The researcher endeavours to differentiate between these two specific terms, used to describe an exaggerated interest in food. Hence, in relation to this study and in order to offer a more impartial or non-biased outlook when investigating the topic of foodies, food culture and food adoration, the more historically used term, 'foodism', is applied.

Whereas The term, 'foodie-ism' or 'foody-ism' (as spelt in American dictionaries) suggests a more light-hearted, playful connotation of the term than its much older format. This present-day neologism is used mostly by foodies themselves, (Johnston and Baumann, 2010) refer to this version of the word and journalists such as (Myers, 2011) but is also adopted by cultural theorist, (Collins, 2015). In *Cooking Class: The Rise of the 'Foodie' and the Role of Mass Media* (2015), she challenges the notion that, "foodie-ism' is a new development, trend interest or hobby" and states [it] has actually ebbed and flowed over the twentieth century and earlier" (Collins, 2015, p.1). Collins contends, "what might really be at play is a saturation and 'mainstream-ization' of the culture of heightened awareness and attention paid to food and cooking" (Ibid). Similarly, Poole (2012, p.2) concludes that, "Western industrial civilisation is eating itself stupid. We are living in the Age of Food". He refers to the "foodism worldview" which he himself does not adhere to and instead purposes, "to call its adherents foodists" [not foodies], as this, he argues, "is a much older and more suitable term" (2012, p.3). While examining Irish foodism, Deleuze distinctly distances herself from the popularly used slang, neologism 'foodie-ism', as she notes, "foodism in Ireland takes many other forms" (2012, p.9).

Myers (2011) bemoans that much of food writing is done by foodies themselves and he queries, "is any other subculture reported on so exclusively by its own members?" In, *The Atlantic*, he derides Johnston and Baumann's book *Foodies* (2010) as being, "the product of two self-proclaimed members of the tribe". He slates, food writing by foodies, Pollan and Severson of the *New York Times* and chefs Alice Waters and Anthony Bourdain. Previous to publishing *Foodies*, Johnston and Baumann maintain that, "as experts within the culinary field, food writers have considerable power to shape perceptions of food as high quality, fashionable, and worthy of attention from high

status consumers” (2007, p.165). Rousseau concedes, “if food studies recognizes food as essential, food media capitalize on food as an essential distraction” (2012, p.12).

## **2.6 The Foodism Phenomenon**

Deresiewicz (2012) notes, “foodism has taken on the sociological characteristics of what used to be known...as culture”. Barr and Levy (1984, p.31) account that, during the 1950s, “the spread of supermarkets and the start of food advertising on television took Foodism to the masses”. Contemporary cultural theorists, (de Solier, 2005, 2013; Collins, 2015) recognise the phenomenon of foodism as pronounced in both, the western world and worldwide. Collins ascertains foodism is not a new phenomenon: “It has become heightened with the aid of food and cooking information in a variety of media” (2015, p.289). She argues that, “food interest had been embedded in the human psyche for a long while” (2015, p.290).

Livingstone (2019) points out: “Neologisms like ‘foodie’ give us a way to name what was previously unnameable. A light goes on and you see the phenomenon everywhere”. Hence, she observes that, “if Barr and Levy were right in asserting that foodie culture is a late-twentieth-century trend in passion-driven behaviors, then we are now living through the full commercialization of their theory” (Ibid). Commenting on Ireland’s contemporary foodism, Deleuze (2012, p.1) asserts how, “today, there is an impression of abundance, hedonism and hyper-consumption that pervades all food related areas: Ireland has gone mad about food”.

## **2.7 Irish Food History**

In order to best establish why the average Irish person’s interest in food has grown, the country’s past relationship with food should be considered. As a nation, many Irish citizens are conscious of the fact that scarcity of food can prove detrimental for their health, due to the numerous famines their ancestors witnessed, throughout the nineteenth century. A direct result of which were deaths by severe hunger and the spread of diseases which in turn caused the downsizing of the country's population (Reil, 2013, p.6). From mid-to-late 1840s, the Great Famine killed nearly one-eighth of Ireland’s entire population, a result of the complete dependency of the Irish on the potato crop.

Biographer Cowen (2006) mentions how (before the famines) Irish dependency on the potato as a mono crop was extreme. She details that:

Irish men consumed an incredible average of fourteen pounds every day, women and children more than ten pounds...and eventually two million acres were given over to potatoes and three million people ate nothing else, bar salt for seasoning and the odd leaf of cabbage (Cowen, 2006).

Boylan (2016, p.405) notes that, in the throes of famine time, “other food outputs were either exported or priced too high for the rural poor; there was no food to trade down to in the event of a shortage”. In the post famine years, Duane suggests: “There was relatively little change in the Irish diet between the late 1800s and the mid-1900s. Ingredients were heavily biased toward local foods or foods that could be imported from Ireland's main trading partner, the United Kingdom” (europeancuisines.com). “In both city and country there was a tendency toward heavy meat-and-potatoes meals, and not much else” (Ibid). Today, this may be hard to comprehend when viewing the vast array of foodstuffs lining supermarket aisles and when taking into consideration, the varied diets many Irish citizens now have.

“Ireland's long history as a country of significant emigration is well known and documented. Between 1871 and 1961, the average annual net emigration from Ireland consistently exceeded the natural increase in the Irish population, which shrank from about 4.4 million in 1861 to 2.8 million in 1961 (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009). “Caused primarily by [the country's] lagging economic development, net emigration was particularly high in the 'age of mass migration' (1871 to 1926) and in the post-World War II era (1951 to 1961). Traditional destinations included the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia” (Ibid). American historian, Diner details the Irish immigrant after this mass migration, in *Hungering for America*:

The absence of food in the construction of Irish American identity grew as much out of structural realities of the migration and settlement as it bore witness to the persistence of a pre-migration culture that did not focus on food (2001, p.115).

She contends Irish immigrants only considered how, “food prevented hunger, but they did not look at it as a great pleasure” (Ibid). Hence, Diner suggests they lost a sense of themselves and a connection with the land from which they came. However, Irish historian Mac Con Iomaire maintains that, Diner’s research, “overlooks a long tradition [in Ireland] of hospitality and fails to observe, a long tradition [mentioned in Irish

songs] of ‘guesting and feasting’ (during Brehon times)” (2018a, p.10). He criticises Diner’s, “lack of awareness of texts [some in the Irish language] which contain numerous food references” (Ibid). Thus, Mac Con Iomaire suggests: “Food ‘motifs’ can be found from earliest times in Ireland, in the form, of place name lore, mythologies, poetry, songs and stories” (Ibid).

As recent as the 2000s, Irish food critic Doorley relates how Irish people's attitude to food still comes with undertones of guilt attached to “historical baggage” left over from the famine, “we have a guilt about eating well because we are the descendants of the people who survived the famine...in this context it is no surprise that our attitude to food is rather short on joy and celebration” (2004, p.134). Hickey proposes that, for centuries, the Irish found ‘a sense of themselves’ elsewhere, “caring more for the magic of words, the high-minded pleasures of philosophy and the lilt of the fiddle and the flute than for interesting cuisine, fine clothing or comfortable housing” (2018, p.202).

A shift began in Ireland, during the 1960s, it was a time when the country once again suffered from emigration on a large scale and the event played a significant part in introducing change to the Irish palate and ‘approach’ to food (Reil, 2013). With increasing numbers of family members living abroad; many of them now second generation Irish; letters home may have described the new cuisines and tastes they experienced. Duane (2012) documents how in the 1960s and 70s, changes that occurred in travel and transport impelled an evolution in tastes:

Especially with the growth of cheaper air freight and worldwide refrigerated transport, and the introduction of the 'package holiday' and the first low-cost airlines. Suddenly ordinary Irish working people could afford to sail or fly to foreign countries and eat the local foods. And when they came back home, they wanted more of what they'd had while they were abroad...which, at the time, was anything but Irish traditional food (European Cuisines, 2019).

People’s elaborate wants were soon met by the local Irish supermarkets who began to stock their shelves with foodstuffs like pasta, rice, olive oil and exotic spices. Also, during the 1960s and 70s, cooking programmes began broadcasting on Irish television; here cooks like Denise Sweeney, Monica Carr and Monica Sheridan presented their own shows. As a result, “the ‘cooking instruction manual’ came to life and became a 'one-to-to-one' audio-visual experience for the Irish audience while introducing them to

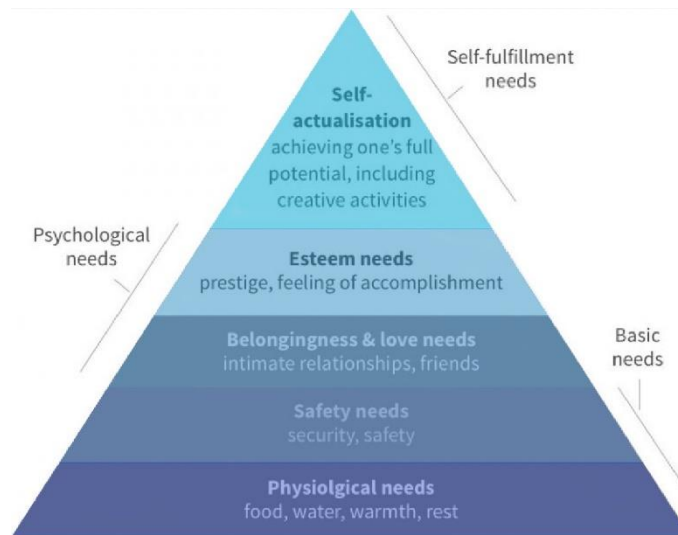
new ranges of ingredients and cuisines” (Reil, 2013, p.8).

Another significant factor which affected food selection and production, came in 1973, when Ireland joined the European Union (known then as the European Economic Community), This milestone had a huge impact on Ireland’s food, agriculture and fishing industries. The event opened markets, crossed borders and created a flow for trading going both ways, which made it easier to import both foreign and European foods into Ireland and in turn, removed its economic dependence on U.K. Markets. During the 1970s also, the Irish economy began to prosper which helped reverse the emigration flow somewhat, “for the first time in Irish history, net migration to Ireland was positive” (Ruhs and Quinn, 2009). This boom did not last long, and the country suffered another recession during the 1980s. However, the following years saw the return of more Irish workers with their families, increasing the population and again as a consequence, the new migrants brought with them adventurous palates and refined epicurean tastes.

## **2.8 Celtic Tiger Cuisine**

Food and water are essential for us as human beings and vital factors to ensure our survival, but should we under-eat, overeat, or under-cook food, it can prove detrimental to our health. American psychologist A.H. Maslow developed his ‘needs’ theory during the 1940s which recognises food as one of the basic physiological needs required by humans, other needs relate to rest, shelter, and sex. “He suggested that human needs may be classified into motivating factors that influence behaviour” (Linehan, 2008, p.46). They consist of physiological needs at the bottom of the pyramid and then move up to safety, social, ego and self-actualisation needs at the top. “Maslow proposed that people tend to satisfy their needs systematically, beginning with basic physiological needs and then moving up the hierarchy” (Ibid).

Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



(Source: Chiquo, Creative Commons BY-SA 4)

When Ireland experienced its most recent economic boom, from the early 90s to 2008, (known as the 'Celtic Tiger' years), many Irish had the chance to focus on satisfying other needs such as social and ego (not simply physiological ones), which enabled them to progress further up Maslow's hierarchical pyramid. "These years saw economic growth, rising living standards and employment soar from 1.1 million to 1.9 million" (Dorgan, 2006). In EU countries, "Spain took the lead with almost 20 per cent, followed by Greece and Ireland where eating out boomed in the 1990's" (Scholliers in Freedman, 2007, p.351). Mac Con Iomaire (2011, p.541) documents a growth of haute [high] cuisine in Dublin restaurants and an increase in Michelin star rewards during the mid-90s. He establishes that:

Factors influencing this new dynamism included the rising wealth of Irish citizens due to the Celtic Tiger phenomenon, which made dining in restaurants a regular pastime rather than an occasional treat, and also the changing tastes of the Irish public, who were more widely travelled than any previous Irish generation.

Referring to the change of Irish attitudes towards food during the boom years, Boucher-Hayes and Campbell observe how:

Food and eating were one of the ways in which we were desperate to redefine ourselves. The spud went out the window. In came prosciutto and sushi...our connection to growing food, and our knowledge of food



had completely broken down (Boucher-Hayes and Campbell, 2009, p. x).

Similarly, Irish economist David McWilliams progresses with the concept that the Irish sought to redefine themselves. He labels a cohort of the population, 'Hibernian Cosmopolitans' (HiCos), “the new Irish elite are the most educated tribe ever” (2006, p.222). “For HiCos, food marks you out. It distinguishes the truly educated from the merely rich” (McWilliams, 2006, p.264). Mac Con Iomaire (2018b) observes a similar satirical air exists in a collection of fictional novels by Irish writer, Paul Howard, based on his protagonist Ross O’Carroll-Kelly which are written during ‘the boom and bust’ years and carry on into the post-recession period. “His use of food and beverages as a signifier of status is captured in the title of two of the books” (Mac Con Iomaire, 2018b, p. 375). Howard labels other fictional characters with humorous titles and makes jibes at various food-based professions. These ‘tongue-in-cheek’ cultural and societal observations by Howard, written from (1994-2014) are comparable to how (Barr and Levy, 1984) satirically observe British and American culture and society during the nineteen eighties.

## **2.9 The Concepts of Culture & Food Culture**

As a concept, culture can sometimes seem vague or intangible. T.S Eliot simply describes culture as: “That which makes life worth living” (1948, p.27). In the same decade, that Maslow developed his needs theory, Eliot argues: “If we take culture seriously, we see that a people does [sic] not need merely enough to eat...but a proper and particular cuisine: one symptom of the decline of culture in Britain is indifference to the art of preparing food” (Ibid). Cultural theorist Barker surmises that, “culture is both the ‘arts’ and the values, norms and symbolic goods of everyday life. While culture is both concerned with tradition and social reproduction, it is also a matter of creativity and change” (2012, p.42).

Hence, it is important to establish a genuine meaning for what ‘food culture’ represents. Long (2015, p.2) surmises that, “food can be viewed as three types of construct”:

- Cultural construct- by reflecting the worldview, history, physical and natural environment, and values of the society (which shapes notions of edibility).

- Social construct- shaped by hierarchies of power including socioeconomic class and social status (which shapes notions of palatability/taste).
- Personal construct- every individual has their own taste preferences, circumstances, interests and values, including their own unique food memories (Long, 2015, p.2).

Coakley establishes that, “food culture is an ongoing negotiation of likes and dislikes of traditions and new discoveries; it is a constant process of becoming” (2012, p.323). Both Coakley (2012) and Barker (2012), reflect food culture as a dynamic concept. In a similar vein, Amilien and Notaker (2018, p.4) conclude: “Food culture offers a comprehensive conception including the uses, conditions, practices, artefacts, structure, norms, situations and symbols, as well as the context and the environment in which food is formed, evolving, becoming and being”.

## **2.10 What is Irish Food?**

Irish food historian, Regina Sexton ascertains:

Food cannot be viewed in isolation from culture, and the foods we eat and the ways in which we prepare them are products of our cultural identity and say just as much about us as our language, our music and general disposition (1998, p.7).

Irish food today differs greatly to what it was fifty years ago. Food choice now is varied and vast compared to what was on offer to previous generations. “During the noughties, an influx of immigrants added to Ireland’s population which in turn saw Polish supermarkets, Nigerian Bars, and Korean, Filipino, Brazilian and Argentinian restaurants add a diverse food landscape to the capital city's streets” (Reil, 2013, p.2). Nowadays, Irish traditional dishes such as coddle, Irish stew, colcannon and boxty are presented with a ‘European twist’ on many restaurant menus and cooked less frequently in a home setting, while some of the younger generation may never have tasted them. As Fischler (1998, p.290) states, “if one does not know what one is eating, one is liable to lose the awareness or certainty of what one is oneself”. Food writer, Coleman Andrews (2009) believes:

Irish cooking...is almost inevitably straightforward, homely fare, based on first-rate raw materials whose identity shines through. Even in sophisticated urban restaurants, it tends to have an underlying earthiness and solidity that suggest honesty and respect for rural tradition.

“Too many self-avowed connoisseurs were convinced that Irish food began and ended with cabbage and potatoes- or the lack thereof” (Goldstein, 2014, p. xi). “A broader-minded study of Irish food...acknowledges that many of our foods are simple and peasant in origin. Much the legacy of poverty and harsh economic circumstances” (Sexton, 1998, p.7). Hickey contends that, “a combination of political and historical forces that find no parallel elsewhere in Europe created conditions in Ireland inimical to the proper enjoyment of Irish food and the development of an intricate native cuisine” (2018, p.14). In a similar vein, Mac Con Iomaire (2018a, p.6) holds that, “this could also account for the difficulty of creating a ‘national’ cuisine” and he considers how, “during the Celtic revival in the late 19th century, nobody thought of food culture as an element in nation building” (Ibid). Irish food revolutionary and passed proprietor of Ballymaloe House, Myrtle Allen maintained:

When we talk about an Irish identity in food, we have such a thing, but we must remember that we belong to a geographical and culinary group with Wales, England and Scotland as all countries share their traditions with their next door neighbour (Allen cited in Cashman and Mac Con Iomaire, 2011).

Similarly, Mac Con Iomaire (2018a, p.6) suggests that, “in an Irish context, it is probably more reasonable to discuss the concept of regional cuisines which are influenced by geography, climate, religion and tradition” (Ibid). However, Montanari’s (2006, p.81) perspective on ‘geographic’ and ‘regional’ food is that, “it is a new notion that was developed much later in culinary history and “abolishes or in any case weakens social distinctions”.

### **2.11 Who is the ‘Foodie’?**

“It is at least commonly understood that a foodie is a member of a group with a particular set of tastes, interests and body of knowledge that sets him or her apart from those without. These members have an interest in food beyond merely biological needs” (Collins, 2015, p.271). However, Deleuze (2012, p.1) contends that, “everyone has his own definition of what good food is, anyone can be a foodie today, it is no longer exclusively the preserve of the well-off”. Collins (2015) then concurs with Deleuze (2012), that many people who are ‘exuberant eaters’ or who just love food are calling themselves foodies. However, she stresses while a ‘common denominator’ is an appreciation of food, “a ‘foodie purist’ has a high degree of earnest interest in learning

about and, as a result, a knowledge about food that includes, for instance, its historical origins, social history, flavour profiles and ideal wine pairing” (Collins, 2015, p.272). Similarly, Livingstone (2019) suggests that, “the foodie eats to meet the demands of her body from the neck up, not the neck down. Mind, mouth, soul: This is where the foodie lives”. Self-proclaimed foodie, Steen (2015, p.1) observes: “Foodies are unlike normal people. They are obsessed with food and drink to the point that nothing else matters to them”.

Johnston & Baumann (2010, p.67) perceived the foodies they interviewed were, “well-informed, discovery-minded, discerning customers (and most often food producers as well) who lead food-focused lives and present themselves to others as uncommonly passionate about food”. Zuton suggests that, “foodies are, in short, omnivorous consumers in pursuit of perfection wherever they can find it” (Zuton cited in Johnston and Baumann, 2010, p. xiv). However, contrary to this, de Solier argues that foodies are not omnivorous; she contends that, “while they consume highbrow haute cuisine and middlebrow authentic ethnic cuisine, they repudiate lowbrow industrial foods, such as fast food and processed supermarket food” (De Solier, 2013, p.171). Instead, she distinguishes the foodie as a type of producer, “[they acquire] the knowledge and skills required to produce things (such as culinary education) and...[deploy] these skills in forms of material production (such as cooking)” (De Solier, 2013, p.115).

## **2.12 Foodism in Ireland & the Irish Foodscape**

While many question- ‘What is Irish Food? Few have concentrated on the phenomenon of foodism in Ireland. Many individuals seem caught up in the wave of foodism. While food industry actors are discussing it with each other, so far only Deleuze (2012) has recorded the phenomenon within an Irish setting and queried, why has interest in food risen in Ireland. Theorist de Solier (2013) in her research study, points out that she, herself is not a foodie and this researcher also notes the same. This situation presents an opportunity to examine the phenomenon from an unbiased distance.

French sociologist Barthes (1997, p.34) suggests that, “food is an organic system, organically integrated into its type of civilisation”. And as mentioned previously in the introduction chapter, Long defines food culture as: “The practices, attitudes, and beliefs

as well as the networks and institutions surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food” (Long, n.d.). From a geographic perspective, ‘foodscape’ is a term that refers to the “spatial manifestation of food distribution and eating habits” (Yasmeen, 2001, p.95 cited in Coakley, 2012, p.323). Johnston and Baumann’s interpretation of the ‘foodscape’ “[describes] the cultural spaces of gourmet food” (Johnston and Baumann, 2010, p.3). They suggest this foodscape, on the one side, covers the food system, cultural institutions, mass media and societal norms and on the other side includes, “culture, taste, and ecology” and that both these sides are interlinked (Johnston and Baumann, 2010, p.3). They concur, it is here in this ‘scape’ that foodies reside.

Sage (2010) contends: “It is difficult to define the ‘Irish’ foodscape. As a result of globalization and a period of economic growth in the last twenty years it has undergone significant changes” (Sage, 2010 cited in Coakley, 2012, p.310). Johnston and Baumann’s (2010) concept of ‘the foodscape’ describes where two food spaces or ‘scapes’ interact with each other. It is here that the researcher will outline a notion based on Johnston and Baumann’s (2010) ‘foodscape’ concept. However, it will instead contemplate it from the angle of Ireland’s food landscape or foodscape, *figure. 2* on the next page, endeavours to illustrate this. The concept sets out to explain that the Irish foodscape consists of two spheres which interlink or over-lap into each other:

**The first sphere:** Sphere One (*yellow*) consists of food ‘campaigners’. Food ‘campaigners’ relate to those cultural actors (professional) connected and involved directly with the food industry such as food organisations and institutions e.g. Bord Bia and Fáilte Ireland, but also includes chefs, cooks, educators, producers and farmers, gastro-tour specialists, restaurant and hoteliers, café and bar owners.

**The second sphere:** Sphere Two (*blue*) consists of food ‘enthusiasts’ (mainly non-professional) which represent actors such as, foodies, Slow Food-ers, GIY-ers, bloggers, and food adventurers. Many actors, such as, chefs or educators now assume dual roles as food ‘campaigners’ while also being food ‘enthusiasts’, which means they crisscross between sphere one (in a non-professional capacity) and sphere two (in a professional capacity) also.

The third area (in green) is a societal space where the two spheres collide or connect and interact, it is also in this space where influence within society and culture occurs, through forms of food media (print, broadcast, websites, social media etc.) and food focused education (via institutions and materials). These media and educational tools (which include the internet, communication materials plus acquired knowledge) can be viewed as the ‘tools for production’ which ties in with de Solier’s (2013) concept of the foodie as a ‘producer’ (mentioned previously, p.21). Meaning that, cultural actors from both the ‘enthusiast’ or the ‘campaigner’ spheres can take on the roles of ‘producers, e.g. bloggers or educators by using the tools of production, i.e. digital media, communication tools and educational tools.

Figure 2. Venn Diagram shows two spheres of food culture actors with interlinked commonalities



The researcher concludes that Ireland’s contemporary foodscape depicts, “food distribution and eating habits” similar to that explained by (Yasmeen, 2001) but it is also made up of the two sets of actors, ‘campaigners’ and ‘enthusiasts’, as laid out above. Hence, both spheres (i.e. both sets of actors) share ‘societal’ commonalities such as; media and education, societal norms, food distribution and eating habits. In relation to how food links with cultural or media studies theory, communication theorist, Lizie

(2013, p.34) contends: “We lack an understanding of how ideas about food circulate within arenas divorced from (or peripheral or parallel to) mediated areas”.

### **2.13 Are Foodies-more subculture than mainstream culture?**

“The ‘culture’ in subculture has referred to a ‘whole way of life’ or ‘maps of meaning’ which make the world intelligible to its members. The ‘sub’ has connoted notions of distinctiveness and difference from the dominant or mainstream society” (Barker, 2012, p.429). Cultural theorist, Barker further asserts: “The notion of an authentic subculture depends on its binary opposite e.g. a mass-produced mainstream [popular culture]” (Ibid). Parasecoli states that, “specific subgroups in a society may develop their own forms of expression through which they may directly or indirectly criticise and oppose the mainstream [or popular culture]” (2013, p.274). Anderson points out how, “gourmets and foodies do not form true subcultures but are still defined by their tastes. Individual taste has something to do with all this, but much of it is driven by the need of individuals to communicate something special, distinctive, and personal about themselves” (2014, p.178). Parasecoli (2013, p.274) opposes Anderson’s (2014) viewpoint, he considers: “Foodies are one of the many ‘well established subcultures’, sprouted around food issues”. A subgroup he believes that, “deserves greater attention...in terms of lived experiences and the performances of newly built and shifting individual and collective identities” (Ibid). Hence, the researcher establishes that foodies are indeed a subculture, in line with Parasecoli’s (2013) insights and moulded by Cohen’s (1955) definition:

The norms are shared only among those actors who stand somehow to profit from them and find in one another a sympathetic moral climate within which these norms may come to fruition and persist. In this fashion culture is continually being created, re-created and modified wherever individuals’ sense in one another like needs, generated by like circumstances, and not shared generally in the larger social system (Cohen, 1955 cited in Gelder, 2005 p.56).

### **2.14 Foodie Philosophy and Aspirations**

Barr and Levy establish that, “foodism is a good ism- it is helpful to planet earth rather than doing any harm” (1984, p.7). “Most foodies divide their attention between past, present and future, i.e. the last meal, the one that is currently being consumed and one that will be made or served soon” (Steen, 2015, p.1). British foodie Sudi Pigott stresses:

“Our foodie mantras are provenance, seasonality, artisanal, and single-estate and we consider such impeccable credentials a necessity not a luxury” (Pigott, 2006, p.9). Collins points out that, “food has increasingly proven itself to be an arena where viewers and diners can express their interests, creativity, social status and desire for self-improvement” (2015, p. 281). Livingstone (2019) observes that, “it’s clear that foodie culture is roiling with a new awareness of social politics, undermining some of that culture’s unspoken tenets: that taste, and pleasure are neutral, universal concepts; that the kitchen is an apolitical zone. Being a foodie now, in 2019, requires thinking with more than your tongue”. However, Ferdman (2016) condemns foodie aspirationalists and argues that, “there is a great irony in describing yourself as a food insider [i.e. a foodie] in a way no actual food insider ever would. The act itself precludes you from being part of the world you want to associate yourself with”.

### **2.15 Elitism and Class Aspirations**

Anderson points out: “Foods as class markers are so important that elites have often resorted to ‘sumptuary laws’ to protect themselves from status emulation” (2014, p.136). Myers (2011) figures that, “It has always been crucial to the gourmet’s pleasure that he eat in ways the mainstream cannot afford”. However, Johnston & Baumann (2010) maintain that class may no longer feature as part of the foodie persona. This may be difficult to concur with when considering studies carried out by Bourdieu in *Distinctions* (1984). Here, he examines the tastes and preferences formed by the different class structures in France. The analyses he presents “is based on a survey by questionnaire, carried out in 1963 and 1967-68, on a sample of 1,217 people” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.5). Bourdieu establishes that, “our food tastes are far from individual but have their basis in the social relationships between different groups and in particular, social classes.” (Ashley et al., 2004, p.64). In addition, de Solier’s (2013) observation directly contradicts that of Johnston and Baumann (2010). She points out that, the majority of her research participants (self-professed foodies), “earned incomes above the national average wage with a substantial majority earning double”.

Mennell (1996, p.56) suggests that throughout history, “social distinction was expressed not simply through the display of ‘good’ manners but also through the consumption of ‘good’ food”. Furthermore, Collins (2015, p.271) establishes that in a



present-day setting, “food is still a divided, classist arena with a high dose of aspiration (vs. inspiration as touted by television programmes and hosts) with political, economic and cultural causes and effects”.

### **2.16 Taste, Distinction, Cultural Capital and Subcultural Capital**

Mandelkern observes: “In some respects, the anxieties associated with eighteenth century foodism were very similar to those voiced today...and then just as now, taste and snobbery went hand in hand” (2013, p.1). However, Johnston and Baumann (2010, p.106) contend that, “foodie culture is not a simple story of snobbery or cultural liberation but is fundamentally constituted by the tension between a pull of democratic inclusion and the desire to erect boundaries of exclusivity, distinction and social status”. Distinction, de Solier maintains, relates to how a material object is used or absorbed, “it is the way foodies consume haute cuisine and the way they shop for quality food that makes them a foodie” (2013, p.113).

Montanari (2006, p.63) ascertains that, aside from taste being the “sensorial assessment of what is good or bad...it can also mean knowledge”. Bourdieu’s (1984) theory of cultural capital relays how, “knowledge that is accumulated through upbringing and education which confers social status. It is the linchpin of a system of distinction to which cultural hierarchies correspond to social ones and people’s tastes are first and foremost a marker of class” (Bourdieu 1984, Thornton, 1995 cited in Gelder, 2005, p.185). Hence, “distinctions are never simply statements of equal difference. Rather they entail claims to authority, authenticity and the presumed inferiority of others” (Bourdieu 1984, Thornton 1995, cited in Barker, 2012, p.451).

Barker asserts that, “cultural capital is distinguished from economic capital (wealth) and social capital (whom you know)” (2012, p.451). Cultural theorist Thornton (1995) ascertains: “Just as cultural capital is personified in ‘good’ manners and urbane conversation, so subcultural capital is embedded in the form of being ‘in the know’” (Thornton in Gelder, 2005, p.186). She points out a critical difference between subcultural capital and cultural capital (as theorised by Bourdieu), is how, “the media are a primary factor governing the circulation of the former” (Ibid). Hence, Thornton (1995) also argues how, the difference between being in or out of fashion, high or low

culture in subcultural capital correlates in complex ways with degrees of media coverage, creation and exposure” (Thornton, 1995 cited in Gelder, 2005, p.187). Furthermore, she surmises: “Subcultural capital is not as class-bound as cultural capital” (Ibid).

### **2.17 The Search for Meaning: food as the new religion**

Contemplating a spiritual theme, Poole (2012, p.4) suggests that, “everywhere in the ideology of foodism we see a yearning for food to be able to fill a spiritual void”. He believes that, “we no longer trust politicians or the clergy; but are hungry for cooks to tell us not just how to eat but how to live, the moralistic synecdoche easily accomplished since we now happily accept that one lives through eating” (2012, p.9). Similarly, Myers (2011) adds religious connotations within food writing, such as: “References to cooks as ‘gods’, to restaurants as ‘temples’, to biting into ‘heaven’, etc., [once] used to be meant as jokes...now the equation of eating with worship is often made with a straight face”. And in the same context, Gopnik points out that these days, “our top chefs are ‘deities’ and our favourite restaurants are ‘places of pilgrimage’ (Gopnik cited by Gilbert and Porter, 2015, p.457).

Referring to the ‘cash rich’ younger generation in Ireland (Deresiewicz, 2012, p.2) observes, “food, for young people now, is creativity, commerce, politics, health, almost religion”. In relation to societal ‘food’ groupings such as localism, cosmopolitanism, and those that support foodie and slow food ideologies, Bromberger (2006) proposes:

For these social movements and for those who join them, food symbolizes not only shared identity through common consumption; it also symbolizes the past. A strong sense of nostalgia is wrapped up in the conception of these typical foods, as symbols of a way of life that no longer exist (Bromberger, 2006, p.91).

Citing Fischler (1988) he adds that members may be, “attempting to reintroduce a normative logic into everyday eating, a coherent system...in short, an order” (Fischler in Bromberger, 2006, p.90). Similarly, Belasco (2008, p.6) establishes that in a dynamic contemporary world, “large segments of the public are looking for ways to assert some control over their lives- and watching what they eat maybe one such way to feel in charge of your destiny”. In the same vein, Deresiewicz (2012, p.2) contends, “food now expresses the symbolic values and absorbs the spiritual energies of the educated class. It has become invested with the meaning of life”. De Solier surmises from her research

studies, “for foodies, the material culture of food provides a way of re-embedding their lives and a sense of ontological security” (2013, p.172).

From an Irish historical perspective, Hickey (2018, p.14) points out that, Irish people struggled to feed themselves so, “[they] tried to find their riches in other things...in music, in dance, in sport, in love of nature, in an interior spiritual life, and above all, in words”. In 2012, Deleuze examines Irish people’s loosening connection with religion and notes a decrease in Roman Catholic figures for the 2011 Irish Census. Thus, she notes too how, the observance of fast days which were once highly respected and even an obligatory part of the religion, had notably reduced. She claims that, “the link between the body and food as opposed to spiritual matters has endured for centuries” (Deleuze, 2012, p.7).

## **2.18 Ireland’s Global Gastronomical Position**

Gastronomy is defined by Gillespie as: “The study and appreciation of all food and beverages” (2001, p.5). He specifies too that, “it can involve detailed knowledge of some of the well-known national dishes and beverages of the major countries in the world” (Ibid). In 2010, UNESCO officially granted that the ‘Gastronomic Meal in France’ be recognised and protected as part of the country’s cultural heritage. “France’s multi-course gastronomic meal, with its rites and its presentation, fulfilled the conditions for featuring on the [world intangible heritage] list” (Samuel, 2010). In her paper, *A New Craze for Food: Why Is Ireland Turning into a Foodie Nation?* Marjorie Deleuze refers to a Bord Fáilte brochure from 1974, aimed at the French, which states:

Ireland is certainly not the country of gastronomy. But there’s no need to denigrate Irish cuisine as a whole...with modesty, we let, those who know, make complicated culinary preparations. What we serve is first and foremost simple (Bord Fáilte, 1974 cited in Deleuze, 2012, p.2).

While much later on, a feature article by Katrina Meynink in *Food & Wine* magazine in 2005, recounts the writer’s perception of Ireland’s food culture as follows:

Artisan food producers and talented chefs are pushing the envelope towards food excellence, but Ireland is still a long way from possessing a real Irish food culture that can hold its own against its European counterparts. I believe modern Irish cuisine in its full-fledged glory does not yet exist, but I’m willing to be convinced it does. (Meynink 2005, p.33).

Mac Con Iomaire notes a turnaround occurred in 2011, which casts a more favourable view of Irish cuisine. The French travel guide, *Le Guide du Routard*, “declare Ireland’s restaurants unmatched the world over for their combination of food quality, value and service” (Mac Con Iomaire, 2018c, p.69). Then in 2018, Irish cuisine hits the headlines again, when Galway and the West of Ireland Region is recognised as the ‘European Region of Gastronomy’. Both these instances demonstrate how this small Island nation has progressed from how it was viewed in the past, by its European neighbours. It has steered in a new direction in relation to its gastronomic and culinary offerings.

### **2.19 A Call for Recognition?**

Since the late 80s, Irish food writers and restaurant reviewers, John and Sally McKenna have been on a mission to spread the word for Irish food produce, products and places. They published *The Irish Food Guide* in 1989 to much acclaim. In an interview in 1995, they list, “the most notable change they’ve found on the restaurant front is the increasing number of young and innovative chefs” (Mc Kenna, 1995, p.42). Interestingly, they note however, “in terms of restaurants, there are still a number of black spots throughout the country” but a turnaround should eventually occur if highly trained Irish chefs return from abroad, to open their own premises. The couple advocate, “if we’re going to have a thriving food culture...then [producers] will have to be protected and encouraged. They’ve done more than any Bord Fáilte promotion to improve Ireland’s gastronomic image abroad and they deserve support” (Ibid). Subsequently, the couple continued to back their belief, through the decades, by releasing their yearly *McKenna’s Food Guide* in conjunction with Bridgestone International (a publishing partnership that lasted until 2013) and in later years, by independently releasing it, via digital formats (i.e.website and applications).

Nearly fifteen years later, a similar suggestion is reiterated by Boucher-Hayes and Campbell. In *Basketcase: what’s happening to Ireland’s food?* (2009) they propose; “Irish food is a world-beating product. If [food producers] are given better levels of support, there is enormous potential to exploit our natural resources and expertise in farming and food” (2009, p.236). Over the last decade, it appears these words have been deliberated on and this mantra has been repeated throughout Ireland, and in turn, acted upon by an array of food enthusiasts, chefs, with further backing of state organisations,

such as Fáilte Ireland and Bord Bia.

## **2.20 Fáilte Ireland's Vision and Support**

Fáilte Ireland, the national tourism development authority is responsible for dividing the country into four 'tourism provinces' in a bid to disseminate messages of diversity in its scenery, its produce and its regions mainly to the domestic tourist but also to the International tourist, in order to grip their interest. These tourism provinces are, the *Wild Atlantic Way*, *Ireland's Ancient East*, *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air* and in the last couple of years, *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands* (which extends outwards from the midlands). They further pushed their marketing message via a group of carefully selected Irish food campaigners, who they christened 'food champions'. These food champions hailed from a wide variety of food focused backgrounds such as Irish chefs and cooks, gastro-tourism specialists, food producers, restaurateurs and entrepreneurs.

In order to encourage tourism development, the organisation adopted a global perspective and developed its own strategic plan, the *Fáilte Ireland Food and Drink Strategy 2018-2023*. This long-term plan is designed to support and intensify the revelation that, "Irish food and drink has become a powerful enhancer of Ireland's experience brands; greatly improving the visitor's overall stay; and delivering sustained growth in per diem spend" (Fáilte Ireland, 2018, p.9). At the time of plan's publication, "food and beverage [accounted] for 35% of overall visitor spend" (Ibid).

The organisation viewed findings from *The World Traveller Food Travel Association Report 2016*, it observed: "Despite the increasing quality of our food and drink in Ireland, and our new experience offerings, we have a very limited world reputation in this area. Perceptions globally of the quality of Irish food in particular lag far below the reality" (Ibid). *Figure 3.* shows how pre-perceptions of the U.S and global tourist (before they visited the country) greatly differed from those of the post-perceptions of the tourist that had visited Ireland.

Figure 3. The American and Global Culinary Traveller, 2016 in Fáilte Ireland's Food and Drink Strategy

AUDIENCE	HIGH-QUALITY FOOD OFFERING	MEMORABLE FOOD EXPERIENCES	BROAD RANGE OF FOOD TYPES
<i>Perception:</i> US VISITORS	48.5%	53.3%	46.1%
<i>Reality:</i> US VISITORS	69%	72.4%	56%
<i>Perception:</i> GLOBAL VISITORS	43%	50%	42%
<i>Reality:</i> GLOBAL VISITORS	70%	65%	64%

Source: The American Culinary Traveler: Ireland Custom Questions, World Food Travel Association Ireland Report, USA 2016

(Source: Fáilte Ireland, 2018, p.27)

A goal of *Fáilte Ireland's* five-year plan is to change the perceptions of the global culinary traveller to Ireland. One aim is to, empower the country's food and tourism enterprises with the knowledge and tools to craft their own stories. The organisation surmises, "we must tell a renewed story about the Irish food and drink experience, focusing on quality, authenticity, innovation and value for money" (Ibid). *Figure 4.* below details the overall long-term goal and the continuous objectives within the plan:

Figure 4. Objectives of Fáilte Ireland’s Food and Drink Strategy 2018-2023

STRENGTHENING IRELAND’S APPEAL	
OBJECTIVE	DESIRED OUTCOME
To seek to close the gap between perception and reality by investing in key promotional initiatives that help to raise Ireland’s food and drink experience reputation overseas.	Increased awareness around Irish food and drink experiences overseas followed by heightened expectations for potential visitors.
KEY ACTIVITIES	
<p><b>ONGOING 2018 - 2023</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue and invest in development and promotional initiatives that actively work to alter Ireland’s food reputation overseas and promote Ireland’s food culture to potential visitors. (2 per year).</li> <li>Support sustainable regional efforts that showcase local food as part of visitor offerings.</li> <li>Assist MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences &amp; Events) Operators, Destination Management Companies (DMCs) and Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs) that are looking to use Irish food and drink to enhance experience and gain competitive advantage.</li> <li>Support networks and businesses in creating compelling food and drink imagery and video that depicts an in-holiday experience for use across all campaigns.</li> <li>Continue to ensure that quality Irish produce is featured across all incoming travel media and international buyer trips.</li> <li>Explore Brand Ireland promotional opportunities in conjunction with Tourism Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland and Industry Partners.</li> <li>Scope and plan a tourism initiative of scale aimed at closing the perception gap to form the basis of Food and Drink strategy 2023 – 2028.</li> </ol>	

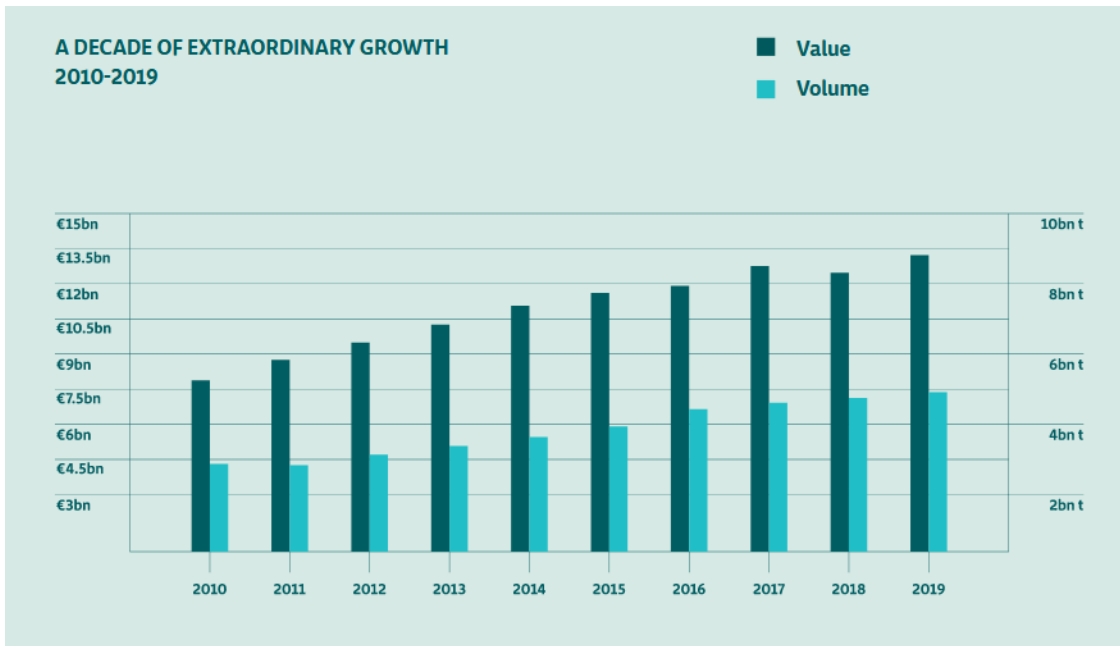
(Source: Fáilte Ireland, 2018, p.41)

## 2.21 Bord Bia’s Commitment, Support and Publications

‘Bord Bia’ is Ireland’s official food board. It was formed in 1994, when the ‘Irish Meat and Livestock Board’ and ‘Bord Glás’ (the horticultural board) were amalgamated. The organisation’s focus is: “To bring Ireland’s outstanding food, drink and horticulture to the world, thus enabling growth and sustainability of producers” (Bord Bia, 2020a). The organisation liaises with food businesses and producers and promotes Irish food products domestically and globally. It consistently monitors, accesses, and reports on Irish people’s food habits, tastes and buying patterns.

The Bord Bia *Industry and Performance Prospects Report 2019-2020* states: “2019 was a record-breaking year for Ireland’s food, drink and horticulture industry as exports reached €13billion, capping a decade of consistent growth of 67% since 2010” (Bord Bia, 2020b, p.8). *Figure 5* below graphically details this “decade of extraordinary growth”, from 2010 to 2019.

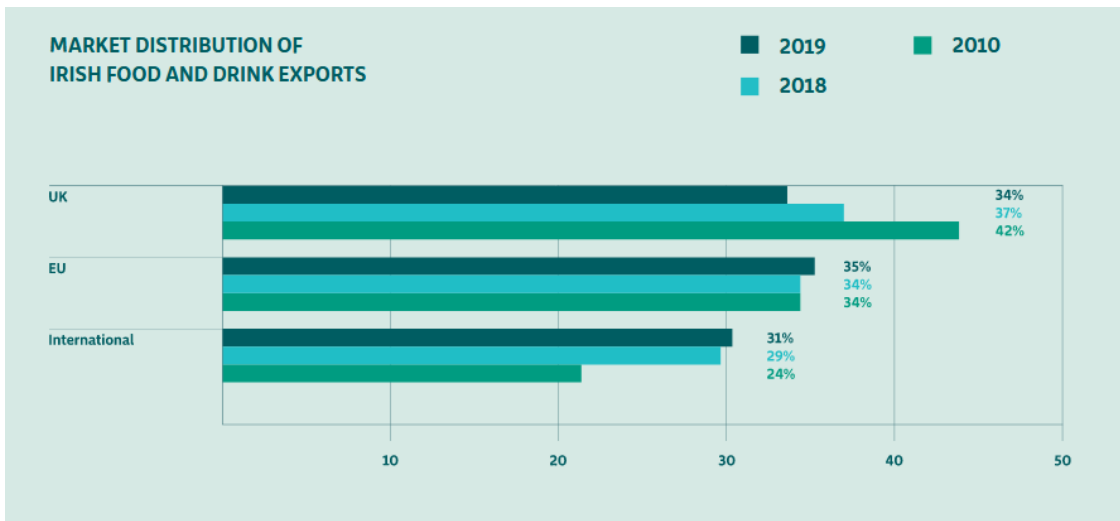
Figure 5. Ireland's Food, Drink and Horticulture Exports 2010 to 2019



(Source: Bord Bia, 2020b, p.9)

Figure 6 shows how, “[2019] is also the first year that a larger proportion of Irish food and drink exports went to continental EU than those that went to the UK” (Bord Bia, 2020b, p.10). The graph shows the overall division of market share, which falls between the European Union, the United Kingdom, and International markets:

Figure 6. Division of Market Share of Irish Food and Drink Exports



(Source: Bord Bia, 2020b, p.11)



Bord Bia records: “Ireland’s dairy sector maintained its position as a pillar of Irish food and drink exports, growing in value by 11% in 2019 to €4.4bn in value. This was the third consecutive year in which the value of dairy exports exceeded the €4bn mark and was achieved despite weakening prices for key dairy categories internationally” (Bord Bia, 2020b, p.10) Butter, cheese and milk powders were the main performance drivers. “Irish exports of alcohol were worth €1.45bn in 2019, as exporters built on the strong performances of recent years to deliver 8% value growth” (Bord Bia, 2020b, p.52). 2019 was a momentous year for Irish whiskey; “some 55% of the €137m in export growth achieved in 2019 was in the Irish whiskey category, as total whiskey exports reached €727m “(Ibid).

### Bord Bia’s Evening Meal Recruitment Survey 2020

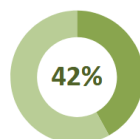
Another relevant report carried out by Bord Bia was the *Evening Meal Recruitment Survey 2020*. This posed the question: ‘What Ireland Ate Last Night?’, to the average Irish adult consumer. The overall survey examined the eating habits and opinions of a percentage of the Irish population throughout the month of October 2019. The findings were published in February 2020. Specific findings, where compared with previous findings from a similar survey the organisation conducted, in 2011. Figure 7. shows how trends such as, ‘health and wellbeing’ and ‘responsible living’ influenced Irish consumer’s evening meal choices in 2019. These aspects fared particularly strong with the under 35 years old cohort and more specifically the under 25s and this reflects a rise of veganism amongst these cohorts too.

Figure 7. Bord Bia Consumer Lifestyle Trends for 2019

### **Influence of Bord Bia Consumer Lifestyle trends is evident in our Evening Meal consumption.**

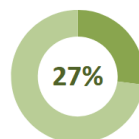
**% A GREAT DEAL OF INFLUENCE ON EVENING MEALS**  
(Base: All Adults Aged 18+, n=1,013)

#### **HEALTH & WELLBEING**



*I am more aware of the food that I eat and the impact it can have on my physical and mental wellbeing*

#### **RESPONSIBLE LIVING**



*I have become more conscious about the food that I eat and try to make choices that are more positive for the environment*



- Strong under 35 years old bias (especially under 25)
- High prevalence of fresh fish, fruit, rice, noodles, seeds/ nuts, salad, vegan, pulses, herbs, oils (not sunflower)

SOURCE: Evening Meal Recruitment Survey 2019 (n=1,013 adults)

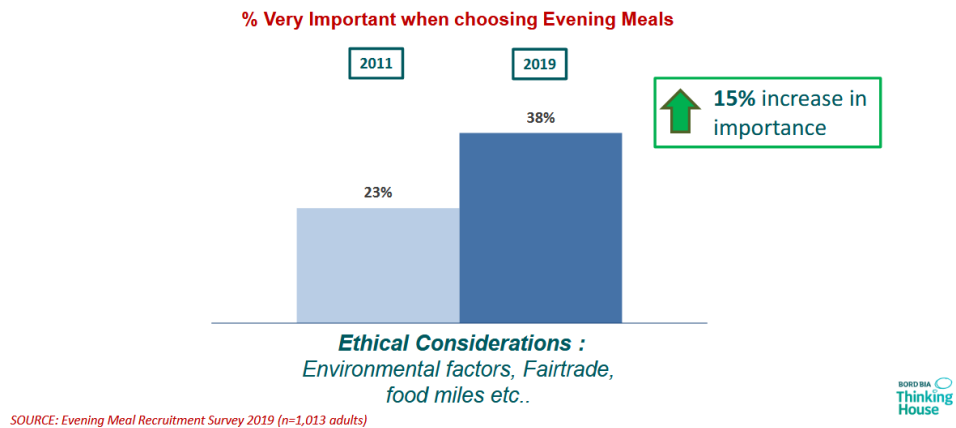


(Source: Bord Bia, 2020c, p.12)

From the survey findings, it become evident Irish consumers in 2019 reflected on ethical matters such as environmental, fair trade and food miles etc. before evening meal decisions are made. See *figure 8*:

Figure 8. Irish Consumer's Ethical Concerns 2019 vs 2011

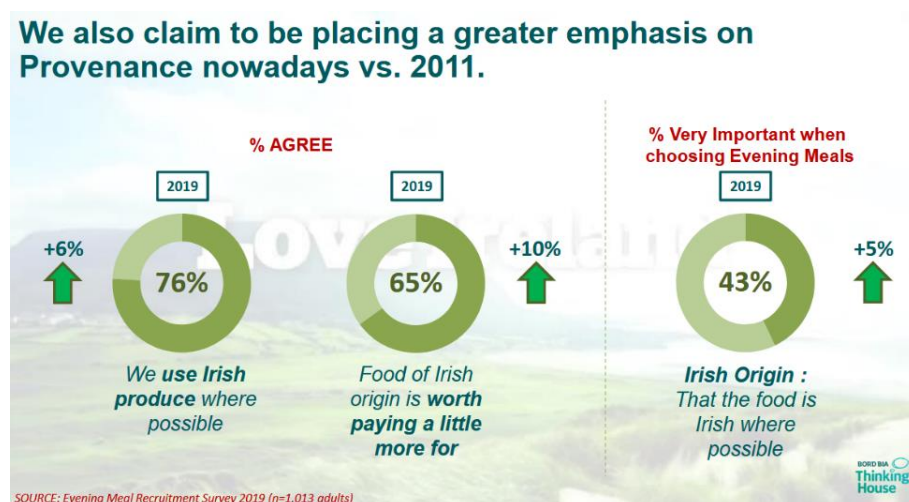
**Ethical considerations when choosing evening meals are significantly more important now than in 2011.**



(Source: Bord Bia, 2020c, p.13)

Thus, when compared with 2011 findings, Bord Bia found the average Irish consumer in 2019 placed more significance on food provenance. The organisation found for that year, 6 percent more consumers choose Irish produce when available and there was a 10 percent rise in those that believe it is best to pay more for Irish products.

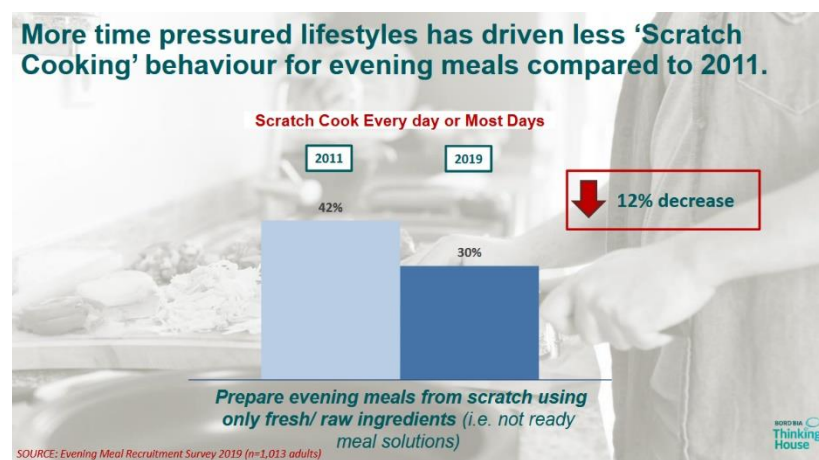
Figure 9. 2019 Irish Consumer Placed an Emphasis on Provenance Compared to 2011 figures



(Source: Bord Bia, 2020c, p.14)

Surprisingly too, this report reveals a prominent drop in ‘cooking from scratch’ skills, which refers to the percentage of Irish people who cook their evening meals from scratch in the home environment, evident in *figure 10*. It showed a decrease of 12 percent, from 42 percent in 2011 to 30 percent in 2019. A result which stems from the influence of the ‘time pressured lifestyles’ experienced by many Irish adults. This is of particular interest and has significance too, due to the rise in interest by many of the Irish population in cooking programmes, celebrity chefs, gastro-tourism, and food festivals.

*Figure 10. Survey Results Show Less ‘Cooking from Scratch’ in Irish Homes*



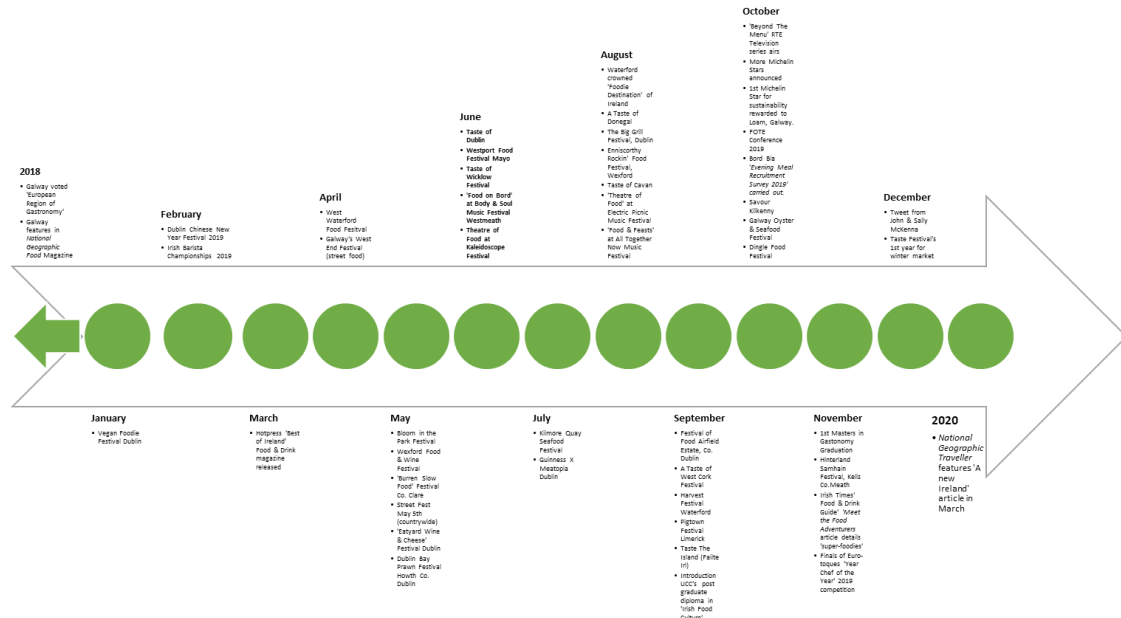
(Source: Bord Bia, 2020c, p.19)

Finally, the *Evening Meal Recruitment Survey 2020* portrays that the Irish consumer may still have loose connections with a past diet, shown, with the presence of the potato (particularly prominent amongst the over 45s), and how dairy products still factor highly on the weekly home menu. While fish still features as a small percentage (7%) in the weekly diet also. What is of particular interest too is how the majority of fish eating is still focused on Fridays (rises to 11%) (Bord Bia, 2020d), this could be traced back to a previous Catholic Lenten calendar, a time of religious abstinence from meat.

Bord Bia’s Consumer Insight Specialist, Grace Binchy commented on the surveys relevance for industry: “Over the past decade Ireland has experienced huge social, economic and technological changes which have significantly impacted consumer attitudes. This research will help the food and drink industry to look forward and make well informed business decisions that serve customers’ needs better” (Bord Bia, 2020d).

## 2.22 2019: A Golden Year for Irish Gastronomy

Figure 11. Prominent Events in Ireland's Gastronomic Timeline 2019



The retrospective timeline illustrated in *figure 11*. shows prominent gastronomic events, publications and festivals which occurred throughout Ireland, during 2019. Included too is the significant event relating to Co. Galway being crowned the 'European Region of Gastronomy' in 2018. An article featuring this occurrence also appeared in the *National Geographic Food Magazine* in 2018. Then post 2019, a feature article is published in March 2020, in another international publication, the *National Geographic Traveller* magazine which heralds: 'A New Ireland'. (A larger version of the timeline illustration is available in the Appendix I).

### Early 2019

The year 2019 proved to be a golden year for Irish food exports, Irish gastronomy and gastro-food tourism. Writing for *National Geographic*, travel writer and Irish food ambassador, Pól O'Conghaile prophetically proclaims that, "Ireland is waking up to the pristine produce under its nose" (2018, p.85). Renowned Galway chef and *Food on The Edge* founder, J.P. McMahon announces how, "we have the best ingredients, we just need to put the pieces together and present them in the best possible way" (Ibid). As the

year commences, these food show-casing ideals appear to have taken hold. In April, music journalist and (more recently converted) food writer, Stuart Clark exclaims: “These are great foodie times that we’re living in” (2019, p.57). “Ireland now boasts a selection of restaurants that would be deemed cosmopolitan in any country” (Ibid).

### **Food and Festival Fever**

In recent years, Irish food festivals have continued to thrive nationwide with large attendance numbers for the *Galway Oyster and Seafood Festival*, *West Waterford Food Festival*, *A Taste of West Cork Festival*, *Taste of Dublin*, to name a few. The Taste of Dublin food festival is held annually in June and 2019 was the fourteenth year that the event ran. This event “[transforms the Iveagh Gardens] into a foodie haven” (Taste Food Festivals, 2019). Attendance figures for the four-day gathering in June 2019 were 32,000 (Falvey, 2019) this displays further evidence of the rise in Irish people’s reverence to food. The festival showcases a diverse range of restaurants, food producers and food brands. It offers food lovers the chance to take part in food and beverage tastings, chef masterclasses and to watch cooking demonstrations. Dining experiences from a selection of Dublin’s eateries are also offered. 2019 was also the first time, organisers added a winter fest option to the events calendar. The winter festival was organised for an indoor venue and attendance figures were expected to be somewhat lower, at around 18,000 over four days (Ibid).

Parallel to the larger food festivals which run yearly are a phenomenon of micro food festivals that have sprouted over the last ten years. These are ‘a festival within a festival’; the case of a number of food festivals being supported under the umbrella of music festivals, in Ireland. Examples are, ‘Theatre of Food’ at *Electric Picnic* music festival in Co. Louth, ‘Food and Feasts’ at the *All Together Now* music festival in Co. Waterford and ‘Food on Board’ at *Body & Soul* music festival, in Co. Westmeath. These micro fests stage, food trucks, food banquets, food discussions, food demonstrations, food tastings, food workshops, drinks theatres and even the odd food-centric table quiz; all this takes place within the music festival’s enclosure and are marketed as an added attraction; one which caters to the tastes of both food and music lovers.

### **Euro-toques Ireland: Protects Irish Culinary Heritage**

*Euro-toques Ireland* was started by Myrtle Allen in 1986. It is a collective of chefs, cooks and food producers whose goal is to protect Irish culinary heritage. The organisation plays a valuable part in supporting and promoting Irish food producers and products. They hold an annual awards ceremony: “The aim of which is to recognise the very best artisan food producers currently working in Ireland” (Euro-toques Ireland, 2020). The community also runs the ‘Euro-toques Young Chef of the Year’ competition, open to chefs under the age of twenty-six. “This is Ireland’s premier culinary competition...in search of Ireland’s best new talent” (Ibid).

### **Destinations for Foodies**

‘Foodie Destinations’ is an annual countrywide competition run by the Restaurant Association of Ireland. The winning region: “Actively promotes itself through joint promotional activities such as food festivals, gourmet trails or farmer’s markets as well as great dining experiences for locals and visitors alike” (Foodie Destinations, 2019). They will “have established a local producer/supplier network which is utilised and promoted by local business” (Ibid). In 2019, Waterford county was the region crowned the Foodie Destination of the year.

### **Time to ‘Taste the Island’**

In September 2019, Ireland’s gastro-tourism offering further upped the ante, when micro food businesses connected to tourism and the hospitality sector received promotion and inspiration from a triad of Irish Tourism Board agencies; *Fáilte Ireland*, *Tourism Ireland* and *Tourism Northern Ireland*. In Autumn of this year, they launched the *Taste the Island* campaign to help promote the country’s food offerings outside the peak holidaying time of the summer months and have created a program of events countrywide (Fáilte Ireland, 2019). The initiative’s aim was to attract both tourists and locals and to bolster collaboration between food producers, restaurateurs and micro food tour specialists. Fáilte Ireland urged stakeholders to share convincing, relevant and unfailing business messages. They advised that the best way to do this, “is to have a clear well-defined and consistent food and drink story to tell” (Failte Ireland, 2019, p.38). The following figure shows three vital components the organisation considers are crucial in the dissemination of a food story.

Figure 12. Storytelling Values- Fáilte Ireland's 'Taste the Island' Toolkit



(Source: Fáilte Ireland, 2019, p.38)

Another positive result from this was the emergence of spin-off regional food centred collectives that formed around the country such as, *Food the Waterford Way*, *Taste of Limerick* and *Taste Cork*. The *Taste Cork* group has also produced its own strategic plan. Their initiative is, “to become a leading regional representative of the county’s outstanding food producers micro/SME food enterprises, retailers, food service operators and distributors” (Taste Cork, 2020, p.13).

### **More Michelin Stars**

A shining light for Irish gastronomy and culinary recognition came in October 2019, with the announcement that an increase of Michelin Stars was to be awarded to Irish restaurants. The *Michelin Guide Great Britain & Ireland 2020* now lists a total of 18 Michelin one starred restaurants, 3 Michelin two starred restaurants and 21 Bib Gourmand restaurants for the Republic of Ireland. For the whole island, five new restaurants, north and south have been added- “two in Dublin and one each in Cork, Limerick and Belfast” to the latest edition of the guide (Irish Times, 2019). *The Michelin Guide* first began its award system in France in 1926. The guide began to: “Award stars for fine dining establishments, initially marking them only with a single star. Five years later, a hierarchy of zero, one, two, and three stars was introduced” (Guide Michelin, 2020a). It is a highly esteemed restaurant rating system that is recognised worldwide. Their one-star rating represents “a very good restaurant”, the two stars “excellent cooking that is worth a detour” and three stars “signify exceptional

cuisine that is worth a special journey” (Dixon, 2008). Of the two starred named restaurants in the Republic, one is situated in county Kildare and the other two are based in Dublin. The Bib Gourmand rating was introduced in 1995, this “is a separate category for restaurants that serve great food at reasonable prices” (Ibid). Ireland fares well in this category for 2020 with the *Michelin Guide* selecting 21 Bib Gourmand restaurants in the country, for its listings.

This year, a special Michelin award for sustainability went to an Irish restaurant, *Loam* in Galway and this year too, “*Loam* was also the first independent restaurant to be awarded the top rating of 3 Stars by the Sustainable Restaurant Association” (Guide Michelin, 2020b).

### **Food for Perspective**

Food scholars belong to the same affluent social class that fuelled an unprecedented expansion and elaboration of restaurant and supermarket options, and that well-educated, trend conscious public is literally hungry for analysis and perspective (Belasco, 2008, p.6).

Belasco notes that, since the 1970s, urban middle-class culture, “has become much more interested in food related matters of taste, craft, authenticity, status and health” (Ibid). A premier for Ireland and a prominent event for an Irish educational institution, 2019 was the year that saw the first cohort of students graduate with a Masters of Arts in ‘Gastronomy and Food Studies’. This is a part-time post graduate programme offered by Technology University Dublin which runs over two years. Students cover a diverse menu of subject matters such as, Irish food history, the politics of the global food system, social approaches to wine and beverage culture, gastro-tourism, and food writing. Following suit, that same year, University College Cork announced the inclusion of a ‘Post Graduate Diploma in Irish Food Culture’ to their prospectus. On their website the institute states: “Interest in food and culinary matters is at an all-time high as Ireland develops a more considered relationship with Irish food culture” (University College Cork, 2019).



### **Focusing on Food Adventurers**

In November 2019, an article in the *Irish Times Food & Drink Guide* highlights a group of extravagant eaters called ‘super-foodies’ or to use the correct term, ‘food adventurers’, which applies to individuals who take their foodie fetishes further. This term was first penned by author Lisa Heldke in her book *Exotic Appetites* to describe those, “motivated above all else to go out to eat, to the newest, most authentic, most exciting restaurants, cafés or roadside shacks” (Heldke, 2003 in Cope, 2019, p.10). In all probability ‘food adventurers’ would fall within the “white, middle-class, educated and financially comfortable” social bracket (Cope, 2019, p.10). Journalist, Cope (2019, p.12) notes that, “today’s food adventurers are most likely to be millennials (aged between 23 and 38 in 2019). She explains that, this young Irish cohort surfaced from ‘the experience economy’ era of the 1990s and many were further moulded by the extravagant Celtic Tiger Years. Their food curiosities were further fired, threefold, by their global travel experiences and avid exposure to television and the internet (Cope, 2019). Similar to how de Solier (2013) sees the Melbourne foodie persona as media activators, Cope points out that, “food adventurers tend to be dynamic communicators, recording and sharing their experiences through social media” (2019, p.12). One Irish food adventurer she interviewed admits his, “love of food verges on an obsession”, and “eating out makes him excited, and that people without hedonistic desires around food are miserable” (Ibid).

### **The Year ends on a Positive Note**

Following a vibrant and busy gastronomic calendar for 2019 plus the added bonus of extra Michelin stars for many Irish restaurant owners, the year ended on a positive note voiced by John and Sally McKenna via the McKenna’s Guides’ Twitter account:

Figure 13. Social Media Tweet from McKenna's Guides, Dec '19



(Source: McKenna's Guides, 2019)

### 2.23 The Shifting Role of the Irish Chef

Irish food historian and chef Mac Con Iomaire (2018c, p.59) believes that, “the rebirth of Irish gastronomy coincided with the Celtic Tiger years (1994-2007)” and the recession which followed, forced Irish chefs to become frugal with their cuts of meat and forced them to experiment with “non gourmet ingredients” (Ibid). Post the recession years, Reil (2013, p.36) notes, “Irish [television] cooks promote an ideology of budgeting and frugality which audiences believe meet their needs. In turn, Irish audiences contend they are savvy enough to decipher underlying messages within food media, aided by their newly acquired knowledge and interest”.

As previously noted in the introduction chapter, many chefs have adopted a prominent active role within the Irish food scene, in recent years. This is particularly evident with the evolution of *the Food on the Edge* (FOTE) conference which takes place yearly, in Co. Galway. The first conference was held in 2015. The topic title for FOTE in 2019 was, ‘The Future of Food’, one theme was ‘democracy’ and past themes covered

‘action’ and ‘collaboration’. The conference focus’ on global food topics not just those specific to Ireland. And what began mainly as an industry event for chefs and restaurateurs now attracts a wider audience which includes foodies, food writers, bloggers, journalists and tourism specialists. At the conference, international and national chefs and cooks speak about food democracy and sustainability while they also provide food tips on best culinary and sustainability practices. In 2019, FOTE organiser, JP McMahon comments that, “I really want to see *Food on the Edge* reflecting on what we’ve done in order to do things in the future and we need more action” (Food on the Edge, 2019).

While chefs like Richard Corrigan and cooks like Myrtle and Darina Allen have carried the activist gauntlet for many years, other Irish chefs within the last ten years have taken it up, such as, JP McMahon, Jess Murphy, Paul Flynn and Domini and Peaches Kemp, all who make their opinions heard through the media (and have written for or write for the *Irish Times*). These collective culinary voices, the *Food on the Edge* symposium, and other harmonising factors have influenced a new generation of Irish chefs. Any chef worth their salt will have watched the long running *Chef’s Table* Television series available on the Netflix streaming platform. The show first released in 2015 and is currently into its sixth season. It has featured an abundance of internationally renowned names in the culinary world such as, Ferran Arida, Massimo Bottura and Copenhagen chefs, René Redzepi and Claus Meyer, (two chefs at the fore of the New Nordic Food movement). Their restaurants *Noma* and the later, *Noma 2*, feature prominently on all chef’s and foodie’s bucket lists, whose main focus is to travel to the restaurant in Copenhagen for a once-in-a lifetime gastronomic experience. The stand-out features of the Nordic Movement were a concentration on “heritage, environment, and national traditions to influence what they cook” (Byrkjeflot, Strandgaard Pederson, and Svejenova cited in Mac Con Iomaire, 2018c, p.61). Amilien and Notaker (2018, p.24) add that, the visibility of the Nordic chefs in international competitions emphasised their reputation. They define: “Nordic cuisine as, a respect for nature, slow cooking, raw and simple food” which reflects an innovative use of fermentation (Ibid).

## **2.24 Celtic Food Revival**

From an Irish culinary perspective, Mac Con Iomaire argues that, “we are approaching a ‘Celtic’ food revival” (2018a, p.17) and notes how, Irish chefs are playing a big part in this by winning International awards in recent years. He believes that, the Nordic Food culture movement had a big influence on the contemporary food scene in Ireland. And this in turn, has helped Irish chefs re-visualise their own homegrown food culture and traditions. Enter, creative young, Irish chef Mark Moriarty. Moriarty won the ‘San Pellegrino World Young Chef of the Year’ in 2015. His win enabled him to tour worldwide and create his signature dish in a pop-up style kitchen, to showcase to internationally renowned chefs and this also prompted the opportunity to collaborate with them. Describing his cooking style, Moriarty relates that, “my food is classically based, simple and confident, presenting Irish food in a new way” (Moriarty, 2018, p.34).

In 2019, he became a familiar face in Irish living rooms when he presented an RTE television series called *Beyond the Menu*. In the programme, Moriarty profiles other Irish chef’s work and businesses but also discusses their ambitions, lifestyles and work/life balance situations. The programme is enticing, educational and inspirational viewing for any industry chef or enthusiastic foodie to watch. It is progressive too, in how it deals with the life/balance quandary facing many Irish chefs today. Moriarty gives a premise for the series, “there is a generation who are just now starting to be head chefs and open businesses, and I want to introduce audiences to this new group of people who are doing some really good work” (Digby, 2019). “Moriarty’s win in 2015 was not a flash in the pan, but a signal moment for the rising status of Irish food and cooking” (Mac Con Iomaire, 2018c, p.59).

## **2.25 Conclusion**

Through this research, it is important to establish how the country's food culture has developed over time and to reach an understanding of what contemporary Irish foodie philosophy represents. The literature review (secondary research) examines and explains the phenomenon of foodism posed by the first sub research question: 1. Explain the foodism phenomenon. And partially answers questions three and four below also.

In the literature review, a notion relating to the ‘Irish foodscape’ based on a trio of other theorist’s concepts was examined and discussed. This brought to the fore, the contribution made by significant actors such as, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Bord Bia, an array of Irish food writers, food historians, culinary educators, including the two-fold culinary scene that encapsulates both; retro, established Irish chefs and younger, up-and-coming chefs.

Also, in chapter two, a retrospective timeline of the year 2019 was presented which emphasises significant events, festivals and publications relative to Ireland’s gastronomy and food scene. The primary research should lead to answers for the other four sub-research questions as follows:

- Identify what is Ireland’s present discourse around food?
- Determine why have Irish people’s interest in food risen?
- Establish if foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture?
- Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture?

The literature review has shown a gap in research relating to, the phenomenon of foodism in Ireland, what represents the Irish foodscape and the Irish foodie persona. In the next chapter, the methodology approach undertaken for primary research will be outlined and discussed.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### 3.0 Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

After completing a comprehensive literature review, all researchers need to identify and develop the appropriate methodology in order to carry out the research study. This chapter outlines the methodological approach taken and the justification behind it. The chapter defines the primary and secondary research carried out and the applied resources. It discusses the ethical code that was adhered to and concludes by listing the limitations and restrictions that arose while conducting the research.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

The research project adopts a philosophical standpoint from the paradigm of interpretivism. The interpretative outlook emerged primarily from the discipline of hermeneutics social sciences. This outlook considers that the way to understand social reality is from the perspective of the subjects immersed within it. It is not developed from a political perspective but more so from a societal, cultural or anthropological perspective. Therefore, this research study draws insights mainly from the fields of sociology and cultural studies. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, p.5) hold: “The interpretivist position assumes the social world is constantly being constructed through group interactions, and thus, social reality can be perspectives of social actors enmeshed in meaning-making activities”. Seale argues that, “interpretivists emphasize the *meaningfulness* of social life and the alleged irrelevance of natural scientists’ modes of analysis and explanation” (Seale, 2004, p.8, italics in original).

Figure 14. Differences between Positivism and Interpretivism

Positivism	Interpretivism
<b>Relationship between society and the individual</b>	
Society shapes the individual - <i>'Society consists of 'social facts' which exercise coercive control over individuals'</i>	Individuals have consciousness and are not just puppets who react to external social forces as Positivists believe.
People's actions can generally be explained by the social norms they have been exposed to through their socialisation.	Individuals are intricate and complex and different people experience and understand the same 'objective reality' in different ways
<b>General focus of social research</b>	
The point of research is to uncover the laws that govern human behaviour, just as scientists have discovered the laws that govern the physical world.	The point of research is to gain in-depth insight into the lives of respondents, to gain an empathetic understanding of why they act in the way that they do.
Prefer quantitative methods which allow for the researcher to remain detached from the respondents.	Prefer qualitative methods which allow for close interaction with respondents.
<b>Preferred research methods</b>	
<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
Require research to be valid, reliable and representativeness	Prepared to sacrifice reliability and representativeness for greater validity

(Source: Revise Sociology, 2019)

### 3.3 Research Methodology

Regarding whether to choose qualitative or quantitative methods, (Labuschagne, 2003, p.100) suggests, “the two approaches should be regarded as complementary rather than competitive”. Quantitative research involves, “a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures” (Creswell, 2009, p.4). This is an objective form of research. “Qualitative researchers try to extract meaning from their data. The focus of research is generally words and texts as opposed to numbers (as is the case in quantitative/statistical research)” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p.4). This is considered a more subjective form of research practice. However, as Blaxter et al., (2010, p. 217) underline: “Both [approaches] offer representations of what we as individuals perceive of as our ‘reality’”.

Creswell (2009) is a strong advocate of the ‘mixed methods’ approach which combines both qualitative and quantitative methods. The mixed methods approach has been adopted by many researchers in more recent years. With this approach, researchers use one method to compliment and validate the other method.

*Table 1.* below, distinguishes between the three main research approaches:

*Table 1: Quantitative, Mixed and Qualitative Methods*

Quantitative Methods	Mixed Methods	Qualitative Methods
Pre-determined	Both predetermined and emerging methods	Emerging methods
Instrument based questions	Both open- and closed-ended questions	Open-ended questions
Performance data, attitude data, observational data, and census data	Multiple forms of data drawing on all possibilities	Interview data, observation data, document data, and audiovisual data
Statistical analysis	Statistical and text analysis	Text and image analysis
Statistical interpretation	Across databases interpretation	Themes, patterns interpretation

(Source: Creswell, 2009, p.15)



### **3.4 Research Question**

Secondary research for this thesis includes books, journal articles, newspaper and magazine articles, television programmes, social media and online blogs. These are discussed and referenced in the literature review chapter of this dissertation. The research question's working title is-

*Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in contemporary food culture?*

The specific objectives to be answered are:

1. Explain the foodism phenomenon.
2. Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food.
3. To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen?
4. To establish whether foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture.
5. Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture.

The researcher notes, while the topics of foodism and foodie subculture have been explored in Britain by Barr and Levy (1984); in the United States by Johnston and Baumann (2010) and by Collins (2015); it has also been examined in Australia by de Solier (2013); within Ireland, (as aforementioned) the topic has been critically examined by Deleuze (2012). However, it is important to note that Barr and Levy (1984) in their book and Deleuze (2012) and Collins (2015) in their research papers do not carry out specific research studies on the subculture. Neither, has the phenomenon of foodism or foodie subculture ever been the focus of a research study, in Ireland. As a result of this, either topics would merit a study in this country as there is a gap in Irish based literature.

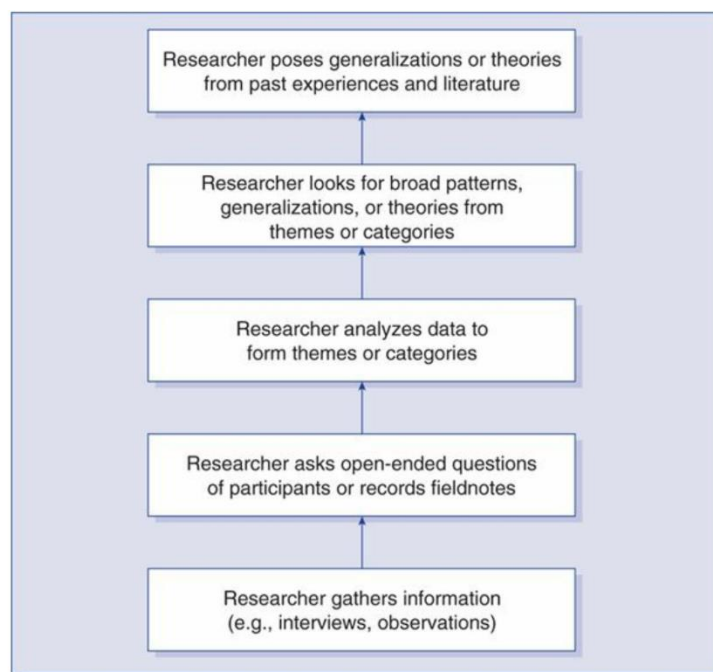
### **3.5 Steps in Conducting Research Practice**

“Methodology is the bridge that brings our philosophical standpoint (on ontology and epistemology) and method (perspective and tool) together” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p.3). This bridge is one which the researcher travels or crosses throughout the research process (Ibid). It is what Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) consider to be a ‘holistic approach’ to methodology, one that, “views research as a process rather than an event” (Ibid).

In relation to primary research, the methodology process implemented for this dissertation adopts a qualitative approach. Creswell (2009, p.176) writes that, “qualitative researchers often use a lens to view their study, such as the concept of culture”. “Each culture has its own set of values and traditions that provide a window into understanding the social world that passes down from one generation to the next” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p.31). Qualitative researchers try to develop a means to explain the bigger picture; by factoring all the information, reporting on the multiple interpretations and outlining an overview of what develops (Creswell, 2009).

This approach provides a more subjective type of research as opposed to quantitative research which is mainly objective. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, p.35) note how, “most qualitative views on the nature of social reality can agree on the importance of the subjective meaning individuals bring to the research process”. It is then down to the researcher themselves to decipher the meaning of the collected data. Qualitative research, “involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes...interpretations of the meaning...the final written report has a flexible structure” (Creswell, 2009, p.4). The logic behind a qualitative research study is laid out in *Figure 16*:

*Figure 15. The Inductive Logic of Research in a Qualitative Study*



(Source: Creswell, 2009, p.63)

### 3.6 Phenomenology

Labuschagne (2003, p.100) points out that, “qualitative research...is mainly concerned with the properties, the state and the character (i.e., the nature, of phenomena)”. “Phenomenology is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experience of a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell, 2009, p.13). Denscombe (2014, p.99) maintains, phenomenology considers people firstly, as “creative interpreters of events”, who are not passive but “agents who create an order to their own existence”. And secondly, this interpretation process is not unique to the individual but must be shared socially, otherwise it would be collectively misinterpreted (Ibid). However, Denscombe stresses that, if it is not, “people could be living different worlds unable to communicate”, thus he points out, “there would be no basis for social life” (Ibid).

### 3.7 Outline of Previous Studies

Table 2 was designed by the researcher and is used to describe two leading research studies carried out on foodie subculture, by food culture theorists, de Solier (2013) and Johnston and Baumann (2010):

Table 2: Prominent Foodie Subculture Research Studies

Researcher/Theorist	De Solier (2013)	Johnston and Baumann (2010)
Study (book)	<i>Food and the Self</i>	<i>Foodies</i>
Country	Australia (Melbourne)	United States
Research Field	Material Culture/ Media Studies /Anthropology	Sociology
Epistemology	Interpretivist	Social/Constructionist
Methodology	Qualitative	Qualitative and Quantitative
Research Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnographic study of subculture</li> <li>• Interviews X 20</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews X 30</li> <li>• Content Analysis</li> <li>• Questionnaire</li> </ul>

Further details of the research methodologies undertaken by both sets of researchers mentioned above are as follows.

Material culture theorist, de Solier (2013, p.12) took, “an ethnographic approach to food media and [her] research provides rare empirical evidence of the media’s actual impact on people’s lives”. For her methodology she adopted a qualitative approach. De Solier studied foodies within their private social space (home) and their public social spaces

(restaurants, markets, cafés etc.). She examined their usage of food media, online such as, food blogs, social media and television cooking shows but also their consumption of more traditional media such as, cookery books and restaurant's guides etc. In addition to this, she carried out in-depth interviews with twenty self-professed food enthusiasts.

Sociologists, Johnston and Baumann (2010) took both a qualitative and a quantitative approach with their methodology. Their qualitative approach involved a study of foodie discourse by both carrying out a content analysis of an up-market food magazine (i.e. *Gourmet*), and then by conducting in-depth interviews with thirty self-identified foodies. They combined, this with a quantitative methodological approach which involved the distribution of a questionnaire.

Hence, the methodology practices of de Solier (2013) and Johnston and Baumann (2010) have been closely consulted by the researcher when contemplating which methodological approach to apply. This research study includes both primary research and secondary research (the literature review). It was decided that the primary research will be conducted in the form of qualitative semi-structured interviews.

### **3.8 Research Instruments**

Regarding this thesis study, the research instrument to be used are semi-structured interviews.

“In qualitative interviews, the researcher is often regarded as a co-producer of the data, which are produced as a result of an interaction between researcher and interviewee(s)” (Mason, 1996, p.36 cited in Seale, 2004, p.181). While a focus group was initially considered also, this did not proceed further because of the government restrictions on social distancing that were enforced, due to the corona virus epidemic.

### **3.9 Semi- Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are “often used to encourage an interviewee to talk perhaps at some length, about a particular issue or range of topics” (Seale, 2004, p.181). This differentiates it from the survey styled interviews (via quantitative methods) which are done for marketing research purposes, and also from household and census surveys done by state bodies such as the National Statistics Office, in Ireland. Semi-styled interviews include open-ended questions. This is as Nardi (2018, p.79) recommends

that, “a good way to find out what people think is to ask them open-ended questions”. Also, Seale (2004, p.187) perceives this style of interview as: “A relationship designed to provide a close-up, detailed or meticulous view of a particular experience”.

### 3.10 Sampling

“Qualitative research usually works with small samples. The logic behind this is usually to give a more in-depth understanding” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p.45). Interviewees are mainly selected because they can offer a unique perspective on the research topic or they may hold a position which offers access to sought after information such as social policy, state policy or company strategy. These types of interviewees are what (Denscombe, 2003, p.189) considers as “key informants”, from whom the researcher tries to tap their learned “wisdom”.

The reasoning behind the selection process of certain individuals for semi-structured interviews for this research study is explained in the table shown below. *Table 3* outlines the objectives behind the sourcing of specific interviewees. Highlighted are the individuals that accepted and agreed to be interviewed.

*Table 3: Perspective interviewees proposed for Interview Process.*

Possible Interviewees	Organisation/Title	Objective
Sinead Hennessey	Fáilte Ireland	Discuss state authority, involvement and strategy
Grace Binchy	Bord Bia	Discuss state authority involvement, and strategy
John Mc Kenna	Food Writer & reviewer, author of McKenna Guides	Irish food scene commentator (food actor).
Maire Claire Digby	Irish Times- Food Writer	Discuss-why does she not like the word foodie?
Ketty Quigley	Dublin Food Tour & French Foodie in Dublin	How does she define foodie? Why call herself a foodie?
Andrea	Waterford Foodie- blogger	Why call herself a foodie?
Anthony O’Toole	Chef & educator, Head of Euro-toques Ireland Food Council & ex Failte Ireland food champion.	He wants to grow Irish food culture to International level. To continue what Myrtle Allen started years previously. Activist

JB Dubois	GIY HQ- head chef	What is Irish food? Offer a French & Irish perspective.
Paul Flynn	Chef & educator & Restaurant Owner	Discuss the changing role of the chef. Rise in culinary skills and education. Also, the rise in festival attendance.
Domini Kemp	Chef & Entrepreneur	Discuss chef activism
Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire	Food historian, Culinary lecturer, Chair of Dublin Symposium & Master's college course.	Discuss Ireland's food history and culture. Changing role of the chef. And rise in culinary skills and education.

The aim was to perform a number of interviews with a variety of individuals with backgrounds that relate back to the 'Irish foodscape' diagram discussed previously in the literature review chapter. Interviewees were selected both from the 'food campaigners' sphere (such as food producers, chefs or educators) and individuals from the 'food enthusiasts' sphere; for example, a food blogger, a food writer or simply a self-proclaimed foodie. For example, food journalist, Marie Claire Digby claims on her Twitter profile that she, "loves food, [but] dislikes the word foodie!" And Ketty Quigley a.k.a. the *French Foodie in Dublin* proclaims herself to be a foodie online, but what does this mean to her? Semi-structured interviews propose the ideal format to question them, in-depth, in relation to this.

Also, it would be pertinent to interview a representative working for an Irish state body or authority which relate to food, such as *Bord Bia* or *Fáilte Ireland*. As recommended by Denscombe (2003, p.189) these types of interviewees are what he considers as "key informants"; they would present first-hand knowledge of the policies and strategies proposed for Ireland's food sector industry including the domestic and export markets. Plus, the gastro-tourism sector, which were both discussed previously in the literature review chapter.

A total of six interviews will be carried out with the aim to achieve a more insightful and rounded perspective of the research topic. Sub research questions that are required to be answered or teased out by interviewees are as follows:

- Identify what is Ireland’s present discourse around food?
- To determine why have Irish people’s interest in food risen?
- To establish if foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture.
- Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture.

### 3.11 Piloting the Interview Questions (Pre-Testing)

A list of twelve interview questions were prepared, written and tested beforehand in order to plan in relation to the six different interviewees. These were tested beforehand on family members and friends and also sent for review to a college professor supervisor, in order to decide on the interview questions’ best sequence, flow and relevance. While also remaining focused on the thesis’ main objectives. A small number of changes were suggested and then corrected.

### 3.12 Advantages & Disadvantages

Denscombe (2003, pp.189-190) points out the advantages and disadvantage of interviews. Some **advantages** he lists are:

- Depth of interviews- subjects can be probed, issues pursued, and lines of investigation can be followed.
- Insights- can be gained from valuable data from ‘key informants’.
- Informants’ priorities- interviewees have the ability to expand their ideas and develop further what they believe to be priority topics.
- Flexibility- interviewing allows Interviewer to develop a line of enquiry.
- Validity- direct contact with interviewee means data can be corrected, rechecked, or consolidated during that time.
- High response rate- as interviews are pre-confirmed, scheduled and prearranged for a suitable set date, time and location.

Some **disadvantages** he lists in relation to interviews are the following:

- Time-consuming- analysis of data can be difficult and time-consuming.
- Data analysis- the process tends to produce non-standard responses.
- Reliability- the impact of the interviewer and of the context means that consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve,
- Interviewer effect- data is based on what people say rather than what they do. Denscombe (2003, p.190) mentions how, “the two may not tally”.
- Resources- geographically interviewees may be spread out which means the costs relating to the interviewer’s time and travel costs may be high. Also,

this can further impact the time it takes to transcribe these ‘long distance’ interviews.

### 3.13 Interview Question Formulation

Bottery (2015) proposes a useful method to apply for how best to formulate appropriate questions, both for interviews and questionnaires and, also focus group discussions. This is done by matching the research study’s sub-research questions with issues that arise within the literature. He suggests, this method offers the researcher a proficient way to design suitable questions for both ‘one-to-one’ interviews, questionnaires but can also be applied for focus group discussion interviews. It prompts possible questions including possible follow-up questions to use. The researcher has applied this method accordingly for this research study as is displayed in *Table 4* and found it to be an effective and quick method to use.

*Table 4: Formulation of Interview/ Questionnaire or Focus Group Questions*

<b>How to Use the SRQ’s to Develop Interview/Questionnaire Questions</b>				
SRQ	Issues Identified in the Literature	Possible questions	Possible follow up questions	Notes
1. Identify what is Ireland’s present discourse around food.	Local and traditional are concepts pushed for years, Irish food is evolving too.	What traits do you think best describes Irish food?	How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries?	
2. Why have Irish people’s interest in food risen?	Many people are not familiar or aware of the term foodism. There is a need to distinguish both terms used,	Can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is? Which term would you use?	Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? If so, how? And why do you think this is?	
3. Establish whether foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture.	Are foodies a subculture or now more mainstream?	What do you consider a foodie to be? What are their traits or habits?	Are you a foodie? Do you know any foodies?	



4. Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture?	In the Irish food scene/sphere there are many who work both separately and in conjunction with each other but also share commonalities	When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be?	How do you, personally promote or spread the word of Irish food, products, producers, places and so on?	
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(Source: Bottery, 2015)

### 3.14 Data Generation (Collecting the Data)

In relation to the qualitative approach, Seale (2004, p.181) points out that, “[this] tends to view the interview as a process of data generation rather than collection”. “Qualitative data provide a depth and detail through direct quotation and careful description of situations, events, interactions and observed behaviours” (Labuschagne, 2003, p.100). “Researchers need to think about how they will record and store data during the research and writing up process” (Seale, 2004, p.181).

### 3.15 Data Analysis (Analysing the Data)

Qualitative analysis of data involves the non-numerical organisation of data to discover patterns, themes, forms and qualities found in field notes, interviews, transcripts, etc.” (Labuschagne, 2003, p.102). “Those with a more interpretative viewpoint might not view the transcription process as so transparent...they would stress the importance of the researcher’s point of view and the researcher’s influence on the transcription itself” (Mishler 1991 in Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p.303).

Denscombe (2003) mentions that qualitative research can produce large quantities of data which could present a problem for the researcher. He advises (2003, p.270) that, “a sound reference system is needed” so the researcher can easily transverse the data and relocate specific sections or important points when required. He suggests that the researcher prepare for the analysing process. Ways to exercise this are to ensure all qualitative data material are collected in similar sized formats such as A4 pages or record card size. Space should be left for note taking and comments when transcribing interviews such as, in a border or, “a wide margin to the right-hand side of the page left

blank” (Denscombe, 2003, p.269), to necessitate the researcher to make written recordings.

### **3.16 Analytic Coding**

A process many qualitative researchers use to break-down qualitative data is analytic coding.

“Coding is the process of organising the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to the information” (Rossman and Rallis, 1998, p.171 in Creswell, 2009, p.186). Denscombe (2003, p.269) further recommends that data should be coded, i.e. “material should be identified with a unique serial number or code for reference purposes”. The first stage of coding is called “open coding” (Denscombe, 2003, p.271). The aim of open coding is, “to discover, name and categorize phenomena; also, to develop categories in terms of their properties and dimensions” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990 in Denscombe, 2014, p.272).

Creswell (2009, p.187) notes that researchers approach coding data differently, a few, “use some combination of predetermined and emerging codes”. Creswell recommends: “Using the coding to generate a small number of themes or categories, perhaps five to seven categories for a research study” (2009, p.189). These themes, “should display multiple perspectives from individuals and be supported by diverse quotations and specific evidence” (Ibid).

### **3.17 Thematic Analysis**

Psychologists Braun and Clarke (2006) are strong advocates of ‘thematic analysis’ as a process to administer for data analysis: “Thematic analysis involves the searching across a data set- be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts – to find repeated patterns of meaning” (2006, p.15). “This means that they examined the data to extract core themes that could be distinguished both between and within transcripts” (Bryman, 2012, p.13). Each transcript is broken down into differentiated elements and “given labels” or codes (Ibid).

Preferably, “the analytic process involves a progression from description...to interpretation...often in relation to previous literature” (Braun and Clarke 2006 p.13). Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to this approach as the “latent approach” which, “would seek to identify the features [the data] gave it [sic] that particular form and meaning” (Ibid). Hence, they note that in latent thematic analysis, “the development of the themes themselves involves interpretative work, and the analysis that is produced is not just description but is already theorised” (Ibid). This method is seen by some theorists as: “a key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology” (Bird, 2005, p.227 in, Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.17).

They explain the **six-step process** is not a linear one but one that is on-going. The researcher needs to constantly move forwards and back across the whole range of data that is gathered- “the coded extracts of data that you are analysing, and the analysis of the data that you are producing” (2006, p.15). Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis six phase process is laid out in *Table 5*:

*Table 5: Six Phases of Thematic Analysis*

<b>Phases of Thematic Analysis</b>	
1.	Familiarisation with the data- the researcher must immerse themselves in and become intimately familiar with their; reading and re-reading the data...noting any initial analytical observations.
2.	Coding- is not simply a method of data reduction, it is also an analytic process, so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher codes every data item and ends this phase by collating their codes and relevant data extracts.
3.	Searching for themes- a theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The ‘searching’ is an active process; themes are not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered by the intrepid researcher. Rather the researcher constructs the themes.
4.	Reviewing themes- involves checking that the themes ‘work’ in relation to both the coded extracts and the full dataset. The researcher should reflect on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data and begin to define nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes.
5.	Defining and naming themes- requires the researcher to conduct and write a detailed analysis of each theme. ‘What story does this theme tell?’ and ‘how does this theme fit into the overall story about the data?’

6. Writing Up- involves weaving together the analytic narrative and (vivid) data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualising it in relation to existing literature.

(Source: Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.35)

Bryman (2012) notes that, by coding transcripts the researcher searches to link the data with the research questions, the relevant literature and the theoretical concepts first presented (Ibid). By the end of the analysis period, Braun and Clarke (2006, p.15) point out that, “what is important is that the finished product contains an account- not necessarily that detailed – of what was done, and why”.

A report relating to the steps taken, as part of the ‘thematic analysis’ process for primary research of this thesis, is included in detail in the chapter four.

### **3.18 Ethical Issues**

Ethically, the researcher will ensure that the research is conducted to a high standard. The researcher will inform all interviewees that interviews are to be recorded and they will obtain signed consent forms from all of the interviewees before interviews commence. Seale (2004, p.185) states that, “it is important to protect respondents from questions of disclosure, consent and anonymity”. The interviewees will be advised they can stop the interview at any time, should they feel the need to do so. All researchers should adopt an ethical approach to their research study. They are obliged to:

- Respect the rights and dignity of participants in the research project.
- Avoid any harm to the participants arising from their involvement in the research.
- Operate with honesty and integrity. (Denscombe, 2003, p.134)

The ethics code the researcher adheres to comes under that practiced by the educational institution, Technological University Dublin. T.U. Dublin’s research ethics committee: “Is guided in its work by commonly agreed standards of good practice including the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the IUA Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland” (Technological University Dublin, 2020).

While the researcher considers the subject matter of foodie culture may not always prove to be a sensitive topic, however, they do acknowledge that this may be viewed

very differently by some of the interviewees. Should this be the case, the interviewer will respect others' stance and viewpoints. All participants were emailed a 'participant information sheet' beforehand outlining the scope and objectives behind the study. This can be viewed in the appendices. Transcriptions of all interviews and signed consent forms are available in Appendix A-F of this thesis.

### **3.19 Justification of Study**

#### Validity

Denscombe (2003, p.301) stresses that, "the idea of validity hinges around the extent to which research data and the methods for obtaining are deemed accurate, honest and on target". Meaning that both data and methods are understood to be correct and pertain to the truth. Major threats to validity which (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p.48) relate are: "researcher bias and measurement bias". These should both be recognised by the researcher and considered a concern.

#### Reliability

"The reliability criterion for qualitative research focuses on identifying and documenting recurrent accurate and consistent (homogenous) or inconsistent (heterogenous) features as patterns, themes, world views and any other phenomena under study in similar or different human contexts" (Labuschagne, 2003, p.103). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, p. 52) also note that, a best practice for validity of a research project is when, "researchers who are concerned with external consistency go out of their way to look for evidence that will confirm their findings".

### **3.20 Limitations of Study & Restrictions**

This is a small-scale research project, so timeframe and time management are important factors when researching, planning and implementing the research methods. Either of these may prove detrimental if not considered fully or not managed correctly by the researcher. Cancellation of interviews by interviewees is always a possibility and so too, as with all projects or strategic plans, is the likelihood that any unforeseen circumstances may arise.

### Interview Process Preparation

From the 1st of March, potential interviewees were contacted via email and phone text message, and another recipient was also contacted via LinkedIn. One meeting request invite was requested by the Bord Bia interviewee, this was sent on and the recipient accepted but this was a number of weeks after the initial contact took place. The first two interviewees were conducted in person as face-to-face interviews. These took place in the Gresham Hotel, on the 10th of March 2020. Interviews are recorded with the use of a portable *Zoom HI Handy* digital recorder

### Interview Progress and Unforeseen Circumstances

Around the 1st of March it was reported that the corona virus had reached Ireland. The Irish Government announced on the 12th of March the country would go into a form of lockdown due to be initiated on Friday the 13th of March. From this date, it proved particularly difficult to confirm interviews as most business owners and organisations shifted and intensified their work routines or closed down businesses. The researcher continuously chased and had to follow up with potential interviewees. While others did not accept or cancelled. Consequently, it was up to the 27th March by the time a third interview took place. This time the interview was recorded over the phone by using the same portable equipment.

Following this, it was not until the end of the second week in April that more interviews were confirmed. One was carried out on the 14th of April and another was confirmed for the 15th of April. The Bord Bia interviewee that had confirmed for Monday the 20th of April, cancelled again but rescheduled the interview for Monday 27th April. She reassured, that it would take place upon this date, so the researcher accepted this because this was a significant interviewee representing a state body and their insight should prove a valuable primary research source; an interviewee type which Denscombe (2004, p.189) recognises as “key informants”.

### **3.21 Outline of the Coding Method use for Interviews:**

In total, six semi-structured, in-depth interviews were carried out with individuals from the gastro-tourism industry, the culinary industry, food consultancy, academia and

education, and a state food organisation. All interviews are recorded with the use of a portable *Zoom HI Handy* digital recorder. The interviews were transcribed, and line numbering was used in order to easily trace back to exact comments or topics discussed by the interviewee. Annotation was applied by highlighting significant sections or important references and quotes. Also, the ‘comment box’ feature in Microsoft Word was applied and inserted to transcription documents when the researcher needed to add a note or comment; this proved particularly helpful when it came to recording thoughts and deductions and could be used in unison with the line numbering feature in Microsoft Word. Manual comments were also added upon frequent readings of hardcopies of transcripts. Following the transcribing process, interviewees were contacted if queries arose within the texts, to clarify terms and to recheck spellings or other specifics. The full transcripts detailing these interviews are presented in Appendix A to F. The following *figure 16*. shows an example of comment feature added to the Initial observations from the KQ1 Interview:

*Figure 16. Comments and notes for Interview KQ1*

**Initial Observations of Interview KQ1:**

**Gastro-tourism** business- a rise in in Ireland. **[more operators in Dublin]** (Line 77-82)

There is still a **gap** in what tourists see. Foodies and people in the industry (107-108). Gastro tourists- (120-121), Huge gap (127-128)

*Delicious Dublin Tours* food blog attracted foodies whereas her tours have a different demographic, international tourists. She has now merged the tourists with foodies (418-421)

**2019** – “last year was my busiest here ever” (84-85) Commented [SR1]: Gastro-tour operator comments

**Ballymaloe**, training gives both confidence and education (65-73) Commented [SR2]: Culinary Education = Knowledge

**What is Irish food** – high quality ingredients. Local- small island, it doesn’t have to travel far. (94)

**[Traits]** Raw ingredients: dairy, seafood and meat. (96) - humble home cooking (98)

**Irish food is evolving** (101) **[in a good way]** the locals believe in it more than they did in the past. (103-104) More chefs prouder and shouting about it (104-105)

**How Ireland is gastronomically viewed from abroad** – Her perception when she moved from France, as an outsider, didn’t think it was great. Fifteen years ago (110-111).

More choice **how** (111-115) Commented [SR3]: Ties in with MMC2 comments/recollections

**Foodism and Foodie-ism - KQ1 definition** (147-151) “Foodism is like people with a ‘high’ interest, interest in food, you know? Or people who are looking for good food, I’d say. This is how I would describe it. You can call it gastronomic and bon vivant, you can call it foodie-ism it’s all the same, pretty much”.

**Foodies- [note]** “foodie is a word that everyone hates!” (147) “I don’t know it has a bad connotation. I think especially with professionals from the food industry. They don’t really like people who call themselves foodies. At the same time, I think it’s people how are interested in food, basically” (151-154).

“If you’re a foodie, you wouldn’t call yourself a foodie!” (159-160). Commented [SR4]: Ties in with Literature

“they’re not so much a foodie because they don’t know so much about food. (Laughs) They eat in bad places, (when I get to talk with them) okay you’re not a foodie as I would define a foodie, you know? I think it depends on people”. (161-164) Commented [SR5]: Ties in with AOT3 comment on foodies

### 3.22 Overview of Interviewees and Interview Coding System:

Table.6 presents details of each interviewee such as their names, positions or the organisation/industry they are associated with, the location and dates of the interviews, and the table also includes the unique codes assigned to each one:

Table 6. Overview of Interviewees

<b>Name &amp; Initials</b>	<b>Title/Organisation</b>	<b>Interview Details</b>	<b>Interview Codes</b>
Ketty Quigley (KQ)	Owner of Delicious Dublin Food/French Foodie in Dublin Blog	Gresham Hotel, on 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	KQ1
Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire (MMC)	Food Historian, Lecturer in Culinary Arts Gastronomy and Food Studies, in TU Dublin, and organiser of the 'Dublin Gastronomy Symposium'.	Gresham Hotel, on 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	MMC2
Anthony O'Toole (AOT)	Food & Drink Education and Business Advisor, Euro-toques Ireland representative, ex Fáilte Ireland Food Champion and Chef.	By phone, on 26 <sup>th</sup> , March, 2020	AOT3
John McKenna (JMK)	Author of McKenna Guides, restaurant reviewer and organiser of 'Theatre of Food' festival	By phone, on 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	JMK4
Paul Flynn (PF)	Renowned Irish Chef, Restaurant owner of 'the Tannery', Waterford and columnist with the Irish Times.	By phone, on 15 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	PF5
Grace Binchy (GB)	Consumer Insight Specialist at Bord Bia.	By phone on 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	GB6

All of the interviewees were asked a sequence of 12 questions:

**Questions 1 to 4** varied for each interviewee and were general introduction-styled questions relating to the specific individual experience or the organisation they were associated with.



**Questions 5 to 12** were common questions asked of all of the interviews which were directly associated to the specific research objective questions (as outlined above). These interview questions numbered 5-12 are as follows:

5. What do you think best describes Irish food? A trait or example.
6. How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries?
7. From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?
8. Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food?
9. What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
10. Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use?
11. When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? (chefs, tourism boards, food bodies, producers, or enthusiasts and campaigners etc.)
12. How do you personally, spread the word of Irish food? i.e., products, producers, places and so on.

*Table 7. Shows an example of the question sequence for Interview coded, KQ1.*

<b>Interview 1: Ketty Quigley</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>Code: KQ1</b>	
Owner of <i>Delicious Dublin Food Tours</i> and she previously wrote the <i>French Foodie in Dublin</i> food blog.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When did you move to Dublin and what made you decide to write a food blog?</li> <li>2. Why did you decide to stop writing your blog?</li> <li>3. Presently, you are the owner of Delicious Dublin Food Tours. What year did you set it up and why did you decide to start the business?</li> <li>4. From a gastro-tourism business owner viewpoint, have you noticed a rise in the interest of food tours in Ireland? And if yes, from when?</li> <li>5. What traits do you think best describes Irish food?</li> <li>6. How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? France maybe? Or do you receive feedback from tourists?</li> </ol>	

7. From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?
8. Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? If so how? And why do you think this is?
9. What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
10. Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use? Do you know any foodies?
11. When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? Chefs, tourism boards, food bodies, producers, or enthusiasts and campaigners etc.?
12. How do you, spread the word of Irish food? i.e., products, producers, places and so on.

### **3.23 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the philosophical standpoint that the research project adopts, from the paradigm of interpretivism. It outlined the main differences between positivism and interpretivism. Then, the specific differences between the three methodology approaches of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodology were discussed. Both the primary and secondary research tools were outlined, and two prior and related research studies, one carried out by de Solier (2013) and another by Johnston and Baumann (2010), were examined. These two studies influenced the final methodological decision reached by the researcher.

In relation to, best practice procedures to adhere to when implementing a methodology practice, the researcher followed specific steps laid out by Creswell (2009). A qualitative methods approach was applied for the study. The purpose of which was to source relevant and good quality data in order to answer the series of sub research questions posed in chapter one. The chosen research instrument for the study was a selection of semi-structured interviews. These were transcribed and codes were applied to each one in preparation for further analysis. In the following chapter, the results and findings of the data gathered as a result the qualitative studies adopted by this thesis will be displayed and recorded.

## **Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings**

## **4.0 Presentation of Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

- Objective 1- Explain the foodism phenomenon.

It can be established that this objective or sub research question was answered in-depth via the secondary research discussed and examined in the literature, chapter one, paragraphs; 2.1, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.11.

This chapter outlines the findings that were gathered from the primary research data. It describes the main methods used during this process and it relates the interview questions back to the thesis objectives, which are:

- Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food?
- To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen?
- To establish if foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture?
- Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture?

With a view to reach the overall main objective of the thesis.

### **4.2 Appropriation of Methods**

As mentioned previously in Chapter 3, the main methodology adopted for this thesis is qualitative. This chapter details the steps relating to, thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) which were carried out. The researcher does their best to display the findings both textually and visually via colour coding, tables, and concept maps. Bryman (2012, p.13) notes that, "the data analysis stage is fundamentally about *data reduction*...in the case of qualitative data by grouping textual material into categories like themes [without this] it is more or less impossible to interpret the material" (italics in original text). Upon reaching the analysis period, Braun and Clarke (2006, p.15) recommend that, "what is important is that the finished product contains an account- not necessarily that detailed – of what was done, and why".

### **4.3 Interview Question Sequence from the SRQs**

According to Bottery's (2015) concept referred to in chapter three, the researcher designed and formed interview questions from the sub-research objectives, as follows:

- **Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food?**

-What do you think best describes Irish food?

- How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically?

- **To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen?**

-Can you describe what foodism/foodie-ism is?

-Do you think Irish people display an exuberance of food?

- **To establish if foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture?**

-What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits?

- Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?

- Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use?

- **Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture?**

-When speaking of Irish food culture- Who would you consider the main food actors to be?

-How do you, yourself promote or spread the word of Irish food, products, producers, places and so on?

#### **4.4 Aligning Objectives with Interview Questions to form Numerical Codes:**

In order to begin to break down the large quantity of qualitative data that was gathered, the researcher began with text from the first interview (referred to in chapter three), coded KQ1. The researcher deduced that by applying colour coding to the research objectives this would help to condense the greater body of text and bring to the fore the relevant topics and issues. Hence, this could further facilitate with the formation of numerical codes when applied across all interview data that was collected.

#### **4.5 Example of General/Introduction Questions**

**From Interview 1- Code: KQ1**

1. When did you move to Dublin and what made you decide to write a food blog?
2. Why did you decide to stop writing your blog?
3. Presently, you are the owner of Delicious Dublin Food Tours. What year did you set it up and why did you decide to start the business?

4. From a gastro-tourism business owner viewpoint, have you noticed a rise in the interest of food tours in Ireland? And if yes, from when?

#### **4.6 Colour Coding Interview Questions:**

As a way to decompose and segment the interview data further, Creswell's (2009, p.187) advice to create "predetermined and emerging codes" was followed. Predetermined codes are those that may have already been raised in the sub-research questions or in the literature (Ibid). Emerging codes are any new or unforeseen topics that surface from the interview material or any events that emerged from the 'introduction' interview questions numbered one to four.

Displayed below is a sample of the colour coding technique used during the data analysis process. The colour coded research objectives were matched with the prevalent and more specific interview questions. These were then further distinguished as numerical predetermined codes (PD Codes), numbered one to nine, which were developed from the determined research questions and are then aligned with the significant interviewee answers. The following shows the common Interview Questions (numbered 5-12) linked by colour coding with the predetermined coded questions.

- Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food?

**Q:5** What do you think best describes Irish food? Traits or examples. **PD Code 1**

**Q:6** How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? **PD Code 2**

- To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen?

**Q:7** From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is? **PD Code 3**

**Q:8** Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? **PD Code 4**

- To establish if foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture?

**Q:9** What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? **PD Code 5**

**Q:9.1** Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream? **PD Code 6**

**Q:10** Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use? **PD Code 7**

- Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture?

**Q: 11** When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? **PD Code 8**

**Q:12** How do you, spread the word of Irish food? **PD Code 9**

#### 4.7 Predetermined and Emerging Codes

Upon completion of the interview colour coding process outlined above; ‘predetermined codes’ and ‘emerging codes’ that were detected as described in the following table:

*Table 8. Establishing Codes:*

Predetermined	Emerging Codes
What is Irish food	Irish Pride & Confidence
Irish people’s exuberance for food	Active & proud producers
How Ireland is gastronomically viewed from abroad (Global Audience)	Food knowledge
2019	Education
Tourism	Ballymaloe
Gastro-tourists	Myrtle Allen
Irish food is evolving	Subcultural capital
Foodism/Foodie-ism	Food writing & critics
Foodie Traits	Evolving Irish food
Foodies (interviewee’s definition)	Ireland vs France and Italy
Growth of Food Festivals & Events	JP McMahon
Cultural Capital & Elitism	Darina Allen
Foodies-subculture or mainstream	Restaurant culture
Differences between Ireland, France & Italy	Nordic food culture
State Bodies & Government Policy	Gap in tourism
Bord Bia’s Input	Music festivals
Fáilte Ireland & Initiatives	Perceptions of Ireland
Main food actors	Social capital & Elitism
Irish chefs	
Chef activism	
Michelin Guide, food guides & Restaurant Culture	
Celtic Tiger	
Scandinavian/Nordic Food Culture	
Culinary Skills	
Spreading the word of Irish food (interviewees)	

By doing this, steps one (familiarisation with the data) and step two (coding) from the ‘Six Phases of Thematic Analysis’, as outlined by (Braun and Clarke, 2006), previously in the methodology chapter, were also complied with and completed.



## 4.8 Presentation of Interview Findings

### 4.8.1 Research Objective 1-

- Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food?

**Q:5** What do you think best describes Irish food? traits or example **PD Code 1**

**Q:6** How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? **PD Code 2**

Table 9. Predetermined Code 1

Predetermined Code 1		
Q.5 What do you think best describes Irish food? (traits or examples)		
<b>KQ1</b>	Data extract	High Quality/ Local/ Humble home cooking/ Evolving/ Raw Ingredients (dairy, seafood & meat).
<b>MMC2</b>	Data extract	Healthy/ Tasty/ Fresh/ Traditional/ Local/ Raw Ingredients (beef, seafood, milk & butter).
<b>AOT3</b>	Data extract	Simple/ Accessible/ Diverse/ Produce or Raw Ingredients* (potatoes, herbs, seafood & lamb).
<b>JMK4</b>	Data extract	Spontaneity/ Evolving/ Producers & Produce (cheese/bacon/salmon)
<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	Inspirational/ Good/ Simple/ European Twist (evolving)* /Produce or Raw Ingredients (bacon & cabbage)
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	Fantastic/ Local/ Sustainable/ Good Quality/ Evolving/ Great Produce (raw ingredients).

\*Note: Produce and Raw Ingredients can be considered the same thing.

\*Note: Cooking with a European twist could be considered as evolving.

**Common codes that arose between interviewee's responses for 'Irish food' are-**

- Raw Ingredients (all 6 responded)
- Evolving (4 responses)
- Local (3 responses)
- High/Good Quality (2 responses)

Other traits that were suggested were- fantastic, spontaneity, inspirational, healthy, tasty, fresh, traditional, simple, accessible, diverse, sustainable and humble cooking. And finally, the main raw ingredients or produce that were mentioned by respondents were:

Dairy (milk, butter, cheese), Meat (Beef, Lamb, Bacon), Seafood (salmon, oysters, seaweed), Vegetables (potatoes, herbs, cabbage). *Figure 17.* shows a word cloud designed from the traits and perceptions of interviewees in relation to Irish Food:



<b>AOT3</b>	Data extract	<p>“There’s <b>two perceptions of Ireland</b>, when people come here, their perception changes- on how diverse and fresh and organic it is... I mean how natural it is or how close it is to the ground. And how it’s more people focused. (AOT3, line 109-112)</p> <p>“<b>The other perception</b> is always about bacon and cabbage and Irish food that [has] a very ‘old’ focus. That’s just down to our advertising and the perception of what people think- [a] drinking culture and that we all eat potatoes, bacon, ham and that’s it. And it’s a Catholic thing as well” (AOT3, line 112-115).</p>
<b>JMK4</b>          <b>JMK4 cont’d</b>	Data extract	<p>“I think we might not be regarded as premier league yet, but we’d certainly be regarded as first division” (JMK4, line 178-188).</p> <p>“We have come a long way in a relatively short period of time, and I think we keep getting better. I mean, my experience as somebody who is on the road trying new places and seeing people’s levels of confidence and creativity, is that one; we’re getting better and that two; this is recognised (JMK4, line 191-195).</p> <p>“I think what people are realising internationally is that the Irish have...a spontaneity which is really quite refreshing. I think that is, beginning to be recognised and I think it will continue to be. It’s like the snowball going down the hill- as you gather weight, as you gather strength and you gather speed” (JMK4, line 404-208).</p> <p>“So, have we done a good job, yes! Is there still a lot to do, yes! Of course, there is” (JMK4, line 278-279).</p>
<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	<p>“Yes, is the answer; I think it’s very important to get the message out there because what we’ve achieved in the last ten years has been brilliant. I’m very proud of what we have foodwise in this country and what’s coming, what’s to come yet. It’s brilliant, it’s very exciting” (PF5, line 48-51).</p> <p>“Without a doubt. I think that’s happening but still people are surprised. There still is a long way to go (I’m not saying it’s done) but people that come to Ireland can be very surprised that we have good food in Ireland and that’s a bit frustrating but I suppose that for a long time we didn’t but you still have to pick and choose where you go; there’s bad food in every country.” (PF5, line 43-46).</p>
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	<p><b>[Note]</b> GB6 mentioned she would not be the relevant person from Bord Bia to answer this.</p>

#### 4.8.2 Research Objective 2:

- To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen?

Q:7 From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is? **PD**

**Code 3**

Q:8 Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? **PD Code 4**

Table 11. Predetermined Code 3

<b>PD Code 3</b>		
<b>Q:7 From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?</b>		
<b>KQ1</b>	Data extract	“Foodism is like people with a ‘high’ interest, interest in food, you know? Or people who are looking for good food, I’d say. This is how I would describe it. You can call it gastronomic and bon vivant, you can call it foodie-ism it’s all the same, pretty much” (KQ1, line 147-151).
<b>MMC2</b>	Data extract	“Foodie-ism is sort of a word or a movement that has appeared really in the last twenty years, as such. And part of it is linked with the idea of the Celtic Tiger in Ireland” (MMC2, line 263-265.)
<b>AOT3</b>	Data extract	“Foodism is, it’s a trend. For me it’s foodie, it’s something that’s current, it’s trendy, it’s popular to say that you’re a foodie- to go out and eat and to socialise” (AOT3, line 134-136).  “It’s down to the tech world, it’s down to the marketing world, the accountancy world; foodism is an important aspect of that working lifestyle now and that’s where that generated from” (AOT3, line 203-205).
<b>JMK4</b>	Data extract	“I think there is a lot of people who for whom food is indifferent, but basically more and more people want a good experience and want an experience to be optimised” (JMK4, line 275-277).  “It’s not a snob thing in Ireland, it just shows that you’ve got a bit of savvy really” (JMK4, line 373-374).
<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	“Gosh, it’s a word that’s just saying I’m a real foodie, I don’t know if it’s a word that I love. But what it means is that I have an interest in food which is a really good thing” (PF5, line 106-108).
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	“That’s the million-dollar question, sometimes we have to check ourselves. I think it’s used in different contexts, so I don’t know what the precise context of it is. I think the way you describe it is probably a good one [an exuberance for food]. But ways of eating might be one...ways of eating today” (GB6, line 151-154).

Table 12. Predetermined Code 4

<b>PD Code 4</b>		
<b>Q:8 Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food?</b>		
<b>KQ1</b>	Data extract	<p>“It’s a small percentage of the Irish population. And I see on social media, you have this niche of people who are like the people interested in food or always talking about food or working in food and they think that the country is elevated, you know, that everyone is educated but there is a huge gap”! (KQ1, line 169-173).</p> <p>“I mean the foodies or the gastronomes or whatever the hell you call them; it’s a small percentage of people. Obviously, the interest in food has grown, you have, I mean, you have restaurants everywhere. It’s growing you have so many food festivals so many food events. Obviously, people are interested in food that’s for sure. But then, it’s not everyone” (KQ1, line 173-176).</p>
<b>MMC2</b>	Data extract	<p>“I’ve had some idea about what’s being going on. And people’s interest in food. And definitely I’ve seen a dramatic change” (MMC2, line 9-11)</p> <p>“I think, for the last fifteen years or so if you get into a conversation with people, quite often the conversation will turn to food quite quickly; What did you like? What did you have? Where have you eaten? Or, have you tried this new place? Have you heard this? Have you eaten that? Have you tried this new wine? This new craft beer, this new gastropub? This new, this, that and the other” (MMC2, line 293-297).</p>
<b>AOT3</b>	Data extract	<p>“In general? I don’t think so, no. I think it’s changing but currently I think it’s not an important aspect for Irish people. It’s part of a necessity. We don’t value it” (AOT3, line 141-142).</p> <p>“It’s down to costs not quality...and it’s down how Irish people are followers; they’ll just follow the next thing and believe that we should be spending a euro for a litre of milk instead of €1.50. That we used to spend ten years ago” (AOT3, line 144-150).</p>
<b>JMK4</b>	Data extract	<p>“Yes, I think they do- for enjoying it, I mean there are people in every society for whom food is fuel... (line 263-264) but the Irish enjoy food. (JMK4, line 266).</p> <p>“Irish food lovers are very sophisticated people” (JMK4, line 98-99).</p>
<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	<p>“Some people do, a lot of people don’t. And I think what it is, we always viewed food as function. You know there was the appreciation of simple food done well, definitely” (PF5, line 115-116).</p>
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	<p>“Yes, I absolutely think we have and that’s probably fair to say of every generation. I think the current, the younger generation coming through now express themselves through food. The fact</p>

	<p>that people are actively following specific diets” (GB6, line 159-161).</p> <p>“As a nation then, throughout various demographics we have embraced food in terms of our understanding of organic, shopping local, supporting local, those kinds of things” (GB6, line 166-168).</p>
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### 4.8.3 Research Objective 3:

- To establish if foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture?

**Q:9** What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits?

**PD Code 5**

**Q:9.1** Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream? **PD Code 6**

**Q:10** Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use?

**PD Code 7**

Table 13. Predetermined Code 5

<b>PD Code 5</b>		
<b>Q:9 What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits?</b>		
<b>KQ1</b>	Data extract	<p>“Foodie is a word that everyone hates!” (147) “I don’t know it has a bad connotation. I think especially with professionals from the food industry. They don’t really like people who call themselves foodies. At the same time, I think it’s people how are interested in food, basically” (KQ1, line 151-154).</p> <p>“If you’re a foodie, you wouldn’t call yourself a foodie!” (KQ1, line 159-160).</p> <p>“Some people who call themselves ‘foodies’, they’re not so much a foodie because they don’t know so much about food” (KQ1, line 161-162).</p>
<b>MMC2</b>	Data extract	<p>“It’s a difficult term maybe it’s a term someone should use to describe someone else as opposed to what someone should self-describe themselves” (MMC2, line 368-370).</p> <p>“Interested and passionate about food who like talking about food. Interested in going to restaurants, trying new dishes and quite adventurous” (MMC2, line 378-380).</p> <p>“Interested in authenticity, storytelling, terroir, and backstory as opposed to just eat food for fuel” (MMC2, line 379-380).</p>

<b>AOT3</b>	Data Extract	<p>“It’s part of your image. Your lifestyle. It’s not something like when I say foodism or I think that it’s not someone that’s really passionate about authentic or real, it’s more something that’s popular” (AOT3, line 136-138).</p> <p>“A prime example is the <i>Press Up</i> group. The <i>Press Up</i> group have a great following and they think outside of that world doesn’t exist. Because they all just dine in the <i>Press Up</i> group and they think that’s amazing. And their charging a ridiculous amount of money and the qualities not great. The have a following and they are all foodies” (AOT3, line 197-201).</p>
<b>JMK4</b>	Data extract	<p>“The person who is, and it’s not food obsessed by any means, but lets’ say or describe it as, food particular” (JMK4, line 236-238).</p> <p>“They’re fussy; they don’t want a bad experience” (JMK4, line 302).</p> <p>“They won’t go into a <i>Spar</i> shop to get a cup of coffee (to get a cup of <i>Frank and Honest</i>). They will walk to <i>3fe</i> or they will walk to <i>Cloud Picker</i>, or they will walk to <i>Bread 41</i> because they will not have a second-rate experience. They want a first-rate experience” (JMK4, line 240-242).</p>
<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	<p>“It’s more to do with my job. Like a foodie is more something like a hobby and it’s something they have an interest in and I think maybe it’s not their career. You’d never describe a chef as a foodie because a chef should be a foodie” (PF5, line 154-156).</p> <p>“Food TV, magazines. What’s the first section do you pull out? Do you read reviews of restaurants in the first 15 minutes of buying the Sunday papers? Stuff like that, just a general interest, that’s what you have. And more than common knowledge of who’s who in the country and what cookery books they’ve written. It just becomes part of their life in a very easy way. It’s a lovely community to be part of” (PF5, line 123-127).</p>
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	<p>“There are many different types of foodie. So, I think the Foodie you’re probably talking about is the kind of gourmet foodie but you could have the foodie who’s the exerciser foodie who cooks their clean food in batches for the week. The gourmet foodie is somebody who probably is very interested in local food and avoids processed foods” (GB6, line 203-207).</p> <p>“All these people, there’s so many motivators and so many different demographics you can approach it through. They all go together to make a piece of the pie. So, a sport foodie might be a niche foodie, but a gourmet foodie is also a niche foodie...in a nationally representative way, those kinds of audience are not your absolute everyday person by any stretch” (GB6, line 222-227).</p>

Table 14. Predetermined Code 6

<b>PD Code 6</b>		
<b>Q:9.1 Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?</b>		
<b>KQ1</b>	Data extract	“There is an interest, a growing interest for food. And of course, people have more access to more food ingredients, even in your supermarket. Jesus, the choice of ingredients. You couldn’t find stuff ten years ago and now you have this exotic stuff. That is definitely mainstream, in a way”! (KQ1, 220-224)
<b>MMC2</b>	Data extract	<p>“Foodies [are] still a subculture but it’s quite a large subculture, it’s definitely growing but it’s not ‘mainstream’ mainstream”. (MMC2, line 400-401).</p> <p>“It would be more mainstream amongst a certain socio-cultural or socio-economic grouping, so there is definitely an amount of cultural capital associated with food knowledge, in the same way there would be about literature or film, or about drama or theatre”. (MMC2, line 401-404).</p> <p>“There is still a lot of people in the general public who still consider food just to be something that they eat as fuel” (MMC2, line 399-400).</p>
<b>AOT3</b>	Data extract	“Yes, I think it’s more mainstream, I think, it’s more popular. It’s a thing now to go to Starbucks, as a teenager, and that classifies you as a foodie” (AOT3, line 156-157).
<b>JMK4</b>	Data extract	“I think they’re mainstream really” (JMK4, line 357).
<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	“I think it’s subculture, really. I don’t think it’s mainstream...it’s growing all the time. I suppose, maybe I’m wrong, but I tend to immerse myself in that community the same way that other people might immerse themselves in the football community or GAA or something like that. It’s certainly bigger than it was” (PF5, line 129-134).
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	<p>“They’re not necessarily the mainstream but I think what you see happening is that when you look at the trend as foods become more mainstream, they become more affordable and then they become more a part of the conversation” (GB6, line 229-231).</p> <p>“I think they’re all part of the food culture that we are today. I think the food culture, the world that we live in, looking at it through a lens of sustainability, you’re going to have people who want to embrace food that’s produced more responsibly, and under that kind of umbrella there’s lots of things from local, to natural, organic, to sustainable, less packaging, to in season” (GB6, line 217-221)</p>



Table 15. Predetermined Code 7

<b>PD Code 7</b>		
<b>Q:10</b> Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use?		
<b>KQ1</b>	Data extract	<p>“I wouldn’t call myself a foodie, but I called myself a foodie for the blog” (KQ1, line 246-247).</p> <p>“I’m a hardcore type of foodie” (261).</p> <p>“For me being a foodie, you have to be like- I breathe food, (laughs) I’m obsessed! It’s about cooking, it’s about shopping for food, it’s about eating out, it’s about reading, writing learning as much as I can about food”. (KQ1, line 203-207).</p> <p>“I can use the French words like bon vivant, gastronome but it’s the same thing at the end, do you know what I mean? I just love food so, I’m obsessed (laughs). But people would call me a foodie that’s it, for sure. When they know me...people would say she’s a foodie. But I’m not going to go around saying, I’m a foodie” (KQ1, line 249-253).</p>
<b>MMC2</b>	Data extract	<p>“I am a foodie whether I want to consider myself one or not” (MMC2, line 399).</p> <p>“I suppose I am a foodie but what’s interesting is that there is a pejorative understanding about a foodie because [of] some people who may be, I wouldn’t use foodie as a badge to label myself but I probably do fall under the foodie category in the same way that I’m a native Irish speaker” (MMC2, line 346-350).</p> <p>“A Gaeilgeóir is sometimes a pejorative term that is sometimes used by other people to label me. I wouldn’t consider me, a foodie, but some people would consider me one, but I suppose I am both a foodie and a Gaeilgeóir. But I just consider myself, me!” (MMC2, line 351-354).</p>
<b>AOT3</b>	Data extract	<p>“No, I hate the word” (AOT3, line 175)</p> <p>“I’d have friends who would classify themselves as foodies and think they know a lot about food. Which some people do but they don’t, it’s the understanding behind, it’s that you’re not following what marketing is doing or what the trend is. You’re doing something that is actually ethically right. Or what’s good quality and good quality against cost as well” (AOT3, line 177-181).</p>
<b>JMK4</b>	Data extract	<p>“I’m just a food-lover but not just purely in terms of what I put on my own table or what I buy or where I choose to eat” (JMK4, line 395-396).</p> <p>“I love good food; I love good wine; I love good beer. But, what I also love is also the effort that someone puts into rearing that pig properly and their way of slaughtering a pig properly, respectfully. So, I really love all of that. I’m not interested in eating anything where I don’t know the provenance and the producer” (JMK4, line 411-414).</p>

<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	“I suppose I am. Maybe I associate sometimes [with people] that they know more than they do. I don’t know. Either way it’s a good thing. I mean I work in it. I’m a chef, I’m immersed in it, this is my career, my life and the only thing I can do so, I’ve no choice but to be a foodie” (PF5, line 147-150).
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	“I’ll tell you there are people that are way more foodie than I’d be. But I like food and because I work in it, I suppose I’m talking about it every day, and we like our food in our house, it’s very much part of how we live but we’re not a type of foodie we do it all good or bad” (GB6, line 251-254).

#### 4.8.4 Research Objective 4:

- Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture?

**Q: 11** When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? **PD Code 8**

**Q:12** How do you, spread the word of Irish food? **PD Code 9**

Table 16. Predetermined Code 8

<b>PD Code 8</b>		
<b>Q: 11 When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be?</b>		
<b>KQ1</b>	Data extract	<p>“In terms of actors here, JP McMahon is someone who comes to mind but obviously, Ballymaloe, like Darina [Allen]” (KQ1, line 298-300).</p> <p>“I think Clodagh McKenna as well, it’s mainly as well because I follow her, but I think she’s a great ambassador. Because she has an international reach, she is based in the U.K., but she has an audience in Canada, the States” (KQ1, line 299-302).</p> <p>“In terms of <i>Bord Bia</i>, it’s doing a great job. I think better than...obviously it is their job to promote Irish food overseas, but I think they are doing a fantastic job. That’s definitely one thing”. (KQ1, line 296-298).</p>
<b>MMC2</b>	Data extract	<p>[JP McMahon] “For five years in a row...he has had the <i>Food on the Edge</i>, which has grown year on year. And actually, put Ireland on the map amongst international chefs” (MMC2, line 168-170).</p> <p>[Note] MMC2 discusses two levels of main food actors in Irish media, one directed at ‘mainstream foodies’ and another at ‘esoteric foodies’:</p>

		<p><b>Mainstream foodies:</b> “the likes of Lucinda O’Sullivan or Katie McGuinness (in some of the other newspapers) might be more everyday as such and not [taste makers], are considered slightly differently in their approach” (MMC2, line 455-457).</p> <p><b>Esoteric foodies:</b> “I would have considered the likes of a tastemaker would have been of Catherine Cleary in the <i>Irish Times</i> and maybe Marie-Claire Digby” (MMC2, line 453-454).</p>
<b>AOT3</b>	Data extract	<p>“There’s a couple of people, well the main person who’s been driving it for many years is Myrtle Allen and she’s always kept it fresh and vibrant. And then Ballymaloe following that, with Rory, Darina and Rachel. If you look at everything they do, it’s very contemporary” (AOT3, line 216-219).</p> <p>“You have JP McMahon doing amazing things in terms of the contemporary Ireland with the Nordic aspect on it” (AOT3, line 224-225).</p> <p>“[Producers and Slow Fooders] “Like-minded food enthusiasts, I call them, which are people really interested in food” (AOT3, line 224-225).</p>
<b>JMK4</b>	Data extract	<p>“JP [McMahon] in Galway not just because he runs three really, really good restaurants... but also, because he’s very hard working. His new book is exceptional, <i>The Irish Cookbook</i> but also <i>Food on the Edge</i> has really brought people like Massimo Bottura and so on” (JMK4, line 429-432).</p> <p>“Darina is a major player” (JMK4, line 436).</p> <p>“<i>The Fumbally</i> has been important because they have a non-hierarchical, ethical system of working. I think their workshops and their Saturday market (I’m not sure what their plans are now because of COVID19) but they have always been creative” (JMK4, line 442-445).</p>
<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	<p>“That’s a hard one. I suppose <i>Bord Bia, Fáilte Ireland</i> are always very important. They’re the people who bring the tourists in and make them aware that we have something going on. They’re the first two and I don’t know after that really”. (PF5, line 160-162)</p> <p>“J.P. and the work he would have done in Galway at <i>Food On The Edge</i>, he brought serious people over. And when they come over, they see that we have amazing food, and they go back, and people listen to them. That’s a really, really important part” (PF5, line 92-96).</p> <p>“In terms of branding, before producers mightn’t have had the most professionally packaged goods, I’m only speculating now but, whereas now they have. You know we’ll say <i>St. Tola</i> cheese</p>

		and <i>Ardsallagh</i> , they've been putting their good name out there for years" (PF5, line 187-190).
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	<p>"They all have a role to play, don't they, and they all do a good job in terms of what they do. <i>Tourism Ireland</i> do a great job in promoting Ireland and the Wild Atlantic Way and all the food producers along there is one example. Grow Your Own [<i>GIY</i>] is another great network I think that's going to be something that will continue to grow around education and that there's likely to be more emphasis on that into the future. <i>Teagasc</i> are another body that really support people, in terms of helping them research the potential to make particular foods. They look at how to help people when they go to scale up for example if they want to learn how to get the technical make-up right, whether it be an ice cream or type of cheese product" (GB6, line 258-266).</p> <p>"I think chefs in Ireland, people like Darina Allen...she really absolutely has done so much to elevate how Ireland is perceived across the world in terms of food. She's an incredible person" (GB6, line 269-272).</p> <p>"All food producers, as a society there's fantastic different types of producers from the small, smaller farmer's markets, cottage industry style right through to the big producers, big manufacturers. If you go all the way to the large, large, multinational scale of <i>Kerry</i>, the <i>Glanbia</i>'s how they support Irish produce and employment on a huge, huge scale. Everybody has a role to play...come together to make the food culture of today" (GB6, line 278-284).</p>

Table 17. Predetermined Code 9

<b>PD Code 9</b>		
<b>Q:12 How do you, spread the word of Irish food?</b>		
<b>KQ1</b>	Data extract	<p>"I definitely think I do my best because I'm face-to-face. I speak with tourists so I'm giving them the full image. I'm telling them of how it evolved. I'm not just saying Irish food is fantastic. It's more than that- I give them the full Irish food story experience, the taste" (KQ1, line 338-342).</p> <p>What I really do is giving a 'taste of place'. I serve very simple [local] things but quality things" (KQ1, line 351-352).</p> <p>"I give the story of producers, of people who make Irish food" (KQ1, line 357-364).</p>

		<p>“Obviously, my blog as well, seven years of sharing, reviewing, reporting local restaurants, of independent reviews. It was really for the love of sharing my recommendations and thinking this place is doing something great so spread the word about it” (KQ1, line 361-364).</p>
<b>MMC2</b>	Data extract	<p>“I’ve always championed it and I’ve always and I’ve always challenged preconceptions of it based on facts. As opposed to general perceptions [instead] of facts” (MMC2, line 479-481).</p> <p>“Well, I’ve been spreading the word of Irish food for many years now and I’ve been doing it in a number of different ways. I’ve been doing it through my academic research and articles, as I mentioned, from starting off at the Oxford Symposium Food and Cookery and a number of different papers I wrote for them. I’ve completed a PhD on the history of Dublin restaurants, and I’ve written quite a number of articles around that. I have also worked with the Association of Irish Franco Studies and again with the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium on promoting Irish food as well, wherever I can. But I also have done it using the media, both radio, television and newspapers” (MMC2, line 470-477).</p>
<b>AOT3</b>	Data extract	<p>“For my work, I do it through networking [I] explain what Irish food culture is. And by showing the best thing to do. It’s by letting people taste and touch things, so when I travel around the world to events or conferences, I always bring a taste of Ireland with me and something that people wouldn’t consider” (AOT3, line 268-271).</p>
<b>JMK4</b>	Data extract	<p>“We use social media, particularly Instagram (more recently) when we travel. We would have contacts with foreign journalists if people were coming in... [and we pass on recommendations] ...we find the good stuff and we sing their praises. And we’ve done that for thirty years. The people we write about are brilliant and they are really charming as well” (JMK4, line 327-530).</p>
<b>PF5</b>	Data extract	<p>“By cooking it, that’s one thing because I don’t have an international audience unless they come to the restaurant, they don’t get to eat it but also, I do get to write about it. And that’s how I spread the word of Irish food, just by doing it every day and I always ‘Irishify’ my menu whenever possible. Instead of white wine I cook with local cider an enormous amount of the time” (PF5, line 197-201).</p>
<b>GB6</b>	Data extract	<p>“My job would be, the studies we do, whether we look at the, <i>What Ireland Ate Last Night</i> is one example; or our <i>Dietary Lifestyle</i> study is we produce big reports that a block of companies would not be able to invest in because of the cost of them. We don’t do them randomly, we do them thoughtfully based on what we hear people wanting to know about. So, for example, people wanted to know because there was such a surge in interest in veganism, we decided to do a study on that” (GB6, line 297-303).</p>

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#### **4.8.5 Are you a Foodie? -Twitter Poll**

As a direct response to a quote from interviewee KQ1, a poll was sent out on the Twitter social media platform since it was noted by KQ1 that there was a significant foodie presence on Twitter:

I'm really obsessed but the people that I found that are as obsessed as me I found on social media like Twitter. When I started, I found that there was an active community of food lovers on Twitter. I know people that are really obsessed but they are not my close friends to be honest. (yeah, it's a funny thing that it's not) (KQ1, line 261-266).

The Twitter Poll was not to gauge quantitatively if people were or were not foodies and it was not to decipher what were the characterises of a foodie, but it was more a way to measure individual perceptions when presented with the question: 'Would you call yourself a foodie?' This question was posed to record semantically how individuals perceive or approach the word in relation to their own identity. It was a question that was originally posed to the six interviewees also.

#### Poll Analytics

The poll (*figure 18*) ran for three days on the social media platform. Only one vote is permitted per Twitter account user. The tweet was retweeted by a couple of significant food scene individuals such as, @irishfoodguide (36.4K followers) and @mckennasguides (22.4K followers), so it would have reached a significant online and 'food enthusiastic' audience.

Figure 18. Twitter Poll: 'Would you call yourself a foodie?'



(Source: Sinead Reil, 2020)

In total, there were 63 poll votes recorded; 50.8% of participants voted yes (option one), that they would call themselves foodies, 22.2% voted no (option two) that they would not call themselves foodies. The **3rd option** (No, but other people would) captured 15.9% of the vote, and the **4th option** (No, I'm more knowledgeable) counted as 11.1% of the overall votes. These answer options were included, in order to try to distinguish the 'Yes' cohort and the 'No' cohort more. Hence, participants who selected the third option are viewed by other people as foodies but they themselves either do not like the word and so distance themselves from the word or call themselves something else but it can be reasonably deducted that the perception is they have more than an average interest in food. The participants who selected option four, are distinctly distancing from the foodie community because they consider themselves more knowledgeable, suggesting perhaps that they are chefs, academics, people who work in the food industry, or maybe even 'super foodies'/'food adventurers' as suggested by (Cope, 2019), who use food knowledge and experiences as a way to distinguish themselves, both socially and culturally.

#### **4.8.5 Searching for Themes**

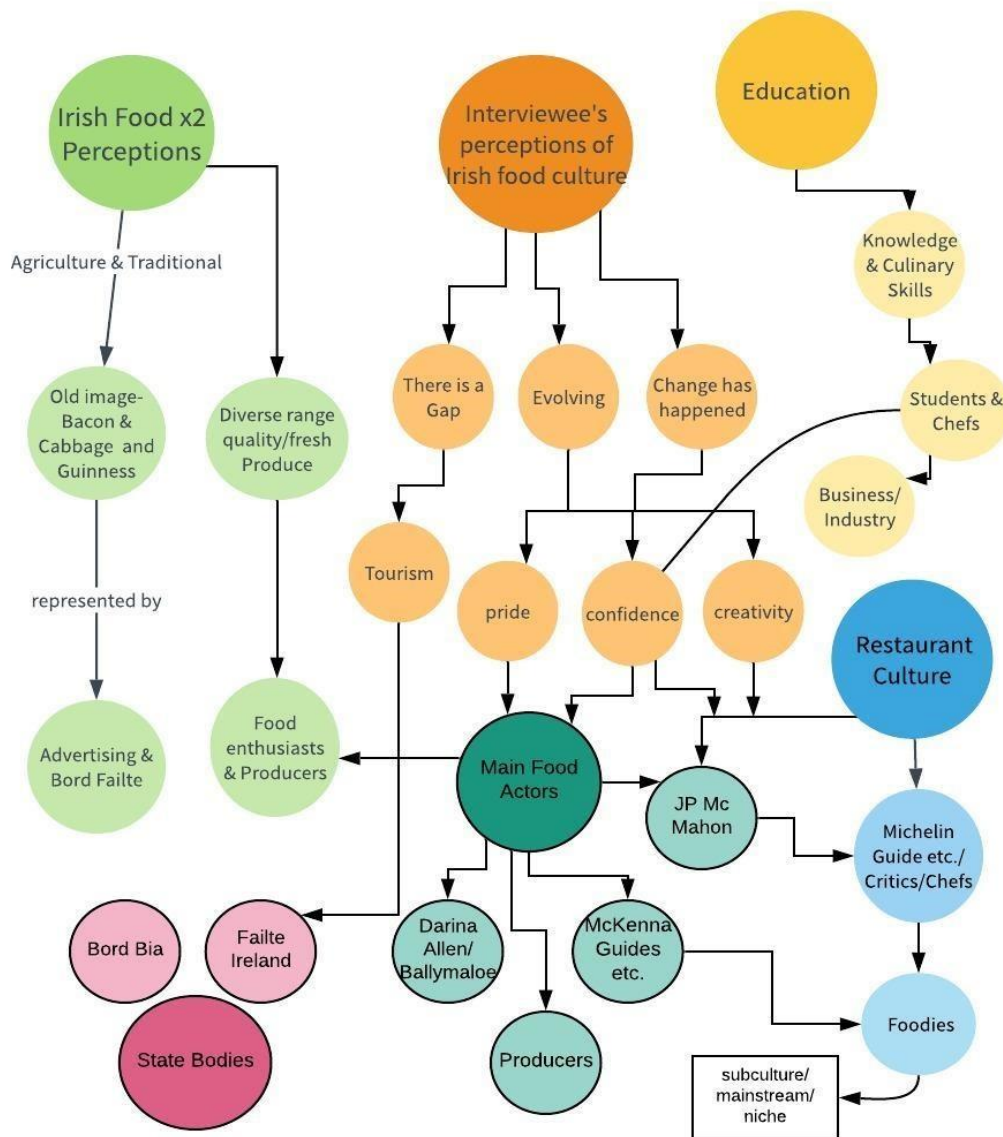
Just to recap in relation to the thematic analysis approach: “A theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.15). “Themes are not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered...rather the researcher constructs the themes” (Ibid). In third stage phase of thematic analysis, the researcher searched for codes across all the data including the two sets of codes as previously outlined, in *table 8*.

#### **4.8.6 Concept Maps-themes**

Following steps 4 and steps 5 of Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis phases and initial concept map was devised. *Figure 19* displays the initial thematic map developed which shows six potential themes. These themes were further broken down in a further developed map shown in *figure 20*.



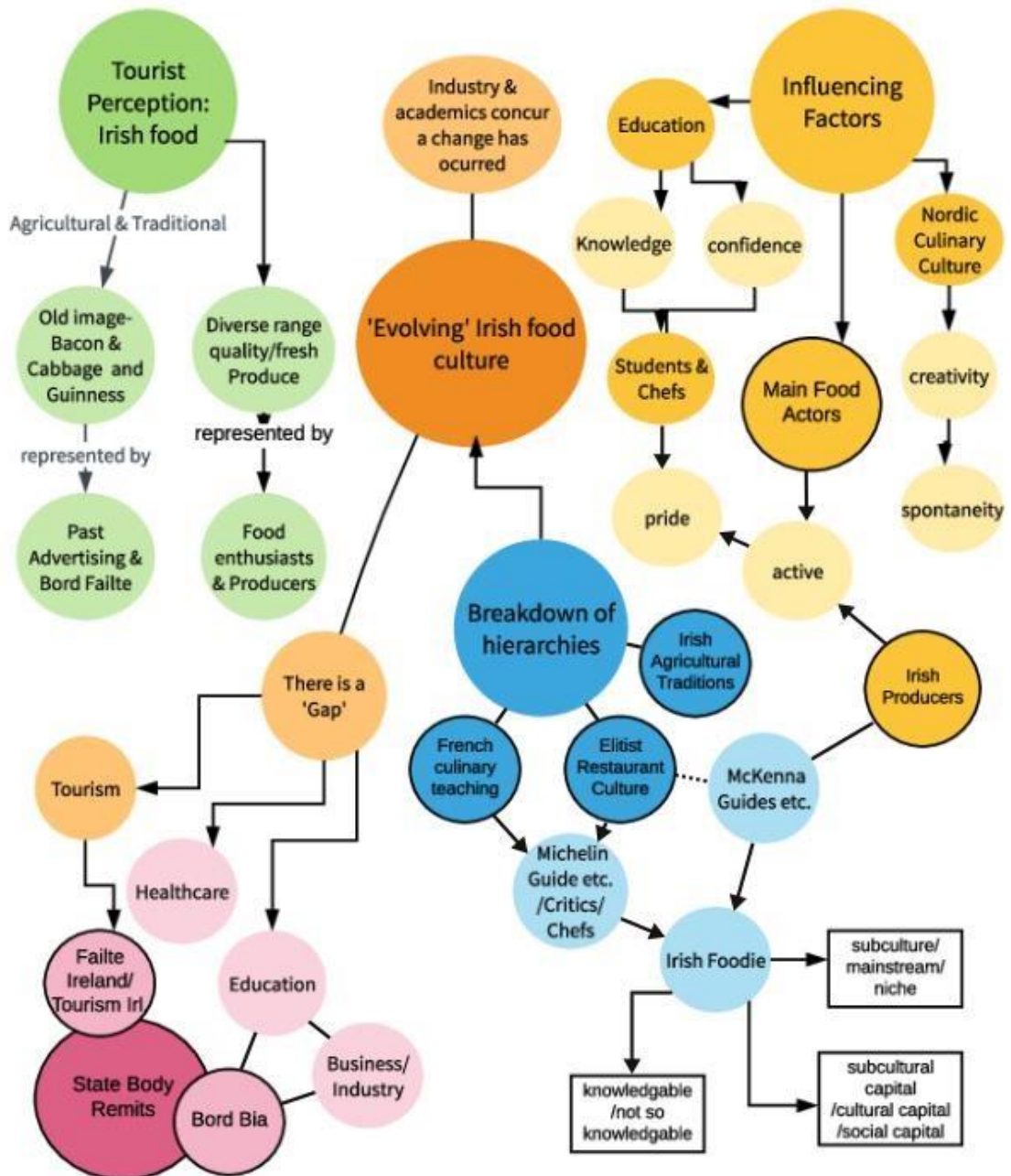
Figure 19. Initial Thematic Map, showing six main themes



(Source: Lucidchart, 2020)

Irish Food Culture -Thematic Map 2

Figure 20. Thematic Map 2 showing the five main themes



#### **4.8.7 Conclusion:**

This chapter presents in detail the findings of the six in-depth interviews carried out. It displays the data visually using tables, figures, word clouds and concept mapping. As an addition to the interview research, an online poll was carried out to distinguish individual's perception of the term, foodie.

This dissertation should offer an overview and insight into contemporary Irish food culture and the personae of the Irish foodie and it may provide useful further recommendations for business or industry.

The next chapter will discuss and analyse the uncovered themes, by relating them to the data (primary research) and back to the literature (secondary research) and then relate the themes' significance to the overarching thesis question.

## **Chapter Five: Analysis**

## **5.0 Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the findings as laid out in chapter four and analyse the five themes which developed from the data. In order to distinguish between ‘themes’ and the ‘research objectives’ the latter will retain their assigned colour coded sequence which was set out in the previous chapter also.

### **5.2 Recognised Changes in Irish Food Culture**

In relation to changes that have developed in Ireland’s food culture, interviewee MMC2 points out: “Things have changed dramatically over the last thirty years, particularly over the last twenty” (MMC2, line 53 & 54). MMC2 (lines 26-53) lists the changes that have occurred in Ireland over the last two to three decades:

- Exotic vegetables- the selection of fruit and vegetables more varied and plentiful nowadays. (line 26-27).
- Eating out in restaurants- “the other huge change would have been the idea of eating out or restaurants because people used to go to restaurants, years ago, just really to mark special occasions” (line 30-32).
- Wines – choice is more varied and plentiful now. “In the 70s and 80s, wine was either, blue, green or black” (line 37).
- Coffee culture has taken off in Ireland over the years: “Definitely we were tea drinkers not coffee drinkers” (line 44-45).
- Travel, more Irish people travelling abroad and also returning emigrants- “a lot of that [change] has come from travel” (line 50).
- Change has come about through the media, such as, food television programmes, radio, and food and wine magazines plus via the internet-

“A lot has also come with food media because the amount of programming around food is quite dramatic now and also the idea of food and wine magazines. Although they’re coming to an end with the world of social media taking over from print journalism” (MMC2, line 50-53).

Four of the six factors mentioned above link in and corroborate what was discussed in the literature review chapter, i.e. the proliferation of food media, an increase in travel, a rise in the numbers eating out in restaurants and a greater availability of exotic food stuffs in stores countrywide. Similarly, many of the other interviewees concur that these

changes are obvious and established within Ireland's contemporary food culture. KQ1 (line 221-224) agrees that, "people have more access to more food ingredients, even in your supermarket, Jesus, the choice of ingredients. You couldn't find stuff ten years ago and now you have this exotic stuff". In the literature, these changes are discussed by (Duane, 2012) and (Reil, 2013) in the 'Irish history' section on (p.12). Other significant factors that brought change were Ireland's membership of the European Union in the early seventies (p.14) that resulted in the opening of trade markets (and accounted for better access to wine and coffee imports), plus the circumstances pre and post the *Celtic Tigers Years* (1994-2007); also outlined in the literature review chapter (pp. 14-15): "Many Irish had the chance to focus on satisfying other needs such as social and ego...which enabled them to progress further up Maslow's hierarchical pyramid" (detailed in *figure 1.* on p.15).

### 5.3 The Five Main Themes

In the Findings Chapter, *Thematic Map 1* is an initial map devised from the deduced themes, these were in no way finished concepts and were required to be broken down further by the researcher to enable a clearer picture of the data and to aid in establishing more focused and specific themes. An attempt was made to link the data concepts further and a next attempt was made to analyse these concepts fully. This resulted in concept map two shown in *figure.20 Thematic Map 2*.

The five themes that surfaced are as follows:

- An 'evolving' Irish food culture.
- Two perceptions of Irish food (Tourism)
- A Fracturing of Hierarchies
- Influencing Factors (that impel change)
- State Body Remits – a disconnection.

### 5.4 Theme 1: An 'Evolving' Modern Irish Food Culture

This theme links back to the **sub research question two**: *Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food?* Upon reading the interview data, it can be ascertained overall that, the interviewee's (Industry experts and academic's) perception is one of an 'evolving' modern Irish food culture. When asked **interview question 5: What do you think best describes Irish food?** (traits or examples) (**PD Code 1**); three of the six

participant's used the term 'evolving' in their responses; a fourth interviewee, PF5 (who is a chef) mentioned that he cooks Irish food with a "European twist"; "I would do bacon and cabbage risotto, I would take certain ways of cooking, say from Italy or France and put Irish ingredients in there, use the methods but with our ingredients" (PF5, line 75-79). In the literature, a similar hybrid cuisine is observed by (Reil, 2013, p.2) on (p.17). Hence, the researcher points out this can be noted as a cuisine having 'evolved' or changed from a more traditional Irish cuisine. Taking this into account, this means four of the six interviewees made references to contemporary Irish food as 'evolving' in some form. For example, KQ1 (line 101) specifically notes: "Now Irish food is evolving" and that, "it's improved a lot. People are lucky now even people that are moving here now, I am telling- Oh my god! The food! Fifteen years ago, it was not as good" (KQ1, line 113-115). Likewise, interviewee JMK4 (line 293-296) acknowledges: "That way in which bread and butter has been transformed by the best Irish restaurants- they turn it into an event. It's a significant aspect of that creativity, to look again at something that you take for granted. It's very encouraging!".

Going back to the literature, Mac Con Iomaire (2018c, p.59) pointed out how, "the rebirth of Irish gastronomy coincided with the Celtic Tiger Years (1994-2007)". He maintains, the recession which followed, forced Irish chefs to become frugal with their ingredients and pushed them to experiment with "non gourmet ingredients" (p.41). Reil (2013) also confirms this on (p.41). Furthermore in 2018, Mac Con Iomaire claims that, "we are approaching a 'Celtic' food revival" (2018a, p.17). This is down to Irish chefs winning International competitions and as a result, gained more recognition. In addition, Mac Con Iomaire, again in the literature (p.43), establishes that the Nordic Food Movement had a big influence on the modern culinary scene in Ireland; which provided inspiration for Irish chefs and in turn has enticed them to re-visualise their native ingredients. Coakley (2012, p.323) cited on (p.20) of the literature review concludes, "food culture is and ongoing negotiation of likes and dislikes of traditions and new discoveries: it is a constant process of becoming".

### **5.5 Theme 2: Two perceptions of Irish food (Tourism)**

This theme also, links back to the **sub research objective two: Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food?** Which has ties with **interview question 6:**

*How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? (PD Code 2).*

The main interviewees who draw on this concept are, AOT3 and KQ1, JMK4, MMC2 and PF5.

AOT3 suggests that, “there’s two perceptions of Ireland, when people come here, their perception changes- on how diverse and fresh and organic it is... I mean how natural it is or how close it is to the ground. And how it’s more people focused” (AOT3, line 109-112). He points out that, “the other perception is always about bacon and cabbage and Irish food that [has] a very ‘old’ focus. That’s just down to our advertising and the perception of what people think- [a] drinking culture and that we all eat potatoes, bacon, ham and that’s it. And it’s a Catholic thing as well” (AOT3, line 112-115).

KQ1 views tie in with this concept too, she states that, “your average tourist the one that does not partake in food tours, they think that Irish food is going to a pub and getting fish and chips. So, like there is a huge gap” (KQ1, line 127-128). She stresses that this, “huge gap” exists “between people interested in food, that will search and find quality food and your average tourist that just want ‘food’. And they can still have bad experiences” (KQ1, line 143-145). Furthermore, she suggests there is another “gap”: “Between trying to promote initiatives around food but then [just generally] promoting Ireland” (KQ1, line 318-324). She points out that state bodies such as, *Bord Bia* are doing “a fantastic job” (JMK4 line 484 concurs the same), but that *Fáilte Ireland* and *Tourism Ireland* are missing the ‘food’ factor. Commenting on the *Tourism Ireland* website, KQ1 (line 323-325) notes how, “there was not a good restaurant mentioned, it was like your average touristy experience of Irish food. And so, you tell that there is a gap”. In relation to *Fáilte Ireland*, she points out that, “they still kind of end up putting [food] on the side” (line 190). She states, “I think that ‘Taste the Island’ was just for people locally again...so locally we think because we’re in a bubble, but I don’t think it reached the outside very well” (KQ1, 291-295). However MMC2 contends that, “research done by *Fáilte Ireland* shows that people don’t necessarily associate Ireland with good food but when they come, they are more often than not overwhelmingly...pleasantly surprised...this is changing...but there is a journey to go to bring it to where the likes of Copenhagen is or Denmark is, at the moment” (MMC2, line 249-254).



AOT3 maintains that, this “gap” is not just with tourism but in other sectors as well. He holds that: “Tourism is only an aspect but it’s only a small part of ‘food’. You have public, like schools, education and healthcare, which are not supporting food, and the social section as well” (AOT, line 330-334).

AOT3 believes: “It’s back to [us]- we’re not educating people in Ireland about what Irish food culture was about and what it is. [So] how can you change perception globally. Because if you ask any Irish person in agriculture, what is Irish food? They will always say bacon and cabbage, which it is, but it’s only a small part about what Irish food is about” (AOT3, line 115-120). Similarly, MMC2 concurs that, “the way to go is not to do with quality, the way to go is to do with the perception” (MMC2, line 246-247). Furthermore, Interviewee PF5 believes, “we can’t call ourselves a food destination. We’re almost waiting to be anointed...but I do think with the people that we have and where we’ve come [from] and we’re going, I think we deserve it, I definitely do” (PF5, line 101-104). His comment is contradicted slightly in the literature, the fact there is already a yearly ‘Foodie Destination’ accolade awarded regionally now, in Ireland, which was set up by the Restaurant Association of Ireland (mentioned on p.37). Plus, the fact that Galway was crowned ‘European Region of Gastronomy’, in 2018 (p.26).

Regarding *Fáilte Ireland*, the literature review (p.29) mentions that, a goal of the organisation’s five-year plan is to change the perceptions of the global culinary traveller to Ireland. This marks a big leap forward in thinking from the *Bord Fáilte* brochure from 1974 (p.26) as referred to by Deleuze (2012, p.2) and the perception held of Irish cuisine during that time, by both Ireland’s national tourism agency and the one held from abroad, that of the French nation. This also ties in with how KQ1’s perception of Irish food has changed due to living in Ireland for the last fifteen years, so much so, that she now promotes it to both tourists and Irish people:

When I moved here...I didn’t think Ireland has great food to be honest. It has changed a lot for me. You have so much choice now in Dublin...in the countryside and in Dublin, you have so many restaurants now. It’s improved a lot (KQ1, line 110-113).

### **5.6 Theme 3: A Fracturing of Traditional Hierarchies**

This theme emerged from the primary research; it recognises a fracturing of two traditional societal hierarchies, which had developed over time within food culture in

Ireland. These are a French culinary doctrine and an elitist restaurant culture (two strains of societal hierarchies that factored across Europe also).

### **5.6.1 French Culinary Teaching**

Regarding a change from a more traditional teaching doctrine in culinary education, in the interview, MMC2 relates how the first cohorts from the BA in Culinary Arts in Technology University Dublin were: “The first generation...to be given that early level of education...so that they’re actually being taught from early days to think critically, to be reflective practitioners, to not just be that old ‘master/apprentice’ role” (MMC2, line 210-212). He reflects that over the years there was, “a change of knowledge” and how, “in the past, it was an empty head that was being filled and trained in a very classical way but was not asked to think outside of that box or to look at any other cultures” (MMC2, line 325-328). Similarly, AOT3 observes how, “in terms of a French classical kitchen, chefs just had one role and then they moved into another role but now they need to be aware of everyone’s roles” (AOT3, line 20-24). “It’s not about mastering your technique as it was years ago. The chefs before they were just told, ‘to do this!’” (AOT3, line 27-28). In the Literature, the Nordic Food Movement is noted as having been instrumental in introducing an alternative to or change from the older French culinary style of teaching. Here (Amilien and Notaker, 2018, p.24) define: “Nordic cuisine as a respect for nature, slow cooking, raw and simple food” (p.42). The Nordic kitchen ethos is also modelled on a non-hierarchical framework. Similar to the business model which is now practised in *The Fumbally* café in Dublin. Interviewee JMK4 confirms, “[Irish Chefs] pull ideas from everywhere, they refine them, but I think really there is a spontaneity to how the best chefs cook, and you find that really throughout the country. They are not just simply churning out the same dish...I think it’s one of the reasons why that French cooking has lost its sheen; is that it suddenly became repetitive” (JMK4, line 147-152).

### **5.6.2 An Exclusive Restaurant Culture**

In the literature review chapter (p.15), Mac Con Iomaire established that in the mid-nineties there was an increase in both, haute [high] cuisine in Dublin restaurants and in the number of Michelin stars rewarded. He holds that the main conditions that influenced this were, “the rising wealth of Irish citizens due to the *Celtic Tiger*

phenomenon, which made dining in restaurants a regular pastime rather than an occasional treat, and also the changing tastes of the Irish public” (2011, p.547). Furthermore, economist McWilliams (2006, p.222) introduces an Irish persona which emerged from the *Celtic Tiger Years* that he satirically refers to as, “Hibernian Cosmopolitans” (HiCos) “the new Irish elite are the most educated tribe ever” (2006, p.222). He observes: “For HiCos food marks you out. It distinguishes the truly educated from the merely rich” (p.16). Likewise (p.8), the foodie persona, as satirised and described by Barr and Levy (1984) arose from a mash up of British and American society during the eighties. They specify how their foodies were, “children of the consumer boom [who] consider food to be an art, on a level with painting or drama” (1984, p.6). And that during that decade too, “food talk is the *staple* diet of social intercourse now” (Ibid) (Italics in original text).

Similarly, in the research Interview, MMC2 observes in Irish society: “For the last fifteen years or so if you get into a conversation with people, quite often the conversation will turn to food quite quickly... Where have you eaten?... Have you heard this?... Have you tried this new wine? This new craft beer, this new gastropub? This new, this, that and the other” (MMC2 line, 293-297). He points out that, “we’re all sophisticated now in our understanding of wine and showing our cultural capital through our wine choice” (MMC2, line 42-43). Also, in the primary research, JMK4 mentions how: “Irish food lovers are very sophisticated people” (line 98). He assesses that the experimental traveller or gastro-tourist of today:

Want to have a precise food experience at all the different points of the spectrum. They just don’t want to be told about (in a dreadful term) what we call ‘fine dining’ because they appreciate you can have an incredible food experience standing at a food cart looking out at Killary Harbour [Co. Mayo] (JMK4, line 94-98).

A distinctive element emerges from the interviews given by MMC2 and JMK4, one which signifies a clash of viewpoints formed around Ireland’s restaurant culture [Please note: neither of the interviewees’ viewpoints were shared with one another and information was kept confidential prior to and during the interview process].

MMC2 describes two levels of food media in Ireland; one level directed at ‘mainstream foodies’ or food lovers from the general public, while the other is directed at ‘esoteric foodies’. He explains the concept further: “Everyday people who are also interested in food but maybe get their information from mainstream radio, telly [television] etc.

Which is sort of the Neven Maguire side as opposed to the more (not saying) esoteric, in the terms of the like...[of] JP [McMahon] or the guys who are seen and who are very active online” (line 426-431). Also he suggests that, “I would have considered the likes of a tastemaker would have been [that] of Catherine Cleary in the *Irish Times* and maybe Marie-Claire Digby...the likes of Lucinda O’Sullivan or Kathy McGuinness...might be more everyday as such and not [tastemakers], [they] are considered slightly differently in their approach” (line 453-457).

Furthermore, MMC2 points out how: “There were two schools of thought in France amongst the critics and the guides. You had the *Michelin Guides* on one level and then on the other you had the *Gault and Millau Guide*” (MMC2, line 462-464). These two schools of thought are represented and can be applied to Ireland; designating the two separate levels into, the *Guide Michelin* (as serving an esoteric audience) and the *McKenna’s Guide* (as serving a mainstream audience) respectively. This concept is backed up by MMC2 and JMK4 in the research as follows; Interviewee MMC2 contends:

*Gault and Millau* were always seen to be championing new ideas and innovation. Whereas I always felt that, the McKenna’s were the *Gault and Millau* of Ireland, as opposed to Michelin. They were nearly anti-Michelin in a way” (MMC, line 464-467).

Interviewee JMK4 maintains:

“*Michelin* for example, and some of the other guys *Gault Millau* is another one that are really just writing about a restaurant culture and we try to write about a food culture” (JMK4, line 55-57). He relates that, “I’m an old school socialist- I believe everybody should eat well. So, there is no elitism involved in it anymore” (JMK4, line, 371-372). And he states: “*Michelin* has always had a big hierarchal system, we don’t rate our restaurants in hierarchy, there might be some of them that we stress are particularly dynamic and creative” (JMK4, line, 68-70).

Furthermore, JMK4 defends:

We’ve an ongoing thing for years that we don’t include [the Michelin two-starred] *Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud*, in Dublin...people say...how could you leave it out? I’ll tell you why because I think it’s a place where rich people go to be with other rich people. And the snob element to it, I find frankly, distasteful. It’s got nothing to do with being in Ireland or being in Dublin. (line 421-426).

Irish society shifted from one of luxury during the *Celtic Tiger Years* to one of recession after the county’s economic bubble burst. However, the downturn did not affect all of its citizens, as an article in the *Sunday Business Post* newspaper from 2009 relates:

In the most expensive restaurant in Dublin, Patrick Guilbaud, on Merrion Street just opposite Government Buildings, is flying. Its website advertises a ‘tasting menu’ for dinner, at a cost of €180 a head. I assume drinks are on top of that, so we are talking about €250 per person (Browne, 2009).

Hence, it is at this point, the researcher discovers a shift occurs within Ireland’s food culture resulting in a fracturing away from an elite restaurant culture within the last thirty years. The researcher believes the formation of the *McKenna’s Guide* as an alternative media source, was a key factor and may have even been a fundamental cause for the occurrence.

Going back to the literature again:

The McKenna’s stated remit [in 1995] was to expose and celebrate not just the wonderful organically produced foods which they discovered throughout the country but also the men and women behind the previously unchartered gastronomic subculture” (McKenna, 1995, p.41).

It is during this time that the focus is shifted from a conventional and somewhat exclusive ‘dining’ experience and instead refocuses on the ‘eating’ experience, which relates to the ‘provenance of the food’ or the ‘food produce and producer’ that restaurant chooses or selects, and which the diner eats. Just to note, a restaurant that may have introduced this and was already offering this, ‘farm to table’ style of dining or what is now known as ‘farm to fork’ was *Ballymaloe House* (a concept also practised in the U.S. by Alice Waters). The Cork based restaurant was established during the mid-60s, by Myrtle Allen who subsequently received her first Michelin star in 1975. Myrtle Allen is viewed as a prominent figure in Irish gastronomy and a revolutionary figure of Irish food culture. It is possible that she may have had an influence on JMK4’s outlook.

In the primary research, JMK4 reveals:

Myrtle Allen so unique in Ballymaloe; she connected directly to the artisan. But a lot of people in Dublin, they were completely indifferent to that. When I think back to ’89 when we first started, you know there was a subterranean subculture but there was very little quality in the restaurant culture because restaurateurs hadn’t connected to the artisan” (JMK4, line 283-284).

During the nineties, the Irish food media offering changes as an alternative appears in the guise of *McKenna Guides* and another independent Irish food guide which followed later such as the *Georgina Campbell Guides*. This in turn loosened the reliance Irish food lovers had on French food guides as taste setters or what MMC2 calls, “tastemakers” in society, but not entirely. In the primary research, JMK4 notes in relation to present day Irish food media that, “we really need more good food writers, really. People who can establish their independent voices” (line 472-473). This is

echoed to an extent by KQ1 in relation to online food bloggers and social media restaurant reviewers, who believes there should be alternative voices too but not just in a deprecating way (line 397-403).

The fact that the John and Sally McKenna's voice may have been further proliferated into Irish society is down to the huge success of their guide at the time. Because of this they were offered a television slot by the national broadcaster RTE and a show called, *McKenna's Ireland* broadcast into the homes of the Irish public. The programme remit at the time was that, "each episode will focus on a particular location, with features on food producers, restaurants, and hotels or guesthouses in the area...the hospitality of the people involved in the business is another important focal point" (McKenna, 1995, p.41).

From the 2000s in Ireland, this democratic food writing model was further boosted by online food blogs and reviewers which were a vital addition to spreading the word of Irish food but is shown to have its drawbacks too (the topic is discussed in detail in the interview with food blogger KQ1, line 364-403). Upon reflection the researcher notes, from the mid-nineties and the 2000s in Dublin city, an unconventional type of restaurant offering was evident when a more 'communal' style dining experience was introduced, one that was influenced by Japanese eateries such as, the *Yamamori* and *Wagamama* restaurants. Both presented dining rooms where restaurant goers were expected to sit together at large communal bench tables; in close proximity; while menus were designed to act as diner's placemats. Previously, in the nineties, the younger generation were exposed to and influenced by an American café culture lifestyle of coffee chain monoliths such as *Starbucks*. This café-focused lifestyle was further dramatised on television, in the popular American sitcom, *Friends* and broadcast worldwide.

It is apparent from the literature review chapter, that the *Michelin Guide* recognised the development of the societal shift or trend in countries' 'casual restaurant' scenes, as it cast a wider and more democratic awarding system net with the inclusion of the Bib Gourmand rating, which they introduced in 1995. As (Dixon, 2008) notes, "this is a separate category for restaurants that serve great food at reasonable prices". In 2020, Ireland was awarded 21 Bib Gourmands by the French restaurant guide.

## **5.7 Theme 4: Influencing Factors (that impel change)**

Theme 4 links back to the **sub research objective five**: *Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture.* In relation to this- **Interview question 11 (PD Code 8)** queried: *Who do you consider the main food actors to be?*

This theme explains the influencing factors which have impelled change in Irish food culture or could impel change in the future, such as the separate food actors and also other country's culinary cultures such as, Nordic food culture (in present times) and French food culture (in the past); both outlined earlier.

### **5.7.1 Prominent Irish Food Actors**

When questioned: *Who do you consider the main food actors to be?* The most prominent Irish 'food actors' to surface from the primary research are, JP McMahon (chef & FOTE), Darina Allen (Ballymaloe House), Irish Food Producers (in general), and *Bord Bia* (Irish food board).

- **Six** interviewees mention JP McMahon as a food actor, since GB6 suggests all Irish chefs act as food actors, hence this would include JP McMahon. Which brings the total from 5 to 6 interviewees who mention him. MMC2 suggests that, "He's reaching an international awareness, amongst other chefs and also amongst other thought leaders, within the industry, internationally" (line 176-177).
- **Five** interviewees mentioned Darina Allen- "Darina is a major player" (JMK, line 436).
- **Three** interviewees suggested Irish Producers- "Like-minded enthusiasts, I call them, which are people really interested in food" (AOT3, line 224-225).
- **Two** interviewees mentioned *Bord Bia* as food actors- "In terms of *Bord Bia*, it's doing a great job...obviously it is their job to promote Irish food overseas, but I think they are doing a fantastic job. That's definitely one thing" (KQ1, line 296-298).
- **One** referred to the McKenna's and their collaborative work with Music Festivals: "John and Sally McKenna were instrumental; they did a lot for this country. They would have brought a big food element (and Supervalu), a big food element of *Electric Picnic*. So much so that it's kind of become expected" (PF, line 59-61).

Other members from Ballymaloe that were specifically mentioned in the interviews were; Myrtle Allen, Rachel Allen, Rory Allen and Clodagh McKenna (a Ballymaloe past pupil). One standout quote from, JMK4 states: "For me the most important and

significant person in the history of the Irish state is, Myrtle Allen; [not] deValera, not Seán Lemass, not T.K Whittaker, not any of those guys, they're just here and they're gone" (JMK, line 534-537).

And an overall quote relating to active chefs and cooks was: "It's what I love about Ballymaloe, JP Mahon, Clodagh McKenna. They're going to showcase modern stuff but they're going to also talk about the Irish stew, soda bread and all the things that make Irish food unique in a way" (KQ1, line 307-310).

Prominent organisations that were also referred to by the interviewees are; Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Teagasc, Slow Food Ireland, Euro-toques Ireland and Grow It Yourself (GIY). – "Teagasc are another body that really support people, in terms of research the potential to make particular foods... whether it be an ice-cream or type of cheese product" (GB6, line 265-266).

It was also noted by MMC2, that chefs who wrote weekly columns for the *Irish Times*, filled the role of "cultural figures" particularly JP Mc Mahon: "He gives a visibility about a chef writing in what would be considered 'the paper of record' in Ireland" (line, 179-183). Similar to how Paul Flynn does, and Domini Kemp did too.

### **5.7.2 A Prominent 'Voice' for Irish Food**

Renowned Chef and *Food on the Edge* organiser, JP McMahon's activist ventures were previously outlined in the literature review chapter. In 2019 the topic for his FOTE event was, *the Future of Food*; one theme was 'democracy' and past themes covered 'action' and 'collaboration'. The subtopics alone give a taste of the hunger for change that emulates from JP and other Irish food enthusiasts. In relation to the organisation of the FOTE event, JP stresses the importance of his Michelin star acquirement (which he received for his restaurant *Aniar*): "Having a star has made it easier for me to be able to meet chefs also at that level. Food on the Edge was informed really by having the star, with the quality of speakers who attended. It was a crucial turning point for us in so many ways" (Good Food Ireland, 2016). Also, he relates local produce is a prevalent



factor in his three restaurant offerings, “local ingredients influence all our menus. They are the key to it all” (Good Food Ireland, 2016). As a chef, his confidence is evident upon the release of his cookery book in 2020, which he appropriately named, *The Irish Cookbook*; this showcases a depth of culinary knowledge in an expansive five hundred recipe volume.

In the primary research PF5 concurs with what MMC2 says earlier in relation to JP McMahon’s prowess as an active food ‘voice’: “JP and the work he would have done in Galway at Food on the Edge, he brought serious people over. And when they come over, they see that we have amazing food, and they go back, and people listen to them. That’s a really important part” (PF2, line, 92-94). He adds, “that’s why I admire the man for putting himself out there because we’re [chefs] all busy and he’s got how-ever many restaurants and he’s got a small family and yet he puts himself out there” (94-97).

Also, in the literature chapter the Irish food actors were detailed in *figure.2*. the Irish foodscape. This outlines the two sets of ‘active’ individuals involved in Ireland’s foodscape; food enthusiasts (non-professional) and food campaigners (professional). Food producers feature as part of the food campaigners sphere. Please see p.21 to review.

### **5.8 Irish Food Producers- ‘pride’ a significant word**

Finally, from the primary research another ‘food actor’ that surfaced are; ‘Irish food producers’. Words that arose around these actors are; ‘active’, ‘enthusiastic’ and ‘pride’. This would suggest, the notion that Irish food producers can now be considered to have some if not all of these traits. “The major change now is the locals actually believe in it more than they did in the past” (KQ1, line 103-104). And again, from KQ1 in relation to producers and other food enthusiasts: “You have these food communities and people shouting more and connecting and more events” (line 328-329). MMC2 supposes that a ‘pride’ built up in Irish society [and infiltrated the Irish psyche] in the late 80s and on into the 90s, which materialised from a number of successes earned by the Irish internationally, in the realms of Sport, Music, and Literature; surrounding poignant events like; the World Cup in soccer, success on the world stage for bands like

U2, Sinéad O'Connor and the Cranberries etc., and also including poet Seamus Heaney's successful win of the Nobel Prize in Literature, to name only a few: "All these things suddenly helped to lift our confidence, as a nation and part of that then...came through in the food as well" (line 283-284). However, PF5 maintains:

It's lower key. If we had a [food] Olympics, something like that, maybe, but I think it's much more low key than that...it's something that's stealthily growing rather than something that's coming roaring out of the traps...it's a gradual chipping away at whatever previously people thought of us foodwise (line 139-143).

In relation to marketing, interviewee PF5 states that producers in the past might not have had professionally packaged goods but he believes now they have: "You know we'll say *St. Tola* cheese and *Ardsallagh*, they've been putting their name out there for years" (line 187-190). Interviewee AOT3 reports, that the owners of *Sheridan Cheese* travel to Italy to promote their cheeses at *Slow Food* conferences and others: "The Sheridan brothers...have a huge part to play in this particularly from the cheese culture and bringing other produce along with [them] to represent 'what is Irish food' now" (line 259-261). And JMK4 describes a number of very active food groups representing regions around the country such as; the *Boyne Valley Food Group*, the *Slane Valley Circle* and the newly formed, *Sea Louth* group: "You know people are doing it for themselves. But they need a bit of help, they need a bit of support, they need a bit of publicity, but if they can get that from their local authority it's really good news" (JMK4, line 516-518). He also points out: "Dingle are incredible at marketing themselves" (line 512) and that; "in Donegal...there is a kind of dynamic food culture there at the moment...some really talented people and you have people working with local authorities...trying to promote the food experience on the coastline" (JMK4, line 508-511). "Within the last ten years, producers have received support from supermarkets such as Supervalu, who run a Food Academy programme that supports and promotes small food businesses; Aldi and Dunnes Stores have followed suit and they now collaborate more and stock more Irish food brands. AOT3 maintains, "sometimes the supermarkets are doing some wonderful things, but they could be doing a lot more" (line, 301-302). GB6 proposes how:

All food producers...from the small, smaller farmer's markets, cottage industry style right through to the big producers, big manufacturers...to the large, large multinational scale of Kerry, The Glanbia's how they support Irish produce and employment on a huge, huge scale. Everybody has a role to play...come together to make the food culture of today (GB6, line 278-284).

Chef PF5 thinks that, “producers are...highly important...I always try to base my food around the producers that are around me” (line 178-181). And AOT3 stresses that,

“Irish food is our produce. It’s not like France, it’s their cookery, their technique, it’s how they cook with their produce. But in Ireland, it’s all about produce, it’s what we get from the ground and the sea, we don’t need to do very [much] cooking with it, in Ireland” (line 93-96).

GB6 agrees: “Irish food is fantastic really, we’re very lucky...that we can produce a lot of our own food, we know it’s grown locally therefore lots of food that we produce...have the sustainability message” (line, 121-123).

### **5.8.1 Food ‘Knowledge’ & more significant words**

In addition, theme four encompasses a sub-topic: ‘education’, as laid out in *Thematic Map 2 (figure.20)*, this is discussed in this chapter, under the heading ‘French culinary teaching’. Regarding culinary education and Irish chefs, particularly young Irish chefs- five significant words emerged out of the primary research; ‘confidence’, ‘knowledge’, ‘pride’, ‘creativity’ and ‘spontaneity’. KQ1 points out “there are lots of chefs now that are prouder, they are shouting about it”. And in reference to their newly gained culinary ‘confidence’, Interviewee JMK4 says that, “I think the new wave of Irish chefs say no, ‘I’m doing it my way’. There may be a textbook but once I have mastered the textbook, I can do whatever I like” (JMK4, line 156-158). He believes: “That sense of being both creative and spontaneous is really what is now the signature of the best modern Irish restaurant”. (JMK4, line 158-159).

As noted in the literature review, a greater awareness with the Irish public of ‘up and coming’ chefs like, Mark Moriarty is eminent, since RTE television ran a series which he hosted, in 2019. In the show Moriarty profiles young Irish chef’s work, awards and businesses and also covers their work/life balance and career ambitions. In the primary research, MMC2 consequently noted that: “they’re coming from a cohort, they are the result of that initial new paradigm of liberal/vocational education that started in Cathal Brugha Street, twenty years ago, with the BA in Culinary Arts” (MMC2, line 208-210). Furthermore, established Irish chef, PF5 observes: “I think smart young chefs, they tend to think of their careers ‘out-of-the-box’ which is a brilliant. It’s not about slaving away in kitchens (and I look at them enviously on social media), they can travel, they seem

to look at ‘the bigger picture...Mark Moriarty being one of them, and I really admire that’” (PF5, line 31-34).

KQ1 speaks about her own cookery education and again the word ‘confidence’ arises within the exchange: “I trained in Ballymaloe Cookery School, five years ago...I had more confidence after Ballymaloe...before that...I was kind of, I’m French telling people about Irish food...but I didn’t feel confident enough to actually have tourists, to say...Eat Irish food” (line 67-71). Interestingly also, KQ1 declares how food activist and Ballymaloe proprietor, “Darina [Allen] literally can do anything” (line 68).

### **5.9 Theme 5: Government Agencies’ Remits**

Theme 5 also has links to **sub research question five:** Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture? So, it factors too under **Interview question 11 (PD Code 8):** *Who do you consider the main food actors to be?* (but somewhat indirectly). AOT3 JMK4, GB6, KQ1 were the interviewees that proved most vocal on this theme.

Regarding governmental support for food, JMK4 remarks that, “The one area where foodism, food appreciation hasn’t hit home is in the government which is kind of disappointing” (line 357-358). In addition, he comments that, “our major political parties are still slow. They are focused on the agricultural element whereas I would love to see them focused on the artisanal element and they still haven’t quite got there yet” (JMK\$, line 375-377).

In the literature also, Boucher-Hayes and Campbell observed that during the Celtic Tiger Years in Ireland:

Food and eating were one of the ways in which we were desperate to redefine ourselves, the spud went out the window. In came prosciutto and sushi...our connection to growing food and our knowledge of food had completely broken down (Boucher-Hays and Campbell, 2009, p. x).

This quote also refers to the ingrained agricultural way-of-life in Irish society pre the boom years, but traditionally agriculture in Ireland became fragmented much earlier this, post the Industrial age. Nowadays, the agricultural sector in Ireland has developed through a business lens, so much so that it is referred to as ‘agribusiness’ in the newspapers; the lines between farming, technology and business have become merged for many farmers and producers alike.

### **5.9.1 State Food and Tourism Agencies**

In the primary research, JMK proposes that, “in a sense the agencies are a little high bound (line 488) ...but the agencies can’t really differentiate too much, you know, they can’t, I can come out and say, ‘Galway is the best city to eat in Ireland!! They can’t do that. I can because I don’t work for them” (JMK4, line 491-494). As mentioned in the literature chapter, *Bord Bia* is Ireland’s official food board formed in 1994. In the interview GB6 states that,

“*Bord Bia*’s remit is to market Ireland’s food and drink abroad...we spend a lot of time looking at markets where there are opportunities with Brexit and the UK in the last couple of years, a lot of work was put into diversification in finding new markets. Then if we find those new markets we have to go into those new markets and understand those markets and understand the consumers within and what motivates those consumers, Food Brand Ireland has... come out of that” (GB6, line 101-107).

A number of *Bord Bia* reports relating to 2019 were discussed in the literature chapter. Their Industry and Performance Prospectus Report 2019-2020 noted, “2019 was a record-breaking year for Ireland’s food, drink and horticulture industry as exports reached €13billion, capping a decade of consistent growth of 67% since 2010” (Bord Bia, 2020b, p.8). This is a monumental food business and industry achievement for a small country and a big bonus to Ireland’s international trade relations. However, in the primary research, food consultant AOT3 shares another lens through which this can be viewed. He contends that, “it’s down to our exports and how our economy runs. *Bord Bia* it’s all about export, 90% of our food in Ireland is exported and the import; we need to split that” (AOT, line 302-304). Furthermore, he believes that, “we need to reduce our imports and our exports and keep more produce here”. (line, 304-305). His underlying reasoning for this is expressed in the fact that, he says, there are numerous countries around the world with access to quality Irish food:

Like seafood you can get great Irish seafood in China or Japan and they do very little with it. Compared to Ireland, we don’t get access to it at all...it’s the same with the beef, our beef is amazing but we’re getting the second-grade beef in Ireland. The best gets exported all the time (AOT3, line 103-106).

*Bord Bia* would contend that by bringing, “Ireland’s outstanding food, drink and horticulture to the world, [they are] thus enabling growth and sustainability of

producers” (Bord Bia, 2020a). In the primary research, GB6 explains that, “there are two pillars within the organisation that we developed: *Origin Green* and *Food Brand Ireland* more recently” (line 44-46). The *Origin Green* initiative has been welcomed and signed-up for, by many small producers and much larger food manufacturers as well. GB6 states how, “you’ve got farmers...producers, manufacturers, who’ve embraced *Origin Green*. We can use that message to promote Ireland then on the basis that we are more sustainable in terms of how we farm, how we practice and that makes us distinctly different from other markets” (line 49-51). Hence, sustainability acts as a Unique Selling Point (USP) for the Irish producer or manufacturer and this in turn helps *Bord Bia*, in terms of marketing the goods.

This and many other marketing strategies and initiatives provided by *Bord Bia* are resourceful and have proved beneficial when the world markets are running smoothly and trading profitably. But unfortunately for 2020, post a COVID19 epidemic world, the tables may now have turned on Ireland’s glowing export market. As a result of this, we may need to start looking inwards, towards the country’s diverse and abundant produce and the eclectic selection of Irish producers. AOT3 recommends that our present food industry economic model can be turned around. In the interview, AOT3 gives the Danish model as an example of this concept:

The Danish export all their cheap products and unfortunately Ireland buys a lot of this product...for example pork and chicken. They keep the best and they import organic only produce to their country because they are on a conversion; to convert over to just producing organic and good quality food. And it’s available in all public [institutions] in schools, healthcare system and prisons so everyone is getting access to good local food (AOT3, line 305-311).

In addition, AOT3 maintains: “how the whole Nordic movement started and that’s why Copenhagen and NOMA [are] becoming a phenomenon around the world. Because they have a thing called, one third/one third/ one third; one third public buying; one third private buying, and one third consumer buying” (line 323-326). AOT3 suggests how, “we can do the exact same thing in Ireland which will in turn will [promote] Ireland around the world as a food culture. But we have the buying from the private, we have very little buying from public” (327-329). Furthermore, JMK4 supports this viewpoint somewhat, as in the primary research he points out how, chef and Danish food champion René Redzepi [*NOMA*], “had the support of the Danish government and the Danish food industry. If you look further back from Redzepi, you see that here was

a Danish food manifesto before him” (JMK4, line 36-40). While Interviewee AOT3 holds: “It’s activism on the ground first before we can consider going global. And that’s down to every kitchen down to culinary schools supporting local producers” (line 55-57).

For the domestic Irish food sector, *Bord Bia*’s yearly reports, multiple market research studies and survey statistics prove extremely beneficial for all food industry and institutions. In the interview, GB6 states that, “we’re all about developing insights that industry can use and whether that’s for new product development right through to communications, messaging or understanding their consumer a bit better” (line 318-320). In the literature (p.32), *Bord Bia’s What Ireland Ate Last Night 2020* reports 6 percent more consumers choose Irish produce when available and there was a 10 percent rise in those that believe it is better to pay more for Irish products (Bord Bia, 2020c, p.14). They also found that compared to 2011 figures, that the average Irish person considered food provenance an important aspect when choosing what to eat for their evening meal. This is all good news for Irish producers and something *Bord Bia* will consider for their 2020 campaigns. The organisation is already utilising the skills of chef JP McMahon as he features ‘Bord Bia approved’ products in some of his online Instagram video posts.

Also, from the same *Bord Bia* report, a decrease was noted of Irish people’s willingness to cook evening meals from scratch. This decreased from 42 percent in 2011, to 30 percent in 2019. *Bord Bia* explains this stemmed from people generally experiencing more “time pressured lifestyles” (Ibid). For 2020, a complete turnaround of these statistics may occur as GB6 notes, “The next couple of years when the virus is finally put to bed, will...there be people working a couple of days a week at home? Will that mean they’ll have more time to cook from scratch, will people want to do more home cooking now that they have learnt a few more recipes when they can?” (GB6, line 76-79).

### **5.9.2 Where is the Food ‘Gap’?**

From the literature and within the interviews it became apparent, as pointed out by KQ1 and AOT3 (paragraph 5.5) that a gap lies in the dissemination of the food message to

international tourists. In addition, with interviewee AOT3 pointing out that an ambiguity lies in the observation that there are two perceptions of Irish food and the two state tourist agencies cross over or double up somewhat on their remits. The two state tourist agencies which promote the Republic of Ireland as a tourist destination are: *Tourism Ireland* (who took over from *Bord Fáilte*) and *Fáilte Ireland*. *Tourism Ireland* deals with marketing Ireland internationally to foreign markets and *Fáilte Ireland's* remit originally was to predominately promote tourism on a national level on the island of Ireland and serve mainly a domestic market. However, there is occasionally a crossover with both sets of duties for the organisations. This is where a vagueness lies which could be what is confusing for tourists. Particularly, when as pointed out in the literature (p.21), *Fáilte Ireland* adopted a global perspective upon the development of their *Food and Drink Strategy 2018-2020* of which a desired outcome of one of their objectives is to “increase awareness around Irish food and drink experiences overseas” (Fáilte Ireland, 2018, p.41). Here, the researcher questions: is this not the remit of *Tourism Ireland* already? So, it seems that this may be one of the occasions that the organisations’ remits double up.

Also, in *Fáilte Ireland's* Strategy 2018-2020 an ongoing ‘key activity’ is mentioned: “to explore *Brand Ireland* promotional opportunities in conjunction with *Tourism Ireland*, *Tourism Northern Ireland* and Industry partners” (Ibid). As mentioned in the literature, a successful venture between this tourism agency triad was the ‘Taste the Island’ initiative. One that AOT3 mentions in the interview also involved input from the *Fáilte Ireland* ‘food champions’. “[Taste the Island] was developed with the food champions on the ground. It’s not about bacon and cabbage and Irish stew or Guinness” (AOT3, line 79-82). AOT3 maintains that, [food] is always lost in translation and this is what the food champion network is about essentially. It’s all linked. I believe that is how they got the message out there better” (line, 77-79). As mentioned in the literature (p.38), the ‘story telling’ marketing aspect to the *Taste the Island* initiative seems to have proven to be a success with Irish food producers and small tourism operators but time will tell of its overall reach and success in promoting the message of Irish food.

In the primary research, JMK4 praises *Fáilte Ireland's* success with their *Wild Atlantic Way* tourism and food initiative:

The success of the *Wild Atlantic Way* [initiative] really shows that, people [producers and places] ...have had an enormous boost from just very clever,



simple marketing. So, I think they do a great job within the limits of the office because they can't make the distinctions I do" (JMK, line 500-504).

However, in the primary research also, KQ1 points out, there is a clear lack of offerings depicting food on the *Tourism Ireland* website. The organisation seems to be pushing more a message of diversity of scenery, adventure and fun to the international tourist instead. Hence, it is a possibility that the gap may lie between the two main Irish tourism agencies *Tourism Ireland* and *Fáilte Ireland*. A likely collaboration with another state agency such as *Bord Bia* could remedy this. In the primary research, GB6 comments on a state agency collaboration regarding gastro tourism in the future:

[Bord Bia] do a really good job of understanding [how] we should market Ireland abroad and that might reflect in the export numbers you were talking about earlier. Whether there's an opportunity for *Tourism Ireland* and *Bord Bia* to develop a campaign that could make sense, but they have their remit as to whether if there was to be a collaborative...I don't know whether it's ever been discussed or whether there is a specific tactical thing that could be looked at...that could make sense" (GBS, line 111-118).

## 5.10 Foodism in Ireland 2019

**Sub-research objective three** ventured: *To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen?*

**Interview question 7** - *Can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?* (PD Code 2), is discussed in paragraph 5.10.1, below.

**Interview question 8** addresses this objective too by asking- *Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food?* (PD Code 4)

### 5.10.1 Foodism/ Foodie-ism

By examining the replies of the interviewees from the primary research, it can be established that:

- “**Foodism is**...people with a ‘high interest in food...or people who are looking for good food...you can call it gastronomic and bon vivant...you can call it foodie-ism it's all the same” (KQ1, line 147-151).
- “It is a sort of word or a movement that has appeared really in the last twenty years...and part of it is linked with the idea of the Celtic Tiger in Ireland” (MMC2, line 263-265).

- “It’s a trend...it’s ‘foodie’, it’s something that’s current, it’s trendy, it’s popular to say that you’re a foodie- to go out and eat and to socialise” (AOT3, line 134-136).
- “it’s not a snob thing in Ireland, it just shows that you’ve got a bit of savvy really” (JMK4, line 373-374).
- “What it means is that I have an interest in food which is a really good thing” (PF5, line 107-108).
- “I think the way you describe it is good [an exuberance for food] but ways of eating... [might be one way to describe it] ...ways of eating today”. (GB, line 153-154).

On further analysis of the interviews, the researcher concludes that the majority of the interviewees seemed initially puzzled by the term ‘foodism’ this may be down to the prevalent use of the term ‘foodie-ism’ within popular culture and in modern societies. JMK4 even commented that he was “intrigued” by the use of the term but during the interview it was apparent that he had contemplated its meaning. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, prior to the interview process, the researcher noted:

These days the word foodism barely features in many people’s vocabulary nor is it a concept that many ponder or contemplate its origins. Even those who label themselves as foodies draw a blank stare at the mention of this ‘ism’ and instead offer to correct that the proper term to use is ‘foodie-ism.

However, all the interviewees were open to answering the question and giving their own interpretation of the term. KQ1 and MMC2 and AOT3 offered confident and good explanations for the term. PF5 applied the term to himself, “it means that I have an interest in food”. As mentioned, JMK4 gave the term careful consideration and applied the concept in relation to Ireland also. And GB6 at first relied on the interviewer’s definition of the word but then suggested it could refer to, “ways of eating today”.

The dictionary definition of the term is: “A keen or exaggerated interest in food, especially in the minute details of the preparation, presentation and consumption of food” (‘Foodism’, 2018a). “From the literature, Barr and Levy (1994) proposed, “foodism crosses all boundaries and is understood in all languages (1984, p.6). This ties in with a comment made by MMC2 in the primary research; when asked about Irish people’s exuberance for food, he observed: [In Ireland] “For the last fifteen years or so if you get into a conversation with people, quite often the conversation will turn to food quite quickly” (MMC2 line, 293-294).

**Interview question 8** addresses objective 2 also and asks- Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? (PD Code 4). Interviewees answers have been condensed further from that of *Table.12* in the findings chapter.

*Data Excerpts from Table.12 - Interviewee Answers to Question 8 (PD Code 4)*

<b>KQ1</b>	“It’s a small percentage of the population” (line 169) “Obviously, the interest in food has grown...you have restaurants everywhere. You have, so many food festivals so many food events. Obviously, people are interested in food that’s for sure, but then it’s not everyone” (174-175).
<b>MMC2</b>	“I’ve had some idea about what’s going on and people’s interest in food. And definitely I’ve seen a dramatic change” (line 9-11).  “Definitely, I would suggest that the average person knows as much if not more about food than a chef in Ireland may have known twenty-five years ago” (line, 311-312).
<b>AOT3</b>	“In general? I don’t think so, no. I think it’s changing but currently I think it’s not an important aspect for Irish people. It’s part of a necessity. We don’t value it” (AOT3, line 141-142).
<b>JMK5</b>	“Yes, I think they do- for enjoying it, I mean there are people in every society for whom food is fuel... (line 263-264) but the Irish enjoy food”. (JMK4, line 266).
<b>PF5</b>	“Some people do, a lot of people don’t. And I think what it is, we always viewed food as function. You know there was the appreciation of simple food done well, definitely” (PF5, line 115-116).
<b>GB6</b>	“Yes, I absolutely think we have and that’s probably fair to say of every generation. I think the current, the younger generation coming through now express themselves through food. The fact that people are actively following specific diets” (GB6, line 159-161).

Three of the interviewees answered, Yes, to this question- two of them followed their remarks by a definitely or an absolutely. MMC2 even goes as far to say: “I would suggest that the average person knows as much if not more about food than a chef in Ireland may have known twenty-five years ago” (line, 311-312).

In addition, JMK4 answered with a definitive, “the Irish enjoy food”. AOT3 answered no, but he thinks it is changing. He believes food is part of a necessity and Irish people don’t value it. PF5 mentioned that the population could be split, [maybe 60/40], because

he states that, “some [people] do and a lot of people don’t” have an exuberance for food (line115). However, he adds, that the “appreciation of simple food done well, definitely” [always existed in Ireland] (line, 116). And finally, GB6 (from *Bord Bia*) goes as far to say, that the exuberance for food filters through the generations but it is particularly noticeable in the younger generation who “express themselves through food”, this is evident she notes by how, “people are actively following specific diets” (line 160-161) and she gives the example of veganism and its popularity with the younger demographic.

### **5.11 The Modern Irish Foodie**

**Sub-research objective four:** *To establish if foodies are a subculture of mainstream?*

**Interview questions 9, 9.1 and 10 (PD Codes 5, 6 & 7):**

- What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits?
- Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
- Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use?

The interview questions listed above examined this objective and the primary research reveals the following perceptions about the modern Irish foodie and if they may be considered to be part of a subculture or part of the mainstream culture in Ireland.

#### **5.11.1 The term -Foodie**

In the literature, Poole (2012, p.3) points out that the “Foodie has now pretty much everywhere replaced ‘gourmet’. Interviewee MMC2 mentions how, ‘foodie’ is a pejorative term, one which he describes can be compared to ‘gaeilgeóir’, another derogatory term which is often used to define an Irish speaker. “That is sometimes used by other people to label me. I wouldn’t consider me, a foodie, but some people would consider me one, but I suppose I am both a foodie and a gaeilgeóir”; but I just consider myself, me!” (MMC2, line, 352-354). Furthermore, he maintains that ‘foodie’; “It’s a difficult term maybe it’s a term someone should use to describe someone else as opposed to what someone should self-describe themselves” (MMC2, line 368-370).

In the primary research, KQ1 concurs: “Foodie is a word that everyone hates!” (147) “I don’t know it has a bad connotation. I think especially with professionals from the food industry. They don’t really like people who call themselves foodies. At the same time,

I think it's people how are interested in food, basically" (KQ1, line 151-154). KQ1 insists, "If you're a foodie, you wouldn't call yourself a foodie!" (KQ1, line 159-160). This quote draws parallels with Ferdman from the literature, who talked about people who refer to themselves as foodies- he suggests the term foodie is, "no longer in style" but not so unfashionable for "some to mistake it as being cool" (Ferdman, 2016). However, Deleuze (2012, p.1) contends, "nowadays the term has progressively lost its negative meaning".

### **5.11.2 Irish Foodie traits**

Interviewee **KQ1** (Author of the 'French Foodie in Dublin' Blog) was the most prolific when it came to describing the traits and habits of foodies and the Irish foodie. The following quotes from the primary research captured her perceptions:

- "Well to be honest, your average, your foodie in Ireland would be more social economic traits. It would be more middle class, a white person, someone with a high income". You know it's not going to be people living on the minimum wage". (KQ1, line 190-192)
- "So, it is people usually female...I can tell from by [my blog] readership...female, living in the city, lots of them". (KQ1, line 193-195).

That fact that KQ1 mentions, foodies are usually female links back to the literature where (Livingstone, 2019) who also perceived the foodie to be female, claims that, "the foodie is ubiquitous, she has never been harder to define". This is disputed by (Barr and Levy, 1984) and (de Solier, 2013) who believe the contemporary foodie is represented by both the male and female gender.

- "The foodie in Ireland, you know. It's kind of a privileged thing being a foodie. It's not like food is cheap". (KQ1, line 191-193).
- "And then the traits, I don't know! - they like eating out, cooking, you know. It depends there are foodies, who say – "Oh, like I'm a foodie"" They will never cook anything, you know!" (KQ1, line 196-199).

**The other interviewees' perceptions of the traits a foodie possesses are as follows:**

- "They're fussy; they don't want a bad experience" (JMK4, line 302).
- "The person who is...not food obsessed by any means, but lets' say or describe it as 'food particular'" (JMK4, line 236-238). Here JMK contradicts KQ1's exclamation of being an "obsessed" about food', foodie.

- “Interested and passionate about food who like talking about food. Interested in going to restaurants, trying new dishes and quite adventurous” (MMC2, line 378-380).
- “Interested in authenticity, storytelling, terroir, and backstory as opposed to just eat food for fuel” (MMC2, line 379-380).
- “It’s part of your image. Your lifestyle. It’s not something like when I say foodism or I think that it’s not someone that’s really passionate about authentic or real, it’s more something that’s popular” (AOT3, line 136-138). -This is in a similar vein to the comment by PF5 below.
- “Like a foodie is more something like a hobby and it’s something they have an interest in and I think maybe it’s not their career. You’d never describe a chef as a foodie because a chef should be a foodie” (PF5, line 154-156).
- “There are many different types of foodie. So, I think the Foodie you’re probably talking about is the kind of gourmet foodie, but you could have the foodie who’s the exerciser foodie who cooks their clean food in batches for the week. The gourmet foodie is somebody who probably is very interested in local food and avoids processed foods” (GB6, line 203-207).

### **5.11.3 Foodie Philosophies**

From the literature, Livingstone (2019) suggests that, “the foodie eats to meet the demands of her body from the neck up, not the neck down, Mind, mouth, soul: This is where the foodie lives”. Zuton maintains, “foodies are in short, omnivorous consumers in pursuit of perfection wherever they can find it” (Zuton in Johnston and Baumann, 2010, p. xiv). However, de Solier contradicts this somewhat, she holds that, “while they consume highbrow haute cuisine and middlebrow authentic ethnic cuisine, they repudiate lowbrow industrial foods, such as fast food and processed supermarket food” (2013, p.171). Furthermore, Johnston and Baumann (2010, p.204) describe another dilemma that rages within the psyche of a foodie. One that forces them to choose between the opposing grounds of- democracy and distinction. They note that the cohort’s, “gourmet foodscape”, “embodies a tension between embracing ideals of meritocracy, equality, and inclusiveness on the one hand, and offering avenue for marking status and for divisive class and identity politics on the other”.

In the primary research, GB6 establishes that in Ireland there are lots of ‘types of foodies’, they exist in lots of different niches: “All these people, there’s so many

motivators and so many different demographics you can approach it through. They all go together to make a piece of the pie. So, a sport foodie might be a niche foodie, but a gourmet foodie is also a niche foodie...in a nationally representative way, those kinds of audience are not your absolute everyday person by any stretch” (GB6, line 222-227). She explains that the Irish: “As a nation then, throughout various demographics we have embraced food in terms of our understanding of organic, shopping local, supporting local, those kinds of things” (GB6, line 166-168). In the literature, Deleuze (2012, p.9) concurs and at the same time distances herself from the neologism of foodie-ism, when she states, in 2012: “foodism in Ireland takes many other forms”.

#### **5.11.4 Mainstream or Subculture?**

The findings from *table.15* displayed in chapter 4 are analysed as follows:

In relation to whether the foodie cohort should be considered a sub-culture or a mainstream culture, findings of the interviewees’ viewpoints showed: Three out of six of them (KQ, AOT3, JMK4) stated they thought foodies were a mainstream culture now. This may be down to a wider proliferation of ‘gourmet’ foodstuffs and the notion that it is now a trendy or popular stance or outlook to adopt, in the public domain. A fourth interviewee GB6 relates that she didn’t necessarily think foodies were a mainstream culture but that it may become a factor soon, due to the trend of ‘gourmet’ foods becoming popular and more widespread and to the fact that it is also spread quickly now, by ‘word of mouth’. The remaining interviewees PF5 and MMC2 maintain that foodies are a subculture. However, PF5 pointed out it is one that is growing all the time. In addition, while MMC2 thought that it represented quite a large sub-culture, he believed “there is still a lot of people in the general public who still consider food just to be something that they eat as fuel” (MMC2, line 399-400).

Also, in the primary research, two of the interviewees KQ1 and AOT3 express the notion that there is a percentage of the Irish foodie tribe who label themselves as foodies but as KQ1 relates: “They’re not so much a foodie because they don’t know so much about food” (line 162). AOT3 suggests that, “a prime example” is the *Press Up* group’s diners or club members in Ireland; whom he insists do not know about food: “Because they all just dine in the *Press Up* group and they think that’s amazing” (line 199). “They [the *Press Up* Group] are charging a ridiculous amount of money and the quality is not

great. They have a following and they are all foodies” (AOT3, line 200-201). AOT3 claims that, “I just have the knowledge to know that *Press Up* is all marketing and it’s not right compared to *Chapter One* and I know it’s more valuable.” (line 189-190). At this point- the researcher notes a distinct division appears between the ‘knowledgeable’ or the ‘well informed’ foodie tribe and the ‘not so knowledgeable’ foodie tribe. Furthermore, AOT3 specifies that he has attained his food ‘knowledge’ from: “Experience [and] I question things. I’m not afraid to read things and to keep reading and to find the right sources compared to people who will just listen to one person and say that’s what it is” (line 193-195).

In addition, interviewee AOT3 surmises how this foodie cohort have emerged is, “down to the tech world, it’s down to the marketing world, the accountancy world; Foodism is an important aspect of that working lifestyle now and that’s where it generated from” (line 203-205). He points out, “it is a work culture, [food] fits into and part of that culture and lifestyle. It’s the San Francisco lifestyle; that *Twitter* and *Facebook* brought to Ireland and it changed, and the London lifestyle” (line 207-211). Hence, he speculates that, “it’s the hunt for the next best thing, eating around the world and that’s what people want, they don’t care where it came from and what it is and how it’s made (AOT3, line 209-211).

AOT3’s ‘work culture’ foodie group resemble another ‘work culture’ group who appeared in the eighties era, alongside Barr and Levy’s (1984) foodie tribe, these were ‘yuppies’. The yuppie cohort also had their own lifestyle handbook but whilst foodies used food as a mark of distinction, ‘sharply dressed’ yuppies used corporate power and wealth to determine their standing, within society.

In relation to Ireland, the ‘knowledge’ factor again ties in with what McWilliams (2006) found during the noughties decade, which took the form of his Hibernian Cosmopolitan tribe (HiCo’s). He insists that it was education that distinguished this tribe not wealth; who used food knowledge as the signifier which “distinguishes the truly educated from the merely rich” (McWilliams, 2006, p.264). Today, the keen foodie values knowledge not just simply wealth or social status, to establish distinction. Interviewee JMK4 concurs that, “It’s not a snob thing in Ireland, it just shows that you’ve got a bit of savvy really (JMK4, line 3373-374).



Similarities too are found in the literature when cultural theorists distinguish the differences between social capital, cultural capital and sub-cultural capital. Bourdieu's (1984) defines cultural capital as: "Knowledge that is accumulated through upbringing and education which confers social status (Bourdieu 1984, Thornton 1995 cited in Gelder, 2005, p.185). Barker (2012, p. 451) asserts that, "cultural capital is distinguished from economic capital (wealth) and social capital (whom you know)". In addition, (Thornton in Gelder, 2005, p.186) points out, "a critical difference between subcultural capital and cultural capital is how, "the media are a primary factor governing the circulation of the former". (Ibid). Consequently, this connects with the notion presented of Ireland's two foodscape spheres which have interlinked commonalities (as discussed on p.21); one of which are 'the tools of production' i.e. media and educational tools. Hence, this in turn connects back to de Solier's (2013) perception of the foodie; one that she views as not a 'passive' individual but as an 'active' media user and consumer. This in turn resonates with a 'significant' word found in the primary research also- 'active' such as, 'active' producers, 'active' food enthusiasts, including foodies and consumers who are now 'active' through the process of keeping 'well informed'.

## **5.12 Conclusion**

The next chapter offers a more considered synopsis of these themes, suggests answers for the remaining sub-research questions, and presents a resolution for the over-arching main research question. In addition, recommendations are suggested that could be implemented for education, tourism, the food industry and towards Government policy.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations**

## **6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This closing chapter gives a brief condensed overview of the analysis based on the research findings and finally forms deductions for the sub-research questions and the over-arching thesis research statement.

### **6.2 Concluding the MRQ and the SRQs**

In this chapter, we return to the dissertation's main research question:

*Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in contemporary food culture.*

The researcher considers how the sub-research objectives have been answered by this research study. A short synopsis will follow each of the individual objectives which will also encompass the five themes that were analysed in chapter five.

- **Objective 1: Explain the foodism phenomenon?**

This objective was answered in-depth in the literature review chapter one, paragraphs; 2.1, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.11.

- **Objective 2: Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food?**

From the primary research, it can be ascertained that, food industry experts and academics concur that in 2019, Irish food culture has evolved and is evolving from the more traditional Irish cuisine; this is a dynamic process. It was noted that simple ingredients such as bread and butter have been transformed by chefs in the best Irish restaurants. A different and broader discourse has begun to develop around food in Ireland which is no longer just focused on the famine era and the *Celtic Tiger Years*. One reason for this is down to a greater interest in food being studied as an academic

subject at third level. One Interviewee noted that, “what we have now is people... researching food from so many different angles...using food as a lens [to examine] as opposed to war, or class or using gender, or anything else!” (MMC2, 129-132). Another interviewee observes that in Ireland there is a: “Hunger for food” (PF5, line 201-216) amongst a small but growing cohort of the population, in regards to access to information through food media such as newspapers, cookery books, and also an increase in ‘the hunger’ for ‘food experiences’ such as culinary courses, gastro tours and food festival events.

It was concluded from the primary research that there are two perceptions of Irish food (AOT3, 109-115); one that is of fresh, good quality, with a diverse range of produce and products; the other is the old image of bacon and cabbage and Guinness which was presented via advertising and tourist boards down through the years. From the primary research it was deduced by interviewees that a gap in the dissemination of the tourism message exists. However, another noted that this ‘gap’ does not only exist in the tourism sector. It is also present in the public, education, and healthcare sectors. And another interviewee pointed out it stems back to a lack of interest in ‘food’ in the government. Government concentration in relation to food is mainly an agricultural one not an artisan one. It was noted that the way to switch visitor’s perceptions from the ‘old’ food perception was through educating people of the ‘diverse-ness’ of Ireland’s larder (produce, products and producers).

**[Conclusion]** The solution that was offered was to adopt a similar approach to what the Danes took, that is to stop overly concentrating on the export market, and to even cut back on both it and the import market. While the Irish food export market was booming in 2019 in order to change perceptions the country may have to begin again on a local level and then to resume the global level. In order to establish a more robust and vibrant Irish food culture, we would have to begin to ‘look inwards first’ instead, towards the rich selection of produce, producers and farmers that we have in the country. As one interviewee pointed out, the country is “waiting to be anointed” as a food destination, we should instead just work on becoming one. This would require the focus to be shifted from the ‘bigger picture’ of an agribusiness and giant exporter country to that of a ‘smaller view’, one of an evolved, sustainable and more artisan based, ‘food culture’ centred country. The change required would be for Ireland to lead not to follow. The

country has shown that leadership in other sectors like I.T., pharma, business, and the fact that our country's men and women have taken their place on the world stage in other cultural sectors such as, music, art, film, and literature - why would this not be possible with our 'food' culture too?

**[Conclusion on Tourism]** while progress is slow, it is getting there. The *Taste the Island* initiative showed promise with connecting the smaller groups of regional producers. In 2020, it is not clear how things will fare now since the food champion role has been eradicated. There may be a need for a new food champion to be introduced that could create an overarching effect on the food community and consumer. The link that may be missing is further connection to producers and farmers. It remains to be seen what lies ahead in the later part of 2020.

○ **Objective 3: To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen? Foodism in Ireland 2019** is perceived as follows:

- A high interest in food.
- A movement that is linked to the *Celtic Tiger Years*.
- It is trendy.
- It is no longer a snob or upper-class thing
- It demonstrates that you are food 'savvy'.
- It is a 'way of eating' today.

**[Conclusion]** Foodism is not a word that is regularly used nowadays. Foodie-ism is broadly the more preferred term that is used. Generally, the Irish have an exuberance for food but it is still only a small portion of the population, which is believed to be growing. However, this may change over the coming years due to the increase of 'gourmet' products into supermarkets making them more accessible to the 'mainstream' population. The topic of food is more regularly discussed and raised in conversation and in social settings, amongst the general population. Food as a topic is viewed by many as a valuable way to connect with other people and cultures as it is a common dominator between them. In Ireland, an exuberance for and a love of food is particularly noticeable in the younger demographic of the population.

- **Objective 4: To establish if foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture?**

In relation to this objective the researcher concludes the following from perceptions formed from the primary research:

#### **The term foodie...**

- Is now used everywhere instead of the term 'gourmet'.
- It is a pejorative term that is generally used to describe someone else.
- A lot of people do not like the term, particularly those connected to or working in the food industry.
- People connected to or working in the food industry generally do not label themselves as foodies.

[**Conclusion**] these findings contradict what Deleuze (2012, p.1) suggested that, "nowadays the term has progressively lost its negative meaning".

#### **An Irish Foodie is...**

- Middle class
- Of white ethnicity
- High income bracket
- Mostly or usually female
- Mainly lives in the city
- Is privileged (as food in Ireland is still too expensive for someone living on the minimum wage).

#### **Foodie's traits are...**

- Likes to cook (however there are a percentage of them who never cook).
- Likes eating out.
- They are well informed about food topics however there is a percentage of them too who do not know a lot about food.
- They are fussy or 'food particular'.
- They are interested and passionate about food.
- They are quite adventurous when it comes to food.
- They are interested in authenticity, storytelling, terroir, and backstory.
- Food is an important part of their image.
- Food is more a hobby than their career.

**[Conclusion]** Many chefs and people working in the food industry do not consider themselves to be foodies even though they may possess some of the foodie traits. They believe that ‘knowledge’ and keeping ‘well informed and interested’ is what separates them from the average foodie.

In addition, when a Twitter Poll was conducted and distributed to a ‘food interested’ audience 15.9 percent of the 63 poll votes recorded, selected the option that they would not call themselves ‘a foodie’. And 11.1 percent of the overall votes selected; chose or voted the option that, “No, I am not a foodie, I’m more knowledgeable”. Indicating that there is a portion of the population who try to distance themselves from that what is perceived to be a ‘typical’ foodie.

### **The Modern Irish Foodie**

**[Conclusion]** Interviewee GB6 from *Bord Bia* holds, that there are lots of different types of foodies present in Irish society. She is mainly speaking in terms of foodie consumers, which we have established are ‘active’ consumers and media users. She mentions that they all have niches such as, the ‘gourmet’ foodie, the ‘sporty’ foodie, the ‘health-food foodie’ etc. In the primary research (Bord Bia, 2020) and the secondary research, it was noted that, the Irish have embraced how they understand the concepts of organic, shopping local and supporting local. This would connect with how Deleuze viewed foodism in Ireland during 2012. She states: “Foodism in Ireland takes many other forms” (Deleuze, 2012). GB6 also noted, sustainability, clean food and environment are an important factor in many Irish people’s lives now. This is similar to how a shift came post the *Celtic Tiger Years* to a more frugal lifestyle for many people. 2020 has already seen great social upheaval and consequently a shift and a return of the Irish to baking and cooking from scratch. In turn, this may change people’s food perspectives, habits, diets and is sure to impact on Ireland’s overall food culture, in the future.

### **A Subculture or a Mainstream Culture**

**[Conclusion]** Half of the six interviewees believed the foodie tribe is mainstream due to the proliferation of gourmet foodstuffs into supermarkets and other areas. And also, to do with the attraction of foodism, to follow as a trend. The three others believed foodies are still a sub-culture which is constantly expanding and one of the three noted

this is due to the growth of foodstuffs and ‘word of mouth’. It was also established from the research that foodie culture in Ireland is split into two tribes- ‘mainstream’ and ‘esoteric’. What separates these two groups are media consumption and also, whether they are ‘knowledgeable’ or ‘not so knowledgeable’ when it came to informing and educating themselves.

- **Objective 5: Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture?**

Chef and FOTE organiser JP McMahon stood out as a prominent food actor in Irish food culture with all six interviewees considering him to be a main actor. Other Irish chefs also featured particularly the young chef cohort that recently emerged on the food scene. It was mentioned that Darina Allen is a major player in Irish food culture. In addition, half of the interviewees stated that Irish producers themselves are very ‘active’ food culture players and becoming well connected in regional areas. In the primary research, it emerged that they could now be considered ‘active’, ‘enthusiastic’ and ‘proud’ food actors. It also emerged that the ‘knowledge’ gained through education from third level colleges and cookery schools like Ballymaloe has played a big part in building ‘confidence’ and in turn ‘pride’ and ‘creativity’ in chefs and ‘pride’ in food enthusiasts alike. Food agencies like Bord Bia are valued and were considered a major food actor by some of the interview respondents.

**[Conclusion]** Irish food producers may prove a valuable link in the promotion of Irish food and in bridging the gap between the two perceptions that have formed around Irish food. Education can be used to change perceptions. A prominent food enthusiast/champion is needed.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study**

Initially, it was the researcher’s preference to conduct a focus group which would have comprised of a small group of ‘self-recognised’ foodies. The option to do a focus group was unfortunately no longer possible as a result of the outbreak of the COVID19 virus. This was due to the fact that the entire country went into lockdown as directed by the government on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This inhibited any attempt to conduct a focus



group as social mixing and travel were restricted and in turn delayed the interview process.

#### **6.4 Contributions of the Study**

This qualitative research study offers a perspective of the perceptions that have formed around Irish foodism and the foodie psyche and persona, instead of a quantitative statistical study centred on the size of the foodie population or the cohort's food and buying patterns. The study adds to previous Irish research since the topic of foodism in Ireland and foodies from an Irish perspective, which had only previously been studied by Deleuze (2012). This research will also add to other international studies conducted on the foodie persona. In addition, the study's findings will add value to the bank of knowledge on Irish food culture especially for contemporary times.

#### **6.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

Further research for this study could comprise of:

- A collaboration between food and tourism state agencies such as Bord Bia and Tourism Ireland in order to eliminate the ambiguous food 'gap'.
- A change of Government policy to refocus from that of an 'agricultural' food culture to that of an 'artisan' food culture.
- A collaboration between government agencies, food agencies and educational bodies with an objective to close the 'food' gap between the health, public, and educational sector.
- A revisit to examine if the Irish foodie persona exists in 2025.
- An in-depth study into food subcultures represented in Ireland.

Or further research on a broader scale into:

- The development of the artisan food sector in Ireland in 2020.
- The effect the COVID19 epidemic has had on Irish food culture.
- The effect the COVID19 epidemic has had on the Irish restaurant industry.

## **6.6 Overall Thesis Conclusion**

**MRQ:** *Foodism in Ireland 2019:*

*feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in contemporary food culture?*

### **Feeding Foodie Philosophy?**

**[Conclusion]** The practise of foodism in 2019 does indeed still feed foodie philosophy but it has also spread and begun to reach a wider cohort, in some instances; such as the foodie's environmental philosophies in relation to food provenance, authenticity and sustainability. It is these doctrines in 2019 that are taking a stronger foothold with the Irish foodie but also, they are spreading out into mainstream society now too. Johnston and Baumann (2010) mention the turmoil that exists within foodies regarding their desire for democracy and also distinction in society. This may have shifted proportionally within the mind of the contemporary Irish foodie with a greater pull in a democratic direction, to further develop their hunger for knowledge and self-improvement, to use as a mark of distinction.

### **Shifts in Contemporary Food Culture**

**[Conclusion]** The two major shifts that have come about in the last twenty to thirty years, are a change in restaurant culture in Ireland and a rise in the artisan food movement. Both changes are clearly visible in 2019. The artisan food movement has been given a giant lift by Myrtle Allen since the 60s, with the McKenna's and other Irish food guides and writers proudly sharing their message since then. In 2019, it does look like we have lost a connection with Irish food and what it stands for when a large portion of it goes to export markets. Irish producers and farmers may be the switch that trips the light of change.

### **Food Culture is not just Restaurant Culture**

**[Conclusion]** In 2019, it may not be the general consensus among academics or members of the food industry that a fracturing of an elite restaurant culture occurred within Irish society, which stemmed from the nineties but this and other factors within the restaurant industry have subsequently influenced, a more democratic restaurant

culture which has allowed space in the capital city for food lovers to sample and savour every variety of eatery from; *The Fumbally's* egalitarian establishment, to Michelin restaurants, hip weekend hangouts such as 777 on Georges Street, food trucks, bohemian food markets, doughnut and ice-cream parlours to artisan pizza places; blended from main streets to backstreet alleys.

Presently, there is a need to distinguish restaurant culture from that of food culture. Irish food culture is not just a 'restaurant' culture, nor does it encompass the tradition of agriculture in its totality. It is comprised of concepts, tools, traditions and actors from the past and present.

Culture is both the 'arts' and the values, norms and symbolic goods of everyday life". While culture is both concerned with tradition and social reproduction, it is also a matter of creativity and change (Barker 2012, p.42).

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Interview 1: Ketty Quigley KQ1

Interview Code:

Owner of *Delicious Dublin Food Tours* and she previously wrote the *French Foodie in Dublin* food blog.

1. When did you move to Dublin and what made you decide to write a food blog?
2. Why did you decide to stop writing your blog?
3. Presently, you are the owner of Delicious Dublin Food Tours. What year did you set it up and why did you decide to start the business?
4. From a gastro-tourism business owner viewpoint, have you noticed a rise in the interest of food tours in Ireland? And if yes, from when?
5. What traits do you think best describes Irish food?
6. How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? France maybe? Or do you receive feedback from tourists?
7. From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?
8. Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? If so how? And why do you think this is?
9. What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
10. Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use? Do you know any foodies?
11. When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? Chefs, tourism boards, food bodies, producers, or enthusiasts and campaigners etc.?
12. How do you, spread the word of Irish food? i.e., products, producers, places and so on.

- 1 **SR:** I'm here with Ketty Quigley the owner of *Delicious Dublin Tours* and  
2 previously wrote the *French Foodie in Dublin* food blog.
- 3 **SR:** Hiya Ketty! How's it going?
- 4 **KQ:** Hi!
- 5 **SR:** First question is...when did you move to Dublin? And what made you  
6 decide to write the food blog?
- 7 **KQ:** Okay so I moved to Dublin in December 2004. And I started the blog in  
8 2012 so during the recession. Ah what did you ask?
- 9 **SR:** When did you move?
- 10 **KQ:** Okay, so initially it was to share my recommendations. Ah especially to  
11 my ex-pat friends, cos they were telling me that Irish food was really bad.  
12 And I was eating out quite a bit so, I was like- okay, I'm going to start a blog  
13 I'm going to share my tips. You know whenever I find somewhere nice, I'll  
14 just write about it. Yeah, so mainly on one evening in August in 2012 on my  
15 sofa, I thought, why not. I've always loved writing, I've always loved food so  
16 yeah, I didn't really over think it. I just started it.
- 17 **SR:** So, it was really to do with friends so, and then? For your own interest  
18 and you were discovering the city as well!
- 19 **KQ:** I should mention...there was an event I was reading about. The tapas  
20 trail by *Campo Viejo*. A wine brand. And, they were doing a Tapas Trail Tour  
21 of Dublin. It was the first time and it was very cheap, so I was wondering what  
22 it was about. So, I searched online, information about it before I booked the  
23 tickets. And I found another blog, I found a blog from a Polish girl, living in  
24 Dublin, who was sharing her recommendations. And I was, oh my God like!  
25 You know, it kind of inspired me as well cos she was Polish and was writing  
26 about food in Dublin. I was like, okay, she has a blog...it seems nice...so  
27 initially it was when I was researching about the tapas trail from *Campo Viejo*  
28 and then I think, I went on it. And then I wrote one of my first blog posts of  
29 the experience of the tapas trail, so that's it, you know! But it was to share my  
30 recommendations and obviously the first people I shared it with was my  
31 friends. I said to them, have a look if you want a recommendation, have a  
32 look.
- 33 **SR:** And why then did you decide to stop writing the blog?
- 34 **KQ:** Oh god, well we're seven years later though! I got this idea to stop, last  
35 year. So, I started in 2012 so I decided to stop in 2019 as over the past two  
36 years, I was thinking aaahh! (shrugs) Initially, I was thinking in 2012, it was  
37 during the recession and it was a time at a time when there were lots of new  
38 places, independent places opened, and I loved sharing this. Like you know,  
39 *Brother Hubbard* or *Eathos* or these kinds of places. Obviously, I've been  
40 writing for seven years, I evolved, my life changed over the years and the blog  
41 changed my life and you know, I was busy studying as well for the past two  
42 years. And, I've been going the last two years with my business. I kept the two  
43 brands separate, there were the tours and then the blog. But I decided to focus  
44 on the tours. And I just felt it didn't feel the same and I've outgrown it  
45 basically! And it was time to change. I'm getting older and I thought maybe  
46 time to do something else.
- 47 **SR:** And do you think people at this stage – go off themselves to find what they  
48 like themselves? Do you think they still go to food blogs and to websites?
- 49 **KQ:** To be honest, yeah, people, read less that's for sure.

50 Like myself, at the start I was reading blogs, I don't read blogs anymore. With  
51 social media now anyone can give their recommendations. It was a lot of my  
52 time as well. You know I was not living from the blog, so it was really  
53 something that I did by passion. Not to gain something but it actually brought  
54 me so much. It changed my life and it brought me to everything I did over the  
55 past seven years. You know from starting a business to studying, yeah, I just  
56 felt like you know, I like evolving. I felt it was time, time to stop. I just did not  
57 feel like it anymore!

58 **SR:** Presently you're the owner of *Delicious Dublin Tours*. What year did you  
59 set that up? And what made you decide to start that business then?

60 **KQ:** Initially, I started running food tours in 2013. And it's linked to the blog,  
61 the blog started in 2012. And people because I'm French were asking me  
62 where to find good food in Dublin. So, I decided to start French food tours of  
63 Dublin initially. They were about French food in Dublin, and it was in  
64 addition to other things I was doing for a living. I ran that for two years  
65 almost. And then I trained in *Ballymaloe Cookery School*, five years ago. I  
66 finished the training at Ballymaloe at the end of March 2015. And then  
67 because I did Ballymaloe I said, okay I'm ready to switch to Irish food. I had  
68 more confidence after Ballymaloe. Darina literally can do anything. Before  
69 that ahhh I was kind of, I'm French telling people about Irish food. I was  
70 doing it anyway on my blog. I was doing it on my blog, but I didn't feel  
71 confident enough to actually have tourists to say oh! Eat Irish food. So, it's  
72 really Ballymaloe made me switch to *Delicious Dublin Tours*, it's when I  
73 started the brand. O, 2015 it's going to be five years, in May. But technically  
74 I've been running tours for seven years.

75 **SR:** From the perspective of a gastro-tourism business owner- have your  
76 noticed a rise in food tours in Ireland? And if yes, then from what time?

77 **KQ:** Yes! Definitely, I was not aware of any food tour companies anywhere in  
78 Dublin when I started. I was the second company doing food tours in Dublin.  
79 Now you, I think, four really, including myself in Dublin. Now you can find  
80 them all over and it's growing so definitely more interest in Ireland. But then,  
81 I don't know how busy they are but in Dublin, like it has grown, I'd say over  
82 the last two years, especially.

83 **SR:** And is there a rise in the amount of people booking yours?

84 **KQ:** Yes, definitely, last year was my busiest here, ever. Definitely more and  
85 more people. It grew. It was always growing but really a big rise last year.  
86 Now, this year I'm not too sure how it's going to go with the Corona virus. It's  
87 already impacting on my bookings! In normal circumstances, I think it would  
88 be going up again. But we'll see. It looks busy for summer so far, but I don't  
89 know if I'll get any cancellations.

90 **SR:** And it all depends, later on for any tour business...

91 **KQ:** I'm sure it's going to be impacted this summer, but I don't know what is  
92 going to happen! But it has been growing, you know.

93 **SR:** What traits best describe Irish food?

94 **KQ:** Well, high quality ingredients, it's a small island so. Obviously, if you're  
95 using local it doesn't have to travel too far or too long. It's the quality and for  
96 me it's the raw ingredients; the dairy, the seafood, the meat.

97 Yeah, it depends because now Irish food is evolving. But it can be simple but  
98 it's quality if you use good ingredients. Humble- if you look at the home  
99 cooking but yeah, it's more about raw ingredients and quality.

100 **SR:** Okay, right!

101 **KQ:** And it's evolving.

102 **SR:** Yeah, how do you think it's evolving then?

103 **KQ:** Well, it is interesting because I think, the major change now is the locals  
104 actually believe in it more than they did in the past. I think, that's it. There are  
105 lots of chefs now that are prouder, they are shouting about it. Obviously, now  
106 when you see in terms of tourism, people are trying to use Irish food as  
107 something to attract tourists. Now all the foodies, the people in the industry  
108 they think Irish food is great but there is still a gap on what the tourists see and  
109 think about Irish food but it is evolving in a good way because now... I mean  
110 when I moved here... as an outsider... I didn't really think Ireland has great  
111 food to be honest. It has changed a lot for me. You have so much choice now  
112 in Dublin. Now, I live in Dublin so it's different. In the countryside and in  
113 Dublin, you have so many restaurants now. It's improved a lot. People are  
114 lucky now even people that are moving here now, I am telling- Oh my god!  
115 The food! Fifteen years ago, it was not as good. (Laughs).

116 **SR:** That leads on to the next question then (as you were saying) fifteen years  
117 back it may not have been as good. So, how do you think Ireland is viewed  
118 gastronomically by other countries? You would have the experience of France  
119 or do you receive feedback from tourists?

120 **KQ:** I mean, it's different because I deal with people who have an interest in  
121 food, so they book food tours, they are well travelled. You know I think there  
122 is a difference between your average tourist and the ones that partake in food  
123 tours. There is definitely a gap! I realise myself when I talk to people here, my  
124 customers, they usually have a good perception, you know, that's why they  
125 partake in the food tours, they are not going to join if they will eat bad as well.  
126 But, your average tourist the one that does not partake in food tours, they think  
127 that Irish food is going to a pub and getting fish and chips. So, like there is a  
128 huge gap. And I know from my studies and I service people- the average  
129 tourist- they don't have high expectations; they think Irish food is what you  
130 find in pubs. And they are stuck to the old traditional stuff, which is great!  
131 You know you can have high quality traditional stuff but here you have lots of  
132 tourist places like tourist attractions that serve really bad stuff and the tourist  
133 think that this is Irish food, you know! So, you have the foodies because  
134 people with an interest in food, wherever they go, they are going to search for  
135 good food. But then you have the person that comes here who do the touristy  
136 things and food is just something that they have to get. You know if they're  
137 hungry they are going to go to the first place, and they can get really bad food.  
138 I think we have to be aware of this. I think lots of people in the food industry  
139 in Ireland think, oh we're there but not so much, you know!

140 **SR:** There are other improvements to be made as such is there?

141 **KQ:** Yeah.

142 **SR:** Okay, there's a gap between, the two?

143 **KQ:** Oh, there's a huge gap between people interested in food, that will search  
144 and find quality food and your average tourist that just wants 'food'. And they  
145 can still have bad experiences, you know.



146 **SR:** From your experience, can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?

147 **KQ:** (Laughs) Ah, foodie is a word that everyone hates! (laughs again).

148 Foodism is like people with a 'high' interest, interest in food, you know? Or

149 people who are looking for good food, I'd say. This is how I would describe it.

150 You can call it gastronomic and bon vivant, you can call it foodie-ism it's all

151 the same, pretty much. I don't know it has a bad connotation. I think

152 especially with professionals from the food industry. They don't really like

153 people who call themselves foodies. At the same time, I think it's people how

154 are interested in food, basically.

155 **SR:** It's more of an exuberance, love or interest in food?

156 **KQ:** Yeah, it's an interest, I'd say. And there are people, and it's funny cos I

157 sometimes get them. My blog was called *French Foodie in Dublin*, but I

158 didn't overthink it! Anyway, it's funny when on my tours, someone would

159 start- "Oh I'm a foodie"! Internally, I'm laughing and thinking. If you're a

160 foodie, you wouldn't call yourself a foodie! (laughs). Which is funny if you

161 know what I mean? And then, I realise when I talk to them, that they're not so

162 much a foodie because they don't know so much about food. (Laughs) They

163 eat in bad places, (when I get to talk with them) okay you're not a foodie as I

164 would define a foodie, you know? I think it depends on people.

165 **SR:** I know, yeah.

166 **SR:** So, I'm going to talk about Irish people- do you think Irish people display

167 an exuberance for food? And if so, how do they? Am, even if you're judging

168 from a while back, even fifteen years ago, do you think?

169 **KQ:** Aha, of course but then it's a small percentage of the Irish population.

170 And I see on social media, you have this niche of people who are like the

171 people interested in food or always talking about food or working in food and

172 they think that the country is elevated, you know, that everyone is educated

173 but there is a huge gap! I mean the foodies or the gastronomes or whatever the

174 hell you call them; it's a small percentage of people. Obviously, the interest in

175 food has grown, you have, I mean, you have restaurants everywhere. It's

176 growing you have so many food festivals so many food events. Obviously,

177 people are interested in food that's for sure. But then, it's not everyone. I

178 would love to know the percentage of people that describe themselves as

179 foodies. I'd say it's a small niche still. But there is more interest that's for

180 sure. So many cookbooks, so much food on TV, not only Ireland it's

181 everywhere. It's everywhere, I talk to people from all over the world. It is

182 growing- social media, it is about food. It's all around you. But it's definitely

183 growing here but you've always had people interested in food here as well.

184 But still I don't think everyone is looking for...interested or know about good

185 food, as much as you think when you are in this little bubble of 'people

186 interested in food', I think.

187 **SR:** And so yeah- what would you consider a foodie? What about their traits

188 or habits, as such?

189 **KQ:** Well do be honest, your average, your foodie in Ireland would be more

190 social economic traits. It would be more middle class, a white person,

191 someone with a high income. You know it's not going to be people living on

192 the minimum wage. The foodie in Ireland, you know. It's kind of a privileged

193 thing being a foodie. It's not like food is cheap. So it is people, usually female,

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**Code:** KQ1

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194 I would say because I can tell from my readership as well, you know. My  
195 readership, in terms of blogs, would have the kind of people considering  
196 themselves as foodies; female, living in the city, lots of them. And then the  
197 traits, I don't know! - they like eating out, cooking, you know. It depends there  
198 are foodies, who say – “Oh, like I'm a foodie”” They will never cook  
199 anything, you know!

200 **SR:** I know, they are more restaurant goers or a 'taster of food'?

201 **KQ:** Yeah, I know! Where I know, I was sharing restaurant recommendations,  
202 but I cook at home. But I was not sharing what I cook at home. I think being a  
203 foodie is good but eating in restaurant is one thing. For me being a foodie, you  
204 have to be like- I breathe food, (laughs) I'm obsessed! It's about cooking, it's  
205 about shopping for food, it's about eating out, it's about reading, writing  
206 learning as much as I can about food. So, it's not about going to restaurants, to  
207 show on my Instagram, I'm going to restaurants! It's a lot about social capital,  
208 I think in Ireland. Now these days as well, about showing that you're educated  
209 and have access to all this fancy food, you know.

210 **SR:** And knowledge maybe as well?

211 **KQ:** Yeah! I think it's for show as well for lots of people (I love when I'm in  
212 a restaurant listening to conversations) and people are trying to show more and  
213 more that they know a bit about food. And sometimes, (laughs) sometimes it's  
214 funny in a way, you feel like it's people who want to demonstrate that they can  
215 access these foodie places themselves and more than about the food itself, you  
216 know? Showing off really. This was the same during the Celtic Tiger times,  
217 people going to restaurants. It was more to show your status than the food  
218 itself, you know (laughs).

219 **SR:** Would you consider them to be a subculture more than mainstream, now?

220 **KQ:** I mean, again, there is an interest, a growing interest for food. And of  
221 course, people have more access to more food ingredients, even in your  
222 supermarket. Jesus, the choice of ingredients. You couldn't find stuff ten years  
223 ago and now you have this exotic stuff. That is definitely mainstream, in a  
224 way!

225 **SR:** More so for ingredients and gourmet food?

226 **KQ:** Yeah. Definitely being, if you want to talk about foodies. I mean, what  
227 I've always said, is that in France...growing in France, people always end up  
228 talking about food. I feel like people know about food you know. Like, it's not  
229 just about eating out, it's more about the cooking and the social experience of  
230 eating and stuff. I've always thought as well, it was food classes, it was not  
231 only like middle classes, upper classes, it was anyone. I felt that food was  
232 more accessible in France. So now it has changed, I left fifteen years ago but  
233 I'm from a working-class background, but I ate good food and I felt like I had  
234 a good education. My parents knew about food and people, you know, my  
235 family knew about food, but it doesn't have to be about/for privileged people.  
236 I feel like for Ireland at the moment it's still a small percentage of the  
237 population that know about food and especially in the city.

238 **SR:** Unless you're from an agricultural background?

239 **KQ:** Exactly, you have different conversations then. I get Irish people on my  
240 tours where they grew up on a farm. Their parents used to grow everything  
241 from scratch. They grew their own stuff. There is these people but then there is  
242 a lot of people going to restaurants and posting on social media for most of

243 them (laughs). You know what I mean! The foodies!

244 **SR:** So, you don't, or would you call yourself a foodie? (I'll leave it an open  
245 question!)

246 **KQ:** Well, no. I wouldn't call myself a foodie, but I called myself a foodie for  
247 the blog! That's funny. (laughs). But I'm not going to go around and say, Oh,  
248 I'm a foodie. I know. People who call themselves a foodie like that...it's just  
249 weird. It's weird but I love food, I'm obsessed but call me anything like. I can  
250 use the French words like *bon vivant*, *gastronome* but it's the same thing at the  
251 end, do you know what I mean? I just love food so, I'm obsessed (laughs). But  
252 people would call me a foodie that's it, for sure. When they know me...people  
253 would say she's a foodie. But I'm not going to go around saying, I'm a foodie.

254 **SR:** You don't use the term yourself?

255 **KQ:** No, I don't. I actually don't use the term.

256 **SR:** Okay and do you know any foodies (not by name) as in people who  
257 would be interested.

258 **KQ:** Oh, plenty and I found them in not really my friends (that's funny as I  
259 said at the start, I did the blog mostly for friends), but they never really read  
260 the blog, it was more strangers that read the blog. So, it's funny! But I mean, I  
261 think it's because I'm a hardcore type of foodie. You know like, I'm really  
262 obsessed but the people that I found that are as obsessed as me I found on  
263 social media like Twitter. When I started, I found that there was an active  
264 community of food lovers on Twitter. I know people that are really obsessed  
265 but they are not my close friends to be honest. (yeah, it's a funny thing that it's  
266 not).

267 **SR:** So, when you're speaking about contemporary Irish food culture. Who  
268 would you consider the main food actors? Such as chefs, or tourist boards,  
269 food bodies, producers, enthusiasts or campaigners and so...to do with  
270 contemporary Irish culture.

271 **KQ:** The main actors? Definitely, JP McMahon in Galway. For me is like, the  
272 one that is doing more. Cos, what I feel is that, many people here are basically  
273 preaching to the converted. In their little bubble again and they say Irish food  
274 is great, but they only reach people in Ireland, you know. Generally, JP  
275 McMahon is doing his bit to...not to change because he is also talking about  
276 traditional stuff and it's what I love about what he does. It's about food history  
277 as well. He has a column in the *Irish Times* and it's always linked to Irish food  
278 history and he shares a recipe. I think it's really great because it's educating  
279 people here. Even so, Jesus, with *Food on the Edge*, he's bringing  
280 international chefs here and basically doing a lot for Irish food. So, he's doing  
281 that, he has just released *The Irish Cookbook*, doing a tour all over America.  
282 You know, the cookbook is about Irish recipes, but it is about Irish food  
283 history, so this guy is definitely doing something, it has a reach. Whereas  
284 going on Twitter talking to other foodies in Ireland, I don't think is changing  
285 anything. You believe when you're in this group, it doesn't really change  
286 anything. I think now it's changing. Tourism boards, I think, it's great with  
287 *Taste the Island* and stuff. It is great that it is there trying to promote food  
288 tourism. Now, in terms of, if you go on social media and search for tourism  
289 Ireland. They don't really promote Irish food like the *Taste the Island*  
290 campaign was a bit, okay. [But] they still kind of end up putting it on the side.  
291 I think that *Taste the Island* was just for people locally again because when

292 I was talking to my tourists that [are] food tourists, they never heard of it.

293 **SR:** Okay.

294 **KQ:** So, locally we think because we are in this bubble, but I don't think it  
295 reached the outside very well. So, I think they should promote more. In terms  
296 of *Bord Bia*, it's doing a great job. I think better than...obviously it is their job  
297 to promote Irish food overseas, but I think they are doing a fantastic job.  
298 That's definitely one thing. In terms of actors here, JP McMahon is someone  
299 who comes to mind but obviously, Ballymaloe, like Darina [Allen]. I think  
300 Clodagh McKenna as well, it's mainly as well because I follow her, but I think  
301 she's a great ambassador. Because she has an international reach, she is based  
302 in the U.K., but she has an audience in Canada, the States. So, Clodagh  
303 McKenna, JP McMahon and what I love is that okay Irish food is changing,  
304 and you have sophisticated dishes and stuff like that but these guys, they don't  
305 forget where it came from, you know, the traditional thing as well. Because  
306 many people now just want to move away from all the traditional stuff. It's  
307 good as well, you know. It's what I love about Ballymaloe, JP McMahon,  
308 Clodagh McKenna. They're going to showcase modern stuff, but they're  
309 going to also talk about the Irish stew, soda bread and all the things that make  
310 Irish food unique in a way. Because the chefs now, okay, they use local  
311 ingredients but it's so much like Nordic Food and then food starts looking the  
312 same, you know(laughs).

313 **SR:** That's the danger, I suppose.

314 **KQ:** It's crazy! I understand that people are being inspired. There is being  
315 inspired but there is also copying. And when you travel, and you feel like the  
316 places are the same. But the tourism board, I feel like they are getting better  
317 but there is a gap between *Fáilte Ireland...Taste the Island* was a Fáilte  
318 Ireland initiative, but *Tourism Ireland* promotes Ireland but, for me, there is a  
319 gap between trying to promote initiatives around food but then promoting then  
320 Ireland. I know, that they still don't promote food. Sometimes, I look at the  
321 Facebook Page [for] *Tourism Ireland* and they ask people- "What was your  
322 best experience in Ireland?" So, it's obviously tourists replying, and it was,  
323 "Oh, it was fish and chips in this pub" or "this and this in this place". There  
324 was not a good restaurant mentioned. It was just like your average touristy  
325 experience of Irish food. And so, you can tell that there is a gap.

326 **KQ:** What was the question again? The main actors?

327 **SR:** The main actors, yeah.

328 **KQ:** I mean, people as well – you have these food communities and people  
329 are shouting more and connecting and more events. Obviously, they are doing  
330 their bits locally, but I suppose what you want to do is to have an international  
331 reach. This is what you want not just local. I say that because I am in food  
332 tourism. Obviously, if you want people to buy Irish food, you have to educate  
333 people here too. It's tricky, I think.

334 **SR:** How do you, yourself then spread the word of Irish food? To do with  
335 products, produce, places, and so on.

336 **KQ:** Jesus! You know, last week I had a person from South Africa- she said,  
337 "oh my God! You promote Irish food so well! They should give you money!"  
338 You know, like the Tourism Board? I was like; "Yeah!" (laughs). So, I  
339 definitely think I do my best because I'm face-to-face, I speak with tourists so  
340 I'm giving them the full image. I'm telling them of how it evolved. I'm not

341 just saying Irish food is fantastic. It's more than that- I give them the full Irish  
342 food story experience, the taste, and what someone said as well – “what I love  
343 about your tour is that you only serve Irish stuff”. And that woman did a tour  
344 in Amsterdam and she said she tasted Mediterranean stuff. It was not very  
345 Dutch, she felt that it did not really feel Dutch cos she tasted mini pasta and  
346 stuff like that. And I said; I could bring you to nice Tapas places or Asian  
347 places and bring you for the best tacos and blah, blah, blah, but you don't want  
348 to come here to taste this stuff. But I realise that other tours that I follow on  
349 social media, (I'll say Brighton, it looks great their tour but), they serve like  
350 pizza, burgers, what they serve could be very good, but it does not give a 'taste  
351 of place'. What I really do is giving a 'taste of place'. I serve very simple  
352 things but quality things and I give them, I tell them- look, listen, [if] you want  
353 to go to an Irish pub (very often they ask me where to go for an Irish pub or  
354 for good food in an Irish pub) and [I say] look- Irish pubs, I love them, great  
355 craic, great drinks, music, people but you don't really go to the pub to eat, you  
356 know like? I say, I can give you gastro-pub recommendations, pub  
357 recommendations and you know, I'm very honest as well. But I think I do my  
358 bit, I give the story of the producers, of people who make Irish food. I serve  
359 local so I'd say I have an impact cos these people when they go back, they can  
360 tell their friends and I get many people who come on their friend's  
361 recommendations. So obviously, my blog as well, seven years of sharing,  
362 reviewing, reporting local restaurants, of independent reviews. It was really  
363 for the love of sharing my recommendations and thinking this place is doing  
364 something great so spread the word about it, you know? And, this is what  
365 happened as well, you had more foodies because people were shouting about it  
366 and then it grew from there. And now everyone is recommending stuff on their  
367 Instagram.

368 **SR:** And you think the social media would kind of have been a vital edition to  
369 it?

370 **KQ:** Yeah! Now yeah, but you have to be quite careful as well because social  
371 media can be fake. There was a wave when I started the blog, there were some  
372 amazing food bloggers at that time. They all kind of stopped blogging because  
373 they became food writers or something else. The blogs really made them start  
374 something, change their career, like me you know. So, there was that wave of  
375 people and you had the first Irish bloggers like Caroline Hennessey from  
376 *Bibliocook*, you had Imen McDonnell from *Farmette*, you had Aoife  
377 McElwain from *I Can Has Cook*, Donal Skehan. So, you had this first  
378 generation before me and then in 2012, there was me and there [were] a few  
379 people who stopped way before me. And then after that there was a wave from  
380 maybe 2016, like the last 3 years. Just wanting to do it to get fillers or to get  
381 money or you know for fame. So, it's very [dynamic]. Now you have people  
382 who just share their recommendations and they're all micro blogging on their  
383 Instagram now. You know, it's not about writing anymore. I love writing. I  
384 love eating but I love writing. Now it's more about pictures, it's more about  
385 video. So, it has evolved a lot. But the problem is as well that people think  
386 they know a lot more, than they [do] I think. (laughs), There is this Instagram  
387 account I came across (because obviously they pay to have their account  
388 because it comes up in my feed) and these people are giving marks to  
389 restaurants and they are brutal!

390 Like, who do they think they are? Saying like, this place gets two out of five  
391 for food. I just don't understand that! Now, it's spreading people think they  
392 know lots. And they're not thinking. For me it was about spreading positivity.  
393 If I didn't like a place, I didn't talk about it. I feel like now they can say  
394 whatever they like on social media about a restaurant. I just feel it's wrong in a  
395 way, you know.

396 **SR:** So, the attitude maybe has changed, as such there, maybe?

397 **KQ:** Oh no, you have some amazing people as well, you know, giving  
398 recommendations but I think now is [that] you have a lot of hype or you have  
399 people like that just being brutal. Thinking they can rate restaurants and say  
400 whatever they want. Which I think is bad as well. You can't control, that's it,  
401 you can't control the quality now. So, you know anybody can do it now,  
402 because of Instagram because, yeah, it's mainly Instagram that killed the blogs  
403 really.

404 **SR:** I know, killed the main food blogs at the moment.

405 **KQ:** Yeah, it killed the joy. It's a new platform and Instagram will be killed  
406 [off] by something else. I mean for sure we are going to turn into just video  
407 content. It's evolving but at the same time, you know, food writing is not dead.  
408 You still have reviews in newspapers and stuff like that. And lots of people  
409 worried [that] blogs [would kill] that. Then, you know, it has to evolve. When  
410 I said I stopped, people were- "oh no, you're stopping!". Yeah but it's when  
411 you stop that people realise that they are going to miss something, you know.

412 **SR:** I know, yeah!

413 **KQ:** It's like a restaurant, when a restaurant is closing, people are like, "Oh  
414 No!" -But did you go in the last two years? (laughs). That's exactly the same  
415 thing!

416 **SR:** But they may be more inclined to do food tours now as well- you never  
417 know! To find out more information if they are not getting it elsewhere?

418 **KQ:** Yeah, to be honest- it's different. People reading my blog and then those  
419 who come on my tours. Like I mean people reading my blog, they are from  
420 here. Yeah, it's a different demographic. And, people joining tours, they are  
421 not from here, I kept them separate but now I kind of merge, it's a bit weird. I  
422 don't know! (laughs).

423 **SR:** Great Ketty, we'll leave it there. Thanks very much for your time,  
424 anyway.

425 **KQ:** No problem. You're welcome.

## Appendix B

### Interview 2: Dr. Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire

Interview Code:

MMC2

*Food Historian, Lecturer in Culinary Arts at TU Dublin, Chair of the MA in Gastronomy and Food Studies and organiser of the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium.*

1. From your role as an educator, have you noticed a rise in Irish people's interest in food related topics or an eagerness to learn or develop culinary skills?
2. What inspired and encouraged you to start the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium? In its fifth year - Has there been greater interest and attendance since it began? (2010)
3. As a food historian, do you think the discourse around Irish food is beginning to move away slightly from the famine era and the 'Celtic Tiger' years? What is the current discourse surrounding it?
4. Is chef activism an important factor in the Irish food scene. Where do you see them leading or taking us in the future?
5. What traits do you think best describes Irish food?
6. How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries?
7. From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?
8. Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? If so how? And why do you think this is?
9. What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? In present times, do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
10. Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use? Do you know any foodies?

11. When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? Chefs, tourism boards, food bodies, producers, or food enthusiasts and campaigners etc.?
  
12. How do you, spread the word of Irish food? i.e., products, producers, places and so on.



1 **Intro:**

2 **SR:** Now I'm here with Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire. He's a food historian, a lecturer in  
3 in culinary arts, chair of MA in Gastronomy and Food Studies and organiser of the  
4 Dublin Gastronomy Symposium.

5 So, Máirtín from your role as an educator have you noticed a rise in people's interest  
6 in food related topics? Or an eagerness to develop or learn culinary skills?

7 **MMC:** There's a big question, as they say! I suppose I have, in that, I've been  
8 involved with food and food education for over twenty years. I'm fifty-one years old  
9 so I've been in this and for the last forty years, (or thirty-five/forty years) I've had  
10 some idea about what's being going on. And people's interest in food. And definitely  
11 I've seen a dramatic change. Like for example, I started working at the age of eleven  
12 in a grocery store, a local grocery store in Blackrock, and we used to sell fruit and  
13 vegetables, it was a classic grocery store, you know, fruit, veg, rashers, sausages,  
14 cooked ham, corned beef, all that kind of stuff. We used to do fish on a Friday, and  
15 we used to cut our own rashers and all that. But they were quite forward thinking the  
16 lads I was working for, in that they would have had spinach, they would have had  
17 kiwi fruit, they would have had the odd time, things like kumquats, wine apples  
18 sometimes, and some pomegranates. Things like this and some of these were very  
19 much ahead of the time. Even the idea about garlic and ginger was very much ahead  
20 of the time as well. So, I have seen where potatoes were the big vegetable thing, but  
21 with potatoes back then it wasn't just [present day] potatoes because this was pre-  
22 rooster, it was pentland dells or it was queens, or it was records or golden wonders or  
23 kerr pinks or all those different varieties. And that each family would have their own  
24 preference of the type of potato that they liked. Naturally, you had cabbage, that was  
25 big, onions, carrots turnips, parsnips. All that sort of stuff but not so much courgettes,  
26 not so much courgettes, not so much aubergines, not so much peppers. These were  
27 quite exotic at that time. Whereas nowadays, anything goes. Like spinach, I think  
28 there were only two people that used to shop in that shop, that bought spinach. You  
29 know, whereas now sure nearly everybody buys spinach regularly, without talking  
30 about rocket and all these other types. The other huge change would have been the  
31 idea of eating out or restaurants because people used to go to restaurants, years ago,  
32 just really to mark special occasions. I think the first time that I had been to a  
33 restaurant was when my sister and done her junior cert (or what was known as the  
34 inter cert at that time) and my parents brought the three eldest out to Blakes in  
35 Stillorgan. And this was a sort of marker that if you did well in your exams that you'd  
36 be rewarded that you'd be brought to a restaurant. You know what I mean, so this was  
37 sort of giving you a message. Wines would have been another thing. Back when I was  
38 growing up, you could say that wines came in three colours, blue, green and black.  
39 Because they were either, *Blue Nun*, *Green Label* or *Black Tower*. And they were all  
40 *Liebfraumilch* and maybe a *Pedrotti* maybe a *Mateus* rosé or the Californian carafe.  
41 And that was the exoticism of it. Whereas all that has changed and changed and  
42 changed utterly. We're all quite sophisticated now in our understanding of wine and  
43 showing our cultural capital through our wine choice. And that's not getting into  
44 [anything else], I'm here with a cappuccino in my hand as definitely we were tea  
45 drinkers not coffee drinkers. Do you know what I mean, I remember my first memory  
46 of coffee, would have been some dinner party, my parents made coffee, they would  
47 have taken out a percolator they got as a wedding present and using it. So, you sensed  
48 there was something special about this. I remember tasting it and I wasn't particularly  
49 fond of it. It was quite strong! But things have definitely changed dramatically and a  
50 lot of that has come from travel, a lot has also come with food in the media because

51 the amount of programming around food is quite dramatic now and also the idea of  
52 food and wine magazines in the past, although they're coming to an end with the  
53 world of social media taking over from print journalism. Things have changed  
54 absolutely dramatically over the last thirty-five years. And particularly over the last  
55 twenty years.

56 **SR:** And have you've seen more people taking up culinary skills courses or is it the  
57 same through the years?

58 **MMC:** It's hard to say because the landscape of culinary education has changed  
59 particularly in the last twenty years because you suddenly had the degree in culinary  
60 arts (we started it twenty years ago). The first time ever you could actually do a  
61 degree in culinary arts and even the idea of wine studies, gastronomy, all of these  
62 becoming topics. Food studies becoming topics that you could study. That was new  
63 because up until twenty years ago you could do basically an apprenticeship. You  
64 know there were vocational courses, apprenticeship courses. And even at that, it  
65 wasn't even a recognised trade and it still isn't a recognised trade and even if you did  
66 do an apprenticeship course, as such, with cert in professional cookery, we weren't a  
67 recognised trade like an electrician or like a plumber. So, there weren't any set rates  
68 of pay and you were also in a position that someone else could come in with no  
69 qualifications and also do your job. Whereas that couldn't happen if you were a  
70 plumber, a brick layer or a carpenter or any of those recognise trades. You needed x  
71 amount of paper otherwise you wouldn't be a member of the union and you wouldn't  
72 get your place in employment. That's another part, there has always been this problem  
73 of barriers of entry. In many ways there's no barriers of entry to the [culinary]  
74 profession because in one way it's one of the oldest professions going but in another  
75 was it's not a profession at all because it doesn't have those traditional things you  
76 need for a profession. Which would be a language of its own, a professional body that  
77 oversees you and that idea that you need to be qualified to get in. Code of ethics  
78 would be the third aspect, that normal professions would have.

79 **SR:** And, what inspired you to start the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium? At that  
80 time. That was around 2010 was it?

81 **MMC:** The first one was 2012. Then again, the bones of it probably would have  
82 started around 2010. I suppose the original background to that would have been 2000  
83 so, over twenty years ago, I started attending the Oxford Symposium in Food and  
84 Cookery. And, that had been on the go around 1979 or 1981 or something like that. It  
85 was around that period that it began and it's the longest running symposium around  
86 food in the world, at the moment. But, that's really where you could say I got my third  
87 level education in food, would have been through my regular attendance and also the  
88 fact that I did research. I wrote quite a number of papers. The Oxford Symposium is  
89 arranged around a theme every year, they use a different theme every year and I used  
90 to take the themes every year to try to shape or to guide some form of research that I  
91 would carry out normally on the area of Irish food. So, I think food and fat was the  
92 first, I did a paper on the history of the pig in Irish cuisine and culture. I think,  
93 vegetables would have been a theme. I might have done a paper on the potato.  
94 Nurture was a theme so I did a paper on mentoring because I would have been  
95 involved in mentoring, as part of a work-based program that was part of the degree  
96 course in culinary arts. And eggs, I did a paper with Andrea Scully, one of my  
97 students on that. Equally when it came to, I think, 'cured, fermented and pickled', I  
98 did a paper on corned beef with another one of my students, Padraic O'Gallagher. So,  
99 that was a journey for me of exploration, of learning of meeting like-minded people  
100 and I thought, "wow! why not try and do something similar here in Dublin and that's

101 really what led to the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium”. I also made contact with  
102 Brian Murphy and Eamon Maher who were over in Tallaght.  
103 **SR:** Oh right, Tallaght IT?  
104 **MMC:** Yeah, it was Tallaght IT at the time. And Brian was doing a PhD on ‘Place  
105 and Story in New World Wines and Old World Wines’ and he had a whole chapter on  
106 ‘The Irish Pub, Storytelling and Place’ and again I ended up being his external  
107 examiner for his PhD but we felt a friendship and we collaborated together in setting  
108 up the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium so really long before we had TUD  
109 [Technology University Dublin], nearly eight years before we had TUD, we actually  
110 had this collaborative project going which has continuously gone on between the two  
111 institutions, in Dublin, which are now the one.  
112 **SR:** Very good and have you noticed and increase in interest or attendance since back  
113 in 2012?  
114 **MMC:** Absolutely, yeah, nearly every year there’s been an increase in attendance and  
115 in interest and it’s become truly international as well. Like, I think we had something  
116 like twenty-three different nationalities at the last one. It was interesting also, that the  
117 2012 one coalesced with the beginning of a food tourism team in Fáilte Ireland. So,  
118 when I reached out to John Mulcahy [Fáilte Ireland] to look for some sponsorship for  
119 the event, he was very open to it. Because it actually liaised and fitted well with what  
120 they were doing in trying to promote food tourism within in the country.  
121 **SR:** Oh right.  
122 **MMC:** So, we worked in conjunction with them over a number of years. And again in  
123 2018, that was the first year we didn’t get any sponsorship from them but at that stage,  
124 John had retired and at that stage they were changing tact slightly in what they do.  
125 **SR:** Oh right! And then, from your food historian role then. Do you think the  
126 discourse around Irish food is beginning to move away, slightly from the famine era,  
127 and the Celtic Tiger Years? Or, what would be the current discourse surrounding it  
128 now?  
129 **MMC:** Well, I think it’s really exciting at the moment, because what we have now is  
130 we have people researching food from so many different angles. And really food  
131 history is just like any other form of social history except it is using food as a lens as  
132 opposed to using war, or class or using gender, or anything else, you know?  
133 **SR:** Yeah.  
134 **MMC:** But the more people carrying out research uncovers different aspects of the  
135 past, which opens our perspective and a lot of this information is then being passed  
136 through the media via documentary programmes or through articles in the newspaper  
137 or magazines. And also, through the fact, through the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium  
138 and other journals. This information is available online and open access so people can  
139 access information freely and openly through all sorts of platforms; podcasts. You  
140 know the fact that there’s history programmes on the radio now, that cover these  
141 things from time to time. Like I’ve had two students complete PhDs, one on the  
142 ‘Culinary Manuscripts of the Anglo-Irish Houses’ and another on diplomatic dining in  
143 Ireland. ‘The History of Diplomatic Dining in Ireland’. Which is two very different  
144 areas but two very interesting areas. I’ve another student just do a Masters on ‘The  
145 History of Irish Stew’ for example. And it’s great to have people getting deeper into  
146 disparate parts of Ireland’s culinary past. I’ve a student at the moment, nearly finished  
147 looking at claret, which is like the red wine of Bordeaux, and its importance in Ireland  
148 in the long Georgian period. So, that tells a different story then that what is regularly  
149 understood. When we think about food and the famine, we don’t necessarily think  
150 about this country, this discerning country that understood the value of good wine and

151 was actually looking down on England. A lot of Irish people when they went to  
152 England and they tasted the wine there, they would say, this is rubbish compared to  
153 what we normally have. It's a different narrative to what you normally hear.  
154 **SR:** Oh right, God!  
155 **SR:** So, do you think chef activism is an important factor in the Irish food scene? At  
156 the moment. I'd be talking about Irish chefs, say like, J.P. McMahon, Domini Kemp  
157 or even Mark Moriarty.  
158 **MMC:** Yeah, I think there are a number of people who are quite active, particularly, I  
159 think, because Irish chefs now are more well-known than they were in the past. To put  
160 it like that, there are a lot of household names now and what's also interesting with  
161 the household names, let's take JP McMahon [as an example]. JP McMahon is a very  
162 interesting character because, he's interesting on a number of fronts. Number one the  
163 fact that he was a food champion for Fáilte Ireland, and through that food champion  
164 role, he got to travel a bit and he got to experience the phenomenon of these food  
165 festivals as such. And he had the vision to imagine to start one in the West of Ireland,  
166 in October, which is off season.  
167 **SR:** I know, yeah.  
168 **MMC:** For five years in a row and he's continuing the next one, this year, as well. He  
169 has had the *Food on the Edge*, which has grown year on year. And actually, put  
170 Ireland on the map amongst international chefs. Like, I've just returned from a similar  
171 type of conference in Istanbul, the 'Parabere Forum for Women in Hospitality' and I  
172 met some Turkish chefs and other people from around the world who were very  
173 familiar with *Food on the Edge* because when they heard of Ireland they were familiar  
174 with *Food on the Edge*.  
175 **SR:** So, he's reaching an international [audience]?  
176 **MMC:** He's reaching an international awareness, amongst other chefs and also  
177 amongst other thought leaders, within the industry, internationally. You know?  
178 **SR:** Yeah.  
179 **MMC:** But he works in another way as well the fact that he has this sort of weekly  
180 column in the Irish Times, as well means that he gives as well, he gives a visibility  
181 about a chef writing in what would be considered 'the paper of record', in Ireland.  
182 And, I suppose, Paul Flynn would have done that role beforehand as did, Domini  
183 Kemp, as well. You know what I mean?  
184 **SR:** Yeah, yes.  
185 **MMC:** So, you suddenly have cultural figures within society, that you have chefs  
186 with this role and a voice in a leading paper. It does go up the level and it gives a  
187 certain status to what chefs have to say as well. But it is interesting from Domini's  
188 perspective. Like Domini came and she completed the Masters [in Gastronomy and  
189 Food Studies] programme last year and she's a very successful businesswoman,  
190 (before coming to do the Masters) and that. And, one of the reasons for her to do the  
191 Masters was that she wanted to be taken seriously.  
192 **SR:** I know, yeah, yeah.  
193 **MMC:** It's about, actually, it leads back to what was in the past, the idea that anyone  
194 could become a chef so to actually get the qualification and to actually show, that no,  
195 I know what I'm talking about. I've done the research and I'm not just talking off the  
196 top of my head. So, that was important to her and even the likes of JP [McMahon] is  
197 completing a PhD, at the moment, as well. So, I think a lot of people realise the  
198 importance of just not being seen, as maybe, just 'mouthpieces'. Venting off things  
199 but that they want to show that they've done the research and that what they say has  
200 value to it. Do you know? And they're interested in these interesting topics, whether

201 it's to do with obesity or sustainability or whether it's to do, with any of these global  
202 issues. They want to be well versed in what is going on.  
203 **SR:** Great, yeah and even the younger chefs like Mark Moriarty is very interesting as  
204 well.  
205 **MMC:** Yes, Mark Moriarty is very interesting as well, I think what you have with  
206 Mark but not just Mark, all that generation, because for the first time now...  
207 **SR:** It's reaching down the generations?  
208 **MMC:** It's coming down the generation but, they are coming from a cohort, they are  
209 the result of that initial new paradigm of liberal/vocational education, that started in  
210 Cathal Brugha Street, twenty years ago, with the BA in Culinary Arts. So, they were  
211 the first generation to come through that. To be given that level of education and  
212 opportunity so that they're actually being taught from early days to think critically, to  
213 be reflective practitioners, to not just be that old 'master/apprentice' role. Which was  
214 the idea that you had an empty head and that the master would pour the information  
215 into your head. But the idea was that we were co-creators of knowledge and that there  
216 was no right or wrong. And to constantly critique and constantly question, and  
217 constantly reflect on what you're doing; What's going on? What's really going on?  
218 How can it be done better? Is there another way of doing it? How was it done  
219 differently in other cultures? Etc., etc. And I think this has led to the success and well,  
220 is not exclusive to the BA in Culinary Arts but it was interesting that in the last  
221 Michelin [awarding's] first time recipients both had graduated from the program, a  
222 few years apart. Being Killeen Higgess up in *Variety Jones* and Kenneth Coulhane in  
223 the *Dissert* in London. And both would say that their experiences in college and their  
224 internships that were facilitated for them while they were in college; first and second  
225 year in Ireland and third year that they got to work international level, Both at home  
226 and internationally they got to experience what was going on internationally and what  
227 was going on at the highest level, at home. And not to be challenged by that and to  
228 critique it. What we call accelerated learning. So yeah, it's been an interesting time.  
229 **SR:** Yeah, and it's something that can be seen then, especially when Mark Moriarty  
230 covered it in the TV programme afterwards, it's then showcasing...  
231 **MMC:** It's then showcasing because even the TV programme that Mark carried out,  
232 the people on it were again, graduates of the college like Gráinne O'Keefe, Holly  
233 Dalton, Mark Jennings in *Pilgrims*, like they would have all come through Cathal  
234 Brugha Street as well. The only one who didn't was the fella from Donegal, who had  
235 been in Forest and Marcy, Ciarán Sweeney. He was the only one who hadn't come  
236 through Cathal Brugha Street.  
237 **SR:** There's a nice selection of them so, across the board. **MMC2:** Oh, there was  
238 another guy, the guy in *Aimsir*. He is only here a year now, in the village of Lyons,  
239 Co. Kildare- Jordan [Bailey] (he is from Cornwall).  
240 **SR:** And then what traits do you think best describes Irish food?  
241 **MMC:** What traits best describe Irish food- healthy, tasty, fresh, traditional, local.  
242 That probably covers it, if you're talking about the best traits to describe it. That's  
243 what I would use, yeah.  
244 **SR:** And then, how do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other  
245 countries?  
246 **MMC:** I think how other countries view Ireland gastronomically is changing  
247 drastically and improving all the time. It still has a way to go. And the way to go is  
248 not to do with the quality, the way to go is to do with the perception. Because as  
249 research done by Fáilte Ireland shows that people don't necessarily associate Ireland  
250 with good food but when they come, they are more often than not overwhelmingly,

251 they're normally pleasantly surprised. But this is changing, and this will change but  
252 there is a journey still to go to bring it to where the likes of Copenhagen is or  
253 Denmark is, at the moment. Foodwise or whatever. But that said, it's definitely going  
254 in the right direction.

255 **SR:** Great, yeah.

256 **MMC:** I think when people think of Ireland they automatically think of green, fresh,  
257 local, do you know what I mean? So, they have a very positive...they think of beef,  
258 and seafood and they think of milk and butter so there is a lot of good stuff that people  
259 think of automatically with Ireland. Green, lush pasture but again there's a journey  
260 between with moving that, suddenly with it being a place such as France or Italy, or  
261 such [known] for a cuisine.

262 **SR:** So, from your experience, what way would you describe foodism or foodie-ism?

263 **MMC:** Well foodie-ism is sort of a word or a movement that has appeared really in  
264 the last twenty years, as such. And part of it is linked with the idea of the Celtic Tiger  
265 in Ireland. Ireland was a country of emigration as supposed to immigration, you know  
266 what I mean? When suddenly, that changed drastically when the economy rose.

267 Actually, it's funny I was just watching the programme on the Irish soccer team in the  
268 1980s and 90s. 88 and 1990 the world cup. That in many ways, that was the beginning  
269 of us having pride in ourselves as a nation and a self confidence in ourselves. Because  
270 we were a country particularly in the 80s...like...there was mass emigration, there  
271 was murder and terror in the north and really there wasn't a lot of positivity, in the air.  
272 And we were made feel like second class citizens. I remember emigrating in the mid-  
273 1980s, leaving school and working on the building sites in London. And you were,  
274 there were all the characteristics, the Paddy, the Mick, the thick. Uneducated labourer,  
275 sort of stuff which had been around for about 150 years. It was the same when the  
276 Irish went to America first, you know what I mean? That they were looked at as just  
277 thick and you know just manual hard workers, as such, but not bright, not smart. Not  
278 any of these, sort of things. I mean and you were looked down upon. Whereas, with  
279 the confidence that we gained I supposed from a bit of sport, then a confidence in  
280 economy and then in also other sporting ways. It wasn't just in soccer, in people like  
281 Seán Kelly, [Stephen] Roche and all doing well in the cycling. Others, bands like U2  
282 doing well on the world stage, Seamus Heaney doing well getting Noble Prizes and  
283 stuff like that. All of these things suddenly helped lift our confidence, as a nation and  
284 part of that then part of that then came through in the food as well. A lot of people had  
285 travelled abroad and when they came back, they realised, we had really good food  
286 here and they opened up restaurants and the quality of the food got so much better.  
287 And then, eating out then transformed from what had been a thing you did to celebrate  
288 an occasion or moments in life to becoming a weekly or a fortnightly event. And it  
289 was a thing that you did instead of going to the pub, you went to a restaurant for a  
290 meal (and then maybe for a few drinks). So, it transformed completely.

291 **SR:** So, at the moment, do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? Or  
292 over the last few years?

293 **MMC:** I think, for the last fifteen years or so if you get into a conversation with  
294 people, quite often the conversation will turn to food quite quickly; What did you  
295 like? What did you have? Where have you eaten? Or, have you tried this new place?  
296 Have you heard this? Have you eaten that? Have you tried this new wine? This new  
297 craft beer, this new gastro-pub? This new, this, that and the other. I suppose it's a very  
298 accessible way to speak to strangers, it's something that unifies us all, you know. So,  
299 in many ways it has been good in that way. I suppose there is a certain amount of  
300 snobbery around it. And I suppose, the best example of that snobbery probably would



301 be the way that, Paul Howard in his [fictional] character, Ross O'Carroll-Kelly uses  
302 food to try and identify or highlight a certain type of snobbery, particularly in south  
303 county Dublin but it doesn't have to be. It's south county Dublin because that's where  
304 he is writing about but really it manifests itself in Irish society in general. And this  
305 idea about moving with the latest thing and the latest thing it could be food. But  
306 equally Ross O'Carroll-Kelly's character, that writing is also very good [it applies] to  
307 fashion labels and even on the latest hip place is to hangout. Whether it would be a  
308 bar or a wine bar or a spa or resort or a nightclub or whatever. Or even a place to go  
309 on holidays, that's the latest ski resort or the latest cool place to be. That people's  
310 cultural capital [is] shown through food or clothing or accoutrements. It's quite  
311 interesting that way. But definitely, I would suggest that the average person knows as  
312 much if not more about food than a chef in Ireland may have known twenty-five years  
313 ago.

314 **SR:** Okay, bar maybe those who trained abroad or something?

315 **MMC:** No, but even with that because what it was when people trained abroad,  
316 people trained within the French classical cuisine. Whereas nowadays, people's  
317 knowledge of food is much more global because within the French classical cuisine,  
318 you know how to cook French classical cuisine and you knew the rich repertoire of  
319 French classical cuisine but you didn't know Belgium cookery, you didn't know  
320 Dutch cookery, you didn't know Thai cookery, you didn't know South African  
321 cookery or Mexican cookery because nowadays we are so much more globalised.  
322 We're familiar with spices from Goa, ceviche from Peru, all these different foods  
323 from all over the world, you know. The minute you name a region or a country of the  
324 world, you can nearly associate a food with it and that is so much different as to how  
325 it was in the past. And, part of that comes from the change in knowledge because as I  
326 said, in the past, it was an empty head that was being filled and trained in a very  
327 classical way but was not asked to think outside of that box or to look at any other  
328 cultures. Whereas now, we're living in a much more broad and global world and  
329 much better travelled as well. People will have holidayed in many places and will  
330 have known people who have lived in various countries and not just that, but now  
331 work with people from all over the world. Whereas, when I was growing up in  
332 Ireland, the only black people you saw in Dublin, years ago were working in the  
333 College of Surgeons or something. So, we're now a truly multi-cultural, multi-ethnic,  
334 multi-racial country.

335 **SR:** And I suppose, there's always online access as well?

336 **MMC:** Absolutely, yeah, yeah.

337 **SR:** So, would you consider yourself to be a foodie? Going back to the foodie  
338 expression.

339 **MMC:** Well, I suppose I am a foodie whether I want to consider myself one or not.  
340 It's funny I was having this discussion with some students I had earlier on today...in  
341 that I clearly am a foodie in that I've a real passion and interest in food, in food  
342 history, in all things to do with food and in trying new types of food. So, I'm very  
343 open to trying new types of food even if I was to go into a restaurant and I was to get  
344 a menu, I would normally go with something that's a little bit quirky, a little bit  
345 different, maybe some offal or something a bit spicy or something. As opposed to just  
346 going with a steak or going with a salmon, you know. So, I suppose I am foodie but  
347 what's interesting is that there is a pejorative understanding about a foodie because  
348 [of] some people who may be, I wouldn't use foodie as a badge to label myself but I  
349 probably do fall in under the foodie category in the same way that I'm a native Irish  
350 speaker. And that I was brought up speaking Irish in Dublin and I raised my own

351 family speaking Irish, but I don't consider myself as a Gaeilgeóir. A Gaeilgeóir is  
352 sometimes a pejorative term that is sometimes used by other people to label me. I  
353 wouldn't consider me, a foodie, but some people would consider me one, but I  
354 suppose I am both a foodie and a Gaeilgeóir. But I just consider myself, me!  
355 **SR:** Very good! So, what terms would you use now if you're talking about other  
356 people, do you know any foodies, yourself?  
357 **MMC:** I know loads of foodies, I suppose! An awful lot of people who come through  
358 the programmes are foodies, whether they'd like to consider themselves as foodies or  
359 not. As, I mentioned one of the students didn't like, (even though most of the students  
360 would consider themselves foodies), one didn't like it. He decided that today, he  
361 wasn't a foodie because he felt was professional and he was in the industry so that  
362 made him not a foodie, that made him above being a foodie. And he had an issue with  
363 people who sort of just knew a certain amount, or I suppose a certain 'surface  
364 knowledge' about food and yet considered themselves open to critique people who  
365 know so much more than them but that doesn't stop them critiquing them, whether  
366 it's on social media or on *Tripadvisor* and things like that. And casting aspersions on  
367 what [the knowledgeable people] are doing when maybe they're not sufficiently  
368 qualified to cast that critique. So, yeah it is a difficult term maybe it's a term that  
369 someone should use to describe someone else as opposed to what someone should  
370 self- describe themselves. Maybe, that would be a better way of looking at it.  
371 **SR:** Yeah, I know yeah. And what do you think their traits mainly are? Is it just the  
372 love of food or the fact that they try to display their knowledge?  
373 **MMC:** I think, foodies are really interested and people who are really passionate and  
374 who like talking about food. People who are interested in going to restaurants or  
375 trying new dishes out. People who are quite adventurous. People who like to keep up  
376 to date, I suppose with the latest trends and what's happening. People who like to  
377 know the back story to foods. I suppose the terroir, who produces, things like that,  
378 you know. I think these are all the traits you would get from foodies. They are  
379 interested in authenticity, they're interested in storytelling, they're interested in terroir  
380 and backstory really as opposed to just eating the food for fuel.  
381 **SR:** And do you think (as you mentioned earlier) do you think it's to do with  
382 snobbery? Or do you feel that that's drifting away now? Or is there always going to  
383 be people like Paul Howard talks about?  
384 **MMC:** No, listen you're always going to get a certain amount of snobbery but that's  
385 true about every corner of society. You know in every group of society there is people  
386 who will try and use whatever limited knowledge they have to try and elevate  
387 themselves. But that says more about them than it does about the category in general.  
388 I wouldn't tarnish all foodies because a few foodies are eejits. In the same way I  
389 wouldn't target all Irish speakers because some Irish speakers are eejits. You know or  
390 academics because some academics are eejits or any other cohort, sports fans or  
391 whatever. So, you'll get that!  
392 **SR:** Do you see them as more of a subculture or more mainstream now? The foodie  
393 movement?  
394 **MMC:** It's a bit contradictory to call them a mainstream subculture (laughs).  
395 **SR:** No, I said, are they more subculture or are they heading more mainstream?  
396 **MMC:** Well, I think they have now gone mainstream but I think we need to  
397 remember sometimes, when you are into food or in the food business, you tend to be  
398 speaking amongst your peers, amongst similar type of people and there is still a lot of  
399 people in the general public who still consider food just to be something that they eat  
400 as fuel. So, foodies [are] still a subculture but it's quite a large subculture, it is



401 definitely growing but it's not 'mainstream' mainstream. It would be more  
402 mainstream amongst a certain socio-cultural or socio-economic grouping, so there is  
403 definitely an amount of cultural capital associated with food knowledge, in the same  
404 way there would be about literature or film, or about drama or theatre. Or anything  
405 like that. So, it fits into those brackets. I mean like- have you been to the latest, good  
406 restaurants or have you been to the latest play in *The Abbey* or *The Gate*? Or have you  
407 been to the latest art exhibition or whatever. It shows that you have that sort of  
408 cultural nous about you.

409 **SR:** So, there's still a lot of people out there who wouldn't know or who wouldn't be  
410 involved in the scene? Average people.

411 **MMC:** There's a lot of people average people who would just like to have just fish  
412 and chips, steak and chips or just meat and two veg and that's it. The same way that  
413 they're happy just to watch their *Coronation Street* as opposed to going to the latest  
414 theatre [production] or to read the latest book or following the *Booker Prize*  
415 shortlisting's or whatever.

416 **SR:** Speaking about contemporary Irish food culture, who would you consider the  
417 main food actors? Such as chefs, tourism boards, food bodies, producers, food  
418 enthusiast or campaigners etc.

419 **MMC:** I think it works in different levels and I think amongst what you would call  
420 the foodies or those who are in the industry, as such. That it would be the likes of JP  
421 McMahon, it would be the likes of McKenna, John and Sally McKenna. It would be  
422 the likes of John Mulcahy who was in Fáilte Ireland and stuff like that. And people  
423 like that who would be the main movers and shakers. Whereas amongst the general  
424 public, they would probably mention people like Nevin Maguire or Catherine Fulvio  
425 or Darina Allen. So, what you have, even though Darina would hover between the  
426 two as such. So, there is a difference between what we'd call the 'foodie' foodies and  
427 what you'd call the everyday people who are also interested in food but maybe get  
428 their information from through mainstream radio, telly [television] etc. Which is sort  
429 of the Neven Maguire side as opposed to the more (not saying) esoteric, in the terms  
430 of the like about JP [McMahon] or the guys who are seen and who are very active  
431 online.

432 **SR:** Yeah, or like the people, like John or Sally McKenna who have been active for  
433 years.

434 **MMC:** They have been active for years, but they've also been controversial.

435 **SR:** Okay.

436 **MMC:** So, John and Sally McKenna have been controversial in a number of ways, in  
437 for example that they are proposing a specific type of local, traditional, organic,  
438 selection. For example, like one of the key things they have done with is problematic  
439 is that in their 'Hundred Best Places to Eat in Ireland', over the years they have never  
440 once mentioned Patrick Guilbaud's restaurant, even though for many years it was the  
441 only two-star Michelin restaurant. Now, that was clearly a philosophical and maybe  
442 even a marketing ploy, you know because they are championing certain types of food.  
443 They are sort of saying that they would think that a good bacon sandwich, served with  
444 a bit of passion from a good garage would be better than a meal in Guilbaud's, you  
445 know?

446 **SR:** Yeah.

447 **MMC:** So, I'd have problems with that! And I think that sometimes they are courting  
448 controversy as well as anything else. Definitely, they've got a bit of that hippie  
449 philosophy, behind them and they have an interest in the West Cork producers of

450 cheese, hams, not just West Cork but all over the country, there's a certain type of  
451 establishment that they tend to champion. And maybe not others.  
452 **SR:** Okay, oh right!  
453 **MMC:** Like interestingly, I would have considered the likes of a tastemaker would  
454 have been of Catherine Cleary in the *Irish Times* and maybe Marie-Claire Digby even  
455 whereas you would see the likes of Lucinda O'Sullivan or Katie McGuinness (in  
456 some of the other newspapers) might be more everyday as such and not [taste  
457 makers], are considered slightly differently in their approach.  
458 **SR:** And Catherine Cleary would definitely be restaurants as well.  
459 **MCC:** Yeah.  
460 **SR:** Maybe, [The McKenna's] are just trying to distance themselves from just being  
461 restaurant critics. You know, I didn't realise that now. That's interesting alright.  
462 **MMC:** There was two schools of taught in France amongst the critics and the guides.  
463 You had the *Michelin* Guides on one level and then on the other level you had the  
464 *Gault and Millau* Guide. And *Gault and Millau* were always seen to be championing  
465 new ideas and innovation. Whereas I always felt that, the McKenna's where the *Gault*  
466 *and Millau* of Ireland, as opposed to *Michelin*. They were nearly anti *Michelin*, in a  
467 way.  
468 **SR:** Okay. alright. And then, so you yourself, how do you spread the word of Irish  
469 food?  
470 **MMC:** Well, I've been spreading the word of Irish food for many years now and I've  
471 been doing it in a number of different ways. I've been doing it through my academic  
472 research and articles, as I mentioned, from starting off at the Oxford Symposium Food  
473 and Cookery and a number of different papers I wrote for them. I've completed a PhD  
474 on the history of Dublin restaurants, and I've written quite a number of articles around  
475 that. I have also worked with the Association of Irish Franco Studies and again with  
476 the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium on promoting Irish food as well, wherever I can.  
477 But I also have done it using the media, both radio, television and newspapers. In that,  
478 I have been a go-to person for the media if they want to have someone to speak about  
479 the history of Irish food or to speak about Irish food in general. And, I've always  
480 championed it and I've always and I've always challenged preconceptions of it based  
481 on facts. As opposed to general perceptions [instead] of facts. I've carried out a  
482 number of different television programmes but the one championing Irish food, that I  
483 did was called *Blásta* for TG4, in 2018. The idea was working with the Folklore  
484 Commission and was travelling the length and breadth of the country and uncovering  
485 parts of the Irish food tradition, from the different areas of Ireland and showing that  
486 there is a variety. Between Waterford and the blaa and things like that. Whether it's  
487 down in Kerry or up in Donegal or Dublin. That there are different regional foods and  
488 regional dishes in different parts of Ireland. So, it's not just that we have an Irish  
489 cuisine, we actually have regional cuisines as well, even though we are actually quite  
490 a small country. So, that there is this diversity and distinctiveness between the  
491 different area and what we like to eat. So, quite often with these things, is that they're  
492 hidden in plain sight and they're too close to us to actually know and it takes someone  
493 to actually step back and to actually start asking questions or to look at it  
494 dispassionately, or to do the research or to compare with other countries to see that  
495 actually we do have quite a strong food tradition. And that food and hospitality are  
496 really embedded in who we are as a people because if someone comes to your house,  
497 you won't be happy until you have a cup of tea or a drink in their hand and either a  
498 sandwich or a biscuit or something. Because that goes back to ancient times in that  
499 you always looked after the traveller and the worst thing you could be known as was –

500 I went to that house and Jesus I wasn't even offered a cup of tea! You know what I  
501 mean, that would be shocking! (laughs)

502 **SR:** And do you think (I'll just put on a sub question there!) Do you think with  
503 regards to introducing people to folklore and to regional cuisines there, via the *Blásta*  
504 programme and in regards about getting the voice out internationally, that some  
505 people in Ireland still haven't discovered those parts, like, they may still not know the  
506 distinctive regional dishes of other areas of Ireland. Is something missing from us  
507 trying to get the message abroad?

508 **MMC:** Indeed. Well, I think we're definitely moving in the right direction and year  
509 on year, I am pleasantly surprised with the level of knowledge around food and  
510 around food history and provenance and story amongst the average Irish person but  
511 also within the industry. And you can see even with influence and interest in the  
512 Masters of Gastronomy and Food Studies from people from around the country,  
513 people come from all over the country. That there's a hunger for knowledge around  
514 this area and what has been really interesting is to see the new effects that this Masters  
515 programme (which is only three years on the go) is starting to have on people's  
516 thinking. For example, I was speaking to [a student] earlier on, who is working with  
517 the *Ferncullen* Whiskey distillery in Powerscourt and she has brought in this idea  
518 about a food and whiskey pairing tasting and it's becoming really interesting. But it is  
519 in telling the local story, whether it's Wicklow Heather Honey, whether it's local  
520 Wicklow cheeses, whether its charcuterie from the area, and also telling the story of  
521 the history of the area and the food history of the area, tying it in with the barley and  
522 with the whiskey. And even the idea of the name *Ferncullen* that is was the old name  
523 for that region, which went all the way from Bray out to Tallaght. So, you know, it's  
524 place names, it's storytelling, it's mythology, it's folklore, and that these things that  
525 we've been teaching on the programme are now actually becoming commercialised  
526 which is really interesting.

527 **MMC:** And helping to improve food tourism within Ireland because whiskey tourism  
528 is a really growing aspect of the Irish food story, there's more distilleries growing up  
529 now than anywhere else. Irish whiskey is the fastest growing beverage in the world at  
530 the moment.

531 **SR:** Yeah, that's right.

532 **MMC:** And, it's really, really interesting. And again, I have a PhD student who is  
533 looking at the old recipes, the old mash bills which are basically the recipes of how  
534 whiskey was produced and the different recipes of how much oats, barley, wheat,  
535 malted barley etcetera was used in these historic recipes and whiskies in the past. And  
536 he is doing that research at the moment in order to help shape innovation within the  
537 modern whiskey industry. So, we are really living in exciting times.

538 **SR:** Right, so, it's sharing the message that way, via history, folklore and heritage of  
539 the areas.

540 **MMC:** A simple thing like with the *Aisling Mc Conglinne* [an ancient Irish verse].  
541 It's like a twelfth century tale about a land of milk and honey which has a wonderful  
542 description of all the foods and drinks in Ireland, shows that our ancestors were very  
543 sophisticated actually probably ahead of so much of the world in this area and that  
544 food is not just something that has appeared in the last twenty years in Ireland. That  
545 we have always had it, we've always been renowned for our hospitality and we've  
546 always been renowned for our variety of food.

547 **SR:** Great! Okay I'm going to stop it there so. Thanks very much Máirtín, that was  
548 great. Thanks very much.

549 **MMC:** You're welcome.

## Appendix C

### Interview 3- Anthony O'Toole

Code:

#### AOT3

*Food, Drink, Education and Business Advisor, Euro-toques Ireland representative, ex Fáilte Ireland Food Champion and Chef.*

1. From your role as an educator, have you noticed a rise in Irish people's interest in food related topics or an eagerness to learn or develop culinary skills?
2. Is chef activism an important factor in the Irish food scene? Where do you see them leading us in the future?
3. Other interviewees have mentioned that we need to share the message more to a global audience...about Irish food and the changes that are happening...how can we disseminate the message more?
4. You were a Failte Ireland food champion, do you think this was a valuable role? How has it benefitted Irish food culture and gastro-tourism?
5. What do you think best describes Irish food? A trait or an example?
6. How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? You many have received feedback when you were a food champion?
7. From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?
8. Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? If so how? And why do you think this is?
9. What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
10. Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use? Do you know any foodies?

11. When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? Chefs, tourism bodies, food boards, producers, or enthusiasts and campaigners etc.?
  
12. How do you, spread the word of Irish food? i.e., products, producers, places and so on.

1 Intro:  
2 **SR:** Hi Anthony, thanks for taking the call. How are you?  
3 **AOT:** No problem and you?  
4 **SR:** Ah good, not bad. So, will I start straight into it?  
5 **AOT:** You can, thanks.  
6 **SR:** From your role as an educator, have you noticed a rise in Irish people's interest in  
7 food relate topics or an eagerness to learn or develop culinary skills?  
8 **AOT:** Yes, I have it's a big rise. A lot more people are questioning things. Instead of  
9 just listening a lot of people have opinions now. Are willing to debate.  
10 **SR:** Okay, great. And do you think chef activism is an important factor in the Irish  
11 food scene.  
12 **AOT:** Yes, it is, and social media I think, has given a massive platform for that.  
13 Basically, to express their own opinions, their own identities and experience and to  
14 help others.  
15 **SR:** Yeah, and where to you see them leading us in the future?  
16 **AOT:** Chefs leading us?  
17 **SR:** Yes, in the food scene, what areas do you think they lead in? Like sustainability.  
18 **AOT:** A couple of areas- I think education is one. Chefs are really frustrated with the  
19 younger generation with the younger generation, in terms of how they are educated  
20 and not educated. Trying to get chefs to be educated in what's require now, in the  
21 current, not what was required years ago. And then sustainability definitely, what is  
22 all around them because it is all linked to cost, at the end of the day. Chefs are driving  
23 more for the younger generation to understand that you need to have business focus  
24 when you are cooking.  
25 **SR:** Okay, to focus themselves more on that, as such.  
26 **AOT:** Yeah, to understand that, a potato – where it came from and how you can use  
27 it. It's not just about mastering your technique as it was years ago. The chefs before  
28 they were just told, 'to do this'! Now it's much more awareness of your time, the  
29 factors around you, the produce you are using, how long it stores, the presentation so  
30 it's understanding the entire running of a kitchen essentially. Instead of just managing  
31 your section, in a way that kitchens used to be managed years ago. In terms of a  
32 French classical kitchen, chefs just had one role and then they moved into another role  
33 but now they need to be aware of everyone's roles.  
34 **SR:** Oh yeah, so that everyone is considered, in the big picture.  
35 **AOT:** And it's down to cost, it's all driven by cost and down to cost because there is  
36 less margin in running a restaurant now.  
37 **SR:** Okay. And then other interviewees have mentioned that we need to share the  
38 message more to a global audience, about Irish food and the changes that are  
39 happening. How can we disseminate the message more?  
40 **AOT:** How chefs can?  
41 **SR:** No, even other people from different backgrounds as well.  
42 **AOT:** One of the things of how we can get the global message out there is first we  
43 need to support local first before we go global. And this is down to how our  
44 agricultural system is run in Ireland, we export 90% and we import a lot. Unless we  
45 shift that around, we'll never get the global message send out there about Ireland's  
46 food culture because if you can't access it locally. As for example me- if I can't  
47 access fish and I'm in a county, Wexford that's surrounded on two sides by water. If I  
48 can't access it how are a global [community] going to access it, if they come to visit  
49 us. So, that's what needs to happen, if you go to Italy or France or Spain or Portugal,  
50 you instantly get access to the local food. But, in Ireland you don't, it's very hard

51 because in Ireland we don't have farmer's markets in the middle of town, local stores  
52 that are seasonally focused. It you walk into any of those places in Ireland it's full of  
53 international food, imported food. It's imported chicken, you can see imported lamb  
54 and these are items that are part of the Irish food culture. Even potatoes and onions we  
55 imported them and we've the best weather to grow them. So, it's activism on the  
56 ground first before we can consider going global. And that's down to every kitchen,  
57 down to culinary schools supporting local producers. I keep going on about how  
58 wonderful GMIT are with their work with local producers and getting the students to  
59 act at that. When they know about it, they go out into the world working, know about  
60 where their chicken came from, where the vegetables are coming from. They know it's  
61 local, they know the person who is making it, they know how much it cost. Most  
62 likely, they have all been to them and that then goes into industry. I've been working  
63 with a chef who never came from that background before, but they get into that  
64 kitchen and it's like 'train the trainer' but it goes from young upwards.

65 **SR:** You were a Fáilte Ireland food champion, do you think this was a valuable role?  
66 And how has it benefitted Irish food culture and gastro tourism?

67 **AOT:** Yes, it's been an amazing role and it ended last year and is something that is  
68 missed. Because it allows government and particularly Fáilte Ireland to govern food  
69 tourism and tourism in general and to act on what can be seen on the ground and to  
70 speak to people and develop policy and to develop a new strategy. And that's why  
71 their new Food and Drink Tourism strategy which was launched last year was  
72 developed with food champions, on the ground. We all consulted voluntary on that to  
73 get the right message out there and they were the right people who were doing it.  
74 Because [previous to this] it's is always the bigger industry people that they [liaise  
75 with]. This time they engaged people fulltime to liaise with government departments,  
76 on what the policy should be to benefit themselves. And it has always been the  
77 smaller on the ground is what Irish food culture is about. And it's always lost in  
78 translation and this is what the food champion network is about essentially. It's all  
79 linked. I believe that's how they got the message out there quicker. That's where the  
80 *Taste the Island* thing came from. We helped Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland and  
81 Tourism N. I. to get the word out there. It was developed with the food champions on  
82 the ground. It's not just about bacon and cabbage and Irish stew or Guinness. Like a  
83 prime example would be Guinness drinks because they've been dominating the drinks  
84 market for 80/90 years because Fáilte Ireland has allowed that and now it's stopping  
85 because we've implemented and been told to help and get the 'small' people out  
86 there.

87 **SR:** Oh, so the food champions were involved with the triad of Fáilte Ireland,  
88 Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland under the *Taste the Island*[initiative]?

89 **AOT:** Yes! *Taste the Island* came from that strategy and that's because of the food  
90 champion network.

91 **SR:** Right, very good, okay. And just as you were speaking there about Irish food,  
92 what do you think best describes Irish food? A trait or even an example.

93 **AOT:** What is Irish food? Irish food is our produce. It's not like France, it's their  
94 cookery, their technique, it's how they cook with their produce. But in Ireland, it's all  
95 about the produce, it's what we can get from the ground and the sea, and we don't  
96 need to do very [much] cooking with it, in Ireland. It's similar too, equally if you  
97 consider [the country's] produce, it's our beautiful potatoes, our herbs, our seafood,  
98 our lamb which you can taste where it comes from. Depending if it's Wicklow or  
99 Achill Island, Connemara or Kerry. There's a very regional focus from its taste and  
100 flavours and that's Irish food. It's simple and accessible.



101 **SR:** So, it's mostly the sense of place from it?  
102 **AOT:** Sadly, there's some great places around the world who have access to Irish  
103 food and that type of food – like seafood - you can get great Irish seafood in China or  
104 Japan and they do very little with it. Compared to in Ireland, we don't get access to it  
105 at all. And, it's the same even with the beef, our beef is amazing but we're getting the  
106 second-grade beef in Ireland. The best gets exported all the time.  
107 **SR:** How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? Have  
108 you received feedback when you were a food champion?  
109 **AOT:** There's two perceptions of Ireland, when people come here, their perception  
110 changes- on how diverse and fresh and organic it is. And when I mean organic, I  
111 mean how natural it is or how close it is to the ground. And how it's more people  
112 focused. And the other perception is always about bacon and cabbage and Irish food  
113 that [has] a very 'old' focus. That's just down to our advertising and the perception of  
114 what people think- [a] drinking culture and that we all eat potatoes, bacon, ham and  
115 that's it. And it's a Catholic thing as well. And it's back to [us]- we're not educating  
116 people in Ireland about what Irish food culture was about and what it is. [So] how can  
117 you change perception globally. Because if you ask any Irish person in agriculture,  
118 what is Irish food? They will always say bacon and cabbage, which it is, but it's only  
119 a small part about what Irish food is about. You'll have very few people that will say  
120 it's oysters, it's seaweed, it's lamb and when I say lamb, I mean, lamb, mutton and  
121 hogget, it's going back fifteen years and we're very short term in that thinking in  
122 Ireland. We don't really value what we have.  
123 **SR:** Yeah, so [people] don't go out and look and see, what else is out there? A lot of  
124 people stick to what they are used to, as such.  
125 **AOT:** And even some people, what they're used to, have changed their shopping  
126 habits very quickly in Ireland. My granny for example who lives on a farm and ten  
127 years ago we used to shop locally but now she goes to Lidl every week. And this is a  
128 person who loves her food and used to grow all her food and still loves on a working  
129 farm. And its change, and I get frustrated with her all the time. I try to understand all  
130 the time- why. Why are you going in? She says because it's accessible, local stores  
131 don't have the variety anymore and it's very hard if the local butchers are closed, and  
132 I can understand that -the drive for convenience.  
133 **SR:** And from your experience, can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?  
134 **AOT:** What is foodism? Foodism is, it's a trend. For me it's foodie, it's something  
135 that's current, it's trendy, it's popular to say that you're a foodie- to go out and eat  
136 and to socialise. It's part of your image. Your lifestyle. It's not something like when I  
137 say foodism or I think that it's not someone that's really passionate about authentic or  
138 real, it's more something that's popular.  
139 **SR:** Okay, yeah. And do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? And  
140 if so how? As in nowadays...  
141 **AOT:** In general? I don't think so, no. I think it's changing but currently I think it's  
142 not an important aspect for Irish people. It's part of a necessity. We don't value it.  
143 **SR:** It's still a struggle to change people's habits or perceptions, I suppose?  
144 **AOT:** Yes, and it is down to the drive for convenience because good food is now  
145 more expensive. The rise of supermarkets like back about ten years ago, we didn't  
146 have the amount of supermarkets that we have now. And because of the insert of Lidl  
147 and Aldi in the supermarket chain so they have driven costs. It's down to costs not  
148 quality. And it's down how Irish people are followers; they'll just follow the next  
149 thing and believe that we should be spending a euro for a litre of milk instead of  
150 €1.50. That we used to spend ten years ago.



- 151 **SR:** So, they are mostly just looking for bargains.
- 152 **AOT:** Yeah, they don't weigh it out against good food would be in the end.
- 153 **SR:** And, just to speak of foodies there again. Would you see them as a subculture, or  
154 would they be more mainstream than a subculture...whereas years ago...would they  
155 be a large group in Ireland?
- 156 **AOT:** Yes, I think it's more mainstream, I think, it's more popular. It's a thing now to  
157 go to Starbucks, as a teenager, and that classifies you as a foodie. And via the next  
158 thing and that is where veganism comes in to play because it is the next [big] thing for  
159 particularly the younger generation and it's the popular thing to do regards eating.  
160 But, if you ask any of them why they're doing it, it's a trend, it's people to follow and  
161 to be part of the phenomenon. However, I wouldn't say a cult but it's a following. It  
162 will soon move on to something else in a while.
- 163 **SR:** But it's not a moral stance or anything- veganism?
- 164 **AOT:** No, most of it is not. I think some of it, it is a moral stance, like I look at a  
165 relation of mine who has recently gone vegan and she thinks it's a moral thing. But  
166 it's not because they are not looking at the bigger picture and it will take time.
- 167 **SR:** It'll what? It'll take time.
- 168 **AOT:** But at the moment it's because it's popular. [The consensus is] if you're eating  
169 meat at the moment it's because you are destroying the environment, essentially.
- 170 **SR:** So, they want people to change as such but it's not looking at the whole story  
171 behind it. Or the two-sides to the story.
- 172 **AOT:** No, we're followers. It takes or if you got a celebrity or a bigger person to  
173 explain this, people would listen.
- 174 **SR:** And then yourself then, would you call yourself a foodie?
- 175 **AOT:** No, I hate the word.
- 176 **SR:** Yeah, okay. And do you know any foodies, yourself then?
- 177 **AOT:** Yeah, I do, I'd have friends who would classify themselves as foodies and  
178 think they know a lot about food. Which some people do but they don't, it's the  
179 understanding behind, it's that you're not following what marketing is doing or what  
180 the trend is. You're doing something that is actually ethically right. Or what's good  
181 quality and good quality against cost as well.  
182 But I don't know a lot who will spend, but there are a few foodies out there who will  
183 spend 20euro on an organic chicken, but other people won't.
- 184 **SR:** But is that for quality, as such, do they believe it's quality?
- 185 **AOT:** Yeah, because I know a lot of foodies, who think they know a lot about food  
186 and then they'll go and eat in a *Press Up* group restaurant and spend, I don't know; a  
187 hundred euro, on a dinner. And, then I would go and have a so much better dinner in  
188 Chapter One for 80 euro. Which is higher quality, more of an experience and quite  
189 unique. And I just have the knowledge to know that *Press Up* is all marketing and it's  
190 not right compared to Chapter One and I know it's more valuable. Do you get what I  
191 mean?
- 192 **SR:** Yeah, but that comes from experience, from your role as a chef probably?
- 193 **AOT:** Yes, from my background. It's experience but it's my nature as well, I question  
194 things. I'm not afraid to read things and to keep reading and to find the right sources  
195 compared to people who will just listen to one person and say that's what it is. And  
196 that's were it comes in for a follower because they'll just listen to one type of person  
197 or just one type of group. A prime example is the *Press Up* group. The *Press Up*  
198 group have a great following and they think outside of that world doesn't exist.  
199 Because they all just dine in the *Press Up* group and they think that's amazing. And

200 their charging a ridiculous amount of money and the qualities not great. The have a  
201 following and they are all foodies.  
202 **SR:** Okay!  
203 **AOT:** And it's down to the tech world, it's down to the marketing world, the  
204 accountancy world; foodism is an important aspect of that working lifestyle now and  
205 that's where that generated from.  
206 **SR:** So, it is a work culture than it is an upper-class culture, anymore?  
207 **AOT:** I actually agree, I think it is a work culture, [food] fits into and part of that  
208 culture and lifestyle. It's the San Francisco lifestyle. That Twitter and Facebook  
209 brought to Ireland and it changed, and the London lifestyle. It's the hunt for the next  
210 best thing, eating around the world and that's what people want they don't care where  
211 it came from and what it is and how it's made.  
212 **SR:** This is all about the going out and the socialising part of it.  
213 **AOT:** It's the socialising parallel of that circle  
214 **SR:** When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider  
215 the main food actors to be?  
216 **AOT:** Who are representing and driving it? There's a couple of people, well the main  
217 person who's been driving it for many years is Myrtle Allen and she's always kept it  
218 fresh and vibrant. And then Ballymaloe following that, with Rory, Darina and Rachel.  
219 If you look at everything they do, it's very contemporary. It's something that people  
220 think that they can access, they admire, but in reality, it's very simple. But they've  
221 always kept it very fresh. And even when they do a brown bread, an Irish stew or a  
222 bacon and cabbage it's always been something that people want or aspire to. So, it's  
223 not something that people look down on and go, 'oh it's just another Irish stew'. And  
224 other people, like now, you have JP McMahon doing amazing things in terms of the  
225 contemporary Ireland with the Nordic aspect on it. And for institutions you have  
226 *Euro-toques Ireland* which is an organisation for chefs and producers and that down  
227 to Myrtle Allen, it has been contemporary because it's always been about the produce.  
228 And the chefs representing it on the plate.  
229 **SR:** That's *Euro-toques* is it?  
230 **AOT:** Yes, *Euro-toques Ireland*- it is a European-wide programme to protect  
231 indigenous producers around Europe and then from that you have the Young Chef  
232 Competition and any winner from that, represents contemporary Irish food. You  
233 would say, Neven McGuire is a winner of that Ferrodell Lynch is a winner of that,  
234 more recently you have Gráinne Mullins who is refreshing Irish pastry.  
235 **SR:** And do they travel with that, abroad afterwards? Or do they study afterwards,  
236 from winning it? **AOT:** So, if you win the Irish chef you win a badge the world,  
237 depending on whomever the guest judge is. You could say that is helping to build  
238 Irish food culture around the world. Like Jack went last year to South Africa and  
239 Gráinne is going to (well actually she hasn't decided yet!), and any of the finalists  
240 from that go on like Mark Moriarty, he was a finalist from that a couple of years ago  
241 and went on to win the San Pellegrino award. And that stems from *Euro-toques*  
242 Ireland and that is representing Irish food culture. And he's been collaborating with  
243 loads of associations around the world and chefs.  
244 **SR:** So, he's well out there over the last couple of years, after that win.  
245 **AOT:** And it's been good to see the support of people and chefs on the ground and  
246 the chef network around the world because we have a lot of connection with chefs  
247 around the world who are members like, Anna Haugh in London, [*Euro-toques*]  
248 helped to get Irish food on their plate and Richard Corrigan, who would be another  
249 one to list.

250 **SR:** And is he a member of the Euro-toques?  
251 **AOT:** Yeah, he is. And then another one would be Slow Food as well, who have a  
252 base in Ireland too and I have clients who sit on the board for that and also people like  
253 Darina Allen. And you have, Veronica Steele or Sally Barnes who originally set it up  
254 with Myrtle and Darina. And Gina Ferguson from Gubbeen [Cheese] and that  
255 represents modern and contemporary Irish food culture and bringing it around the  
256 world. Particularly to Italy every year at the relevant Slow Food events which you  
257 have. Like-minded food enthusiasts, I call them, which are people really interested in  
258 food. Around the world there is a network of a couple hundred thousand who get to  
259 know what contemporary Irish food culture is. And the Sheridan brothers, Kevin and  
260 Seamus have a huge part to play in this particularly from the cheese culture and  
261 bringing other produce along with [them] to represent 'what is Irish food' now.  
262 **SR:** And they travel over to Italy, do they?  
263 **AOT:** They go over to Italy and they bring over produce, and they help people.  
264 **SR:** And then the last question there is, how do you, yourself spread the word of Irish  
265 food? Is it through products, producers and places etc., or all three as such?  
266 **AOT:** How do I or how do we all?  
267 **SR:** How do you yourself do it?  
268 **AOT:** For my work, I do it through networking [I] explain what Irish food culture is.  
269 And by showing the best thing to do. It's by letting people taste and touch things, so  
270 when I travel around the world to events or conferences, I always bring a taste of  
271 Ireland with me and something that people wouldn't consider. Or it could be  
272 something so common like a potato. And [I'd] cook it so simply in some sea salt, and  
273 water or seaweed water or something. And sometimes they'd taste it and go, 'wow!  
274 That's amazing; that doesn't represent what I think Ireland is'. And from there then  
275 people are starting to ask questions. The first thing is to get people to taste because  
276 when they taste, an oyster, a proper wild oyster or wild salmon. People go; 'that is  
277 amazing compared to what I've tasted and what I perceive to be Irish food'. Because  
278 salmon is something that is a big problem at the moment. Because if you take smoked  
279 salmon or what's perceived to [Irish] smoked salmon and it's not [Irish] salmon at all  
280 because it's farmed. It's farmed and most of the salmon is coming from Scotland and  
281 Norway and then shipped here to be smoked, and it's not really Irish salmon.  
282 **SR:** And then people are seeing it in Lidl as well.  
283 **AOT:** Yeah and it's the same with Beef as well. If I get some good quality beef and  
284 get people to taste it. They go, wow! That's Irish, that's amazing and not what I  
285 consider to be Irish beef. At the moment our beef industry is so big, it is so generic.  
286 You don't really get a taste of it. And through that that's how we can change, what is  
287 Irish food culture.  
288 **SR:** At least you get a chance to do that when you travel abroad and to spread the  
289 word further, that way.  
290 **AOT:** Yeah, it's travelling and networking and talking to people. Because people  
291 instantly go Guinness if they talk about an Irish stout and I'm going, yes, yes that's an  
292 Irish stout but we actually have more, that's an introduction to an Irish stout. But we  
293 do have other[s], I'd say fifty more Irish stouts in Ireland which are very unique and  
294 different, and which taste a higher quality. And depending on what flavour you like,  
295 do you like more bitter, or more creamier, we have different varieties available.  
296 **SR:** Yeah, it's just to make people aware, I suppose of the vast or diverse amount of  
297 stuff in Ireland.  
298 **AOT:** Yeah, the diverse larder Ireland offers for a very small nation, we have a lot.

299 **SR:** Yeah, so it's just to steer people away from Lidl and Aldi for a while, they just  
300 get caught up in the whole thing otherwise.  
301 **AOT:** Yes, it is but sometimes the supermarkets are doing some wonderful things, but  
302 they could be doing a lot more. It's down to our exports and how our economy runs.  
303 *Bord Bia* -it's all about export. 90% of our food in Ireland is exported and the import,  
304 we need to split that. We need to reduce our imports and our exports and keep more  
305 produce here. And I think, look at the Danish model as a prime example. The Danish  
306 export all their cheap products and unfortunately Ireland buys a lot of that product,  
307 like for example pork and chicken. They keep the best and they import organic only  
308 produce to their country because they are on a conversion; to convert over to just  
309 producing organic and good quality food. And it's available in all public [institutions],  
310 in schools, healthcare system and prisons so everyone is getting access to good local  
311 food.  
312 **SR:** Okay and they send the rest out. I know, that would be a good turn around for us.  
313 **AOT:** That's why Copenhagen is a massive big phenomenon, the whole Nordic  
314 movement is [a success] because that's how it worked.  
315 **SR:** They just ended up focusing on what they had themselves and keeping it.  
316 **AOT:** Yeah and figuring out what did they want and doing a conversion programme.  
317 And saying, okay we'll work with producers, [and] go, look we want this product-  
318 we'll help you to grow it, to rear it but for the meantime we are going to import the  
319 highest quality. And to get you to export that and when you have the quality that you  
320 want, we'll buy it off you. And they're not spending more money, they're doing a  
321 conversion. So, if they're using chicken fillets in a public school, they convert it over  
322 to thighs for the same price, but they are using a better-quality meat, which is reared  
323 more sustainably. And, that's how the whole Nordic movement started and that's why  
324 Copenhagen and *NOMA* [are] becoming a phenomenon around the world. Because  
325 they have a thing called, 'one third, one third, one third'; one third public buying, one  
326 third private buying and one third consumer buying. By consumers supporting or  
327 buying tickets for events and that's how it converted over. And we could do the exact  
328 same thing in Ireland which will in turn will [promote] Ireland around the world as a  
329 food culture. But we have, the buying from the private, we have very little buying  
330 from public. Because at the end of the day, tourism is only an aspect but it's only a  
331 small part of 'food'. You have public, like schools, education and healthcare which  
332 are not supporting food, and the social section as well. And then with consumers you  
333 have, they will follow quickly. People are wanting it, particularly now you can see the  
334 drive of people wanting more transparent, direct produce.  
335 **SR:** Yeah, I can see that in the private alright or even in the schools and the healthcare  
336 and education system, yeah it is mostly American [catering] companies now, serving  
337 in the [college] canteens and the shops.  
338 **AOT:** And consumers want it, they want good quality food. Everyone does- want it,  
339 there is not one single person who doesn't. It's down to convenience, it's down to- is  
340 it available to me and can I have it at my door and if it's not, they won't go out of  
341 their way.  
342 **SR:** Yeah, well that's great so Anthony, thanks very much, that's great.  
343 **AOT:** Okay and if you have any more questions, you can text or ring me again and I  
344 can clarify.  
345 **SR:** Great yeah, that's brilliant so. Thanks very much again, take care and stay safe.  
346 **AOT:** Okay, alright, bye!

## Appendix D

### Interview 4- John McKenna

Code: JMK4

*Author of McKenna Guides, restaurant reviewer and organiser of 'Theatre of Food'.*

1. You been writing about food since the late 80s, in more recent years, have you noticed a rise in Irish people's interest in food related topics? (when did a change occur?)
2. Other interviewees have mentioned that we need to share the message of Irish food more to a global audience, how can we disseminate the message?
3. How would you differentiate the *McKenna Guide* from the *Michelin Guide*? Are gastro-tourists your main audience?
4. In the last ten years, food festivals within music festivals have become popular in Ireland. What's your experience with the 'Theatre of Food' at the *Electric Picnic*?
5. What do you think best describes Irish food? A trait or an example?
6. How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? Can we be considered a world class food destination?
7. From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?
8. Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? If so how?
9. What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
10. Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use? Do you know any foodies?
11. When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? (Chefs, tourism bodies, food boards, producers, or enthusiasts and campaigners etc.)

12. How do you personally, spread the word of Irish food? i.e., products, producers, places and so on.

1 **Intro:**  
2 **JMK:** Hello!  
3 **SR:** Hi John! This is Sinéad here. How are you?  
4 **JMK:** I'm fine. Sinéad, how are you?  
5 **SR:** Good thanks not bad now. Will I start straight into it?  
6 **JMK:** Yeah sure, why don't you just fire ahead.  
7 **SR:** Great! Okay John, you've been writing about food since the late 80s, in more  
8 recent years have you noticed a rise in Irish people's interest in food and food related  
9 topics?  
10 **JMK:** Yes, I think the explosion in interest really probably began in the early to mid-  
11 90s. It was probably 94/95, I think. I'm kind of judging that because at the point in  
12 time I was writing weekly columns for the Irish Times and particularly reviewing  
13 restaurants and that was the time when it really became noticeable because you would  
14 get feedback from restaurateurs if you reviewed them. That people were literally  
15 picking up the phone and making a reservation on a Saturday morning. I mean this is  
16 pre-internet stuff now, really. So, people were literally picking up the phone at nine  
17 o'clock on a Saturday morning and making a reservation. And that procedure would  
18 go on for several months if not even a couple of years. So, it was very obvious then  
19 that, I suppose what we had begun to notice with our first book in 1989 and then the  
20 second book in '91 is that there was a very distinct interest in new food experiences.  
21 Yes, but I would date it to round about '93/94.  
22 **SR:** That answers the second part of that so, for me; when did a change occur? Okay,  
23 so other interviewees mention that we need to share the message of Irish food more to  
24 a global audience. How can we disseminate the message?  
25 **JMK:** I think it's one of those things. I think there's two ways to do it; one is through  
26 consistent messaging which gets through in terms of the media, (obviously the media  
27 now is just the traditional print media, broadcast media. It's also social media) so I  
28 think that's one way that you have to do it. Just bear in mind however that, we're  
29 coming out of a position where effectively we didn't have a culinary reputation. If  
30 you speak to people in Fáilte Ireland, they'll tell you...if you spoke to people in Fáilte  
31 Ireland twenty years ago and you said we have wonderful food in Ireland...they'd  
32 have said...well actually tourists don't care. If you speak to them today, they  
33 recognise that actually tourists really do care. So, in one way the message is getting  
34 out and the quality of Irish food and its ability to act as an attracter to foreign tourists  
35 is definitely manifest today in a way it wasn't twenty years ago. The other way you  
36 could do it I suppose, is really through food champions, you know and I'm thinking  
37 here of someone particularly, someone like René Redzepi in *NOMA*. But of course,  
38 Redzepi was a champion who had the support of the Danish government and the  
39 Danish food industry. If you look further back from Redzepi, you see that there was a  
40 Danish food manifesto before him. Even though Redzepi, if you like peaked people's  
41 interest, the groundwork had already been laid by the government by people like  
42 Claus Meyer by people much more important than Redzepi but not as well known. So,  
43 it takes time and there are still countries who don't act, whose cuisine does not act as  
44 an attraction. Germany for example, nobody goes to Germany to eat and there are  
45 countries that are emerging particularly Mexico and some of those Central American  
46 countries but it takes time and I think you need action between the food agencies, the  
47 tourist agencies, the government agencies and if you're lucky you get a champion like  
48 Redzepi. Obviously, we do have people, obviously Darina Allen is an international  
49 name. I think, JP McMahon to some extent is an international name but I think that



50 some of the younger chefs that are coming through now will actually play quite an  
51 important role, in that regard.

52 **SR:** Yeah, great. And how would you differentiate between the *McKenna's Guide* and  
53 the *Michelin Guide*?

54 **JMK:** Well, there are several points of difference; one thing is, [for] most of our  
55 books until fairly recently we wrote about food producers. *Michelin* for example, and  
56 some of the other guys *Gault Millau* is another one that are really just writing about a  
57 restaurant culture and we try to write about a food culture. A restaurant doesn't exist  
58 in isolation and really good restaurants are completely dependent upon their suppliers.  
59 You can go anywhere to buy a pork chop but if you really care about what you're  
60 doing you'll actually go up to Mayo and visit *Andarl Farm* in Mayo. You'll try to  
61 ensure that you've got a supply of *Andarl Farm* pork because that's what going to  
62 give you your point of difference. So, on the one hand we really try to write about a  
63 much broader food culture rather than just a restaurant culture but having said that  
64 we've written for almost thirty years, a book called, *The 100 Best Restaurants in  
65 Ireland* book. The difference of course, *Michelin* have in some ways caught up with  
66 us, I think, if I can be arrogant enough to say that, because we always featured the  
67 little out of the way places, at a time when *Michelin* was really focusing on very grand  
68 dining, you know. And *Michelin* has always had a big hierarchal system, we don't  
69 rate our restaurants in a hierarchy, there might be some of them that we stress are  
70 particularly dynamic or creative. And for us the defining feature about writing about  
71 restaurants indeed writing about the whole food culture is that you got a very Irish  
72 experience. One of the criticisms of *Michelin* is that it's a very international  
73 experience really and that they are looking for the same thing whether they are in  
74 Tokyo or Lyon or whether they're in San Francisco. We are looking for points of  
75 difference really but more broadly, we're interested in the entire food culture and how  
76 it evolves and how it develops. And that's what we really tried to chase for nearly  
77 thirty years now.

78 **SR:** And is your main audience kind of gastro-tourists then?

79 **JMK:** Actually, I think our main audience are Irish people and Irish people who are  
80 interested in Irish food experiences. I'll tell you the book that really showed us that  
81 our audience were Irish was, several years ago we did a book called, *Where to Eat &  
82 Stay on the Wild Atlantic Way* which is just gone into its fourth edition (which came  
83 out a month ago) and to our surprise (because at that stage everyone was saying books  
84 are dead and guidebooks are dead and everything is online). And the books sold really  
85 well, and so did the next edition and the next edition. Well actually completely sold  
86 out. So, we could see from that and from the feedback we were getting from the  
87 people included in the book. You know the people who were using it were actually  
88 Irish travellers, Irish tourists and maybe one reason for that is the distribution of our  
89 books is mainly confined to Ireland and a little bit of England so we're not shipping  
90 books off internationally to New York or wherever. But the people who buy our  
91 books are the people who for the last thirty years have just become progressively  
92 more and more interested in food and that's food across the whole spectrum. Because  
93 our book the *Where to Eat & Stay on the Wild Atlantic Way* will tell you the best  
94 place, for example, in Ennistymon to get a coffee. These are people who want to have  
95 a precise food experience at all the different points of the spectrum. They just don't  
96 want to be told about (in a dreadful term) what we call 'fine dining' because they  
97 appreciate you can have an incredible food experience standing at a food cart looking  
98 out at Killary Harbour. So, the Irish are, in some ways those, Irish food lovers are  
99 very sophisticated people.



100 **SR:** Okay, then in the last ten years ‘food festivals within music festivals’ have  
101 become popular in Ireland. What’s your experience with the ‘Theatre of Food’ at the  
102 *Electric Picnic*?

103 **JMK:** Yeah, I mean we got asked about twelve years ago, eleven years ago to sort of  
104 do a food competition amongst the stall holders at *Electric Picnic* and over a couple  
105 of years that developed into sort of curating and presenting the ‘Theatre of Food’, not  
106 only that (like if circumstances were normal) now we would be having a ‘Theatre of  
107 Food’ at the *Kaleidoscope* Festival in June, ‘Theatre of Food’ in the *Latitude Festival*  
108 in England, in July. And of course, ‘Theatre of Food’ right at the end of August, start  
109 of September, in Co. Laois. So, I think what has happened, is that there is a number of  
110 changes here; one, people who are festival goers are slightly getting older and for a  
111 large part those people want good food. They do not want to just eat chips and  
112 noodles for three days. But then what has also changed was, what was once music  
113 festivals has become music and arts festivals, so we are part of the artistic, we’re not  
114 part of the music. We’re part of the artistic thing which is to offer a broad spectrum of  
115 entertainment. And certainly it’s very popular and it has proven very successful and  
116 certainly any festival now that doesn’t make an attempt to offer good food really  
117 won’t hold an audience because you will not get discerning people to come back to  
118 your festival if they have to live on cheap noodles and beans. And that was the case  
119 fifteen years ago if you went to a festival, you expected to eat badly and you expected  
120 to pay far too much money for it, you know. The other thing that has changed is chefs  
121 through having a profile, whether it’s through having a cart [food truck] which is a  
122 good way to start a business, or whether it’s through being on a stage and thereby  
123 boosting your own brand; is a very good and very direct way to find an audience.

124 **SR:** And then, the next question then is, what do you think best describes Irish food?  
125 A trait or example even.

126 **JMK:** I think it’s the same thing that defines Irish hospitality, which is to say,  
127 spontaneity. The best Irish food would be somewhat different from, let’s take two  
128 classical cuisines, French and Italian. The French will tell you there’s a way to do  
129 something and you just keep doing that. And the Italians almost even more so will tell  
130 you, you make Spaghetti Alfredo that way. And you do not make it in any different  
131 way and that is the way my mamma and so on, and her mamma made it. And it’s even  
132 noticeable that the great chef (ah his name is gone out of my head now, that you  
133 know). He had the number one restaurant in the world a few years ago and he spoke at  
134 *Food on the Edge*. You know the difficulty that he had when he opened.

135 **SR:** Is it Bottura, is it?

136 **JMK:** Do you remember his name? That’s it- Bottura, Massimo Bottura. Bottura  
137 anyway is venting away coming up with new ideas and concepts and for years he is  
138 banging his head against a brick wall because the Italians say; ‘you don’t do it like  
139 that, what are you doing, you don’t do it like that!’ We do it this way and that’s the  
140 way you have to do it!’ And I think, when we started writing thirty years ago Irish  
141 chefs thought there was a way to do it and that by and large was the French way and  
142 they simply don’t think that now. If you look at some of the most exciting talents, you  
143 know say, *Fisk* [Seafood Bar] up in *Downing’s* in Donegal, it’s a tiny little place, tiny  
144 little room beside a pub. Tony Davidson an amazing cook, you know you will have  
145 the best Mexican seafood Taco since you were in Baja, which I had there in  
146 *Downing’s*. And you will have the most perfect oysters with a Bloody Mary granita,  
147 which you might have in London, and so on and so forth. [Chefs] pull ideas from  
148 everywhere, they refine them, but I think really there is a spontaneity to how the best  
149 chefs cook, and you find that really through the country. They are not just simply

150 churning out the same dish. And that I'm afraid is really what you will find in Italy  
151 and particularly in France and I think it's one of the reasons why the French cooking  
152 has lost its sheen; is that it suddenly became repetitive. The old Guard of; Paul  
153 Bocuse, George Blanc, Troisgros and so on. You know they insisted that there was  
154 one way and that it was the only way and of course that's nonsense. It's one of the  
155 things the Scandinavians said no we're not doing that. A new wave of Spanish chefs  
156 said, no we're not doing that, and I think the new wave of Irish chefs say no, 'I'm  
157 doing it my own way'. There may be a textbook but once I have mastered the  
158 textbook, I can do whatever I like. So, I think that sense of being both creative and  
159 spontaneous is really what is now the signature of the best modern Irish restaurant.  
160 **SR:** There's no danger that the influence from the Danish side or the Scandinavian  
161 side coming in- there's no danger that's it's influencing Ireland too much that the  
162 chefs end up copying that rather than...just an interviewee mentioned that  
163 before...they thought there were too many chefs trying to recreate what was going on  
164 in *Noma* but not really doing their own thing.  
165 **JMK:** No, I wouldn't agree. I think really chefs are magpies. They'll work stages,  
166 they'll learn things and then they'll adapt them. You could say a style of plating has  
167 evolved out of what the Scandinavians do; a style of presentation and maybe a format.  
168 But what's winding up on the plate is definitely not Scandinavian in any sense. You  
169 know to me, as someone who has written a book about *the 100 Best Restaurants in*  
170 *Ireland*, for thirty years I can see the changes and I can see that nowadays what's  
171 valued is creativity. You know, any creative artist steals from everywhere, it doesn't  
172 matter! I'm a writer or a journalist, you know, I've never been to New York, but I  
173 have a subscription to the *New Yorker* because I want to read the best journalists in  
174 the world who all write for the *New Yorker* (not all of them) but a lot of them write for  
175 the *New Yorker* so I'm trying to learn from their example, even though I'm very, very  
176 old, you know I'm still trying to get better, I'm still trying to say; well that's good and  
177 that's good; look at the way they do that. And that every creative person I have ever  
178 known in my life thinks exactly the same way that; you borrow, adapt, refine, steal if  
179 need be. You can call it plagiarism; you can call it influence but the simple fact of the  
180 matter is nobody creates something entirely new out of nothing. People might say:  
181 'Oh what about Jazz? it's the most original art form of the 20th century'; but jazz  
182 comes out of Black African music really. So, you can always find a precedent  
183 everywhere whether it's in culinary arts or any other art form you want to talk about.  
184 **SR:** Great, yeah. And, then how do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by  
185 other countries? Can we be considered a world class food destination? Now, at this  
186 stage.  
187 **JMK:** I think we might not be regarded as premier league yet, but we'd certainly be  
188 regarded as first division. I mean our cuisine, you know if you want to see something  
189 relatively comparable, go to Scotland; roughly the same size, roughly the same size  
190 population; absolutely diabolical food! Diabolical- away from Glasgow, Edinburgh. I  
191 mean, you will just weep at how poor the food is! So, we have come a long way in a  
192 relatively short period of time, and I think we keep getting better. I mean, my  
193 experience as somebody who is on the road trying new places and seeing people's  
194 levels of confidence and creativity, is that one; we're getting better and that two; this  
195 is recognised. You know- you see pieces in the *New York Times* saying- if you spend  
196 48hrs in Cork then you should eat here and eat here. I mean, that was unthinkable ten  
197 years ago! What you would have got ten years ago in the *New York Times* was that  
198 somebody would come to Ireland and in a week they would pick- five or six grand  
199 places; three of them in Dublin and really pay precious little attention to the rest of the

200 country and they have gone home and written their fifteen hundred words. Now  
201 somebody will say- 48hrs in Galway, 48hrs in Cork, 48hrs in Belfast and they will  
202 give you twelve or fifteen choices; gastronomic choices, culinary choices from pubs  
203 to bars, to where to eat, to where to stay and so on. And we simply didn't have that  
204 strain of depth, twenty years ago. I think what people are realising internationally is  
205 that the Irish have a (if we want to go back to what was said at the beginning), a  
206 spontaneity which is really quite refreshing. I think that is, beginning to be recognised  
207 and I think it will continue to be. It's like the snowball going down the hill- as you  
208 gather weight, as you gather strength and you gather speed. And more people  
209 continue to start to pay attention. But having said that, you still need to work on  
210 promoting the country as a destination but above all as a food destination. One of the  
211 main things for me that has changed- I don't mean personally but in how I see  
212 people's attitude- is that food simply didn't feature for Fáilte Ireland, even ten years  
213 ago, and now they recognise that it's a very important driver. And it's also a driver for  
214 the audience that you want. Which is to say an audience of independent travellers who  
215 want to spend money on unique experiences- so they don't just want to have a glass of  
216 single malt whiskey, they want to go to the *Dingle* Distillery and hear the story. And  
217 those are the tourists that we want to have! It annoys me when I hear Fáilte Ireland  
218 talking about counting numbers at the end of the year because anybody who knows  
219 anything about tourism knows that you can have say- four people from a central  
220 European country and they will sit in your bar or your restaurant all night long and  
221 spend very, very, little money whereas two people from the UK or two people from  
222 New York will sit there for three and a half hours and spend three times as much  
223 money. You know. So, just counting heads is meaningless. You have to kind of  
224 identify the tourist you want- the interested traveller, the experiential traveller. And I  
225 think we have a very good offer for them. You know, people say Ireland is dear, but  
226 you know, go to Scandinavia! They are much more expensive than we are. Or go to  
227 Paris! So, we're not cheap but I think we are pretty good value really.

228 **SR:** And then from your experience, can you describe what foodism and what foodie-  
229 ism is?

230 **JMK:** Well, I was intrigued by your term, I think it's somebody who, when they think  
231 of a particular act, like making dinner, or they think of a particular part of cultural  
232 experience like- 'I'm going to Dundalk for a wedding or for work'; so what figures  
233 for them in their calculation is, where am I going to eat? Am, I going to have a good  
234 experience? Where do I get the best cup of coffee? So, they are somebody for  
235 example... they are somebody, who at some point food is an important decision to  
236 make. So, in other words if it's eleven o'clock (which it is now!) the person who is,  
237 and it's not food obsessed by any means, but let's say or describe it as, food  
238 particular. They don't say, 'I want a cup of coffee', they say, 'where is the best place  
239 to get the best cup of coffee?' So, if for example they are on Pearse Street, in Dublin.  
240 They won't go into a *Spar* shop to get a cup of coffee (to get a cup of *Frank and*  
241 *Honest*). They will walk to *3fe* or they will walk to *Cloud Picker*, or they will walk to  
242 *Bread 41* because they will not have a second-rate experience. They want a first-rate  
243 experience. They want- the fact in *Bread 41*, the second time I was there the barista  
244 was actually measuring the weight of every single cup of coffee every grind and they  
245 want that experience. They want that whether they go to (so for example they don't go  
246 to Torremolinos for their holidays) it's where they choose where they go; there's a  
247 gastronomic element to it. If they're going to Sicily- they want to know where the  
248 good food is in Sicily beforehand so that it can be part of that cultural experience but  
249 the same is true of what drives their spending, domestically. Because as I say, they

250 don't want a cup of coffee- they want a cup of 3fe or they want a cup of *Cloud Picker*,  
251 And they don't want [any] sandwich- they are going to go all the way to *Bread 41* or  
252 they are going to go to *Tiller and Grain* but what directs their spending and what  
253 directs their thinking is optimising that food experience at every point. Obviously, for  
254 people like myself it becomes obsessional, because if I have a bad cup of coffee it just  
255 ruins my day and it really depresses me and I may be obsessional because it's my job  
256 but I'm far from alone and I'm by no means unusual and for an awful lot of people  
257 now (and I see this in my children my youngest son is twenty-one, he is a salesman  
258 and we get messages from [places] when he is travelling, saying ' I'm in Ennis, where  
259 do I eat in Ennis? Tell me! [asking] where do I get a cup of coffee in place X? So, he  
260 won't just go in and have the *Frank and Honest* coffee? He just regards that as  
261 bullshit, you know!

262 **SR:** Very good! So, do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food?

263 **JMK:** Yes, I think they do- for enjoying it, I mean there are people in every society  
264 for whom food is fuel. Obviously, we still have people who smoke tobacco, so this  
265 impairs the actual taste of food for them but in every society, there are a people for  
266 whom food is not a priority. But the Irish enjoy food. I always remember Sally (my  
267 wife) used always say- twenty-five-years ago London chefs were always interested in  
268 guys who came from Ireland, you know going to London to cook. They wanted Paul  
269 Flynn and why did they want Paul Flynn because Paul Flynn could tell a fresh egg  
270 and you couldn't take that for granted with someone coming out of an English  
271 training college who spent three years learning [laughs] to cook in England because  
272 they wouldn't have that basic skill of judgement. Whereas, the Irish always had that  
273 judgement they could tell if something was good the English didn't have that. And the  
274 English certainly wanted Irish chefs because they had that instinct and they had that  
275 judgement. I think there is a lot of people who for whom food is indifferent, but  
276 basically more and more people want a good experience and want an experience to be  
277 optimised. And I think if you go to mainland UK away from London, if you go to  
278 Scotland and you see how bad their food cultures are. I mean absolutely abysmal. So,  
279 have we done a good job, yes! Is there still a lot to do, yes! Of course, there is. When I  
280 think back to '89 when we first started, you know there was a subterranean subculture  
281 but there was very little quality in the restaurant culture because the restaurateurs  
282 hadn't connected to the artisan. A small number of them had; that was what made  
283 Myrtle Allen so unique in Ballymaloe; she connected directly to the artisan. But a lot  
284 of people in Dublin, they were completely indifferent to that. And now, if you want to  
285 open a serious restaurant or if you want to open up a serious bread shop. *Bread 41* to  
286 me is one of the most significant openings in the capital in quite a while because you  
287 know, it's a bakery and yet it's been the most extraordinary success. People want to  
288 go in and sit down and eat and have the pizzas and have the cronuts. And you see that,  
289 parts of the food culture that we would not take seriously (I began to see this about  
290 10/12 years ago) bread, bacon, beer, butter -people are now obsessive about these  
291 things. Especially, sourdough bread, especially good bacon, especially craft beer. You  
292 know my kids wouldn't drink Heineken to save their lives. (You might say that's my  
293 kids!) They think Heineken is naff, it's just not cool. Craft beers are cool. Sourdough  
294 bread is cool. The way in which bread and butter has been transformed by the best  
295 Irish restaurants- they turn it into an event. It's a significant aspect of that creativity,  
296 to look again at something that you could take for granted. It's very encouraging!

297 **SR:** Or to relook at something as mundane as that.

298 **JMK:** Yeah, yeah. The quotidian thing: bread and butter. If you see what JP  
299 McMahon can do with bread and butter, it's unbelievable!

300 **SR:** Then what do you consider a foodie, nowadays to be, as such? What would their  
301 traits or habits be? Like as we discussed there, I suppose.

302 **JMK:** Yeah, fussy. They're fussy; they don't want a bad experience. They don't  
303 want, you know the saddest person of the year is the fund manager who pulls in a  
304 hundred and fifty thousand [a year] and who is sitting at the kitchen table having  
305 beans and toast. You know that's a tragic life by any reckoning. So, you want to be  
306 able to make good choices. You want to have the information to make good choices,  
307 you want to be able to know your way around a wine list. To know that you want is  
308 that bread rather than that bread. Or you know, that bacon or that beer rather than that  
309 beer. So, I think it's a particularity of choice. I think it's main lining information; you  
310 want to be well informed. It's not cool to be ignorant about food nowadays. Or, to  
311 display your ignorance or to be indifferent. So, I think the modern Irish food lover is a  
312 person who really wants to maximise every food experience. We're all locked into  
313 this- whether it's experiential travel or just the experience of having a good cup of  
314 coffee at eleven o'clock. It's a question of having the information that lets you know  
315 that you just have to walk a hundred yards and you'll find a really good spot. This is  
316 the thing; this is what we learned while writing guidebooks: you couldn't tell a good  
317 place because it could look like a dump. You know, I remember probably the greatest  
318 cooking in Wexford over the last thirty years, was when Eugene Callaghan who's  
319 now the executive chef in Kelly's Hotel, in Rosslare. Eugene at one time cooked in  
320 this hut beside a pub and it was the greatest food that Wexford's ever seen but it was  
321 in, in this hut literally! In a prefab so how could you tell because from the outside you  
322 would say- 'well that place looks like a dump', and it did look like a dump! But his  
323 creativity made it extraordinary. So that's one of the fun things about writing  
324 guidebooks in Ireland and probably why we've done it for so long, is you discover the  
325 fact that appearances mean nothing. You know, you can have something incredibly  
326 slick- look at that shop that sells the coffee pods in the centre of Dublin; it's a coffee  
327 boutique; it's shit!

328 **SR:** I know.

329 **JMK:** If you want a good cup of coffee, just go around the corner and you'll find it in  
330 some little place. Where someone actually cares about what they are doing. They're  
331 not just selling a brand. So, it's all about the inside track, the inside information,  
332 wanting to know who is the latest talent, and planning your day, your holiday-  
333 whatever it may be, around the fact that food is important to you because it will  
334 improve your life.

335 **SR:** And you get that if you go abroad sometimes as well, you can happen upon a  
336 place sometimes and think it was terrible, but you're stuck and you go in and you  
337 realise you've got the best place in town, nearly!

338 **JMK:** That it's the real deal! Yeah, France is one of the great examples of that, like  
339 you can go to a glitzy place and it will just be banal and then you go into some little  
340 dive or what looks like a dive and you know, it's got creativity. Everybody has  
341 recognised that-one of the things that has changed in recent years is that people can  
342 start successful business' and really quite quickly you know. If you have ten grand  
343 and a food cart, you are away in a hack, literally! You're away in a hack. You could  
344 start a business and you'll have cash flow and suddenly you have choices whereas  
345 years ago, twenty years ago, you really couldn't have done that. And it means, you are  
346 getting much more creativity flowing in. People don't have to spend ten years  
347 working their way up through restaurants before they can actually get their own place.  
348 You can do it in a couple of years now and that means people have much more  
349 energy, much more creativity and much more originality really. Like and I mentioned



350 *Fisk [the seafood place]* for example, I'm in my office now and my office is bigger  
351 than (and I don't have a big office) were Tony Davidson cooks. It doesn't matter- sit  
352 outside, who cares if it rains! You want to eat that food; you want to eat that  
353 experience. This is a little place beside a little pub in one of the remotest regions in  
354 Ireland. Nobody cares- everybody wants to be there.

355 **SR:** Good and then something else I wanted to ask you. Do you think foodies are a  
356 subculture or mainstream now?

357 **JMK:** Ah no, I think they're mainstream really. The one area where foodism, food  
358 appreciation hasn't hit home yet is in the government which is kind of disappointing.  
359 Because I have a suspicion that Leo Varadkar is a man to whom the proper cup of  
360 coffee is kind of important, just like the proper suit is important- I have a suspicion  
361 that getting a good cup of coffee from *3fe* would be a priority for Leo but I've no firm  
362 knowledge of that. So, the governments, that actual governments have always been  
363 behind the curve. They still regard it as being a little suspicious in politics to express  
364 too much of a fondness for food and wine. You know, the age-old photograph was  
365 when Bill Clinton came over and Bertie [Ahearn] takes him to the pub because  
366 they're both men of the world. Because really in modern Ireland now you should be  
367 taken to *Rascals* craft brewery and served a pizza, you know, so there's still a  
368 reluctance there. People have stopped calling myself and Sally elitists, which they  
369 really did up until about twelve years ago, about ten or twelve years ago. They'd say,  
370 'oh yes! you're interested in food but you're an elitist. I'd say, I'm an old school  
371 socialist- I believe everybody should eat well. So, there is no elitism involved in it  
372 anymore. It's not about elitism, it's about knowledge which is a different thing. In a  
373 country like England people still regard, knowing about food as a snob thing. It's not  
374 a snob thing in Ireland, it just shows that you've got a bit of savvy really. But  
375 certainly, I think the political world, our major political parties are still slow. They are  
376 focused on the agricultural element whereas I would love to see them focused on the  
377 artisanal element and they still haven't quite got there yet.

378 **SR:** They don't combine, or they keep the two separated, I suppose.

379 **JMK:** They can't express it at the moment, but they will. People for years...if we  
380 were doing an interview...on the radio would say, 'of course it's very well for you,  
381 you've an elitist status'. It's not! I'm not concerned to be elitist; I don't want to eat in  
382 a five-star hotel, to me that's the opposite of good food. You will not find good food  
383 in a five-star hotel, no way! Because hotels cook 'hotel food'. So, a priori, that's not  
384 going to be good, because they're working within a system of ordering and sourcing  
385 which is not going to get the best food. I'm happy enough to stay in the place if I'm  
386 working but like everybody else (and hotels will tell you this, it's a problem for  
387 them), people will say that they'll eat in the hotel on the first night, but they don't  
388 want to eat there anymore. If they're staying for three nights, they'll be saying where  
389 do I go to eat, locally? Where do I get local food? And hotels have yet, (some of them  
390 have) but very few of them have latched on to the fact that people do not want 'hotel  
391 food'. They want local food. That will come in time, but the hotels are slow for that  
392 penny to drop.

393 **SR:** Would you consider yourself a foodie or what term (as you were saying you're  
394 not elitist!) but what term would you use to call yourself, in the food realm?

395 **JMK:** I'm just a food-lover but not just purely in terms of what I put on my own table  
396 or what I buy or where I choose to eat. When I first started to write about food people  
397 thirty years ago, and before that I had been a lawyer, I was a barrister in Dublin (a  
398 very unsuccessful barrister, a very tough time in the eighties) and then I started to I  
399 had always written journalism, I wrote for *Hot Press*, when I was a student for the *In*

400 *Dublin* magazine began contributing to the newspapers even when I was trying to  
401 work as a lawyer. Then, we set off to write this book in 1989, we bought a car for a  
402 hundred pounds, a Renault 4, and I met these incredible people who I thought were  
403 the most amazing people I'd ever met in my life. And they were people who made  
404 cheese, or they smoked bacon, or they smoked salmon, or they ran interesting little  
405 places and I thought they were the most extraordinary people, I had ever met in my  
406 life. I'm originally from Belfast, Northern Ireland, it's a very strange society, very  
407 bogged down, puts no value on creativity whatsoever one of the reasons why I left it  
408 and went off to be a student in Dublin and suddenly I met these people who were  
409 incredibly creative and original, different and I thought they were amazing. Now, I'm  
410 writing about their children who are even more amazing. So, I'm a food lover who  
411 loves the food culture. I love good food; I love good wine; I love good beer. But, what  
412 I also love is also the effort that someone puts into rearing that pig properly and their  
413 way of slaughtering a pig properly, respectfully. So, I really love all of that. I'm not  
414 interested in eating anything where I don't know the provenance and the producer.  
415 You can give me foie gras and brioche and frankly I wouldn't be interested in that but  
416 if you gave me a good bacon sandwich, I'd be interested in that. It's just the  
417 hierarchies...and politically I'm a socialist (I think there might be three of us left!)  
418 and I hate hierarchies, I hate the idea- the five-star hotel, the three-star *Michelin* is  
419 somehow a defining experience because of my experience over thirty years, it simply  
420 is not. So, I hate any element of snobbiness in food, it's actually the death of food.  
421 You know, we've an ongoing thing for years that we don't include *Restaurant Patrick*  
422 *Guilbaud*, in Dublin and it's got two stars and people say, 'you're not a critic at all!'-  
423 'How could you leave it out?' I'll tell you why because I think it's a place where rich  
424 people go to be with other rich people. And the snob element to it, I find frankly,  
425 distasteful. It's got nothing to do with being in Ireland or being in Dublin. Nothing  
426 whatsoever.  
427 **SR:** Okay, then speaking about contemporary Irish food culture, who would you  
428 consider to be the main food actors?  
429 **JMK:** Well, I think JP [McMahon] in Galway not just because he runs three really,  
430 really good restaurants. He does and they are fascinating because each one is different  
431 but they're all good. But also, because he's very hard working. His new book is  
432 exceptional, *The Irish Cookbook* but also *Food on the Edge* has really brought people  
433 like Massimo Bottura and so on. Darina Allen is obviously very important because  
434 she is so well connected. I mean I myself did interviews during the *Lit Fest* in  
435 Ballymaloe with Redzepi, with Alice Waters. Darina has these people on her phone,  
436 and they will come for her so Darina is a major player. Not having the *Lit Fest* is a  
437 loss. **JMK:** Do you mean within the broader food culture as well?  
438 **SR:** Yeah.  
439 **JMK:** I mean I could literally mention everyone I write about! *Bread 41*, I think is  
440 important. I think what McCluskey is doing is quite different in the sense of putting  
441 this 'bread offer' first and then having a pizza thing behind it. But, leading with bread  
442 I think is really important. I think *The Fumbally* has been important because they have  
443 a non-hierarchical, ethical system of working. I think their workshops and their  
444 Saturday market (I'm not sure what their plans are now because of COVID19) but  
445 they have always been creative. But to be honest there are just so many people. I wish  
446 there were newer voices in the media (I'm not writing journalism at the present time)  
447 but a lot of people in the media, a lot of the food criticism in the media, I would  
448 regard as absolute bullshit at best. Really terrible stuff, you know. Some of the people  
449 writing on Saturday and Sunday in the newspapers are just really not good. They're

450 really quite..., and I think part of the problem is that some of them have been doing it  
451 for too long. You know in the *New York Times* I know Pete Wells has been there for  
452 six or seven years and previous to that, the guys who were the restaurant critics were  
453 five years at it, it's different you know. So, having that focus and having to write a  
454 weekly column about a restaurant, you know, 52 weeks a year, I've done it! It's very  
455 hard work I've done it for a number of years. It's really difficult but I would be  
456 disappointed in the quality of criticism we see in the mainstream media and I'd really  
457 love to see some new and much younger voices coming through. *All the Food*, one of  
458 your classmates is a very good critic. She's doing a very good job.

459 **SR:** Oh Lisa, yeah, she does. She's great.

460 **JMK:** You know she does, she's a very good critic. And you know, being a critic is  
461 not just saying-I like this. Because nobody gives a shit what you like, really and until  
462 you realise that you're not a critic. You've got to realise what people are reading and  
463 why they're reading and why they want to know is, for themselves. They don't want  
464 your opinion. It's like if you turn in an essay to your tutor and you say, 'I think this, I  
465 think that', they'll say, 'I don't care what you think'! And you have to say the same  
466 about criticism, I don't care what the critic thinks; 'Oh, I think this is'; I don't care!-  
467 either you can explain to me why it's good and why it succeeds, or similarly why it  
468 isn't good or why it fails. And we just get too much of this- 'Oh I like this, this is  
469 nice!' Really that's just bullshit, and it's come out of a system of copying the English  
470 media and the English media is absolutely diabolical. There is only one good  
471 restaurant critic in England and that's Marina O'Loughlin who is unfortunately gone  
472 to the *Sunday Times* but there you go. So, we really need more good food writers,  
473 really. People who can establish their independent voices. And people hopefully like  
474 yourself doing courses like you're doing, will actually have the confidence to do that  
475 because it takes confidence to write about food. It takes you, to have a span of  
476 experience to be able to say X is better than Y and A is more talented than B. You  
477 can't just say that if you just say that, it's meaningless. You have to be able to say, 'A  
478 is better than B because'...And, 'X is better than Y because'...and if you can't  
479 explain the 'because', than you're not a communicator or a critic- you have to be able  
480 to do that.

481 **SR:** Very good. Also, about food boards and tourism boards- how do you think they  
482 push or help with Irish food?

483 **JMK:** Well Board Bia is really focused with selling Irish food abroad and hopefully  
484 on a relatively large scale I have to say I have worked with them, some of the hardest  
485 working people that I have ever worked with in my life (I have to say), extraordinary,  
486 very talented people. There have been changes obviously in Failte Ireland over the  
487 last number of years; Sinéad Hennessey, I think is a terrific person and the main food  
488 person in Failte Ireland. You see, in a sense the agencies are a little high bound. What  
489 Sally and I did in a sense, that was different thirty years ago was, we said, 'A is better  
490 than B', and people said, 'you can't do that. We're all good!'. And we said, 'no!  
491 we're not all good, don't make that mistake'! But the agencies can't really  
492 differentiate too much, you know, they can't. I can come out and say, 'Galway is the  
493 best city to eat in Ireland'! They can't do that. I can because I don't work for them.  
494 And Galway is the best city to eat in Ireland. And fifteen years ago, Galway was a  
495 dump for food. In fact, I think Galway is the best city to eat in the World! Because  
496 when you take its scale, its population, the quality of what it offers at this present time  
497 is absolutely remarkable. So, I'm able to say those things, the agencies in a sense,  
498 they can't really do that. They have to put across a more generalised message but  
499 certainly they have woken up to the fact that food is a very, very important thing for



500 visitors and indeed for Irish travellers, you know. The success of the Wild Atlantic  
501 Way really shows that, people [producers and places] on the Wild Atlantic Way have  
502 had an enormous boost from just very clever, simple marketing. So, I think they do a  
503 great job within the limits of the office because they can't make the distinctions that I  
504 do.

505 **SR:** So, it may be more down to people or independent chefs or even critics as you  
506 say, as well.

507 **JMK:** Yeah, on the other hand what you do is you get a really good food champion.  
508 There are people doing this. In Donegal for example, there is a kind of dynamic food  
509 culture there at the moment, some really talented people and you have people working  
510 with local authorities, trying to promote the coastline, trying to promote the food  
511 experience on the coastline so there is this. Let's say, for example you've got Loop  
512 Head in South Clare, some people are just brilliant at doing it anyway. Dingle are  
513 incredible at marketing themselves. Some of the local more regional people are  
514 actually doing a very good job. Just a few weeks ago (before the COVID outbreak),  
515 myself and Sally, we were going to go up to launch a new initiative in Louth which is  
516 called, 'Sea Louth' which is focusing on the offer around the coastline, which is  
517 actually surprisingly good. So, that's a really good initiative. If you look at the 'Boyne  
518 Valley Food Group', the 'Slane Valley Circle', you know people are doing it for  
519 themselves. But they need a bit of help, they need a bit of support, they need a bit of  
520 publicity, but if they can get that from their local authority it's really good news. I  
521 mean, areas like Slane, the Boyne Valley and Louth. Ask anyone five years ago, 'is  
522 there anywhere to eat there and they'd say no, no there isn't'. Well, there is now, there  
523 are very good producers, so those people with their own initiatives, their own groups,  
524 I think are making a big difference.

525 **SR:** You've probably covered this already (laughs) How do you personally spread the  
526 word of Irish food? Products, producers and places and so on. In every way, probably!

527 **JMK:** We use social media, particularly Instagram (more recently) when we travel.  
528 We would have contacts with foreign journalists if people were coming in, just on an  
529 hoc basis, [and we pass on recommendations] but really for us, we find the good stuff  
530 and we sing their praises. And we've done that for thirty years. The people we write  
531 about are brilliant and they are really charming as well. Of all the people that I wrote  
532 about over the last thirty years there has only been a very small amount that I did not  
533 like; most of them I like enormously because they're fantastic, there are acceptations  
534 of course the odd one but for the most part they were utterly exceptional people. For  
535 me the most important and significant person in the history of the Irish state is, Myrtle  
536 Allen, deValera, not Seán Lemass, not T.K. Whittaker, not any of those guys they're  
537 just here and they're gone. Myrtle created something that is absolutely enduring, and  
538 she's the one.

539 **SR:** So, it's been passed on now through the generations.

540 **JMK:** Yeah, I think so. Her legacy is to lead by example. She showed the importance  
541 of sticking to your guns, being Irish at a time when everyone just copied the French,  
542 supporting your local artisans, creating a unique offering. I mean, she created the  
543 template that everyone works off now. She was the big bang. She's the big bang.  
544 Everything that has happened, has happened because of Myrtle Allen.

545 **SR:** Great, so John! That was a great interview, I think we are nearly an hour!

546 **JMK:** I think I'll get a cup of coffee.

547 **SR:** I think you need a cup of cup of good coffee after that.

548 **JMK:** I sure do! Best of luck.

## Appendix E

### Interview 5- Paul Flynn

Code: PF5

*Renowned Irish Chef, Restaurant owner of the Tannery, Waterford and columnist with the Irish Times.*

1. In recent years, have you noticed a rise in Irish people's interest in food related topics or an eagerness to learn or develop culinary skills?
2. Do you think, chef activism is an important factor within the Irish food scene?
3. Other interviewees have mentioned that we need to share the message of Irish food more to a global audience, how can we disseminate the message?
4. In the last ten years, food festivals have become particularly popular- What is your experience of the *West Waterford Food Festival* and why do you think this is so?
5. What do you think best describes Irish food? A trait or an example?
6. How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? You many have received feedback when abroad or at food festivals?
7. From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?
8. Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? If so how? And why do you think this is?
9. What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
10. Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use? Do you know any foodies?
11. When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? (Chefs, tourism bodies, food boards, producers, or enthusiasts and campaigners etc.)

12. How do you personally, spread the word of Irish food? i.e., products, producers, places and so on.

1 **Intro:**  
2 **SR:** Hello! Hi Paul, how are you? Sorry I missed you there, the first time.  
3 **PF:** I'm good. Grand yeah. So...just fire away!  
4 **SR:** I'll start straight into it sure. Okay, Paul in recent years have you noticed a rise in  
5 Irish people's interest in food or in food related topics or an eagerness to learn or  
6 develop culinary skills?  
7 **PF:** Absolutely, yeah, no question. How recent is recent? We're open twenty years  
8 and it's been huge in twenty years. Otherwise, myself and all these other places  
9 wouldn't be around and also the cookery school, that's doing well and it's because  
10 people have the interest.  
11 **SR:** And why do you think, this is?  
12 **PF:** (Sorry the line isn't great, anyway we'll plough on...) It's down to curiosity,  
13 travel, money, disposable income all those things.  
14 **SR:** Grand so. And, what do you think about chef activism? Is it an important factor  
15 within the Irish food scene?  
16 **PF:** You mean like *Food on the Edge* and everything like that? What JP [McMahon]  
17 is doing?  
18 **SR:** Yeah, or even other individual chefs as well. JP would be a main factor in  
19 rallying people together, I suppose.  
20 **PF:** Well, how do I put this. I mean for me (and maybe it's selfish), we run our  
21 business, we try and do the best we can. We try to cook in a way that we are proud of  
22 and feed people and see they're happy. I myself am not an activist. I'm an activist in,  
23 you know, trying to do all of the above things- I suppose it's just the struggle of  
24 having your own business but I always admire people who have time and engage with  
25 the 'bigger picture', like JP. And [any] people who do, absolutely, I'm a total  
26 supporter but I'm not one of them.  
27 **SR:** Okay so. And how about younger chefs? Would you see a lot of them coming up  
28 with that frame of mind? Or would they be more business centred.  
29 **PF:** I don't know. You come across younger chefs and sometimes you come across an  
30 exceptional person who is capable of doing all of the above. That's capable of having  
31 a really brilliant career, a brilliant communicator. I think smart young chefs, they tend  
32 to think of their careers 'out of the box' which is a brilliant thing. It's not about  
33 slaving away in kitchens (and I look at them enviously on social media), they can  
34 travel, they seem to look at 'the bigger picture'. You know, Mark Moriarty being one,  
35 and I really admire that. But then, you find many others who just struggle to do the  
36 day to day things and things required in the kitchen, like discipline, consistency and  
37 cooking well. And the nature of what we do is very scrutinised, obviously and that's  
38 just the way it is. To get people to understand that you have to be good every single  
39 day, and every single hour of every single day, it's not an easy thing to do so for some  
40 people it's much easier to others.  
41 **SR:** Okay so. Other interviewees have mentioned that we need to share the message  
42 of Irish food more to a global audience. How would you?  
43 **PF:** Well, without a doubt. I think that's happening but still people are surprised.  
44 There still is a long way to go (I'm not saying it's done) but people that come to  
45 Ireland can be very surprised that we have good food in Ireland and that's a bit  
46 frustrating but I suppose that for a long time we didn't but you still have to pick and  
47 choose where you go; there's bad food in every country. And [there's] people who  
48 don't care about it and [think] that's it's all about making money. Yes, is the answer; I  
49 think it's very important to get the message out there because what we've achieved in

50 the last ten years has been brilliant. I'm very proud of what we have foodwise in this  
51 country and what's coming, what's to come yet. It's brilliant, it's very exciting.

52 **SR:** Great! Then in the last ten years food festivals have become particularly popular.  
53 What is your experience of the *West Waterford Food Festival*?

54 **PF:** A lot of effort! And the main reason we did it was firstly we are in the quieter  
55 part of the country; we didn't always have the traffic that maybe the West of Ireland  
56 would have had. So, we had to kind of jump up and down and shout about ourselves,  
57 a little bit and the whole idea was that if people come down for one weekend and they  
58 have a brilliant time, that's what we still try and do, is that maybe they'll come back  
59 and maybe they'll see what we have. So, that's the *modus operandi* but it always takes  
60 a lot of effort by actually a few people throughout the year, you know that just drive it  
61 on and all that and eventually it comes to fruition. It would have been happening, our  
62 one would have been happening this weekend coming which is kind of sad but we're  
63 all in the same boat. So, they're brilliant, they're very important, the food festivals.

64 **SR:** And there are some that actually take place in music festivals as well lately. Have  
65 you seen any of those or been involved in any part of the mini food fests?

66 **PF:** I'd say I have ten years of Electric Picnics. You know John and Sally McKenna  
67 were instrumental; they did a lot for this country. They would have brought a big food  
68 element and Supervalu, a big food element of Electric Picnic. So much so that it's  
69 kind of become expected. That there is a food side to many festivals. And not just  
70 doing the burgers and feeding the masses but, just the more cerebral side to it. And the  
71 combination of food and music is a very logical thing for me, it's a very important  
72 thing in my life. So, coming to festivals happened late but I'm an earnest participant.

73 **SR:** Back to Irish food again. What do you think best describes Irish food? Traits or  
74 examples of?

75 **PF:** I just think that, I've always tried to cook Irish food myself. I would do bacon  
76 and cabbage risotto, I would take certain ways of cooking, say from Italy or France  
77 and put Irish ingredients in there, use the methods but with our ingredients. So, it  
78 doesn't have to be in any way narrow-minded. It can be absolutely eclectic, and I  
79 think it should be. With the produce that we have, it can be inspirational but also  
80 everyday things. What I try and do is reassure people that you can have good, simple  
81 food that is affordable, at home and cooked in an uncomplicated way. And that's a  
82 way of sending out the message. I hope that it is, anyway, sending out the message  
83 that you too can do it. That you don't have to be looking at chefs on telly that...as a  
84 chef you don't have to preach down to people, just help them and encourage them,  
85 give them recipes they can do at home. Then they get confidence and they cook more  
86 at home.

87 **SR:** How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically now by other countries?  
88 Have you received feedback yourself from tourists or people staying?

89 **PF:** You would have, and I suppose a lot of it is "gosh" you know that kind of way, to  
90 use that word. "We didn't know that there was so much here." And I suppose what we  
91 do then is just like building on a foundation, that those people will go away and tell  
92 people that there is really great food in Ireland. And also, just back to J.P. and the  
93 work he would have done in Galway at *Food On The Edge*, he brought serious people  
94 over. And when they come over, they see that we have amazing food, and they go  
95 back, and people listen to them. That's a really, really important part, and that's why I  
96 admire the man for putting himself out there, because we're all busy and he's got how  
97 ever many restaurants and he's got a small family and yet he puts himself out there.  
98 So, you have to admire people like that.

99 **SR:** Do you think Ireland could be called a ‘Food Destination’ now or is that being  
100 too presumptuous?  
101 **PF:** I would love to think so. It’s a strange thing because that’s for other people to  
102 say, we can’t call ourselves a food destination. We’re almost waiting to be anointed  
103 you know, that kind of way. But I do think with the people that we have and where  
104 we’ve come [from] and we’re going, I think we deserve it, I definitely do.  
105 **SR:** From your experience can you describe what *foodism* or *foodie-ism* is?  
106 **PF:** Gosh, it’s a word that just saying I’m a real foodie, I don’t know if it’s a word  
107 that I love. But what it means is that I have an interest in food which is a really good  
108 thing. I mean I don’t understand people who have no interest in food. I don’t mean  
109 that it has to dominate your life, but I mean you can have really simple things cooked  
110 nicely and it adds pleasure to your day. You could be having a really crap day and  
111 have a really nice dinner and all of a sudden you feel better. And I think food can be  
112 that. So, I think without foodies, we wouldn’t be [where we are now] how many years  
113 later. So, more power to them.  
114 **SR:** Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food?  
115 **PF:** Some people do, a lot of people don’t. And I think what it is, we always viewed  
116 food as function. You know there was the appreciation of simple food done well,  
117 definitely. But I think going back to the 70’s and 80’s and later it’s a case of a lot of  
118 people might view restaurants as over-priced, over-hyped wastes of time. So, it’s not  
119 everybody would agree that going to restaurant is well-spent money. So, that’s why  
120 there’s an onus on people like us to make sure that they have a good time for the  
121 money that they spend.  
122 **SR:** What would you consider a foodie to be? What would their traits or habits be?  
123 **PF:** Food TV, magazines. What’s the first section do you pull out? Do you read  
124 reviews of restaurants in the first 15 minutes of buying the Sunday papers? Stuff like  
125 that, just a general interest, that’s what you have. And more than common knowledge  
126 of who’s who in the country and what cookery books they’ve written. It just becomes  
127 part of their life in a very easy way. It’s a lovely community to be part of.  
128 **SR:** It’s more of a community here? Is it more subculture or mainstream?  
129 **PF:** I think it’s subculture, really. I don’t think it’s mainstream.  
130 **SR:** So, it’d be more of a small community in Ireland?  
131 **PF:** Yeah, I think so, but it’s growing all the time. I suppose, maybe I’m wrong, but I  
132 tend to immerse myself in that community the same way that other people might  
133 immerse themselves in the football community or GAA or something like that. It’s  
134 certainly bigger than it was.  
135 **SR:** I had another interviewee that spoke about the soccer, that putting pride back in  
136 Ireland was to do really with the soccer World Cup back in the late 80’s. that kind of  
137 renewed people’s Irish Pride and brought it on through other forms of sport? Do you  
138 think something like that has developed in the food sense then?  
139 **PF:** It’s lower key. If we had an Olympics, something like that, maybe, but I think it’s  
140 much more low key than that. I think it’s something that’s stealthily growing rather  
141 than something that’s coming roaring out of the traps. Every year it’s getting better  
142 and better. It’s a gradual chipping away at whatever previously people thought of us  
143 foodwise.  
144 **SR:** It’s a slow development.  
145 **PF:** Yeah.  
146 **SR:** Would you call yourself a foodie? Not really, it’s not a word you love.  
147 **PF:** I suppose I am. Maybe I associate sometimes [with people] that they know more  
148 than they do. I don’t know. Either way it’s a good thing. I mean I work in it. I’m a

149 chef, I'm immersed in it, this is my career, my life and the only thing I can do so, I've  
150 no choice but to be a foodie.

151 **SR:** But in your case it's more as a food lover than to do with high social status or  
152 anything like that? You always go back to your produce more, it's not factoring in  
153 people's pockets, it's more to do with your produce?

154 **PF:** It's more to do with my job. Like a foodie is more something like a hobby and  
155 it's something they have an interest in and I think maybe it's not their career. You'd  
156 never describe a chef as a foodie because a chef should be a foodie.

157 **SR:** When you're speaking about contemporary Irish food culture, who would you  
158 consider to be the main food actors in Ireland, such as chefs, tourism bodies, food  
159 boards, producers etc?

160 **PF:** That's a hard one. I suppose *Bord Bia*, *Fáilte Ireland* are always very important.  
161 They're the people who bring the tourists in and make them aware that we have  
162 something going on. They're the first two and I don't know after that really.

163 **SR:** Do you see chefs playing a more important role in contemporary Irish Food  
164 culture compared to...I know they were always visual on TV since the 60's but are  
165 people more aware? There's a lot more well-known chefs now. Do you think they  
166 play a part?

167 **PF:** In consciousness, I mean television is very important. More so than books or  
168 magazines. I mean it may not be, I'm on television every now and again, but it's that  
169 what people talk about. If people stop me or I get recognized, people have a chat or  
170 whatever, that's what they talk about. They mightn't be talking about the restaurant as  
171 such, they're talking about "Oh, we saw you on telly the other day." So, it's important  
172 in terms of profile, because going back to having a business, being on TV is important  
173 for just to direct people into your business. That would be my main thing, also I enjoy  
174 it too. I'm not sure if I'm answering your question.

175 **SR:** It's just really to know if chefs as well as other people...And then producers  
176 themselves do you find they push themselves more now or is it similar to how it's  
177 always been with producers?

178 **PF:** Producers are...how do I put this? I think they're highly important and that  
179 maybe the public don't have access to all the producers, well they don't unless the  
180 producers are in supermarkets. Producers are really important, and I always try to  
181 base my food around the producers that are around me. Sometimes you can't,  
182 sometimes you just have to cook, it's not always about naming a producer that's just  
183 up the road from you.

184 **SR:** To do with Irish food culture do you think they have more positivity behind them  
185 now for promoting themselves? Are people more aware to trace back to the producers  
186 compared to years ago?

187 **PF:** Without a doubt. Even in terms of branding, before producers mightn't have had  
188 the most professionally packaged goods, I'm only speculating now but, whereas now  
189 they have. You know we'll say *St. Tola* cheese and *Ardsallagh*, they've been putting  
190 their good name out there for years and I think people will pick up the good Irish  
191 produce rather than the generic stuff if they can afford it. Because there is a price  
192 difference.

193 **SR:** They're helped along by *Bord Bia* and *Love Irish Food* and other organisations as  
194 well, so it makes a difference that way.

195 **PF:** Yeah

196 **SR:** So, then how would you personally spread the word of Irish food?

197 **PF:** Well, just by cooking it, that's one thing because I don't have an international  
198 audience unless they come to the restaurant, they don't get to eat it but also, I do get

199 to write about it. And that's how I spread the word of Irish food, just by doing it every  
200 day and I always 'Irishify' my menu whenever possible. Instead of white wine I cook  
201 with local cider an enormous amount of the time. I use a lot of butter in my food and I  
202 swap it over in the summertime to make it a bit lighter. I love taking humble  
203 ingredients because that's where we came from and making the most of them. Even  
204 into more sophisticated dishes. But equally if you asked me for my death row meal it  
205 would probably be bacon and cabbage. I'm not that far away from simple stuff  
206 myself.

207 **SR:** With your column in the *Irish Times* do you find this is a good voice for you? Is  
208 it good visually for people to be given chef's viewpoints as well?

209 **PF:** Well, I think so, hope so. Otherwise I'm just wasting my time, but I hope so.  
210 There is a hunger for food because the food elements of papers and magazines has  
211 been getting bigger all the time. So, that's kind of going back to your original point, is  
212 it more popular now than it used to be. But I think without a doubt. Even in the *Irish*  
213 *Times* there's three or four food writers and I don't think that used to be the case there  
214 was much less than that. So, it's expanding all the time and the hunger for food  
215 knowledge is expanding because all the TV channels just dedicated to food and all the  
216 books, magazines and all that. I do think so, but I do think there's a curve, if you look  
217 at the books that are being released it's certainly home cooking. And really  
218 accomplished chefs they're not bringing out really complicated food books, they're  
219 bringing out home cooking books. And a healthy way to live, I think that's what  
220 people crave as well. So, a combination of the two.

221 **SR:** Is there a slight rise in people learning culinary skills?

222 **PF:** I think there is. Our school has been open twelve years and I couldn't say that's  
223 it's busier now than what it was. It's always kind of been steady. It's not that people  
224 are clamouring for it and they weren't to before, I just think again we're coming back  
225 to the kind of people that have the interest in food and for us it would almost be about  
226 food leisure. What I mean is people coming to us wouldn't be training to get a  
227 certificate so they can go off and be a chef. It's just what they want to do is expand  
228 their repertoire and have a bit of fun while they're learning new things and generally  
229 people might come down for the weekend do the course on the Saturday. They might  
230 come in for dinner on the Friday night and one or both of them might come in and do  
231 the course and the other one might go off shopping or playing golf. It's leisure, that's  
232 the market we aim at and it works for us. They leave and they've had a nice weekend  
233 and they've picked up a couple of things as well.

234 **SR:** You're lucky in Dungarvan regards the market and a lot of people from the  
235 Greenway would be calling to you.

236 **PF:** That's been huge, no two ways about it, that's been huge. Our location is really  
237 great.

238 **SR:** That's about it, you've covered most of my questions. Thanks very much for  
239 giving your time.

240 **PF:** Not at all, a pleasure.

241 **SR:** And I hope to meet you at some stage in the future

242 **PF:** And best of luck with your thesis it sounds like a lot of hard work.



## Appendix F

### Interview 6- Grace Binchy

Code: GB6

*Bord Bia- Consumer Insight Specialist*

1. In your role as a Consumer Insight Specialist, what is the biggest change you have seen in Irish people's food habits and tastes over the years?
2. From looking at Bord Bia's insight report- 2019 was a prominent year for Irish food exports. Why do you think, this was? (a decade of growth from 2010)
3. *The Evening Meal Recruitment Survey 2019* showed a drop in 'cooking from scratch' skills' in the home environment. Were you surprised by this? (considering the increase in cooking shows, tv chefs and a rise in interest in food media).
4. Other interviewees have mentioned that there is a gap in how some organisations share the message of Irish food to a global audience, how can this be rectified?
5. What do you think best describes Irish food? A trait or example.
6. How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? Do you receive feedback at conferences?
7. From your experience- can you describe what foodism or foodie-ism is?
8. Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? If so, why do you think this is?
9. What do you consider a foodie to be? What are some of their traits or habits? Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream?
10. Would you call yourself, a foodie? If not, what term/terms would you use? Do you know any foodies?

11. When speaking about contemporary Irish food culture- who would you consider the main food actors to be? (Chefs, tourism boards, food bodies, producers, or enthusiasts and campaigners etc.)
  
12. How do you personally, spread the word of Irish food? i.e., products, producers, places and so on.

1 Intro:  
2 **GB:** Hello, Grace Here!  
3 **SR:** Hi Grace. This is Sinéad here, how are you?  
4 **GB:** Hi Sinéad, sorry it was such a length before we got to talk. This week we are  
5 immersed in a whole world of readapting how we work with industry, so [Bord Bia] is  
6 the first at the centre of that. We have to develop a lot of research around future  
7 proofing how consumers are evolving and how their behaviours are changing and that  
8 has to be ready. So, all the work was drafted last week but now we are getting ready  
9 for a presentation (which I didn't know about when I emailed last week). But anyway,  
10 we'll get there! [Note: small talk omitted from 1.05 secs to 4.29 secs]  
11 **SR:** Oh right! So, I'll start into it anyway Grace?  
12 **GB:** Okay, I feel like I'm in a quiz!  
13 **SR:** That's it, yeah! So, question one is: In your role as a Consumer Insight Specialist,  
14 what is the biggest change you have seen in Irish people's food habits and tastes over  
15 the years?  
16 **GB:** If we talk about over the last four to five years I suppose the biggest change is in  
17 peoples' relationship with health and food and the consumer has become a lot more  
18 health conscious, health aware, scrutinise food a lot more and then within that context  
19 I suppose if you're talking about 2019 the big buzz word of the year was veganism  
20 and plant-based foods. I'm not saying that's the biggest change in the last four to five  
21 years but something that's emerging in the last year. We're still in the process of  
22 seeing how big that's going to grow. But I would think health has been a big change.  
23 So, we were concerned about health for a long number of years in terms of how we  
24 treat ourselves and look after ourselves, that relationship has become much more  
25 intense and it can lead out into food as well. Sustainability might be another one  
26 worth putting in there as well and how we look at the environment and we are seeing  
27 in COVID as well that people are concerned about food-waste, but sustainability is  
28 something that, both health and sustainability in particular will stay on the table out of  
29 this current climate.  
30 **SR:** From looking at *Bord Bia's Insight Report for 2019*, 2019 was a prominent year  
31 for Irish food exports. Why do think this was? There was a decade of growth and the  
32 pinnacle was 2019.  
33 **GB:** I'm probably not the best placed person to answer that but a lot of work has gone  
34 into developing relationships across markets the Bord Bia organisation has expanded  
35 into a number of markets and with that has developed a number of partnerships and  
36 relationships. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes in terms of finding new  
37 opportunities, in terms of developing relationships with retailers, suppliers etc. in  
38 markets. So, that's a kind of more technical question getting into more how the  
39 organisation works and would involve a lot of input from other people to be perfectly  
40 honest is less directly related to what I do. So, I couldn't give you a very fair answer  
41 on that one, but suffice to say that the combination of work on the ground going on  
42 and work we're doing around *Insight* is not purely lead by Insight at all, but Insight to  
43 understand consumers in local markets has been very important in the terms of the  
44 work that we do. And within that context there are two pillars within the organisation  
45 that we developed: *Origin Green* and *Food Brand Ireland*; more recently *Origin*  
46 *Green* obviously being more sustainable. Platforms that really is our framework for  
47 looking at how we will address sustainability and how Ireland can pitch itself abroad  
48 based on having, you know, you've got your farmers, you've got your producers,  
49 manufacturers who've embraced *Origin Green*. We can use that message to promote  
50 Ireland then on the basis that we are more sustainable in terms of how we farm, how

51 we practice and that makes us distinctly different from other markets. Then, with  
52 *Food Brand Ireland* we've developed a framework that allows to understand how to  
53 market Ireland across different markets. That's a recent initiative, as in the last couple  
54 of years, but there's an awful lot of people involved in driving that one answer to be  
55 perfectly honest. You could say that *Origin Green* and *Food Brand Ireland* are two of  
56 the initiatives within the organisation that have facilitated that as well as that  
57 investment in local markets and local research in how to understand how to navigate  
58 those markets.

59 **SR:** And that's probably been over the last ten years anyway?

60 **GB:** I would say that those three...in the last ten years, investments in *Insights* and  
61 local markets has been one of the reasons I would say, if you wanted to kind of put it  
62 in a sentence. *Bord Bia* has opened up a lot of offices across markets, we look at  
63 opportunities across markets in terms of different categories as well.

64 **SR:** *The Evening Meal Recruitment Survey 2019*, showed a drop-in cooking from  
65 scratch skills in the home environment. Were you surprised by that?

66 **GB:** What we do though, is we track that through other studies we've been doing over  
67 the years through Periscope. If you look at the overall findings within the *2019 What*  
68 *Ireland Ate Last Night* the big reason for the fall off, and I think it's really important  
69 to understand the background to that study, where you look at the quantitative and its  
70 supported with a diary and out of that we learnt about this theory: choice [fortifying].  
71 [This is how] people like to remember things as being better than they were. And I  
72 think reality is most people would like to cook from scratch more, would like to cook  
73 more but in a world where people are time strapped. You've big commuter  
74 populations, people are under pressure, dropping kids to creche in the morning come  
75 back in the evening, washing bottles, preparing again for the next day. There hasn't  
76 been enough time in people's lives and over the last ten years we've placed a huge  
77 premium on time. It's not to say people don't enjoy from scratch cooking it's just a  
78 time driven thing. So, that does not surprise me but what we're learning now with  
79 COVID is that more people are cooking from scratch more, a lot of what we learned  
80 from *What Ireland Ate Last Night* or some of the findings that we learnt are changing  
81 because we're at home more which is giving people a little more time. That's not to  
82 say everybody has time but one of the things people are embracing is cooking from  
83 scratch. So, it would highlight that people want to do it but when there isn't time, it's  
84 not the priority.

85 **SR:** There could be a massive turnaround now in the next year, the way things have  
86 happened with COVID. It has changed in the last month, but we don't know if it'll be  
87 an even greater change.

88 **GB:** One of the things we're trying to understand is will these behaviours stick and  
89 there are a lot of things at the moment that are unknown and they're hard answers, so the  
90 question is the next couple of years when the virus is finally put to bed, will one of the  
91 things we've learnt, will there be people working a couple of days a week at home.  
92 Will that mean they'll have more time to cook from scratch, will people want to do  
93 more home cooking now that they've learned a few more recipes when they can. You  
94 know there's a bit of a dot, dot, dot around those things.

95 **SR:** Other interviewees have mentioned there's a gap in how some organisations  
96 share the message of Irish food to a global audience.

97 **GB:** What do you mean by that?

98 **SR:** They think there's a gap in different organisations whether they're tourism or  
99 food industry that there's a gap in what other things could be looked at. Do you find  
100 you're doing your utmost from your angle?

101 **GB:** Bord Bia's remit is to market Ireland's food and drink abroad, that's the remit of  
102 Bord Bia so as I say we spend a lot of time looking at markets where there are  
103 opportunities. So, to give you an example with Brexit and the UK in the last couple of  
104 years a lot of work was put into diversification in finding new markets. Then if we  
105 find those new markets we have to go into those new markets and understand those  
106 markets and understand the consumers within and what motivates those consumers.  
107 *Food Brand Ireland* has as I say come out of that, so for example if you're talking to a  
108 German person might be more concerned around organic produce. If you're talking to  
109 a Chinese person, they might be more concerned around food safety. They're all  
110 learnings in patterns and studies we did across 10,000 people. That enables us to start  
111 building messaging for different categories abroad. I think the remit that Bord Bia sets  
112 out, to be fair to the organisation I think they do a really good job of understanding we  
113 should market Ireland abroad and that might reflect in the export numbers you were  
114 talking about earlier. Whether there's an opportunity for *Tourism Ireland* and *Bord*  
115 *Bia* to develop a campaign that could make sense, but they have their remit as to  
116 whether if there was to be a collaborative... I don't whether it's ever been discussed  
117 or whether there is a specific tactical thing that could be looked at from time to time,  
118 that could make sense or whether there is, those discussions that I don't know.  
119 **SR:** What do you think best describes Irish food? A trait or examples.  
120 **GB:** Irish food is fantastic really. We're very lucky I suppose (in the current climate  
121 as well with COVID) that we produce a lot of our own food, we know it's grown  
122 locally therefore lots of foods that we produce, that we're able to eat have the  
123 sustainability message. I think just an overarching answer to that question, we  
124 produce really good quality food. Our dairy is some of the best. We have the climate  
125 that lends itself to producing great food and I think we have as a food culture (to go  
126 back to your earlier point), Ireland has become much more of a foodie nation in the  
127 last ten to fifteen years for many numbers of reasons but we have a lot to celebrate  
128 and a lot to be confident about and when we look at how we market ourselves as a  
129 nation, I'm talking about [how] *Bord Bia* (food and drink business market  
130 themselves), we've done a lot of work on semiotics as well, that our messaging and  
131 how we brand ourselves has become much more confident and behind the scenes we  
132 have chefs, producers and or farmer's markets. All that...it has been fantastic to look  
133 at how Irish food and drink has evolved.  
134 **SR:** A lot of that seems to be stemming from a confidence from different areas or  
135 sections, even from chefs.  
136 **GB:** Chefs themselves and there's a lot of young people who travel and come back  
137 and they learn how to cook bits or come back with an idea in terms of a food service  
138 proposition from abroad. Then, I worked in *Food Works* myself for a number of  
139 years, there's a lot more food entrepreneurs, people coming up with their own ideas.  
140 You've got the *Food Academy* programme that supports that as well. Again, it'll be  
141 interesting to see where we go when we come out of this. You've got a lot of concerns  
142 around supply chains and food safety. We can be confident that our food is safe in  
143 Ireland. It might be the case that people start consuming more Irish food as a result of  
144 wanting to feel that they can thrust it.  
145 **SR:** How do you think Ireland is viewed gastronomically by other countries? Do you  
146 receive feedback at conferences?  
147 **GB:** Again, I wouldn't have a good handle on that, to give you a good answer on that.  
148 I don't attend those kinds of things. If you want to give me a copy of your questions I  
149 can see if can distribute them.  
150 **SR:** Can you describe from your experience what Foodism or Foodie-ism is?

151 **GB:** What it is? That's the million-dollar question, sometimes we have to check  
152 ourselves. I think it's used in different contexts, so I don't know what the precise  
153 context of it is. I think the way you describe it is probably a good one. But ways of  
154 eating might be one...ways of eating today.

155 **SR:** Do you think Irish people display an exuberance for food? In present times.

156 **GB:** Do you mean in terms of cooking or more in terms of going out to eat?

157 **SR:** Either, I've taken in some of the restaurant culture as well or do you think it's  
158 split down the way?

159 **GB:** Yes, I absolutely think we have and that's probably fair to say of every  
160 generation. I think the current, the younger generation coming through now express  
161 themselves through food. The fact that people are actively following specific diets.  
162 The veganism for example, that a lot of people who follow vegan diets tend to  
163 younger, more urban and their reasons for doing that are not just about health but also  
164 about their identity and how they express themselves and in a world with Pinterest  
165 and Instagram a lot of people express themselves through food and I suppose that  
166 relates to millennials now in particular. I think as a nation then, throughout various  
167 demographics we have embraced food in terms of our understanding of organic,  
168 shopping local, supporting local, those kinds of things. Shopping local, supporting  
169 local came out of the recession in 2008 and shopping local continues to be something  
170 that's important with people and we saw that in *What Ireland Ate Last Night [Survey]*.  
171 And it's likely to become more important for sustainability reasons and in a world  
172 where safety is more challenged. But there's a lot more education and awareness  
173 around what good food is and because we've become a nation that's much more  
174 concerned about health and there's a greater understanding of the role food can play  
175 in both our physical and mental wellbeing and we've seen that across a lot of studies.  
176 That has allowed people to embrace the idea of food a lot more and in many cases  
177 healthy eating. Now again, you can fall into that place where, what people say and  
178 what people do, it isn't always the case but there is undoubtedly a greater awareness  
179 around health and food and the benefits of food for everything from mood right  
180 through to our physical wellbeing. As we become a society that's become more tech-  
181 focused we tend to look at our bodies as a series of systems and component parts,  
182 people are starting to understand food in a more...what we look for from food and  
183 drink is evolving. Clean eating is another thing that has become very important to  
184 people as well some of that goes back to lack of trust in big business and lots of  
185 scandals over the years. And that feeds into the conversation around wanting to  
186 support smaller businesses, people you can trust might be a big issue is something  
187 that's staying with us. But with clean labelling then people looking for food with less  
188 ingredients on them, ingredients lists. All those kinds of things have become more  
189 important. So, I definitely think the consumer has become much more demanding  
190 over the years because to some degree they're more, educated isn't necessarily the  
191 word but they are certainly a lot more informed about food and they're reading a lot  
192 more about food. And you can't avoid reading lots about food no matter what type of  
193 magazine you read there's nearly always lifestyle magazine articles about food or  
194 food bloggers and people exercise a lot more, people are going to gyms and hearing  
195 things from the gym instructor about what should or shouldn't eat. So, there's a lot  
196 more people talking about food, nutrition and diet. And also, you've got national  
197 programmes that encourage people to eat well. Lots of conversations going on now in  
198 this time of COVID from all countries and their governments about how people  
199 should be trying to eat well and managing their exercise and reducing their alcohol

200 consumption in the interest of mental health and physical wellbeing. So, definitely as  
201 a nation we've become much more food aware in terms of its benefits.

202 **SR:** What would you consider a Foodie to be? Their traits or habits?

203 **GB:** Again, there are many different types of foodie. So, I think the Foodie you're  
204 probably talking about is the kind of gourmet foodie, but you could have the foodie  
205 who's the exerciser foodie who cooks their keen food in batches for the week. The  
206 gourmet foodie is somebody who probably is very interested in local food and avoids  
207 processed foods. Then you'd have the I suppose you could say the sporty foodie could  
208 also be the Instagram foodie who likes to showcase their lives through the foods that  
209 they eat. That could be everything from their healthy food to their exotic looking  
210 dinner they ate out in a restaurant or their funky ice cream they bought when they  
211 were on holidays. So, I suppose you have the international travelling foodie. On a  
212 local level trying to translate a foodie I suppose, you've got someone who likes to buy  
213 food in the farmer's market, grows their own. There are different types, so it depends  
214 on how you're approaching it really.

215 **SR:** Do you see them as a subculture or more mainstream? The couple of them  
216 you've described.

217 **GB:** I think they're all part of the food culture that we are today. I think the food  
218 culture, the world that we live in, looking at it through a lens of sustainability, you're  
219 going to have people who want to embrace food that's produced more responsibly,  
220 and under that kind of umbrella there's lots of things from local, to natural, organic, to  
221 sustainable, less packaging, to in season. And then if you're looking at health and  
222 wellness it can be more about keen ingredients. All these people, there's so many  
223 motivators and so many different demographics you can approach it through. They all  
224 go together to make a piece of the pie. So, a sport foodie might be a niche foodie, but  
225 a gourmet foodie is also a niche foodie. And I suppose you've got to think about the  
226 country in a nationally representative way, those kinds of audience are not your  
227 absolute everyday person by any stretch. If you think that healthy foods can be more  
228 expensive, a lot of organic food although it's getting cheaper is more expensive. So,  
229 they're not necessarily the mainstream but I think what you see happening is that  
230 when you look at the trend as foods become more mainstream, they become more  
231 affordable and then they become more a part of the conversation. So, if you think  
232 about plant-based foods, vegan foods, when they started out a few years ago they  
233 were really, really expensive and when we did our dietary lifestyle study a couple of  
234 years ago what was coming out of that was that there wasn't much choice, it was  
235 more expensive. And the result is the people following a lot of those diets tend to be  
236 people from a higher demographic. Now, we're seeing a range of food in that space  
237 grow exponentially across all categories. So, the market is on the up-and-up and will  
238 become more affordable. That's an area that is very much in growth and probably will  
239 continue to grow as we look at the world through a different lens around sustainability  
240 and the challenges that brings for the world and the climate.

241 **SR:** I see what you mean about when the foodstuffs become more mainstream that it's  
242 more affordable for everybody else as well.

243 **GB:** Exactly. It is really important to say everybody is not healthy, there are little  
244 groups of niche people. Now, also we're going to be heading into a time, Sinead, you  
245 know, it's going to be very different. Please God, the recession won't be extreme. I  
246 try to look at things optimistically but it's highly likely we'll be heading into a world  
247 that the priority for people will just be getting food on the table. Is it all just going to  
248 be back-to-basics? Other priorities people have around health may not be as important  
249 as people just needing to eat. We'll just have to wait and see.



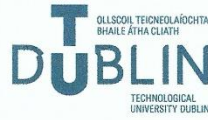
250 **SR:** You don't call yourself a Foodie then?  
251 **GB:** I'll tell you there are people that are way more foodie than I'd be. But I like food  
252 and because I work in it, I suppose I'm talking about it every day, and we like our  
253 food in our house, it's very much part of how we live but we're not a type of foodie  
254 we do it all good or bad.  
255 **SR:** Speaking about contemporary Irish food culture, who would you consider the  
256 main food actors to be, such as chefs, producers, tourism boards, enthusiasts and  
257 campaigners. Is there anyone that would stand out for you?  
258 **GB:** They all have a role to play, don't they, and they all do a good job in terms of  
259 what they do. *Tourism Ireland* do a great job in promoting Ireland and the Wild  
260 Atlantic Way and all the food producers along there is one example. Grow Your Own  
261 [GIY] is another great network I think that's going to be something that will continue  
262 to grow around education and that there's likely to be more emphasis on that into the  
263 future. *Teagasc* are another body that really support people, in terms of helping them  
264 research the potential to make particular foods. They look at how to help people when  
265 they go to scale up for example if they want to learn how to get the technical make-up  
266 right, whether it be an ice cream or type of cheese product. You can spend time there  
267 doing that and they give fantastic support. Who else did you mention?  
268 **SR:** Chefs, producers or food enthusiasts.  
269 **GB:** Yeah, I think chefs in Ireland, people like Darina Allen is kind of the  
270 Godmother, (don't quote me on that), but she really absolutely has done so much to  
271 elevate how Ireland is perceived across the world in terms of food. She's an incredible  
272 person. And there are all sorts of other chefs who all have their own stories to tell  
273 from the Neven Maguires right through to the Donal Skehans. He's probably a bit  
274 more international in his outlook. And then you've got the bloggers, who are probably  
275 more focused on health, they kind of go after specific types of messages. But I think  
276 the Irish chefs do a great job too. Who else is there?  
277 **SR:** I suppose producers as well.  
278 **GB:** All food producers, as a society there's fantastic different types of producers  
279 from the small, smaller farmer's markets, cottage industry style right through to the  
280 big producers, big manufacturers. If you go all the way to the large, large,  
281 multinational scale of *Kerry*, the *Glanbia's* how they support Irish produce and  
282 employment on a huge, huge scale. Everybody has a role to play, I wouldn't like to be  
283 quoted as saying one is better than another. I think all of those together, Sinéad, come  
284 together to make the food culture of today.  
285 **SR:** How would you personally spread the word of Irish food? Would it be through  
286 products, producers, places and so on? I mean to do with your work role really not  
287 you personally.  
288 **GB:** You mean through my work?  
289 **SR:** How do you spread the word of Irish food?  
290 **GB:** In my role... I'm not really...there are people on the marketing team whose job  
291 it is to take the insights that we learn across the markets. So, as I was saying, in  
292 Germany, they want to hear more about organic or Chinese wanting to hear about  
293 safety. Again, that depends on what you're marketing as well, the particular category.  
294 We have a dedicated team who help develop marketing messages for those markets  
295 and then their messages for people within the markets whether they be buyers,  
296 retailers, consumers. So, in my role, I don't work on that marketing team to develop  
297 that insight there would be a person who would do that. But my job would be, the  
298 studies we do, whether we look at the, *What Ireland Ate Last Night* is one example, or  
299 our *Dietary Lifestyle* study is we produce big reports that a block of companies would



300 not be able to invest in because of the cost of them. We don't do them randomly, we  
301 do them thoughtfully based on what we hear people wanting to know about. So, for  
302 example people wanted to know because there was such a surge in interest in  
303 veganism; we decided to do a study on that. We might look at, we started to get into  
304 whiskey, we looked at a study on the future of whiskey. Functional food, healthy  
305 eating was one we did last year. So, we invest in those studies and then we share them  
306 with industry and there's lots of insight in those studies that industry, either we work  
307 with them to help them understand a little bit more in terms of the context of their  
308 category and their consumer or they take away and use it themselves. And it's not just  
309 for the smaller guys the big companies also avail of those reports part of a suite of  
310 things they use to learn how to develop products for market. So, that's kind of where  
311 my role comes in it's looking at...we commission studies throughout the year. *What*  
312 *Ireland Ate Last Night*; my team has done before; it was one that was very popular. It  
313 got interest from a lot of people because it takes it to a micro level and allows people  
314 to understand what people are really eating as well. And where you need to look at  
315 product development, more insight or messaging. This year is now turning out to be  
316 slightly different since then we're likely to do one around dietary lifestyles or we  
317 might do one around the economy and the fall-out of that. At this stage it's really hard  
318 to know but what we were doing and what we are doing is slightly different. We're all  
319 about developing insights that industry can use and whether that's for new product  
320 development right through to communications, messaging or understanding their  
321 consumer a bit better.  
322 **SR:** So, it means the producers and the other food companies can avail of it.  
323 **GB:** Exactly, and it's all free. The other thing we do... was it the *[Consumer] Trends*  
324 *Presentation* I did with you Sinéad?  
325 **SR:** That's right, in Marketing class.  
326 **GB:** So, that as a piece of work is one that every number of years we tender out, we  
327 commission the work and then we share with everybody from the colleges right  
328 through to workshopping it with small businesses, big businesses, starter businesses,  
329 that's another resource that's there for people as well.  
330 **SR:** That's great. I think that's it. Thanks Grace.

## Appendix G

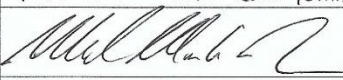
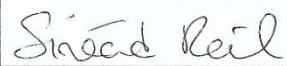
### Interviewees Signed Consent Forms



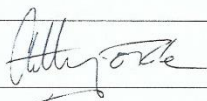

Interview Consent Form:

<b>Researcher's Name</b>	SINEAD REIL		
<b>Academic Unit</b>	TU Dublin Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1		
<b>Title of Study</b>	Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in the country's contemporary food culture.		
<b>The following section should be completed by the research participant</b>			
	Yes	No	
Have you been informed of the nature of this study by the researcher?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about this research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been informed of your ability to withdraw participation and/or data from the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been told of what will happen to data generated by your participation in the study and how it will be kept safe?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which may be disseminated in academic publications, books or conference proceedings?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were you informed that this consent form shall be kept securely and in confidence by the researcher?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Name of Participant</b>	KERRY QUIGLEY <small>Please use block capitals</small>		
<b>Signature of Participant</b>	<i>Quigley</i>	<b>Date</b>	10/03/2020
<b>Signature of Researcher</b>	<i>Sinead Reil</i>	<b>Date</b>	10/03/2020

Interview Consent Form:

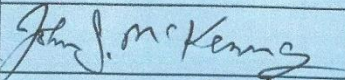
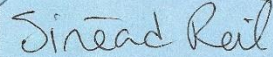
<b>Researcher's Name</b>	SINEAD REIL		
<b>Academic Unit</b>	TU Dublin Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1		
<b>Title of Study</b>	Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in the country's contemporary food culture.		
<b>The following section should be completed by the research participant</b>			
	Yes	No	
Have you been informed of the nature of this study by the researcher?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about this research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been informed of your ability to withdraw participation and/or data from the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been told of what will happen to data generated by your participation in the study and how it will be kept safe?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which may be disseminated in academic publications, books or conference proceedings?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were you informed that this consent form shall be kept securely and in confidence by the researcher?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Name of Participant</b>	Máirtín Mac Cúilomáin <small>Please use block capitals</small>		
<b>Signature of Participant</b>		<b>Date</b>	10/3/20
<b>Signature of Researcher</b>		<b>Date</b>	10/3/20

Interview Consent Form:

<b>Researcher's Name</b>	SINEAD REIL		
<b>Academic Unit</b>	TU Dublin Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1		
<b>Title of Study</b>	Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in the country's contemporary food culture.		
<b>The following section should be completed by the research participant</b>			
	Yes	No	
Have you been informed of the nature of this study by the researcher?	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about this research?	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been informed of your ability to withdraw participation and/or data from the research?	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been told of what will happen to data generated by your participation in the study and how it will be kept safe?	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which may be disseminated in academic publications, books or conference proceedings?	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were you informed that this consent form shall be kept securely and in confidence by the researcher?	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Name of Participant</b>			
ANTHONY OTOOLE			
<b>Signature of Participant</b>		<b>Date</b>	26/03/2020
<b>Signature of Researcher</b>		<b>Date</b>	26/03/2020



Interview Consent Form:

<b>Researcher's Name</b>	SINEAD REIL		
<b>Academic Unit</b>	TU Dublin Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1		
<b>Title of Study</b>	Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in the country's contemporary food culture.		
<b>The following section should be completed by the research participant</b>			
	Yes	No	
Have you been informed of the nature of this study by the researcher?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been informed of your ability to withdraw participation and/or data from the research?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been told of what will happen to data generated by your participation in the study and how it will be kept safe?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which may be disseminated in academic publications, books or conference proceedings?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were you informed that this consent form shall be kept securely and in confidence by the researcher?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Name of Participant</b>	JOHN MCKENNA JOHN MCKENNA		
<b>Signature of Participant</b>		<b>Date</b>	14/04/2020
<b>Signature of Researcher</b>		<b>Date</b>	14/04/2020

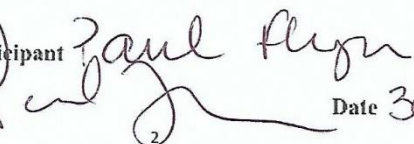
# Done Researcher Consent Form - Pau



Researcher's Name SINEAD REIL SIN  
Academic Unit TU Dublin Cathal Brugha Street D4  
Title of Study Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie or showing a shift in the country's contemporary food culture.

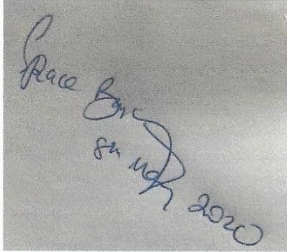
### The following section should be completed by the research participant

- |  | Yes                      |
|--|--------------------------|
| Have you been informed of the nature of this study by the researcher?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about this research?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you been informed of your ability to withdraw participation and/or data from the research?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you been told of what will happen to data generated by your participation in the study and how it will be kept safe?                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which may be disseminated in academic publications, books or conference proceedings? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Were you informed that this consent form shall be kept securely and in confidence by the researcher?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of Participant Paul Flynn PA  
Signature of  Date 30/4/2020 05/04/2020

Signature of Researcher: Sinead Reil 30/04/20



<b>Researcher's Name</b>	SINEAD REIL		
<b>Academic Unit</b>	TU Dublin Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1		
<b>Title of Study</b>	Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in the country's contemporary food culture.		
<b>The following section should be completed by the research participant</b>			
	Yes	No	
Have you been informed of the nature of this study by the researcher?	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about this research?	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been informed of your ability to withdraw participation and/or data from the research?	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been told of what will happen to data generated by your participation in the study and how it will be kept safe?	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which may be disseminated in academic publications, books or conference proceedings?	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were you informed that this consent form shall be kept securely and in confidence by the researcher?	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Name of Participant</b>	GRACE BINCHY		
<b>Signature of Participant</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signature of Researcher</b>	Sinead Reil	<b>Date</b>	8/05/2020

**Participant Information Sheet**

My name is Sinéad Reil, I am a final year student of the M.A. in Gastronomy and Food Studies in Technological University for Dublin. In 2013, I completed an undergraduate thesis on Irish Food Media. This research study has developed from that and has boosted my interest in the area of Irish food culture, the phenomenon of foodism and foodie subculture, which forms the basis for my thesis.

The working title of the study is:

**Foodism in Ireland 2019: feeding foodie philosophy or showing a shift in the country's contemporary food culture?**

The objectives of this thesis are as follows:

- Explain the foodism phenomenon.
- Identify what is Ireland's present discourse around food.
- To determine why have Irish people's interest in food risen?
- To establish whether foodies are a subculture or a mainstream culture.
- Investigate how the main food actors contribute to contemporary food culture.

Interviews are intended to gather as much information as is relevant to the objectives of the thesis. All findings are for academic purposes only and the interviewee's privacy and confidentiality will be respected. Participants have the right to withdraw at any time. All information will be treated as confidential. All data is recorded on an encrypted device.

Contact details for the researcher and my supervisor are as follows, should you require any further details.

**Student Researcher Name:** Sinéad Reil

**Institute:** Technological University for Dublin, Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1.

**Area of Studies:** Gastronomy and Food Studies

**Email:** [d16125714@mydit.ie](mailto:d16125714@mydit.ie) **Contact Number:** 087-7487355

**Research Supervisor:**

**Name:** Kathleen Farrell

**Email:** [kathleen.farrell@tudublin.ie](mailto:kathleen.farrell@tudublin.ie)





# Appendix I

## Gastronomic Timeline 2019

### Prominent Events in Ireland's Gastronomic Timeline 2019

