

Fermenting Community – *Xingar*, *Matraila*, and *Artekia*: Pork Fermentation at GAEC Haranea in Itsasu, Pays Basque

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Figure 1 Pork fermentations hanging in the sechoir, the drying room at Haranea farm.
Photo credit Susie H. Moskowitz

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Abstract: This paper adds to the field of agroecology by examining how pork fermentation contributes to food sovereignty in a case study in the Northern Basque Country (Iparralde), where such questions have not been analyzed. I examine how three pork ferments at GAEC Haranea farm, *xingar* (ham, PDO Jambon du Kintoa), *matraila* (guanciale), and *artekia* (pancetta), together contribute to biocultural diversity and resilient autonomous local food systems which are preconditions for food sovereignty. Using the holobiont theory, I extend this relationship between fermentation and food sovereignty to imagine practices of fermentation as co-evolutionary forces in human-microbe relationships and then explore the political ramifications of this extension for food sovereignty. I argue that fermentation should be included as an agroecological practice to both expand agroecological practices beyond agronomy and to push fermentation research, which has been largely centered on scientific microbiological processes and food technology for high-cuisine restaurants, to factor in the cultural context of fermentation in a more ethnozymological way. I conclude that fermentation is an important but not a necessary nor sufficient condition for creating food sovereign communities because the relationship between fermentation and food sovereignty is contextual to local cultures and ecologies.

Keywords: Basque, Fermentation, Pork, Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, Ethnozymology