

## **A Taste of Home?:**

Food, Identity and Belonging among Brazilians in London

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## **Declaration of Authorship**

I, Maria das Graças Santos Luiz Brightwell, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis brings a focus to food and its cultural geographies by examining the ways that diasporic communities forge networks of distribution and the role of homesickness in shaping tastes in consumer societies. It also adds food (as material and immaterial culture) to diasporic geographies by highlighting the importance of food practices for migrant identities and sense of belonging. Through an investigation of food practices among Brazilians in London this research also contributes to an understanding of how this recent, numerous but under researched South American group experience migration in an everyday basis in London. The investigation undertaken includes desk research on food provision systems, semi-structured interviews and documentary field research with Brazilian food providers across London, focus group discussions with Brazilian migrants, periods of observational research in case study shop and restaurant outlets, and ethnographic domestic research with case study Brazilian households in Harlesden, Brent (an area of London with marked Brazilian immigration over the last decade). My analysis considers 'Brazilianess' as a category and cultural-culinary form being made and contested in London. An overview of the dynamics of Brazilian food provision in London shows that this making and contesting operates through both the material culture of food provision and the social lives of public spaces such as restaurants, cafes and grocery shops. Brazilian food consumption thus operates in a number of different registers linked to practicality, emotion and ethnic identification. A closer look at public Brazilian food consumption spaces reveals how such places create collective migrant spaces of belonging by translocalizing Brazilian life. In the domestic settings, food narratives and observation reveal the materialities and practices of migrant home making in mixed households and the processes through which consumption practices are negotiated and contested by different household members.

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCING AND RESEARCHING BRAZILIAN FOOD IN LONDON</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.2 Researching Brazilian food in London: A personal journey</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>1.3 Researching Brazilian food provision and consumption in London</b>	<b>33</b>
1.3.1 An overview of Brazilian food provision in London	34
1.3.2 Focus group discussions on Brazilian food consumption	40
1.3.3 Ethnographic research in case study outlets	42
1.3.4 Researching Brazilian food consumption in domestic settings	47
1.3.5 Analysis and presentation	49
1.3.6 Conclusion	51
<b>2 CHAPTER TWO - FOOD, MIGRATION AND THE BRAZILIAN DIASPORA</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>2.2 Food and its geographies</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>2.3 Adding food (as material and immaterial culture) to diasporic geographies</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>2.4 Brazilian migration</b>	<b>82</b>
2.4.1 Bye bye, Brazil!	82
2.4.2 Brazilians in the UK	89
2.4.3 Being and becoming Brazilian abroad	92
<b>2.5 Conclusion</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>3 CHAPTER THREE - 'ON THE MOVE AND ON THE MAKING': BRAZILIAN FOOD PROVISION IN LONDON</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>3.1 Introduction</b>	<b>104</b>

<b>3.2</b>	<b>Brazilian grocery trade to and in London: from transnational space to local place</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>'It's not everyone's cake': the making of a 'Brazilian' diasporic cuisine</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Multicultural palates and 'home made food'</b>	<b>133</b>
3.4.1	Brazilian flavours for mainstream customers	134
3.4.2	'All they want is homemade food...'	151
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Emotional geographies of displacement, homesickness and remembrance</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>CHAPTER FOUR - 'THERE IS A BIG BRAZILIAN IDENTITY INSIDE MY BELLY': AN OVERVIEW OF FOOD CONSUMPTION PRACTICES AMONG BRAZILIANS IN LONDON</b>	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Brazilian food consumption as a habit</b>	<b>184</b>
4.2.1	Changes	184
4.2.2	Continuities and 'Returns'	198
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Gut feelings</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Consuming the nation abroad</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>CHAPTER FIVE - THE PUBLIC CULTURE OF BRAZILIAN FOOD COMMERCE IN HARLESDEN: A CASE STUDY OF <i>MERCEARIA BRASIL</i>, <i>SABOR MINEIRO</i> AND THEIR TRANSLOCAL GEOGRAPHIES</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>The research setting</b>	<b>233</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Claiming space: localizing the Brazilian presence in London</b>	<b>243</b>
5.3.1	Spaces of sociality and belonging	243
5.3.2	Emotional geographies of comfort and familiarity	248
5.3.3	Claiming a space for Brazilian children	252
5.3.4	Visibility and Brazilian identity in the city	255
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Translocalizing Brazilian life</b>	<b>261</b>
5.4.1	Having something in common	262
5.4.2	'Brazilianess' remade and contested	270
5.4.3	Translocal 'Brazilianess' as the working of memory	274
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>279</b>

<b>6</b>	<b>CHAPTER SIX - AT HOME WITH BRAZILIANS IN HARLES DEN</b>	<b>282</b>
6.1	Introduction	283
6.2	Situating domestic food practices in the two households	292
6.3	Communal eating in the households	303
6.4	Sensorial engagement with food in everyday life	313
6.5	Food, family and gender roles	321
6.6	Eating Brazilianess: imagine taking away the beans from my life?!	336
6.7	Conclusion	342
<b>7</b>	<b>CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSION: GEOGRAPHIES OF FOOD AND MIGRATION</b>	<b>344</b>
7.1	How is 'Brazilianess' constructed, represented and contested through diasporic culinary culture in London?	345
7.2	What investments do diasporic Brazilians have in the consumption of Brazilian food? 349	
7.3	How are constructions of, and investments in, Brazilian food implicated in the production of public and domestic spaces?	354
7.4	How can food - as material culture and as an embodied practice - contribute to understanding meanings of home, identity and belonging among diasporic populations?	357
7.5	How is Brazilian food translocalised?	360
7.6	Future agendas for research	362
	<b>APPENDIX I - RESEARCH ON BRAZILIAN OUTLETS</b>	<b>381</b>
	<b>APPENDIX II - FOCUS GROUPS COMPOSITION</b>	<b>384</b>

## List of Figures, Tables and Maps

FIGURE 1.1 DINDA ZEFA'S BRAZILIAN BEANS	32
FIGURE 2.1 GROWTH OF BRAZILIAN MIGRATION IN THE UK	90
FIGURE 3.1 BRAZILIAN CENTRE	113
FIGURE 3.2 BRAZILIAN EMPORIUM AND RECANTO DO BRASIL	113
FIGURE 3.3 BRAZILIAN GROCERY SHOPS IN LONDON	114
FIGURE 3.4 MERCEARIA BRASIL FLYER	117
FIGURE 3.5 BRAZILIAN EMPORIUM FLYER	117
FIGURE 3.6 RECANTO DO BRASIL	118
FIGURE 3.7 BEM BRASIL ADVERTISEMENT	119
FIGURE 3.8 GO MERCEARIA ADVERTISEMENT	119
FIGURE 3.9 AL ASDIKA'A SUPERMARKET AND ADVERTISEMENTS OF WAY TO SAVE	123
FIGURE 3.10 TIA MARIA TAPIOCARIA AND THE TAPIOCA PANCAKE	130
FIGURE 3.11 INFORMATION FROM COMIDA'S HOMEPAGE	137
FIGURE 3.12 RODIZIO RICO'S FAÇADE	138
FIGURE 3.13 PRETO'S ADVERTISEMENT TO THE ANGLOPHONE MARKET	138
FIGURE 3.14 RODIZIO RICO'S PASSADORES	139
FIGURE 3.15 COMIDA AND RODIZIO RICO'S ADVERTISEMENT TO THE LUSOPHONE MARKET	141
FIGURE 3.16 FAVELA CHIC MENU	143
FIGURE 3.17 BOBÓ DE CAMARÃO, COCO BAMBOO	144
FIGURE 3.18 TROPICALIA'S MENU	145
FIGURE 3.19 CANELA CAFÉ'S INTERIOR AND FAÇADE	148
FIGURE 3.20 BRAZILIAN GOURMET'S INTERIOR AND FAÇADE	148
FIGURE 3.21 CAFÉ RIO'S INTERIOR AND FAÇADE	148
FIGURE 3.22 BANKETE RESTAURANT: INTERIOR, FAÇADE AND MENU	149
FIGURE 3.23 ADVERTISEMENT FROM BANKETE RESTAURANT AIMED AT BRAZILIAN CLIENTS	151
FIGURE 3.24 BARRACO CAFÉ AND RESTAURANT	158
FIGURE 3.25 BARRACO'S MENU	159
FIGURE 3.26 BARRACO BAR AND RESTAURANT	161
FIGURE 3.27 BARRACO: 'HOMELY' FEELING AND 'HOME' COOKED FOOD	162
FIGURE 3.28 BELLO CAFE AND A 'PRATO FEITO'	166
FIGURE 3.29 MARINHO, OWNER OF CAFE BRASILEIRO AND HIS 'PRATO FEITO'	166
FIGURE 3.30 SABOR BRASILEIRO'S FAÇADE AND BUFFET	166
FIGURE 3.31 GOSTOSA PIZZERIA: INTERIOR, FLYER AND FAÇADE	170
FIGURE 3.32 X BURGER HOUSE'S FLYER	171
FIGURE 3.33 PASTEL AND GUARANÁ FROM KATAVENTO PASTÉIS	171
FIGURE 5.1 GROCERY SHOP IN HARLESDEN HIGH STREET	234
FIGURE 5.2 MERCEARIA BRAZIL	236
FIGURE 5.3 MERCEARIA BRASIL - FAÇADE AND INTERIOR	238
FIGURE 5.4 MERCEARIA BRASIL - MEAT COUNTER	238
FIGURE 5.5 MERCEARIA BRASIL - MONEY TRANSFER AND NOTICE BOARD	238
FIGURE 5.6 SABOR MINEIRO CAFÉ AND RESTAURANT	241
FIGURE 5.7 BRAZILIAN BUSINESSES ACROSS THE ROAD FROM SABOR MINEIRO	242
FIGURE 5.8 BUFFET SERVICE AT SABOR MINEIRO	242
FIGURE 5.9 PEANUT CRUMBLE	266
FIGURE 5.10 SACK OF LOOSE BLACK BEANS - MERCEARIA BRAZIL	266
FIGURE 5.11 PLATE OF FOOD AT SABOR MINEIRO	267
FIGURE 5.12 RETAILING FAMILIARITY - MERCEARIA BRASIL	267
FIGURE 5.13 WATCHING FOOTBALL AT SABOR MINEIRO CAFE	269
FIGURE 6.1 FLAT 19'S KITCHEN AND GARDEN	285
FIGURE 6.2 BERENICE'S KITCHEN AND FLAT 63'S KITCHEN	285
FIGURE 6.3 PREPARING DINNER AT FLAT 63 AND EATING DINNER AT FLAT 19	285
FIGURE 6.4 SONIA'S FOOD CUPBOARD - FLAT 63 AND CELSO'S FOOD CUPBOARD AT FLAT 19	293
FIGURE 6.5 COOKING 'VACA ATOLADA' AT FLAT 19; PREPARING SUNDAY LUNCH AT FLAT 19	294
FIGURE 6.6 MARCOS EATING IN FRONT OF THE COMPUTER	294

FIGURE 6.7 WILLIAM'S FIRST ATTEMPT AT COOKING RICE, BEANS, CHICKEN AND SALAD	294
FIGURE 6.8 BERENICE'S TREATS FROM A TRIP TO BRAZIL; SONIA'S FOOD CUPBOARD	301
FIGURE 6.9 PAN FOR COOKING 'BARREADO'	306
FIGURE 6.10 SANTOS'S SEAFOOD FEAST	309
FIGURE 6.11 BERENICE'S CHILDHOOD FOODS	314
FIGURE 6.12 BERENICE'S AND SONIA'S RECIPE BOOKS	316
FIGURE 6.13 FAMILY MEAL AT FLAT 63	327
FIGURE 6.14 FAMILY MEAL AT FLAT 63	327
TABLE 2.1 ESTIMATED GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF BRAZILIANS LIVING ABROAD FROM 1996 TO 2009	86
TABLE 2.2 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF BRAZILIANS IN THE TOP THREE RECEIVING COUNTRIES IN EUROPE	88
TABLE 3.1 MAIN IMPORTERS OF BRAZILIAN FOOD	108
TABLE 3.2 BRAZILIAN GROCERY STORES IN LONDON	112
TABLE 3.3 PRODUCTS ADVERTISED BY BRAZILIAN GROCERY SHOPS AND TRADERS	121
TABLE 3.4 LIST OF BRAZILIAN FOOD OUTLETS CATERING MAINLY FOR A NON-BRAZILIAN CLIENTELE	135
TABLE 3.5 TEXTUAL AND VISUAL APPEAL USED BY CHURRASCARIAS	141
TABLE 3.6 BRAZILIAN RESTAURANTS AND CAFÉS CATERING FOR A MIXED CLIENTELE	145
TABLE 3.7 LIST OF BRAZILIAN RESTAURANTS AND CAFÉS CATERING MAINLY FOR BRAZILIAN CLIENTS	167
TABLE 6.1 BRIEF DETAILS OF HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION IN FLAT 63 IN NOVEMBER 2009	286
TABLE 6.2 BRIEF DETAILS OF HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION IN FLAT 19 IN NOVEMBER 2009	286
MAP 3.1 DISTRIBUTION OF BRAZILIAN FOOD OUTLETS IN LONDON	103
MAP 3.2 STATE OF ORIGIN OF BRAZILIAN ENTREPRENEURS	105

# **1 Chapter One - Introducing and researching Brazilian food in London**

## 1.1 Introduction

‘As if you were there!’ The phrase, part of an advertisement for a Brazilian grocery shop in London, sums up the complex relationship between migrants, place and food. It promises the migrant the possibility of being at home in the host society through the consumption of familiar brands, foods and sensorial landscapes. Brazilian food entrepreneurs have named this commercial activity ‘*economia da saudade*’ (homesickness economy) proving that migrant entrepreneurs are well aware of the economic potential of the complex cultures and emotions of this diasporic population.

The commercial activity of Brazilian entrepreneurs in the food business and the (re) creation of a ‘Brazilian’ diasporic cuisine is a recent but dynamic enterprise in the UK. Whilst it does not compare with other established culinary diasporas, such as the Indian and the Chinese, it shows a notable growth. In London, the number of Brazilian food outlets (primarily shops and restaurants) has grown tenfold since 2000 to a figure of around seventy, catering mostly (but not exclusively) to fellow Brazilians. Estimates of the number of Brazilians living in the UK vary greatly. The Brazilian Ministry for External Relations gives a number of 180,000 Brazilians living in the UK (Exteriores, 2009); a report released by the ‘Strangers into Citizens’ campaign, entitled ‘Brazilians in London’, gives a higher estimate of 200,000 Brazilians in the UK, of which between 130,000 to 160,000 are supposedly based in London (Evans et al., 2007). A recent research project on London’s Latin American population shows a less robust number of 186,500 Latin Americans in the UK and 113,500 Latin Americans in London (MacIlwaine et al., 2011). Kubal, Bakewell et al. (2011), using official figures from the UK government such as the Census 2001 and the UK Annual Population Survey, give an estimate of 56,000 Brazilian-born persons legally resident in the UK in 2008. Despite such disparate numbers, there is a consensus that Brazilian migration to the UK has been on the rise since the 1990s and has accelerated in the 2000s, though showing a slight decline from 2007 due to the recent economic recession and the tightening of

immigration controls, for example through the introduction of the Points-Based System and the 2006 Immigration and Nationality Act (MacIlwaine et al., 2011, Kubal et al., 2011).

More broadly this thesis is concerned with two important phenomena of the contemporary world: the movement of people and food across national borders. It brings together recent debates on diaspora, transnationalism, translocalism and material culture, and thus adds to geographical knowledge of food and migration. It connects and advances such debates by investigating the role of transnational food practices in fashioning diasporic and migrant cultures. This is achieved in three ways: firstly I provide a diasporic/migrant-centred account on the relation between food and cultural globalising processes; something often omitted in transnational food studies. Secondly, by bringing the materiality and immateriality of food to research on diasporic geographies, I engage with the embodied and emotional aspects of both dislocation and location. Thirdly, I provide substantial empirical and theoretical findings on the largest group of South Americans in London, who so far have had minimal academic attention.

First, through an examination of how the Brazilian diasporic community has forged both networks of food distribution / provision and distinctive cultures of food consumption in London, this research brings a stronger diasporic focus to established work on food and the globalisation of its cultural geographies. Food and transnational study encounters have been sparse but very fruitful (Bernstein, 2010, Collins, 2008, Crang et al., 2003, Rabikowska, 2009b, Abbots, 2011, Abdullah, 2010, Mankekar, 2005, Möhring, 2008, Wilk, 1999). The anthropologist Richard Wilk, for example, used food as an avenue to investigate cultural change and transnational cultural flows in the Caribbean, more specifically, Belize and the United States. His study argues that globalisation processes do not simply wipe out local cultural manifestations but *produces* local cuisines, cultures and identities. He contends that 'the strengthening of local and national identities and global mass-market capitalism are not contradictory trends but are in fact two aspects of the same



process' (Wilk, 1999: 245). He shows that Belizean national cuisine has been, in fact, created under the influence of transnational flows - of people, tourists, sojourners, media and especially by Belizean migrants who went to live in the United States and returned many years later. Wilk claims that food was (and still is) an important building block in the Belizean-American community, with many Belizean restaurants in the US serving a taste of home for Belizeans and calling it 'Belizean food', a label that would bear little meaning in Belize. Everyday cooking was turned into 'Belizean cuisine' by migrants who missed home - a process further reinforced when these Belizean migrants left the United States to return to their home country and opened up restaurants in Belize, calling them 'Belizean restaurants' and serving dishes they remembered from their childhood. Wilk concludes:

After all those colonial years when Belizeans looked at anything coming from abroad as better than they had at home, here was the supreme irony – now Belizean cuisine was being imported from American cities. Just like the brown sugar that had to travel to England for refining, Belizean cuisine was transformed into something more respectable when the taste came back from abroad (Wilk, 2006: 173).

Whilst Wilk's study employs a broader approach to the construction of a national Belizean cuisine, by taking wider transnational flows between Belize and the US into consideration my aim is slightly more modest: I examine the creation of a Brazilian diasporic national cuisine in London. However, Wilk's research highlights important points to bear in mind. First of all, the fact that displacement changes the symbolic and economic value of food; and secondly how food collapses scales, linking the body to wider economic processes, connecting the economic to the symbolic, the past to the present, making this an ideal topic through which cultural and economic globalization processes can be investigated.

Academic research on the transnational flows of commodities – in this case food – was crucial for a more comprehensive understanding of

transnationalism. The work of geographers Crang, Dwyer and Jackson (2003) on transnational commodity culture critically examined and proposed a broader conceptualisation of the notion of transnational space. This broadening was a response to: a) the concerns some scholars had with the growing popularity of the concept - in terms of its scope, specificity and politics; b) calls for the 'regrounding' of transnational studies, to particular people and places (Mitchell, 1997); c) calls for 'disciplining' the field of transnational studies (Portes et al., 1999) only for those who travel or remit regularly, for instance. Crang, Dwyer and Jackson (2003) reacted against these calls, arguing that such an approach would close down the field of transnational studies and that such conceptual disciplining also sets too tight rules for what counted as 'transnational', confining the term to only be used only in relation to 'ethnic minorities'.

The proposed notion of transnational spaces that Crang, Dwyer and Jackson (2003) used drew on the notion of 'diaspora space' used by Avtar Brah (1996), which she considers a:

A conceptual category 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and their descendants, but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. In other words, the concept of diaspora space (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put'. The diaspora space is the site where the native is as much a diasporian as the diasporian is the native. (Brah, 1996: 209)

Crang, Dwyer and Jackson (2003) developed their argument by using examples of their own research on the transnational commodity flows of food and fashion between Britain and the Indian subcontinent. Among other things, their research emphasised the fact that transnationality was a social space 'encompassed by the circuits, flows, trajectories and imaginaries of British South-Asian transnational commodity culture' which 'includes a wide variety of actors who have varying investments in, experiences of and expressions of transnationalism.' (Crang et al., 2003: 449).

'Transnational space' (as well as 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996); 'transnational social spaces' (Faist, 2000); transnational 'social fields' (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004) are now widespread notions in migration research referring to 'social networks and relationships that function across borders and that entail the flow of people, goods, information, and ideas that affect those who move and those who do not (McIlwaine, 2011: 10). My own research engages with this broader conceptualisation of transnational spaces, especially when discussing the networks and flows of commodities involved in the provision of Brazilian food in London (Chapter 3) and more generally by recognising that Brazilian culinary culture(s) in London are re-created and negotiated in relation to not only the migrants themselves but to wider social, spatial and temporal relations.

The notion of transnational space has been influential in research which deals with the internationalisation of food consumption and the growing popularity of ethnic restaurants among mainstream consumers. Möhring's (2008) study, for example, focused on the *public* production and consumption of ethnic food, that is, on the emergence of migrant cuisines in the marketplace and their effects on the food consumption patterns of the non-migrant population in post-war West Germany. It considered that '*migrant and non-migrant owners of the restaurant, cooks, waiters, (illegal) kitchen workers as well as migrant and non-migrant patrons – all participate in the transnational space of the ethnic restaurant, though with differing investments.*' The author's argument is that the opening of restaurants and wine bars in the late 60s and 70s by immigrants in West Germany was met by 'a generation of (young) consumers looking for political, but also culinary alternatives. [...] not least to demonstrate international solidarity by one's consumer choices' (Möhring, 2008: 142).

The focus of Möhring's work (and of others) that discusses the so called 'ethnic food' expansion undoubtedly has its own merits (I discuss this body of literature in more detail in Chapter 2) by examining issues of authenticity, hybridity, commodification of difference, and identity politics in ethnic food

consumption in multicultural settings. However, such an approach investigates migrant food mainly in relation to mainstream markets and palates, thus omitting from the research agenda the migrants' own accounts of their role as consumers and in disseminating their culinary cultures abroad. My own research brings the migrants' voice to the fore by deliberately taking a migrant centred approach to food provision and consumption as they try to recreate and negotiate their food culture under diasporic circumstances. My research also goes beyond public spaces, by looking at the domestic sphere of food consumption.

Secondly, the thesis adds a distinctive focus on food (as *embodied* by material and immaterial culture) to the existing research on diasporic geographies. It does so by highlighting the importance of everyday food practices for migrant identities and senses of belonging and paying attention to how these transnational processes and flows of food and people get situated in a multi-diverse city like London. Academic studies in transnationalism and diaspora have long focused on movement and flow. Mobile aspects of migrant life, such as border crossings, networks and *routes* have been considered 'progressive' and, in opposition to emplacement, rooting and tradition, seen as limiting and conservative. Some scholars have even argued that migrants' increased mobility resulted in deterritorialised identities and a feeling of detachment from place (Appadurai, 1996b).

My study attends to calls for research on transnationalism and diaspora to be more grounded, more attuned to place and locality. Mitchell (1997), was one of the main voices to call for geography to be brought back into transnational discourse. She argued that much of the notion of transnationalism developed during the 1990s focused on the increased movement and connections of financial and entrepreneurial global networks, overlooking migrant experiences and lived spaces. More recently Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) considered an important trend in migration research to look at 'space, place, and the nature of embeddedness', thus providing 'thick and empirically rich mapping of how global, macro-level processes interact with local lived

experiences that are representative of broader trends'. Conradson and Latham (2010: 228) also claimed for research to be more 'attentive to everyday practices and geographical emplacement' and to 'how national identity gets reworked and re-imagined through such movement and mobility'.

What some of the work on grounded transnationalism revealed was that despite their mobility, transnational networks were in fact, heavily influenced and anchored in specific locales - both in sending and receiving countries (Werbner, 1997, Olson and Silvey, 2006, Harney, 2007, Levitt, 2001, Guarnizo and Smith, 1998). Transnationalism therefore, went beyond exchanges between two nation states, but began to be conceived as being complex and spreading through a variety of locations. The concept of translocality, which was developed by Michael Peter Smith when investigating transnational urbanism, allowed for a more nuanced view of how migrants' experiences are situated across different sites and scales. Smith's understanding of translocality differs from the conceptualisations of Appadurai (1996) and Hannerz (1998). For Appadurai, transnational migrant identities are shaped less by their practices than by mass media, for example. Hannerz's take on translocality emphasises the mobility of subjects. But what can sites of emplacement (such as neighbourhoods, towns and cities) of people on the move reveal? According to Smith, such study helps us guard against the macro-analytic view of mobility as occurring in an abstract, globalised 'space of flows' (Smith, 2011: 184). For Smith and Guarnizo 'the transnational practices that connect people across different nations are [...] embodied in relations which are situated in specific contexts' (Smith and Guarnizo 1998 cited by Brickell and Datta, 2011b: 9); the transnational gets 'rooted in the place-making practices of the translocal' (Smith, 2005 cited by Brickell and Datta 2010).

In this thesis I use a multiscalar approach to examine how migrants' daily life is experienced and negotiated in London. I draw and add to a body of research that is concerned with these multi-sited and multi -scalar 'translocal geographies' (Brickell and Datta, 2011a). In this literature, there is an emphasis on the fact that migrants come from homes, families, neighbourhoods, villages,

towns, regions. These multiple spatial registers do not disappear in thin air as migrants cross borders. Furthermore, migrants' experiences in the new settings are mediated on a daily basis by these various scales. One of them is the city where they moved to. For Brickell and Datta (2011a: 16) cities are 'situated within the intersection between place and displacement, location and mobility, settlement and return' and are 'critical to the construction of migrant landscapes and the ways in which they reflect and influence migratory movements, politics, identities, and narratives'. Migrants' daily life is mediated by neighbourhoods, workspaces, streets, consumption places and homes, too. Connected to multiple places, neighbourhoods are the emblematic site for the localization of transnational processes (Appadurai, 1995 cited by Brickell and Datta, 2011: 15). Neighbourhoods produce and are produced by migrants; and are 'the immediate site of encounters with 'otherness' and where notions of belonging and attachment are produced' (Brickell and Datta, 2011: 15). This can be seen, for example, in Datta's study of East Europeans in London (Datta, 2011), where the neighbourhood is a material and embodied site of day-to-day mundane negotiation, connected and compared to other places, producing feelings of belonging and alienation. On the other hand, translocal practices, such as the setting up of migrant shops and signs can significantly alter neighbourhoods, a contentious issue for some residents. Wise's (2011) study of the impacts of Chinese entrepreneurs to the urban landscape of Ashfield, Sydney exemplifies this. She shows how the production of a translocalised streetscape – in this case through Chinese language shop signage - produces embodied and affective feelings of connection (for some Chinese residents) but also 'impact upon the forms of belonging available to other inhabitants, sometimes causing tensions or competing claims of ownership.' (Wise, 2011: 108). Another importance register of affiliation is the home. For instance, in her research with British families returning to the UK after having lived in Singapore, Hatfield (Hatfield, 2011: 56) points to the

Role of homes in the UK as enduring localities for [high skilled] migrants, even when they were physically absent during their time spent living abroad. These homes were symbolically and

imaginatively incorporated into the temporary homes migrants made in Singapore. On return, migrants moved back to these specific spaces, not just the nation in general.

A translocal approach therefore, as pointed out by Brickell and Datta (2010), not only brings back the importance of locality and place in migrants' lives (both in sending and receiving countries), but also is oriented towards migrants' agency. It evidences the influence of specific locales over transnational migrant networks, economic exchanges and diasporic space. It also enters new terrain to explore differing 'spatial registers of affiliation that are part of migrants' everyday embodied experience'.

It is important to note that I do not dismiss the nation state altogether and that I am not only focusing on dyadic local/local connections. In fact, some authors who have asked for research to be more 'attentive to everyday practices and geographical emplacement' (Conradson and Latham, 2010: 228) also point out to research agendas that discuss 'how national identity gets reworked and re-imagined through such movement and mobility' (Conradson and Latham, 2010: 228). While some suggest that transnational processes would mean the downfall of the nation-states (Rouse, 1991, Kearney, 1991), others have argued that the nation-state still plays a key role in transnational processes:

While borders may be cultural constructions, they are constructions that are backed up by force of law, economic and political power, and regulating and regularizing institutions. What they come to mean and how they are experienced, crossed or imagined are products of particular histories, times, and places (Glick Schiller, 1997: 159).

An interesting point for our research is how processes of cultural representation are articulated in situations of displacement. Here, the distinction made by Mato (1997) between transnational relations and transnational identities come to hand as they allow us to investigate the process by which 'transnational relations are significant not only in the making

of transnational identities, but also in the social construction of local and national identities' (Mato, 1997: 157-160). Another key point here, when engaging with transnational identities, as pointed out by Nina Click Schiller (1997) is that cultural differentiations related to locality, region and nation emerge or become more salient via transnational processes.

I employ the notion of diaspora in this thesis as a 'heuristic device' (Fortier, 2005) to think about questions of belonging, home and identity in the experience of dislocation among a relatively new migrant group. Now, although to some diaspora conceptions a relationship with the homeland is central (Safran, 1991, Cohen, 1997, Tölölyan, 1996), I do not consider diasporic subjects as a homogenous group because they come from the some country. As pointed out by Fortier (2005) the new 'terrains of belonging' that are created in the new place of settlement have to re-articulate migrants' multiple locations, times, experiences and identifications. The intersectionality of belonging is not always accounted for (Valentine, 2007). I do however, share an understanding that migrants' experiences in the new settings are mediated by their 'transnational histories, cosmopolitan attitudes, diasporic belongings, national identity, and particular positionalities of gender, race, ethnicity and citizenship' (Silvey and Lawson 1999).

Furthermore, diaspora and transnational studies raise interesting questions about home. Diasporic subjects negotiate their 'new geographies of identity' well beyond the realm of the nation states and across multiple sites of attachment (Lavie and Swedenburg, 1996b). These multilocal mappings of 'home' imply, says Fortier (2005: 183) an examination of '*the social dynamics of roots and routings*'. A number of important and challenging questions have been raised about home in the burgeoning body of migration, diaspora and transnational communities literature (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Brah (1996: 193), for example, raises the point about the difference between 'feeling at home' and claims of belonging; Al-Ali and Koser (2002:7) asks 'how transnational social fields and practices manifest themselves in daily lives, and how (if at all) do they impact on abstract conceptualizations of home?' Ahmed



et al. (2003) queries about migrant homemaking; and Fouron (2003: 209) wonders whether nationally unbounded notions of home would give birth to a 'new' internationalist movement in the twenty-first century. Although I do not answer all these questions, this thesis certainly enters in dialogue with some of them.

Whilst belonging in diaspora may involve *both* attachment and movement (Fortier, 2005) the inclusion of experiences of location in the discussions on diaspora have often been eclipsed, as noted by Brah (1996: 182). It is my understanding that the investigation of these reconnections with the 'lived experience of locality' (Brah, 1996: 192) – central to the formation of diaporic identities - and the translocal geographies of migrant experience requires a sensory, embodied and material approach. The need to address such emotional, embodied, material and quotidian practices in migrants' life has been argued by a number of scholars (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993, Conradson and McKay, 2007, Basu and Coleman, 2008, Wise and Chapman, 2005, Choo, 2004). This body of work argues for the role of material culture in migrants' practices of belonging and home-making and to how 'diasporic identities are forged through the production, circulation and consumption of material things and spaces' (Crang 2010: 139). Such work has, for example, addressed the relationship between migrant home-making and material culture through an engagement with architecture and gardens, furniture and personal belonging, and everyday activities and performances (Tolia-Kelly, 2004b, Tolia-Kelly, 2004a, Datta, 2008, Morgan et al., 2005, Savaş, 2010).

Food allows us to map how migrants ground themselves materially and spatially and how they use food to interact and negotiate their various registers of affiliation with 'others' and among themselves, in a variety of scales: in the city, in specific neighbourhoods, in shops, at home. For Petridou (2001), a food parcel sent from home constituted a marker of difference and helped the Greek students whom she studied to overcome feelings of homesickness. Food can also 'ground' belonging and identity through its sensorial reminders and bodily impressions in particular places, as noted by Hall (2009). People's engagement

with food through its smell, texture, aroma, and appearance cannot be underestimated, as producing feeling of sameness and difference:

Sensory experience mediates social relations in immediate and unspoken ways. It indicates sameness and belonging when an experience is familiar and meaningful to all; it marks otherness and difference when it is new to some, and has diverse associations for others. As culturally embedded, socially shared and physically embodied phenomenon, sensory experience provides a visceral dimension to identity that impinges directly on our daily lives without necessarily entering into dialogue (Walmsley, 2005: 43).

Due to its multisensory qualities, food and its associated practices of shopping, preparing and eating 'evoke a multifaceted experience of place' (Law, 2001), recreating 'sensory landscapes of home' (Seremetakis and Seremetakis, 1994) for migrants and others. This evocation is of particular interest to this research. It has been mentioned that 'remembrance is the primary modality of diasporic identity formation, it is also tied to the creation of identity of places' (Fortier, 2005: 184). Food memories are testimonies of these diasporic reconnections and embodied belonging across several scales and sites. These remembrances abridge time and distance for migrants providing a medium through which stories and histories are told and remembered, places are described, identities formed and communities imagined (Seremetakis, 1994a). This research, therefore, answers Smith's (2011: 198) questioning regarding the role that nostalgia and attachment to things play in the social construction of translocal projects. In this regard I draw and expand on work on food and memory (Sutton, 2001); and embodied memories (Connerton, 2006, Stoller, 1997, Connerton, 1990).

Thirdly, through an investigation of food practices among Brazilians in London, this research also contributes to an understanding of how this recent, numerous but under researched migrant group experiences diasporic life on an everyday basis in London. Latin American migration - across the world, but specially to the United States - has been influential in some major changes

undergone in migration scholarship in the last three decades (Guarnizo et al., 2003, Portes et al., 2002, Guarnizo, 1997, Levitt, 2001). The lives of Latin American migrants in the United States lead to early theorisations on transnationalism and transnational migration (Guarnizo et al., 2003, Portes et al., 2002). Studies of Latinos in the United States challenged bipolar depictions of migration, where migrants leave a contained and defined spatial territory taking their culture with them, arrive in another identifiable space, and after sometime assimilate in the same way into a non-changing, wider society in the host country. More specifically, research done by Massey et al.'s (1987) and Rouse (1991) on Mexican migrants in the United States proclaimed that assimilation was multidimensional: migrants did not need or want to sever ties with their home country nor did they undergo a process of assimilation. Research on European migration has also been influential in advancing theoretical debates on transnationalism and diaspora, however, Latin American migration in the European context is hardly mentioned in these theorisations, as observed by McIlwaine (2011). This thesis, therefore, presents one of the very few studies to date on Brazilians in the UK.

More specifically, the research considered the following three main empirical questions:

- 1- How is 'Brazilianess' constructed, represented and contested through diasporic culinary culture in London?
- 2- What investments do diasporic Brazilians have in the consumption of Brazilian food?
- 3- How are constructions of, and investments in, Brazilian food implicated in the production of public and domestic spaces?

These are followed by two questions that engage with the main theoretical themes of this thesis as a way to identify broader contributions to the field:

- 4- How can food - as material culture and as an embodied practice - contribute to understanding meanings of home, identity and belonging among diasporic populations?
- 5- How is Brazilian food translocalised?

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. This opening chapter will present an overview of the thesis and its chapters, and then turn to a methodological discussion in which I first introduce myself as a Brazilian migrant and researcher. My positionality in this research is clearly important here, but I also delineate and present the specific methods I used in the research whilst addressing the more practical concerns of recruitment, the choice of research locations and research ethics.

Chapter Two situates my own research within wider debates. It begins by considering existing scholarship on food and globalization, exploring work on the internationalization of food consumption, especially that related to so-called ethnic food in multicultural contexts. It then situates 'migrant food' in relation to broader theories of migration, diaspora, transnationalism and translocalism, detailing the relationship between migration, place and identity especially in relation to everyday, embodied and sensory food practices. In its final part, the Chapter contextualises Brazilian migration to the UK within the wider literature on Brazilian emigration. It reviews how Brazilian diasporic identities have been analysed in academic studies and explores some of the sparse but recent research on Brazilian migration in London.

Chapter Three is the first empirical chapter of the thesis, and brings evidence of the breadth of Brazilian culinary culture in London. The investigation undertaken for this discussion includes desk research on food provision systems, as well as semi-structured interviews and documentary field research with a representative sample of the Brazilian food providers across London. Two main arguments run throughout the chapter. The first is that 'Brazilianess' as a category and a cultural-culinary form is being made and contested in London, rather than simply 'imported' from Brazil. This making and contesting operates through both the material culture of food provision (e.g. in the case of shops, through the foods and brands that they stock; in the case of restaurants, through the cuisines that they feature) and through the social lives of these spaces. In some senses, then, this first line of argument is

about recognising that Brazilian food is bound up with place making activities at a variety of scales. The second argument of Chapter Three relates to what I term processes of 'displacement', that is, the disconnections from, and reconnections to, Brazil produced by the provision of Brazilian food in London. Issues that I consider include the character of the food provision system's relations to Brazil; the provision of ingredients and chefs; and providers' senses of food's ability to take one back home and of what they term the '*economia da saudade*' (the homesickness economy).

Chapter Four complements this discussion of Brazilian food provision in London by exploring the wider picture of the food consumption practices of Brazilians in London. The data analysed here was constructed through focus group discussions with Brazilians living in London, during which practices, attitudes, opinions, and habits with regard to the consumption of 'Brazilian' food were explored. Three issues in particular emerged from the data collected: 1) Eating and preparing 'Brazilian food' was considered as a continuation of, or disruption to, habitual practice; 2) Eating 'Brazilian food' filled an emotional need derived from their feeling of homesickness; and 3) Eating and preparing 'Brazilian' food was a way to display and construct a sense of 'Brazilianess' in London. The groups illustrated some differences of both opinion and practice in relation to these issues, but my concern in this Chapter is to set out these domains of habit, emotion and identity as central to Brazilian diasporic food consumption.

Chapters Three and Four thus offer overviews of Brazilian foodways in London, focused respectively on Brazilian food provision and Brazilian food consumption. The following two chapters develop these insights through more in-depth and ethnographic research. In Chapter Five, I focus on the public culture of Brazilian food performed by retail outlets such as grocery shops and restaurants / cafés. Specifically, this chapter is based in Harlesden, the neighbourhood of London with the greatest density of Brazilian people and food outlets in London. More specifically, it draws in particular on ethnographic observational research in one shop (*Mercearia Brasil*) and one restaurant / café

*(Sabor Mineiro)*. My argument in this chapter is framed around an engagement with recent scholarship that uses the rubric of 'translocality' to see the 'everyday practices of mobility as situated within local places' (Hall and Datta, 2011: 69). With a general focus on the production of place through migrant's practices and narratives, this chapter investigates how the transnational processes engendered by migrant food commerce become emplaced/localized in a global city. In doing so, it unpacks how people, places and objects are enmeshed together in the diasporic experience of everyday life. Chapter Five has two main foci. The first part concentrates on showing how Brazilians claim space in the city by localizing their presence in these commercial places. It shows how these retail outlets operate as spaces not just of commerce but of sociality, providing emotional geographies of comfort and familiarity to displaced Brazilians. It also highlights how they provide a visibility to Brazilian identity in London, something that can be both a positive affirmation but also a problematic identification of a population of which many members are 'undocumented' and wary of being visible to state authorities. The second part of the Chapter focuses more on the role these retail spaces play in translocalizing Brazilian life. Paralleling work such as Ehrkamp's (2005) study on Turkish immigrants in Germany, Chapter Five therefore examines how everyday spaces such as grocery shops and cafes can emplace or 'situate' migrants in both a particular neighbourhood in the host country and back in their home country. In discussing the translocalizing role of these places, I also analyse the interplay between constructing a common sense of 'Brazilianess' and reproducing senses of difference and distinction, for example in relation to regional identities. I argue that this tension between sameness and difference is to some extent reconciled through the memory work of Brazilian consumers that these places promote.

Chapter Six brings another grounded approach to Brazilian food consumption complementing the previous chapter's public focus with an in-depth, ethnographic and private focus – the domestic spaces inhabited by Brazilian migrants. Borrowing from Gill Valentine's (1999) analysis of the spatial dynamics of food and eating in domestic settings, I analyse how home

operates as a (food) consumption site where mobile individuals negotiate their identities and engage in home-making practices, thus adding to the scarce literature concerning the intersection between migration, material culture and consumption practices (Basu and Coleman, 2008). My account draws on respondents' narratives in which food was used as a means of talking about things, as 'part of the stories we tell about ourselves and others, our experiences and values, meanings' (Woodward, 2007: 152), and on observation of food practices and consumption in two mixed Brazilian households in Harlesden, London Borough of Brent. This chapter's constant theme is on the two-way relations between diasporic food cultures and the domestic space / domestic home making. Each shapes the other: diasporic food culture is made through the domestic; the domestic is partly forged in relation to diasporic food cultures. This relationship encompasses some of the changes and continuities discussed in the focus groups, such as those affecting domestic practice and routines, which will open the discussion. However, the ethnographic research allows a deeper examination of the dialectic relationship between diasporic food culture and the domestic space in terms of the forms of sociality and commensality within the households; in terms of the gendering of domestic and familial social relations; in terms of the imagined location and identity associated with home; and in the sensorial engagements in everyday life in the two households.

In concluding this thesis, I return to the main objectives set out in the introduction and consider the main findings. These are followed by an exploration of the potential broader theoretical contributions this thesis makes to studies of geographies of food, migration and Brazilian diaspora. Finally, the conclusion turns to consider future agendas for research.

## **1.2 Researching Brazilian food in London: A personal journey**

My own migration has allowed me to be where I am and who I am. In much academic work, researchers' biographies are barely made visible, despite

being of paramount importance (Butler, 2001). However, in migration studies personal stories and choices may have particular relevance to the research and researcher. Knowles (2002: 59), for example, discusses how her research locations were chosen on the basis of personal feelings of attachment, thereby allowing the maintenance of a life that was lived in many different places; Christou (2002) used her migrant identity to engage with research participants and the research to explore her own identity as a Greek-American; and Hatfield's (2010) own experience as a return migrant was translated into a deeper engagement with the issue in her research on highly skilled British transmigrants and their returns to the UK. So, allow me to bring my own position and subjectivity to the fore by beginning with a personal account of how this thesis came in to existence. Migration is not only a topic of study for me. It has been part of my private life for more than two decades: three out of my seven brothers have lived in the UK, I have married an English person and my three children are deeply enmeshed in both Brazilian and British cultures.

I first stayed in London between 1991 and 1997, as part of a contingent of Brazilians who left the country *en masse* at the end of the nineteen-eighties. The decision to come to London was a result of established networks: my brother and other friends were already here. I temporarily halted my History degree and entrusted my one-year-old son to my mother to come to work and study English. For one and a half years I did not see my son, my family or friends. The contradictions in realising my dream as a migrant soon became evident. The desire to absorb English culture in London faced two obstacles: the dilution (as I saw it) of English culture in a highly multicultural London; and the alienation I felt in these cultural encounters. Against all the advice I had received and against my own expectation of integration, I went to live in *Bayswater* (at that time also referred to as *Brazilwater*). The first people I stayed with, those who found me a doctor, house, work, language school, and provided a friendly shoulder in difficult moments, were all Brazilians. I followed the same trajectory of many immigrants. I confess that I became 'more Brazilian' in London and, later, when I worked as a community interpreter, more 'Latin American' (this is a translated version of an article I wrote



(Brightwell, 2010: 24)). Echoes of these experiences inevitably rippled into my doctoral research and my feelings about it. Here, for example, is a research diary entry where I reflect on returning to Bayswater to visit food businesses:

My first stop is at Queensway station. Memories start flooding back as I see some familiar sites. Past emotions, images of people and actions, bits of dialogues, they seem to have been attached to corners, pavements, benches and buildings; all this time waiting for my visit to be unleashed and accompany me during my visit. There is Whiteley's where I got my first job; Hyde Park where I cried with homesickness and guilt for having left my one year old son; the hotel where my ex-partner worked. I see myself walking on the streets; younger and more foreign than now. I see the people on the streets: there are a lot of tourists, and a lot of young and foreign folks and I wonder if they too are full of dreams and expectations of a better life. A lot of the old shops do not exist anymore, and the Brazilian shops that I am going to visit did not exist when I lived here, from 1990 to 1991 (Fieldwork notes, 21/10/2009).

My professional experience as a community interpreter in South London, working with other South American (especially Colombians) and Portuguese migrants, as well as my own personal migration history granted me important skills that came to shape my practice as an academic researcher in migration studies. In particular, I was wary of academic research that stood entirely outside its subject matter, instead following Ellis and Bochner (2000: 746) in questioning 'why should caring and empathy be secondary to controlling and knowing?' as academic sensibilities (Ellingson, 1998). Empathy towards, and personal experience of, some of the emotional aspects of migration, such as rupture, adaptation, longing and expectancy, has certainly influenced this research project, to some degree. Practically, the shared experience of being a migrant was helpful in building rapport with research

participants, who were often pleased to talk and compare experiences, as well as asking advice.

This thesis is not an autoethnography (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, Deck, 1990), but I have drawn on my own experience as a displaced Brazilian not only as the inspiration for this project but throughout the research process. I have written elsewhere about this translation of my own experiences with Brazilian food into my doctoral research:

When married, Tim [my husband] and I went to live in Forest Gate, a suburb to the east of London. On Saturdays I would cross the city to visit a Portuguese store in Portobello Road; probably the only place Brazilian products were on sale in London at the time. Brazilian restaurants could be counted on one hand: *Sabor do Brasil* in Highgate, *Minuano* in Camberwell and *Rodízio Rico* in Westbourne Grove. Sometimes when I worked as a community interpreter south of the Thames, I would stop in Elephant and Castle to savour a plate of food from a Colombian stall in the middle of the shopping centre: beans, rice, fried banana and a vinaigrette sauce. I regularly visited Indian and Afro-Caribbean stalls in search of *chow-chow*, manioc and sweet potatoes, all sold at exorbitant prices and generally old and past their best. Their scarcity meant daily consumed inexpensive Brazilian staples like beans and rice became the luxury food for Sunday only.

For a long time I considered this experience to be merely something individual or anecdotal. I returned to Brazil, lived there for a further ten years, and then returned to the UK four years ago to visit potential institutions for a PhD course. My surprise was immense when I visited my brother in Harlesden, North West London: there were Brazilian shops and restaurants everywhere! Besides this, everywhere in London one found Brazilians. That's when I discovered the subject of my research and decided to study the role of food in the construction of displaced identities. (Brightwell, 2010: 24-25)

Both my professional experience as a community interpreter working with migrants and my personal experience of migration helped and prompted me to delve deeper into issues that are less explored in the social sciences, such as the emotional geographies of displacement. Within the academy I was also keen to promote the study of Brazilians in the UK; I was involved in setting up and organizing a research group focused on this area (GEB- Brazilian migration to the UK research group; see <http://www.gold.ac.uk/clcl/geb/>). However, I was determined that my own position as a Brazilian, interpreter, migrant and advocate for the study of Brazilian matters in the UK, would not prevent me from maintaining a critical position. In this thesis I do not intend to be an advocate for Brazilian identity or Brazilian food in any 'essentialist' way. My intention is neither to endorse nor decry the promotion of Brazilian identities sometimes made by both food providers and consumers in London. Rather, this thesis seeks to understand and interpret the Brazilian food cultures being developed in London. I hope that by 'unpicking' the emotional, embodied and everyday food experiences of Brazilians in London, more can be learned both about the capacity of national states to frame the imaginings of 'their' subjects (Anderson, 1991) even in diaspora, the local nuances of diasporic identities, and how these lived experiences of migration are entangled with the material and sensorial cultures of food (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993, Conradson, 2005).

As for food, it has been a passion for me both as a cook and as a researcher. When I went back to Brazil from the UK in 1997 I took with me a love of Indian food (as produced in London), which was practically unknown in Brazil. I learnt to cook it from cookbooks, introduced my own adapted version to my family and friends, and would often ask people who lived in the UK and came to visit to bring me Indian spices, which shows how much my diasporic experience has influenced my food habits. As a researcher, I worked on two research projects in Brazil which looked at changes in food production and consumption in rural areas of the country (Brightwell and Silva, 2008, Brightwell et al., 2005). Whilst my personal and professional commitment to food may bring the danger of assuming its importance to others (something I looked to counter by avoiding pre-judging its role in my informants' lives and

letting them narrate those roles to me), it also allows me to engage with culinary culture in its own terms: as a culinary art, a practical process, a sensual experience. In this thesis I look to take food seriously as food, rather than as an interchangeable facet of our cultural geographies that is really no different to any other (music, dress, dance and so on). To bring this part of the introduction to an end, I therefore leave you with a small piece of my own gastronomic experience as a displaced Brazilian, published in the form of a recipe from my grandmother Dinda Zefa in *The Guardian* newspaper (Brightwell, 2008):

fingertips and took my peanut. It was gone in a second and I never managed to coax him back again, but that once was pure magic that I'll never forget.  
*Linda Knowles*

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**We love to eat Dinda Zefa's Brazilian beans**

---

**Ingredients**  
 500g black beans  
 6 tbsp oil  
 large onion, chopped  
 two cloves of garlic, chopped  
 2 tbsp flour  
 two bay leaves  
 carrots  
 butternut squash  
 pork or bacon

Soak the beans overnight in cold water. Next day, rinse them and place in a large pan with fresh cold water. Bring to the boil and boil rapidly for 10 minutes, uncovered. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer until the beans are tender, but still have bite. Put in a casserole dish.

In a frying pan, heat the oil and saute the onion. Add the garlic and fry for two minutes. Then add the flour, mix well and leave it to bubble until it goes golden and smells nutty. Season and add to the casserole with two bay leaves.

Add the chopped vegetables and/or any of the following: pork, beef, smoked bacon, pancetta or chorizo, which has been cut into small pieces and lightly fried. Cook in the oven at 180C for about 40 minutes. Eat with boiled rice and lightly sauteed greens.



DELPHINE LEBOURGEOIS

The smell of my grandma's black beans, back in our small village in the south of Brazil, would meet me every day as I walked back from school. Around the last corner, and just as I walked up a little hill – hungry and thirsty under a midday sun – the tantalising smell went up my nose and punched my stomach.

By the time I arrived at her house, the beans were ready. She would then give me a little bowl full of her *caldinho de feijão* – the velvety, thick brown sauce from the beans. When I am feeling homesick, I cook this version for my family. *Graça Brightwell*

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**Figure 1.1 Dinda Zefa's Brazilian beans**

*The Guardian*. London April, 26th.

At <http://lifeandhealth.guardian.co.uk/family/story/0,,2276278,00.html>

### **1.3 Researching Brazilian food provision and consumption in London**

If much of the world is vague, diffuse or unspecific, slippery, emotional, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct, changes like a kaleidoscope, or doesn't really have much of a pattern at all, then where does it leave social science? (Law, 2004: 2)

In the previous section I 'exposed' how my own subjectivity has been important to this research. Researchers are part of the world; one does not 'hunt' and 'catch' the world from the outside so much as interfere with it, immerse myself in it, change it, blurring categories... I tried to embrace this 'messiness' in a positive way, but some steps had to be taken to get to grips with the bigger picture. To that end, I framed the research around four principal research strands. First, I looked to construct an overview of Brazilian food provision in London through desk research, textual analysis, observational fieldwork and semi-structured interviews with Brazilian food providers. Second, I developed a parallel overview of Brazilian food consumption in London via focus group discussions. For reasons discussed below, I was not able to convene as many focus groups as I might ideally have wished to, but I am confident that the four groups that I ran produced valuable and rich data that attuned me and the project to what was seen as being at stake in practices of Brazilian food consumption. Third, I undertook focused periods of ethnographic research over the space of two months in two particular food outlets (one shop, one café / restaurant). Both were located in Harlesden, as mentioned above an area of London now notable for its concentration of Brazilian food businesses. This work allowed me to investigate in more depth the social practices occurring in these spaces, and their role in the wider public culture of this neighbourhood. Fourth, this ethnographic work in commercial spaces of food provision was complemented by ethnographic work with Brazilian households, also located in Harlesden. Based across many months of

encounters with the complex household structures of two neighbouring houses – each subdivided via sub-lets of various forms – this work involved both observations and conversations focused on the role of food in Brazilian residents’ domestic lives as well as, on occasion, testimony about their engagements with the commercial public culture of Brazilian food provision. To give the reader a richer sense of these four research strands, in what follows I set out a chronologically framed account of my research practice.

### **1.3.1 An overview of Brazilian food provision in London**

One of the first steps I took in this research, along with a bibliographical review focused on food and migration, was to build a comprehensive view of the provision of Brazilian food in London. This involved searches in Brazilian magazines aimed at Brazilians in London (where most of these businesses advertise). The advertising campaigns are not elaborate; however, the advertisements caught my attention because a number of them demonstrated awareness of ‘the difference that place makes’ (Jackson, 1996: 357) by referring directly to displacement, homesickness and home as a way to sell their products. I use these advertisements in Chapter Three to discuss how ‘Brazilianess’ gets attached to food and the entanglement between food provision, consumption and the emotional geographies of displacement. Further information on Brazilian shops was found on the internet. I also built a public Google map of Brazilian food outlets in London where viewers could add new places (<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?msa=0&msid=208748132916544673040.00046f5cf829757b2380d&hl=en&ie=UTF8&t=m&z=10&vpsrc=0>). Although the initial research on Brazilian food provision in London pointed to wider networks in Brazil, financial and time constraints did not allow me to pursue a transnational multi-sited research project, and I focused on the London scene.

In tandem with the mapping of Brazilian food retail outlets in London I also began exploratory research (right from the very beginning of my PhD), using visits to these places as a Brazilian customer as a way to get acquainted with the research setting. In these visits I would informally talk to customers, staff and owners. Sometimes, when I felt that sufficient rapport had been established with the owners and staff, I explained my research and asked exploratory questions or asked permission to take photographs. During this exploratory phase I also visited larger restaurant food chains that sold Brazilian dishes, such as Las Guianas, as well as Portuguese delicatessens and non-Brazilian grocery shops that sold Brazilian products in areas where there was a strong Brazilian concentration, such as Harlesden, in the London Borough of Brent. Although these visits helped to contextualise Brazilian food provision in London, they do not form much of the reported empirical basis of this thesis; rather they helped me to frame my research questions and subsequent research practice. In a similar vein, I also took part in birthday parties, church festivities and other Brazilian gatherings with friends and acquaintances, with an eye on what they might suggest for further investigation of Brazilian food consumption by Brazilians in London.

Due to a period of serious ill health, that cost a year of my research time between July 2008 and July 2009, I only went back in to the field in September 2009, this time with a paper map dotted with stick notes locating seventy Brazilian owned food outlets. Of these, at least ten had closed down during the previous year, but an equal number had opened up. Based on a sampling by outlet type (e.g. shop or restaurant), suggested market (as judged by any marketing materials encountered) and location, in total fifty nine commercial establishments were visited. In each case, visits combined observational work and subsequent interviewing of outlet owners or managers. These visits were not done in one bout; since they were quite time consuming they had to be scattered throughout 2009 and 2010, fitting around other academic commitments, as well as weather and financial conditions.

Such work, and indeed my research more generally, thus has an 'ethnographic' character. Some traditional but still powerful definitions of ethnographic fieldwork in Anthropology (Clifford, 1997: 186) and Geography regard it as 'an embodied spatial practice' that calls for 'displacement' (meaning, for Clifford, that the ethnographer has to leave 'home' and travel to another setting). However, travel and mobility mean that urban settings are now populated with people from all over the world, so the traditional anthropological 'field' is not always in a distant place, but often right at our door steps. Moreover, using difference and distance as a way to know 'the other' is also complicated when the 'other' belongs to the same culture, speaks the same language and has a similar trajectory of migrancy as the researcher. I therefore think it more accurate to frame my research as being 'ethnographically informed' rather than as an ethnography *per se*. Nonetheless, the field had to be constructed (Emerson et al., 2001), 'both through the practical transactions and activities of data collection and through the literary activities of writing field notes, analytic memoranda, and the like' (Atkinson, 1992: 5 cited in Emerson et al., 2001). Having produced my outline mapping of Brazilian food provision, the process of visiting food outlets was central to the production of my research.

Having never conducted ethnographic research before, I found these visits quite nerve-racking at the beginning; some places were quite busy and staff and owners overworked. Despite having a schedule of basic mapping activities that I might undertake, I was still not sure as to what I should best be doing and focusing on. In my first visits I found my role seemed more akin to being a food critic than a social scientist. This 'gustative' approach to research meant that I increased by a dress size during the course of the research, but it also had its advantages. I soon realized that 'entering the field' as a Brazilian consumer was easier and more productive than coming and presenting myself overtly as a researcher (Angrosino and Pérez, 2000 on the adoption of a situational identity in observational research). It gave some purpose to my visit that was not an immediate imposition upon outlet staff or owners, and eased my nerves and my body language. I soon developed a successful routine: I did



what other Brazilian customers did. My emergent strategy, then, was what Pink calls the 'ethnographer as a sensory apprentice': learning by actively engaging with the environment and activities we wish to study (Pink, 2009, drawing from Ingold 2000). In grocery shops I looked around; picked up food items on the shelves, touched and smelled them; talked and responded to other customers and staff; then grabbed something to buy. In cafés and restaurants I ordered something to eat, picked up a Brazilian magazine, and sat down, catching up on Brazilian cultural life in London, watching TV and observing as customers came and went. I would discretely take scratch notes about the events, people, place and food when I could and / or would then immediately write these up into field notes after the visit. Adopting such a covert role in observational research, i.e., not telling the members of a community being studied that they are being watched for research purposes, raises some ethical, practical and political issues (Cook, 2005). This covert role was not kept up throughout the research, but applied only to the limitations of undertaking observation research in public places (Flick, 2006) when one cannot always introduce oneself to all the people observed.

After each initial visit I would look to move the encounter into more conversational rather than purely observational forms. I would go to the checkout, where some informal interviewing took place. I would ask questions that any curious Brazilian would ask: how long they had been open, where they were from in Brazil, what their opening hours were, and so on. Sometimes I would ask something about a particular recipe, or a specific ingredient or product. I would then explain that the reason for my interest was due to a research project I was doing. This revelation was sometimes met with suspicion (was I from a magazine, from the council?), but more often than not people were very interested and helpful and wanted to know more about the research, emphasising how useful they thought it would be and expressing personal interest in the results.

If they agreed, I would then would ask if they, or the outlet owner or manager, could answer a very short questionnaire with some basic information

such as: how long they had been in London; their previous experience in business; the structure of their business; what type of client they served; the principal sources / suppliers of their products; where they advertised; and the respondent's position in the company etc.. This basic questionnaire was also used in phone calls to a further eighteen establishments which I was unable to visit, of whom three answered by e-mail. In each case, whether in person, by e-mail or by phone, respondents were also asked whether they would be interested in giving a recorded in-depth interview, and a subsequent visit or a phone call would then be arranged. On a few occasions respondents agreed straight away and arrangements were made, but most often it was necessary to chase up with phone calls and a further visit. Some people declined altogether. Of these, some said that they were too busy whilst others did not state their reasons.

Overall, thirty people who either worked in or owned Brazilian food outlets took part in the in-depth interviewing process (of the total of fifty nine outlets visited and / or surveyed). These individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews took place in the respondents' work environments. A consent form was read and then signed and a copy kept by both parties. In order to be sensitive to the time commitment being made by respondents, I estimated a set interview length, but left open to the individual the decision as to whether to stop before or after that time. Normally, given the nature of these businesses, respondents would be frequently interrupted by their daily commitments, but once they started talking they generally seemed to be very happy to be listened to, which took some of the interviews well beyond the stipulated length without complaint. A basic script / schedule provided guidance for the semi-structured interview and, as a reminder to myself, included some of the initial information garnered on the migration history of the person interviewed, their experience with Brazilian food in London and other information about the marketing of their businesses. I tried to create a very informal and chatty atmosphere that allowed participants to bring in their own agenda. What very often happened was that they interviewed me too, asking questions about my own migration trajectory, the implications of my

research and my opinion on Brazilian food in London. This supports the view that 'interviews are not a neutral tool of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results' (Fontana and Frey, 2000: 646). These interviews with key informants in the Brazilian food business in London provided invaluable information on how Brazilian culinary culture is reconstructed in diasporic settings. They also highlighted the role of migrant food providers, who shape the construction of a national cuisine abroad but are often "at the margins of gastronomic 'discourse'" (Ray, 2011: 244). Seventeen of these thirty interviews were recorded and the rest, usually at the request of interviewees, though occasionally for practical reasons of acoustic quality, were recorded as written notes and then written up after the event.

In the course of the research I also took part in a photography workshop at Brent Museum, which aimed at documenting Brazilian life in Brent. It was particularly interesting, because most participants ended up taking pictures of the Brazilian food commerce in the area. This workshop encouraged me to incorporate photographic methods as a research tool. Initial plans for the use of visual participatory ethnography fell through due to the time limits imposed by my health issues. Instead visual data was used to provide a record and sense of place in the food outlets, both inside and outside. By documenting the outlets' façades I was able to show how 'Brazilianess' is branded and made visible in London's urban landscape, as well as to its clients. In a study of shop fronts along South London's Walworth Road, Hall and Datta suggest that 'these signscapes are translocal since they evoke material and embodied links between the street and its neighbourhoods, while at the same time connecting the street to a wider spatial network of routes/roots which the migrant entrepreneurs have taken to establish their livelihoods on the street' (Hall and Datta, 2011: 69). My own work sought to evidence a similar urban public culture. This visual record also allowed me to think about 'the relationship between the visual and the other senses in the research, analysis and representation' (Pink, 2008: 2). The visual impact of food brands was one of the sensory experiences to which Brazilian migrants most readily reacted, but it

was not experienced in isolation to sound, taste, smell and touch. It was quite difficult to capture these moments in photographs both because of the need to protect the identity of participants and because I did not want to break the magic of the moment and interrupt what was being expressed verbally. In consequence, the other sensory registers of food places came more to the fore in the ethnographic research focused on the two case study outlets in Harlesden (to be discussed in section 1.3.3 below).

### **1.3.2 Focus group discussions on Brazilian food consumption**

In order to have a parallel for this overview of Brazilian food provision in London, my second strand of research practice focused on an overview of Brazilian food consumption. In particular, my aim in this work was to complement my understanding of the discourses should this be 'presented'? by Brazilian food providers with data on the discourses about Brazilian food deployed by Brazilian consumers in London. I also wanted to extend the more ethnographic research I was undertaking in Brazilian food outlets and domestic settings via a wider sense of how Brazilian food might be featured in consumers' food practices, whether eating in or out. I knew people that did not visit Brazilian food outlets but still consumed Brazilian food at home. A way to reach out to a wider circle of Brazilians and their food habits and practices was achieved through a series of focus group discussions (Madriz, 2000, Frey and Fontana, 1994). Focus group discussions as a research method are widely used in social sciences and beyond (Morgan, 1996b, Morgan, 1988, Morgan and Krueger, 1997, Barker and Brooks, 1998), as being supposedly more relaxed, 'chatty', interactional and less threatening than a one-to-one, face-to-face interaction (Madriz, 2000); 'focused yet casual', and 'moderated by the researcher' (Barker and Brooks, 1998: 24).

A call for these discussions was placed on mail lists, in Brazilian magazines, in Brazilian food shops, via community associations and churches,

social network sites and groups, as well as through personal contacts and their acquaintances, also known as 'snowballing'. The sampling strategy was not driven by quantity per se – I was not looking to replicate a representative survey in group discussion form - but by the desire to do you mean tease out the discursive framings of Brazilian food with a wider range of participants than those encountered in my household and outlet case studies.

I arranged four groups, with eventual attendance ranging from four to eight people, held in different locations. In total twenty-three people took part in these discussions. I reached out to people from a variety of regional and ethnic backgrounds (in Brazil), and with different lengths of stay in the UK, marital statuses, occupations in the UK, genders and residential locations. However, I did not succeed in involving undocumented migrants in the discussions. There was also some homogeneity in terms of class background in Brazil, which is partially explained by the fact that poor Brazilians are excluded from the migratory process, and partly due to the fact that what are sometimes termed 'economic migrants' (although one cannot necessarily classify them in terms of their economic background) who do not have so much free time in London to participate in such activities. I had hoped to run eight to ten such groups, but taking account of the research time lost to illness, the problems in recruiting further groups that would widen the social spread of participants, and the richness and volume of data produced by the groups I convened, I made the decision that the four groups had produced data sufficient for the purposes of the overview of consumption that is presented in Chapter Four. Empirically, the focus groups were a valuable research tool both in confirming some of the previous research findings, but also bringing new information about other places of consumption, such as communal settings (churches and other gatherings) and informal networks of Brazilian food provision. In more conceptual terms, they allowed me to establish the discursive registers through which Brazilians framed their food consumption practices, as matters of habit, emotion and identity.

In terms of their practical organisation, I did not have money to pay for the participants' travel expenses but in return of their time and effort I provided food and beverages, not exclusively Brazilian (for a discussion on the use of food in focus group see Miller, 2001a, Morse, 1998). It turned out that this offering gave more than I bargained for, as the taste of food sparked memories, which were then shared with the group. Each focus group started with a brief introduction to my research, and participants then took it in turns to introduce themselves and provide some basic information regarding their name, age, occupation, residential location, length of stay in the UK and origin in Brazil. Although I outlined some basic themes for the discussion, which was to explore the attitudes, opinions and habits of Brazilian migrants about their consumption of Brazilian food whilst living in London, the discussion took different routes in each session. Participants not only asked about my own relationship to Brazilian food, but also were not limited to my questions and posed questions to the group, more directly than I would have. More generally, these focus group discussions allowed me to identify both the discourses about and relationships with Brazilian food in London as experienced by migrants (for a more detailed discussion on the use of focus group methodologies see Jackson et al., 2001)

### **1.3.3 Ethnographic research in case study outlets**

As I will explain in more detail in the literature review (Chapter 2), I argue that existing research on so-called 'ethnic food' has perhaps been too focused on either migrants as producers (e.g. in work on food provision and ethnic entrepreneurship) or on so-called 'mainstream' consumers (as in work on how white British consumers engage with the globalisation of food provision). In both cases, the role of diasporic people as consumers is occluded. The more I visited Brazilian food outlets, the more I realised that the 'Brazilianess' being (re)constructed and consumed in these places had a strongly diasporic feel to it. These were places that in various ways connected

Brazil and London, here and there. The overview work done, with both providers and consumers, had suggested some of these issues; but was limited in what it could say about how particular places might perform them. Moreover, such endeavours, based on the materiality of food, were deeply emotional and embodied, thus requiring methodological tools that met this challenge (Pink 2004). It seemed that an ethnographic approach would reveal more as it would allow me to 'capture varying tempos and rhythms of movement and connection, illuminating implications for both people and places' (McHugh, 2000: 72).

I chose two food outlets to be studied in depth. These places, a grocery shop and a café/restaurant, were chosen after several visits as a client in 2007 and 2008 and a round of interviews with staff and owners in 2009. They were the first Brazilian businesses to open in Harlesden, an area with a large concentration of Brazilian migrants (according to Evans et al., 2007, 30,000 Brazilians live in the borough of Brent). The café had a distinctive regional appeal: it is called *Sabor Mineiro*, meaning flavours from Minas. It both reflects the tastes of, and attracts (among others), one of the largest groups of Brazilian migrants in London, those coming from the State of Minas Gerais. *Mercearia Brasil*, on the other hand, offers grocery products addressed to the Brazilian diaspora at large. Both places showed differences as well as shared aspects which could be generalised to other Brazilian shops in London; but as Stake (2000: 448) argues: 'the purpose of the case is not to represent the world, but to represent the case'.

During two months in the summer of 2010, I immersed myself in both places. In total I spent the equivalent of one full week in each, covering a range of hours and days. Getting permission to hang around in these places for a long period of time was not easy. Nor did I get all the access I had desired; in particular, my persistent requests for sustained access to the kitchen in *Sabor Mineiro* failed, and as such my focus there was very much on the customers' experience. Understandably, the relationships established with the people in these places, including their owners and staff, varied. Despite not being very

open to conversation and quite busy behind the money transfer counter, the owner of *Mercearia Brasil* allowed me to hang around the shop (which is quite small) and freely to interview all the staff. My work was greatly facilitated by one member of the staff who worked as a cashier: she not only was very interested in the research, but was very helpful and made me feel comfortable and at ease. The rest of the staff was equally open and friendly, and I felt that my presence there was not 'out of place'. Access to *Sabor Mineiro* was a little more complicated. Although the owner agreed that I could observe and take notes, when I asked to interview the staff he was consistent in refusing, saying that the owners could provide me with everything that there was to know. I did approach the staff informally, but focused more on their working practices in relation to customers. An interview with the female owner was never accomplished despite my best efforts and further visits. This unevenness is shown in the text: whereas at *Mercearia Brasil* I present a good background on the workers and relatively little about the owner, at *Sabor Mineiro* the male owner's story overshadows the other individuals. Despite these shortcomings, the time I spent in these two places was absolutely essential for a deeper understanding of how these spaces of food provision were experienced and negotiated as collective spaces of belonging by members of the Brazilian diaspora. The ethnographic work undertaken allowed me to explore their performances of sociality; to see, hear and participate in conversations and exchanges that enacted senses of Brazilian commensality. Furthermore, the 'Brazilianess' sought and reproduced in these places was not only 'ordinary' in the sense of everyday, but also firmly based on the materiality of the food and strongly anchored in the senses. Rodaway's view of the senses in geographical understanding seems particularly relevant, as it frames '*the sense both as a relationship to a world and the senses as themselves a kind of structuring of space and defining of place*' (Rodaway, 1994: 4, original italics). Sense, as Rodaway notes, refers both to sensations (how we apprehend the world) and meanings (how we understand or 'make sense'). Furthermore, our experience of being in the world is not only multisensory but also emotional (Rodaway, 1994, Tuan, 1997). It seemed to me that I had to consider both emotion and the



multisensoriality of food if my understanding of what was happening in these stores was to go beyond the economic transactions that took place. Ethnographic participant-observation was an appropriate method in meeting that need.

Although I do not use my own experiences as my only data source, I followed Pink's suggestion that 'the ethnographer learns about other people's experiences using her or his whole body and mind' (Pink, 2008: 1). This was very helpful, as I was trying to capture the creation and experience of these 'sensory landscapes of home', the memories triggered by sensorial reminders and how these memories were shared. Using my own body and senses as a way of knowing about these places brought me intense emotions and feelings. As a Brazilian migrant these places were also a trigger of emotions and sensations, not always positive. In my field notes, I recorded being 'hot', bothered by the strong smell of meat, feeling full and lethargic after a meal, 'not feeling at home'; as well as feeling content, engaged and moved by the encounters I had.

My participation as a researcher in these settings was not always overt. This was not necessarily intentional: as people came and went it was impossible to introduce myself to everybody that came in. My identity as a researcher was sometimes revealed by my own body language. The multiplicity of experiences that were 'thrown together' (Massey, 2005) in these places meant that I could not solely rely on my memory, therefore as I listened and observed attentively (which is very similar in terms of body language to being nosey) I also took notes. This activity raised the awareness of some clients, who were either afraid because of being undocumented or just annoyed. I would then introduce myself and tell them about my research. On one occasion when I introduced myself saying that I was studying food and migration, the customer immediately said: 'I cannot help you if the issue is migration, I don't want to make myself visible'. I reassured her and rephrased my introductory line, making a point of omitting the word 'migration', which can have negative connotations, meaning the 'migration authorities'.

For Pink, the 'sensory ethnographer is trying to access areas of embodied, emplaced knowing and to use these as a basis from which to understand human perception, experience, action and meaning and to situate this culturally and biographically' (Pink, 2009: 47). Of course, as Pink rightly observes, partaking in other people's experience of place is not the same as accessing exactly their experience in the world. She points out that the way that people practice, understand, recall and represent their experience sensorially may differ in terms of class, gender, age, occupation, etc. These sensory experiences were sometimes verbally articulated by customers in the shops. I collected some of these short food stories and others were told by the shopkeepers. Of course, some may say that these narratives can be biased and incomplete as 'narratives are not transparent renditions of 'truth' but reflect a dynamic interplay between life, experience and story.' In consequence, I treat these stories as 'part of everyday life... [that] constitute means for actors to express and negotiate experience. For researchers, they provide a site to examine the meanings people, individually or collectively, ascribe to lived experience' (Eastmond, 2007: 248).

These stories that I was told *in situ* were especially valuable as other attempts to elicit such biographical accounts had been limited to my household ethnographic work. Earlier on in the research process, and following the publication of my piece in *The Guardian*, I put out a call in a Brazilian magazine and on mail lists asking people to contribute with stories of their personal experience of food and being away from home, focused around a particular meal or recipe or food. Very few people replied, and they provided limited information. It made me realize that obtaining written accounts of food at such a distance was not productive. I found that migrants had to be near the materiality of food to talk about it in this way. Food as material culture, then, was not only an important aspect of diasporic lives, but a way of making people open up and talk about their personal and collective experiences, as other research on migration has demonstrated (Hatfield, 2010, Tolia-Kelly, 2004a, Tolia-Kelly, 2004b). I have already signalled how I took this lesson into my

focus group discussion work. I now turn to the ethnographic research I undertook in domestic settings.

#### 1.3.4 **Researching Brazilian food consumption in domestic settings**

'The everyday is hidden and evasive; to attempt to attend to it requires something like a leap of faith' (Highmore, 2002: 145). A theoretical commitment to study the 'everyday' in migrants' lives required a methodological tool that helped me to access the locations where the 'taken for granted' aspects of migrants' lives took place. Domestic spaces are not the only place where the everyday is lived, but the familiarity and ubiquity of domestic life certainly makes the 'taken for granted' easier to investigate. A great part of people's lives are organized around their homes, including those of migrants. Geographic and interdisciplinary enquiry (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, Buchli et al., 2004, Blunt and Varley, 2004, Blunt, 2005) attest to this importance. The home – as a domestic space – is considered to be 'the focal point of most people's lives' (Cieraad, 1999: 11) and where 'most of what matters to people is happening' (Miller, 2001a: 1). Home also makes an interesting site for investigation of the relationship between people and things. As argued by Valentine (1999: 492), 'it is a site of individual, but also collective (household or 'family') consumption, where the goods purchased and the meanings and uses ascribed to them are negotiated, and sometimes contested, between household members'. Homes both fashion and mirror who we are (Cooper Marcus, 1995, Miller, 2001b, Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Despite being vital sites of everyday life, deeming them 'appropriate places from which to investigate how mobile individuals negotiate their identities' (Hatfield, 2010: 54), domestic homes have not been sufficiently present in migration research (Hatfield, 2010: 21).

As a research location, this study certainly challenges the use of the term household when conflated with family, a criticism brought forward by (Settles, 2001) who points out that households can be comprised of a variety of

individuals, not necessarily families or those with kinship ties. The research was conducted in two flats, located in Harlesden, both owned by a Brazilian. Due to a divorce situation, the owner shared one of the flats with lodgers and, a few doors away in the other flat, his ex-wife shared the other flat with their two children as well as lodgers. The peculiarities of the living arrangements found in these two households certainly do not define what all Brazilian migrant homes in London are like. However, the experiences of these two households are indicative of common living arrangements for Brazilians in London (see Evans et al. 2011) and point to the 'diverse and complex nature of modern households' (Valentine, 1999: 494). These case studies are not intended to be representative of households in general; rather 'the object of the analysis is the social processes which may be abstracted from the course of events analysed' (Mitchell, 1983: 190). Drawing from Valentine (1999), what I intend by presenting a detailed and intimate picture of these two households is to demonstrate more clearly some of the complex ways consumption practices and identity formation are negotiated and contested on a daily basis. I also thereby complement my work on the public cultures of food provision outlets with an understanding of the private cultures of domestic space, and how these shape engagements with public food provision. The broad aim of the research was to analyse the interplay between food and identity in a domestic setting paying attention to how food practices allow for Brazilian immigrants to create spaces where notions of home, ethnicity, cultural belonging and exchanges are (re)created, negotiated and performed.

The two flats are located in the same street in Harlesden, Northwest London. The flats belong to someone close to me and I visited these flats on a regular basis from the start of this research project. A final decision to include the households as case studies in the research was taken as the overall shape of the project developed, and was then the basis of discussion with the owner of the flats and the people that lived in them. From then on, I started to take field notes when visiting. In total such visits were made over the period of a year, with periods of stay of up to three days and covering the different days of the week. I also conducted semi-structured interviews, informal one-to-one and

group chats, photo documentation and took part in shopping, cooking, eating in and out with households members. Although not all, the majority of people living in the two flats were Brazilian. These lodgers were of varied socio-economic backgrounds, age, sex, regional origin in Brazil, length of stay in the UK and legal status, which gave a diversity of experiences. I did not interview every resident over the year; some Brazilians were only there for a very short period that did not coincide with my visits. The fact that I knew some of the people living in these flats prior to the formal request for a research relationship has impacted on this research in a number of ways. First, it allowed me access to the private domains of domestic spaces, something considered extremely difficult to access (Miller, 2001a). Only males lived in one of the flats and if it was not for my main contact living there, gaining access and spending so much time with the lodgers could have been awkward. I also knew so much about the story of the family itself, which would not have come up in the interviews. On the other hand, some of the events that happened there I could not report in this thesis, as I witnessed them as a friend, not as a researcher. Although this was never clearly stated I have used my best judgement to be fair to the participants' privacy and have only included non-sensitive information.

### **1.3.5 Analysis and presentation**

The use of multiple methods in this research meant that there were different ways for the data to be organised, analysed and presented. Here are some of the main points that I would like to bring out:

- The recorded interviews were fully transcribed and uploaded into ATLAS.ti. As the majority of the interviews were in Portuguese, they were first analyzed in their original language. It was only after they were coded and the quotes selected that I translated them into English.

Original versions of the interviews were kept in the text as footnotes. The same procedure was adopted for the focus group discussions.

- Field notes were either recorded (in English, to save time) during observation, soon after or in the same evening. Of course these field notes did not record everything; they were selective, ‘a form of representation, that is, a way of reducing just-observed events, persons and places to written accounts... [a form of] descriptive writing [that] embodies and reflects particular purposes and commitments, and... also involves active processes of interpretation and sense-making’ (Emerson et al., 2001). They were later typed up, which also helped further in making sense of them and generated some additional reflective commentary.
- Interviews, focus group discussion and fieldnotes were the primary focus of a grounded approach to research analysis (Strauss, 1987, Glaser, 1992, Charmaz, 2006). This was done, as I mentioned, by filing and coding these texts using ATLAS.ti. For me, though, writing was the main method of analysis and enquiry (Richardson, 2000). Most of the analysis was done in the process of drafting and redrafting (for a parallel observation see Schiellerup, 2008).
- Photos are used in this thesis to demonstrate how ‘Brazilianess’ is overtly presented in London’s commercial landscape as well as illustrating aspects of everyday life both in the public and domestic settings. Where people have been included I have anonymised them.
- Quantitative descriptive data obtained in the survey has been presented in tables and graphs. I also generated two maps with the distribution of Brazilian food outlets in London and in Harlesden.
- I have changed participants’ names but, with their consent, I did not change the names of commercial spaces. I have tried to be aware of sensitive issues and tried not to expose individuals when they revealed confidential information.

### 1.3.6 Conclusion

The research that forms the basis of this thesis was accomplished using a variety of methods, both qualitative and quantitative. This reflected the theoretical demands and the main objectives of the thesis which has a focus on how food allows for the creation of a diasporic culinary culture, identities and senses of home in both commercial and domestic settings. Framing the study around four principal research strands, that went from a more general view of Brazilian food provision and consumption in London to more detailed ethnographic work in public and domestic spaces, provides the thesis with a comprehensive range of empirical materials. The empirical materials comprising each chapter work together to provide a wider picture of both systems of provision and practices of consumption and then narrow it down to specific locations where migrants experience food as part of everyday life in London.

There were rewards, challenges and limitations in the use of this variety of methods. First of all, I believe I have provided considerable data, both in terms of its variety but also in terms of its richness. This variety of data allowed me, for example, to investigate the wider role of Brazilian food business in the construction of a Brazilian food culture in London but also to focus on smaller scale analysis. The ethnographic research on the two outlets as case studies brings out detailed information about the social practices occurring in these spaces, and their role in the wider public culture of a specific neighbourhood. Through the focus groups, I reached out to a wider circle of Brazilians and their food consumption habits and practices. This provided me with valuable and rich data that attuned me to what was at stake in practices of Brazilian food consumption. The ethnographic based work in the two households delved into some of the issues identified by the focus groups whilst revealing different facts of everyday migrant experience.

Although the data provided by the focus groups was rich and voluminous, I would have liked to have run double the number and to have had

a wider participation in terms of social background. It proved impossible to persuade undocumented immigrants to take part, mainly due to time constraints on their part. Some sort of financial reward for their participation would probably have helped. It would also have been interesting to follow up with some of the people who took part in the focus groups with in-depth interviews at their homes. A written workshop on the sensory and mnemonic aspects of food consumption might also have worked.

Participant observation in the two commercial outlets allowed me to narrow down the focus and look at the micro level politics that go into the creation of migrant spaces of belonging. It also brought increased awareness of the emotional and sensorial aspects of food consumption and provision and the supporting role of food both as material and immaterial culture. These material forms were fundamental in establishing 'forms of sociality' (Tilley, 2001) as well as giving subjective meaning (Bourdieu, 1984, De Certeau, 1984), specially related to ethnicity. It was challenging to record the sensory engagement of participants with the environment. I did not want them to elaborate too much on it, but to 'catch the moment'. What I registered was their spontaneous narratives and remembrances, not necessarily elicited by me as a researcher but by the multisensorial capacity of the food and brands. I also relied on the way my own body 'sensed' and 'made sense' of these environments, and of my condition of displaced Brazilian, bearing in mind that my experience did not necessarily correlate to those of the participants. The events observed in these two places reflected and complemented the information obtained in the interviews with staff and owners and the photographs included. I consider the fact that I could not have access to commercial kitchens a major drawback. It would have allowed me to engage more fully with the preparatory phases of food 'practices' and the sensorial engagement of chefs and food. As I found out, this part of the fieldwork was very hard to get access to as a researcher. A strategy for that would mean going 'undercover' as a member of staff, something which crossed my mind but was later discarded both because it would imply breaking the trust and the possible limitations regarding the use of the data gathered.



The research undertaken in the households was facilitated considerably by the fact that I knew the people that lived there and was friendly with the 'gatekeeper' (landlord). It allowed me access to the two flats on a regular basis and did not call so much attention to my role as a researcher. Being accepted as a researcher in people's home is however quite disturbing. It is difficult to draw a line between what constitutes research and what is private. I have tried to be very careful to strike the right balance. On the positive side, it allowed me to explore the particularities of the living arrangements of diasporic Brazilians and gather the importance of food practices on their homemaking and sense of identity. As with the participant observation in the commercial setting I found that it not only brought fine grained information but also allowed me to go deeper into the analysis (DeWalt et al., 1998). Ethnographic research at home was an important methodological tool that helped me to access the locations where the 'taken for granted' aspects of migrants' lives took place. I also experience firsthand the complexity of household structures of two neighbouring houses inhabited by migrants, thus contributing to the scarce literature on domestic homes in migrant literature.

I have pointed out that this thesis is not an autoethnography although I have drawn on my own experience as a displaced Brazilian not only to come up with the idea of the project but throughout the research process. I have also mentioned how understanding and personal experience of some of the emotional aspects of migration, such as rupture, adaptation, longing and expectancy has - to some degree - influenced this research project. I am aware of the risks that I run by stating this, but I feel that the risk is outweighed by the fact that bringing my personal position to the fore gives the reader a clear sense of where I stand as a researcher. I also believe that this is a situated contribution to a less explored theme in the social sciences, the emotional geographies of displacement. I hope I make clear in the course of the thesis that my own position as a Brazilian, interpreter, migrant and advocate for the study of Brazilian matters in the UK, does not prevent me from maintaining a critical position, whilst trying to understand and interpret the Brazilian food cultures being developed in London. While I look to take food seriously as food I am also

careful not to impose my own views on the importance of food in diasporic processes. This is done by bringing a variety of views and by highlighting how this importance is extensively debated among Brazilians in London.

To say that the use of multiple methods presents a challenge in terms of how research 'data' are gathered, analyzed and presented is an understatement. It is every bit as rewarding as it is complicated and time consuming. I believe that this effort was worthwhile, as it provided me with substantial material for a rich discussion, which I hope to deliver in the next chapters. First, however, I outline the theoretical framework of this thesis.

## **2 Chapter Two - Food, Migration and the Brazilian Diaspora**

## 2.1 Introduction

Food miles, global agro-systems, local food, food anxieties, migrant food... Current debates about food seem inherently geographical, concerned as they are about the environmental, scalar and spatial dimensions of food production, provision and consumption. In academia such debates have been the object of attention of many disciplines, as food's ubiquity in one's life and its social, political and economical implications calls for interdisciplinary approaches. As Crang (Crang, 2000b: 272) put it food 'is not a subject matter that sits easily within neat conceptual and spatial boundaries.'

Despite this geographical entanglement food is not the basis of a 'sub-disciplinary body of research within Human Geography' (Crang, 2000b: 272). Nonetheless, analyses of food and its geographies have increasingly appeared in academic writing in the discipline and beyond. A special issue of the journal *Social and Cultural Geography* (vol. 4, no. 1, 2003) on the new cultural geographies of food was published; and the interdisciplinary *Journal for the Study of Food and Society* (Vol. 6, No. 1, Winter 2002) published an issue on *The Geography of Food*. Whereas food production has traditionally been the main focus for geographers (for example Goodman and Watts 1997) over the last two decades geographers, influenced by the cultural turn in the Social Sciences, have turned their gaze onto the realms of consumption and consumer cultures. This has led to a range of studies which have examined, for example: the scalar dimensions of food provision and consumption (Bell and Valentine, 1997); how global agri-food systems are contested by various sorts of ethical consumption under the umbrella of 'alternative systems' (Goodman, 2004); the following of foods through provision systems (Cook and Harrison, 2007); and, following recent food scares and farming crises, contemporary anxieties about food consumption (Jackson, 2010).

My aim in this chapter, though, is not to provide an exhaustive review of food studies or the geography of food (for reviews see Grigg, 1995, Cook and *et al.*, 2006, Cook *et al.*, 2011, Cook *et al.*, 2008). Instead I will provide a more

focused account, establishing the potential importance of food within diasporic and migrant experience, and of diasporic cultures to contemporary cultural geographies of food. I therefore begin the first part of this theoretical chapter by situating my own research within wider debates on food and globalization. The discussion that follows explores existing literature on the internationalization of food consumption, especially that related to ethnic food in multicultural contexts, and sets out the arguments to be developed in the next section. Section two places 'migrant food' in relation to broader theories on migration, diaspora and transnationalism. This section of the chapter also details the relationship between migration, place and identity especially in relation to everyday food practices. It leads to an exploration of how diasporic identities and belonging may be studied as an everyday, embodied and sensory practice. In the last section of this chapter I briefly contextualize Brazilian migration to the UK within the wider literature on Brazilian emigration. I then go on to explore some of the sparse but recent research on Brazilian migration in London, followed by a review of how Brazilian diasporic identities have been analysed in academic studies. I conclude by highlighting some of the main contributions this thesis brings to these existing literatures.

## **2.2 Food and its geographies**

The large scale movement of people, ideas, money and foodstuffs around the globe is considered to have started with the development of the transatlantic food trade following the conquest of the Americas (Inglis and Gimlin, 2009). It provoked changes not only to the ways food was cultivated and distributed but also had a profound impact on diet and culinary culture on both sides of the Atlantic (Mintz, 1986, Mintz, 2008, Davidson, 1992, Standage, 2009, Messer, 1997, Rebora, 2001, Smith, 1994). These processes have taken on new dimensions with recent changes in communication technologies and neoliberal globalisation which have accelerated and created new forms of interconnectedness. The effects on food production, distribution and

consumption have created new dilemmas which in turn have sparked considerable interest among scholars in recent years (for reviews on food and globalization see Phillips, 2006, Watson and Caldwell, 2005, Mintz and Bois, 2002, Inglis and Gimlin, 2009).

The impacts of current globalizing forces upon cultural processes in general has been the object of ample debate among scholars and has polarised in two main positions (Inglis and Gimlin, 2009). On the one hand, Marxists and radical critics consider that local cultures are being *homogenised* and a global cuisine is being promoted by the spread of large American food corporations such as McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut and Starbucks (Ritzer, 2000, Simpson, 2008). Cultural analysts and anthropologists counter argue that economic forces are not entirely in charge of cultural processes, thus emphasising the complexity of the relationship between cultural and globalising processes. In this last view, cultural anthropologists (Hannerz 1996) and post-colonial studies scholars consider the agency of cultural actors and the emergence of 'hybrid' and 'creole' cultures. Such mixtures may result in 'glocal' cultural forms (Robertson, 1992) in so far as 'different forms of food globalization have variously homogenizing and heterogenizing effects, sometimes simultaneously' (Inglis and Gimlin, 2009: 23). Indeed, for Wilk (2002) instead of undermining 'national' taste cultures globalization processes may have stimulated their development.

Another strand of research on food and globalization refers to the internationalization of food consumption. Cross-cultural consumption has become increasingly popular among the urban middle class since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the propagation of foreign eating habits through travel, mass media and printed foreign cookbooks. It is also linked to the expansion of the (so called) 'ethnic' restaurants in Europe and the United States, and their associations with processes of immigration (Chan and Kershen, 2002, Payani, 2002, Möhring, 2008, Cwiertka and Walraven, 2002, Gabaccia, 2002, Gabaccia, 2000). In Europe, for example, the ethnic food sector has been a fast growing segment in the food industry since the 1980s.

According to Möhring (2008: 131) 'the ethnic food market in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain grew to 924 million pounds in 1997, the UK having the largest ethnic food market in Europe, accounting for two thirds of the sales figure'.

This scenario implies the commodification of cultural differentiations, in this case culinary cultures, as they become selling points for customers eating outside their cultural boundaries. Drawing on wider academic debates on material culture, commodification, ethnicity and hybridity, Cook and Crang reflected on how 'ethnic' food also allowed for the production and consumption of 'multicultural imaginaries' in the UK (Cook et al., 1999). The authors offered a critical route map of 'a world of cultural and culinary diversity [which] is currently being served up to British food consumers on their plates, their supermarket shelves and their high streets'. A first point to attend to, they suggested, was the unpacking of definitions of 'ethnic food' which could be a 'complex and confused construction' (Cook et al., 1999: 228). Not only linked to the food itself but to the people that are associated with those foods, 'ethnic food' is generally a 'mark' assigned by 'others' that remains outside the ethnic labelling. Ethnic food is therefore bound up in, and often central to, wider issues of multicultural politics, such as diversity, 'otherness', authenticity, self-representation and hybridity.

Claims of authenticity, for instance, have often been used by businesses eager to differentiate their product in a situation of fierce competition and knowledgeable customer (Cook et al., 2000). In his study of ethnic restaurants in West Germany, Möhring (2008) found that to be viewed as authentic and offering 'genuine' dishes a place such as a restaurant had to offer the whole package - staff, decoration, furnishings - and also needed to be patronised by members of the ethnic community (Möhring, 2008:139). An investigation into the politics of claiming authenticity, as proposed by Abarca (2004), reveals that the necessary knowledge and the legitimacy of a particular cultural production involve outsiders as well as insiders. 'Foodie' and media literati are the knowledgeable outsiders and have the power to pass judgment on what is

'authentic', and then pass this knowledge to consumers (Cook et al., 1999: 234 - 6). Such knowledge, in the hands of the cosmopolitan, does not always translate into a critical understanding of the material and political realities of food production and consumption within broader culinary circuits, as pointed out by Crang (1996), but is merely a process of capitalising on someone else's cultural heritage.

Unpacking these claims of authenticity Cook, Crang et al (1999: 234-6) argued that these were very often place-bounded and walked alongside claims of tradition; but had to deal with the fact that 'pure and local traditions' get involved and mix in wider culinary circuits. In fact, as the geographers point out, such culinary circuits are a product of these wider encounters, and culinary authenticity is often used as a strategy to convince niche customers, and as such it is a construction, an ongoing process. To confine food and culture to specific places, for the aforementioned authors, leaves out the mobility that has characterised centuries of food cultures. Other authors who have been studying diasporic food cultures corroborate this point of view by seeing cross-cultural food encounters as involving transformations to cuisines, 'even as they maintain their distinctiveness' (Narayan, 1995: 186). As cuisines move from one place to the other, improvisation and adaptation are bound to occur. Lack of ingredients, the need to adapt to local commercial environments, and also the host population palate may all be factors that contribute to the development of a hybrid cuisine (Payani, 2002).

On the other hand, authenticity could be considered to be an act of cultural resistance if mobilised by a 'cultural insider' (Abarca, 2004:5 borrowing from Anne Goldman). This position was also taken by Ferrero (2002) who researched Mexican food businesses in Los Angeles: 'Mexican business people can claim authority and cultural capital over the authenticity of Mexican food items and culinary practices' (Ferrero, 2002:198). However, alerts Abarca (2004), a 'planned authenticity' can be a tight vest, expecting that people keep to 'a well defined set of cultural and economic boundaries'. Even in the hands of a cultural insider, it should not prevent people from experimenting



and improvising. She offers 'originality' as a more productive form of cultural value than 'authenticity'.

The discourse of culinary diversity's cultural contribution has also been greatly contested by a number of scholars. Although food related metaphors such as indigestion and contamination have been used to demonstrate fears about non-European immigration and racial intermingling in Australia, for example (Edwards et al., 2000), in the main the diversity of cuisines was (and has been) considered one of the few widely accepted positive aspects of diaspora spaces. Having 'the world on a plate' may appeal to cosmopolitan consumers' palates lingering for exotic tastes and indeed the idea has been used by the media to portray London as a cosmopolitan metropolis (Cook and Crang, 1996). The catchphrase was used by the authors to unpack how 'globally extensive networks and flows of food, people and culinary knowledge are being locally articulated'. The authors also argue that in this process of localization contestable and produced 'geographical knowledges' of where food, people and practices come from are deployed to "re-enchant' (food) commodities and to differentiate them from the devalued functionality and homogeneity of standardized products, tastes and places" (Cook and Crang, 1996: 132).

Others have been critical of a view in which 'multiculturalism is defined according to the availability of ethnic restaurants for cosmopolitan consumers' (Hage, 1997: 99) or where 'multiculturalism here becomes a problem to be coped with by the offering up of cultural treats, thereby evading a more profound engagement with the possibilities for cultural transformation' (Parker, 2000: 78). In his article about Chinese takeaways in the UK, Parker (2000:79) argues that this form of multiculturalism 'is held within the confines of service industries at the disposal of the dominant' and that they therefore 'do not operate wholly on their own terms'. It also 'simplifies the terms of contact between cultures, overlooking the unequal terms of interchange between Europe and Asia in both past and present'.

Uma Narayan (1995) alerts us to the deceiving notion that the acceptance of a migrant's food may lead to an acceptance of their presence in mainstream culture. She exemplifies her argument through an historical analysis of the incorporation of curry in England, saying that British people 'were incorporating the Other into the Self, but not on the Self's term' (1995:165). For Narayan (1995: 77) we should not overlook the fact that 'mainstream eaters would remain privileged consumers, benefiting from the structural inequalities and unpleasant material realities that often form the contexts in which 'ethnic food' is produced and consumed'. The recent expansion of the ethnic food sector with the availability of sauces, spices and ready meals from supermarket shelves does not mean an approximation between cultures, argues Payani (2002). Commonly it means a further 'ghettoisation', says the author, with mainstream communities purchasing what they conceive as ethnic foods from 'safe' and mainstream business outlets instead of patronising ethnic retail spaces.

The jagged relationship between the diner and the 'ethnic other' has been termed as 'consumer cannibalism' or 'culinary imperialism' by bell hooks (1992: 39). The author also points out that food consumed in ethnic restaurants would have been stripped of its original cultural significance. It is offered as a simulacrum. She goes on to say that in order to be commodified, 'difference' would have been branded, stereotyped, spectacularized and aestheticized. The elaboration of difference may emphasise, for example, commonly perceived national symbols, languages and or icons to market specific products, as was the case with pizza in Norway (Lien, 2000). Mainstream consumers are the ones who benefit from such commodification. They are able to experiment with something exotic whilst remaining in a safe position, thus dealing with difference from their own cultural perspective, which is usually a position free of ethnic markers (hooks, 1992).

However, posing commodity culture as the guilty party for removing cultural forms out of their context and then packaging them to be sold, fails to show how commodity culture can also facilitate the reproduction of culture in

different settings, establishing new forms of communication, counter-argue Cook, Crang et al. (1999: 233-34). Ethnic restaurants may consciously choose to employ identity markers such as 'in its name, in its inclusion under an ethnic heading in a special section on the telephone directory, or by listing the specialities of the house in a display ad' (Wilbur Zelinsky, cited by Möhring, 2008). Analysing the consumption of Mexican food in restaurants in Los Angeles, Ferrero argues that 'Mexican food becomes a means to break into the American economic and cultural system, a way of legitimizing social networks and establishing new ethnic roots' (Ferrero, 2002:198). The consumption of ethnic food can transform the 'exotic' to 'familiar', 'inedible to edible', and can promote the acceptance, even if partially, of ethnic minorities into mainstream society (Amy Bentley, cited by Abarca, 2004). Davis (2002: 74) believes there are aspects of inclusion and exclusion in the ingestion experience, but reiterates a two way relationship: 'the act of dining and vending in an ethnic restaurant fill both native and immigrant needs'. Frost's recent research on the role of curry houses in the regeneration and rebranding of Brick Lane in East London (Frost, 2011) is also telling in its emphasis on the application of cultural difference as a proactive migrant approach.

Thus, existing research on 'ethnic food consumption' has highlighted, among others, issues of the commodification of cultural difference; the mobilization of cultural and geographical knowledge in cosmopolitan settings; as well as the identity politics of 'ethnic' food consumption. Notwithstanding the merit of these incursions, a focus on 'ethnic food' instead of 'migrant food' has often meant that the migrant is always seen as the producer, never the consumer, a common trend in the social sciences (Zelizer, 2005). Without a doubt, 'ethnic food' is inscribed in a field where relations of cultural power and domination are present (Highmore, 2009) but portraying the 'ethnic other' as a passive victim strips migrants' of agency. An aim of my own research is therefore to recentre migrant agency through a more diasporically attuned approach to food internationalization.

Moreover, most studies on 'ethnic food' have been concerned with migrant groups which had been established in the host society for a number of years and whose cuisines have been incorporated into mainstream palates through consumption in restaurants and were in the process of being disseminated specially into British kitchens through heavy marketing campaigns. In relation to this study, Brazilians are a fairly recent migrant group in the UK and Brazilian culinary culture has not (yet) been widely marketed at mainstream British consumers. There are some Brazilian restaurants in London that cater for more stereotypical and 'non-Brazilian' expectations of Brazil: as an exotic, tropical paradise, with beaches, sexual bodies, carnival and football, portraying mainly the cultures of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. These cultural images of Brazil do exist on a cultural circuit of consumption aimed at Londoners and displaced Brazilians (Frangella, 2010b), and this will be expanded on in the overview chapter. However, my research evidences that alongside (and intersecting) with this circuit there exists another much stronger commercial food and wider cultural scene being formed. Spreading fast across London, bars, restaurants, cafes and grocery shops were mobilizing other cultural signs of "Brazilianess". These were social spaces that catered for the needs of a new wave of Brazilians coming to London, culturally more attuned to the large numbers of people from the midlands of Brazil. Brazilian business owners were also actively mobilizing their new found 'ethnicity' as 'Brazilians in London' using these other images of Brazil (albeit timidly) as an economic resource. However, I sensed that identity performance in those spaces could not be framed only in terms of how 'Brazilianess' was commodified to be consumed by the 'other'. As some of these spaces are deeply engaged in the construction of collective spaces of belonging for displaced Brazilians in London, they called for an examination of how 'Brazilianess' was a process negotiated and constructed on an everyday basis through food, memories, narratives and practices. I also felt that this 'Brazilianess' constructed through food consumption practices needed to go beyond public spaces of consumption and include the domestic spaces of Brazilians in London.

My research is then framed within discussions of food and globalization that looks at the fashioning of diasporic food cultures under the conditions of contemporary globalising forces (among others Ray, 2009, Ray, 2011, Counihan, 2009, Ray, 2004, Marte, 2011, Abbots, 2011, Frost, 2011, Codesal, 2010, Rabikowska, 2009a, Law, 2001, Abdullah, 2010). As Inglis and Gimlin (2009: 7) pointed out: 'Globalizing forces can both upset, reconfigure and also re-establish such connections between food and feelings of belonging'. I take his point and propose – with a distinct and grounded diasporic focus - to unpick how migrants' everyday practices of food provision and consumption enable them to re-construct and communicate their diasporic identities. The next section therefore turns directly to another set of theoretical issues that will give the foundation for this approach: those associated with 'diasporic geographies'.

### **2.3 Adding food (as material and immaterial culture) to diasporic geographies**

It has now been widely recognised that food is one of the cultural and material practices most closely connected with the maintenance, expression and reworking of identity for migrant groups (Aveli, 2005, Fischler, 1988, Parker, 2000, Kneafsey and Cox, 2002, Ray, 2004, Gabaccia, 1998, Brown and Mussell, 1984, Douglas, 1984). American historian Donna Gabaccia (1998) shows the importance of food for immigrants in earlier periods of American history by saying that 'immigrants sought to maintain their families' foodways because food initiated and maintained traditional relationships, expressed the extent of social distance between people, demonstrated status and prestige, rewarded and punished children's behaviour, and treated illness. [...] To abandon immigrant food traditions for the foods of Americans was to abandon community, family, and religions, at least in the minds of many immigrants' (Gabaccia, 1998:51-54).

One of the dangers when researching migrant food cultures is to essentialise and bound them to discrete spheres. The term 'foodways', first

used in folklore studies, may pose such problem when referring to contemporary ethnic groups. It was first used by folklorists in the 1970s, to define a 'whole interrelated system of food conceptualization and evaluation, procurement, distribution, preservation, preparation, consumption, and nutrition shared by all members of a particular society' (Kaplan, 1998: 121). Changes in communication technologies and advanced globalisation have affected (and increased) the way that people, ideas, money and foodstuff travel around the globe; therefore 'ethnic foodways' rarely are the same as in the homeland, having to undergo a series of adaptations in the new environment (Kaplan, 1998). In fact, food (and migrant) cultures are always 'on the make', borrowing and adapting as they go. They have a flexible and dynamic relationship, not only with the homeland, but also with other surrounding and/or international cuisines. Current understanding of 'foodways' is more flexible and takes stock of these exchanges by defining them as 'beliefs and behaviours about food production, distribution, preparation and consumption' (Counihan, 2009: 243) or 'less a reflection of pre-existing cultures and more as a means through which the cultural IDENTITIES of people and PLACES are invented and performed.'(Crang, 2000a: 274, capitalized as in the original text)

Conceptual concerns about essentializing migrant (food) cultures is not a reason to abandon the study of them, but rather precisely something that empirical study can rectify. As Codesal (2010) argues it is important to pay attention to how food, in the context of migration, also becomes 'localized' so that 'each migration scenario allows, encourages or hinders' the development of specific 'foodscapes'. Neither should the relation between food and identity be considered irrelevant on the basis that we live in an increasing globalized world. Issues of cultural identity often arise to deal with 'problems of permanence amidst manifest change, and of unity amidst manifest diversity' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 2). In fact, there has been an increased academic interest in addressing these issues lately, as attested by the publication of a special issue of the journal *Anthropology of Food* (2010) entitled "Migration, food practices and social relations: when continuity is not reproduction and discontinuity is not rupture". Complaints about the under-theorization of the

field (West, 2011) have also been addressed by a special issue on food, migration and diaspora published by the journal *Food, Culture and Society* in 2011, in which articles were drawn from an interdisciplinary seminar at SOAS in 2009. This thesis draws from and builds on these recent studies by bringing together issues of material culture, sociality and space, and immaterial feelings of longing and belonging. It argues that migrant food practices as an everyday diasporic experience can bring a more nuanced view of the lived experience of migrants thus contributing to current understandings of transnationalism ( and translocalism ), diaspora and identity. In doing so this research also contributes to an issue which been least examined in 'diaspora studies', according to Fortier (2005: 185): 'the manufacturing of diasporic subjects'.

The complexity of the cultural and social relationships that individuals, communities and materials develop whilst living across borders has been analysed in the light of two burgeoning fields of theoretical enquiry: transnationalism and diaspora (Vertovec, 1999a, Clifford, 1994, Brah, 1996, Hall et al., 1994, Glick Schiller et al., 1992, Vertovec, 2001, Safran, 1991, Gilroy, 1994, Levitt, 2010, Crang, 2010, Tölölyan, 1996, Cohen, 1997, Gilroy, 1999, Braziel and Mannur, 2003, Braziel, 2008, Kalra et al., 2005, Guarnizo and Smith, 1998, Smith and Guarnizo, 1998, Lesser, 2003, Crang et al., 2003, Dunn, 2010, Jackson et al., 2004, Khagram and Levitt, 2007, Yeoh et al., 2003). By highlighting the complex geographies of belonging and by challenging the notion of fixed identities, these two interrelated bodies of work have raised questions about how the relations between place, identity and home are conceived. They also dispute the supremacy of the nation state as the only container of social life.

Since its emergence in the early 1990s, the concept of transnationalism has been the subject of heated debates and critiques (Portes et al., 1999, Guarnizo and Smith, 1998, Mitchell, 1997). Broadly speaking transnationalism has been used as an adjective to describe the connections, flows, interactions, ties, exchanges and mobility of people, institutions, ideas and capital - beyond, across and despite boundaries of national territories. Recent research and

theoretical work on transnationalism have examined so many different angles and activities that scholars have been forced to discern the main conceptual grounds from which these notions derive from. Steve Vertovec (1999a) has come up with six distinct but dependable areas of enquiry which view transnationalism as:

1) *Social morphology*: associated with diasporas and their networks as well as illegal activities across borders;

2) *Type of consciousness*: people's attachments and identities are not necessarily bound to a specific place, but have dual or multiple identifications - 'here' and 'there';

3) *Mode of cultural reproduction*: production of hybrid cultural phenomena;

4) *Avenue of capital*: related not only to transnational corporations and power elite but also to the transfer of money by migrant communities and migrant entrepreneurial activities;

5) *Site of political engagement*: activities performed by international non-governmental agencies (NGOs) or transnational political activities of ethnical diasporas;

6) *(Re)construction of 'place' or locality*: relates to how some people are positioned and connected in more than one country by the creation of 'social fields'

These all mean that a number of different social processes such as: "communities, capital flows, trade, citizenship, corporations, intergovernmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, politics, services, social movement, social networks, families, migration circuits, identities, public spaces, public culture", have been considered 'transnational' (Vertovec, 1999a: 448). The fear that the adjective had become a sort of theoretical label which could be applied to such different scales and activities (and being lost as a result of that in a conceptual muddle) led to calls 'to tidy it up a bit'. This could be achieved by



empirically and theoretically ascertaining and limiting what should count as truly transnational (Portes et al., 1999). Pleas have also been made for more empirical work to 'ground' the concept in order to counterbalance a tendency in Cultural Studies to use the term and its associated lexicon too freely (Mitchell, 1997).

The concepts of transnationalism and diaspora - although closely related and sometimes used interchangeably against the notion of the closed boundaries of nation states - differ in many ways. Braziel and Mannur (2003) considered the difference between diaspora and transnationalism to be a human factor: diaspora is concerned with the displacement of people only, whereas transnationalism may also be related to the movement of goods, information and capital. Diaspora studies have an older trajectory than transnational studies and its more classical example is the forced dispersal of Jews. This classical example has been used to determine what constitutes the 'ideal type' of diaspora: a) how a link with the past and the homeland is retained (be it in terms of a project of return, remittances, political participation, or imaginatively); b) the importance of this link with the homeland in the creation of a sense of belonging in the new settings and; c) a reluctance to engage culturally in the new place. (Cohen, 2010, Cohen, 2007, Safran, 1991). Alternative conceptualizations were not so constrained to this 'ideal type'. James Clifford's understanding of diaspora (1994), for example, is more concerned with a form of awareness and resistance developed by those who do not 'fit in' in their new place of settlement. Diaspora, he suggests, is a 'loosely coherent adaptive constellation of responses to dwelling in displacement' (Clifford, 1994: 310). Recent scholarship has followed this usage of the term, and diaspora studies now include various categories of people on the move such as guest workers, exiles, expatriates, refugees, immigrants etc. This conceptual shift in diaspora studies has been observed in the launch of the *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* (Tölölyan, 1991) whilst the comprehensive collection of essays in the book *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersection and Identities* points to the many intersections between diaspora and other social, cultural and spatial processes and relations (Knott, 2010).

These more recent and open definitions of diaspora also recognise that migrants maintain multiple connections across more than one nation- they may feel at home in the place of settlement while still having longings for and attachments to a homeland (Vertovec, 1999b, Clifford, 1994). Brah (1996: 197) went further to differentiate between a 'homing' desire and a 'desire for homeland': she points out that keeping an identification with their place of origin does not mean that people want to go back to live there. Diasporas studies have, therefore fuelled new conceptualizations of home including 'the relationship between home and homeland, the existence of multiple homes, and the intersections of home, memory, identity and belonging' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 199). This more open and fluid understanding of home has accounted for the experiences of people who move across different places and times, thus challenging the apparent opposition between 'home' and 'away'.

Diaspora studies have also emphasised the cultural forms associated with migrant populations bringing light to how diasporic social formations forge their own distinctive senses of identity (Brah, 1996). Of course 'the identity of the diasporic imagined community is far from fixed or pre-given. It is constituted within the crucible of the materiality of everyday life; in the everyday stories we tell ourselves individually and collectively' (Brah, 1996: 183). Diasporic identifications are, for Brah (1996: 194 - 196, original italics), '*multilocal, [...] networks of transnational identifications encompassing 'imagined' and 'encountered' communities.* My research tries to be attentive to both movement and attachment, to the 'social dynamics of rooting and routings' (Gilroy, 1993, Fortier, 2005). For that I employ a notion of diaspora which considers 'questions of belonging, continuity and community in the context of dispersal and transnational networks of connection' (Fortier, 2005: 182-183); how these 'new geographies of identity' (Lavie and Swedenburg, 1996a) are being negotiated across multiple locations and temporalities making culture and identity 'inevitably the products of several interlocking histories and cultures, belonging at the same time to several homes' (Hall, 1993).

I am aware of the dangers in arguing that the material and immaterial culture of food practices support the (re)creation and negotiation of 'Brazilianess' and being interpreted as trying to define 'Brazilianess' as being a homogeneous cultural form. The Brazilian diaspora in London cannot in any way be considered as a 'culturally unified grouping' (Fortier, 2005: 183) on grounds of a common national origin and such 'diversity' and 'divisions' will be explored throughout the chapters. Existing scholarship has also been clear that the diasporic character of culture cannot be reduced to some sort of cultural homogeneity that travels untroubled between two locations (Gilroy, 2000, 128-129, following Kaplan, 1996: 143, Fortier, 2000b). Borrowing from Hall (1993) and from recent diaspora studies it is fair to suggest that Brazil is itself a 'diaspora space' and that the 'system of representation' which constitutes Brazil as an 'imagined community' is already the product of cultures of hybridity (Hall, 1993: 362). On the move, however 'these 'hybrids' retain strong links to and identifications with the traditions and places of their 'origin' (Hall, 1993: 362) but such identifications are open, as:

They are the product of a diasporic consciousness. They have come to terms with the fact that in the modern world, and I believe irrevocably, identity is always an open, complex, unfinished game - always under construction. As I remarked elsewhere, it always moves into the future through a symbolic detour through the past. (Hall, 1990).

However, I do not discard the fact that the nation-state continues to play an important role in terms of how transnational social relations take place (Glick Schiller, 1997). Although negotiated and disputed, the nation continues to be an umbrella of communality for the Brazilian diaspora and for the diasporic networks of trade and commerce of Brazilian food in London.

As Crang suggest 'diasporic identities and processes are forged through the production, circulation and consumption of material things and spaces' (2010: 139). These diasporic/transnational entrepreneurial activities and networks have been studied under the rubric of ethnic economies and

immigrant entrepreneurship (Baghdiantz-McCabe et al., 2005, Rath, 2010, Kaplan and Li, 2006, Oliveira and Rath, 2008) and transnational commodity cultures (Jackson et al., 2004, Crang et al., 2003). The latter body of work has developed conceptualizations of 'transnational spaces' (Jackson et al., 2004, Crang et al., 2003) and 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996) bringing the spatiality of these processes and connections to the fore. For Brah (1996) the use of the term 'diaspora space' 'includes the genealogies of dispersion with those of staying put' (Brah, 1996: 184) thus revealing the dynamic, heterogeneous and often contested nature of the spaces of diaspora.

Outlining an approach to studying transnational spaces, Crang, Dwyer et al (2003) argue that a focus on commodity culture widens the concept of transnationality beyond ethnic communities. Transnational spaces would then try to encompass transnationality 'as a set of multiple experiences and relations formed by producers and consumers, labour migration and trading of goods and services, as well as the construction of symbolic and imaginary geographies' (Jackson *et al.* 2004). This approach brings a multiplicity of actors involved in the transnational commodity circuits to the research agenda, as pointed out by Crang, Dwyer et al (2003: 448): "producers (owners of labour and capital), wholesalers, buyers and retailers (in supermarkets and special outlets) and cultural intermediaries (including advertisers, journalists and other expert writers) as well as a wide array of consumers in a wide range of places". It also allows the tracing of "global flows of specific commodities and cultural styles"; and explores the "commodification" of "ethnic" differences. Such work has influenced how food may be considered not only as placed culinary cultures, "but also dis-placed, inhabiting many times and spaces which, far from being neatly bounded, bleed into and indeed mutually constitute each other" (Cook and Crang, 1996:132-3). Indeed, the transnational flows between UK and Brazil involve not only displaced Brazilian nationals but also exporters in Brazil, as well as providers and consumers from other nationalities in the UK. Given more time and financial resources I would have liked to have pursued a multi-sited research project which would have allowed me to explore these flows in more depth. In this thesis I have tried to keep in mind a concept of

diaspora and transnational spaces by showing how the spaces of Brazilian food provision and consumption are not closed circuits but have porous borders and boundaries.

I would like to retain and explore here the notion of displacement used by Crang (Crang, 1996) to think about the 'geographical constitution of consumption practices'. Drawing and expanding from earlier writing on travel and mobility (Clifford, 1988, Clifford, 1992, Robertson et al., 1994), Crang (1996: 47- 48) uses displacement as a way to depart from discussions on the issues of authenticity related to consumption and its geographies presented earlier in this chapter and propose a move towards 'questions about networks, distances, diversions, routes, and inhabitations'. He suggests an understanding whereby: 'processes of consumption are cast as local, in the sense of contextual; but where those contexts are recognized as being opened up by and constituted through connections into any number of networks'. Furthermore, the notion of displacement is used to express the interrelation between the geographies of the local places of consumption, the spatial structure of 'systems of provision' and the geographical meanings associated with the material flows through these systems.

In relation to the research from which this thesis is drawn it is clear how displacement forms the base of Brazilian food commerce in London and I explore displacement and dislocation in this research both in its material and immaterial forms. Whilst recognising and explicitly showing how Brazilian food commerce is part of wider networks I also want to be attentive to the emotional and subjective aspects of displacement and dislocation. In attending to the 'emotional' dimension of consumption practices in situations of displacement I draw and expand on an emergent body of work on 'emotional geographies' (Anderson and Smith, 2001, Thien, 2005, Koskela, 2000, Nash, 1998, Smith, 2000, Widdowfield, 2000) and wider scholarship that recognises the importance of emotions in social life and research (Williams, 2001, Neu, 2000, Pugmire, 1998).

Furthermore, whilst focusing on dislocation and displacement, much emphasis has been given to flows, boundary crossing and movement, whilst experiences of location have often been eclipsed in discussions of diaspora (as noted by Brah, 1996: 182) and indeed transnationalism. What tends to be forgotten is that 'transnational' social and cultural practices are situated in both sending and receiving societies. The idea of translocalism, which emphasises the role of smaller scale locations over nations (Smith, 2001, Hannerz, 1996, Brickell, 2011, Conradson and McKay, 2007, Smith and Eade, 2008) further develops how theories of transnationalism may be 'grounded'. The term shares some common aspects with the notion of transnationalism in the sense that it tries to explain how people live their lives across different places; but whilst recognizing that the nation is relevant, it suggests that there are other scales than the national that matter transnationally. Hannerz (1996:6) explains: 'there is a certain irony in the tendency of the term "transnational" to draw attention to what it negates – that is, to the continued significance of the national'. Michael Peter Smith (2001) further developed the concept of translocality when investigating transnational urbanism, thus providing a useful framework to understand how mobile subjects ground themselves and develop senses of belonging by taking into account the importance of place and locality. In his own words: 'my take on transnationalism and the city focuses on the social-spatial processes by which social actors and their networks forge translocal connections and create the linkages between and across places that I called *translocality*' (Smith, 2011:181).

Concepts of translocality suggest there is potential for diasporic reconnections with the homeland, via food practices and memories, to retain a strong 'place-based' focus, despite the fact that diasporic culture is not 'place bound' (Fortier, 2005: 184). Furthermore, these individual and collective memories which are an important part in the creation of diasporic cultures will impose themselves in the "specific local interactions" (identifications and 'dis-identifications', both constructive and defensive) necessary for the maintenance of diasporic social forms" (Clifford, 1994). I will further develop these ideas in Chapter Five, especially in respect to how 'Brazilianess' is

translocalised/emplaced socially, culturally and materially in two food outlets in a popular Brazilian neighbourhood in Northwest London. These two outlets also provide a closer investigation of the construction of collective spaces of belonging for Brazilian migrants.

Place is fundamental if we are to make sense of these reconnections both in terms of the remembrances, the longings of 'the lived experience of locality' (Brah, 1996) that informs diasporic identities, but also in relation to the creation of spaces of belonging in new settings of settlement. Given its importance it is surprising that it has often been overlooked in transnational studies, which tend to focus on flows and boundary crossing but forget that migrant life also has a grounded aspect to it (Dunn, 2010). While arguing in their study that transnational spaces are multi-dimensional and heterogeneous, Crang, Jackson and Dwyer also acknowledge the importance of concrete localities: '[w]e must not let elite ideology of transnationalism blind us to the practical and emotional importance of attachment to and in place' (Jackson et al., 2004: 6-7).

Migrants' attachment to and in places, takes us to questions of belonging. Widespread critical scholarship has shown that notions of 'belonging' raise all sorts of issues, from fear of difference and diversity in the 'New Europe' (Hall, 1993); exclusionary nationalist politics (Pred, 2000, Koefoed and Simonsen, 2007); and the articulation of national identity in terms that exclude those who are not citizens (Cresswell, 2006: 189) to cite a few. Belonging constitutes a 'political and cultural field of global contestation' (Hedetoft and Hjort, 2002: x). It is not given, but a process, entailing norms of affiliation (Fortier, 2000b), emotional engagement (Hedetoft and Hjort, 2002) and a collective agreement to be created, performed and sustained (Bell, 1999). Belonging can also refer to feelings: of 'being at home', in the sense of being surrounded by familiarity, safety and comfort, or the lack of these things, as when feeling homesick (Hedetoft and Hjort, 2002: x). Such emotional undertones to this 'banal' form of belonging render it as a 'category of practice', quite difficult to engage analytically (Hedetoft and Hjort, 2002) but nonetheless

helpful as 'a way to ground the relationship between migration and identity' (Gilmartin, 2008: 1842).

The need to address such emotional, embodied, material and quotidian practices in migrants' life has been argued by a number of scholars (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993, Conradson and McKay, 2007, Basu and Coleman, 2008, Wise and Chapman, 2005, Choo, 2004). Although in wider migration studies such approaches are still marginal, there have been an increasing number of studies which are more attentive to the significance of the way migrants lead their daily lives (Ley, 2004, Conradson, 2005, Ho and Hatfield, 2012 [in press]) and how everyday grounded practices might inform migrants' emotional processes of belonging (Cheng, 2010, Tolia-Kelly, 2004a, Walsh, 2006). Broadly, this body of work argues for the role of material culture in migrants' practices of belonging and home-making and how identity is both reinforced and communicated in these processes. These studies draw from earlier work on the sociology of practice and materiality, such as De Certeau (1984), (Bourdieu, 1990, Bourdieu, 1984, Bourdieu, 1977) and Miller (1995, 1997, 2001b, 2001a), that bring together issues of materiality, consumption and everyday practices.

A focus on the everyday, or the 'ordinary', may reveal 'our everyday processes of making meanings and making sense of the world.' (Mackay, 1997: 7). Although one may think that the 'everyday' is 'everywhere', attending to it may prove difficult for it is 'hidden and evasive' (Highmore, 2002: 145). Approaching everyday life through its materiality, De Certeau's investigation focused on how people operate and their 'ways of using products imposed by a dominant economic order' (De Certeau, 1984: xiii). 'Practices', Swidler (2001: 74 -75) explains, are the routine activities of the everyday, 'notable for their unconscious, automatic, un-thought character', etched in the ways individuals 'use their bodies, in their habits, in their taken-for-granted sense of space, dress, food, musical taste - in the social routines they know so well as to be able to improvise spontaneously without a second thought'.

The search for a productive way to investigate migrants' everyday life also leads to the field of consumption and material culture. The importance of



material culture in domestic migrant cultures has been addressed by a number of recent studies. These have looked at different aspects such as architecture and gardens, furniture and personal belongings, and everyday activities and performances. Responding to the narratives of Polish home builders, Datta (2008) investigates the material geographies of home 'not just as a physical or symbolic space, but also as an assemblage of building elements which, in their coming together under different contexts, allow discursive formations of cultural difference and otherness' (Datta, 2008: 519). An examination of outside domestic spaces by Morgan, Rocha et al. (2005) points to the ways in which migrants use their gardens as sites of cultural practice by creating in their backyard a smallholding where 'by growing and cooking traditional foods they reconnect with their homeland through taste, sights and smells' (Morgan et al., 2005: 96). In situations of forced displacement items such as photographs, personal belongings, furniture and even tools transported by refugees provide not only a material link to a previous life but, as 'reminders of who they are and where they come from' (Parkin, 1999:313) and therefore much prized possessions, they also offer the possibility of creating physical, cultural and emotional continuity. Material and visual artefacts such as domestic shrines can also be considered sites of identification and memory, as argued by Tolia-Kelly (2004a) in her research with the South Asian population in Britain. For these populations, such 'home possessions' are linked to 'the diasporic sense of disconnection and loss' but also allow them to build 'new landscapes of belonging' (Tolia-Kelly, 2004a: 315). That role in forging new spaces of belonging is also the focus of Savaş (2010). In contrast to studies that emphasise how material culture is actively used by migrants to remember and keep ties with the past, the work of Savaş (2010) shows how 'the typically Turkish home' in Vienna and its objects have no 'ethnic' associations or ties with Turkey. Instead "'Turkish' objects are appropriated and enunciated as such because they objectify and embody Turkish experience of Vienna' (Savaş, 2010: 316).

In terms of everyday activities and performances, cooking and eating familiar food comes to the fore as home-making practices with high significance

for migrants (Law, 2001, Petridou, 2001, Sutton, 2001, Marte, 2007, Rabikowska, 2009a). In analysing the role of food in home-making practice, I employ a fluid notion of home, which goes in and beyond domestic space and other geographical scales (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Thus, apart from domestic settings, cafés, restaurants and grocery shops owned and visited by immigrants are also analysed in terms of the multiple roles they play in the immigrant's home-building experience. Recent works suggest that these spaces are not only sites where business transactions occur, and the reason immigrants patronise these spaces may go beyond economic factors, as they may not even offer competitive prices (Martes, 2004). Rather, such commercial premises can act as important social spaces where immigrants socialize and (re) create senses of identity and belonging in a strange place, illustrating the 'mutual entanglement of things, values and social relations' (Mankekar, 2005: 202).

Food practices have the 'ability to evoke a multifaceted experience of place', and to foreground the 'geographies of the senses' (Law, 2001, Rodaway, 1994). Research such as Law's on Filipino food practices in Hong Kong, helps us to recognise that belonging and identity are not mere 'general' feelings and ideas; they are grounded in bodily impressions through familiar 'sensorial reminders' connected to specific places. Sensory experiences are considered by some authors as 'the core of everyday living' and 'what we absorb through the senses is the substance of our personal translation of abstract space into 'place', the location of our identities' (Kalekin-fishman and Low, 2010: 6). Due to its multisensory capacity (especially through taste and smell, but also sight and touch) food not only evokes past experiences of home as a totality (Sutton 2001) taking migrants back to other places or times, but also allows them to recreate the 'sensory landscape of home' (Seremetakis and Seremetakis, 1994) in new settings. For displaced people food might become the most tangible link with the birth place, the 'umbilical cord to a homeplace' (Rosales, 2009) and an everyday expression of a sense of collective identity (Choo, 2004: 88-91). It provides 'a medium through which stories and histories are told and

remembered, places are described, identities formed and community imagined' (Seremetakis, 1994a).

The sensorial capacity of food to unleash many memories was beautifully captured by the French writer Marcel Proust in his book *In Search of Lost Time (A la recherche de temps perdu)*. He describes how eating a tea-soaked *madeleine* triggered reminiscences of a childhood place. Proust's insight remained oddly underdeveloped within food studies, and indeed in memory studies, until comparatively recently. Sutton (2001) mentions in the introduction of his book *Remembrance of Repasts: an Anthropology of Food and Memory* that in the mid-nineties his research was met with reticence by other academics and by a lack of academic sources on the subject. Perhaps, he said, it was the strange mixture of such an ordinary but multilayered act as eating and the subjective nature of remembering that kept academic enquiry at bay. Since then, however, there has been a burgeoning academic interest in investigating linkages between food and memory, especially in anthropology, but also in other areas (Choo, 2004, Kravva, 2000, Long, 2004, Möhring, 2008, Marte, 2007, Rosales, 2009, Sutton, 2001, Warin and Dennis, 2005, Counihan, 2004, Naguib, 2009). Despite this increase, Holtzman (2006) notes that there are very few food-centered studies concerned with developing a theoretical framework around the theme. The exceptions, according to the author, are the already mentioned book by Sutton (2001) and the work of Caroline Counihan in *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence* (Counihan, 2004).

In his literature review, Holtzman (2006) teased out the various approaches and processes that different scholars used to analyse the interfaces between food and memory. He brings to the fore six key themes: embodied memories constructed through food; food as a locus for historically constructed identity, ethnic or nationalist; the role of food in various forms of 'nostalgia'; dietary change as a socially charged marker of epochal shifts; gender and the agents of memory; and the contexts of remembering and forgetting through food. He observed though that 'although rich and engaging, such literature

tends toward the a-theoretical, relying on popular culture notions of the resilience of ethnic difference within the melting pot, rather than theorizing this phenomenon' (Holtzman, 2006: 366). An engagement with memory studies, as well as diaspora studies, helps to counter this lack of theorization.

Memory studies comprise a vast field to review, so I want here to bring attention to key points that are relevant to this thesis. First of all, the knowledge developed in debates between history and memory (Perks and Thompson, 1997) has allowed for an understanding of the subjective ways that individuals or groups recall and memorialise the past to construct the present. The process of memory work in this sense is not the ability of the individual to retrieve in one's recollection the past in its entirety. Memory is not only dictated by the present circumstances, it is 'mediated by institutions in the public sphere [...] something that is lived and contested in local and specific situations' (Legg, 2007: 456, quoting Radstone, 2003).

The explorations on how the individual and the social intertwine to construct and interpret memory was developed in the work of Maurice Halbwachs (1992) on 'collective memory'. Turning against a Freudian view of memory, in which the individual is the sole storehouse of past occurrences, Halbwachs argues that although remembering is an individual act, what is remembered is considered for him as constructed in and by social groups. He also argues that memory is entrenched in collective spaces, thus taking memory beyond its temporal qualities to look at how memory is intertwined with space (for reviews on memory and its spatialisation in Geography literature see Legg, 2004, Legg, 2007). An example of this relationship between memory and collective spaces is the monumental work of by Pierre Nora *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, in which he considers how specific public sites of memory come to represent French national identity. He writes: 'Memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events' (Nora, 1989: 143). Blunt observes, though, that these studies on collective memory, space and identity are often framed through public and shared spaces and little attention has been given to more intimate spaces and memories (Blunt, 2003: 719). Blunt's exploration of Anglo-Indian homemaking is exemplary of a more intimate focus. She uses the

term 'productive nostalgia' to 'represent a longing for home that was embodied and enacted in practice rather than solely in the imagination, and a longing that was oriented towards the future as well as towards the past and to a sense of place that was both proximate and distant '(Blunt, 2003: 719). This emphasis on the spatialities of memories is particularly important given the fact that this thesis is about migrants' experience, which comes to be defined mainly by their geographical displacement (Fortier, 2000b).

Another important point to consider is a tension between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' memory (Sutton 2001). Within macro-historical theory contemporary scholars consider memory as an active process, whereas in the Proustian case the act of remembrance that a tea-soaked madeleine provoked was totally unintentional. This process of remembering thus happens not only at a cognitive level, but also at an emotional and physical level. Useful notions to understand this have been provided by Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1977) concept of the habitus, Connerton's (Connerton, 1989) notion of bodily memory, and Stoller's (Stoller, 1997) emphasis on embodied memories. Paul Connerton's book *How Societies Remember* brings an interesting shift away from a hermeneutical understanding of memory and culture as written texts based on visualistic approaches - what he calls 'inscribing practices' (Connerton, 1989). Although he does not dismiss narrative and textual memories altogether, he chooses to concentrate on what he calls 'incorporating practices' - framing memories as 'embodied' and culture as performative. He emphasises how the body itself can be a repository of memories, and how culture moulds our bodily practices such as body postures, gestures, facial expressions, body movements, table manners etc. The term 'habit memory' coined by Connerton emphasizes how ritual performance brings a different type of memory to work, one that is based not on the knowledge of how to do something but on memories sedimented in the body, a body that is used to perform such a task and can remember how to do it.

However, narrative and textual memories are not entirely dismissed in both Connerton and Sutton's work and indeed in this study. Considering that food as

material culture has the capacity to inform identities means that we hold an understanding of the '*expressive capacity* of objects that affords individuals the opportunity to articulate aspects of self through material engagements, in an attempt to communicate something *about* – and indeed *to* – themselves' (Woodward, 2007: 135). I look for these narratives derived from the encounters between food and people, examine the verbalization of remembrances triggered by the multisensoriality of food and analyse what they tell about self and others, of 'here' and 'there'.

In closing this section, I reiterate my view that recent studies on transnationalism, diaspora and material culture can provide possibilities for thinking about the constitution of diasporic identities away from essentializations but as everyday responses present in ordinary acts of dwelling in situations of displacement. Such focus requires an attention to the materialities of everyday life in the settling processes of migrant populations. Drawing from material culture, translocality and memory studies, this thesis will look at how a relatively new group of migrants gets 'situated' in the 'super-diverse' context of London. The next section looks more specifically at the dynamics of Brazilian migration, generally and in the UK.

## **2.4 Brazilian migration**

### **2.4.1 Bye bye, Brazil!**

Brazil's traditional demographic image is one of a country built through the contribution of its immigrants. This image began to change, albeit slowly, in the 1970s, when many of those opposing the military dictatorship (which lasted from 1964 to 1985) were deported, only returning when it ended (Patarra, 2005). From the second half of the 1980s, Brazilian émigrés were leaving Brazil for different reasons. In a three year period (1985-1988) almost 1,250,000 Brazilians left their country due to financial hardship and in search of work abroad; most of these emigrants never returned (Martes, 1999). An up

to date and accurate demographic profile is impossible to achieve as Brazilians who emigrate usually travel on a tourist visa and stay beyond its expiration date, becoming undocumented and thus making it difficult to calculate their numbers and final destination. As a result most of the demographic data presented is based on projections (which only began in 1996) made by the Ministério das Relações Exteriores (Brazilian Foreign Office) together with the Brazilian Embassies and Consulates. The latest Brazilian consular report (2009) shows that the estimated number of Brazilians living abroad (documented and undocumented) has reached a staggering 3,040,993 (Exteriores, 2009).

Brazilian international migration is neither a linear nor a homogeneous process. As Patarra (Patarra, 2005: 25) observed, the 'contexts, meanings, volume, flows and networks' have altered along the way. There is a difference between earlier flows from Brazil in the 1980s and more recent ones pushed by globalization. There are also different processes and phenomena at stake. Just to cite a few, streams of migration include: Brazilians of Japanese ancestry who go to Japan on fixed term work contracts; high skilled professionals who move to richer countries; Brazilian land owners and workers who have migrated to Paraguay following agrarian development plans in that country (Palau, 1995); young urban middle class and lower middle class Brazilians willing to do any work for better wages in richer countries in the northern hemisphere. Thus Brazilians who emigrated cannot be treated as a homogeneous social group, as there are important differences or divergences within Brazilian migrant groups even if they move to the same place (Margolis, 1994, Martes, 1999).

There is a consensus that the first massive wave of Brazilian emigration left the country in the second half of the 1980s during the period of severe economic crisis which hit Brazil and became known as the 'lost decade' (Sales, 1999, Margolis, 1994, Martes, 1999). Rampant levels of inflation, and the disastrous administration of President Collor with his governmental economic rescue plans, provoked the exodus of hundreds of thousands of middle class Brazilians, mainly to the U.S., Japan and Portugal. Theories about the catalysts for the massive international migration from this period usually correlate

international migrations to 'processes of productive restructuring in ?should this be 'at'? international levels, which lead to financial crisis, receding levels of development, excess of labour, poverty, lack of perspective on social mobility' (Patarra, 1995). High levels of education, higher consumer aspirations fuelled by the media and the financial resources to allow international travel also may help to understand why it is that the Brazilian middle classes and not the poorest were/are the ones who move abroad (Margolis, 1994: xv).

The North American anthropologist Maxine Margolis, who extensively studied Brazilians in New York, provides important insights into the motivations and backgrounds of the migrants she encountered in her fieldwork. Instead of the stereotype of poor and destitute immigrants held in the American imagination, the majority were white, from a lower and middle-class background, young, urban individuals from large Brazilian cities – Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The typical Brazilian immigrant in New York at that time was "... an immigrant who was not escaping extreme poverty or political repression. Brazilians are economic refugees fleeing from a chaotic economy back home. (...) They view themselves as sojourners in this country, as temporary visitors here to work for a sliver of the American economic pie to take back with them to Brazil" (Margolis, 1994:20). Brazilians form part of a relatively new immigration wave in the U.S. and struggle alongside other migrant groups competing for low-paid jobs that require no knowledge of English or working papers (Margolis, 1994).

Brazilians in the U.S. have been termed 'an invisible minority' by Margolis (Margolis, 2009) (2009). There is certainly a huge disparity between official U.S. population counts and estimates of migrant numbers by Brazilian consular authorities: whilst the 2000 U.S. census recorded only 51,500 Brazilians in the New York metropolitan region, the Brazilian consulate estimated that there were 350,000 Brazilians living in the greater New York metropolitan area (Margolis, 2009). The divergence in these figures stems from two main factors. Firstly, seventy percent of Brazilians in the U.S. are undocumented and so try to maintain a low profile. Secondly, most Brazilians



consider their stay in the U.S. as temporary, thus not bothering to register their presence on official census forms (Margolis, 1994).

In Portugal, too, the first wave of Brazilian emigration in the 1980s comprised mainly young middle class professionals; with the case of Brazilian dentists being the most commented upon (Padilha, 2006: 3). Brazilian emigration to Japan sits in a slightly different context. From the beginning of the twentieth century up to the outbreak of World War Two, more than 200,000 poor Japanese farmers were drawn to Brazil to work as field hands on coffee and cotton plantations (Linger, 2001). Though most came to Brazil as *dekasegi* (temporary migrant workers), who would return to Japan in few years when financially better off (Tsuda, 2001: 53), few actually did return, and the majority settled in Brazil with their families. Nowadays, the *Nikkei* (Japanese-descent) population in Brazil is estimated to be one and a half million strong, making it the largest migrant Japanese population in the world and the biggest ethnic group in Brazil (Linger, 2001; Tsuda, 2001). They are considered highly by mainstream Brazilian society as well-educated, prosperous and hard working. Although second and third generation Japanese-Brazilians have assimilated and married into other groups, they still preserve a very strong attachment to Japanese culture experienced mainly through activities and events run by community associations and through family ties. Tsuda (2001:57), following Maeyama (1996), suggests that “many of them have developed a strong transnational ethnic affinity with the Japanese of Japan, which remains considerably stronger than their identification with majority Brazilians or with the Brazilian nation”.

In the late 1980s, the chance came for Japanese-Brazilians to experience Japanese culture first hand. On the one hand, Japanese-Brazilians were struggling with the economic recession in Brazil and were looking for other places to move in order to improve their economic situation. On the other hand, Japan’s economic growth provided a surplus of well paid jobs (by Brazilian standards), due to a serious shortage of labour in Japan. Japanese immigration law, with its restrictive policies towards low skilled migrant workers, was

revised and changes were implemented in 1990 which allowed up to third generation Japanese descendents to work legally in Japan. With such changes, the Japanese government were able to respond to both economic and political imperatives, as “a sense of transnational ethnic affinity with the *nikkeijin*, based on common ties of blood and racial descent, provided the critical ideological justification necessary to make the change in policy acceptable” (Tsuda, 2001:61). Japanese-Brazilians living in Japan were mainly documented and worked mostly in what is known as 3-D factory jobs (dirty, difficult, dangerous), earning many times the salary of a white-collar occupation in Brazil. Although they were scattered all over Japan, due to their being contracted to labour brokers there were some concentrations of Brazilians in towns such as Toyota, Toyohashi and Nagoya (Yamanaka and Lesser, 2003, Linger, 2001). Japan’s financial crisis of the early twenty-first century has now led many such Brazilians to return to Brazil.

**Table 2.1 Estimated growth in the number of Brazilians living abroad from 1996 to 2009**

**Source: adapted from Patarra (2005) using estimates provided by consular registrations from the Ministério das Relações Exteriores, Brasília.**

Context	1996	2003	2009
<b>Total</b>	1,419,440	1,805,436	3,040,993
<b>U.S.A.</b>	580,196	713,067	1,280,000
<b>Japan</b>	262,944	269,256	180,000
<b>Europe</b>	135,591	291,816	816,257

As evidenced in Table 2.1, levels of Brazilian emigration have continued to rise steadily elsewhere in the last fifteen years. Some authors believe this increase can be attributed to the existing transnational social networks which made it easier for people to leave Brazil (Goza, 2004: 5) Patarra (2005: 25) and

reinforces the notion that Brazilian international migration was intrinsic to a new phase of globalization. The influence of globalization on the mobility of Brazilians was also taken up by Padilha (2006) for whom poverty, economic instability, unemployment, low salaries, and lack of opportunities resulted in the emigration of many Brazilians who were attracted to booming central global economies of the world that had a growing demand for labour during the late 1990s and the early 2000s. It could also be added that an increase in credit facilities and lower air fares had made travelling abroad easier, and that information about work opportunities abroad became more widely known due to improvements in communication technologies. These factors have led to a 'proletarianization' (Padilha 2006) and 'feminization' (Almeida, 2008, Bógus and Bassanesi, 2001) of the Brazilian migration fluxes.

There have also been some important changes in the patterns of sending locations. Research studies on Brazilian emigration, especially in the U.S., have overemphasised the state of Minas Gerais and especially the municipality of Governador Valadares as the main dispatcher within Brazil. Padilha (2006: 5) argues that nowadays small towns and big cities alike feed the emigration flow. She also calls attention to the fact that these sending locations have links with several world locations, so that even small cities will have people with networks and ties in several countries/continents.

A shift in receiving locations is also perceived, with Europe becoming an increasingly popular destination for Brazilian migrants. Some authors, like Padilha (2006), believe that these new flows to Europe have not replaced previous ones but increased a tendency for people to move from global South to North. She also argues that these new streams are linked to old colonial relationships, especially with Portugal and Spain, but also with Italy. The acquisition of a European passport due to ancestry has allowed many Brazilians to migrate a second time within Europe. The restrictions imposed on entry to the U.S. after 9/11 could also be a factor that led Brazilians to choose countries who did not require a visa to enter, such as the UK (Kubal et al., 2011), the

country which has the highest number of Brazilian immigrants in Europe (see Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2 Estimated number of Brazilians in the top three receiving countries in Europe**

Source: (Exteriores, 2009)

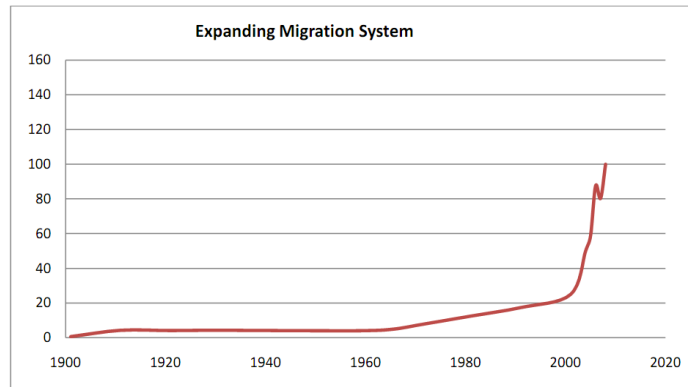
<b>Country</b>	<b>Estimate number of Brazilians</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	180,000
<b>Portugal</b>	137,600
<b>Spain</b>	125,000

It is also important to highlight that the relationship between the Brazilian government and its diaspora has also undergone significant changes in the last few decades. According to Sprandel (2010) this relationship started with the land claims made by Brazilians who returned from Paraguay in the 1980s. With the massive Brazilian emigration in the 1990s Brazilians started to demand from their government better consular service, specially related to the right to register children born abroad. The process of political organization of Brazilian communities abroad is considered to have officially started with a symposium held in Lisbon in 1997, in which a number of representatives of Brazilian migrant organizations from various geographical contexts took part. Since then, the Brazilian government has implemented a series of measures and policies for its citizens who live abroad. These range from the creation of consulates in areas with a strong Brazilian presence to the creation of a register for Brazilian migrants regardless of their status in the host country. On 15th June 2010 the then Brazilian president, Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva, signed a decree establishing the principles and guidelines of the Brazilian government for Brazilian communities living abroad, with the setting up of an annual conference and a council with representatives of Brazilians living abroad (for a

brief analysis of the relationship between the Brazilian government and its emigrants see Sprandel, 2010).

#### 2.4.2 Brazilians in the UK

Any accurate demographic profile of Brazilians in London and in the UK is extremely difficult to produce, and the estimates available show very disparate numbers between UK and Brazilian sources. Apart from the 2009 report released by the Brazilian Foreign Office which estimated the number of Brazilians living in the UK at 180,000 (Exteriores, 2009), another report released by the 'Strangers into Citizens' campaign, entitled 'Brazilians in London', gives a higher estimate of 200,000 Brazilians in the UK, of whom between 130,000 to 160,000 are supposedly based in London (Evans et al., 2007) These high figures are contested by recent research on London's Latin American population, which shows a less robust number of 186,500 Latin Americans in the UK and 113,500 Latin Americans in London (MacIlwaine et al., 2011). Official figures from the UK government, such as the UK Annual Population Survey, show an estimate of 56,000 Brazilian-born persons legally resident in the UK in 2008 (Kubal et al., 2011). Despite such disparate numbers, there is a consensus that Brazilian migration to the UK has been on the rise since the 1990s and has accelerated in the 2000s (see Figure 2.1), although showing a slight decline from 2007 due both to the recent economic recession and the tightening of immigration controls, such as the introduction of the Points-Based System and the 2006 Immigration and Nationality Act (MacIlwaine et al., 2011, Kubal et al., 2011).



**Figure 2.1 Growth of Brazilian migration in the UK**

**Source: Census Data, Annual Population Survey quoted by Kubal, Bakewell et al. 2011  
(Indexed, 2008 = 100, 2008 ~56,000)**

Studies from the 1990s (Torresan, 1995, Cwerner, 2001) showed that apart from the intellectual, political and economic elite, Brazilians in London came from a middle class background, from the larger cities, especially from the South, Southwest and Northeast of Brazil, and were mainly in their twenties or thirties. These Brazilians usually had careers or at least jobs in Brazil and came to London to learn English, work and travel. In terms of their geographical positioning in the UK, from the beginning of the 1980s there were small clusters of Brazilians living in Bayswater, London (also known within the community as Brazilwater). Interestingly, Brazilians as a foreign population in London did not categorise themselves as immigrants, according to Torresan (1995). Most seemed not to know if and when they were going to return to Brazil, and therefore it has been difficult to define them as permanent or temporary.

Recent studies (Evans et al., 2011) show that there has been a diversification in terms of the origin of Brazilians in London, with the most popular being São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul and Goiás. Migrating is still an enterprise undertaken by young people, as shown by statistics. The survey data gathered by Evans, Tonhati et al. (2011) reveals that 69% of the respondents were aged between 25-39 years old. These results were largely in line with the 2001 census data presented in the report by Kubal,

Bakewell et al. (2011) which revealed that 78% of the Brazilian-born population in the UK was between 15 and 44 years. It has, though, become more common to come across young mothers and fathers who left their families in Brazil, and even entire families, as observed by Kubal, Bakewell et al. (2011) and Carlise (2006). Brazilian migration to the UK also follows the wider Brazilian migration trends mentioned above, in terms of feminization. This was confirmed by 2001 census data which shows that 61% of Brazilian migrants were women (Kubal et al., 2011) and by a number of other studies.

Economic reasons are the leading cause for Brazilians coming to the UK (Evans et al., 2007, Evans et al., 2011, MacIlwaine et al., 2011, Kubal et al., 2011). Although well educated, Brazilians experience downward occupational mobility when migrating, concentrating in elementary jobs with low earnings (Evans et al., 2007, Evans et al., 2011). Limited knowledge of English and legal restrictions due to migration status limit their access to a wider range of work opportunities, a problem also shared by others among London's Latin Americans (MacIlwaine et al., 2011) as well as other migrant groups (Wills et al., 2010).

Brazilians often enter the UK with student and tourist visas. Strategies for staying in the country include overstaying such visas, marriage to a Briton or EU national and/or acquisition of European passports due to ancestry (Evans et al., 2007, Torresan, 1995, Cwerner, 2001, Kubal et al., 2011, Evans et al., 2011). Research (Evans et al., 2007) has suggested that Brazilians see themselves as *sojourners*, expecting to stay in the UK for a period of one to five years. Postponing the return date is a common characteristic of Brazilian immigration in different times and geographical contexts (Cwerner, 2001, Margolis, 1994). In fact, as pointed out by Kubal, Bakewell et al. (2011), the recent economic down turn and devaluation of the pound could mean Brazilian migrants had to stay longer in the UK to achieve their financial aims.

In terms of geographical dispersal, London is the main destination for Brazilians in the UK and the London Borough of Brent is considered the most popular with an estimate of thirty thousand Brazilian born residents (Evans et al., 2007). However, data from the fieldwork on Brazilian commerce in London

shows that these commercial premises are dispersed throughout London (I will turn to this data in Chapter Three).

The growing number of Brazilian migrants in London has sparked a range of activities, services and community associations aimed at Brazilians. Organizations such as ABRAS (Brazilian Association) and ABRIR (Brazilian Association of Educational projects in the UK) have sprung up, as well as a range of magazines and newspapers, religious organizations, beauty salons, remittance services, etc.

### 2.4.3 Being and becoming Brazilian abroad

In this section I review how scholars have dealt with the different ways in which Brazilian immigrant identities are challenged and (re)constructed in the migratory process in different geographical contexts. How can some sort of bounding 'Brazilianess' be attributed to, constructed and maintained by such a heterogeneous group of people as the so called Brazilians? After all, a classification as 'Brazilian' can overlook the heterogeneity of such a group. As Torresan (1995: 36) observed: "values, motivation and contradictory interests; distinctions in terms of origin, financial situation and enterprises differentiate Brazilian immigrants".

A first point to remember is that when in Brazil individuals rarely have a need to identify themselves as 'Brazilians'. Instead they will refer to the city, region or state in which they live or from which they come as well as their social class, as pointed out by Margolis (2007). For her, '*Brazilian* becomes a marked category within the context of international migration because it raises questions of ethnic identity with which Brazilians have had little or no prior experience or consciousness' (Margolis, 2007: 213). Most scholars agree that Brazilian identity abroad is built upon difference, a perspective that 'we're not like them', which can refer to both ethnicity and social class (Margolis, 2007, Torresan, 1995, Martes, 2003).



The ethnic encounters provoked by the migratory process have shaped the way Brazilians identify themselves in many ways. Torresan (1995:35) argues that London's multi-ethnic context was central to the construction of new personal, national or ethnic identities for Brazilians. Her interviewees avowed how they 'became more Brazilian in London' or 'how it is different to be Brazilian in Brazil and in London'. It could also be added that for many Brazilians it is the first time they will have experienced living with other Brazilians from different regions, thus being able to better understand regional differences and getting a sense of Brazil as a 'whole' (Torresan 1995:36). This assertion of 'Brazilianess' is mainly related to being different from other non-Brazilians. In Rezende's (2010) work with Brazilian PhD students in France and England, she found that Brazilian identities had to be rearticulated due to the host society expectation: they saw themselves through the eyes of the 'other'. Such stereotypical images of Brazilians could be negative (lack of discipline and punctuality, poor academic background, always partying) or positive (a left wing orientation), but had little to do with their personal characteristics.

In her research with Brazilians in Boston, Martes (2003) unpacks how the notions of race and ethnicity are constructed differently in Brazil and in the U.S. The author points out that Brazilian immigrants in Massachusetts tend to shy away from the label *Hispanic/Latino* (a term that for Americans means the same thing), preferring to identify themselves by their nationality (Brazilian). Although some Brazilians can identify themselves as *Latino*, they vehemently reject the term *Hispanic*, be it for official or practical reasons. Why? Martes's (2003:90) research concludes that the term *Hispanic* does not allow for the historical, geographical and linguistic differences between the groups, as well as not making it possible for the reaffirmation of a national identity. She also points out that Brazilians recognise that this category has negative connotations in the U.S. and there is a pressure for them to be identified with this category. By differentiating themselves from other groups, Brazilians try to guarantee a segment in the competitive informal job market and also to gain access to benefits for ethnic minorities. For Martes (2003:75), 'what Brazilians construct in Boston is, above all, a community based mainly on common

national origin, to which race and ethnicity are subordinated'<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, Fleischer (Fleischer, 2001) demonstrates how Brazilian housecleaners in Boston use their ethnic identity to build an image of being more hardworking and cleaner than their South American counterparts.

Another set of issues relates to how pre-existing social and economic gaps between individuals in Brazil are negotiated when Brazilians move abroad (Margolis, 1994: 102). What Margolis found was that traditional Brazilian regional stereotypes were in fact transplanted to the new settings. Nonetheless, she added that social divisions found within the Brazilian immigrant scene were much more based on the status of the current work in New York than in the previous social economic or regional background. Brazilians in Japan found there were practical reasons for not being so overt about their previous social-economic status; if they were not so well off they would feel inferior, and if they were affluent it would isolate them from other Japanese Brazilians. In fact, Japanese Brazilians had for the first time interclass contact that would not have happened in Brazil. There was also a positive change of status for individuals that came from rural areas in Brazil. They managed to get better work positions because they were considered fitter for the factory work and because their lives in Brazil within more secluded rural Japanese colonies had allowed them to retain their Japanese language skills (Tsuda, 2001).

The Brazilian-Japanese migratory process adds more complexity to the theme of ethnic encounters. When reflecting upon their feelings of this migratory experience one of the frequent comments made by the Japanese-Brazilians is that 'we were considered Japanese in Brazil, but are seen as foreigners in Japan' (Tsuda, 2001: 65). Despite their ethnic affinity, Japanese-Brazilians are discriminated against in Japan (Linger 2001; Tsuda 2001) and treated as foreigners, their language and behaviour being regarded as inadequate. Japanese Brazilians see themselves stripped of the positive 'Japanese' cultural qualities that they were identified with in Brazil and labelled

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<sup>1</sup> "O que os brasileiros constroem em Boston é, sobretudo, uma comunidade baseada preponderantemente na origem nacional compartilhada, frente à qual raça e etnicidade aparecem como afiliações subordinadas".

with less favourable views of Brazilian culture such as laziness, irresponsibility etc. by the Japanese. In contrast, Brazilian Japanese start to positively value and identify themselves with Brazilian culture, 'redefining themselves as more culturally Brazilian' (Tsuda 2001:67) whilst distancing themselves from Japanese culture.

From a gendered perspective, the occupational transition in the migration process brings about a lot of changes to how women experience and perceive their new social position. Messias' (2001) analysis of Brazilian immigrant women living and working in domestic or catering services in the United States draws attention to the dominance of work in immigrant women's lives, which meant that many other aspects of their lives had to be 'put on hold'. The experiences of these immigrant women also revealed many interesting examples of how 'their changing perspectives and redefinitions of work, roles, and identities' (Messias, 2001) are implicated in questions of social class. Many of them were professionals who belonged to a middle class in Brazil and were used to having a maid to carry out their domestic work. In the U.S. they had to learn how to deal with a lot of conflict and struggles arising from working in a lower status job and also from having to juggle their own domestic workload without the help of the extended family or a maid. According to Messias (Messias, 2001) (2001), although they have taken the role as maids in the U.S., they were keen to differentiate themselves from a Brazilian maid's identity. These women had also to deal with the frustrations of not having a successful professional career.

For lower working class women, these experiences and perceptions differed: they found that their workloads were more manageable in the U.S. than back in Brazil. For them, America had liberated them from the social stigmas associated with being a maid. Although they sometimes had difficulty in adapting to a shared social space with their employers, one of them mentions how she "felt more at home" in the context of American society. In general, women viewed the migration process as a positive thing. It enabled them to become economically self-sufficient and they generally felt more empowered to

challenge their assigned place within the domestic realm. A similar situation was reported in Japan (Linger, 2001): not only would women migrants expect more contribution from their partners in terms of domestic chores but in many cases they were reluctant to go back to Brazil, playing a decisive role in postponing the return date.

Another topic analysed in relation to gender studies is how Brazilian women in transnational contexts have to deal with stereotyped images of themselves and of Brazil, usually associated with sex, samba, carnival, beach and cordiality. Beserra (2007) discusses in her article how middle and upper middle-class Brazilian women living in Los Angeles use different strategies to negotiate these stereotyped images in their favour. Surprisingly, many of these women considered some of the stereotypes about Brazilians to be positive and true, attracting others to Brazil and to Brazilians while differentiating them from other Latin Americans. The invention of a stereotyped “Brazilianess” has been also analysed by Machado (2006), in regards to male Brazilians in Portugal. In a study with poor Brazilian immigrants in Porto, Machado revealed how mixed race Brazilian *mulatos*, who had been subject to racial discrimination in Brazil, found it easier to get work in Portugal than their ‘white’ counterparts. Black and *mulato* Brazilians in Portugal had a ‘special position’ within the contemporary immigrant scene in Portugal, which also comprised Eastern Europeans and Portuguese speaking Africans. In their work as musicians, dancers, waiters and attendants these Brazilians constructed an ‘ultra-essentialized Brazilian identity, giving emphasis to all sorts of stereotypes about Brazil, as trying to constantly reiterate to Portuguese people that Brazil is like the place they imagine. Therefore the resulting identity process is the invention of a radically stereotyped Brazilian identity, but that has its real existence as a motor to the auto-identification of the immigrant subjects’ (Machado, 2006: 127). The result was an obliteration of the different forms of construction of Brazilian identity, which may be influenced by class, time, gender and sexual orientation, Portuguese ancestry, race and colour, occupation in the job market, regional differences, religion, etc..

Despite the fact that a great number of Brazilian immigrants in various geographical contexts experience illegality, very few studies acknowledge it as an important factor in the construction of identities and how they experience daily life. Machado's study (2006) is among the few exceptions. He showed that for a group of Brazilian immigrants from Governador Valadares who work in the construction industry in Portugal being undocumented was one of the main factors in constructing their sense as an immigrant group in Portugal, alongside their regional origins in Brazil. As for the UK, given the fact that a common strategy used by Brazilians to stay in the country is to overstay their student or tourist visa, it is no surprise that a large number of Brazilians are undocumented (Evans et al., 2007: 7). In their London survey Evans, Wills et al. showed that over one half of all their respondents had a visa expired status and a later survey (Evans et al., 2011) showed that number to be around 29%. Undocumented Brazilian migration in the UK is still under-theorised (Kubal et al., 2011) but recent comparative empirical research on young undocumented migrants, which has looked at Brazilian cases, brings interesting insights (Bloch et al., 2009). This research shows that being undocumented has profound effects on the everyday lives of young migrants. It restricts their access to jobs, social networks, housing, medical, social and judicial services. Their temporary status also has an effect on their own sense of identity producing 'a transitory and insecure identity' (Bloch et al., 2009: 6). In consequence, legal status is taken into consideration in this thesis, especially with regard to how it plays out in relation to the wider visibility of Brazilian identity in London. Brazilians in London with precarious immigration status and poor knowledge of English language skills are much more likely to mix with people from their own country in order to get work, a place to live, company to go out with, thereby reinforcing their shared experiences of "Brazilians in London".

Another strand of research has looked at the construction (or lack) of Brazilian collective diasporic spaces. Margolis (1995) noted that Brazilians in New York lacked a 'physical community, a distinctly Brazilian neighbourhood or shopping district with which they can identify', which weakened their sense of community. Although there were Brazilian-owned businesses aimed at

Brazilians (a lot of them in Astoria) they did not have an “ethnic enclave, a concentration of immigrant business that serves the ethnic market as well as the population at large” (Margolis, 1994: 111). She concludes that “very few Brazilians in New York City have started small businesses of their own; it is true that Brazilians are employees, not employers”. One of the reasons is that “most see themselves as sojourners, rather than as settlers; thus they are reluctant to make the long-term commitment that starting a business often entails” (Margolis, 1994: 141). Nevertheless, she did identify a number of Brazilians involved in small scale entrepreneurial activities, often food related: catering from their homes and selling Brazilian food in the city’s street fairs, or selling non-Brazilian food in the streets.

The significance of these commercial spaces cannot be underestimated. They are important sites for maintaining a sense of ‘Brazilianess’ outside Brazil. Margolis (1994) reckons that 60% of her respondents kept in touch with their ethnicity by frequenting these businesses as consumers or by congregating in restaurants and nightclubs that feature Brazilian food and/or music. In Framingham, a small town in Massachusetts where the Brazilian presence has grown stronger since 1995, Salles (2005) reported how Brazilian owned businesses have brought a new lease of life to a commercially stagnant area bringing the prices of properties up - a fact recognised and praised by the American press. Such presence, however, has recently been contested by the American local elite who resent the Brazilian presence and have launched an anti-migration movement. Brazilians now feel that, having done the hard work, their presence is no longer wanted. Martes (1999) has also looked at the situation and role of Brazilian-owned businesses in Somerville and Allston - two towns situated in the metropolitan area of Boston. She identified 500 Brazilian owned businesses in the state of Massachusetts, with the major concentration in Somerville, followed by Framingham. They are mainly small family businesses and follow a traditional division of labour: the women take care of the service (cooking, cleaning and serving people) whilst men deal with the financial side. They cater for Brazilians and sell food from well known Brazilian brands or regional products. They aim not for a better price or

technology, but familiarity and reference. These spaces of consumption, for Martes, provide a space of sociability, where Brazilian migrants can meet friends or make new ones, and find information about Brazil, local jobs and gossip. Another interesting point that Martes brings is how these businesses are somehow promoting an image of Brazil abroad. In this sense, she calls for a more active presence of the Brazilian consulate in providing support, as well as suggesting that Chambers of Commerce could address the needs of these small immigrant businesses.

In other geographical contexts there has been sparse study of organizations and services which cater for Brazilians. Almeida (Almeida, 2008), in her work on Brazilian immigrants in Barcelona, mentions that in Spain a growing number of Brazilians with permission to stay have now become entrepreneurs. There are no political or community organizations, so Brazilians meet in bars, restaurants and churches that cater for them. Sheringham's (2010) study of Brazilians in Gorth, Ireland examines 'Brazilian places' in Gorth such as everyday spaces of food consumption, beauty salons and churches. Similarly, Duarte (2005) examines the re-creation of 'Brazilian spaces' in Australia. None of these studies, though, delve into the subject of food per se. The only more detailed account on the role of food for Brazilian migrant communities I found was a chapter entitled 'Eating Brazil' of Linger's book on Japanese Brazilians (2001). He examines Restaurant 51, which he terms as a 'transnational leisure scene in the centre of Nagoya', where people come to 'engage in the self-conscious reaffirmation and reformulation of their identities as displaced Brazilians' (Linger, 2001). He gives a very detailed account of the importance of this place for the immigrant community, where they find refuge from the isolation and loneliness of their life in Japan.

Dias' (2010) exploratory work on the significance of the 'house' for Brazilian migrants is the only work I came across that discusses Brazilian diasporic domestic practices. Dias argues that Brazilians have to inhabit many houses before they find a 'home', which will only be considered as such after attending the material and symbolic needs of the migrant. Among these are: the

price, access to media channels, location and the possibility of maintenance of Brazilian social and cultural rules and norms. Despite its considerable size, the Brazilian migrant experience in the UK is still under-researched and poorly understood. My research tries to bridge this gap by providing substantial empirical findings on how migration is experienced on an everyday basis in London both in domestic and in commercial settings. In mapping Brazilian food providers in London this thesis brings a comprehensive overview of the sector, as well as a more nuanced view of how collective spaces of belonging are constructed in these places. Furthermore, it goes into new terrain by bringing ethnographically informed research to bear on the domestic practices of Brazilian migrants.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has set out the conceptual frameworks for studying the role of transnational food practices in the fashioning of a Brazilian diasporic culture in London. I began by considering existing scholarship on food and globalization and by exploring the literature on the internationalization of food consumption, especially that related to so-called ethnic food in multicultural contexts. I have pointed out that whilst this literature has provided a critical view in terms of the politics of food consumption it did not engage with migrants' as consumers.

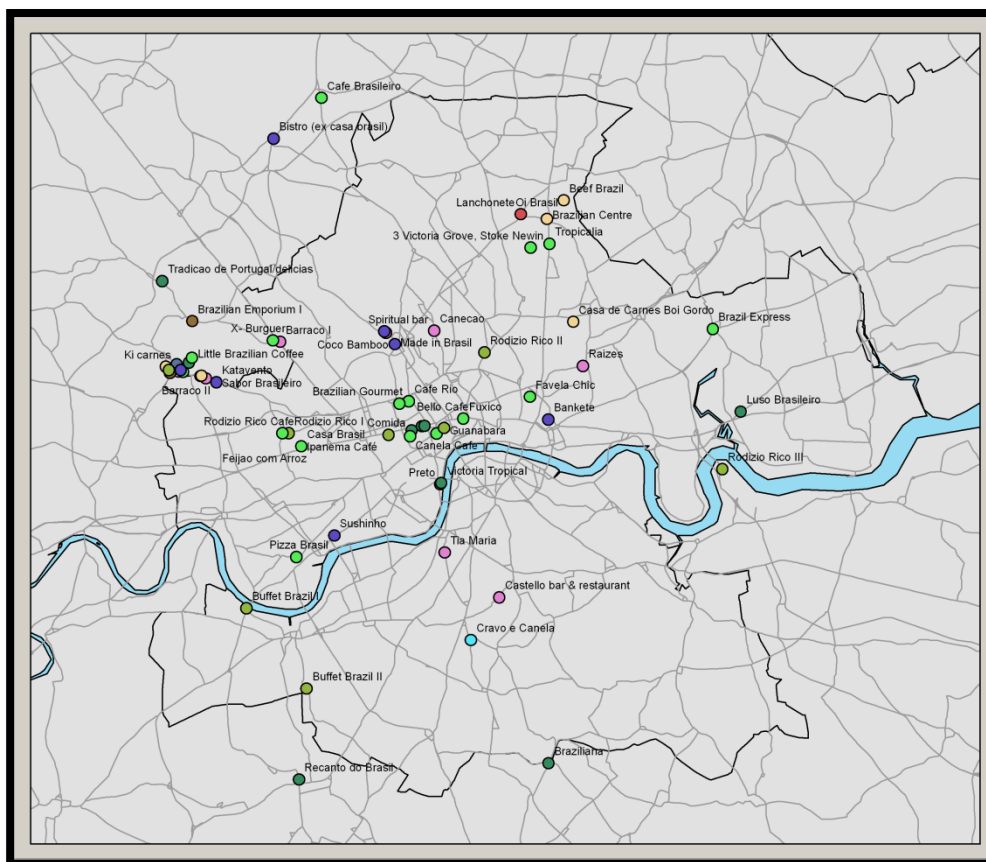
I have suggested in this chapter that more can be added to the field of diaspora and transnational studies by a comprehensive examination of processes of 'displacement' and 'emplacement' in relation to food and the Brazilian diaspora in London. This study aims to cover new ground by exploring the emotional aspects of dislocation. It will do so by examining how food feelings of displacement are deployed and experienced in the commerce of Brazilian food in London. I also propose an investigation of the intersection between displacement, food consumption practices and memory in the



constitution of diasporic identities in domestic and public settings. In bringing a detailed analysis of the emplacement/localization of 'Brazilianess' in London's urban landscape through food commerce it emphasises the importance of place in the lives of migrants, thus engaging with cutting edge research on the field of 'translocality'. This research also explores less studied aspects of migration, such as how migrants' experience everyday life. I consider this by analysing both domestic and commercial everyday food practices among Brazilians in London. Together these different strands will contribute to a better understanding as to how diasporic communities imagine, maintain and negotiate national identity and belonging. In doing so, this thesis seeks to unpack the relationship between the material culture of food, place, memory, the senses and everyday life in transnational settings.

The last part of this chapter contextualised Brazilian migration to the UK within the wider literature on Brazilian emigration. It reviewed how Brazilian diasporic identities have been analysed in academic studies and explored some of the sparse but recent research on Brazilian migration in London. This review has set the ground for my first empirical chapter that follows which focuses on Brazilian food provision in London.

### **3 Chapter Three - 'On the move and on the making': Brazilian food provision in London**



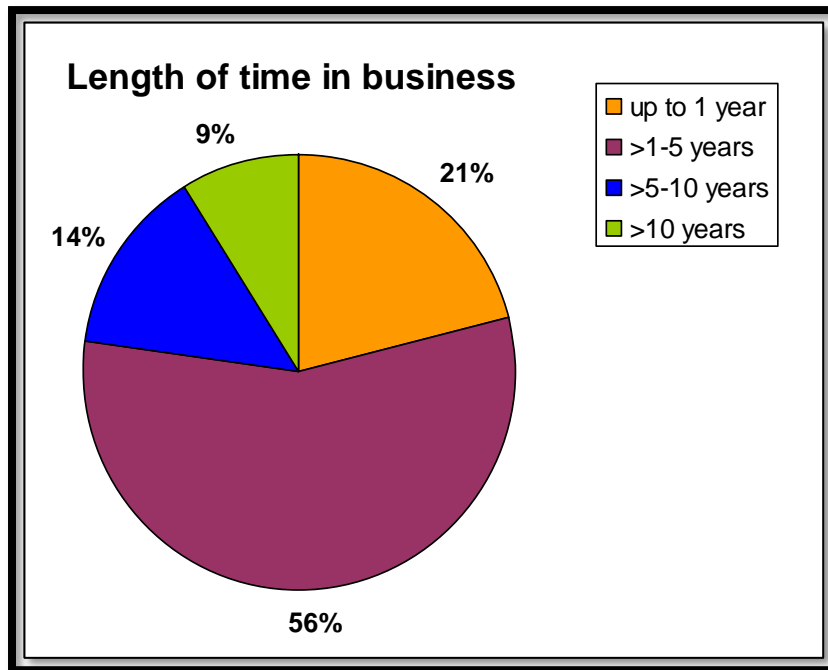
**Map 3.1 Distribution of Brazilian food outlets in London**

**Drawn by Tim Brightwell**

### 3.1 Introduction

This first empirical chapter brings evidence of the breadth of Brazilian culinary culture in London. Two main arguments run throughout the chapter: the first is how ‘Brazilianess’ as a category and cultural-culinary form is being made and contested in London. This making and contesting operates through both the material culture of food provision: (shops and the foods and brands that they stock, restaurants and the cuisines that they feature) and the social lives of these spaces. The second argument relates to what I term processes of ‘displacement’, that is, the disconnections from, and reconnections to, Brazil. Specific foci in this regard include the character of the food provision system’s relations to Brazil; the supply of ingredients and chefs involved in the remaking of “Brazilianess”; and food’s ability to take consumers ‘back home’, a theme which will also be further developed in the following chapters.

Brazilian food provision in London is a relatively new phenomenon. According to the data collected with Brazilian food entrepreneurs, 56% of the commercial outlets opened in the last five years (see Chart 3.1). Regarding their regional background in Brazil, *Paulistas*, *Mineiros* and *Paranaenses* are a significant proportion of the total of Brazilian entrepreneurs (see Map .3.2)



**Chart 3.1 Length of time in business**  
Source: author's survey



**Map 3.2 State of origin of Brazilian entrepreneurs**  
Source: Author's research

The chapter is structured in four sections. Firstly, I briefly discuss the recent growth in the transnational commerce of Brazilian groceries to London, which I argue has provided the basis for the development of a more pronounced Brazilian culinary culture in the city. A closer look at how this commerce is structured in London provides a glimpse at the wider circuit of Brazilian food provision in London as well as introducing the kinds of social spaces these businesses provide for displaced Brazilians. My focus here is in particular upon Brazilian food shops.

I then turn to examine the personal testimonies of Brazilian chefs regarding their role in the creation of different versions of Brazilian cuisine in London. The narratives of migrant chefs are often left out of discussions about globalized tastes, but they provide a rich and unique account of what is at stake in the creation of a diasporic culinary culture. Their trajectory as migrants, their encounter with London's wide culinary landscape, the quest for ingredients and the adaptations made to dishes are some of the aspects explored.

Brazilian restaurants and cafés form a considerable proportion of the overall number of food provision outlets and thus the discussion in this chapter. I turn to them directly in the third section of the chapter. The role of clients in shaping Brazilian diasporic culinary culture is brought to the fore. These spaces also reveal processes of inclusion and exclusion, for Brazilians and non-Brazilians alike. In discussing these shops and restaurants I also give an introduction to the issues regarding what I term 'the emotional geographies of displacement'. I do not want to pre-empt some of the discussion that will be developed in later chapters so here I focus on empirical evidence of how emotions of 'homesickness' and 'remembrance' are enmeshed in Brazilian food provision culture.

### **3.2 Brazilian grocery trade to and in London: from transnational space to local place**

An important factor for the development and spread of Brazilian culinary culture in London was the setting up of direct importing channels by Brazilian entrepreneurs. I still remember when, back in the early 1990s in search of Brazilian ingredients, I had to cross London to go to a Portuguese delicatessen in Portobello Road. Up to the end of the 1990s Brazilian groceries were brought into the UK by Portuguese traders and sold in Portuguese owned outlets (Aguiar, 2009). Following an increase in the number of Brazilians living in London from the beginning of 2000 (among other factors), Brazilian entrepreneurs saw a business opportunity in selling food to fellow countryman, as Aguiar explains:

Brazilians have taken over market opportunities which the Portuguese might have failed to perceive or, as the respondents observed, did not react to early enough. This has also had an impact on the channels of distribution of ethnic Brazilian groceries. Brazilian owned outlets are now importing Brazilian groceries, which were originally carried by Portuguese traders. Initially the reason for relying on the Portuguese marketing channel was to do with the size of a shipment. In order to make an import consignment viable, the minimum requirement would be one container load or the equivalent of 20 tonnes of cargo shipment from Brazil.

Portuguese traders had the advantage of being able to ship greater volumes because of their considerable trading links with Brazil and because ships destined for the UK would usually visit a Portuguese port. A greater demand for Brazilian groceries made it possible to set up specialist Brazilian wholesalers/importers that could contract shipments direct to the UK, bypassing the Portuguese traditional trade route. As a result of importing foodstuff directly into the UK the supply chain has been rearranged, and despite this arrangement being

still in its early stages, it is clear that the Portuguese are losing their previous dominance. In contrast, the Brazilian supply chain for traditional branded food staples is now being extended and is becoming more international. (Aguiar, 2009: 116)

His argument was confirmed by the majority of shop owners who I talked to, who cited Brazilian importers as their main channel for obtaining Brazilian products. However, some form of intermediation still occurs: Portuguese traders still have a considerable slice of the market, due to competitive prices and because they are able to offer a range of products such as processed sausages, meat on the bone and dairy products which have restricted entrance into the UK if not from within the EU.

Table 3.1 lists the importers of Brazilian food mentioned by the outlet owners. Of the nine importers, two were Portuguese, one Anglo-Brazilian and six were Brazilian. Three of them were importing only to retail in their own shops. It was not the scope of this research to consider food imported for retail in major supermarkets. Gaia, Brazilian Products and LusoBrits are the three main traders, importing the best selling items in substantial quantities. Some importers are also representatives in the UK for Brazilian food manufacturers, which mean they have the monopoly of selling those products. The company Brazilian Products, for example, is the sole commercial representative of well known Brazilian brands such as *Sucos Mais*, *Bauducco*, *Predileta*, *Yoki*, *Garoto*, *Valedouro*, etc. Brazilian Products have created their own brand for beans and palm hearts. Gaya Products also imports and markets 'new and healthy food from Brazil', many of them from the Amazon such as fruit pulps. Both Brazilian products and Casa Brasil mentioned having a trading partner in Brazil, who helps them to select the products and deal with the exporting bureaucracy.

**Table 3.1 Main importers of Brazilian food**  
**Source: interviews with shop owners**



<b>Importer</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Commercial scope</b>
<b>Atlantico Ltd.</b>	UK Portuguese	Wholesaler
<b>LusoBrits Trading Company Ltd.</b>	Portuguese	Wholesaler
<b>Pampa Products Ltd.</b>	Brazilian	Wholesaler
<b>Zaeli Alimentos</b>	Brazilian	Wholesaler
<b>Brazilian products</b>	Brazilian	Wholesaler/ retailer: Brazilian Emporium and online at: <a href="http://www.brazilianproducts.co.uk/">http://www.brazilianproducts.co.uk/</a>
<b>Gaya Ecotrade</b>	Anglo-Brazilian	wholesaler/ retailer: online at: <a href="http://www.gayafoods.co.uk/">http://www.gayafoods.co.uk/</a>
<b>São Paulo Imports</b>	Brazilian	retailer: Casa Brasil and online at: <a href="http://www.casabrasillondres.co.uk">/http://www.casabrasillondres.co.uk</a>
<b>Mercearia Brasil</b>	Brazilian	Retailer

Although Brazilian grocery products are not necessarily cheap, the restructuring of the importing system had a big impact on the final cost of these products, according to Aguiar (2009: 116). This was made possible by the larger scale of goods being imported and because importing costs were reduced by bringing goods directly to the UK and not via Portugal. For Aguiar, this reduction benefited the customers who were able to access a greater range of products at a more reasonable price. It also allowed for the establishment of a greater range of outlet formats, such as cafés, mini-markets, butchers, restaurants etc.

Almost entirely dependent on Brazilian consumers, the retail of Brazilian groceries in London has seen a rapid increase in the last few years, mirroring the case of other newly arrived groups in London such as the Polish (Rabikowska, 2009a). When Casa Brasil opened in 1999 in Bayswater, an area then popular with Brazilians, it was the first Brazilian grocery shop in London. Two years later, Brazilians settled in other areas, another grocery shop followed: *Mercearia Brasil* opened up in NW10 in 2001. Harlesden, Willesden and Kensal Green were to become the hub of Brazilian activity in London, concentrating a quarter of Brazilian food commerce in total and a third of the Brazilian grocery shops more specifically. Ten years on, the number of shops has risen to above twenty (new places open and close every month so there is no fixed number). A number of reasons account for the increase in the number of these commercial outlets, in the shopkeepers' opinions. The availability of financial and practical support from food importers, distributors, Brazilian organizations such as ABRAS (Associação Brasileira no Reino Unido), BASE (Brazilian Advisory Services) and also Brazilian accountancy firms has facilitated the process of opening up a business. There has also been a growing demand for Brazilian groceries from an increased number of Brazilian customers. The fact that a significant proportion of Brazilians have acquired entitlement to stay in the country due to marriage and European ancestry means that people can make long term plans and set up businesses. More general factors such as an increase in transnational trade as an aspect of globalization and the low capital cost involved in setting up food businesses

could also be said to account for this type of migrant entrepreneurship (Sassen, 1995, Portes, 1995).

As shown in Table 3.2, there are a number of different arrangements to the way that Brazilian food is sold: most grocery shops double up as a café and meat shop and either offer money remittance services or have a company next door which offers this kind of service. Three of the Brazilian groceries companies sell food via the internet but it was not possible in this research to gather more information about on-line retail. More recently, commercial centers such as the one in Figure 3.1 gather a number of Brazilian owned businesses together offering an array of services: dental practices, accountancy firms, hairdressers, money transfer agencies, grocery shops, meat shops and cafés, schools etc. This type of business arrangement suits both business owners who can share the cost of marketing and also time-starved Brazilian migrants who have only one day off from work a week to sort out their private affairs. The advertisement for this centre in Stamford Hill, placed in a Brazilian magazine reads (Figure 3.1):

What was good has become even better! Everything [you need] in one place. In the Brazilian centre you can find: meat and grocery shop, money transfer, distance learning undergraduate course, accountancy services and dental surgery. (Author's translation)

As well as offering a service or a product, these businesses try to impress on the consumer the image of being 'a Brazilian place'. The first sign of the 'Brazilianess' of the place is the façade and its use of many visual cues such as: blue, yellow and green (the colours of the Brazilian flag) as well as the image or the Brazilian flag itself; logos using the image of the map of Brazil and the national flag; use of Portuguese words (*mercearia*, *açougue* instead of grocery, butchers) and phrases in Portuguese such as the one used by Brazilian Emporium (figure 3.2)

**Table 3.2 Brazilian grocery stores in London**  
Source: author's research

Outlet	Postcode	TYPE
1- Casa Brasil	W2	Grocery store meat shop
2- <i>Mercearia Brasil</i>	NW10	Grocery store meat shop
3- Brazilian Emporium I	NW10	Grocery store meat shop
4- Brazilian Emporium II	NW10	Grocery store meat shop
5- Brazilian Centre	N16	Grocery store meat shop
6- Ki-Carnes	NW10	Meat shop grocery store
7- Casa de Carnes Boi Gordo	E8	Meat shop grocery store
8- Beef Brazil	N15	Meat shop grocery store
9- Casa de Carnes Brasil	NW10	Meat shop grocery store
10- Novilho de Ouro	E16	Meat shop
11- Bem Brasil	W1	Grocery store cafe
12- Tradição Portugal/Delícias Brasil I	de do NW10	Grocery store cafe
13- Tradição Portugal/Delícias Brasil II	de do NW10	Grocery store cafe
14- Go mercearia	W1D	Grocery store cafe
15- Luso Brasileiro	E16	Grocery store cafe
16- Gostosa Deli	NW10	Grocery store cafe
17- Intertranscafe	W1D	Cafe grocery store
18- Victoria tropical	SW1	Cafe grocery store
19- Recanto do Brasil	SW19	Cafe grocery store
20- Brazilianana	SE19	Cafe grocery store
21- Cantinho Brasileiro	E16	Cafe grocery store
22- Fuxico do Brasil	WC2	Grocery store
23- Brazil Express	E11	Cafe grocery store



Figure 3.1 Brazilian centre

Source: Revista Brasil etc. September 2010, 50, p.11



Figure 3.2 Brazilian Emporium and Recanto do Brasil



Figure 3.3 Brazilian grocery shops in London

Inside the shops, the 'Brazilianess' of the place is promoted mainly by the products themselves (Figures 3.5 – 3.6) and shop owners are well aware of the capacity familiar brands have to evoke memories and emotions from homesick clients. Apart from the products, an ever present Brazilian flag and more practical aspects contribute to create a familiar Brazilian atmosphere: the communication with the public is in Portuguese, as well as the description of the products on the shelves and in price lists; a TV tuned into a Brazilian channel; Brazilian papers and magazines; a notice board, a small library with Brazilian books. Despite the cramped conditions in some of the shops, these are important social spaces and customers will linger on whilst eating a snack and a *guaraná* (Brazilian soft drink) and eating a *pão de queijo* or a *coxinha* (Brazilian savoury snacks). These are key moments for exchange of information about jobs, recipes, housing, grooming services, education etc.

Flyers and magazines aimed at Brazilians in London are the prime media for advertising these businesses. According to shop owners, only 15 - 20 % of their Brazilian clientele has fixed residence, the rest are people that come to stay one to two years. Out of the twenty-three grocery shops studied, sixteen placed advertisements in magazines such as Leros, Brasil etc., Páginas Brasileiras, Real and Jungle Drums. Undoubtedly, the main meaning attached to food in the adverts is "Brazilianess". This is represented by (see Figures 3.7 – 3.9 for examples):

- 1) The words Brasil, Brazil, Brazilian, Brasileiro, Braziliiana appear in fifteen out of the 23 grocery shops;
- 2) Somewhat unremitting use of green, yellow and blue, the colours of the Brazilian flag;
- 3) Logos that resemble the flag;
- 4) The outline of the map of Brazil.

References to homesickness and displacement are also deployed, as well as suggestions that shops are a place to touch base with Brazilian roots and where clients will feel at home (see figures 3.8-3.9). Pictures of clients in Brazilian places 'having a good time' placed in Brazilian magazines are frequently used as a marketing strategy (see figure 3.9). Advertisements also make direct reference to the products they are selling. As the competition increases, shops try to show they can offer a good range of products to the client, especially those that may have travelled from a long distance and want to stock up on Brazilian products. This variety is emphasised either by lists of products available, and/or images of the products themselves, and/or image of products in the shelves. (see Figures 3.10 – 3.11)

Because grocery shops tend to offer the same products, they have to find ways of differentiating themselves. Claims regarding their time of operation, quality, low prices, convenience, personalised and friendly service, comfort, authentic Brazilian butchering techniques, most traditional, trustworthiness, good taste are the most cited arguments in their advertisements. Hard to find products such as country style sausages, Minas Cheese, Brazilian style cream cheese, were also used in the advertisements (Figure 3.11). Grocery shops and other Brazilian businesses also support a broader Brazilian cultural circuit in London, for example by sponsoring music concerts with Brazilian artists popular with their clientele.





Figure 3.4 Mercearia Brasil flyer

*"Come and kill your homesickness whilst you enjoy yourself with our variety ?range of products" (Author's translation)*



Figure 3.5 Brazilian Emporium flyer

*"As if you were there!" (Author's translation)*

**RECANTO**  
*do* **BRASIL**

**CAFÉ E MERCEARIA**

177 Merton Road, South Wimbledon, SW19 1EE - TEL 0208 540 4739

Estamos perto da Estação de South Wimbledon e na rota dos ônibus 57, 93, 131e 219.

Opening Times: Mon to Fri - 08.00 until 20.00  
Saturday - 09.00 until 21.00  
Sundays and Bank Holidays 10.00 until 18.00

Venha conhecer o Recanto do Brasil e desfrutar das deliciosas especialidades brasileiras. Nossas especialidades são produzidas e disponíveis diariamente, sete dias na semana, de manhã até a noite.

De uma passadinha para tomar aquele saboroso café, nossos X-Sanduíches (X-Salada, X-Frango, X-Tudo, etc.), nossos salgadinhos e pães de queijo. Sem contar nossos sucos tropicais, tais como cupuaçu e açaí. Confira também a nossa mercearia de produtos brasileiros.

**Não perca essa oportunidade de fazer uma viagem às origens brasileiras.**




**Figure 3.6 Recanto do Brasil**

'Delicious Brazilian specialities. Don't miss out on the opportunity to travel to Brazilian origins' (Author's translation) Revista Brasil etc. September 2010, 50, p. 75



New Website: [www.lojabembrasil.com](http://www.lojabembrasil.com)

**Bem Brasil**  
Tudo a preço de banana!!!

**A MAIS TRADICIONAL LOJA BRASILEIRA EM LONDRES!!!**

**8 ANOS**

**ESTA VOCÊ CONHECE!  
ESTA VOCÊ CONFIA!**

**MERCEARIA & LANCHONETE**

**DEU A LOUCA NO MARTINS!!**

**A MAIOR VARIEDADE DE PRODUTOS BRASILEIROS EM LONDRES**

- Coxinhas de frango com catupiry
- Linguiça de porco da roça
- Queijo Minas • Requeijão • Pamonha
- Água de coco e muito mais

**2 LOJAS NO CENTRO DE LONDRES**

**27, Grosvenor Gardens**  
Victoria Station - SW1 W0BP  
020-7233-9686  
Aberto de Segunda a Sábado das 10h às 19h e Fechado aos Domingos

**44, Poland Street**  
Oxford Circus - W1F 7LZ  
020-7734-0627  
Aberto de Segunda a Sábado das 10h às 19h e aos Domingos das 11h às 18h

**BEM BRASIL VENDE MAIS PORQUE É MAIS BARATO OU É MAIS BARATO PORQUE VENDE MAIS?**

Safe Transfer  
O Boticário  
SEDA

Figure 3.7 Bem Brasil advertisement

Revista Leros, March 2008, 198, p.69

**GO MERCEARIA** Preços pensando em você... **Edson & Hudson** 1303 Coronet Theatre

**0,79** Coca-Cola, Guaraná, Fanta Uva

**2,89** Nescau 400g

**2,09** Feijão Preto e Cariquinha

**2,99** Cereal

**0,55** Suco TANG vários sabores

**0,79** Tempero KITANO

Faça seus envios para o Brasil na GO Transfer e com mais £ 1 ganha 1 Salgado e 1 Suco Natural. Concorra ainda a ingressos para o show do Edson e Hudson no dia 13/03.

**Farofa Pronta** £ 1,35  
**Farinha Láctea** £ 3,49  
**Neston** £ 3,49  
**Pimenta** £ 1,59  
**Doce de Leite** £ 1,70  
**Paçoquinha** £ 1,79

**Massa Pronta Bolo** £ 1,20  
**Cariquinha** £ 1,09  
**Farinha Mandioca** £ 0,99  
**Arroz Tio João** £ 0,99  
**Café Fino** £ 1,40  
**Biscoito Negresco** £ 0,99

**Horário de Atendimento**  
Seg. a Sáb. - 10 às 19h  
Domingo - 11 às 15h  
44-42 Oxford Street, 1º Andar, Sobrelajeira - W1D 1BB (Acima da Loja da Waitrose)

**Guaraná em pó** Toddy  
**Figo em calda** Guaraná  
**Natoco** Sante de leite  
**Doce de leite caseiro**  
**Adeçante líquido** Goiabada  
**Chocolate Bis** Água de coco  
**Farofa Temperada** Chá Matã Leão  
**Ingredientes para feijada**  
**Grande Variedade de Cosméticos brasileiros**  
**Paçoca Paçoquinha** Pamonha  
**Panela de Pressão 4.5 litros**  
**Novidades!!!**  
Temos salgadinhos e carnes brasileiras (Filé Mignon, Contra Filé e Picanha)

**Woolway Road**  
**Harrow Road - ônibus 18**  
**Kensal Green**  
**Mercearia Brasil**  
**Truman Way**

Figure 3.8 Go Merceria advertisement

Revista Leros, March 2008, p.198

So far we have looked at the spread of Brazilian food business in London that caters for the need of a growing Brazilian community. But exactly what are they buying? Aguiar had already noted that 'Brazilians look for processed products of established Brazilian brands. Brazilian grocery outlet owners trade in products which attract relatively low profit margins and are bulky in nature (e.g. beans, carbonated drinks and fruit preserves.' (*Aguiar, 2009:116*). Indeed, when I first saw the offer of products in the shops shortly after arriving in the UK I was truly disappointed to see that it was mainly mass market products which were being sold at not such cheap prices. So what make people buy it? A., a sales representative, explains: 'The products are expensive; to buy them you have to be a Brazilian or really like them. Provenance sells, the Brazilian coffee sold here is not top quality, but it sells because it is Brazilian' (interview with A. C., wholesale salesman, 19/01/2007).

Whilst concerns about commercial confidentiality prevented the construction of precise sales figures, according to the general information provided by shop owners, the most popular products sold in grocery shops are meat, beans, rice, flour (maize and manioc), a cheese / bread mixture and *Guarana Antarctica*, a Brazilian soft drink. These businesses also stock a selection of other Brazilian mass marketed products such as herbal teas, coffee, biscuits, sweets, soft drinks, frozen snacks and pulp juices, sauces and spices, cake mixtures, tinned and preserved food, confectionery and some food utensils, as well as non-food items such as toiletries (see for example Table 3.3 and Figure 3.11).

**Table 3.3 Products advertised by Brazilian grocery shops and traders**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Products advertised</b>
<b>Gaya Ecotrader</b>	Frozen <i>açaí</i> , frozen pulps, frozen and fresh fruits, cheese bread, coffee, sweets and compotes, coconut milk, manioc flour, manioc starch, <i>guaraná (soft drink)</i> , frozen pastries and snacks, <i>palmito</i> (palm hearts), beans, rice, cassava flour, corn flour, concentrated juices (passion fruit, cashew, <i>graviola</i> , <i>pitanga</i> , mango, guava), <i>guaraná</i> and coconut water
<b>Mercearia Brasil</b>	<i>Guaraná</i> , <i>Toddy</i> , figs in syrup, <i>Nescau</i> (instant chocolate drink), <i>Sonho de Valsa</i> bonbon, <i>doce de leite cremoso</i> (fudge spread), liquid sweetener, <i>goiabada</i> (guava paste), <i>Bis</i> chocolate, coconut water, seasoned manioc flour, <i>Matte Leão</i> tea, ingredients for <i>feijoada</i> , variety of Brazilian cosmetics, <i>paçoquinha</i> (peanut crumble), <i>palmito</i> (palm hearts), pressure cooker, Brazilian snacks, Brazilian beef.
<b>Go Mercearia</b>	Soft drinks, <i>Nescau</i> chocolate drink, black and <i>Carioca</i> beans, <i>Garoto</i> bonbons, <i>Tang</i> instant drink, <i>Kitano</i> seasoning, seasoned manioc flour, cereals, pepper sauce, <i>doce de leite cremoso</i> (fudge spread), <i>paçoquinha</i> (peanut crumble); cake mix; <i>canjiquinha</i> ; manioc flour, <i>Tio João</i> rice; <i>Fino</i> coffee; <i>Negresco</i> biscuits.

Regional and local Brazilian products and brands are obviously missed by clients; but shopkeepers and importers cater for a clientele framed in national terms and have to adhere to few national brands, as this importer and shop owner told me:

In terms of demand for regional food, people from Goiás have their very own taste and people from the South are also very demanding. People want a brand from Putinga, do you know what I mean? In Putinga you buy beans from a local food cooperative and people come here and want the same, or a brand of mate tea they buy there. If I already sell two types of beans here, I am not going to bring another type just because it is regional. I am going to bring a brand which is nationally known so I can serve everybody. I am not an outlet specialized in selling *gaúcha*, *mineira* or *baiana* food. I am a Brazilian shop. I mean, I have a Brazilian shop.<sup>2</sup> (Interview with I., shop owner,

<sup>2</sup> Shop owner: Tem. Por exemplo, há mais ou menos 1 ano e meio atrás ninguém trazia erva

21/10/2009)

Another example is *tapioca*. *Tapioca* was a product that we took a long time to put on the shelves because it was only asked for by people from the north and northeast. We put it on the shelves and it doesn't sell. A packet in a blue moon is sold. But we stock it in small quantities to serve these customers.<sup>3</sup> (Interview with I. shop owner, 21/10/2009)

'Brazilians cannot live without a barbecue' said the owner of a meat shop in Harlesden. Because importing restrictions make Brazilian beef more expensive, Brazilian butchers cannot always guarantee Brazilian provenance and most often the beef is sourced from Argentina, Australia or Ireland. Butchers find a way of making it Brazilian by selling it as 'Brazilian cuts' (or in case of other types of meat, by preparing freshly made sausages or offering products which are hard to find such as chicken hearts). Butchers are also aware that the Brazilian way of barbecuing meat has to be adapted to the 'London Brazilian way':

In Brazil we have another system to barbecue meat. The barbecue grill is more spacious for a start. Here often people use small electric grills. So you have to cut the meat according to the client. (Interview with R., shop owner, 01/10/2009)

Even though Brazilian grocery shops were frequented by other ethnic groups, mainly from Portuguese speaking African countries, Portugal, Poland and other South American countries, they tended to sell only Brazilian products. From all those I visited only one sold a general range of products, and

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mate. O Luiz traz, mas o Luiz traz 1 tipo de erva mate, eu tenho 5 na loja. Chás ninguém trazia, o Luiz traz, a Karen traz, mas era só eu que trazia chá. Coisa mais regionalizada é coisa do Nordeste, tipo o pequi, óleo disso, óleo daquilo. O pessoal de Goiás tem um gosto bem próprio dos produtos e o pessoal do Sul, que não dá pra negar que o pessoal é bem exigente. O pessoal quer o feijão da marca tal que compra lá em Putinga, sabe? Lá em Putinga compra um feijão que é fabricado e embalado por uma cooperativa local e o pessoal chega e quer aquele ou quer aquela determinada erva que ele toma lá. Eles são bem seletivos.

<sup>3</sup> Shop owner: Tapioca, por exemplo. Tapioca a gente demorou pra colocar na prateleira porque era só o pessoal do norte e nordeste que pedia. A gente coloca na prateleira e quase não vende. Vende 1 pacote a cada 'blue moon', como se diz aqui. Mas a gente tem. Então são coisas que você tem, mas em pequenínissima quantidade pra atender esse público, né?

two others sold Portuguese and other South American products, especially from Colombia. In areas where there was a larger concentration of Brazilian migrants such as Harlesden, shop owners from other ethnicities were tuned into this niche market. By stocking a range of Brazilian products (which they buy from Brazilian importers), these non-Brazilian shop keepers attract Brazilian clients who ended up buying other products which were not available in Brazilian shops. They also placed advertisements in Brazilian magazines and place a Brazilian flag at the window to attract the attention of Brazilian customers (see Figure 3.9).



**Figure 3.9 Al Asdika's supermarket and advertisements of Way to Save -Brasil etc. Sept. 2010, 39, p. 4**

The opening up of this niche market to non-Brazilians has been received with predictable criticism by Brazilian entrepreneurs not used to the competition:

I import products to sell in my shop. I go [to Brazil] once a year to research and an agent will buy things for me. (...) So 40% of the products I sell are exclusive. (...) The distributors are now bringing 20% of these products too, which they did not sell

before but saw in my shop and began to import. In a way it is good because the price goes down as they bring larger quantities. The negative side is that I lose the client's preference; they will be able to find other sources. Because they [the distributors] are unscrupulous, they sell it to Brazilians, Indians, and Arabs. (...) The important thing for them is to make money. It goes against the objective of supporting the Brazilian community, because you are competing not only with Brazilians but also with non-Brazilians. Indians survive selling to Indians, if they sell to Brazilians it will be an extra to them. This is a very complicated thing. Five years ago my clients came from all over London and its outskirts. Nowadays, why is a client living near Harrow Rd. [NW10], or in Seven Sisters, or in Putney going to come here? He doesn't need it any more. So this has affected me badly. Our shop however has a distinguishing feature (...) which is the variety of products. (...) It has become very complicated in the last two years. Still, it is this 30 - 40% of products that I bring myself which attracts clients.<sup>4</sup> (Interview with I., owner of a grocery shop, 21/10/2009)

While it has been noted that solidarity and trust are central conditions for the success of 'ethnic enterprises' (Granovetter, 1998), the demand of Brazilian imported products from non-Brazilian entrepreneurs points to a widening of these networks of provision. Brazilian importers and distributors

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<sup>4</sup> Shop owner: Há cinco anos os meus clientes vinham de todos os lugares de fora de Londres ou dos arredores ou até mesmo do centro de Londres. Hoje, porque é que o cliente lá da Harrow vai vir aqui, ou lá no Seven Sisters, ou lá de Putney? Ele não precisa mais, então é claro que prejudicou. Tem um diferencial na nossa loja (...) que é a variedade de produtos. Eu que importo direto pra minha loja. Eu vou uma vez por ano, faço uma pesquisa e depois, nesse meio tempo, a minha agente é que faz as compras pra mim (...) Mas, então, cerca de 40% dos produtos são só nossos exclusivos. Por quê isso? Os próprios distribuidores hoje estão com cerca de 20% produtos que eles vendem, são produtos que eles não tinham a um ano atrás, mas ele viam aqui e em 2-3 meses eles começaram a trazer, entendeu? Bom pra mim porque o preço fica mais barato, porque eles trazem em grande quantidade. Ruim porque eu perco a preferência, também o cliente vai poder encontrar em outros lugares. Porque eles são inescrupulosos, eles vendem pra brasileiro, pra indiano, pra árabe. Se a tua loja é americana e quer comprar, eles tão vendendo. O importante pra eles é fazer dinheiro. Foge um pouco do objetivo de manter a comunidade brasileira, porque você além de quebrar na concorrência entre brasileiros, você quebra na concorrência com quem não é brasileiro. Indiano sobrevive vendendo produto pra indiano, querer botar pra brasileiro é extra pra ele, entende? Então é uma coisa meio complicada. Nesses dois últimos anos especialmente ficou muito complicado. Mas ainda assim os 40%-30% que eu trago é o que faz o diferencial da loja; é o que atrai o cliente.



are the main beneficiaries of this expansion with increased sales; other ethnic entrepreneurs also benefit from having Brazilian products because they can attract Brazilian customers. By having Brazilian goods available at more competitive prices and closer to their home Brazilian customers also gain. The only ones to lose out are Brazilian shop owners who specialise only in Brazilian products. This widening of provision networks beyond the ethnic enclave also signals a broader conceptualization of these transnational spaces of food provision as noted by Crang, Dwyer and Jackson (2003).

Still, even if the food provision system may show signs of wider participation, the commerce of Brazilian groceries in London is still very much geared towards feeding the Brazilian belly and assuaging their sense of displacement through the connections provided by the material culture of food provision and the social life of these spaces.

### **3.3 'It's not everyone's cake': the making of a 'Brazilian' diasporic cuisine**

As Ray (2011) argues, immigrant tastes and accounts are usually left out in gastronomic 'discourse'. Such disregard overlooks the crucial role migrant chefs and cooks play in disseminating their cuisines abroad and in contributing to broader urban culinary landscapes. The narrative of Brazilian chefs and cooks - who very often are the owners - provides a rare glimpse of a 'Brazilian cuisine' on the move and in the making. It suggests a constant process of trial and error, adaptation and improvisation, interaction between the realities of wider London's culinary circuits, the personal abilities and memories of cooks and customers' tastes and desires for home food.

The majority of cooks came to London having had some sort of professional experience in the food industry but very few had formal training. They either had had their own restaurant, a buffet service for parties or had worked for someone in this area. Others, such as D., a woman migrant selling

home-cooked frozen food was a source of extra income, for many years after she arrived in the UK in 1997. It was only later, when her daughter came to the UK that she decided to open a restaurant. In other cases the work experience was acquired in London. D., for example, worked in a Brazilian grill for seven months before opening his business. After marrying a Portuguese national, he took her to Brazil for three months to learn how to make Brazilian snacks and cakes. They now have a grill in the Seven Sisters area and also provide snacks and cakes to other Brazilian business, as well as catering for private functions. M., whose father had a food commerce business back in Brazil worked as a manager for Pizza Express for three years before opening a restaurant. Cookery skills had often been learnt through mothers, grandmothers but also fathers, and memory processes were also at work when trying to reproduce some of the tastes from home.

The lack of trained Brazilian chefs was a common complaint, especially with *churrascarias* managers and owners who are at the top end of the market. Most of the available Brazilian chefs had learnt to cook in the UK and were not familiar with cookery skills needed to reproduce Brazilian dishes. Although not a common procedure, two businesses reported having sourced chefs from Brazil, bringing them in through a skilled work visa. But this was a costly option, and most often restaurants did not seem prepared to pay the price of hiring a qualified chef, preferring to rely on the ability of a good cook to prepare larger quantities of food:

It is rare to find trained chefs. If a person is well qualified it is difficult for her to find a place that values and financially rewards that. This is the biggest Brazilian restaurant in London and this is the policy adopted here, even if this is not beneficial to [chefs]: Usually they will hire a person who knows how to cook and will cook on a large scale (interview with A. manager of a restaurant, 12/10/2010)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Manager: Cozinheiro, cozinheiro, chefes, são pouquíssimos. Porque se a pessoa é bem qualificada é difícil achar um lugar onde ela possa ser reconhecida pela qualificação e ser bem remunerada por ela. No geral, como este é o maior restaurante brasileiro em Londres, mas é a

In general, people come here and say: 'I can cook, give me an opportunity, there is no secret to it.' Brazilian cuisine is not something... it is as I told you, it is adapted to the people here. The flavour is there, but as it is in London it is kind of international. We have salad which is not Brazilian. Taboule is more of an Arabic thing. It is a bit mixed.<sup>6</sup> (Interview with A. manager of a restaurant, 12/10/2010)

They come and do a test. Doesn't need to be a chef, but has to be an accomplished cook. The majority have some kind of experience. A lot of people started washing-up, and then learn how to chop and to make salad, and become chefs. They begin working with us and we provide them with a safety and hygiene course and explain the work here. Sometimes, people come and say: 'I have worked as a chef for Varig [a Brazilian airline company]'. But when they get into the kitchen they cannot cook an egg. It has to be someone from a humble background. The best cooks are ladies from a humble background. There was a lady who was a nursery cook back in Brazil; she was used to cooking huge portions. The chef that I have now has travelled around, worked in the US and in pizzerias before coming here. He did not come from Brazil straight to here.<sup>7</sup> (Interview with P., owner of a restaurant, 23/09/2010)

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política deste restaurante, geralmente acaba prejudicando um pouco. Geralmente eles pegam um pessoa assim que, ela sabe cozinhar, então vai cozinhar em grande escala. Mas agora o próprio chefe e um pouco difícil.

<sup>6</sup> Manager: Agora, eles trouxeram uma saladeira treinada pelo SENAC lá do Brasil, por contrato, trouxeram um chefe também do Brasil, formado, era cozinheiro, chefe. Conseguiram um contrato de trabalho por cinco anos e ficaram. Só que é muito difícil para conseguir. (...) Uma ficou. Tinha um também que teve que ir embora para o Brasil e eles estão vendo se conseguem um contrato para ele também. No geral aparece mais este pessoal: 'Eu sei cozinhar, me dá uma oportunidade, não tem segredo'. A cozinha brasileira não é aquela coisa assim... É como eu disse, tem esta adaptação, ela é adaptada ao povo daqui. O sabor é aquele, mas como é em Londres é meio que internacional. A gente tem salada aqui que não é brasileira. Taboule é coisa mais árabe. Meio que mistura um pouco.

<sup>7</sup> G: Como é a questão dos cozinheiros? São homens, são mulheres? Tem dificuldades?

Owner: Dificuldade sempre tem, independente do sexo, tem que ser bom ali no que faz. Chegar e fazer um teste. Não precisa ser chefe de cozinha com carteirinha, tem que ser um bom chefe, um cozinheiro de mão cheia.

G: Já eram cozinheiros no Brasil?

I now turn to how the personal experiences of Brazilian cooks and restaurateurs influence the shaping of Brazilian cuisine in London. Take the example of J., the owner of an upmarket restaurant in Camden. His restaurant, *Coco Bamboo*, could be defined as 'Brazilian north eastern food cooked in French style with a Caribbean twist'. J.'s cooking draws from many sources of inspiration and from his large experience in catering: in the last ten years he has been back and forth between Brazil, Europe and UK working in several restaurants (including Made in Brazil in London, and other restaurants in Fortaleza and Rio de Janeiro). When he first came to the UK in 1996 to learn English he worked in a Caribbean restaurant called Cotton. He was completely taken by it and decided that that was the kind of cooking he wanted to do. '*I suppose I do a bit of fusion cooking, although Caribbean food has a lot in common with Brazilian north-eastern food.*' His menu has a lot of Caribbean dishes: jerked chicken wings, seafood Gumbo, curry goat. He is keen to point out though that his cooking also uses French techniques:

In Brazil a bobó de camarão is made in big quantities, in a big pan. Here we cook every plate individually, cooked in the exact time perhaps 'with precise timing'. We aim at perfection, sophistication, professionalism. If you look at contemporary Brazilian chefs like Alex Atala, they reinterpret Brazilian culinary traditions using sophisticated French techniques. (Interview in English with J., owner, 31/10/2010)

Whereas J.'s intention is to re-fashion Brazilian traditional dishes using sophisticated techniques, E., the owner of a north-eastern Brazilian restaurant, Tia Maria, took the opposite direction. Due to the lack of ingredients, he had to learn traditional techniques via the internet to prepare the basis for his main

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Owner: Sim, a maioria já tinha experiência. Mas muita gente que começou com a gente iniciou na pia, foi aprendendo a descascar e a fazer uma salada, estas se tornaram chefes também. Iniciam com a gente e a gente dá o curso de higiene, a pessoa vai tendo um pouco mais de noção como funciona aqui, como tem que ser. (...) Às vezes, a pessoa fala: 'Sou chefe de cozinha, já trabalhei para Varig.' Quando chega na cozinha não sabe fazer um ovo. Tem que ser alguém simples. As melhores são as pessoas mais simples, cozinheiras. Tinha um senhora que era uma cozinheira de uma crèche no Brasil, fazia aquelas paneladas. Este meu chefe que está aqui já trabalhou nos Estados Unidos, já trabalhou em pizzeria, já viajou fora, não veio do Brasil direto para cá.

north-eastern Brazilian dish. A soft spoken young man from Joao Pessoa, he told me that after his arrival in 2004, he worked his way up in a French restaurant from washing-up to head chef. The stressed conditions of the job then made him change the kitchen for a temporary job as a courier. When he found the spot his restaurant is based in, he thought 'it was time to profit from Brazilian's popularity in London and to introduce a taste of the North-east fare'. He realised no restaurant was doing Tapioca (in Brazil, the word tapioca refers to a kind of pancake made from manioc starch and water) and decided to have a go at it. Although E. is an accomplished and experienced cook he had never cooked tapioca pancakes before. Moreover, the mixture which is available readymade in Brazil is not available in the UK. So he researched on the Internet until he found the technique to extract the starch from the manioc, a very time consuming process. The manioc has to be grated and soaked in water overnight. Then it is sieved through muslin cloth; the white liquid is full of starch and it will eventually sink to the bottom. This solid part is the starch, a dough or '*goma*', from which the pancakes are made.



**Figure 3.10 Tia Maria Tapiocaria and the tapioca pancake**

The challenge of creating a menu that could represent the exotic culinary traditions of various regions in Brazil but at the same time appeal to

his cosmopolitan clientele was taken up by C. He drew on his travelling experiences in Brazil to come up with a range of dishes which he started selling from a stand in Vauxhall food market. Here in the interview he discusses this professional biography:

I have travelled around in Brazil. I know exactly what people eat in the South, in the Northeast, in the interior of Sao Paulo, in Minas.... I have used that knowledge. There are things that are common in the whole of Brazil. First of all we looked for what is a common eating habit among Brazilians; and secondly what a person that visits Brazil tries – which is *feijoada*, rice and beans, *picanha*.... *Coxinha de galinha* everybody knows. And some English clients come asking for *coxinha* and *pão de queijo*. That was the base. Now we add more: “This is something nice that people in Santa Catarina eat.” Few people may know, let’s offer some tastings.

And how about cakes and sweets?

It was the same. Finding typical things Brazilians eat. What ingredients Brazil has? Coco, manioc, especially in the countryside. We took Minas Gerais culinary cooking as a basis, that’s where you eat very well. We looked for and worked with Brazilian ingredients: manioc, coconut, sweet potato, banana, pineapple... we started with these kinds of cakes and tried it out. Some of them we don’t bother anymore because they did not prove popular – for example the cornmeal cake, it is a nice cake to have with coffee, but can be a bit dry. It is a very simple cake, some love it but it is not everyone’s cake. So we stopped selling it. The one made with coconut and manioc, 3-4 are sold in a day in the market. Here in the café that’s a best seller, along with the banana one.<sup>8</sup> (Interview with S., owner, 22/10/2009)

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<sup>8</sup>Owner: A seleção do menu é basicamente, também, que alguns já foram ao Brasil, que já conversaram com brasileiro, sabem que no Brasil se come arroz com feijão - é o básico. A partir daí... Eu, por exemplo, trabalhei no Brasil e viajei muito. Então eu sei exatamente o que se come no Sul, no Nordeste, no interior de São Paulo, em Minas... e eu em cima disso fui buscando. Há

Thus, clients' taste will also strongly contribute to what food is sold in Brazilian restaurants and cafés; this will be analysed in more detail in the next part of the chapter. For now I would like to turn to the role of ingredients and material adaptations in the refashioning of 'Brazilian' cuisine in London. Beans and beef came at the top of the list as the main ingredients sourced from Brazilian outlets by restaurateurs. The provenance of beans was quite important but as for beef, due to importing restrictions, Australian and Irish beef, as well as Argentinian *picanha* were also used by most restaurants and cafés, even if they were still supplied by Brazilian companies. A number of other products and ingredients also came from Brazilian importers such as rice, *guarana* (Brazilian soft drink), palm hearts, coconut milk, palm oil, manioc flour, manioc starch, *goiabada* (guava paste), tropical pulp juices (*açaí*, *acerola*, *cupuaçu*) and even breadcrumbs. They do have a different consistency! When starting, small cafés would buy most of their products from Brazilian suppliers, but later ended up sourcing similar ingredients (such as rice, condensed milk, coconut milk, cassava flour) with a different provenance for better value from other 'ethnic' retailers. As some Brazilian dishes share a lot of ingredients with

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coisas que são comuns no Brasil inteiro. A gente primeiro procurou isso: o que é comum e todo brasileiro come; segundo: o que a pessoa que vai passar no Brasil prova - que é feijoadá, arroz e feijão, picanha... então em cima disso. Coxinha de galinha todo mundo conhece. E tem cliente inglês que vem exclusivamente procurando coxinha ou o pão de queijo. Então foi em cima disso, depois não, agora a gente vai criando, "Ó, isso aqui é uma coisa legal que se come muito em Santa Catarina". Pouca gente conhece, mas vamos dar pra provar.

G: Por exemplo algum tipo de prato regional que você serve?

Owner: Por exemplo, costela de boi na panela com mandioca é uma coisa que no Rio de Janeiro se come muito, o mineiro também come. Nós colocamos aqui às terças-feiras e eles adoram. Carne de músculo na panela com vegetais. No Rio se come muito músculo também, se faz ele na panela. Em Goiás parece que também, porque a menina que trabalha comigo é goiana e ela diz que também faz. Eles adoram, fica muito macia. E depois os temperos, a gente teve o cuidado. Porque o brasileiro adora açúcar e sal, então a gente tem o maior cuidado porque o inglês não é muito de comer muito sal nem muito açúcar. A gente também controlou o tempero. É que a nossa família mesmo não é chegada a comida muito salgada, mas todo mundo que a gente leva pra trabalhar com a gente pra ajudar na cozinha, se deixar, é sal puro. Então a gente não deixa, a gente controla.

G: E como foi a história dos bolos e dos doces?

Owner: Foi assim também. Coisa bem típica que o brasileiro come. O quê que o Brasil tem? É coco, mandioca... principalmente o interior. Aí foi baseado em Minas Gerais, que se come muito bem. Aí nós procuramos coisas bem brasileiras: mandioca, batata doce, coco e fomos trabalhando em cima disso... banana, abacaxi. E aí começamos com esse tipo de bolo e fomos experimentando. Alguns nós nem fizemos mais porque não agradou muito - tipo o bolo de fubá, de farinha de milho, é um bolo bom pra tomar com café, mas era um pouco sequinho. É um bolo simples, ele é simples. Alguns adoram, mas não é um bolo que todo mundo gosta. Então nós também paramos de fazer. Mandioca com coco, numa feira, é capaz de vender 3-4 por feira. E aqui mesmo no café é o bolo que eu mais vendo. O banana de também eu vendo muito.



other Afro-Caribbean cuisines, owners of restaurants would tap into these suppliers especially for fruit and vegetables which are not sold by Brazilian traders.

We don't find it difficult [to find the products]. We find everything because the Jamaican community eats a lot of similar things to Brazilians. And as they have a strong presence here you find everything around the areas where they live. You find yams, coconut, jackfruit, other fruit and vegetables. You find everything. (Interview with S., owner, 22/10/2009)

A great deal of research went into finding ingredients which could replace Brazilian ingredients which were not allowed to be imported from Brazil. The owner of a Brazilian pizzeria mentioned that one of the favourite toppings for Brazilians was chicken with a soft cheese from Minas Gerais called *catupiry*. She ended up replacing it with a similar cheese of Middle Eastern origin. For the owners of Cravo e Canela, a café and catering company in Brixton, it has been a long process of trial and error in terms of the recipes. None of them had professional experience in patisserie. They had to get used to the different types of flour and sugar. He says, for example, that he prefers sugar cane sugar to beet sugar, as the latter affects the consistency and flavour of the cake. For the *pão de queijo* recipe (cheese bread made with manioc starch) he had to experiment with Asian tapioca flour instead of a Brazilian one, which was more expensive.

### **3.4 Multicultural palates and 'home made food'**

Whilst I have highlighted already the importance of feelings of dislocation to the narratives of restaurateurs as they improvise in the construction of a Brazilian culinary culture in London, these narratives cannot be separated from narratives about how they are 'situated' or located within specific business models and markets. Shops and restaurant owners have to take into

consideration factors such as nationality of the client (if not Brazilian), origins in Brazil (if Brazilian), income and customer's working hours when choosing a menu or product to stock.

In terms of restaurants, taking into consideration the information provided in the interviews on the percentage of Brazilian clients, three profiles emerged: 1) places whose main customer basis is not Brazilian, especially big *churrascarias* (Brazilian grill) and fusion restaurants but also smaller cafés in central areas of London; 2) places which have a broadly balanced number of Brazilians and non-Brazilian customers; and 3) places that cater mainly for Brazilians. Of course such a division cannot be set in empirical stone, and will reflect only the time when the research took place. However, here I use this schematic framework to examine what types of food are sold as 'Brazilian' in both London's 'cosmopolitan' food circuit and in culinary places focused more on migrants. The schema also allows us to envisage food outlets as social spaces where cultural boundaries are constantly being created, discussed and negotiated both for Brazilians and non-Brazilians. The discussion that follows is divided in three parts. I first examine the first group (*churrascarias* and fusion restaurants); secondly I explore how smaller outlets who have a mixed clientele accommodate different tastes, and; thirdly, on commercial spaces which cater for the Brazilian palate. Bon appétit!

#### **3.4.1 Brazilian flavours for mainstream customers**

The place of Brazilian cuisine in London's culinary landscape is still marginal but an increasing number of restaurants have been selling Brazilian food for a wider cosmopolitan audience. As can be seen from Table 3.4, *churrascarias* (barbecue/carvery/steak houses) are the most popular type of restaurant in this group and a smaller number are 'fusion cooking' restaurants.

The research also showed that this group had the highest number of non-Brazilians as co-owners. Adding to these, a number of smaller Brazilian cafés and bars have sprung up all over London whose main customer basis is not Brazilian. They are either located in areas where there are not many Brazilian residents, as was the case with *Bistro Brasil* (N3), *Braziliana* (SE19) and *Cravo e Canela*, or, as in the case of *Luso Brasileiro* (E16), the Brazilian clients have gone back to Brazil due to the financial crisis. Still others, for example *Canela* café, are sited in busy areas of central London serving the general public. In the discussion that follows I explore how Brazilian flavours are accommodated in these various commercial settings to serve mainstream palates.

**Table 3.4 List of Brazilian food outlets catering mainly for a non-Brazilian clientele**

Source: author's research

Name	Post code	Owner's country of origin	% Braz. Clients
1. Rodizio Rico I	SE10	Iraq/Brazil	20%
2. Rodizio Rico II	N1	Iraq/Brazil	35%
3. Rodizio Rico III	W2	Iraq/Brazil	30%
4. Rodizio Rico IV	Sw6	Iraq/Brazil	-
5. Preto Churrascaria	SW1	UK/Italy/Brazil	40%
6. Amber Grill Churrascaria	NW10	Brazil	30%
7. Comida Churrascaria	W1	United Kingdom	30%
8. Canecão Bar and Restaurant	N7	Brazil	40%
9. Favela Chic Bar and Restaurant	EC2	France/ Brazil	40%
10. Coco Bamboo Bar and Restaurant	NW1	Brazil	30%
11. Sushinho Bar and Restaurant	SW3	Indonesia/Germany	30%

*Churrascaria de rodizio* (barbecue/carvery/steak houses) where the waiters pass from table to table carving different types of meat are the most

successful Brazilian culinary model sold to non-Brazilians in the world, according to an article by the Brazilian magazine VEJA on the expansion of the Fogo de Chão churrascaria to the US ([http://veja.abril.com.br/011003/p\\_076.html](http://veja.abril.com.br/011003/p_076.html)). In Brazil, *churrascarias* were for a long time associated with low quality road side eateries, but in the last thirty five years they have become popular within the middle class urban culture with the expansion of successful chains such as *Porcão* (big pig) and *Fogo de Chão* (bonfire) in the main Brazilian capitals. Although *churrascarias* still refer to the *gaucho* style of barbecuing they have become, in fact, the meeting places of different culinary cultures: apart from the carved meat, they also serve a smorgasbord with salads, hot food (such as beans, rice, fried plantains), fried snacks and... *sushi* and *sashimi*.

In London's culinary landscape there are half a dozen Brazilian *churrascarias* selling the concept "all-you-can-eat" for a fixed price ranging from £16.50 to £23.50 excluding drinks. They compete with other South American type restaurants which also offered grilled meat in their menus. Brazilian *churrascarias* allude to the abundance of meat as a selling point, but in truth, they are still a poor image of their counterparts in Brazil in terms of food and service and seem to be considered expensive by London customers(see for example,

<http://www.timeout.com/london/restaurants/venue/2:2161/rodizio-rico#booking-form>, last accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011).

The first Brazilian *churrascaria*, Rodizio Rico, was opened in 1997 by an immigrant couple: an Iraqi male and a Brazilian woman started a cafe in Westbourne Grove and have since then expanded to three other restaurants (plus the café). In terms of ownership all but one of the *churrascarias* are owned by a couple of whom the female partner is Brazilian.

The unlimited eating experience direct from Brazil, uses a unique style of service. Gaucho chefs (waiters) pass from table to table carving our varied different cuts of beef, lamb, pork and chicken [sic] are slow-roasted over an open flame to capture their own individual flavour. Then we serve it to you directly from skewers onto your plate.



Here at COMIDA we do not believe in over seasoning. This technique of cooking meat dates back to the time of Brazilian cowboys, who roasted huge skewered cuts of meat over pit fires, creating that barbecued flavour that we have captured at COMIDA.

- Each guest uses a two sided disk to control the pace of their meal.
- The green side signals the gaucho chefs to bring out skewers of fire roasted meats to carve at the table.



- The red side indicates a stopping point.
- Turning back to the green lets the gaucho chefs know to start offering the meats again.

Lunch at COMIDA £18.00                      Dinner at COMIDA £22.50 (from  
6pm)                      COMIDA desserts - £4.00

Figure 3.11 Information from Comida's homepage

Source: [http://www.comidabar.co.uk/page.asp?page\\_num=12](http://www.comidabar.co.uk/page.asp?page_num=12) (accessed on 15th January 2011)



Figure 3.12 Rodizio Rico's façade



Figure 3.13 Preto's advertisement to the Anglophone market



**Figure 3.14 Rodizio Rico's passadores**

London's *churrascarias* market themselves as upmarket and tend to capture a clientele of Portuguese, Italian and Spanish tourists and residents (some already familiar with the *rodizio* concept), according to the managers to whom I spoke. They are marketed as a “carnivore delight” for healthy appetites. Although there is an emphasis on the exotic, especially with reference to the gaucho techniques of preparing and serving the meat (roasting it over a charcoal fire and carving it at the client’s table), adaptations are the rule. The buffet steers towards a more international cuisine to please international palates:

People come and want to try something different, but not so exotic. If you keep it too strict, you narrow your public. So it is not that thing of authentic Brazilian food (...)<sup>9</sup>

We have hot dishes, every day we have fries and fried plantain,

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<sup>9</sup> Manager: As pessoas vem e querem provar algo diferente, mas não tão exótico assim. Então se você ficar muito fechado, o público vai ser restrito. Então não é aquela coisa de comida brasileira autêntica. É isso. (...)

people love it. We have some vegetarian food: cream of corn or broccoli, we change it frequently. Always we have a chicken or meat lasagne; and we have a dish that changes every day: fish with asparagus, beef in little rolls (...) stroganoff.<sup>10</sup> (Interview with A., manager, 12/10/2010)

Apart from the food and service, the Brazilian ambience is created mainly by Brazilian live music or DVDs of Brazilian musicians played on a large screen TV. A female samba dancer with scant attire wriggling around the tables was also employed to inject 'Brazilianess' into one of these restaurants. Negative reaction from female clients led to the end of this performance. Female dancers are still widely used in advertisements though, and in some special events. The male figure of the *passador* seems to lend itself to a safer display of 'Brazilianess', although still re-enforcing gender stereotypes. The decoration does not allude to gaucho culture, as some of their counterparts in Brazil do, but to a general idea of Brazil through pictures of football, famous Brazilian landscapes, Brazilian celebrities and customers, as well as the omnipresent Brazilian flag. The manager of one of these places found the decoration of the branch he worked is 'too sombre' and suggested it did not reflect Brazilian cultural vibrancy. Brazilian magazines and flyers of Brazilian cultural events in London are also displayed at the entrance. Most of the employees are Brazilian, and a concern of the management of one of these places was that employees were able to explain to customers eager to know more about Brazilian food cultural aspects.

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<sup>10</sup> Manager: Temos a sessão dos pratos quentes, praticamente sempre tem batata e banana empanada frita. O pessoal adora. Tem uma parte para os vegetarianos; creme de milho, de brócolis e vamos mudando. Sempre tem uma lasanha que vai ser de frango ou carne. E tem um prato que muda todos os dias: tem dia que é um peixe com aspargos e alcaparra, tem um dia que é bife a rolê. Moqueca, eles já tentaram, mas parece qua não sai muito. Vai variando desta forma. Tem stroganoff..





Figure 3.15 Comida and Rodizio Rico's advertisement to the Lusophone market

Table 3.5 Textual and visual appeal used by churrascarias

Name	Internet/English	Brazilian magazines/Portuguese
<i>Rodizio Rico</i> W2, N1, SE10	<p>Unique style of service; a new eating experience</p> <p>no craving is too large; authentic Brazilian grill selection of meat is extensive; be tempted with delights vast array of traditional Brazilian hot dishes and exotic salads until you can eat no more</p> <p>time-honoured recipe; pure carnivore's delight</p> <p>all you need is a hearty appetite; eat as much as you desire</p>	<p>Promotion</p> <p>Discount</p> <p>Live music</p> <p>Types of food: <i>picanha, alcatra, coração, linguiça, pão de queijo, feijoada com couve, farofa, maionese, saladas, pudim de leite moça, caipirinha, vinhos, licores</i></p> <p>Rump cuts. Chicken hearts, sausages, cheese bread, bean stew with greens, toasted manioc flour, potato mayonnaise salad, various salads, condensed milk cream caramel, Brazilian cocktails, wine and</p>

		liquors. Images: Meat on a spit Brazilian flag Cheese bread
<b>Amber grill NW10</b>	The authentic <i>shuhascoç</i> ; Brazilian inspired restaurant; Slow roasted ; Perfectly seasoned; Open flame grill; Skilled servers; Experience a wide variety of offerings; Unlimited visits to salad buffet; International hot dishes	The authentic churrasco; Discount vouchers; Flavoursome meat; High standard Images: Meat on a spit tandard
<b>Preto churrascari - a Brazilian steak house SW1, SW15</b>	A little piece of Brasil in London; Dining experience like no other; Truly unique Brazilian grill; Unlimited selection; delectable spit roasted meats continuously served Images: Rio de Janeiro nocturnal landscape; Female samba dancer; Food; Drink; staff	
<b>Comida W1</b>	Unlimited eating experience ; Direct from Brazil; Unique style of service; Gaucho chefs (waiters); Slow roasted over an open-flame; This technique of cooking meat dates back to the time of Brazilian cowboys Images: Roasting meat Barman mixing drinks	

In an attempt to appeal to wider audiences, a mix of culinary traditions may be deployed as a cultural currency. These culinary mixtures may not only refer to the hybrid character of Brazilian's cuisine but to encounters which have occurred outside Brazil. One of these places is *Sushinho*, a restaurant/cocktail bar which, although owned by an Indonesian, markets itself as a 'little bit of Japan - in Brazil - in London' thus drawing on the entangled geographies of Brazilian migration as a selling point. On their homepage they state that the restaurant 'takes its cue from the Japanese Brazilian culture thriving in Brazil today', adding that the Japanese community in Brazil is the largest outside Japan with 1.5 million people. In the menu, the sushi bar option shares a place with South American inspired dishes.

With a controversial name alluding to the commodification of poverty, *Favela Chic* sells 'Brazilian cuisine. French style. London attitude'. In its burlesque settings the classic Bahian chicken dish - *xim-xim de galinha*- is given a French name: Amélie Poulet, a play on words with the French film character Amélie Poulain. It attracts a young, cosmopolitan, hip clientele of which some Brazilians also form part. *Coco Bamboo* - which as discussed earlier has in its menu Caribbean dishes such as jerked chicken wings, seafood Gumbo, curry goat - attracts a large Caribbean clientele as well as Londoners who love the live black Brazilian music. The restaurant's Brazilian clientele is small, mainly, accordingly to the owner, Brazilian families or people that are well established here in the UK.

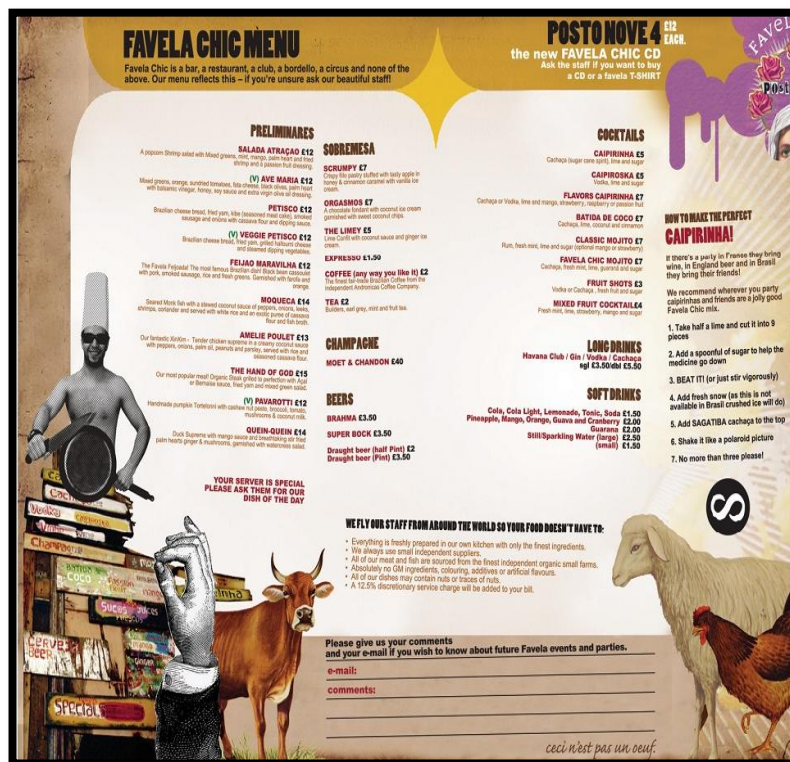


Figure 3.16 Favela Chic menu



**Figure 3.17 Bobó de Camarão, Coco bamboo**

In restaurants such as *churrascarias*, and in some of the ‘fusion’ restaurants, non-Brazilian customers knew they were stepping out of their familiar culinary habits to consume ‘otherness’, and owners had to deal with very demanding clients who knew what they were paying for. The ‘strangeness’ of the food was part of the experience of an evening meal or a special treat. For smaller cafés in this group (see Table 3.6), the challenge has been a different one: they are trying to sell Brazilian food at lunch time, for clients who are much more conservative in their food habits.



Figure 3.18 Tropicalia's menu

Table 3.6 Brazilian restaurants and cafés catering for a mixed clientele

Outlet	Location	Brazilian clients
1) Cafe Rio	W1	60%
2) Bankete Restaurant	E1	60%
3) Recanto do Brasil Café and Grocery shop	SW19	52%
4) Tropicalia Cafe	N16	50%
5) Barraco I bar/restaurant	NW6	50%
6) Sabor Mineiro Cafe	NW10	50%
7) Castello bar & restaurant	SE5	50%

Some of the owners spoke passionately about their activity, which they regarded as a positive way of imprinting Brazilian culture on the fabric of the



city: 'We have clients that have had lunch here every day since we opened up. (...) What I most enjoy is when I receive English, French clients. I consider it a victory (...) they come and look for it. Even if it is a sandwich, we try to give a Brazilian touch... People talk about Brazil in negative terms and we show a different Brazil. A flavoursome, tasty and fragrant Brazil (...) Food is a spectacular aspect of Brazilian culture.' (Fieldnotes, 22/10/2009). But in reality, they had to stick to what the clients wanted. When I first visited *Brazilian Gourmet* the owner estimated 80% of his clients were English, French and from other nationalities who work in the offices nearby. It had a hot buffet with Brazilian dishes, mostly for his Brazilian clients, and a menu with sandwiches and English breakfast. They were trying to introduce a Brazilian breakfast consisting of baguette, low fat cheese, ham, cheddar cheese, fresh salami, fruit jam, fruit salad and orange juice. A bowl *Açai* (energetic Amazon fruit served with granola and bananas) was also offered as a breakfast option.

For the owners of these places, catering for a majority of non-Brazilian customers posed a real challenge. It took them time and effort to choose the type of Brazilian to be offered. Some places, such as *Cravo e Canela* in Brixton, had begun offering Brazilian food when they first opened but soon found out that there was not a strong Brazilian presence in the area, in this case noting that the few Brazilian clients would come mainly on Saturdays for the *Feijoada*. After few weeks of throwing unsold Brazilian food away, the owners of *Cravo e Canela* decided to sell a more recognizable London café menu and to keep the Brazilian food only for their very successful catering service. One of the main problems when trying to introduce Brazilian food to non-Brazilians was the fact that the Brazilian dishes offered were meat based. Very often I witnessed non-Brazilian clients asking for vegetarian options or *halal* meat options. These small establishments were beginning to realise that they had to be more sensitive to the habits of a cosmopolitan clientele and some had come up with vegetarian options for some Brazilian dishes, for example, a vegetarian version for *feijoada* and snacks. As the owner of *Recanto Brasileiro*, argued: 'We cannot exclude and alienate non-Brazilian clients as we are the ones to lose' (Interview

with R., owner, 07/10/2010). Another typical change was the use of salt and sugar which had to be used more sparingly when cooking for non-Brazilians.

In the quotes below, a manager and owner of two small cafes, *Café Rio* in central London and *Recanto do Brasil* in Wimbledon, talk about the food habits of non-Brazilian clients:

Some are curious. But when they come, they come to eat their food. They come to have English breakfast. At lunch time they eat sandwiches, omelette, and this kind of thing. They are curious [about Brazilian food (...)] but it is not their first choice. They are not used to eating rice and beans. When we serve their plate they always leave the rice. They don't have the habit of eating rice. Beans, they accept more.<sup>11</sup> (Interview with M. A., manager, 19/10/2009)

Forty percent of our clients are English. They usually come for breakfast, especially at weekends and might try pão de queijo, but they do not know much about Brazilian food. Seasoned steak and chips are popular because it is familiar (Interview with R., owner, 07/10/2010)

*Tropicalia* and *Sabor Mineiro* on the other hand, served only Brazilian food. In the case of *Tropicalia* (see Figures 3.21), the owner said that the name and the offer of Brazilian tropical juices were a strong point of attraction for non-Brazilian clients. As for *Sabor Mineiro*, despite not having a menu in English or Portuguese, its location near a tube station in a busy road and its good value and tasty food (buffet and also snacks) attracted clients from various ethnic backgrounds.

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<sup>11</sup> Owner: Alguns tem curiosidade. Mas quando eles veem, veem para comer a comida deles. Eles veem para tomar o café da manhã inglês, eles veem para comer sanduíche, né? Na hora do almoço eles comem sanduíche mesmo. Comem omelete, essas coisas. Mas, às vezes, eles tem curiosidade sim.

G: E vocês oferecem?

Manager: Sim. Sempre que vai mostrar o cardápio eu mostro o que tem, né? Eles tem curiosidade, mas não o é o forte deles. Eles não tem o hábito de comer arroz e feijão. Mesmo quando é servido no prato, o arroz sempre fica, né? Eles não tem o hábito do arroz. Feijão eles aceitam mais ainda.



Figure 3.19 Canela Café's interior and façade



Figure 3.20 Brazilian Gourmet's interior and façade



Figure 3.21 Café Rio's interior and façade





STARTERS / PORÇÕES	BRAZILIAN DISHES	PASTAS	WINES / VINHOS
Olive / Azeitona £1.95	All accompanied by rice, beans and salad included. Accompanishes per course, sides or salads.	Spaghetti Pomodoro £6.95	Pink Grigio (Bravo / Dry white wine)
Bread / Pão £1.95	Cap of Pump or Skirt Steak £9.95	Spaghetti Bolognaise £7.50	Merlot (Dry / Fruity red wine)
Garlic bread / Pão de alho £2.50	Brazilian Cut Steak / Bife na Chapa £9.95	Spaghetti Carbonara £7.50	Chardonnay (200ml) £4.25
Rice / Arroz £2.95	Chicken Fillet / Filé de Frango £8.50	Spaghetti à la cream sauce with smoked sauce & mushrooms	Bottle £12.50
Beans / Feijão £2.95	Fish Fillet / Filé de Peixe £8.50		Pisco Brandy Bottle (Pisco) £13.50
Mixed Salad or Vinagreira (Chicken, tomato, carrot, onion & lettuce) £2.95	Pork Rib / Costeletinha de Porco £8.50	<b>BURGERS</b>	Capitães £4.50
Soup of the Day / Sopa do dia £2.95	Pork Steak / Carne de Porco £8.50	Burger (served with tomato and lettuce) £3.50	The most famous Brazilian cocktail made of Brazilian cachaça, freshly squeezed lime juice, ice & sugar
Vegetarian / Salada Fitita £2.95	Diced cooked beef / Carne de Panela £8.50	Meat Burger (Coke, Soft, Fanta or Water) £4.25	<b>SOFT DRINKS</b>
Brazilian Steak / Salsinha £4.95		Chocoburger £4.25	Guaraní £1.20
Light Pasta / Pastilha £4.95	<b>BRAZILIAN SPECIAL</b>	Meat Burger £4.25	Coke/Diet Coke £0.90
Chicken Breast / Peito de Galinha £4.95	Fajada Brasileira £9.95	Extra bread *£1.50	Sprite / Fanta £0.90
Cod Fish Balls / Bolinhos de Bacalhau (served) £5.50	Mixed of pork and beef meat cooked in black beans served with rice, sprouts Brazilian herbs, spring greens & orange slices	<b>ENGLISH BREAKFAST</b>	Water (still or sparkling) £1.00
Omelette £4.95		1) Bacon, bacon, egg, tomato & toast £4.25	Hot Tea £2.50
Ug-egg, cheese & onion and salad £4.95	<b>HOUSE SPECIALITIES</b>	2) Bacon, bacon, egg, tomato, sausage, mushrooms and 2) toast £4.50	Topolina Orange Juice (200ml) £1.75
Fajada £5.50/£6.95	Accompanied by rice & french fries. Accompanishes per course in Brazilian style	3) Bacon, bacon, scrambled egg, mushrooms, 2 sausages & 2 toasts £4.95	Natural Juice Variety of Berries (450ml) £3.00
Fried Cassava / Mandioca frita £4.50	Chicken Stegouff £7.95	Extra bread £0.35	<b>SPIRITS / DOSES</b>
Pork scotchling / Tomama £5.25	Shrimp cocktail served in a sauce in a heavy cream & parmesan sauce	<b>SANDWICHES</b>	Vodka £2.60
Sausage sausage / Calabresa £5.25	Permeigada £8.25	Ham & cheese on toast £2.50	Bacardi £2.60
Chicken Rump / Picanha na chapa £9.95	Tropical Salad £7.50	Tuna & onions melted with mozzarella on toast £2.75	Whisky £2.60
Beef Rump / Bife à Parmesina £5.25		Bacon & beef egg on toast £2.95	Gin £2.60
Breaded Fried Fish / Bica de Peixe à Milanesa £5.25	<b>SALADS</b>		Bellies £2.60
Fajada Paulista £5.25	Chicken Caesar £7.50		Campana £2.60
Fried Egg / Ome Frito £0.80	Chicken Breast, tomato, Cucumber (dressing & parmesan) £7.50		Tia Maria £2.60
Fresh Omelette / Omeu £1.95	Nicole £7.50		Brandy £2.60
	Dish with onion, egg, carrot, tomato, onion & lettuce £7.50		Brazilian Cocktails £2.60
			Tangula £2.60
			Sambuca £2.60
			Jack Daniels £2.75
			Cachaça with Honey / Pisco com Mel £3.00

Figure 3.22 Bankete restaurant: Interior, façade and menu

Eating at the same place does not always mean integration though. In other cafés from this group Brazilian clients and non-Brazilian clients very often used the cafes at different times of the day and ate different food. *Bankete*, near Liverpool Street, for example, had a clientele of office workers during the week; Brazilians would flock in at weekends to watch football and listen to live Brazilian music. The menu, in this case, would reflect the mixed taste of its clientele offering English breakfast, sandwiches and pasta, as well as Brazilian dishes (see Figure 3.22).

Conquering the palates of mainstream consumers in a cosmopolitan city like London with a varied culinary landscape was a real challenge for entrepreneurs, regardless of their background. Brazilian culinary culture in London is still in its early days and Brazilians were learning how to work in a very competitive market. As the chef and owner of *Coco Bamboo* said:

People nowadays don't go to a restaurant without reading a review and knowing what to expect. We are a booking partner of Top-table and Taste London, and customers already know what to expect in terms of price, service and food. If you deal with mainstream consumers it is impossible to survive in this business if you don't offer quality and aren't involved with partnership with this kind of booking service, unless you are the top end [...] Churrasco is the most popular and there are a lot of small bars, but some of these places sell the idea that you go to eat a lot but there isn't an emphasis on quality.' (Interview in English with J.; chef of *Coco Bamboo*, 31/10/2010)

Despite their focus on mainstream consumers, these Brazilian cafés and restaurants also received a considerable amount of Brazilian customers. The next section explores in more detail the social character of this Brazilian market.

### 3.4.2 'All they want is homemade food...'



Figure 3.23 Advertisement from Bankete Restaurant aimed at Brazilian clients

Restaurants and cafes catering for a mixed clientele had different attitudes towards Brazilian customers, with some of the owners being quite choosy about the type of Brazilian client they wanted. This section explores the social character of the Brazilian food market - with its varied clientele from different regional origins - and its effects on the negotiation of a 'Brazilian menu'. *Churrascarias*, for example, although clearly focusing on the mainstream consumer, regularly advertise in Brazilian magazines offering discount coupons. Indeed, 35% of the clients of the most popular *churrascaria* - Rodizio Rico - are Brazilians who "come to rescue that link they have with their gastronomic culture" (A., manager Rodizio Rico, interview with author, 12/10/2010)<sup>12</sup>. But generally, Brazilian customers who visit *churrascarias* are a heterogeneous group comprised of: successful Brazilians who come regularly; middle class professionals who bring a group of non-Brazilian friends; people who live nearby and have 'this identification with barbecued meat, especially

<sup>12</sup> Manager: O brasileiro vem justamente para resgatar aquela ligação que tem com a cultura gastronômica aqui. As vezes chega um pessoal aqui: 'nossa eu precisava de um arroz com feijão que eu não agüento mais comer estas coisas por ai. É mais a cultura, o hábito de comer a comida nossa.

people from the South [of Brazil]<sup>13</sup>; 'Brazilian families who come at the weekends'<sup>14</sup>; 'working class people, who come here [to London] to work hard, they end up coming here even if they consider expensive, because it is relatively expensive'<sup>15</sup> (quotes from interviews with A., manager of Rodizio Rico, 12/10/2010 and H., owner of Amber Grill, 01/10/2009 and informal conversation with staff at Preto, 15/07/2010).

It is clear that price excludes some Brazilians from these places, an issue also noted by Lopes in her discussion of Brazilian *churrascarias* in New York (Lopes, 2009). Still, there are many Brazilians who may have been excluded in Brazil from this consumption experience but can now afford eating out. These 'new consumers' are categorized by the staff in terms of their lack of knowledge of the way the system works or by eating their money's worth. During an interview with a manager of a *churrascaria*, Brazilian clients were contrasted with non-Brazilians in terms of their income:

A big difference is that a Brazilian come with a budget, he knows how much he is going to spend (...). Maybe he is here to save money or maybe he earns less. It is a different pattern, even in Brazil, isn't it? We go out to a bar and spend normally and not 'I can only spend 20 reais...' Here, people say that Brazilians go out [only] with a 20 pound note in their pockets (laughs)<sup>16</sup> (Interview with H., owner, 01/10/2009)

The concept of eating-as-much-as-you-want for a set price, although promoted by these businesses, also leads to accusations of gluttony towards working class Brazilian customers:

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<sup>13</sup> Manager: Tem os que vem sempre que vivem aqui perto e faz uma rotina, que não pode faltar. Tem esta identificação com o churrasco, principalmente do pessoal do sul.

<sup>14</sup> Owner: Segundo, eu acho que o brasileiro é mais família na questão final de semana, por exemplo, é um dia muito forte pra gente aqui, né?

<sup>15</sup> Manager: Tem esta classe trabalhadora, que vem para aqui trabalhar mesmo, acaba vindo mais aqui, mesmo achando caro, porque é relativamente caro.

<sup>16</sup> Owner: Uma diferença grande é o brasileiro ele vem com recurso limitado, ele sabe que ele vai gastar x, aí por diversos fatores. Talvez o cara vem pra guardar dinheiro e aí ele é limitado mesmo, ou ganha menos também, né? Então são padrões diferentes e é diferente no Brasil né? A gente sai vai para bar e gasta normalmente e não fica "Só posso gastar 20 reais...". Aqui, o pessoa até fala que brasileiro sai com 20 pounds no bolso! (risos) (

(...) we made these promotions, 50% [off] and it was full every day. But we realised that, at the time - today I don't see this anymore - there were people that had not been to a *churrascaria* for a long time. Sometimes, [they are] people from a very humble background. They say things like: 'today I am going to eat loads...' guys came to eat, eat, and eat. Now we see, on the other hand, people who come to enjoy the Brazilian flavour, to remember Brazilian feijoada. <sup>17</sup> (Interview with H., owner, 01/10/2009)

An ex-employee of a *churrascaria* mentioned to me that 'Brazilian clients only want to eat prime cuts of beef such as *picanha* (rump cut), but the *passadores* (carvers) had a quota of how much they could serve of prime cuts of beef. When the staff put the clients' complaints to the owner, he said that he did not care about Brazilian clients. A member of the staff of a *churrascaria* contrasts the gluttony of some of the working class Brazilians, who want to eat their money's worth, with another type of Brazilian client: '*The girls come, as they have easy access to money, money is not a problem for them. Even if it is 15 minutes before closing time, doesn't matter, they sit and eat their food quickly and go*'.<sup>18</sup> These are Brazilian call girls who come daily with their clients, to eat in on their own or drop by with their driver to get a takeaway for £ 20.

Brazilian clients were not seen though as a homogeneous group. In the conversations with staff and owners from two cafés, Brazilian clients are stratified based on their regional origins in Brazil and also in terms of the distinctive quality of the diasporic population in London:

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<sup>17</sup> Owner: (...) Então a gente faz essas promoções e eu lembro bem no começo que, quando a gente abriu em novembro, foi uma promoção muito forte. A gente fez 50% então isso lotava quase todo dia, mas a gente percebia que, naquela época - hoje eu não vejo mais isso -, mas tinha muita gente que fazia alguns anos que não ia em churrascaria, né? E às vezes é um pessoal do nível muito simples. Sabe aquela coisa assim: "Hoje vou tirar a barriga da miséria...", os caras vinham pra comer, comer, comer. Agora a gente vê, por outro lado, pessoa que veem porque é o gosto que tem do Brasil, lembra da feijoada do Brasil, lembra de uma comida típica. É isso.

<sup>18</sup> Manager: As meninas que vem, como elas tem acesso mais fácil ao dinheiro, dinheiro não é problema. pode estar faltando 15 minutos para eu tirar a comida, não importa, sentou, come um prato rapidinho e vão embora (...).

The type of Brazilian person who comes here is... I think the majority of the Brazilian who come here are not very polite, they talk loudly, don't mind other people, shout on the phone... Things that I did not see in Brazil I see here. I think they are more open, maybe it is the city? London... I come from a small town, Florianópolis is very small. People don't discuss their lives on the phone. Here I see people talking openly. I think it is an influence of the city. Everything is too open, too liberal... maybe my culture is different. Florianópolis is different..

G: The people who come here come from a different place?

Very few people from the South [of Brazil] I meet here in London. Very few. Even in schools. I studied English for a while, I see a lot of people from Goiás, Goiânia, "mineiros", but few from the south... <sup>19</sup>(Interview with M.A., manager, 19/10/2009)

It's not about being prejudiced but there's a big difference between Brazilians that live south of the river and north of the river. Brazilians here [north of the river] are better behaved; they have been to university back in Brazil or are studying here. (Interview in English with R., owner, 07/10/2010)

Young Brazilians that come here want double the portion for half the money (Interview in English with J., owner, 31/10/2010)

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<sup>19</sup> Manager: É. O brasileiro que vem aqui é bem... eu acho que a maioria dos brasileiros que vem aqui não são muito polidos [sic], assim, eles falam alto, não se importam se tem alguém ouvindo, e falam muito no telefone, brigam no telefone... Coisa que eu não via no Brasil eu vejo aqui. Acho que eles são mais abertos, acho que a própria cidade, né? Londres... Eu também venho de uma cidade pequena, mesmo Florianópolis é super pequeno. As pessoas não falam no telefone, não contam a vida no telefone. Aqui eu vejo que as pessoas falam muito assim aberto. Mas eu acho que é a cidade que impõe isso, né? Tudo muito aberto, liberado... Talvez porque a minha cultura é diferente. Florianópolis é diferente.

G: As pessoas vem de um lugar diferente?

Manager: Poucas pessoas do Sul aqui em Londres eu encontrei. Pouquíssimas. Mesmo em escola e tudo. Eu estudei algum tempo inglês, eu vejo muita gente de Goiás, Goiânia... mineiro, mas do Sul tem pouco, né? A gente encontra pouco.

Owners of these cafés serving a mixed clientele, despite their reticence towards Brazilian clients, knew that these Brazilians (even if in a minority) were faithful clients and on occasions stimulated the chef to prepare a larger range of Brazilian dishes, thus disseminating some dishes which were popular in some regions of Brazil. However, such influence was mediated by regional, cultural and social background differences, which meant that the chef and clients did not share the same taste in food:

For example beef ribs cooked with manioc is a very popular dish both in Rio and in Minas Gerais. We serve it here on Tuesdays and people love it. Or beef shank with vegetables. That's a popular dish in Rio. The girl that works with me is from Goiás she says it is popular there too. They love it, it is very tender.<sup>20</sup> (Interview with S., owner and cook of Brazilian Gourmet, 22/10/2009)

We have a lot of ideas but we have to be aware that a lot of people who are here are from Goiás and Minas Gerais. They don't come from a high social and intellectual background. We have to adapt to that. What do they normally eat? They want rice, beans and meat. That's why everybody offers this. You cannot make it too sophisticated. Ninety five percent of the people that come to the market to eat are of this type. We have pies, but that is for people from Rio, Sao Paulo and Santa Catarina. I cannot offer them lobster because they won't eat it. I have various clients who don't eat seafood. (...) We tried to sell prawn pie, but it wasn't very successful. We realise that's not their habit. As they are from the interior, they are not used to

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<sup>20</sup> Owner: Por exemplo, costela de boi na panela com mandioca é uma coisa que no Rio de Janeiro se come muito, o mineiro também come. Nós colocamos aqui às terças-feiras e eles adoram. Carne de músculo na panela com vegetais. No Rio se come muito músculo também, se faz ele na panela. Em Goiás parece que também, porque a menina que trabalha comigo é goiana e ela diz que também faz. Eles adoram, fica muito macia

eating seafood (...) (Interview with S., owner and cook of Brazilian Gourmet café, 22/10/2009)<sup>21</sup>

*Barraco* café and restaurant, overtly promoted itself as a place to meet other South Americans, thus emphasising social gathering and meeting the 'other' as an important part of the consumption experience. They try to differentiate themselves from upmarket *churrascarias* by offering a more affordable option and generous servings. Claiming to have a more inclusive policy 'welcoming all types of Brazilians', and by offering a 'homely, cosy place', *Barraco* café and restaurant seems to have hit a soft spot with Brazilian customers who are looking for an experience of cosiness and simplicity. In fact, as you enter the place, its laid back style does remind you of a Brazilian grandmother's house, with its shabby and colourful plastic table covers and a multitude of objects hanging on the walls (at least my grandmother's house was like that!). It is the sort of place that, despite its simplicity, as a Brazilian, you feel comfortable to present to non-Brazilians, as noted by the person who accompanied me when I went there to eat and for many other Brazilian customers who I spoke to. The owner's interview gives some hints of how this experience of home for Brazilians is mediated by the fact that they are a demanding paying customer:

I see people from all levels and religions, to be honest. Ordinary people from a humble background to upper middle class people. We receive everyone and that's what's nice. [They are] students, families with father, mother and child who share a plate to economise. Or even families who are doing well here. (...) Sometimes people say: 'I came from the other side of town to eat this picanha, it is delicious'. They miss it. Or maybe it is the wife's birthday. People who have been here longer miss

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<sup>21</sup> Owner: Exatamente, não é o dia-a-dia deles. Nós fizemos empadão de camarão que não teve um sucesso muito grande. Vou fazer umas alteraçõezinhas e vou voltar com ele porque eu acho que é muito bom, mas a gente percebe que é isso, o hábito. Como são do interior não estão acostumados a comer frutos do mar - quando é brasileiro. Então como eu trabalho no domingo basicamente pra eles, eu não posso. Aí eu procuro fazer a costela de boi... coisas desse nível. E vendo tudo. Domingo, às 3 horas, nós não tínhamos mais nada pra vender. Tem sido assim todos os domingos ultimamente. 2-3 horas e acaba tudo.



things more. The ones that are here not so long are very demanding. 'Is this *picanha* the real thing?' They compare the price... You realize the person has just arrived. Those who have been here longer have a different attitude. 'I miss rice and beans... *Barraco* has this atmosphere that we have created, this feeling of home. When people come here they don't feel they are not welcome; children come here, prams, babies... They make a hell of a mess on the floor, but we don't care; we are here to receive people. Even on Friday night when we have live music... So this makes people feel relaxed. (...) Brazilians are suspicious. The food arrives and after they've eaten they will tell you whether they liked it or not. I don't want to be boastful but our food is very fresh. People are surprised, when they arrived here, after walking through this ugly little road, entering this modest restaurant with plastic table covers, when the food arrives they are surprised. Our strong point is the food. Why people come here? The music, the atmosphere, the language... It is easier. They become a bit more demanding because of it, too. Sometimes I think: if they were in an English or European restaurant, would they be behaving like this? Sometimes you have to take a deep breath and think: 'They are here enjoying their moment.' It is an important moment for them to come and eat *picanha*, rice and beans. You realize that. So we make this moment special for them. You can choose the music you want to hear: 'Can you play Dudu Nobre, country music?' I think people travel back home. <sup>22</sup> (Interview with P., owner, 23/09/2010)

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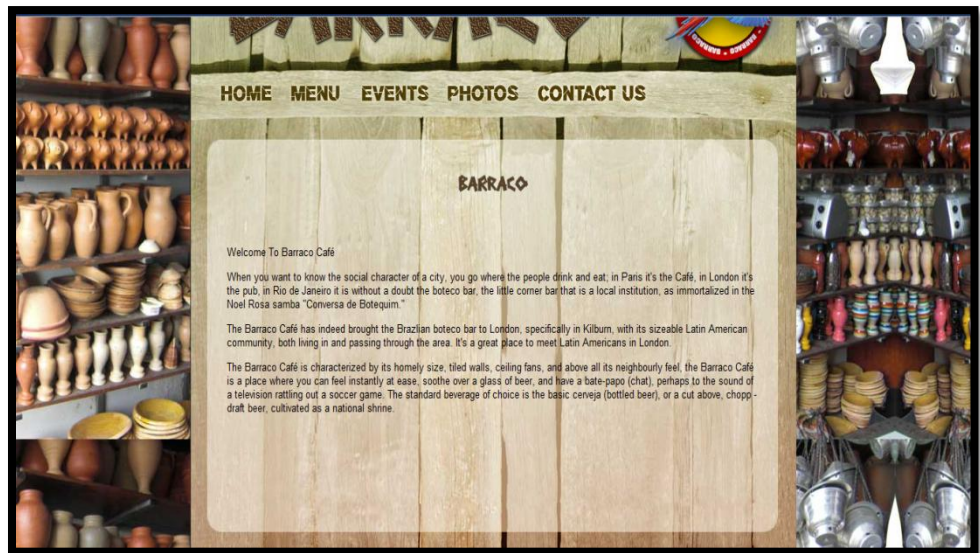
<sup>22</sup> Owner: Eu vejo de todos os níveis e religiões para ser sincera. Humildes, até gente assim mais de classe. A gente abrange a todos, isso que é legal. Desde o povão até a pessoa de classe média alta, estudantes, a família, que vem o pai, a mãe, o filho, dividem um prato, vem os estudantes, para pagar o preço econômico. Ou também aquelas famílias que estão bem aqui. Que se deram bem aqui.

G: Com relação aos clientes fixos...

Owner: Sim e não. Às vezes as pessoas dizem: " Vim do outro lado da cidade só para comer esta picanha que é uma delícia". Estão com saudades. Ou é o aniversário da esposa (...).

G: Em relação ao período de estadia? As pessoas que chegam são mais saudosas?

Owner: Não, as que estão há mais tempo são mais saudosas. As que estão aqui faz pouco tempo, são exigentes. "A picanha é picanha mesmo? Comparando o preço... Você percebe que a pessoa



**Figure 3.24 Barraco café and restaurant**

**'It's a great place to meet Latin Americans in London'**

acabou de chegar. Quem já está aqui há mais tempo já é um outro reconhecimento. "Ah, que saudade do feijão, do arroz..." O barraco tem muito isso que gente criou, esta atmosfera de casa. Aqui a pessoa não se sente hostilizada, aqui vem criança, vem carrinho, vem bebê... Faz aquela bagunça no chão, e a gente não se importa, a gente está aqui para receber... crianças... até na sexta-feira à noite quando tem música ao vivo... Então isso faz as pessoas se sentirem à vontade.

G: Existe uma diferença entre o que o brasileiro espera da comida e o europeu?

Owner: (...) O brasileiro é mais exigente. O europeu se satisfaz mais fácil, não vão perguntar se picanha é picanha. O brasileiro é mais desconfiado. E aí vem a comida, depois que ele comeu, se estava boa é que ele vai dar o braço á torcer e vai dizer se estava muito bom. Modéstia à parte a gente faz um negócio bem fresco. As pessoas se surpreendem um pouco, pois chegam aqui nesta ruinha feia, este lugar simples, toalhinha de plástico, negócio simples, aí quando vem a comida a pessoa é surpreendida. Nosso forte, vamos dizer que o carro chefe é a comida mesmo. [...]

Owner: A música, a atmosfera, o falar português. Mais fácil, né. E aí eles se tornam um pouquinho mais exigentes por causa disso também. Às vezes eu penso: se eles tivessem em um restaurante inglês ou europeu eles estariam se comportando assim? Porque às vezes a gente tem que respirar fundo e pensar: eles estão aqui curtindo o momento deles. É como se fosse bem importante, vir comer picanha com arroz e feijão, é o momento, você percebe isso. Então a gente faz este momento ser especial para a pessoa. Você escolhe o tipo de música que quer ouvir: 'Pode tocar o Dudu Nobre, colocar sertaneja?' A pessoa acho que viaja de volta para casa.

	<b>FEIJOADA</b> BLACK BEANS, PORK, SAUSAGES, SALTED BEEF, STEW SERVED WITH RICE AND GREENS. ACOMPANHA ARROZ E COUVE		
	<b>STARTERS</b> <b>GRILLED BRAZILIAN SAUSAGES WITH ONIONS</b> CALABREZA - ACEBOLADA <b>MEAT GIGQUETTE</b> - CROQUETTES DE CARNE <b>CHEESE BREAD</b> - PÃO DE QUEIJO <b>FRIES</b> - BATATA FRITA <b>FRIED YAM</b> - MANDIOCA FRITA <b>BREADED FRIED PRAWNS</b> - CAMARÃO FRITO EM PANADO <b>FRIED PRAWNS WITH SHELL</b> - CAMARÃO FRITO COM CASCA <b>FRIED PRAWNS WITHOUT SHELL</b> - CAMARÃO FRITO S/ CASCA <b>RIBE</b> - MINCED BEEF + WHEAT GRAIN WITH MINT LEAVES <b>COPISIN CAKE</b> - BOLINHO DE BACALHAU <b>FRIED CHICKEN</b> - FRANGO A PASSARINHO <b>PORK SCRATCHING</b> - TORREIÃO <b>PRAWNS RISsoles</b> - RISsoles DE CAMARÃO <b>CRAB IN THE SHELL</b> - CASQUINHA DE SIRI (CHICKEN IF IS IN STOCK) <b>FRIED FROG LEGS</b> - RÃ FRITA <b>BREADED FRIED FISH</b> - PEÇA DE PEIXE À MILANESA (TILAPIA) <b>CHICKEN HEART</b> - CORAÇÃO DE FRANGO <b>CHICKEN GIZZARD</b> - MOLELA DE FRANGO <b>OLIVES</b> - AZEITONAS <b>SALTED BEEF WITH FRIED YAM</b> - CARNE SECA COM MANDIOCA FRITA <b>MINI PASTEL PORTION</b> - PORÇÃO DE MINI PASTEL <b>BREADED CHEESE BALLS PORTION</b> - PORÇÃO DE BOLINHAS DE QUEIJO		
	<b>SOUP OF THE DAY</b>		
	<b>SALADS</b> <b>FRESH MOZZARELLA AND TOMATOES</b> - MOZZARELLA, FRESCA E TOMATES <b>PRIMAVERA</b> - LETTUCE, TOMATO, OLIVES AND ONIONS <b>HEART OF PALM SALAD</b> - LETTUCE, TOMATE, CHLODAR, HEART OF PALM, OLIVES AND OLIVES		
	<b>GRILLED SPECIAL - CARNES NA CHAPA</b> £7.00 (SELECTED BRAZILIAN SLICED BEEF, GRILLED WITH ONION, SERVED WITH BREAD - ACEBOLADO COM PÃO) <b>RIBAP</b> - Picanha £10.00 <b>SIRLOIN</b> - CONTRA-FILE £10.00 <b>RIB-EYE</b> - FILE £10.00 <b>CHICKEN BREAST</b> - FILE DE FRANGO (WITH CHEESE - COM QUEIJO) + £2.50 £10.00		
	<b>GRILLS - GRELHADOS</b> £3.00 CHOOSE YOUR GRILL AND TWO OPTIONS: £4.00 RICE - BEANS - CHIPS - SALAD £4.00 ESCOLHA SEU GRELHADO E DOIS ACOMPANHAMENTOS £6.00 ARROZ - FEIJÃO - FRITAS - SALADA £8.00 <b>RIBAP STEAK</b> - Picanha £9.00 <b>RIB - EYE STEAK</b> £9.00 <b>SIRLOIN STEAK</b> - CONTRA FILE £9.00 <b>CHICKEN BREAST</b> - FEITO DE FRANGO £8.00 <b>PORK MEAT</b> - CARNE DE PORCO £8.00 <b>POW</b> - PEIXE £8.00 <b>MIX GRILL</b> - CHURRASCO MISTO (BEEF, CHICKEN & PORK) £10.00 <b>T-BONE STEAK</b> - BISTECÃO £12.00 <b>MIX SKEWERS</b> - MISTO DE ESPETINHO £10.00 (CHICKEN AND BEEF - FRANGO E CARNE)		
	<b>BAKED</b> £4.00 <b>COW RIBS WITH TWO OPTIONS</b> (SEE GRILLS) £8.00 £6.00 COSTELES DE VACA, ACOMPANHADA DE DUAS PORÇÕES (MESMAS PORÇÕES DO GRILL) <b>PARMEGGIANA</b> ITALIAN WY - BREADED COVERED WITH TOMATO SAUCE AND MELTED CHEESE, SERVED WITH RICE AND FRIES ACOMPANHA ARROZ E FRITAS <b>CHICKEN BREAST</b> - FEITO DE FRANGO £10.00 <b>BEEF - RIBE</b> £10.00 <b>AUSBERGINS</b> - BERINGELA £8.00		

Figure 3.25 Barraco's menu

Barraco was one of the first Brazilian restaurants in London to recognise that Brazilians clients came in search of the experience of 'travelling back home'. The role of specific regional food in this dislocation was highlighted as particularly important, leading to development of a menu that reflects the tastes of a varied Brazilian clientele:

The menu has improved... When we started it was more improvised. We started with *feijoada*, *picanha*, grilled fish. From the beginning we wanted to offer grilled meat. Brazilian beef... We always have Brazilian beef. Afterwards we introduced *moqueca*, risotto, manioc fried balls; we added more things to our menu. We did not originally have *moqueca* in the menu. People from Bahia would come and say: 'Why haven't you got *moqueca*, *bobó de camarão*, *escondidinho*?' Sometimes we knew it but had never tried cooking it. Then you look for [recipes], sometimes what we eat when we go to Brazil... We become interested: 'Why not? What's *escondidinho* like?' I have a house in Salvador, when we went there we ate *escondidinho* and *bobó*. 'So, that's it? Let's take it to the restaurant!' So we have them as specials on weekends; they are not on the fixed menu. Braised beef with tomato sauce... 'So you haven't got rolled beef like my mother's?' We make it... We are not limited to the menu...<sup>23</sup>  
(Interview with P., owner, 23/09/2010)

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<sup>23</sup> G: Como era a comida no início?

Owner: O menu melhorou, no começo era mais improvisado. Começou com a feijoada, a picanha, o peixe grelhado. A gente já de cara entrou com a proposta: é uma casa de carnes grelhadas. Carne brasileira, sempre tem carne brasileira. Depois foi a moqueca, o risotto, os bolinhos de mandioca, fomos aumentando o nosso menuzinho. Sempre com a aquela proposta da comida caseira... Aquele negócio: preço bom, quantidade grande, que o cliente vem, come... De tanto ver e ir em restaurantes brasileiros aqui, não estar satisfeito com o preço, a qualidade... Os brasileiros não tinham um lugar assim para ir. Só tinham o Rico, que é caro, é diferente, outro estilo, não é aconhegante, não tem música. Bem caseiro...

G: Como é que é este negócio das pessoas sugerirem pratos? Existe uma tendência de algum lugar do Brasil?

Owner: A moqueca foi ... a gente não tinha, os Bahianos vinham e diziam: 'Não tem a moqueca, o bobó de camarão, o escondidinho'. Às vezes a gente conhecia, mas não tinha se aventurado a fazer. Você procura, às vezes vai no Brasil e come ... E a gente foi se interessando, por que não? Como é o escondidinho? Aí, eu tenho casa em Salvador, a gente foi e comeu o tal escondidinho, o bobó. Ah, é isso... Então vamos trazer para o restaurante. Por que você perde, se tivesse iria vender. Então, a gente faz os especiais de final de semana, estes pratos não são todos que tem no menu fixo. Bife recheado, que restaurante que tem? Aquela carniinha de panela com



**Figure 3.26 Barraco bar and restaurant**

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molhinho de tomate... 'Ah, então não tem aquele bife rolê, igual ao que a minha mãe fazia?'  
Vamos fazer... Não é aquele negócio de ficar limitado ao menu e falar para o cliente...





Figure 3.27 Barraco: 'homely' feeling and 'home' cooked food

This trend of composing the menu based on the wishes and suggestions of clients was a practice found among many of the restaurants I visited. Chefs and owners had a close relationship with the appetite of Brazilian clients:

We are used to people calling and asking if there's *tutu de feijão*. If there is not, we make it. And *pudim* for dessert.<sup>24</sup> (Interview with P., owner, 23/09/2010)

They ask: "Do you have *pequi* to put in the pizza?" I say "No..." Because it's not the taste of the majority, it's not something that everybody likes. *Catupiry* was something most of the Brazilians are used to, so that we made an effort to get it, but *pequi* no! (risos) I myself don't like *pequi*, but *pequi* is something they like. Another thing is *açaí*, we have juice and everybody ask if we have *açaí*. But then again, it doesn't appeal to people from the South, but people from the North, North East they're really keen to have that. And, wow, black beans and the beans from my state as well, Minas Gerais. Everybody likes *feijão tropeiro*; that is something...<sup>25</sup> (Interview with A., owner, 08/10/2009)

The other day they wrote a list [of dishes]. The other day I cooked oxtail broth and someone asked: 'Why don't you cook a manioc one?' (...) a lot of people say I should cook *acarajé*... I have never done that in my life. I should try once a month...<sup>26</sup> (interview with E., owner, 15/07/2010)

Of course, it was not possible to follow up and agree with all clients' suggestions. The owner of a small café which specializes in pasties (Katavento Pastéis, Figure 40) told me that he adopted a different approach:

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<sup>24</sup> Owner: (...) A gente acostuma que o pessoal liga e pergunta se tem *tutu de feijão*. Quando não tem, passa a ter. A gente costuma a fazer. E o *pudim* para sobremesa.

<sup>25</sup> Interview in English.

<sup>26</sup> Owner: Fizeram muito. Outro dia fizeram uma lista. Outro dia fiz um *caldinho de mocotó* e um pediu: 'Porquê não faz um *caldinho de mandioca*? (...) Muita gente que fala que podia fazer *acarajé*... nunca fiz na vida. Vez por outra alguém fala isso. Deveria tentar um vez ao mês, nem que fosse...

People ask for many things: *feijoada*, black beans, but I want to specialize not diversify. People ask for *caldo-de-cana* as they used to have it in the markets back in Brazil. The problem is that it would be very expensive to provide it here. They also ask for a vinaigrette sauce; in Brazil it would just be on the counter for people to help themselves. Here it would never be allowed for health and safety reasons. (Interview with F., owner, 07/10/2010)

Brazilian restaurants catering for Brazilians were under pressure to present a menu that accommodated the tastes of a clientele from different regional origins and tastes. This problem was tackled in different ways. Sometimes, customers themselves came to teach a dish to the chef, as in the case of Tia Maria, who had someone coming to cook *rabada* (oxtail). Alternatively, restaurants would hire chefs to cook for ‘themed nights’ which would showcase Brazilian regional music and food (especially from Goiás, Minas Gerais and Bahia). An alternative was to offer basic fare that appealed to Brazilians from all regions. They knew well what the Brazilian anthropologist argued:

In Brazil, the combination ‘rice-and-beans’ is the daily food of Brazilians, regardless of class, ethnic and regional origin. This combination may vary slightly, but generally a Brazilian’s main meal will have beans, rice, meat (pork, beef, poultry) or fish and salad. Even when a ‘main dish’ is served, rice and beans tend to come as side dishes; they are mandatory in at least one meal of the day (Maciel, 2004: 31)<sup>27</sup>.

These two quotes (do you mean the preceding two or is there one missing?) illustrate perfectly what I have encountered in my field work:

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<sup>27</sup> ‘No Brasil, ultrapassando as diferenciações regionais, de classe social ou de origem étnica, há uma combinação alimentar que marca o cotidiano, constituindo-se na comida básica do brasileiro: o “feijão-com-arroz”. Essa combinação pode variar, mas, em geral, o prato da refeição principal do brasileiro constitui-se na mistura de feijão, arroz, carne (de porco, gado, ave ou peixe) e salada. Mesmo quando é servido um “prato principal”, arroz e feijão costumam ser servidos como acompanhamentos, sendo, dessa forma, quase que obrigatórios em pelo menos uma das refeições do dia’.



whatever region or whichever social class Brazilians came from they would carry on eating rice and beans on a regular basis given the opportunity. 'Cooking for Brazilians is not difficult', affirmed T., the owner/cook of a Brazilian café tucked into a gallery in Charing Cross Road. 'All they want is home cooked food'. On the other hand, the places that I came across in my fieldwork took the idea of Brazilian food well beyond the rice and beans combination and closer to 'fast food'. However, for many Brazilians that is not 'proper' food as the owner of a Brazilian pizzeria explains:

It's funny: before we had rice and beans on the menu, people would come and say: 'Do you sell food?', 'Of course, we are a restaurant! We sell food.', 'Oh, so give me rice and beans!' I said: 'Not, we are a restaurant but we serve pizza, sandwich, ribs...' 'That's not food!' (...). 'What is food for you?' 'Food for us is rice, beans and meat!' (...) Pizza is pizza, pizza is a treat. Sandwich is a treat, is something that you don't have every day, whereas rice and beans is something you must have every day because that's food! (Interview in English with A., owner 08/10/2009)

Many of these commercial outlets served daily food for Brazilian workers: couriers, cleaners and receptionists who want a hot plate of food. These were mentioned as being the regular clients. There were also Brazilian clients who came more at the weekends, usually families and students, or people who live far away. Some of these cafés were quite small and did not even have cooking facilities and/or a licence to cook on the premises. Cafe Brasileiro, in Islington (Figure 3.29) was dubbed by a client as 'food in the hole'. In these cases, the owners cook at home. Small portions of rice, beans, meat stew are cooked at home and frozen in individual portions. They are then brought to the premises where the food will be micro waved and the portions arranged on a plate and served to the client; this system is called '*prato-feito*' or 'PF' (a plate prepared by the waiter consisting of rice, beans, meat and salad or vegetables, Figure 3.28 and 3.29). For the owners, it is a more efficient method as portion sizes can be accurately controlled and a meal can be reheated when required

thus leading to less food waste as compared to a buffet service where the food is exposed and goes to waste if not consumed.



**Figure 3.28 Bello Cafe and a 'prato feito'**



**Figure 3.29 Marinho, owner of Cafe Brasileiro and his 'prato feito'**



**Figure 3.30 Sabor Brasileiro's façade and buffet**

The buffet system (by kilo at £12 - or eat as much as you like from £6. 50 to £9) is also another popular system of serving food. Buffets usually serve rice, beans, boiled manioc, sautéed greens, mayonnaise salad, fried plantain, salads etc. The vast majority of cafés also sell traditional Brazilian snacks, cakes and sweets (*brigadeiros, beijinhos, bolo de cenoura, nega maluca, prestigio, empada de palmito, coxinha, pao de queijo*). A number of places will also provide snacks, cakes and sweets for parties; others rely on suppliers such as *Gula* snacks, or smaller home-based catering enterprises (whose reliability was an issue according to some cafe owners). Most of these places offer take away as well (what in Brazil is called *marmitex*) consisting of the same rice and beans offering. In areas where there is a strong Brazilian presence food is delivered at home.

**Table 3.7 List of Brazilian restaurants and cafés catering mainly for Brazilian clients**

**Source: author's research**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>% of Brazilian clients</b>
<b>Bello Cafe</b>	WC2	95%
<b>Cafe Victoria Grove</b>	N16	90%
<b>Lanchonete café</b>	N15	90%
<b>Oi Brasil cafe and restaurant</b>	N15	90%
<b>Corcovado Bar &amp; Restaurant</b>	NW10	90%
<b>Delicias do Brasil café grocery and meat shop</b>	NW10	90%
<b>Tradicao de Portugal/Delicias do Brasil</b>	NW10	90%
<b>Little Brazilian Coffee</b>	NW10	90%
<b>Brazil Express Café and Grocery canny</b>	E15	90%
<b>Raizes Bar and Restaurant</b>	E2	90%
<b>Tia Maria bar and restaurant</b>	SW8	80%
<b>Victoria Tropical Cafe/grocery shop</b>	SW1	80%
<b>Cafe do Brasil</b>	NW10	80%
<b>Gostosa Pizzeria</b>	NW10	80%
<b>Ipanema Café</b>	W2	80%
<b>Katavento Pastelaria</b>	SW19	70%

Sabor Brasileiro Restaurant	NW10	70%
X- Burguer	NW6	70%

Not only beans, rice and regional specials cross the borders to participate in the making of a Brazilian diasporic cuisine. Fast food Brazilian style, such as pizza and burgers, are also being marketed at Brazilians in London. This move reflects not only how global food trends have been incorporated into Brazilian palates in Brazil but also how these trends are appropriated by Brazilians who, through a process of adding and changing, come to consider them as their own 'culinary culture'. This interview with the owner of *Gostosa Pizzeria* (Figure 3.31) gives a hint of this process:

In Brazil I had a company specializing in parties, children's' parties, entertainment (...). I am from Minas Gerais, Uberlândia - it is in the heart of Brazil (South East). I decided to come here like everybody, with a broken heart. After the end of a nine year relationship I decided to come to England to stay three months, but by the first month my money ran out and I decided to work. I graduated here in English and I decided to do a Postgraduate course in Languages. In Brazil I have a degree in French and Portuguese. So here I decided to do French and Spanish.

When I arrived here nine years ago there weren't any Brazilian stores or shops [in this area] you wouldn't find Brazilian food at all. So I told him [her then friend and now business partner]: "Please, make me a pizza, but Brazilian style!", and he did and he said "Wow! What will we call this pizza?" I said: "For me, it's *gostosa!*" Which means tasty, hot and it is a very ambiguous word, you can use it for food or for women and many kinds of things..." So he did that pizza *gostosa* and it was really delicious. He decided to put it on the menu (...) but that was six years ago. So he did and it was a success because the Brazilian community was already growing, so it was a success in less than a month (...) with the Brazilian community.

And then after that, three years ago, I told him he was wasting money in that place. He could have a better restaurant, eating in, not only a takeaway. And it started really small, he decided to change and the response was fantastic. We had people queuing outside because we didn't have enough tables - we had two tables. After that we moved on to five tables and today we have nine tables and we are going upstairs as well where we will fit eight more tables; because the response was very good. So from pizza, we went [to make] sandwiches as well - all Brazilian style. And now we have the main Brazilian dishes, the best known that is *feijoada*, beef *stroganoff*, rice with beans, this sort of thing. We still do the takeaway, delivery as well as eating in. For the eating in, we have customers that will come almost every day, and customers that will come every weekend because they live outside London. So they come especially to have Brazilian pizza or our Brazilian burger because they miss home, I think. It's a step to feeling close to home to come to a place where they can listen to Brazilian music, talk Portuguese and eat Brazilian food.

Graça: What do you think is special about Brazilian pizza?

It's the ingredients, it's the mixture. We are very adventurous in mixing spices and that kind of food ?thing. Like *gostosa* pizza has eleven toppings, the maximum you normally get in London is five (...)

One of our *pizzaiolos*, is Italian and when he sees pizzas such as *gostosa* or Portuguesa, which have eleven and nine toppings respectively, he says that it is a bad thing. How can we eat something that resembles a soup, where you cannot taste anything because there are so many ingredients? We [Brazilians] think the more the better. He says: 'We invented the pizza!' I say: 'No, you didn't. It was the Chinese!' (Laughs). (Interview with A. owner, 08/10/2009)



Figure 3.31 Gostosa Pizzeria: interior, flyer and façade



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Figure 3.32 X Burger House's flyer



Figure 3.33 Pastel and guaraná from Katavento Pastéis

### 3.5 Emotional geographies of displacement, homesickness and remembrance

I would like just to signal here themes that will be explored in more detail in subsequent chapters which relate to the emotional aspects of displacement. The first relates to the multi sensorial capacity of food. As I pointed out in the introduction familiar smells, tastes and the visual mnemonics of brands bridge time and space for displaced Brazilians. An example of this is the way in which the smells of spices would make a chef return to the micro cosmos of grandmother's kitchen:

Yes, it is interesting. I use cumin and every single time I marinate meat with it, it reminds me of my grandmother and her kitchen which is in another state - Mato Grosso ( not where I come from) - so straight away it reminds me of her and my childhood when we would go on holiday and she would marinate with it, and the smell reminds of my childhood holidays in my grandmother's house.

Graça: How was her kitchen?

Her kitchen was very big. I don't know if it seemed big because we were tiny, but it was a very big kitchen and a very big backyard with all sorts of spices so we should get the cumin for her...[...] It's to marinate meat so it would taste really good... meatballs...<sup>28</sup> (Interview with A., owner, 08/10/2009)

These memories were also registered in body gestures repeated every single cooking time. J., a cook from Minas Gerais, told me that he learnt to cook with his grandmother. When she seasoned food she would always do it three times. One day he asked her why. She said that it was a religious gesture in honour of the Trinity. J. still repeats this habit unconsciously.

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<sup>28</sup> Interview in English



Sensorial and emotional experiences provoked by the smells, noises, colours and signs present in immigrants' shops are powerful 'mnemonic cues' (Holtzman 2006). They are reminders of the homeland and constitute an important aspect in the consumption experience. For Brazilians, Guarana Antarctica was cited as the brand that most triggers feelings of nostalgia for consumers, despite not being the most popular brand of soft drink in Brazil. Confectionery such as peanut brittle is also a powerful reminder of Brazilian childhood. *Coxinha* and *pão de queijo* - typical Brazilian snacks - likewise trigger everyday gastronomic memories. Tropical fruit pulp juices make people talk about their own backyards and gardens. "We serve juices and people from different regions in Brazil come here. They say "Ah, I had a cashew tree." And go on talking about it.

However, a reminder of home does not always have positive connotations. The two cases I present here illustrate how painful the relationship between 'here and there' can be for immigrants. Familiar smells and tastes may take people back to their kitchen table but what happened there may bring painful memories of domestic and family life. These painful memories are sometimes shared with the staff in Brazilian commercial outlets. A., a Brazilian waiter told me that food is the trigger for good and bad memories:

They tell me things that I'd better keep my mouth shut about. They talk a lot. They tell family stories. Some are pleasant, others not so. (...) You hear stories about that father who got drunk and violent. <sup>29</sup>(Interview with A., waiter, 08/10/2009)

For many migrant workers, to go out and eat Brazilian food is a very special treat, one that perhaps in Brazil they could not afford. A., the owner of a

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<sup>29</sup> Waiter: Falam de coisas que é melhor ficar calado! Mas falam sim, falam bastante coisa. Porque você começa a ter aquelas histórias de família. Às vezes você ouve relatos, é claro, agradáveis e outros não tão agradáveis.(...) É, porque aí você tem a história daquele pai que bebia e que agredia.

Brazilian pizzeria, told me about the guilt felt by mothers who left their children in Brazil:

Usually you get mothers thinking... most of them come here to earn money to help relatives, their families back home. Usually they say they get sad and they feel guilty because they are eating in a restaurant, spending money while their family is struggling back home and depending on them for financial help, so sometimes they feel guilty to be eating when they know, or don't know whether, their family back home is having a hard time.<sup>30</sup> (Interview with A., owner, 08/10/2009)

The second theme concerns how the feelings of displacement are acted upon by Brazilian commerce: through advertisements; by describing the whole food sector as selling to homesick Brazilians (*'economia da saudade'*) and by creating spaces where home can be reproduced and remembered under diasporic circumstances. 'Saudade', a deeply charged Brazilian word which has been described as a 'deeply yearning someone or something profoundly missed' (Duarte, 2005) partly describes the complex feelings of being 'out of place'. The suggestion that consuming familiar food may provide the possibility of being transported to the 'whole world of home' (Sutton, 2001: 82), even if momentarily, and relieving oneself from the 'emotional overload' of living in a foreign land is a common feeling among migrants, as pointed out by Sutton. When I asked an owner of a Brazilian butcher's shop if his clients expressed feelings of homesickness or if they shared memories of Brazil he said that the opposite happened: "[They tell me about] the barbecues they have eaten in London. They comment on how they have 'killed homesickness': 'I made a barbecue' or 'I went to eat at my friends'".<sup>31</sup> (Interview with R., owner, 01/10/2009). Cooking and preparing familiar foods makes them feel at home.

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<sup>30</sup> Interview in English

<sup>31</sup> Owner: Não. Aqui acontece muito o contrário. É "eu matei a saudade do Brasil!" Eu fiz um churrasco" ou "Eu fui num churrasco do meu amigo...". A gente faz uma linguiça, a gente faz 4-5 tipos de linguiças que é o mesmo procedimento brasileiro - mesmíssimo: tempero, o tipo de fazer e como tem que ser feito é o mesmo padrão brasileiro. Aí eles falam às vezes: "Matei a saudade, matei a vontade de comer churrasco na casa de um amigo."

Brazilian food outlets in London are popular for more than just their food. Brazilian businesses foster a strong relationship with customers, as they offer emotional support for homesick clients (who of course become faithful clients):

She came with swollen, red eyes and said to me: "Do you have an antidepressant? A *quindim*, a *pudim* [Brazilian desserts]?" (laughs) I said to her: "Come here..." I hugged her and she cried and cried... I said to her: "I'll get you a *pudim*!". "But I wanted my grandma's *quindim*!" "Dear child, I cannot get you grandma's, but I will make one for you, tomorrow you can eat a *quindim*" (laughs). Nowadays I offer myself [without them asking]. Everything is an antidepressant, isn't it? Because really, the majority of the clients miss home.<sup>32</sup>(Interview with R., owner, 01/10/2009)

Two weeks ago a young girl, she was in Scotland for nine months and she worked in a hotel - it's like a resort in the middle of nowhere, and people go there to do water sports - so the next village is half an hour by car and she was completely isolated in the middle of nowhere. She came with a friend and she asked for a bowl of beans, and I asked her: "Do you want anything else?" She was like: "No, please, I just want beans!" And then when I served her beans, she started crying. I nearly cried with her! I was like, what happened? And you can see that she is from the upper-class and it is not that she was starving or anything like that, but she missed beans and she had to call her mother and tell her: "Mom, I am eating beans! This is the happiest day of my life! In these 9 months I spent two days that were the happiest days of my life!"<sup>33</sup> (Interview with A., owner, 08/10/2009)

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<sup>32</sup> Owner: Ela chegou com o olho inchado assim pra mim: "Ah, você tem um antidepressivo, hein? Tipo um *quindim*, um *pudim*?" (risos) Aí eu falei: "Vem cá!...", aí abracei, ela ficou deitada, chorou, soluçou... Daí eu falei assim: "Tem, vou te dar um *pudim*!". "Mas eu queria um *quindim* da minha vó!", aí eu disse assim: "Ah, filha, da tua avó não dá, mas eu faço um, amanhã você come *quindim*" (risos) Agora eu ofereço. Tudo é antidepressivo, né? Porque, realmente, a maioria dos clientes agora é porque tá com saudades de casa. (D. R.)

<sup>33</sup> Interview in English

.....it is as if when you feel [homesick] you want to share it... and kill homesickness ... there's no family here. There are a lot of people who come here to talk. My husband sits down at the table to talk to them. They say, put this on the menu, why don't you prepare this that my mother used to make, they bring recipes; that's a nice thing, we are open to this.<sup>34</sup> (Interview with P., owner, 23/09/2010)

Having a place where people can go to eat 'mother's food', chat and reminisce, re-creates the possibility of 'making home' again. "They take a little trip to Brazil whilst eating" says S., the owner of a café/restaurant and a market stall in Vauxhall and Brick Lane Market.

It is true, people comment: 'Every Sunday my mother would make this manioc cake'. The other day a guy went to the market, after he finished eating he said: 'For me, my mum's chicken lasagne was the best in the world. I don't know if it is because I am far away, but yours is just like hers.' Food triggered in him a desire to go back, to be home. It makes a person remember.<sup>35</sup>(Interview with S., owner, 22/10/2009)

Such emotional geographies of displacement are an important part of how migrants experience daily life and construct their diasporic selves. Brazilian food places allow the sharing of these banal and localized forms of remembrance, provoked by smells and tastes: the kitchen, the table, the backyard, the family... By doing so they may trigger a desire to go back. More importantly, through tastes and aromas Brazilian food commerce creates

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<sup>34</sup> Owner: Tem bastante, e como se ao se sentir a vontade queira dividir um pouco... também matar a saudade... não tem a família aqui. Tem muita gente que vem aqui para conversar. Também com os clientes, senta na mesa, principalmente meu marido. Eles dizem, põe isso no menu, faz isso que a minha vó fazia, trazem receitas, isso é legal, a gente está aberto para isso.

<sup>35</sup> Owner: É verdade. A gente percebe, conversando, que "Puxa, a minha mãe todo domingo fazia o bolo de mandioca! Minha mãe todo domingo fazia essa lasanha de galinha!". Esses dias foi um rapaz na feira que foi até interessante: ele terminou de comer e virou e falou assim: "Poxa, pra mim, a lasanha de frango da minha mãe era a melhor que existia no mundo. Mas eu não sei se é porque eu tô longe, mas a sua tá igualzinha a dela." Então despertou um sentimento de voltar, estar em casa. Faz lembrar. A pessoa, quando procura, é pra matar uma saudade.

spaces where home can be re-lived and re-created under diasporic circumstances which may assuage homesickness.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This discussion about Brazilian food provision in London has highlighted how the spread of food commerce has allowed the development of a notion of 'Brazilianess'- both as a category and as a cultural-culinary form. This 'Brazilianess' I have argued, is not an essentialised cultural form travelling untroubled across national borders but is 'on the move and on the making'. In fact, dishes and culinary forms which are presented in London as 'Brazilian' would not have such national framing in Brazil. Displacement recreates, reinforces and re-signifies national identification.

The setting up of importing systems by Brazilian entrepreneurs was central to the development of a stronger Brazilian food scene in London, as it allowed the expansion of the Brazilian grocery trade and the establishment of a more varied circuit of food provision – ranging from grocery shops, butchers, cafés and restaurants.

As I signalled before, bringing the chefs narratives to the fore has given me precious insights into the process of re-creation of Brazilian diasporic food culture. Alongside imported products and brands, chefs provide a material connection to Brazil. By adapting, researching, creating and incorporating they make it possible that some sort of 'Brazilianess'-- as a culinary form – is re-created and re-signified outside Brazil.

The processes of 'displacement' relating to food become more pronounced in its link with diasporic longing. Here, it is where Brazilian culinary culture reigns absolute in London's culinary landscape, as it affords the diasporic subject 'a trip back home'. In this sense, owners, chefs, staff and Brazilian clients are involved in a dialectic process: Brazilian culinary culture is defined by the tastes of clients since owners and chefs are open to their suggestions. Longing, remembering and consuming home is what 'economia da

saudade' is all about. 'Brazilianess' as a cultural and culinary category is a constant compromise between diasporic longings and tastes, mainstream tastes, chefs' abilities and entrepreneurial activities.

Whilst this chapter has focused on the provision side and therefore based on the provider's account, the next chapter turns to an investigation of the consumption habits of Brazilian migrants through a series of focus groups.



### 3.7 Introduction

Consumption studies have proliferated in the last decades (to cite just a few: Shove et al., 2007, Miller, 1995, Miller, 1997, Jackson, 1999, Valentine, 1999, Mackay, 1997, Warde, 1997, Clarke, 2003, Fine and Leopold, 1993, Lury, 1996, Illouz, 2009) following the rise of consumer societies in the Western world in the second half of the twentieth century (Bocock, 1993). This increased interest has brought important changes to how consumption is understood. Whereas up until the 1980s scholars influenced by a Marxist view framed private consumption as negative and alienating, in the decades since the consumer has increasingly been cast as an active agent, creative and self-reflexive (Gronow and Warde, 2001a, Miller, 1995). However, as Tilley phrased it 'the development of various practices and sites for consumption has claimed to be the new key to unlock an understanding of our modernity and the way in which we come to know ourselves. If alienation is an intrinsic condition of our relationship to goods in Western society, it has been recognised that people convert these alienated things into meaningful possessions by endowing them with subjective meaning in relation to ethnicity, gender, social roles and status (Tilley, 2001: 266 following Bourdieu, 1984 and de Certeau, 1986).

Consumption has now been defined in academic studies as going beyond the act of purchase to encompass 'the complex sphere of social relations and discourses which centre on the sale, purchase and use of commodities' (Mansvelt, 2005: 6). This more comprehensive notion of consumption brings together 'a range of material and symbolic practices and meanings which centre on the sale, choice and selection of goods and services, and their purchase, use, reuse, or resale and disposal' (Mansvelt, 2005: 6).

Food consumption does not lend itself easily to theorizing, as both Warde (1997: 181) and Mintz (1993) warn. First of all, food is not experienced in exactly the same way as the consumption of other goods. It has its own distinctive materiality and relationship to the embodied consumer. Eating is a transient act: once food is eaten it is gone. Secondly, food is so intertwined with other equally important aspects of everyday life that its consumption does not



follow a single rationale. Apart from traditional variables such as price, income, nutrition and preferences, food consumption patterns can also be influenced by 'ritual, taboo, folklore, culture, energetics, emulation, differentiation, ecology, habit, aversion, craving, intimacy, security, love, deprivation, religion, status, control, palatability, veneration, etc.' (Fine and Leopold, 1993).

Studies of food consumption and demand among ethnic minorities are relatively scarce. Those studies that exist have looked at the role food plays in the adaptation process of international students in the UK (Brown, 2009, Petridou, 2001); the central position of food practices in the lives of Iranian women by providing an accessible means to reinforce, modify or transform identities (Harbottle, 1996); the attitudes and behaviours of Hispanics living in Belgium in relation to mainstream Belgian food (Verbeke and López, 2005); and the relations between the consumption patterns of migrants and processes of acculturation (Jamal, 1998, Jamal, 2005, Harbottle, 1996, Zmud and Arce, 1992, Orozco, 2008, Laroche et al., 1998, Cruz et al., 2004, Renne, 2007, Burton, 2002).

It is not the purpose of this chapter to uncover all the reasons behind Brazilian migrants' food consumption choices. Rather, the intention is to paint the wider picture of the food practices of Brazilians in London. The data analysed here was collected from focus group discussions with Brazilians living in London where practices, attitudes, opinions, and habits with regard to the consumption of 'Brazilian' food were explored. Of course, the results cannot be used to make a statement about the whole Brazilian community. They are indicative of a range of views and opinions, but not necessarily of their distribution.

Three principle discursive themes emerged from the data collected: 1) Eating and preparing 'Brazilian food' was considered as a continuation of a habit; 2) Eating 'Brazilian food' filled an emotional need derived from a feeling of homesickness; and 3) Eating and preparing 'Brazilian' food was a way to display and construct a sense of 'Brazilianess' in London. These themes structure this chapter. Paralleling the materials from food providers discussed in the previous chapter, displacement was again a central issue for the food consumption experience. Moving from one country to other certainly broke

established patterns of food consumption, leading to adaptations in eating habits and strategies to find channels of provision of familiar foods. Being far from home provoked desires and emotions of longing and homesickness which were partially assuaged with the consumption of familiar foods and the reproduction of home cooking. Furthermore, in their encounter with different food cultures, displaced Brazilians used food to establish difference from others thus allowing them to construct a self and collective image of 'Brazilianess'.

It is important to note again that ascribing the term 'Brazilian' to food poses certain problems. Although there was a common food language among the participants, no two Brazilian people shared exactly the same eating habits. There were variances in what was considered to be 'Brazilian' food. Rural, urban and regional differences, age, size of family and ethnicity accounted for a diversity of experiences when it came to eating habits. For example, the social aspects of eating were framed by some of the participants in terms of differences between rural and urban experiences. Participants who came from a more rural background emphasised how eating together with friends and family was an important part of their background. Geraldo and Tereza, a young Brazilian couple who come from the same state, São Paulo, commented on how the food habits of their families had little in common due to the differences between their urban and rural upbringings, as well as their ethnic backgrounds:

Tereza: Because I come from the countryside, the food from that area is very typical; there are a lot of characteristics of the food from Minas. They always cook the same food; I can list their weekend food. There is a lot of difference because Gustavo is from the capital and his father is Portuguese. We always noticed there was a lot of difference in the way we ate at our parents' homes. Polenta, chicken or pork is considered weekend food at my house. In Gustavo's house they don't eat pork at weekends.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Tereza: Porque eu sou do interior e a comida é bem típica, muito parecida com a comida de Minas Gerais. Eles sempre cozinham as mesmas coisas, posso fazer uma lista da comida de final de semana. Tem muita diferença do G., que é da capital e o pai é português. Sempre notamos a diferença na maneira como comíamos na casa de nossos pais. Polenta, chicken and pork é

Other respondents also pointed out how their ethnic background had been an important aspect in shaping their food habits and in the creation of notions of 'Brazilianess' when they were growing up in Brazil. However, there were different outcomes. Fernando, a male in his early thirties, came from a Japanese immigrant family. Growing up, he was exposed to his parents' and grandparents' food traditions, but rejected Japanese food and preferred 'Brazilian' food. He elaborated on this in relation to rice:

Fernando: I only began to like it [Japanese food] when I was much older, around 22. For example, I had to ask my mother to cook Brazilian rice for me. I call it Brazilian rice because it is seasoned. She mostly cooked the Japanese style rice, which is not seasoned and has no taste, just like the rice you eat here.

Graça: And you called it Brazilian rice?

Fernando: Yes, because it is normal among Brazilian families and not in mine and I missed it. When I was in the Navy, where you are supposed to eat everything and the food was top quality, it was then that I began to like it more [Japanese rice]...<sup>37</sup>

Fernando eventually learnt to cook Japanese food 'in theory'; in practice he does not do it very often. Living on his own, he considers it to be fiddly and overly time consuming to do it on a daily basis. On the other hand, Cristina, a female in her late twenties, was closer to the food traditions of both her Italian and Polish migrant parents and still cooks a few of the dishes she grew up with (although she later said she prefers to cook simpler dishes that are more

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considerado comida de final de semana na minha casa. Na casa do G. eles não comem porco no final de semana.

<sup>37</sup> Fernando: Meus avós eram japoneses, então eu cresci, não comendo comida japonesa, mas vendo com bastante frequência.

Graça: Porque não comendo?

Fernando: Porque eu não gostava. Eu só comecei a gostar bem mais velho, com 22 anos. Mas por exemplo, o arroz brasileiro, eu chamo brasileiro porque é temperado. Eu tinha que pedir por favor para minha mãe fazer. Porque era só arroz japonês que é aquele arroz que não tem tempero nenhum. É água, arroz, fecha a panela e espera cozinhar. Não tem gosto nenhum. Que é o mesmo arroz que se come aqui.

Graça: E você chamava arroz brasileiro...

Fernando: Sim, porque é comum nas famílias brasileiras e na minha família não era e eu sentia muita falta. Mas muito pela questão da marinha, você acaba acostumado a comer de tudo e de tudo mesmo, da melhor qualidade e de todos os tipo de pratos possíveis. Aí eu voltei a gostar mais...

convenient). She did not consider her parents' food as 'Brazilian', as they did not cook beans very often, and therefore she did not 'have the habit' of cooking 'Brazilian' food (although she admits that she will eat it when her sister cooks and she will also go out in London just to eat Brazilian beans). Other participants identified with Italian food even if they did not come from an Italian family background, having lived in areas of Italian colonization where it was widely available. One of the female respondents, Tatiana, pointed out that she identifies more closely with Italian than with Brazilian food, although she has kept a Brazilian meal schedule. Katia, another young woman from a southern town in Brazil with a pronounced Italian migrant presence, patted her belly and said: 'there is a big Brazilian identity inside here' and nearly cried when she listed all the 'Italian' foods she missed.

The previous chapter showed how Brazilian food providers also differentiated their clienteles in relation to social class. This issue will be touched upon in the in-depth analyses of food outlets and household consumption practices that follow in Chapters Five and Six. However, this variation came through less strongly in the focus group discussions. This could be attributed in part to the sociology of migration discussed in Chapter Two; the poorest Brazilians from the lowest socio-economic groups do not have the means to migrate to London. However, it also reflects the fact that the majority of the focus group participants shared a similar socioeconomic background (middle and lower middle class in Brazil, documented in the UK), and as such discussions of class and income levels were awkward and resisted within the group dynamics. To reiterate, the relationship between social class and consumption does however get touched upon in later chapters, in particular in relation to household consumption.

## **3.8 Brazilian food consumption as a habit**

### **3.8.1 Changes**

Until comparatively recently, studies of routine consumption practices as part of everyday activity were comparatively rare, outweighed by studies that considered consumption in terms of its symbolic and communicative significance (Gronow and Warde, 2001a). According to Gronow and Warde (2001a: 4) 'actions which require little reflection, which communicate few social messages, which play no role in distinction, and which do not excite much passion or emotion' had been ignored in consumption studies, something that recent work with a more practical orientation has sought to counter and correct (Gronow and Warde, 2001b, Shove et al., 2007).

Chiming with such attention to the routines of everyday activity, for many participants in my focus groups food consumption patterns were articulated in terms of a habit or routine activity. They described being used to a particular kind of food which they grew up with, something which was part of their routine, which they perhaps never gave much thought to prior to their migration to the UK. Whilst recognising that food habits could change and were varied (as discussed above), nonetheless 'Brazilian food' was considered food with which they had a degree of familiarity and that was recognisable by taste, smell and appearance. It was when confronted by difference that the diasporic body explicitly recognised and claimed the habitual in terms of a national taste. For Geraldo, the ritual of enacting home through the smells and tastes of afternoon coffee – which could only be reproduced with Brazilian coffee - was reconfigured as the smell of Brazil. 'Brazilian food' also became defined through comparison to other food cultures. In the opinion of Mauro and Pastor Antonio, 'Brazilian' food was tastier, and better seasoned. Sandro, a young man from Goiás, testified that after spending a week in Brighton and trying a different restaurant every night he went home to cook Brazilian beans. '*Brazilian culture runs deeper*' he said.

Pastor Antonio: (...) I could not adapt to English food because I don't eat potato, and I don't eat a lot of bread. I would never get used to it.

G: What do you consider the English way?

Marta: It is to cook vegetables without seasoning, just with salt and water. I don't think you have to exaggerate on oil and salt, but you can use a bit of garlic and onions, because that is good for your health too. One of the things which make Brazilian food preferable is the seasoning. And if it is well balanced it is one the healthiest in the world, it has protein, carbohydrate....<sup>38</sup>

An important point to remember, as pointed out by Ilmonen (2001: 12 - 13) is that 'habits are followed without conscious reflection. We have to think about them only when we may face difficulties in applying ourselves to it. In this case, it was the participants' move to the UK that led to reconfigurations of their everyday routine of food consumption. Some of the participants who had recently moved to this country were coming to terms with the fact that their food habits, as they had known them in Brazil, were over (for a while at least). Leaving Brazil was to leave a whole dietary and culinary feeding infrastructure: they could not rely on parents, relatives or maids for cooking. Financial and time constraints, inaccessibility of Brazilian restaurants, limited cooking skills, poor shared cooking facilities, lack of ingredients, and different lifestyles were some of the factors which impeded a continuation of their 'Brazilian' food habits and impelled them to adjust their eating patterns to the new settings they inhabited in London.

Included in the 'Brazilian' food habits they considered to have changed was, for example, the normality of having a warm meal for lunch as part of their everyday routine (for a discussion of Brazilian food habits in Brazil see:

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<sup>38</sup> A comida pra mim tem que ter o tempero do tipo Brasil, da África, da Índia, mas sendo bem temperado, esta qualidade da comida me faz bem. Eu não me adaptaria assim à comida inglesa. Não, por que eu não como batata, eu não gosto muito. E pão, por exemplo, não como muito. De manhã com o café. Mas se você passar só com pão, só tomate, aquela coisa, não consigo (...) Eu não me adaptaria jamais eu acho.

Graça: O que você considera à moda inglesa?

Marta: É fazer legumes sem tempero, só com sal e água. Acho que não precisa exagerar no óleo e no sal por causa da saúde mas a gente pode colocar um pouquinho de alho e cebola que também é bom para a saúde. Então eu acho que neste fator a comida brasileira o que pesa muito é a questão do tempero. E outra coisa que eu acho, como tenho uma formação na área de saúde. A comida brasileira se for bem balanceada, ela é uma das comidas mais saudáveis do mundo. Você pode pensar na proteína, carboidrato ... Se você fizer uma combinação correta... O problema é que a gente não faz uma combinação correta a maioria das vezes.

Barbosa, 2007). Eating out at lunchtimes - a practice more affordable in Brazil - was considered expensive in London. Also they did not like the taste or trust the food served in restaurants in the UK. Thus, this routine had to be re-considered and they had to adapt to London's eating habits and to new ways of procuring food. For the respondents who were students and were living on a budget, for example, it was discussed that all they could afford for lunch were sandwiches, 'meal deals' from retailers / shops, and food from fast food chains.

Often working far away from home and juggling different jobs and activities, most people's eating routines had suffered modifications, changes dictated by their daily commitments outside the home. In one of the focus groups conducted in a Brazilian Pentecostal church, despite the fact that all the members lived in the same building and hence the same neighbourhood, each household had adapted their eating times differently. Marta, for example, did not have lunch most days because she went to school. Her main meal would be an evening supper between five and seven. On the other hand, another resident preferred to have a late lunch at two thirty and not to have dinner. Changes in lifestyle also influenced the way some Brazilian dishes were prepared. The 'Brazilian' way of making rice (seasoned with garlic and onions) was considered to be too time consuming for Verônica, a time starved model/student/mother, for example.

Verônica: The other day my mother came to have lunch with me and I cooked some rice. I did the practical way: rice, water and salt. She looked at me and said: 'What kind of rice is this?'

Graça: That's not the way I taught you, kind of thing...

Verônica: (laughs). 'No, it is easier this way, mother, than having to chop garlic, onion, let's be practical. She ate and did not complain too much.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Verônica: Estes dias eu tive a minha mãe comigo, e eu disse vou fazer uma arroz aqui para gente, tal... Eu fiz o mais prático, arroz, água e sal. Ela olhou para mim: que arroz é esse...

Graça: Não foi assim que eu te ensinei...

Verônica: Risos... Não, mais fácil mãe, para que ficar cortando alho, cebolinha, vamos ser práticas. Ela comeu, até que não reclamou muito não.

Simplified versions of certain dishes and a greater use of pre-prepared ingredients (such as canned pulses and readymade mixes) were strategies used to adapt Brazilian dishes to the domestic reality of everyday life in London. So, dishes which take a long time to cook, such as black beans, might be made with canned beans; and ready mixtures for recipes such as the all time favourite *pão de queijo* (cheese bread rolls) were also widely employed. Lack of time, cooking facilities and cooking skills meant that respondents relied on fast and frozen foods as major parts of their diets. For younger people, these changes were not perceived necessarily as a problem, due to the wide availability and accessibility of convenience food. They viewed these adaptations in their diet as necessary and they were positive about changing their tastes, as long as every now and again they ate beans and rice.

Fernando: I haven't cooked here yet because I live in shared accommodation and I have to share a kitchen and everything is a mess. That's ok; one has to get used to it. I had been living on my own in Brazil, and I like to have my own stuff. In the place where I live there are no plates and pans; I would have to buy everything and this is not something I would like to spend my money on right now.<sup>40</sup>

João: My experience with Brazilian food here in London is nil until today [I had provided a full Brazilian meal for the focus group]. I am very bad at cooking so I don't know when I am going to eat Brazilian food again. I am counting on Fernando as he mentioned he can cook. (...) but so far none of us have found a supermarket with the ingredients and I think it is not going to be a very easy mission. But I don't have a lot of restrictions

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<sup>40</sup> Fernando: Não, ainda não porque, como eu moro como se fosse numa república, é uma cozinha compartilhada, e uma bagunça por acaso no meu flat, mas tudo bem a gente se adapta. Então, como eu já moro sozinho há um certo tempo no Brasil, eu gosto de ter as minhas coisas, acho que não fica legal... Até por que aqui eu teria que comprar tudo. Nas residências você não tem panela, prato, você tem que comprar tudo. E não é uma coisa que eu gostaria de gastar dinheiro agora, principalmente porque quando eu voltar ao Brasil não quero ir cheio de malas, carregado de panelas.



in terms of food. My palate is well adapted and since I arrived I have eaten a lot of frozen food. It is working... I think I can survive the rest of my life on it... (Laughs) I adapt easily.<sup>41</sup>

Fernando: You get used to the taste of it...

Cristina: It changes a lot, because the culture here is different. You have to get used to it, there is no other way. Unless you cook or have someone to cook for you every day, you have to get used to eating cold sandwiches.<sup>42</sup>

João: I think I have adapted well to the food here. Today, for example, after eating black beans I 'killed the longing' for it, and I can go on for a month without missing it now. When I was living in London a group of Brazilians cooked a Brazilian lunch: 'feijoada', chicken risotto, roast beef, rice and toasted manioc flour, we filled our bellies. It was really good (...)<sup>43</sup>

This discussion of changes in food habits led on to a consideration of wider changes in the social and cultural aspects of routine food preparation at the domestic level. Most respondents who were in their twenties and thirties had relied on their mother, father and maids to prepare food for them in Brazil. They either had no skills or cooked very occasionally. In the UK it was therefore

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<sup>41</sup> João: A minha experiência com comida brasileira aqui em Londres era nula até hoje... (risos). Desde o tempo que eu cheguei há duas semanas, e pra complementar eu sou péssimo em cozinha, daí eu não sei quando que eu vou comer comida brasileira novamente. Eu estou contando muito com o Fábio. Ele falou que sabia cozinhar ...

Mas até o momento acho que nenhum dos dois ainda não achamos mercado com pimenta, feijão preto esse tipo de coisa. Acho que não vais ser uma missão muito fácil de encontrar aqui não.

Graça: Voce é uma pessoa mais *conservadora* em termos de comida?

João: Não, não. Não tenho muita restrição em termos de comida, não. Meu paladar é bem adaptado, desde que eu cheguei aqui tenho comido muita comida congelada. Mas funciona. Acho que eu consigo viver o resto da vida assim ... (risos) Eu me adapto fácil.

<sup>42</sup> Cristina: Muda muito, a cultura daqui é diferente. Você tem que adaptar, não adianta. Ou você cozinha ou tem quem cozinha todos os dias, ou se adapta a comer o sanduiche frio.

<sup>43</sup> João: Mas eu ainda acho que tenho uma boa adaptação com a comida. Hoje, por exemplo, depois de ter matado um pouco a saudade do feijão preto, é daqui um mês que eu vou começar a sentir falta. Mas só para voltar a este período que eu estava em Londres, eu tenho uns amigos brasileiros lá. E um destes meus amigos é casado e ele, ela, e um grupo de outros brasileiros que já se conheciam fizeram como se fosse um almoco em grupo e era uma feijoada. Então neste dia também tinha de tudo: galinhada, carne assada, feijoada, arroz, farofa, foi o dia para tirar a barriga da miséria. Realmente foi muito bom. Mas fora isso, eu gosto de cozinhar...

the first time that they were in a situation in which they had to shop and prepare food by themselves and sometimes for a partner too:

Ana Cristina: At the house where I lived when I arrived, there were four Brazilians, three were male. Only they cooked, I did not. I used to get very upset because my diet was based on bread and Brazilian snacks I bought, and they were cooking stroganoff, rice, steak and onions...<sup>44</sup>

Anita: My mother is an excellent cook but I have no culinary talent at all. I joke that the guy who marries me will have to be very much in love, because from the outset I'm going to tell him I can't cook. Either we hire a cook or we have to eat out every day. And I haven't learnt to cook since I have been here. I eat out a lot and a lot of junk too. I have put on weight since I arrived because I don't eat anything healthy.<sup>45</sup>

Paula: I didn't cook a lot. I lived with my parents. After I left home I went to live with some friends; maybe then I cooked a little bit more. But because there wasn't a lot of time, I ate a lot of noodles; I did not dedicate a lot of time to food. Here my life changed a lot because I was only studying, and with my husband, so I had to give it attention. And as I did not find a lot of options for eating out, I have to prepare food myself. I discovered that you can buy tinned beans.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ana Cristina.: Na casa onde eu morei quando eu cheguei, com quatro brasileiros, três eram homens. Eu não cozinhava, só eles. Eu ficava triste, por que eu comia só pão. E aí direto eu comprava coxinha, empadinha estas coisas na rua... (...) e os meninos direto... faziam stroganoff, arroz, bife com cebola, eles quem cozinhavam.

<sup>45</sup> Anita: Minha mãe cozinha, muito bem, mas eu não tenho nenhum talento culinário, assim. Eu até brinco, que o cara que se casar comigo tem que estar muito apaixonado porque de antemão eu vou dizer para ele que eu não cozinho. Ou a gente contrata uma cozinheira ou então tem que comer fora todos os dias. E aqui, eu não aprendi. A gente come fora, muita porcária, assim. Eu dei uma engordada desde que eu cheguei aqui. Porque não como nada muito saudável.

<sup>46</sup> Paula: Cozinhava pouco. Eu morava com meus pais depois eu sai fui morar com duas amigas. Nesta experiência de morar sozinha, eu cozinhava mais. Mas por causa do pouco tempo, enfim, acaba sendo miojo, enfim, não era sempre que eu dava muita dedicação à comida. Aqui a minha vida mudou muito porque eu só estava estudando, com meu marido, então precisava dar mais atenção para isso. E como na rua eu não achei muitas opções, o jeito é eu mesmo preparar. Então eu descobri o feijão que já vem cozido na latinha só com água. (...)

Verônica: For me it changed. When I lived in Brazil, I had a person in my house who cooked for me. I did not have to worry about it. Here, as it is only me and my husband, we share. Sometimes he goes shopping for food, sometimes I do. As for preparation, he cooks more than me, because I can only prepare Brazilian dishes and he cooks much better than me. (...) <sup>47</sup>

Cristina: In Brazil I lived with my parents, and usually my mother cooked, although sometimes my father wanted to cook his Italian dishes such as polenta, or to barbecue. When I began to share a flat with my sisters, it changed. I began to cook my own food. It was different from the type of cooking my parents did, and I cooked much simpler dishes: mince, salad, and chicken with rice, pasta or potato. Everything simple because I don't enjoy cooking (...) <sup>48</sup>

Two participants mentioned that migration had led to a change in gender roles in domestic settings, as men and children were expected to take on a larger role in domestic chores such as food preparation. However, this was not true for all participants. In fact a number of males had learnt to cook whilst in Brazil either out of necessity, as a hobby or as a professional skill:

Fernando: In Brazil, in my case, I cooked, cleaned, I did everything. It was funny; my mother laughed at me because

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<sup>47</sup> Verônica: Para mim mudou. Eu morava no Brasil, praticamente eu tinha uma pessoa que cozinhava em casa. Não precisava me preocupar com isso. E só que aqui, como sou eu e meu marido, a gente divide. Às vezes ele vai comprar, as vezes eu compro. Na hora de preparar, ele cozinha mais do que eu, porque o que eu sei fazer são os pratos brasileiros e ele cozinha muito melhor do que eu.

<sup>48</sup> Cristina: No Brasil eu morava com meu pai e minha mãe e era aquela coisa. Meu pai, mas geralmente minha mãe cozinhava, mas meu pai às vezes resolvia fazer os pratos italianos dele. Polenta, que não falta, churrasco, ele quem faz. Mas depois que eu passei a morar sozinha ou dividir apartamento com minhas irmãs, mudou. Eu passei muito a cozinhar a minha própria comida, mudou muito do que meus pais faziam, passei a fazer uma coisa muito mais simples, carne moída, arrozinho, saladinha, sem muito fuzuê, frango no molho com arroz e com massa ou batata. Tudo muito simples, porque eu não gosto muito de cozinhar. Cozinho de tudo, faço tudo, acho que continua. Senti que meus hábitos alimentares mudaram de acordo com a mudança aqui para Londres, porque tem muita coisa no Brasil que não tem aqui. E aí você acaba se adaptando.

when I finished cooking the kitchen was already clean. That was something I learnt with my father. And sometimes, I would eat standing up, doing the washing up at the same time (laughs).<sup>49</sup>

Geraldo: I have always liked cooking. It is a therapy. Before I came to the UK I enrolled in a gastronomy course at SENAC because I knew I would have to work in this area. And my parents always made us help out. When I arrived here I started working in a restaurant. When I have time, I like to cook at home...

Sandro: Ever since I was small, due to life circumstances, I learnt to cook. (...) My father taught us to cook. He would go to work, we were eight of us, and the older ones had to cook for the young ones.

César: I learnt to cook with my grandmother. I was a kid and would watch her cooking rice. (...) I always cooked for myself. The girlfriends I had did not cook at all; it was always me. Brazilian men cook, sometimes forced by the situation, sometimes to save money.<sup>50</sup>

In one of the focus groups, it was suggested that changes in Brazilian men's attitudes towards cooking had been influenced by the success of cookery shows portraying male chefs such as Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver. This trend is mentioned in a recent article by Barbosa (2007), where she analyses contemporary Brazilian eating habits. Others counter-argued that whilst this could be true in some places in Brazil, such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and among the middle classes, it could not be generalized for all social classes and regions of Brazil. It was also mentioned that men's cooking abilities emerged

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<sup>49</sup> Fernando: No Brasil, no meu caso, eu cozinhava, limpava, fazia tudo. Era até engraçado porque a minha mãe morria de rir, porque eu terminava de cozinhar e a cozinha já estava limpa, que era algo que eu aprendi com meu pai. E no final, às vezes, eu comia em pé, já lavando o prato (risos)

<sup>50</sup> César: E eu aprendi a cozinhar com minha vó. Eu era moleque e via ela cozinhar, fazendo arroz e tal. E eu disse vó eu quero aprender e ela me ensinou e eu fiquei fera do negócio.(...) Desde que eu servi o exército eu já sabia cozinhar. E sempre cozinhei para mim, morei um tempo fora. As namoradas que eu tive não sabiam nada, sempre eu quem cozinhava. Os homens brasileiros cozinham, às vezes forçados pela situação, às vezes para economizar.

when they were forced to do it, such as in situations where they had to live on their own.

Among older married women, the changes brought about by displacement and its effects in food preparation were discussed in terms of the lack of time to prepare Brazilian dishes. In the focus group at the church, where people knew each other well, it became a point of contention. A lady in her sixties challenged a younger woman, by saying that having a busy lifestyle should not be used as an excuse for not engaging with home cooking.

Tatiana.: I think we don't cook here not because of lack of ingredients or culture. It is because of lack of time, it is the lifestyle.

Dona Eulália: It is a lack of will, that's for sure!

Tatiana: Not if you had to work seven...

Dona Eulália: Look, there are people who work more than you do, but they manage to cook their food. The fact is that you get used to eating something else.

Tatiana: Maybe.

Dona Eulália: Even in Brazil, where life was busier, I arrived home at ten...

Marta: I would never go to the kitchen.

Dona Eulália: Sometimes I had to go and kill the chicken and prepare it myself.

Rosângela: There are no women like you anymore.

Tatiana: Nowadays, everything is more practical, you go and buy something and put it in the microwave.

Dona Eulália: Even in Brazil...

Marta: I see a lot of people of my age really fond of things from the past. For me, modernity is everything. I am not attached to the past. I like practical things, the more modern the better. If I have to cook only from cans, that's fine.<sup>51</sup>

Dona Eulália was the matriarch of a large family and cooking was central to her role as a wife, as a mother and as a grandmother. At the beginning of the focus group, I had asked her if she still cooked at home, and her husband replied: 'If she didn't cook I wouldn't...' She did not let him finish the phrase and added: 'I don't give up on my beans and rice. I have a daughter who says: mother I thank God for the way you taught us to eat. (...) My partner likes beans and rice, too. So we always have it at home. The grandchildren come... they all love it'. The other women felt that they did not want to conform and reproduce traditional gender roles in everyday routine activities and welcomed a more flexible and convenient pattern of food consumption. These changes in gender roles will be further discussed in Chapter Six's analysis of domestic consumption.

The domestic sphere was not the only place where changes in food habits were perceived. People incorporated new tastes via restaurants too. Indeed, some participants mentioned that although they were passionate about

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<sup>51</sup> Tatiana: Acho que aqui a gente não cozinha não é pela falta do alimento ou pela falta da cultura. É pela falta do tempo, e o estilo de vida.

Dona Eulália: Falta de vontade, isso sim!

Tatiana: Não... se a senhora tivesse que fazer sete...

Dona Eulália: Olha, mas tem a pessoa que trabalha mais que você trabalha, Pati, e se ele não fizer a comidinha... É que acostuma a comer outra coisa, Pati.

Tatiana: Talvez.

Dona Eulália: Lá no Brasil mesmo, que a vida era muito corrida, chegava em casa dez horas da noite...

Marta: Ah, mas não vou para cozinha mesmo.

Dona Eulália: Às vezes não tinha frango para comprar limpinho. Você tinha que matar o frango, despenar o frango e fazer comida. E eu fazia.

Rosângela: Mas mulheres que nem a senhora não tem mais...

Tatiana: Agora tudo é muito prático, vai ali compra um negócio e coloca no microondas.

Dona Eulália.: Hoje no Brasil já é assim também.

Marta: Eu vejo muitas pessoas da minha idade ligadas as coisas do passado. Para mim a modernidade é o tudo, sabe. Eu não sou ligada ao passado. Coisas práticas para mim, quanto mais moderno mais fácil, é melhor. Se tiver que abrir tudo de latinha e não cozinhar, tá bom...

cooking Brazilian food at home, when it came to eating out, they preferred to taste new flavours and rarely went to Brazilian places:

Ana Cristina: I rarely go out to eat at Brazilian places. I cook Brazilian food at home, but when I go out I like to eat French, Persian, Indian sometimes, as well as Italian and English food. At the beginning you may feel a bit shy, because you may not speak English and don't know what to order. There are a lot of places that serve modern English cuisine. The English are fighting hard [to improve] their food. I have been to Ramsay's pub: they serve casseroles, stews... Everyday English home cooking is very plain: potatoes, meat, and boiled vegetables. For us it is horrible. But English restaurant food, you should try it one day.<sup>52</sup>

Tatiana: I go out [to eat Brazilian food] because of Roberto. If I can choose, because the diversity of restaurants here is enormous, I'd choose Italian; let's say a pizza, or a lasagne, or even Chinese, instead of eating Brazilian food. Roberto likes to go out to eat steak, rice and beans.<sup>53</sup>

Geraldo and Tereza: Never been ?We never go out.

Geraldo: Apart from 'churrascarias', which I would like to go to, because I have not been to Brazil in two years (...) I don't feel at all like going to a Brazilian restaurant. (...) Here you have the opportunity of trying so many different foods. Like the other

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<sup>52</sup> Ana Cristina: Não comer fora eu não como em Brasileiro. Quase nunca. Eu faço comida brasileira em casa, mas quando eu vou comer fora eu vou comer *French*, persa, indiano, mas não muito, italiano às vezes, e inglês também. No início, você fica meio tímido, você não fala inglês, sabe ainda como pedir, mas tem vários lugares que vendem comida inglesa. Chama-se modern English cuisine. Porque os ingleses eles estão batalhando neste negócio de comida há anos. E hoje em dia, eu já fui no pub daquele homem lá o Ramsay, [comida] inglesa: casseroles, *stew*... É que a comida que eles fazem no dia a dia e muito *plain*. É tipo batata, uma carne, uma cenoura que é so fervida. Para gente é horrível, mas se for em um restaurante, experimenta um dia.

<sup>53</sup> Tatiana: Eu saio por causa do Roberto. Se eu poder optar, porque a diversidade de restaurantes aqui é muito grande, então se eu puder optar para comer uma comida italiana, vamos dizer lasagna, pizza, ou até mesmo chinesa. Eu vou optar ao invés de comer o brasileiro. Mas o Roberto gosta ele vai em restaurantes comer bifão, arroz, feijão.

day we tried food from Eritrea (...). When we go out we want to try something new, ethnic, as long as it is not Brazilian.

Tereza: When my family came we took them to a Persian restaurant, and we took my brother to a pub. But we wouldn't take them to a Brazilian restaurant...<sup>54</sup>

Brazilians do not live in a social bubble and personal relations also affect food habits. The experiences of Verônica and Ana Cristina show how cultural difference has to be negotiated at home by couples from different nationalities. Also evidenced here is how 'Brazilian' food gets defined in terms of a 'Brazilian way of doing', which potentially allows for its continuity in the very process of culinary adaptation:

Verônica: In my case, my husband is English and his mother is French, so he has a bit of a European eating style. One thing he doesn't eat is beans, so I end up not eating beans at home. Rice is also not his favourite dish. Every now and again I make a chicken risotto and he eats it. What I cook more in terms of Brazilian food is... 'moqueca' (a fish dish). He likes it a lot...

Graça: Do you find this complicated? How do you deal with your partner not eating Brazilian food?

Verônica: Sometimes I would like him to like it... But now I have got used to it. We have been together for a long time. After living away from home for a long time you get used to it. You have to adapt to survive. Because if you think that you have to eat rice and beans every day, it is impossible. It is not the habit of the people from here, and you end up getting used to the local food

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<sup>54</sup> Geraldo: Tirando as churrascarias, que eu gostaria de ir, porque ha dois anos não vou ao Brasil [...] eu não tenho vontade de ir aos restaurantes brasileiros. [...] Aqui você tem a oportunidade de provar tantas comidas diferentes. Outro dia a gente provou comida da Eritrêia [...] quando a gente sai a gente quer provar algo diferente, étnico, que não seja brasileiro.  
Tereza: Quando a minha família veio nós os levamos para jantar em um restaurante persa, e levamos meu irmão à um pub. Nós não o levaríamos à um restaurante brasileiro.



and changing your tastes. This change is visible with desserts: in Brazil, I ate much more sugary food than here; we used a lot of sugar while here I have cut down a lot.<sup>55</sup>

Ana Cristina: I love it when they like [my cooking]. My fiancée is hooked on Brazilian food and so is his family, they all love it. (...) I mix things from other cuisines and make it a bit Brazilian. For example I put sausages in with the beans. But I season it the Brazilian way, the same with the rice, fry garlic and onion first of all. There are many ways to cook [rice and beans] but I cook it so it has the Brazilian taste.<sup>56</sup>

In this section I have shown how migration to London affects the habits and routines of food consumption for Brazilian migrants. These changes can be related to the access afforded to other culinary cultures, as well as to the difficulties and limitations in accessing Brazilian ingredients and systems of provision. The changed lifestyles adopted by migrants also posed limitations in terms of both the time they had available to source and prepare food and the frequent lack of domestic infrastructures for cooking. These changes were sometimes cast as losses but they were not always perceived as negative by the group participants; rather, they were often seen as necessary, bound up with adaptations and improvisations in culinary and eating practices that allowed diasporic senses of 'Brazilianess' to be fostered; and on occasions they were

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<sup>55</sup> Verônica: No meu caso, meu marido é inglês mas a mãe dele é francesa, então ele tem um pouco o estilo Europeu também. Mas uma coisa que ele não come é o feijão, então eu não como muito o feijão em casa. Arroz também não é muito o prato favorito dele. Mas de vez em quando eu faço uma galinhada, aí ele come, bastante frango ele gosta. O que mais que eu cozinho de comida brasileira... Uma moqueca, ele gosta muito. E o resto, para falar a verdade...

Graça: Você acha isso complicado? Como você encara isso de seu companheiro não gostar da sua comida?

Verônica: Às vezes eu gostaria que ele gostasse... Mas agora já acostumei. A gente já está há muito tempo junto. Depois de muito tempo morando fora, você acaba também se adaptando com a região. Você tem que se adaptar para poder sobreviver. Porque se você ficar pensando: eu preciso comer feijão com arroz todos os dias, é impossível... Aqui não é o hábito do povo e você acaba se adaptando com a comida da região e até mudando seu paladar. Eu acredito muito nisso, eu vejo muito pelos doces. No Brasil eu comia muito mais doces do que aqui, bolo, a gente coloca muito açúcar e aqui eu diminuí muito.

<sup>56</sup> Ana Cristina: Minha vida é cozinhar, praticamente. Todos os dias eu cozinho... E eu adoro quando eles gostam. Tanto que agora meu noivo é viciado em comida brasileira. A família dele... todo mundo adora. [...] E aí é bom porque eu misturo alguma coisa de outras cozinhas e meio que faço brasileiro. Por exemplo eu pego as 'sausages' e uso no feijão. Só que com um temperinho. Acho que o que é brasileiro mesmo, né, porque muita gente faz feijão, faz arroz. É o jeitinho de misturar alho e cebola, fritar o arroz antes. porque tem várias jeitos de fazer, mas é o jeito que eu acho que é brasileiro e fica com o gostinho bem brasileiro.

cast as positive, for example as liberation from established gender roles and as stimulating exposure to new tastes and to London's cosmopolitan commercial foodscapes.

### 3.8.2 Continuities and 'Returns'

We have seen that senses of change and rupture featured strongly in the discussions of food habits within the focus groups undertaken for this research. However, this emphasis on change did not preclude some forms of 'continuity' in food practices. In signalling this continuity, I am not seeking to counter the argument made so far; on the whole this was not a linear continuity characterised by an absence of change, but what we might describe as a 'returning' to (what had become seen as) Brazilian food habits. For many members of the focus groups, their habits and routines of consuming food had interruptions and phases. One of the participants, who was pregnant, said that despite being adapted to the food in the UK, she had felt like eating more Brazilian food since her pregnancy and would 'teach' her son to eat Brazilian beans. It was interesting to discover that some people became more attached to Brazilian food after they had been in London for a while. In a common narrative, they first described how they were more interested in enjoying the varied food cultures in London; but, as time went by, they began to long for food from home and even learnt to cook so that they could replicate some dishes.

Andrea: When I first arrived I didn't care much about Brazilian food. I lived with English people. And I have always been very open to new food. I didn't know how to cook. As time went by for me it was the other way round... After a while I started to miss things, and then it became important to me. I learned to make a few things, I bought recipe books, I phone my mother and ask her for advice when I am cooking.

Teresa: Initially, we thought we could... we had some difficulty finding similar products, because it was difficult to find things at the supermarket. Early on we wanted to try things from here, find out the new things. After a while we found the need to go and look for Brazilian things and products. Nowadays, we have more... (...) Nowadays we consume more Brazilian products, maybe in the last year.

Yolanda: For me it is a bit marginal, in the sense that I don't go after Brazilian products to make Brazilian food. But this has changed over the years. For example, at the beginning it was difficult to find Brazilian products, but now you can find them easily. When I am in town interviewing Brazilians and I see a Brazilian grocery shop I go and buy a 'guaraná' [Brazilian soft drink], drink a coffee, get a 'sonho de valsa' [chocolat truffle] (...) in the last five years, every time I go to Brazil I bring back a suitcase full of food.<sup>57</sup>

The continuation of Brazilian food habits was also articulated by some respondents as a form of resistance: *'I'm not giving up my beans and rice'* said Dona Eulália; *'to give up Brazil was easy; to give up Brazilian food is impossible'*. Eating rice and beans was something 'you don't give up', 'you don't lose', 'you don't forget' because it is something 'you have always done' and will carry on doing even in conditions of displacement. It is the resistance of the palate:

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<sup>57</sup> Andrea: Quando eu cheguei aqui eu não dava muita importância para comida brasileira. Eu morava com ingleses. E eu sempre fui muito aberta com relação à comidas novas. E eu não sabia cozinhar. Conforme o tempo foi passando eu comecei a sentir falta, e aí começou a ficar importante para mim. Aprendi a cozinhar alguns pratos, comprei livros de receita, ligo para a minha mãe e pergunto...

Teresa: Inicialmente a gente pensou que passaria sem... Tínhamos dificuldade em achar os produtos e queríamos provar as coisas daqui, novidades. Depois de um tempo a gente sentiu necessidade de procurar coisas e produtos brasileiros. Hoje em dia a gente tem mais... [...] hoje em dia a gente consome mais produtos brasileiros, talvez no último ano.

Yolanda: Para mim é marginal, no sentido que eu não saio para comprar produtos brasileiros para fazer comida brasileira. Mas mudou no decorrer dos anos. No começo eu tinha dificuldades e encontrar produtos brasileiros, mas agora acha-se com facilidade. Quando estou na cidade fazendo entrevistas com brasileiros e encontro uma mercearia brasileira, compro guaraná, tomo um café, pego um sonho de valsa [...] nos últimos cinco anos, cada vez que vou ao Brasil trago uma mala cheia de comida.

Dona Eulália: At the heart' of our cuisine is 100% Brazilian. We always have rice and beans. We vary the type of meat: it can be beef, poultry, pork or fish and eggs. We eat a lot of vegetables: peas, sweet corn, greens; we have a varied diet, but we never forget [Brazilian food]. One reason is that my partner here likes rice and beans, he says the food he likes most is rice and beans. So we never run out of that at home. And the grandchildren, they all like it. Carlos, he says that he doesn't miss it, but he does.

Carlos: I love it.

Dona Eulália: The other grandchild who lives here in the building when he arrives home he goes straight to my house: 'Grandma have you got rice and beans? Can you make food for me?' So, we haven't lost the habit of eating our food, as we ate it in Brazil. With the exception of some bitter salad leaves which we cannot find here. <sup>58</sup>

Pastor Antonio: I learnt to eat my rice and beans. I am seventy years old and don't give up on my rice and beans. <sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Dona Eulália: A base de nossa cozinha aqui é 100% brasileira mesmo. Arroz e feijão, isso nunca falta. Uma carne, frango ou peixe, porco. Sempre varia o tipo de carne. Verduras, legumes... A gente come bastante ervilha, milho, couve, repolho, ovo. Então a gente varia né? Sempre a gente tem em casa, duas, três, até quatro saladas, dois ou três legumes. Sempre se comeu bastante assim, bem variado, mas a gente nunca esqueceu... Uma que meu companheirinho aqui gosta de um arrozinho com feijão. Ele fala que a comida que mais ele gosta é de arrozinho com feijão. Então nunca a gente deixa faltar o arroz com feijão em casa. E vem os netos né... As netaiada tudo gosta. Carlos gosta, ele fala que não sente falta mas ele sente sim.

Carlos: Eu gosto, eu é que digo.

Dona Eulália: O outro netinho que mora aqui no prédio, ele chega e já vai direto lá. Ah, vovó, tem arroz e feijão? Faz comidinha para mim. Então, sempre, a gente não perdeu o hábito de comer a nossa comida, como a gente comia no Brasil. Com excessão, como a Marta falou de algumas verduras que a gente não acha aqui. Que a gente gosta muito de verdurinha amarga, não é? Até o repolho a gente acha aqui no Internacional, aquele repolho mais macio, para salada, refogado.

Pastor Antonio: Eu aprendi a comer meu arroz com feijão. Estou com setenta anos de idade e não abro mão de meu feijãozinho, do meu arroz.

<sup>59</sup> Dona Eulália: Eu também não abro mão de meu arroz e feijão. Eu não janto, é difícil eu jantar, mas no almoço tem que ter.

Marta: I always cooked Brazilian food at home, because my kids love Brazilian food. I have a nine year old who is in love with rice and beans. He has to have it. At least three or four times a week. He came here when he was four years old. He also likes the food from here, because he eats it at school, but he likes our food a lot. I particularly like Brazilian food, but also like other types of food. I have no difficulty in adapting to food. At home, my husband and kids like meat, my husband does not like vegetables much, but I do. I tried to vary things and have more poultry and fish than beef. But now we eat more beef (...) I cannot say that I miss [Brazilian food], because I don't; I have it every day at my house (laughs). So, not a lot has changed. I have lived in Mozambique and there we also carried on cooking our food. So I think it is a strong thing in Brazil, we find a way of getting the ingredients, rice, beans and the vegetables we like...<sup>60</sup>

Eating rice and beans, for these participants, is a habit which is 'learnt' and needs cultivating. For the women in question, it was considered their role to feed the nation and to reproduce the tastes of home for children and husbands in the diaspora.

Importantly, not all aspects of Brazilian food consumption were equally amenable to this discourse of national continuity. With the exception of weekends, when the menu broadened to include *feijoada* (bean stew with pieces of pork), roasted meat, barbecues, 'farofa' (a side dish consisting of toasted and seasoned manioc flour) and potato mayonnaise salad - there was

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<sup>60</sup> Marta: Eu sempre fiz comida brasileira em casa, porque meus filhos são apaixonados por comida brasileira. Eu tenho um filho de nove anos que é apaixonado por arroz e feijão. Não abre mão de feijão mesmo. Pelo menos umas três ou quatro vezes por semana ele come feijão. Ele veio para cá com quatro anos. Ele gosta também da comida daqui porque ele come na escola, mas ele, gosta muito da nossa comida. Eu gosto, particularmente eu gosto da comida brasileira, eu gosto de outras também. Eu nao possi dizer que eu sinto falta, porque eu nao sinto mesmo, porque tem todos os dias na inha casa. (Risos )Entao não teve muita variação. Eu já morei em Moçambique e lá também a gente continuou fazendo a nossa comida. então eu acho que isso no Brasil é muito forte, a gente consegue dar um jeito de encontrar a comida, encontrar o arroz, o feijão, encontra as verduras que a gente gosta. A dificuldade aqui na Inglaterra e com verdura. Não é que não tenha..

little variation to what Brazilians reported as being the Brazilian food they cooked and ate in London. On an everyday basis it did not go much beyond rice, beans, meat and salad, or simple combinations such as cooked rice with a fried egg on top:

Graça: Do you cook every day? What kind of dishes?

Ana Cristina: All the time. Rice, beans, salad, meat. This is the food of a lot of people.

César: I live on rice and beans...

Ana Cristina: For example, I cook a lot of rice and beans and keep it in the fridge. We asked Andre's mother to give us a pressure cooker, because he loves Brazilian food. He only eats Brazilian food, does not want anything German. César has a pressure cooker, so we fill both of the pans, because [the beans] are the most difficult part, it takes time. The rice is in a bag and we prepare a salad. Every day. Sometimes I cook a pasta, but most of the time that is it.

Paula: I also cook a lot at home, for the same reason. I find ready-made food very bad, fatty. So I end up cooking a lot at home, but I haven't got a pressure cooker.<sup>61</sup>

Celso: I cook rice and beans at home all the time. I avoid junk food, only when there is no other way. Brazilian food is always

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<sup>61</sup>Graça: E assim, que pratos vocês cozinham no dia a dia?

Ana Cristina: Direto. Arroz, feijão, salada, carne. É isso...

César: Arroz, feijão, salada, carne.. É a comida de muita gente, né...

César: Eu vivo de arroz e feijão...

Ana Cristina: Por exemplo, eu faço um monte de arroz e feijão e ponho na geladeira. A gente pediu à mãe do André [boyfriend] para nos dar uma panela de pressão, por que ele ama comida brasileira. Só come come comida brasileira, não quer saber de nada alemão. O Celso tem uma panela de pressão, a gente enche as duas, que é o mais chato. Demora. Arroz e na *bag* e salada faz na hora. Todo dia, aí as vezes mudo para pasta, essas coisas, mas a maiorias das vezes é isso.

César: Um tropeirinho..

Paula: Eu também cozinho bastante em casa. Pelo mesmo motivo. Eu acho a comida da rua muito ruim, muito gordurosa. Então acabo cozinhando muito em casa. Só que eu não tenho panela de pressão.

present in my house, following the same tradition from home. There is not a famous everyday English dish.<sup>62</sup>

A common topic of conversation among Brazilians in general, and reproduced within the focus groups, concerns the sourcing of specific ingredients and/or substitutes for foods that they miss. Although some people reported having changed their diets because they could not find a lot of Brazilian ingredients in the UK, this could be at least temporarily rectified by bringing food from Brazil in a suitcase or by asking visiting relatives to bring Brazilian treats, as Yolanda explained:

(...) In the last five years, every time I go to Brazil I bring a suitcase full of food. I bring for example, paçoquinha, Japanese peanuts, coffee, popcorn, ki-suco. All these things are not essentials, but they are easy to make, and sometimes that reminds me of childhood: *pão-de-queijo, sonho de valsa, chokito*.

Geraldo: My mum sends me a lot of diet foods, because I am diabetic and it is hard to find it here.<sup>63</sup>

Participants did not visit Brazilian grocery shops as often as I had imagined. [Visiting Brazilian grocery shops was not done as regularly by the group participants as I had imagined it might be.] This in part reflects the residential locations of the group participants, who came from across Greater London. Apart from the people from the church focus group, who lived near Brazilian food outlets, the rest of the respondents did not live particularly near a Brazilian store. Even those who lived nearby only bought products they did

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<sup>62</sup> César: Eu faço um arroz e feijão direto em casa, saladinha, minha comida. Evito comer junk food, so quando não tem jeito. Mas a comida brasileira sempre está presente e em casa, neste sentido de seguir o mesmo esquema de comida que a gente está acostumado em casa. Que aqui não tem nem um prato famoso, para dizer a comida inglesa. Então é comida brasileira mesmo.

<sup>63</sup> Yolanda: [...] nos últimos cinco anos, cada vez que vou ao Brasil trago uma mala cheia de comida. Trago, por exemplo, paçoquinha, amendoim japonês, café, pipoca, ki-suco. Não são coisas essenciais, mas são fáceis de fazer e me fazem lembrar de quando era criança: pão-de-queijo, sonho de valsa, chokito.

Geraldo: Minha mãe me manda muita comida dietética, porque sou diabético e é difícil encontrá-las aqui.

not find in other places: manioc starch, *guaraná* [soft drink], passion fruit concentrated juice, *Nescau* (a brand of instant chocolate drink) and beans. Those who did not have access to a Brazilian shop near their homes or places of work would stock up on Brazilian products when they happened to be close to a Brazilian shop, or they would make a trip if they had to cook a meal for a special occasion. More generally, faithfulness to Brazilian brands was reported by a small number of respondents:

Andrea: If I have to choose between two fruits, I will choose one that is from Brazil. I think it is patriotism. If I see a lemon... A beer, I will buy Brahma.

Yolanda: There is a tendency to value Brazilian products.<sup>64</sup>

In Cristina's case, although she could find the same brand of instant chocolate in an English supermarket and a brand of cereal in Portuguese delicatessens, she preferred the flavour of the Brazilian brand:

Cristina: I buy a lot of stuff. When my sister goes to Brazilian shops I always ask her to bring me Brazilian meat, so we can cook it when we are all at home together. We always have Brazilian food at home. My nephew eats 'farinha láctea' [a type of cereal]. I used to eat that and I miss it. I love Brazilian Toddy, so she brings me that sometimes.

Graça: But you can find Toddy in any supermarket.

Cristina: It is not the same flavour.

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<sup>64</sup> Yolanda: Alguem de vocês aqui sente a afirmação da identidade brasileira quando consome produtos brasileiros?

Geraldo: Café

Andréa: Tem a coisa de procurar o produto brasileiro, se tem dois eu vou ler se é ou não é brasileiro.

Yolanda: Hoje há uma tendência de valorizar o produto brasileiro.



Cristina: 'Farinha láctea' from Portugal is not the same. (...) There are various Brazilian places near Queens Park (...) Another place which I go to is near town when I have to send money: they have chocolates, snacks, juice, pasties, pão de queijo, coxinha.<sup>65</sup>

On the other hand, a great deal of what respondents considered daily Brazilian cooking did not rely on ingredients from Brazil or from Brazilian shops. It also included food from other ethnic shops such as Polish retailers (especially sausages). Food was made 'Brazilian' in the process of cooking, as Andrea pointed out:

For example, I cook Indian [basmati] rice but I cook it at home; I cook black beans which may have come from somewhere in Africa; I add bay leaves to give it taste. (...) I always have manioc flour at home. I buy it here, although everything is more expensive. (...) I find it in other ethnic shops, rapadura you can find in Indian shops. I cook my mother's recipes. I also use recipes from Claudia's [a Brazilian women's magazine].<sup>66</sup>

As I mentioned before, the living conditions of Brazilians limited their cooking activities at home. Very often they lived in small spaces lacking cooking facilities and utensils as well as being time-starved. However, group participants reported other ways of accessing Brazilian food in London.. For those with no time or inclination to cook, but who work or live in central London or near a borough with a concentration of Brazilians, having Brazilian food delivered was an option. Sandro, a builder from Goiânia, reported to the

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<sup>65</sup> Graça: Mas toddy tem no supermercado.

Cristina: Não é o mesmo gosto. (...) Ate a farinha láctea de Portugal nao é igual à farinha láctea brasileira. Tem em vários lugares brasileiros. a minha irmã compra ali perto de Queens Park. Ela sempre passa perto do trabalho dela.

Outro lugar que eu vou que é perto do centro quando tenho que mandar dinheiro: tem bombom, salgadinho, suco, pastel, pão de queijo, coxinha.

<sup>66</sup> Andrea: Por exemplo, eu cozinho arroz indiano em casa, cozinho feijão que pode ter vindo da África e coloco louro para dar gosto [...] sempre tenho farinha de mandioca em casa. Compro aqui ainda que tudo seja mais caro [...] eu compro em outras lojas de produtos étnicos, até rapadura eu encontrei em loja indiana. Cozinho as receitas da mãe e também receitas da revista Claudia.

group an interesting case that illustrates how some job sectors which employ a large number of Brazilian immigrants have spurred a demand for food services. This demand was quickly met by informal Brazilian food delivery services. Known as '*quentinhas*', '*marmitas*' or '*marmitex*', they are take-away, freshly home-cooked (literally) Brazilian food delivered to building sites by motorbike, for the price of £3.50. The foreman collects the orders from the builders, who have a choice of three dishes every day. The food is sold on credit and money is collected from the foreman at the end of the week. Usually advertised by word of mouth, it was a practice unknown to most of the other focus groups participants, but widely used by Brazilian migrants who worked on building sites, for example.

In the focus group carried out at the church, three people said that they did not miss Brazilian food at all. Initially I took this as a sign that they did not eat it. As the discussion in this focus group went on, however, I discovered that in fact the reason they did not miss Brazilian food was because they were surrounded by it! Not only did they live next door to a '*churrascaria*' (grill) and in close proximity to other Brazilian food outlets, but Brazilian food was also a central part of the social life in the church:

Tatiana: I eat everything but don't cook anything. I eat at birthday parties.

[...]

Dona Eulália: There are a lot of parties here at the church...  
(laughs)

[...]

Rosângela: Yes, we always make desserts for the church's parties. We maintain the tradition of doing savoury snacks such as '*coxinha*', '*empadinha*', '*pão de queijo*'. [...] This coming Sunday we have the monthly lunch which takes place after the service. We have a family meal, in which all the congregation takes part. We all prepare the food. We bring Brazilian food, no beans though, but rice, potato mayonnaise salad, '*salpicão*', chicken, meat, salad.

Tatiana: Once a month we have a lunch at the church, and then we have commemorations with food at Easter, for birthdays, every birthday party is really Brazilian with 'beijinho' e 'brigadeiros'. [...] The thing with the food is so strong that when we plan an event to raise money for children in India, you don't think about a film, you think about food, because then everybody comes.<sup>67</sup>

The communal consumption of traditional food in congregations composed mainly of migrants of one nationality are not uncommon, as was noted by Ebaugh (1999). She also pointed to the fact that, through food, women have a central role in reproducing diasporic culture in these religious settings, as they are usually responsible for planning and cooking. This was indeed the case with respect to the church group represented within the focus groups.

Even though some respondents did not regard Brazilian restaurants in London as offering good value for money, and felt them to be disappointing in terms of the quality of the food and the ambience, for many others they provided a way to keep in touch with Brazilian tastes:

Cristina: I like to go are Raízes and Barraco, the food is very flavoursome. It is very difficult to get a seat on Fridays and Saturdays Because the food is so good, you feel like going back. Lately I have gone to Cafe Rio. It is very central and I like their

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<sup>67</sup> Tatiana: eu como tudo, mas não faço nada, em festas de aniversário.

[...]

Dona Eulália: É muita festinha aqui na igreja, sabe (risos)

[...]

Rosângela: Sim, a gente sempre faz os doces pra igreja. Até mesmo mantendo a tradição de salgadinhos, coxinha, empadinha, pão de queijo. [...] Este domingo mesmo temos a nossa ceia que a gente faz uma vez por mês, depois do culto, para participar do corpo e sangue de cristo, a gente vai ter uma ceia em família, onde vai participar toda a igreja. Aí, todos nós vamos fazer comida. Todos nós vamos trazer comida brasileira, com excessão do feijão. Arroz, maionese, salpicão, frango, carne, salada.

Tatiana: Nós temos uma vez por mês este almoço da Igreja, no natal nos temos, páscoa, aniversários, toda festa de aniversário e brasileiríssima. Beijinho, brigadeiro. [...] A coisa da comida é tão forte que quando vamos fazer um evento para levantar fundos para as crianças da India, você nao pensa num filme, você pensa em comida, porque todo mundo vem...

food. (...) I go once a month. It is not very frequent. It is when I start to miss it.<sup>68</sup>

Fernando: Yes, I go at the weekends with my friends who live in London.

João: The same for me. I tried to go to Corcovado last Saturday but it was too full. I feel like going at least every week or twice a month. I'll try to eat Brazilian food regularly but I'll have to go to London for that.

Sandro: Once or twice a week... Almost always to Sabor Mineiro. With £6.50 you cannot cook that variety of food at home. It is very cheap. - one of the cheapest places in London. (...) It is the most famous in London because of the price. When I started going there were around forty people queuing to get in. Now there is more competition and people have also learnt to cook.

<sup>69</sup>

Célio: I went out yesterday to eat Brazilian food in a small restaurant... it tasted like mother's food. Tropicalia...

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<sup>68</sup> Cristina: Os dois que fui e ainda vou é o Raizes e o Barraco, onde a comida é muito saborosa. Sexta e sábado lá quase não tem lugar para você ficar. Mas a comida é bem brasileira, bem gostosa e saborosa. E assim, você sente vontade voltar(...) Ultimamente eu tenho ido no Cafe Rio, que é muito central, eu gosto muito da comida deles.

<sup>69</sup> Sandro: Uma vez por semana, duas...

Graça: E aí vai em um lugar brasileiro?

Sandro: Sim vou quase só no Mineiro. Com £6. 50 nao dá para fazer essa variedade, chegar em casa, fritar um bife, fazer um feijão tropeiro e comer. £ 6. 50 é quase de graça. Já falei para ele duas vezes. Em Londres a coisa mais barata dos benefícios é vir comer aqui.

Ana cristina: Onde que é isso?

Graça: Sabor Mineiro.

Ana Cristina: É longe para mim. (...)

Sandro: É o mais famoso de Londres pela qualidade e preço. Quando eu comecei a ir lá em 2005, tinha fila. Quarenta pessoas. Esperava uma meia hora, uma hora. Agora aumentou a concorrência. E as pessoas no geral aprenderam a cozinhar, a fazer um churrasco no domingo...(..)

Ana Cristina: Very delicious. The woman sells a take way for four pounds with the daily special. She showed me yesterday and I bought one for me and Andre.<sup>70</sup>

In summary, then, the focus group discussions presented 'Brazilian food' as a widespread part of diasporic Brazilian lives in London. Of the twenty-three respondents, only four did not eat Brazilian food on a regular basis. Two of these were newly arrived male students who did not have cooking facilities; one was a young female who did not cook; and the other a mother who did not 'identify' with Brazilian savoury food. For the rest, Brazilian food was part of their routine of food consumption. However, in the diasporic setting of London, and bearing in mind the kinds of ruptures to lifestyles and food provisioning discussed in the previous section, the ongoing presence of Brazilian food in these Brazilians' lives is not simply a continuation of foodways from the homeland. Instead, I have argued, this presence is generated via a 'return' to Brazilian foods, reconnections that are forged as part of processes of disconnection and displacement from the homeland. In many cases this notion of 'return' is literal; respondents discussed how a concern for Brazilian food grew over time spent in London. However, more generally 'return' offers a metaphor for thinking about how Brazilian food consumption becomes displaced in the diaspora setting. In London, 'Brazilian food' – a notion with little purchase or meaning in Brazil -- becomes an object of discussion and practice, translated from past everyday food practices 'at home' through the mediation of food provision systems in London and the everyday routines of diasporic Brazilian consumers. Particular meals (notably rice and beans, but not solely), branded products and (for some) restaurants / food providers then take on this 'Brazilian' meaning for consumers. The resultant food routines varied amongst the participants. For some, Brazilian food is very much everyday food, though now weighted with national significance (as in Dona Eulália's advocacy for Brazilian home cooking). For others, it becomes

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<sup>70</sup> Célio: Ontem eu fui comer comida brasileira em um pequeno restaurant, parecia comida de mãe, o Tropicália...

Ana Cristina: Muito delicioso. A mulher vende uma marmite ppor quarto libras com o especial do dia. Ele mostrou-me ontem e eu comprei ums para o Andre.

occasional, in both senses of the term: not regular; and a notable event that can constitute Brazilian identity, in both collective events (such as at the Pentecostal church) and in individual or household routines (where it becomes a treat, a special occasion for self-maintenance and the building of relationships).

### **3.9 Gut feelings**

In the preceding section, I focused on the accounts from focus group participants that recognised food consumption as a practical activity, experienced and managed on an everyday level. These accounts signal the 'infrastructural' and habitual quality of food provision and consumption, its embedding in the routine conduct of everyday life. However, the group discussions also generated other narratives related to feelings of being away from home and the emotional importance that sourcing, eating and preparing 'familiar' foods acquired in this context. Food consumption more generally has this duality: both routine, mundane and practical, and emotionally charged and strongly felt. I therefore now turn to these emotional geographies of food for Brazilians in London, exploring the relations between culture and body in the 'gut feelings' expressed about Brazilian food.

It has been widely documented that consumer goods and services are marketed in terms of the emotional meanings and experiences they portray (Leiss et al., 1988). However, little has been discussed as to 'how exactly does their emotionality [of objects] 'spill over' and overlap with the emotional meaning of the act of consumption itself?' (Illouz, 2009:380). Emotion as a concept, according to Illouz (2009), can 'explain how consumption is anchored in cognition and culture on the one hand, and in the motivational structure of drives and of the body on the other' (Illouz, 2009: 382). Rather than resorting to a psychological understanding of emotion, Illouz (2009: 383) argues that 'through emotion we enact cultural definitions of personhood as they are expressed in concrete and immediate relationship with others. Emotion is thus

about where one stands in a web of social relationships'. Although not an action in itself, emotion is often what impels social beings to act.

The feeling of nostalgia and/or homesickness is a powerful trigger for diasporic consumption. Migrants yearn to reproduce the lived experience of home through acquiring, preparing and eating familiar foodstuffs. Nostalgia, according to Alison Blunt, 'invokes home in its very meaning' (Blunt, 2003: 720). The roots of the word come from the Greek *nostos* which means to return home, and *algos* which means pain; thus the implied meaning of homesickness. Cultures of nostalgia have encountered considerable criticism: whether charged with being an attempt to commercialize the past or to promote escapism, nostalgia has been termed as 'reactionary, regressive, ridiculous' (Lowenthal, 1989: 20). Blunt's notion of 'productive nostalgia' on the other hand draws from a more forward looking view to signify a yearning for home that is 'embodied and enacted in practice rather than solely in narrative and imagination' (Blunt, 2003: 722). That is not to say that imagination and narrative are not important ways for migrants to relate to the food from their homeland. I was reminded by a pastor in one of the focus groups how it is through food consumption that displacement is remembered (he was referring in particular to the biblical narrative of Exodus, in which the Israelites escape slavery in Egypt in such a hurry that they could not wait for their bread to rise; in commemoration, for the duration of Passover, no leavened bread is eaten). However, for the participants in the focus group, the remembered absence of home food was a displacement largely felt at the gut level, rather than expressed in collective myths and narratives.

For instance, '*saudade de casa*', or the yearning for home, provoked a desire for things which were not accessible any more. For some this related to the variety of foods found in a city like Sao Paulo, which were not necessarily 'Brazilian' in their national codifications but Italian, or Japanese, adapted to Brazilian tastes. Others remembered particular food stuffs, like Brazilian sausages which are used in the *feijoada*. For many it was the sweets and confectionary from the corner shop. Displacement made migrants fonder of certain foods, which perhaps in Brazil they would not have regarded as so

special. It also changed the way they felt about the places of food consumption in Brazil: open food markets, for example, which had been previously disregarded as 'messy', become 'authentic'.

The urgency of this hunger for home was felt at a gut level, a hunger which could not be appeased with any other food. For Mauro, César and Sandro there was no other food that could substitute for the flavours of Brazilian food. Sandro explained:

I have been to Chinese and Indian [restaurants] a couple of times. When I went to Brighton last year, during the ten days I stayed there I tried a different restaurant every night. No one was Brazilian. Every day I felt something was missing... The food did not satisfy me. I left and came home to eat beans.<sup>71</sup>

Like Sandro, most of the respondents acted on these feelings by reproducing the tastes they longed for. They said that preparing Brazilian food brought them feelings of comfort, familiarity and made them feel at home. Additionally, it was also through the memories triggered by the consumption of these particular foods that people, places and experiences were kept alive and home was recalled and re-enacted. For Tatiana, eating coconut pudding reminded her of her grandmother and banana cake triggered memories of her mother, memories that further reveal the gendered dimensions of food memories and home. The memories and emotions unleashed by consumption were also enmeshed with the social aspects of eating in the company of others, often from childhood and linked to the domestic sphere:

Yolanda: Food has the capacity to unite people in a specific moment. In my experience, at least, we had to sit down together and share food. Or people arriving at your house, uncles,

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<sup>71</sup> Eu fui em Chinês, e Indiano algumas vezes. Eu fui em Brighton, por exemplo, tem uns quinze restaurantes diferentes. Uma vez eu fui lá, o ano passado, e fiquei lá uns dez dias e provei cada dia um restaurante diferente... Só que eu fiquei lá e não comia nada brasileiro. Cada dia que passava, dava uma vontade... Não sustentava. Sai de lá e vim para casa comer feijão.



friends, maybe you don't even know them and you invite them for a coffee. There was always food on those occasions.<sup>72</sup>

It has been more generally noted in food studies that 'eating and drinking and fasting as part of a social group... [are] among the most poignant recollections of childhood' (Burnet and Palmer, 1988: 216). In the diasporic context, personal biographies and the nostalgias of childhood are drawn out into wider cultures of memory. Thus, although an individual's food memories were linked to specific places - such as the kitchen, the table, a particular stall in a particular market - and were generally reproduced in the domestic realm, in the discourses generated within the group discussions the sensory experience of consumption was reconceptualised as being a link with the home country:

Geraldo: In Brazil, the smell is only part of a routine around various things happening at the same time. Here, when you make the coffee, it activates a memory, bringing with its smell one of the few links you have with Brazil (...) My parent's house was above their shop, it was late afternoon, I was on holiday and helping my father, we went up to have a coffee. Food ends up being part of that memory.<sup>73</sup>

Of course, these memories and emotions were not necessarily memories of being 'Brazilian' per se, but to do with experiences often related to the family unit, extended family, and friends. It was in the diasporic context that such memories and socialities came to stand for, and be associated with, a sense of 'Brazilianess'. So, within the group discussions *brigadeiros* (homemade chocolate truffles) were discussed as reminders of childhood parties; pop corn and *guaraná* as reminders of holidays on the beach with cousins; steak and

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<sup>72</sup> Yolanda: Comida tem essa coisa de unir as pessoas em determinado momento. Pelo menos na minha experiência, quando você é pequeno, tem que sentar na mesa para comer, dividir com outro. Chega alguém em casa, vem tomar um cafézinho, às vezes você nem conhece. Amigos dos pais, os tios, eu tinha bastante contato com os tios. Sempre tinha comida nestas relações...

<sup>73</sup> Lá no Brasil, o cheiro ele é apenas parte da rotina de várias coisa que estão acontecendo ao mesmo tempo. Aqui, quando você vai passar o café, ele ativa uma memória, o cheiro é uma das poucas coisa que você tem do Brasil. (...) tipo, a casa dos meus pais era em cima da loja, era fim de tarde e a minha mãe fez, eu estava lá de férias, havia acabado de ajudar meu pai na loja e a gente subiu para tomar um café. São coisas em que a comida acabou participando da memória.

onions as reminders of mother's cooking; *pamonha* (freshly grated sweetcorn mush wrapped on the husk and cooked in boiling water) as a memory of food preparation and eating together by the whole family; carrot and cornmeal cake and French bread and butter hot from the bakers, both evoked as part of rituals of afternoon coffee at home at the kitchen table. But collectively, all these memories were framed as part of a Brazilian home. In this, the focus group dynamic was not the product of an exceptional situation, but indicative of a wider experience in other social spaces, in which the sharing of nostalgic narratives is a means through which diasporic selves retrieve individual and collective senses of being Brazilian in London. For example, within one of the focus groups, the group members (including myself) shared the same rural childhood eating experiences, even though we came from different parts of Brazil. We fashioned a collective nostalgia from our individual biographies.

Another aspect of the emotions which are unleashed by food consumption in a situation of displacement relates to nourishment. Within the group discussions, feelings of longing and belonging were woven around accounts of meaningful social relationships, and in particular relationships of nurturing. As reflected etymologically, the nourishment offered by foods is powerfully interwoven with the social relationships of nurture, of rearing and caring. The emotional connections provided by the nurturing qualities of food are illustrated in the two extracts from group discussions below:

Teresa: On my birthday, my auntie sent me an e-mail. The first image that came to my head was of when I was a child and we would go to her farm and she served us freshly baked bread with milk and toddy. I wrote back to her and said: When I go back to Franca I hope you serve me that bread again. She wrote back saying she felt very emotional because she had rarely baked that bread since she sold the farm.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Teresa: No meu aniversário, a minha tia me mandou um e-mail de parabéns, e na minha cabeça, a primeira imagem que veio era quando a gente era pequeno e a minha tia tinha uma chácara e ela fazia pão caseiro. E o dela sempre ficava mais moreninho do que o da minha mãe. Com leite e toddy. Então a primeira coisa quando eu li o e-mail, assim eu tinha uns doze anos, foi essa do pão na chácara. Eu escrevi de volta e disse: Tia, quando eu for de volta à Franca, vou

Yolanda: I have twin aunties and on their birthday I said I was going to bake a cake in their honour. [...] we had a discussion group in the family and everybody posted their messages. I sent a message: I am going to bake a cornmeal cake now and when I eat it I will think of you two. I remembered the moments when they came to visit and we sat down drinking coffee and eating cornmeal cake.<sup>75</sup>

### **Yolanda's Bolo de Fubá (Cornmeal cake)**

#### **Ingredients:**

4 tbsp butter

6 tbsp caster sugar

2 tbsp plain flour

6 tbsp fine cornmeal

½ tsp raising agent

½ cup coconut milk

**To make:** Mix the butter and sugar with an electric mixer until creamy (of course it can be done manually).

In another bowl sieve the plain flour, cornmeal and rising agent. Mix together the two sets of ingredients.. Separate the egg yolks from the whites. Add the egg yolks and coconut milk to the mixture. Whisk the egg whites until they peak and fold them gently into the mixture.

Put the mixture in a greased rectangular baking tin and place in a pre-heated moderate oven and bake for approximately an hour. To see if the cake is cooked insert a knife into the centre of the cake: if it comes away dry, the cake is baked.

Take it from the oven, leave to cool and take it from the tin.

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esperar que você faça o pão. Porque da última vez ela fez jantar; ela é uma tia muito próxima. Ela falou de volta: a hora que você falou isso eu me emocionei. Desde que eu vendi a chácara, quase nunca mais fiz este pão.

<sup>75</sup> Umas duas tias gêmeas, irmãs da minha mãe, fizeram aniversário agora e eu mandei um e-mail dizendo: eu vou fazer um bolo em sua homenagem. (risos) A gente tem um grupo de discussão na família e todos colocam aí as mensagens. Vou fazer um bolo de fubá agora, e quando eu estiver comendo eu vou lembrar de vocês. Eu lembrava de alguns momentos, em que elas vinham nos visitar e a gente sentava e tomava um café com bolo de fubá.

In the diasporic context, food thus becomes a medium through which transnational social relationships can be nurtured. As illustrated above, this may happen through communications of memories, in which past acts of nourishment are commemorated and re-enacted across transnational spaces. It can also happen through occasional material transfers of foodstuffs; the foods brought in luggage by visiting parents, relatives and friends were described as valued (even if fleeting) possessions. The emotional aspects of food sharing can go beyond bodily presence and migrants continue to use certain food rituals to nurture relationships across borders.

In summary, in this section I have focused on outlining the emotional qualities of food that were discussed within the focus groups. For these Brazilians in London, food was emotionally powerful, bound up with embodied feelings and cultural narratives of nostalgia, longing and belonging. These feelings were deeply personal, felt in the gut; but they were not private or confined to the production of an interiorised subjectivity. They were bound up in social relationships, whether those were the more local sharing of feelings that were intimated by the dynamics of the groups themselves or the transnational social relationships that participants saw food as nurturing. Finally, the geographies implicated in these emotions had a relational quality that cut across the hard divisions of a scalar imagination. Food studies more generally have recognised how food connects together scales of attention ranging from the body to the globe (Bell and Valentine 1997). Diaspora studies recognise that diasporic culture interpolates the local and global. This parallel suggests some of the reasons why food is such a powerful form of diasporic experience. Certainly, it was notable that in the emotional geographies intimated in these group discussions, food ingested at particular times and in particular places stimulated social relationships and feelings that stretched both time and space.

### 3.10 Consuming the nation abroad

Within the interdisciplinary field of food studies it has already been noted that 'nation, nationality and nationalism are enacted through food' (Bell and Valentine, 1997: 114). As will have been apparent from some of the extracts discussed already, this was certainly felt to be true by most (if not all) of the group participants. In this final section of the chapter I therefore now focus more explicitly on how eating and preparing 'Brazilian' food was framed as a way to construct and display a sense of 'Brazilianess' in London. The discussion here parallels that in Chapter Three concerned with the construction of senses of 'Brazilianess' by commercial food providers, adding to it an understanding of the investment made in such constructions by diasporic Brazilian consumers.

As we saw in the testimony of Andrea and Yolanda earlier in this chapter, senses of Brazilian identity and patriotic feelings could feature in individual acts of purchase, such as the positive selection of Brazilian fruit or Brahma beer in a supermarket. The 'Brazilianess' of food could also feature in stitching of domestic food practices to senses of national culture. Dona Eulália's affirmation that '*the base of our cuisine is 100% Brazilian*' testified to a more general claim, held especially by older participants. Mothers and grandmothers especially emphasised the importance of the domestic sphere in the reproduction of the nation's tastes outside its borders, and criticised those who neglected such a role. Such claims, and the fact that they had to be made rather than simply being taken for granted, both spoke to the contested, gendered nature of such an endeavour and confirmed Warde's argument that 'the family is the bearer and reproducer of the embedded disposition which comprises the habitus. While individualization challenges and disrupts its function, the practical experience and emotional significance of family cooking remain a preponderant force behind most people's taste for food' (Warde, 1997: 184).

However, it was in some relationship with the wider public that Brazilian identity was most commonly performed through food. Cooking for others was the most cited form of enacting 'Brazilianess', and such performances were reported with pride by participants. They required the

deployment of cooking skills for the reproduction of dishes which were emblematic of Brazilian cuisine, such as 'feijoada', and were often prepared for a non-Brazilian audience. For Ana Cristina, a young woman from Minas Gerais and a postgraduate student in London, it was an identity performance learnt in London itself:

Every year, on my birthday, I give a party and cook some food. Every time I invite people now, they say: are you going to cook beans? Because I cooked it once and people still remember it. This year I invited them and I was going to cook a green curry, which has nothing to do with Brazilian food, but has got a nice sauce and it is good if you are hungover. 'Green curry? No! We want caldinho de feijao' [the liquid from a cooked beans soup]. Everything I do involves food, I love food. I learnt to cook here in the house where I lived with some other Europeans. I learnt to cook Italian food. My sister has got a catering service in Brazil; she cooks really well. I thought I have to learn to cook Brazilian food, so I would ring my sister and she would teach me recipes. Nowadays everything I do at my house has to do with food. And the majority of things are Brazilian: frango com quiabo [chicken with okra]...<sup>76</sup>

Graça: In what contexts do you cook Brazilian food and for whom?

Andrea: For foreigners [non-Brazilians] to see. And then I make a lot of it and put the rest in the freezer and eat it for two

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<sup>76</sup> Ana Cristina: Aliás, no meu aniversário, todo ano eu faço uma festa e faço um prato. E aí toda vez que eu convido o pessoal para ir lá em casa: você vai fazer aquele feijão? Porque eu fiz um caldo de feijão e o povo lembra até hoje. Convidei este ano para o meu aniversário, que eu ia fazer um green curry [...] 'Não! Green curry? Não! Queremos caldinho de feijão'. Tudo que eu faço envolve comida, eu adoro cozinhar. Porque eu aprendi a cozinhar aqui, e aprendi nesta casa dos europeus que eu morei. Então aprendi muita comida italiana. E depois, a minha irmã tem um buffet no Brasil e ela cozinha demais. E aí depois eu falei, eu tenho que aprender a fazer comida brasileira e eu ficava ligando para minha irmã, ela me ensinava a receita e eu comecei a misturar. Então hoje em dia tudo o que eu faço na minha casa tem haver com comida. E hoje em dia tudo é brasileiro: faço frango com quiabo, ele sabe...

months. And rice. Because I don't like to cook, I cook in big quantities and freeze it in little balls.<sup>77</sup>

Yolanda: Sometimes I invite friends to gather at home, to eat 'feijoada'. It is the most common, I have the ingredients, and it is easier.

César: I cooked a lot of Brazilian food for my gringo friends in Ireland. It was a delight! Oh God. All they eat is junk food. So when they eat our food they go mad. Here I don't have so many gringo friends. (...) I feel proud to cook food and for people to be mad about it.<sup>78</sup>

For Andrea, this presentation of Brazilianess through food was not only about particular dishes or an appreciation of the food's taste, but also related to the social relationships Brazilians engendered around food, such as showing hospitality:

For us Brazilians, I think it is not only about the food, but the relationship we establish around it. You see it more clearly when you relate to people from other countries. In my house [in Brazil] it has always been like this: if you come in you are going to eat. Even the postman came in for a coffee or a juice. Everything was about food and people always gather in the kitchen. (...) I am like that and sometimes people find it strange [in this country]. If you come to my house you have to eat. (...) nothing planned but decent food, we eat together. My non-Brazilian girlfriends feel very surprised. If you go to their house and you haven't officially been invited for dinner, because they

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<sup>77</sup> Graça: In which contexts do you cook Brazilian food and to whom?

Andrea: For foreigners [non Brazilians] to see. And then I make it a lot and put the rest in the freezer and eat it for two months. And rice. Because I don't like to cook, I cook in big quantities and freeze it in little balls.

<sup>78</sup> César: Eu fiz isso muito na Irlanda. Cozinha, fazia um feijão lá, uma arroz, uma comida brasileira para os meus amigos gringos. Ish! Era um delight. Oh God. Eles só comem junk food. Então quando eles comem a nossa comida eles ficam doidos. E aqui de vez em quando eu faço, mas não tenho tanto amigo gringo, assim. Totalmente, a coisa além de nosso jeito de ser. Por que eu acho que nosso povo é o povo mais legal. Vamos dizer assim. Todo mundo para quem eu falo que eu sou brasileiro, é ah! É na hora. (...) Eu sinto orgulho de fazer uma comida e o pessoal pira.

never have lunch, you'll have to ask for a glass of water, because you are not even going to have a sniff of food. In my house the freezer is always full of food. There is also that thing that people come to your house and they hang around the kitchen, it creates intimacy. When I go to other Brazilian people's houses I feel that too. That's the difference. I don't have a problem relating to English people. But there are some days I want to hang around with Brazilians, go to their houses, because everything is more relaxed, intimate, open.<sup>79</sup>

Restaurants are also used as sites where non-Brazilian friends can be taken to be introduced to Brazilian culture, as reported by these respondents:

Sandro: I had some experiences. When I arrived in London, I worked at the weekends selling fruit in the market. I became friends with an English guy who I worked with, Gary. One day he invited me to his house for a meal, in Canterbury. I went there and he cooked something, no salt in it. I invited him to come to London and I took him to eat at a Brazilian place, 'Sabor Mineiro'. He went mad with the amount of food and meat. (...) He found it strange that we mix it all together, the beans and the meat. We stayed there for about three hours and he kept saying: 'I'm surprised ...'<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Andrea: Acho legal isso de pensar que para nós brasileiros, não é só a comida em si, é como as relações se dão em volta da comida, e isso como você vê a diferença quando você está se relacionando com as outras pessoas de outros países. Lá em casa, esta coisa de comida sempre foi assim, se você entra lá em casa você vai comer. O carteiro ia entregar carta e ele entrava e tomava café, um suco, e tudo assim. Tudo tinha que ter uma comida. A gente fica sempre na cozinha, sempre conversando na cozinha. [...] E eu tenho isso. As outras pessoas estranham. Não só de estar na cozinha, se você for na minha casa, você tem que comer. (...) Não é nada planejado, mas é uma comida decente. Chegou, você come com todo mundo junto. As minhas amigas que não são brasileiras, elas ficam assim, nossa... Se você for na casa delas e não tiver marcado oficialmente que é uma janta, que almoço não tem, você tem que pedir água, né, por que não passa nem cheiro de comida. Agora, lá em casa o freezer está sempre cheio de comida. Tem aquela coisa que a pessoa vai na sua casa e ela fica mais tempo, ela vem na cozinha, você cria uma certa intimidade. Quando eu vou na casa de outros brasileiros também tem isso. É isso eu vejo a diferença. Não tenho qualquer problema de me relacionar com inglês, mas tem dia que eu quero me relacionar com brasileiro, quero ir na casa de brasileiro, por que tem esta coisa que deixa tudo mais relaxado, mais íntimo, aberto.

<sup>80</sup> Sim, tive algumas experiências. Quando cheguei em Londres eu trabalhava em uma obra e não tinha muito o que fazer no fim de semana. Então consegui um trabalho vendendo verdura



Paula: Once in the school my husband goes to, which is very international and they hold activities for people to interact with one another, (...) there was a party at *Favela Chic*. They were playing samba, and the gringos thought it was very cool. I like samba and I thought it was an interesting experience, being in an environment in which people were appreciating my own culture. (...) But that is not a place where I'd go with my friends. I rarely go to Brazilian places. Another time I went to a small vegetarian place in Covent Garden which sells *feijoada*. My husband has been to a *churrascaria*, but he wasn't very impressed.<sup>81</sup>

Andrea: I am Brazilian and I am going to take you to a Brazilian restaurant so that you know a bit more about me and my food. Sit for three hours to eat instead of sit down to eat something quickly and run...<sup>82</sup>

Andrea: I usually go with non-Brazilians. But last week I went with a Brazilian after the ABRIR seminar. (...) We saw a Brazilian flag and discovered it is a Brazilian *churrascaria* in

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na feira. Aí conheci um inglês, eu trabalhava para ele. Fiquei muito amigo de um cara que dirigia a van, Gary, eu fiquei seis meses no final de semana trabalhando com ele. Ai a gente fez, ele me convidou para comer na casa dele em Canterbury, ai eu fui lá ele fez um negócio lá, tudo comida sem sal. Aí eu marquei com ele para vir em Londres e a gente comer num brasileiro. Aí levei ele e o filho dele ali no Sabor Mineiro, chegou lá ficou doido, o tanto de comida, carne... (...) Ele estranhou essa coisa de misturar carne, feijão, ...ficou umas 3 horas sentado, ele olhava, ele dizia, 'I'm surprised how this...'

<sup>81</sup> Paula: Não, Muito difícil. As experiências que eu tive foi: uma vez na escola que meu marido estuda, e bem internacional, tem cinco por cento de cada nacionalidade. É uma escola que tenta fazer com que o pessoal interaja. Então teve uma vez que o pessoal fez uma festa Latino - Americana que a gente trouxe pão de queijo, coxinha, caldinho de feijão e caipirinha. Porque era para todo mundo conhecer um pouquinho. Depois teve uma outra festa brasileira que agente fez no Favela Chic. Então o pessoal gosta. Eu achei interessante a experiência porque os gringos acham o máximo. Estava tocando sei lá, um samba. E eu gosto de samba. Então eu acho interessante estar naquele ambiente em que aquela era a minha cultura, mas que outras pessoas também apreciavam. (...) Mas não é um lugar que eu vou, que eu vou ligar para meus amigos, vamos lá. Eu dificilmente vou à lugares brasileiros. Eu fui uma vez em um restaurante que tem perto do Covent Garden (...) que vendia feijoada (...) Nem em churrascaria, meu marido já foi uma vez, mas falou que não foi legal, que não gostou muito.

<sup>82</sup> Andrea: Eu sou brasileira vou levar em um restaurante brasileiro para você conhecer uma pouco mais de mim e de minha comida. Tem aquela coisa de sentar por três horas para comer aos invés de sentar, comer e sair correndo, não...

Bond Street. [...] Sometimes if I go and visit someone who lives near a Brazilian place I suggest going there. I usually eat at *Guanabara*, usually to take a foreigner, to the *fórró* [dance] night, and once there I may eat, I know they have a good *feijoada*.<sup>83</sup>

Such cultural self-presentation was not limited to commercial settings. As I have previously signalled, in the events promoted by the Pentecostal church, where one of the focus groups was held, food - as material and immaterial culture - lent itself well to church activities, playing a very important role in community building. Birthdays, picnics, special dinners, fund raising parties, celebrations of religious dates; all of these are regularly staged with large offerings of 'Brazilian' food. Church members suggested that the food activities promoted by the church helped to maintain a lively Brazilian food culture outside of Brazil:

Carlos: Our church ends up safeguarding our Brazilian food culture. If we lived individually, in different places, we would not eat as much Brazilian food as we eat here.<sup>84</sup>

Pastor Antonio: In fact, we are not preserving it, we are enjoying it!<sup>85</sup>

As the members of this church's congregation were not a homogeneous group, food was pivotal to cultural negotiations with other groups, as well as among Brazilians themselves. 'Brazilian food' did not simply replicate but negotiated 'Brazilianness' for both Brazilian and non-Brazilian church members. In fact, catering for a congregation's appetite was recognised to be a matter of learning their food habits too:

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<sup>83</sup> Andrea: geralmente eu vou com pessoas que não são brasileiras. Mas a semana passada eu fui com um brasileiro depois do seminário da ABRIR. (...) Nós vimos uma bandeira brasileira e descobrimos uma churrasceria brasileira em Bond Street. [...] Às vezes se eu vou visitar alguém que mora perto de um lugar brasileiro eu sugiro que a gente se encontre lá. Geralmente como no Guanabara, levo algum estrangeiro na noite do fórró, e uma vez lá eu como, sei que eles tem uma feijoada gostosa.

<sup>84</sup> Carlos: A nossa comunidade, a nossa igreja acaba preservando a nossa cultura alimentar brasileira porque se nós vivéssemos individualmente em lugares diferentes nos acabaríamos não comendo tanto a comida brasileira como comemos aqui.

<sup>85</sup> Pastor Antonio: Não é nem preservando, é aproveitando!

Rosângela: People from the South are not very fond of salad (...) if we do lunch we know we have to have various options. (...) These boys, for example, went out to buy bread so they could eat it with beef. They didn't fancy any other food on the table. It was Brazilian food, but there wasn't a lot of meat... So now we know what people from each region like and dislike. We try to offer both basic and unusual dishes, because there are people who like something unusual.

Pastor Antonio: If we have a 'pequi' night, only 'goianos' will come. If the food is 'tutu', 'arroz' and 'couve', 'mineiros' will come. They come here and ask: when you are going to have 'frango com quiabo' (chicken with okra)?<sup>86</sup>

In these food celebrations Brazilians were also exposed to other food cultures, such as Iranian, Portuguese, Angolan, Sri Lankan, Jamaican and English. The Brazilians involved stated that they were very proud if other people tried their food and showed appreciation. More generally, similar attitudes to food and eating were reported to bridge cultural gaps for some respondents. So, Geraldo and Teresa discussed with the group how when they went to the wedding of a Slovak couple they realised that they had a similar regard for food to Brazilians, and this was something that brought them closer together.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Aqui é o seguinte: o pessoal do sul não gosta muito de salada. É comum com a gente. Se a gente fizer um almoço, a gente sabe que tem que ter várias opções. As básicas. Se colocar só salada o pessoal do sul não vai comer. [...] estes meninos, foram buscar pão, para comer a carne dentro do pão. Porque nada do que estava sendo oferecido atraía eles. Era comida brasileira, mas como não tinha, a coisa mais voltada para a carne. Mas é assim, o normal, a gente já sabe o que cada um come: o pessoal desta região não come muito este tipo de comida... Geralmente em nossos almoços, a gente tenta fazer o básico. Quando faz algo diferente a gente tenta fazer o básico também.

Pastor Antonio: Se tiver uma noite do pequi, vai ter só goiano. Se tiver uma noite do tutu de arroz com feijão e couve é mineiro. E eles chegam aqui e falam: quando e que vai ter o frango com quiabo?

<sup>87</sup> Geraldo: O casal de eslovacos que são amigos da Teresa e do Tiago, os quais fomos no casamento (...) Percebemos no dia e no casamento o trato da comida é igual, tem essa valorização da comida.

Yolanda: Parecido com o nosso.

Geraldo: Sim, e você acaba percebendo que uma coisa que acaba aproximando é o trato da comida.

Teresa: A gente gostou do que tinha lá para comer.

Food was implicated in cross-cultural relations in the workplace, too. For example, further testimony provided to the group discussions by Geraldo and Teresa shows how in the restaurant where they worked the act of preparing and eating Brazilian dishes was used as a way to 'reinforce' cultural distinctions:

Geraldo: In the restaurant where I used to work, there were a lot of Brazilians from various sectors. There were some that worked in the kitchen, from Bahia, Goiás and Pará. And they kept insisting that they needed to cook some Brazilian food. One day I came to work and they were all excited because they had prepared some.

Yolanda: What was it?

Geraldo: It was an attempt to reproduce Brazilian food: rice, chicken and a salad. They were eating it and kept saying how much they missed Brazil. I remember they looked down on me when I refused to eat it and decided to prepare some Carbonara. They said: 'It is not possible, how come you are not eating the Brazilian food we cooked?' It was something they kept for themselves; they did not offer it to the Albanians or Italians, it was only for Brazilians. For me, the only Brazilian thing about the dish was the hand who cooked it. It was funny. It was the first time I saw Brazilians cooking Brazilian food only for Brazilians.

Teresa: I had the same experience. There was this woman who worked in the kitchen with me and she prepared a lemon tart, like the ones we do in Brazil, with meringue on top, and she only offered it to the Brazilians.

Graça: A way to exclude people?

Geraldo: That day I thought about food as a way to reinforce the barriers [...] Maybe they felt excluded because they did not speak English, held lower positions in the restaurant, and they were also illegal. Maybe what they did was a sort of revolt; maybe they were trying to assert their identity. I never had that problem. Although I worked in the kitchen with them, I never felt bad about it. I wasn't keen on eating Brazilian food to connect with them or to show my allegiance to Brazilian identity. And I was regarded in a poor light by them for that.<sup>88</sup>

Here, then, food was the terrain upon which cultural differentiations and exclusions were made, processes that in this case interwove identifications of nation, region and class.

In summary, in the focus group discussions participants recognised that food played a role in both constructing and presenting Brazilian culture in

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<sup>88</sup> Geraldo: Eu lembro que no restaurante tinha muitos brasileiros e eles trabalhavam em vários setores. Uns na cozinha e eles ficavam nesta 'neura' da comida, né. De, ah, precisamos fazer uma comida brasileira, e era um pessoal da Bahia, um cara de Goiás e um do Pará. E lembro que um dia eu cheguei no trabalho, eu ia começar sábado 4 da tarde, eu cheguei lá e vi uma puta muvuca na cozinha. Eles tinham feito uma comida brasileira.

Yolanda: E o que era?

Geraldo: Era uma coisa assim que você olhava. Era uma tentativa de reproduzir a comida brasileira. Eles fizeram, não lembro se eles compraram arroz, fizeram um frango, e uma salada. E eles comiam aquilo e diziam, que saudades do Brasil. E eu lembro que eu fui muito mal visto, porque eu olhei para eles e para aquilo e fui para a cozinha fazer carbonara. Os caras falaram que absurdo nós fizemos comida brasileira. Você não vai comer isso? Era uma coisa que eles fecharam entre eles, não deram para ninguém, albaneses, italianos, ninguém podia comer aquilo, só brasileiros. Meu, isso aí de brasileiro só tem a mão de quem fez. Mas é uma coisa engraçada. Foi a única vez que eu vi brasileiros querendo fazer a comida brasileira só para quem era brasileiro.

Teresa: Tive esta mesma experiência outra vez. Esta mulher que eu trabalhava na cozinha, fez uma torta de limão, que eu lembrei por que esta aqui é de limão. Ela fez uma torta destas que tem no Brasil, que tem um suspiro em cima, ela fez e só deu para quem era brasileiro. Ela nem oferecia para as outras pessoas. Ela chegava assim - que ela fez meio escondido com as coisas da cozinha. Ela chegava assim, vem cá. Ela ia até a geladeira, cortava um pedaço e falava assim: come escondido. Ela chamava só os brasileiros.

[...]

Geraldo: Neste dia eu lembrei muito aquela coisa de reforçando as barreiras

Graça: Mas você não reconheceu aquilo como comida brasileira?

Geraldo: Reconheci, mas talvez entre aquele pessoal, talvez porque muitos não falavam inglês e eles estavam em cargos no restaurante que eram cargos mais baixos e muitos eram ilegais, então eles sentiam-se excluídos. Eu não sei se aquilo foi meio que um levante: tipo, nós temos a nossa identidade. E eu nunca tive este problema assim. Eu trabalhava na cozinha, com eles, não me sentia mal em fazer aquilo. Mas eu não ligava em comer, 'preciso comer a comida brasileira para, ah estamos entre nós, somos brasileiros, vamos comer'. E eu fui mal visto por eles.

London. In Chapter Three I argued that commercial food providers in London oriented themselves to a notion of 'Brazilian food' that was not simply 'imported' from the homeland, but fashioned in the diasporic setting of London to appeal both to non-Brazilians and Brazilians themselves. Earlier in the current chapter, I similarly argued that Brazilian consumers reconstructed food habits from their earlier lives in Brazil, refashioning them into more reflexive returns to foodways that were now understood as Brazilian. In this final section of the chapter, I turned explicitly to testimonies about the role of such food not only in the construction of personal and familial biographies but in senses of collective identity. These suggest that the designation, making and eating of Brazilian food is part of the designation, making and experience of a diasporic Brazilian community. As such, Brazilian food is a medium through which inclusions to and exclusions from Brazilian identity are forged; through which a Brazilian identity is articulated to others; and through which a public expression of being Brazilian in London can be presented.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

The focus group discussions presented 'Brazilian food' as a widespread part of diasporic Brazilian lives in London. Out of the twenty-three respondents, only four did not eat Brazilian food on a regular basis. However, in the diasporic setting of London, and bearing in mind the kinds of ruptures to lifestyles and food provisioning discussed in the previous section, the ongoing presence of Brazilian food in these Brazilians' lives is not simply a continuation of foodways from the homeland.

In London, 'Brazilian food' – a notion with little purchase or meaning in Brazil -- becomes an object of debate and practice, translated from past everyday food practices 'at home' through the mediation of food provision systems in London and the everyday routines of diasporic Brazilian consumers. Particular meals (notably rice and beans, but not exclusively), branded products and (for some) restaurants / food providers then take on this 'Brazilian' meaning for consumers.

Three principle discursive themes emerged from the data collected in the focus groups which revealed the main reasons behind migrants' decisions to eat 'familiar' food in diasporic circumstances: 1) Eating and preparing 'Brazilian food' was considered as a continuation of a habit; 2) Eating 'Brazilian food' filled an emotional need derived from a feeling of homesickness; and 3) Eating and preparing 'Brazilian' food was a way to display and construct a sense of 'Brazilianess' in London.

Food consumption patterns were articulated in terms of a habit or routine activity. They described being used to a particular kind of food which they grew up with, something which was part of their routine, which they perhaps never gave much thought to prior to their migration to the UK. Whilst recognising that food habits could change and were varied, nonetheless 'Brazilian food' was considered food with which they had a degree of familiarity and that was recognisable by taste, smell and appearance. It was when confronted by difference that the diasporic body explicitly recognised and claimed the habitual in terms of a national taste.

Food was emotionally powerful, bound up with embodied feelings and cultural narratives of nostalgia, longing and belonging. These feelings were deeply personal, felt in the gut; but they were not private or confined to the production of an interiorised subjectivity. They were bound up in social relations, whether the more local sharing of feelings that were intimated by the dynamics of the groups themselves or the transnational social relationships that participants saw food as nurturing. Certainly, it was notable that in the emotional geographies intimated in these group discussions, food ingested at particular times and in particular places stimulated social relationships and feelings that stretched across both time and space.

Participants recognised that food played a role in both constructing and presenting Brazilian culture in London. This suggests that the designation, making and eating of Brazilian food is part of the designation, making and experience of a diasporic Brazilian community. As such, Brazilian food is a medium through which inclusions to and exclusions from Brazilian identity are forged; through which a Brazilian identity is articulated to others; and through

which a public expression of being Brazilian in London can be undertaken presented.

These 'investments' diasporic Brazilians have made in the consumption of Brazilian food are further explored in relation to domestic consumption in Chapter Six. The chapter that follows examines, among other things, how the feelings of nostalgia and/or homesickness are cast as a powerful trigger for diasporic consumption in Brazilian food outlets.



**4 Chapter Five - The public culture of Brazilian food commerce in Harlesden: a case study of *Mercearia Brasil*, *Sabor Mineiro* and their translocal geographies**

## 4.1 Introduction

Travelling suggests a journey that alters not only the traveller but the spaces travelled. (Highmore, 2002: 146)

A number of academic studies on transnationalism have focused on the mobile aspects of migrants' lives, emphasising the flows, social networks, economic and cultural exchanges that happen across borders, forgetting that migrant life has also a grounded aspect to it (Dunn, 2010). Some scholars have even argued that migrants' increased mobility leads to the creation of deterritorialized identities and a feeling of detachment from place (Appadurai, 1996a, Appadurai, 2005, Hannerz, 1996). However, as noted by Brickell and Datta (2011b), a more complex picture has emerged as recent research (Conradson and McKay, 2007, Smith, 2001, Smith and Guarnizo, 1998, Gielis, 2009, Mandaville, 1999, McKay, 2006, Velayutham and Wise, 2005) has taken into account that these transnational networks are created, negotiated and sustained in localized contexts.

Michael Peter Smith's concept of translocality (Smith, 2001), developed in investigations of what he termed 'transnational urbanism', provides a useful framework for understanding how mobile subjects ground themselves and develop senses of belonging through its recognition of the importance of place and locality. In his own words, 'my take on transnationalism and the city focuses on the social-spatial processes by which social actors and their networks forge translocal connections and create the linkages between and across places that I called translocality' (Smith, 2011:181). Stemming from this, Brickell and Datta have coined the term 'translocal geographies' 'as a simultaneous situatedness across different locales which provide ways of understanding the overlapping place-time(s) in migrants' everyday lives' (2011b: 4).

Central to these concepts is an understanding that the nation is not the only reference for migrant identity. Migrants come from homes, families, neighbourhoods, villages, towns, regions and these multiple spatial connections and registers of affiliation will continue to influence migrants' trajectories in their new

place of settlement (Brickell and Datta, 2011a). Furthermore, the transnational connections or loyalties that are part of migrants' lives do not exist in opposition to an engagement with the local geographies of residence; migrants will 'ground' themselves and develop attachment to their close surroundings (Smith, 2001). Such grounding leads to a 'rethinking of local places as dynamic sites where transnational, translocal, and diasporic identities are expressed and explored' (Hall and Datta, 2011: 70), an approach that further enriches what Doreen Massey called the development of 'a global sense of place' (1994).

An engagement with this recent scholarship, which examines the 'everyday practices of mobility as situated within local places' (Hall and Datta, 2011: 69), provides the theoretical basis for this chapter's ethnographic account of two Brazilian-owned food enterprises in the London neighbourhood of Harlesden. With a general focus on the production of place through migrants' practices and narratives, this chapter investigates how transnational processes engendered by migrant food commerce become emplaced/localized in a global city. In doing so, it unpacks how people, places and objects are enmeshed together in the experience of everyday life. Its orientation is towards the 'public culture' of Brazilian food; i.e. the always more than commercial meanings produced through the provision and consumption of Brazilian food in settings such as grocery shops and restaurants and cafés. More specifically, I provide a detailed description of how Brazilian food commerce both claims space and gives visibility to Brazilian identity in London and also enables the translocalization of Brazilian life to these new settings. Drawing from Ehrkamp's (2005) study on Turkish immigrants in Germany, I examine how everyday practices such as grocery shopping and eating in familiar places can emplace migrants in both a particular neighbourhood in the host country and in spaces of their home country. Ehrkamp also draws attention to the fact that studies of transnational practices often neglect how migrants' local and regional identities and belongings are not totally erased in the process of migration, but have to be 'negotiated locally and across generations' (Ehrkamp, 2005:335). In my study I examine the interplay between regional identities - which are represented in food commerce settings materially through food and imaginatively through accounts

from owners, staff and clients – and the role of the nation-state in the formation of Brazilian diasporic identities.

I centre my analyses on the ‘micro-structural scales of material life and social practices’ (Smith, 2011:187) of two eating and shopping places in a specific neighbourhood, Harlesden. I suggest that this investigation of what goes on inside these commercial spaces contributes to bringing a ‘multi-scalar imagination to the dialectic of mobility and place making’ (Smith (2011:187). In examining these ordinary sites of consumption I also rectify an academic tendency to focus on spectacular sites of consumption such as shopping malls, ignoring ordinary places where people do everyday shopping (Jackson and Thrift, 1995), chiming with a number of recent migration studies that have now turned their attention to smaller commercial locations (Hall and Datta, 2011, Everts, 2010, Hall, 2009, Coakley, 2010, Mankekar, 2005). Research on places such as cafés, restaurants and grocery shops owned and visited by immigrants requires an understanding that these are not just commercial enterprises but play multiple roles in an immigrant’s home-building experience (Mankekar (2005). I follow Mankekar’s argument that belonging and identity are not merely ‘general’ feelings and ideas; they are grounded in bodily impressions, through familiar ‘sensorial reminders’ and in particular places. These places thus stage an ‘intimate mode of belonging’, as Hall terms it, in her ethnographic work in a London ‘caff’ (Hall, 2009).

The chapter is divided into three main parts. The first section provides an overview of the research setting, giving contextual information about the neighbourhood where these two commercial spaces are located and then more details on each outlet. The second section then examines how, through these commercial ventures, Brazilians claim space in the city and localize their presence. It shows how these spaces operate as spaces of sociality, providing emotional geographies of comfort and familiarity to displaced Brazilians. It also highlights how they provide visibility for Brazilian identity in London, both as a positive affirmation and as a problematic identification of a population of whom many members are ‘undocumented’ and wary of being visible to state authorities. The third part of the chapter focuses on how Brazilian life is translocalized in these

places: materially through the commonalities of brands and food; sensorially via not only food but commonalities of language and media provision and consumption; socially through the staging of conversations with common preoccupations (such as Brazilian football); and emotionally, as all these aspects of place and their sociality prompt more subjective re-connections, for example through memories. I also highlight how these are spaces of re-creation of diasporic forms of “Brazilianess”. As such, they become important sites of reference for getting young migrants acquainted with Brazilian culture. However they are also spaces where ‘Brazilianess’ is re-made and contested, where there are politics of inclusion and exclusion, and where new cultural boundaries are drawn, including through the regionalization of cuisines.

## **4.2 The research setting**

The two commercial outlets chosen as case studies are situated in Harlesden, a neighbourhood in the south part of the borough of Brent, in North-West London. According to the 2001 census, Brent had a population of 263,464 (Brent, 2004). Black and ethnic minorities made up 54.7 % of Brent’s population, but neither Brazilians nor South Americans appear as a category of identification in the figures of the 2001 census of population. However, according to the informants researched in the neighbourhood, there were very few Brazilians living in Harlesden until the first decade of the twenty-first century. The Brazilian presence began to be more visible during the 2002 World Cup, when Brazilian flags could be seen in various flat windows, and this signalled an emergent trend which saw Harlesden and its vicinities become an important centre of Brazilian activity, with migrants attracted by lower rents and easy access to Central London. Indeed, according to Evans (Evans et al., 2007) around 30,000 Brazilians now live in the wider Borough of Brent, and this marked Brazilian immigration over the last decade has earned Harlesden a reputation for being the ‘most Brazilian’ neighbourhood in London.

Harlesden appears as a multicultural neighbourhood, and this multicultural presence has been imprinted on the commercial life of the high street. A short walk

around Harlesden reveals a retail landscape that is dominated not by chain stores but by small ethnic enterprises providing all sorts of material goods for this diverse community. Together with churches, and community and cultural organizations from different ethnic groups, these commercial settings provide a network of support and a place of socialization for both earlier and more recent migrants. Behind what can seem a messy, shabby and sometimes violent sort of place, lies a rich variety of dreams, projects, conflicts and encounters. Brazilians have carved a home in this area among earlier migrant waves such as the Portuguese, the Afro-Caribbeans and the Irish. The Portuguese presence in the area certainly facilitated the life of newly arrived Brazilians, and shops, restaurants and bars marketed for both groups are common. In 2007 a short-lived Portuguese Speaking Business Association was created by Brent Council. Nonetheless, making a home in Harlesden does not occur without tensions with other ethnic groups, as reported by Brazilian residents (an issue which I will come back to).



**Figure 4.1 Grocery shop in Harlesden High Street**

As I suggested in Chapter 3, the spatial concentration of time starved, homesick and English illiterate Brazilians, coupled with savvy Brazilian entrepreneurs, creates an environment in which what it is aptly called ‘*economia da saudade*’ (homesickness economy) can flourish as a niche sector providing services for Brazilian immigrants in London who miss home. *Mercearia Brasil* was the first

Brazilian grocery shop to open in the area in 2001 and is now situated next to a Brazilian hairdresser in a street hosting a number of other Brazilian and Portuguese food businesses. It opens daily from 9 am to 7 pm, selling mostly Brazilian groceries and meat, but also doubling as a money transfer agency. Like most other Brazilian owned grocery shops, as a place *Mercearia Brasil* is overtly Brazilian: most of the signs inside the shop are written in Portuguese, Brazilian magazines are on display on the floor under a shelf, a Brazilian flag is permanently on display in the shop window, and inside the shop pictures of well known Brazilian landscapes such as *Corcovado* and printed religious messages hang on the walls. A board displays advertisements offering all sorts of services for the Brazilian diaspora: accommodation, grooming, interpreting, and private classes in subjects and activities such as *Jiu-jitsu*, *Capoeira* and music.

According to the staff the busiest times are on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The clientele profile is a mixture of regulars who live nearby and come into the shop two to three days a week; customers who order by phone and come to pick goods up at the weekends; and clients who live further away and will come once a month to buy in larger quantities, often leaving with a suitcase full of goods. In terms of the shop's stock, best selling products include meat, beans, *guaraná* (a Brazilian soft drink) cheese bread mixture and maize and manioc flour; but the shop also stocks herbal teas, coffee, biscuits, sweets, soft drinks, frozen snacks and pulp juices, sauces and spices, cake mixtures, toiletries, etc. The shop keeps to well-known Brazilian brand names that comply with UK and EU hygiene and safety rules. It works with small profit margins. Some products have to come from Portugal, such as *Guaraná Antarctica* (a Brazilian soft drink made with an Amazon berry), condensed milk and processed meat products such as sausages and cheeses. They used to import directly from Brazil, but their trading partner in Brazil has been bought up by Carrefour and the exporting division was closed temporarily. *Mercearia Brasil* now obtains their products from the three main importers in the UK: Brazilian Products, Gaya and Lusobrits Imports. The meat is provided by a Brazilian importer but at the moment Australian and Irish beef are sold because of more competitive prices.

The owner, Fernanda, is in her 50s and arrived in the UK in 1987, coming from São Paulo where she used to work as a secretary. In 2001 she opened the business with another Brazilian partner, a preacher from an Evangelical church. After a year the partnership was dissolved and she decided to continue on her own. The opening of other food shops in the area hit her business, but she bounced back offering money transfer services and opening a meat counter, both inside the same shop space. Fernanda belongs to an evangelical church called *Ministério do Reavivamento* and believes that God has played a big part in the success of her business. *Mercearia Brasil* has become well-known and respected as one of the first Brazilian food outlets to open in the area. Fernanda works behind the money transfer counter and employs two full-time and two part-time staff to assist in the other activities of the shop.



**Figure 4.2 Mercearia Brazil**

At the time of my research (2010), the person who worked on the meat counter was Angelo, a young man from Minas, in his mid 20s, who had arrived in the UK in December 2009 following a short stay in Italy for three months in order to get the documentation for an Italian passport. His wife had a cousin in the UK who received them on arrival and helped to get him a job as a courier. He had been working in the grocery shop for three months but was soon to leave to work in another Brazilian



food outlet in the area. His butchery skills - which he had acquired in Brazil - were very much in demand in the Brazilian grocery trade in London. He pointed out though, that working in a Brazilian environment prevented him from learning English. Apart from his work in the grocery shop, which was 6 days a week from 9 am to 7 pm, he also worked in the evenings as a cleaner in a bingo hall. His wife, Patricia, was a manicurist but, as well as also having an evening cleaning job, she too had just started working at *Mercearia Brasil* part-time. Together they had managed to save seven thousand pounds, a considerable amount in terms of Brazilian income levels.

Carina (30) had been working in *Mercearia Brasil* since 2004. She was born in Paraná, but had lived in Santa Catarina and Campos do Jordão, São Paulo, where she met her husband. They decided to move to Europe for economic reasons and first went to Portugal, later moving to England to join some friends. Carina had trained in Brazil to be a teacher but had worked mostly as a shop assistant in a clothes store. The fact that she held an Italian passport meant that she was keen to invest in her life in the UK. At the time of the research she was doing a part-time child care course and intended to work in a nursery or as a child minder. She and her husband lived in good accommodation and travelled frequently.

Diana worked at *Mercearia Brasil* part-time. She knew Carina from the time when they had lived in the same city in Brazil. She had been in the job for one and a half years, but was planning to go back to Brazil because her mother was sick. She lived with her husband and a six year old daughter. She had a degree in Hotel Management and her goal was to work in order to save money sufficient to finance the building of a small house to rent out in Brazil.



Figure 4.3 Merceria Brasil - façade and interior



Figure 4.4 Merceria Brasil - meat counter



Figure 4.5 Merceria Brasil – money transfer and notice board

*Sabor Mineiro* is a Brazilian cafe and restaurant located on the corner of Station Road, near Willesden Junction tube station. The name means 'flavour from Minas', alluding to the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, whose culinary culture is highly regarded in Brazil. It is situated across the street from other businesses belonging to the same owner: *Brazilian Emporium* and *Minas Transfer*. Its colourful yellow and green façade stands out against the grey brick building in which it is located and promotes an overt image of Brazil. *Sabor Mineiro* is owned by a couple from Minas Gerais who met in London. Lindomar (in his 40s) and his wife Amanda (also in her 40s) left Brazil in 2002 because of a perceived lack of opportunities and arrived in the UK looking for a better life. Lacking English language skills, Lindomar decided to use his culinary talent gained from his work in a restaurant in Brazil, and started selling home-made Brazilian food such as *feijoada* and snacks for Brazilian couriers. One year after he arrived he met his wife, who had an Italian passport and spoke some English. By then he was already working in the retail space that was to become *Sabor Mineiro*. Back then it was called *Sabor Goiano* and, according to Lindomar, due to the inexperience of the then owner, was not doing well. Lindomar and Amanda bought it and started their own business. Soon after they started trading they realised that there was scope for more business within the Brazilian enclave in Harlesden and opened a grocery shop (*Brazilian Emporium*). Other non-Brazilian owned grocery shops in the area then started to buy goods from them to re-sell, which prompted them to open up an importing business (*Brazilian Products*). By the time of my research in 2010, as well as the café/restaurant (*Sabor Mineiro*), the grocery shop (*Brazilian Emporium*) and the import company (*Brazilian Products*) they also owned a frozen food company (*Gula Foods*), a snack company (*Gula Snacks*) and a money transfer agency (*Minas Transfer*). The owner told me that he had sixteen full time employees across all the businesses and four self-employed salesman.

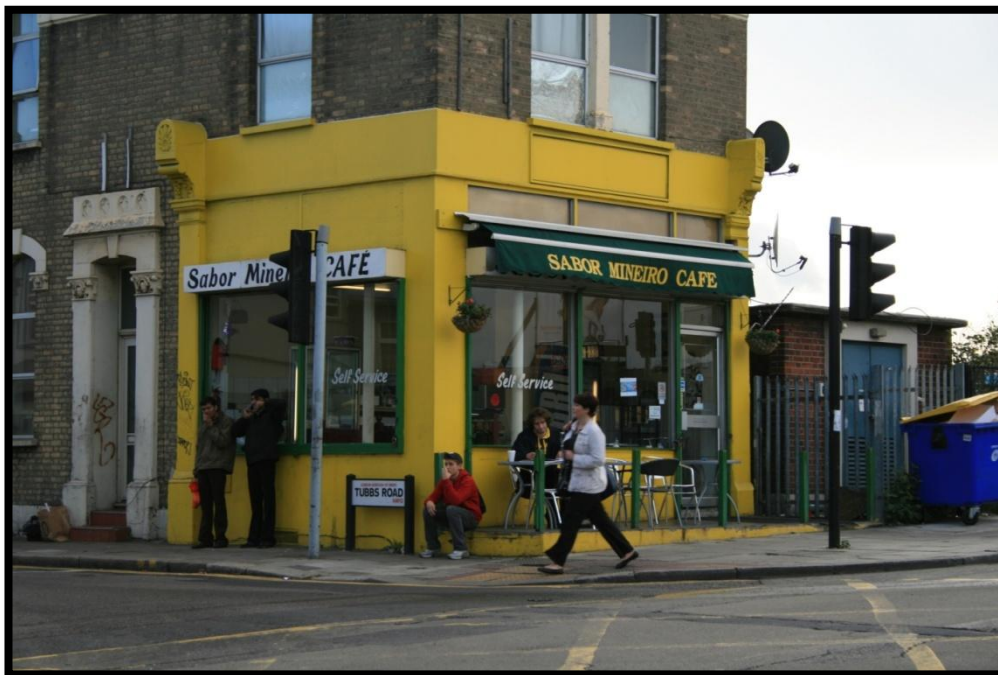
*Sabor Mineiro* opens at 6.30 am and closes at 8 pm. The restaurant, which is in the basement, serves food from 12 noon to 8 pm in a buffet service, where you can eat as much as you like for £6.50. The food served is labelled as 'comida mineira', i.e. typical food from Minas Gerais. A typical menu will consist of two kinds of beans stew, toasted manioc flour, mayonnaise salad, tomato and cucumber salad, sautéed

kale, fried plantains, creamed sweet corn, and three kinds of meat. During the week the only variation on the restaurant menu will be the meat and the side dishes. On Saturdays a typical dish will be *rabada* (oxtail); and on Sunday *lasagne*, grilled chicken and *salpicão* (a cold chicken salad) are served. The café serves a good variety of widely recognized Brazilian savoury and sweet snacks and cakes: *coxinha*, *pastel*, *pão de queijo*, *quibe*, *assado de presunto*, *pudding*, *brigadeiro*, *beijinho*, *cueca virada (orelha de gato)*, *torta recheada*. For beverages they offer coffee, exotic Brazilian pulp juices, fresh orange, the Brazilian soft drink guaraná, and other soft drinks.

The quality of the food makes up for the physical qualities of the place, which is small and unprepossessing, especially the restaurant in the basement. The owner was apologetic about this shortcoming, adding that it is quite difficult to find spacious places to rent in the area. Upstairs, in the café, a TV showing Brazilian programmes is always on; there is a board with small advertisements; and Brazilian magazines are on display. There is no menu or any explanation - in English or Portuguese - of the dishes or the service, apart from a sign on the façade which says 'self-service'. My most sustained period of observation coincided with the 2010 Football World Cup, so, apart from the Brazilian flag, English and Portuguese flags were also displayed. This was a diplomatic move to prevent antagonism and to show support not only to the supposed host society but also to the other 'host' communities in the area.

According to Lindomar and Amanda, between the restaurant and the café two hundred and fifty people are served daily. One hundred of these will eat at the restaurant. They estimate that half of the clientele will be Brazilian, the rest 'locals', workers and commuters on their way to the tube station. Lindomar is in the café on a daily basis, serving behind the counter, cooking on the chef's day off and chatting to clients. Amanda is also around, mainly to have her meals but occasionally helping out at weekends. Carla, a young woman in her twenties, works on the counter. She is bubbly and chats to everyone but discloses very little to me about herself except for the fact that she is from Foz do Iguacu, Paraná, and has been here in London since 2007. Downstairs a cook and a part-time kitchen helper deal with the

restaurant. I did not have the opportunity to speak to the part-time kitchen helper, but learned that Rosane, the cook, is from Belém do Pará, was a teacher in Brazil and is married to a Portuguese national. Her previous job in the UK was in a mussel factory but she decided to come and work here because “it is an established company”. She always enjoyed cooking but had never before cooked professionally. “The most important thing is that you are passionate about what you do”, she says. She wants to become a ‘proper’ chef, and get to know a wide range of cuisines: “It is important to be able to adapt one’s tastes and skills to the circumstances” (Fieldnotes, 14/06/2010)



**Figure 4.6 Sabor Mineiro café and restaurant**





**Figure 4.7** Brazilian businesses across the road from Sabor Mineiro



**Figure 4.8** Buffet service at Sabor Mineiro

## 4.3 Claiming space: localizing the Brazilian presence in London

### 4.3.1 Spaces of sociality and belonging

I go upstairs to the café and ask for an espresso and a cream caramel. A guy on a motorbike is delivering pastries and the already small space is very cramped with boxes. The place is decorated with green and yellow flags and in the glass windows a Brazilian, a Portuguese and an English flag are hung. Lindomar, the owner, arrives and looks at me sitting down but does not say hello. A lady comes in with a 10 year old boy. He goes straight behind the counter and helps himself to a 'coxinha' and eats it there. I presume he is a relative by the familiar way they talk to him. A couple at the opposite end of the café to where I am sitting is eating a snack and she comments to everyone in the café that tomorrow is her birthday, the same day as the first Brazilian world cup match. (...) People come, grab a snack and leave; some eat in quickly; some stay chatting for an hour or so. There are a lot of couriers on motorbikes, all of them with a Brazilian flag hanging at the back of their vehicle. They seem to know each other well; they stop here between jobs and put their helmets on top of the drinks fridge. One of the couriers, wearing a green and yellow wig, says jokingly that in Brazil people are not working today because the Brazilian team plays tomorrow and that the same should happen in the UK. They all laugh and Carla [the staff girl on the counter] reminds him 'but you are not in Brazil!' He says that he decided to take the day off anyway. 'I haven't saved much so far, it won't be now during the World Cup that I will work hard.' Lindomar, the owner, joins the banter and accuses the guy of being cheeky: he has bought food somewhere else and asks for it to be heated in the microwave, and then changed his warm drink for a cold one from the fridge. They all laugh, including Lindomar, in a manner that is not entirely reproachful to the guy's attitude but almost admiring him for getting away

with this 'malandro' (smart-ass) attitude. (Fieldnotes, *Sabor Mineiro*, 14/06/2010)

A client arrives and goes to the meat counter. She is a middle aged Brazilian woman and starts asking a lot of questions before she buys a *feijoada* mix (Brazilian bean stew): sell-by-date, price, how long can it be kept in the fridge. She says, as if thinking aloud, that she now has food for two days. I ask if she cooks Brazilian food often. She says that although she has been here for 29 years, she still cooks *feijoada*, *moqueca*, *casquinha de siri*. She is from Minas Gerais and lives in Ealing. She goes to the freezer and has a peep at the frozen snacks. They have to be deep fried and she is not very good at it, she says. She asks me for advice. She then comments that her English husband does not like fried food, which is a drag, because she loves *coxinha*. She buys a packet to take home and leaves in a hurry because her husband is in the car outside waiting for her. Angelo gets on with his work and I move to the front, to follow the conversation of the cashier with another customer. The customer is paying for some biscuits and Carina asks if her sister-in-law has already left. The woman nods and says that her absence is unbearable; to have someone to visit reaffirms that person's absence from daily life. God willing, they will move back to Brazil this year, if only for the sake of their little girl, who has developed bad eczema. (Fieldnotes *Mercearia Brasil* - 10/07/2010)

Migrants' strategies for claiming spaces of their own in the city are fundamental to establishing a sense of belonging and to the creation and sustenance of diasporic identities (Westwood and Phizaclea, 2000, Mandel, 1996, Ehrkamp, 2005, Fortier, 2000b). One of the first things I noted as I started the research in *Sabor Mineiro* was how the café was an extension of home. The family who owned the place came every day to have breakfast and lunch; so did the employees of the grocery across the road (also owned by



Lindomar and his wife), who would walk in and go behind the counter and help themselves to a coffee or food. Lindomar was around quite often, sitting and chatting to the regular customers who, I could recognise by their accents, came from Minas Gerais too. The café was at these times a very male-dominated space and there would be moments of collective banter, usually mid morning and after lunch. These regular clients used the café as one uses a place of one's own: placing objects, hanging around, talking loud, relaxing... Many were couriers, killing time between jobs; but there were also other Brazilians who lived and worked nearby. In fact, the couriers seemed to use the place almost as an office space. One of them, who appeared to be the boss, stayed there all day and distributed the jobs around as the couriers came and went, as this extract from my fieldnotes attests:

They discuss work hours and delivery times. The one with a wooden cross necklace seems to be the boss. The other one is not happy because he is supposed to deliver something late at night. When the boss leaves he says to his colleague that he is not a drug dealer to be delivering stuff late at night. One of them is trying to trade his motorbike over the phone. They talk about stress in the job they do, but say they prefer to do this than work in a restaurant. I notice that a lot of these people do not consume a lot, but just hang around. (Fieldnotes, *Sabor Mineiro*, 07/06/2010)

At *Sabor Mineiro*, the boundaries of commercial space and personal space were blurred.

Shopping in *Mercearia Brasil* was also a social experience. More often than not this shopping was not done in a rushed or purely functional manner; people stayed around for a while, going around the store touching and smelling products on the shelves, responding emotionally to the brands, and engaging sensorially with food and the ambience. Very often this was not an individual activity, even if they came to the store unaccompanied. Clients seemed eager to engage with each other and indeed with me, exchanging comments as they walked around the shop. These exchanges could be of a practical nature, such

as asking for a recipe, where to find an ingredient, how to prepare a dish, or where to find a Brazilian manicure. But they also strayed beyond the subject matter of the goods in the shop. As noted above, conversations ranged across many aspects of people's experiences in London: a cross-cultural marriage, where the partners did not share the same tastes in food; the emotional pain of transnational family relations; the sense of a body struggling to feel at ease in its environment. Narrated pieces of their past and present lives poured out and were shared with anyone nearby as they looked, prodded, smelt and tasted brands and food products.

As already signalled, apart from the regular Brazilian clientele who lived and worked nearby both *Sabor Mineiro* and *Mercearia Brasil* also received newly arrived Brazilian migrants - those without the language skills to order food in English, and also with an interest in looking for information about jobs, housing, schools. They were also frequented by Brazilians from an earlier wave of migration, people who had been living in the UK for more than ten years and had lost touch with other Brazilians. For some, visits to these Brazilian places were an attempt to re-connect with their Brazilian ethnicity, for others it was a habit that they had never lost. Non-Brazilians also patronised these spaces. Customers from Portuguese speaking countries such as Angola came regularly to *Mercearia Brasil*. *Sabor Mineiro* café was a stop for local bus drivers and road workers and the restaurant received clients from nearby areas as well as regular retired Caribbean clients who would buy a take-way for lunch. *Sabor Mineiro* was also used as a cultural gateway to 'Brazilianess' in London: non-Brazilians who wanted to go to Brazil would try sampling Brazilian culture in London first; similarly, Brazilians would bring non-Brazilian friends and partners to both places to introduce them to Brazilian culture.

The role of these commercial spaces as spaces of sociability was related to the skills of owners and staff in making them hospitable. In *Mercearia Brasil*, interaction among regulars and non-regulars was facilitated by the cashier who often tried to include more people in the conversation and encouraged people to talk about their lives. This probing was not invasive; nor was it at the

expense of customer service, rather an intrinsic part of it. At *Sabor Mineiro*, the atmosphere of familiarity and informality was more closely related to the interactions between owners, staff and regular customers, as I have previously noted. These could be instances where the staff 'looked after' vulnerable members of the community such as children; or more relaxed moments where they teased each other:

At 3.30 two school girls arrive. One is crying and saying she wants her mother. The waitress consoles them and makes a phone call, presumably to the mother? (Fieldnotes, *Sabor Mineiro*, 16/06/2010)

The waitress asked a man who is dressed in a suit for his blessing. I presume he is from a church nearby. He says that she must come to church and pay tithe before she can receive the blessing. (Fieldnotes, *Sabor Mineiro*, 04/06/2010)

Despite this apparent informality and lack of boundaries, it became clear as the research progressed that the conversations, the familiarity and the joking that went on at *Sabor Mineiro* café is the prerogative of a small circle, whilst others hang around listening, eating or waiting to get served. In subtle ways familiarity was not a given thing but had to be earned with time and trust. Nonetheless, the physical characteristics of these spaces also played a part in allowing a wider experience of interaction. They were small, enclosed spaces; in the restaurant, the tables were very close together and it was easy to hear each other's conversation. Despite the limited seating, at *Sabor Mineiro* customers in general were allowed and encouraged to linger to watch TV, read the magazines or just observe. The same was true for *Mercearia Brasil*. Customers were not rushed, as they walked around and chatted.

These same factors that allowed familiarity and informality also posed questions about these retail outlets' efficient operation as commercial spaces. Not only could they be very cramped and sometimes uncomfortable, but being a customer there required a prior knowledge of the script of Brazilian culinary culture and indeed norms of patience. There was no translation, both literally

and metaphorically. *Sabor Mineiro* had made earlier attempts to include a wider clientele by offering tastings of Brazilian food to non-Brazilians; and its location, near the station, attracted a number of non-Brazilian passers by without much effort. The core of their business was, though, to nourish the needs of displaced Brazilians.

In order for a place to be recognized as a place of belonging it has to provide some sort of reassurance for its users, making them 'feel at home', to paraphrase Fortier (2000a). This entails the construction of a space of shared meanings for those involved. Drawing on Probyn's (1996:68) idea of belonging, Fortier explains that 'practices of group identity are about manufacturing cultural and historical belongings that mark out terrains of commonality, through which the social dynamics and politics of 'fitting in' are delineated' (Fortier, 2000a: 2). My intention here is not to argue that restaurants and grocery shops enable a collective identity project for all Brazilians in London. In fact, as became clear in this research's focus group discussions (see Chapter 4) and domestic ethnography (see Chapter 6), there are Brazilians in London who do not identify with or go to these places. However, *Sabor Mineiro* and *Mercearia Brasil* are illustrative of how food retail plays an active role in forging significant, visible, public spaces of belonging for some Brazilians in London. As such they form community spaces that all Brazilians in various ways relate to, whether by visiting regularly, occasionally, or avoiding. One of the main ways in which they developed this community role was through their forms of sociality, which in turn provided comfort, familiarity and a 'sense of home' to fellow Brazilians. I now turn to an elaboration of how their forms of sociality in these retail spaces produced such emotions.

#### 4.3.2 Emotional geographies of comfort and familiarity

For immigrants navigating a foreign language and culture, a restaurant that provides familiar flavours is a city of refuge.  
(Kirschenbaum, 1939, cited by Jochnowitz, 2007: 131)

This place is like my backyard. I love it here. I go mad in this shop. I have to put something around my eyes so I don't go looking and grabbing things. (Client at *Mercearia Brasil*, 09/07/2010)

The complex and new situations engendered by the lack of familiarity with London and the English language, often magnified by the absence of institutional and family support, mean that newly arrived migrants can suffer a great deal of emotional confusion. Familiarity brought by language, food, objects and social situations thus provides comfort and eases the burden. Brazilian food shops cater for such newly arrived Brazilian immigrants, those who have not learned the English language and cannot read labels or menus, identify products or order a meal in English. In that context exchanges are not limited to a monetary transaction nor simply the supply of material goods; they also comprise narratives about being Brazilian in London, reminiscences about their lives in Brazil, and the passing on of recipes, information about jobs, services, housing, education and immigration policing. What *Sabor Mineiro* and *Mercearia Brasil* lacked in terms of sophistication and comfort was made up for by the imagination and cravings of a 'sensorially displaced' (Seremetakis, 1994) diasporic body that wanted a temporary fix of cultural familiarity. Personal feelings and problems were exchanged with total strangers, but strangers who could understand one's language and offer some comfort, or maybe even a practical solution.

It has already been noted by Frangella (2010a) that despite the differences in socio-economic status and migration trajectories, Brazilian migrants in London often shared common difficulties in terms of adaptation to the host country. Furthermore, this research has revealed that the emotional engagement sought by Brazilian customers that shop and eat at these places is not restricted to newly arrived Brazilians. An older wave of Brazilian migration in London - people who had non-Brazilians partners, were affluent and fluent in English - also patronised these places. Some had lost contact with Brazilian culture and went to these places to re-establish contact with "Brazilianess".

For others, these places were almost a lifeline in a lonely existence in a big city, offering social contact and comfort:

A client asks Carina if she knows a good manicure and Carina recommends Angelo's wife. She then mentions that tickets to Brazil are very expensive; she is desperate to go, she says. I ask how long it is since she has been to Brazil. 'Three long years', she answers; her life is all here now. She has lived in the UK for over 29 years and I ask if she still lives a 'Brazilian life'. She says that regrettably no, she does not. And then the words start pouring from her mouth: her husband is English, and so are her daughter and grandchildren. They don't even like Brazilian food. So when she cooks it is only for herself. She lives in Hampstead but comes here sometimes to find someone to talk to. She has no friends and feels very lonely. She sometimes would like to go out to have lunch with someone and would even pay for someone to come with her, but she has no one. Not a single person. She used to work in the consulate but she has made no friends there. She cries and says she feels so depressed she wouldn't mind dying. Carina and I try to comfort her. Carina suggests she joins a group, maybe from a Brazilian church. She says that Brazilians are friendly only at the beginning when they need help. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 15/06/2010)

This episode epitomises how much these places are considered as a port of call by Brazilian migrants who are isolated and come to them looking for a sense of community. It also speaks to the powerful emotions that Brazilian food can prompt. The owners and staff of Brazilian businesses are well aware that, besides food, they need to provide a space where customers can respond to the emotional demands of migration and a diasporic life. In conversation with owners and staff, they are well aware of the emotional role that they and their place play:

People come here not only to procure food. They seek someone who listens to them, someone they can trust with intimate details of their lives, their problems. People arrive here and I

notice straight away if they have a problem. I use psychology. People come here because they are lonely and they need someone to talk to. When you are listened to, you establish a connection, a personal relationship. It is not only about the food. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 22/06/2010)

I feel very emotional when I talk about these things. This sixty year old gentleman arrived here and stared at the Brazilian flag, maybe five minutes. A tear dropped from his eye. He was going through a lot of difficulty. He hadn't eaten for a while and he did not speak English. (Interview with the owner of *Sabor Mineiro*, 22/01/2010)<sup>89</sup>

Linger, in his research on Brazilians of Japanese descent living in Nagoya, Japan, shows how immigrants patronise a Brazilian restaurant called *Restaurante 51*, not only to eat as they would in Brazil but also to consume ?absorb the experience of being a displaced Brazilian and to share and confirm a feeling of alienation from mainstream Japanese culture (Linger, 2001:78). Therefore, the invitation to feel at home, a common marketing strategy within the immigrant food business, only makes sense while one is not at home. For that reason, says Linger, a Brazilian restaurant in Japan will draw much more explicitly on its ethnicity than a counterpart in Brazil.

Of course, the sense of belonging provided by being in a familiar environment should not be assumed. For example, a feeling of being trapped within one's cultural boundaries was reported by Angelo when discussing how he found working at *Mercearia Brasil*. This resonates with similar feelings from respondents in the general research, some of whom were business owners who were frustrated by the fact that they were selling Brazilian culture when the objective of coming to the UK was to get immersed in the host culture. However, in general it was the emotional geographies of comfort, familiarity and feelings of being at home that these retail spaces fostered. To reiterate, their role went well beyond a purely commercial

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<sup>89</sup> Eu me emociono muito quando eu falo destas coisas. Chegou um senhor de um sessenta e poucos anos e ficou parado olhando para a bandeira uns cinco minutos. Quando eu vi caiu uma lágrima do olho dele. Ele estava passando muitas dificuldades aqui que chorou ao ver a bandeira. Ele não tinha o que comer, não falava nada de inglês.

transaction. In my ethnographic observations, these spaces of food consumption were sites where feelings of solitude, yearning, dislocation could be expressed and responded to; they were places where one could get in touch with the complex feelings and emotions that the migration experience brings. As we have seen, the emotional feelings of being 'out of place' and a desire to feel at home, to be comforted, were apparent for Brazilians across different social classes and regions, and with varying biographies of migration and settlement in London. Brazilian shops and restaurants, in this regard, provide the public locations where both the collective and private emotional aspects of identification and belonging can be played out. The notion of these retail spaces as part of an 'Economia da saudade' illustrates perfectly the entanglement between feelings, materiality and place as people and objects move and settle.

#### 4.3.3 Claiming a space for Brazilian children

As I have shown so far, a longing for home was part of the Brazilian diasporic experience presented by these Brazilian food outlets, and spanned differences of class, age, gender and regional origins. Their appeal to children though, seemed to stand out in my observations; I now turn to this issue more directly. A shop full of sweets and treats not only brought out the child in adult shoppers but made real children marvel: eyes widened, fingers pointed, and familiar packages were caressed. Children were regular visitors to both *Mercearia Brasil* and *Sabor Mineiro*:

A party with two young men, a woman and a small boy arrive. They go and look at the instant juice. The little boy goes mad, pointing to biscuits and juices and saying "this one and that one too". They spend a long time looking around and choosing stuff. They buy beans, Passatempo biscuits, manioc starch biscuits, instant chicken soup. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 09/07/2010)



Both spaces also provided a positive atmosphere for Brazilian parents and children who stopped in after school on a regular basis. These were occasions when an idealized Brazil surfaced in the conversations: Brazil became a place where children could play freely on the streets and on the beach, surrounded by the security of the extended family. But these visits also seemed to have a more definite purpose, of educating Brazilian children into a Brazilian diasporic culture. It was on such occasions that the child's diasporic body ?persona was made familiar with national tastes:

Their conversation is broken by the arrival of two Brazilian guys with a three year old boy. *Papá* (food), says the child pointing at the food in the buffet. The father serves the kid who then tucks in to the plate of rice and beans. 'The boy slept 12 hours after the journey'... 'we to go through immigration... (...)

People come to get take ways. Someone's beeping a horn outside.

The men with the kid start talking again. The boy has lost interest in his *papá* and looks tired and sleepy. The men boast about past, present and future drinking. 'Back in Brazil, it was a case of a beer a day', said one. 'Drunk until four in the morning and then I had to get up at five', said the other. 'I am meeting a friend for a drink tonight'... The father looks at the child and then at his unfinished meal. Both the friend and the father encourage the boy to eat more saying: 'You have to eat beans so you can get strong.' (Fieldnotes, *Sabor Mineiro*, 15/06/2010)

Relatively little attention has been given to children in migration studies. Too often, these studies are only concerned with the economic impact of migration, thus focusing on adult earners (Bushin, 2008). Children are often considered as a form of luggage (Orellana et al., 2001): more a thing than a human, to be transported by adults and lacking feelings and an agency of their own. This neglect has been rectified by contemporary studies on 'transnational

families' (Parreñas, 2001, Waters, 2005) and the role of the household in return migration (Hatfield, 2010).

The presence of these young Brazilian customers is also indicative of a wider trend within Brazilian migration in the UK, witnessed by shopkeepers; an increase in the number of undocumented families with children:

Undocumented migrants bring two, three kids to live here, in a life of fear and uncertainty. Their life in Brazil must have been unbearable...They don't speak a word of English. They came here with letters; asking me to put credit on their mobile. They live in a room, which has to be shared between four people. Sometimes they bring their mother to look after the children. An old lady came here asking for help. Her son had paid for her to come and look after the children. When the children started to go to school, he threw her out of his house. We helped her to find live-in work. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 15/06/2010)

Having seen how some mothers would buy a large quantity of biscuits and sweets, I asked the shopkeeper if this was a normal occurrence. According to her, Brazilian mothers 'fill' the children up with sweets and biscuits to compensate for absent and overworked parenting, as a substitute when a normal life with school, friends, relatives and open space was not possible:

It is not given as a treat, but daily. I don't know if it is because I have been here for a while and I have changed my taste and my way of seeing things, but I think they give children too many sweets. And then they complain when the children put on weight or don't want to go to sleep until midnight. Maybe it is because in Brazil these treats are expensive and here they can afford them. Maybe they feel guilty because the children get bored because the parents don't do a lot with the children. Every day, after school, they come here and get a *coxinha* and a *guaraná* (soft drink). There is this client and she buys *Mucilon*, an infant cereal. The child is three years old and she buys a tin

every three days. I asked the mother and she said that he doesn't eat anything else. The parents cannot say no to children when the subject is food. [...] There is this emotional relationship with food: if the child is sad they give chocolate to make it better. And this happens a lot, because Brazilian children do not fit well in the schools. And many parents care more about making money than making sure their children are happy. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 15/06/2010)

Sometimes people would arrive in the middle of the day with children. The shopkeeper would ask why the child was not at school. In one particular case, a mother arrived with a daughter. She said that they had been in the UK for three months and the girl hadn't gained a place at school, so she had to accompany her mother to her cleaning jobs. "Here, I am not supposed to leave her alone at home", complained the mother. They bought the ingredients for a beef stroganoff: beef, *batata palha*. The girl, a chubby twelve year old, pointed excitedly at the peanut crumble: *paçoquinha*. Often, then, there was nothing celebratory in these doses of Brazilian diasporic culture, even if they came wrapped with memories of happier times. Instead they evidenced the marginalisation that migrant families, especially undocumented migrant families, experienced, and the temporary solutions they sought. The sweet taste of Brazilian diasporic food culture in this context was used as a palliative for a bitter and complex situation involving children, one that certainly deserves more academic attention.

#### 4.3.4 **Visibility and Brazilian identity in the city**

Based upon my ethnographic fieldwork, then, I have been arguing that these Brazilian retail outlets in Harlesden are not simply commercial spaces. They are also sites of sociality, home-making and solace. However, this making of homely retail spaces, and these claims upon urban public space, does not occur without tensions. In public spaces, and the wider public realm, encounters often lead to the

categorisation of Brazilians as 'out of place' in London, even in Harlesden. Here, for example, is a story told about public transport – both the number 18 bus route and train travel – by a Brazilian resident in Harlesden:

Like this white guy that boards the bus every now and again. He has always got a book with a page open and whilst looking at the page he starts this monologue: 'Look at me. I am the only English person on this bus. Look at you, you are all immigrants. It did not used to be this way. Long, long time ago, there were only English people here. Then you immigrants started to come...' He goes on and on, going back over the speech again and again . Most passengers don't understand because they don't speak English or are too tired to give a damn. The other one was a black guy; he boarded the train and made a theatrical gesture, opening up his shirt and saying: 'Look at me, I am black but I am English. Look at you, all immigrants going to work illegally, bearing false passports and fearing being stopped by the police. I am black but I am English. If someone hassles me or turns violent against me I have a right to be protected by the government, I will get compensation. You don't...' (Interview with a Brazilian resident in Harlesden, 16/02/2010)

Elsewhere in my observation notes in the grocery store, a teenage girl tells the shopkeeper about a school fight with Irish girls:

A Brazilian teenage girl arrives and Carina asks if everything is well at school and if they have stopped fighting. She says "has the priest stopped preaching?" The girl starts to narrate all the events at school. She arrived six months ago from Paraná and has been involved in school fights with Irish girls. She speaks really fast and gesticulates animatedly, mixing English and Portuguese words. "The Irish girls thought they were the best and everybody feared them. The girls with the cloth in their heads [Muslim girls] feared them. They [the Irish girls] did not like it when we Brazilians arrived. They were jealous because Brazilian girls are pretty. And we were not afraid to face them.

There was a fight and they had to call the police. All the other girls looked up to us, but the gipsy Irish girls threatened to kill anyone that talks to us. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 28/06/2010)

The rivalry and ensuing physical violence between Brazilian and Irish girls at school escalated to such a point that a local Brazilian association had to mediate with the school and with parents. Such events, and their conversational circulation through spaces such as *Mercearia Brasil*, illustrate a sense of a sometimes hostile environment that Brazilians may have to face in their daily life as migrants. Apparent too is a desire to assert a positive Brazilian identity in that context.

It is in this environment, where exclusion and fear are sometimes felt, that Brazilian shops play a role in making Brazilian culture visible and part of the locality. Retail spaces like *Mercearia Brasil* are, as I argued above, spaces of Brazilian sociability, spaces where one can be Brazilian without any wariness of the reactions of non-Brazilian 'Others', spaces where stories about those 'Others' – like Irish and Muslim girls at school – can be told and re-told. Moreover, through their visibility, and their role in making Harlesden recognised as the 'most Brazilian' neighbourhood in London, these shops and restaurants also provide a space of sociality for a more heterogeneous Brazilian diaspora, 'feeding' displaced Brazilians with comfort and familiarity as well as providing a space for people settled across Greater London to get in touch with their Brazilian 'ethnicity' (as it becomes framed in the UK).

Furthermore, these commercial settings make manifest a Brazilian presence in the neighbourhood, thus creating a notion of what it means to be a Brazilian in London, not only for Brazilians but also for non-Brazilians. Brazilian shops in general, my two case studies included, are one of the most visible signs of the Brazilian presence in London, disseminating images and meanings of 'Brazilianess' for Brazilians and non-Brazilians alike. Shop owners believed that their presence gave Harlesden a positive image. Indeed, Brazilian commercial activity in the area had caught the attention of Brent Council's Neighbourhood Renewal Team for Harlesden and Stonebridge, who fostered the creation of the Portuguese Speakers

Business Association (PSBA). Created in 2007, this association comprised twenty - five Brazilian and five Portuguese business owners. In a press release at the time Councillor Paul Lorber, Leader of Brent Council, said: “Portuguese-speaking businesses play a crucial part in the development and attraction of investment in the area, providing a unique shopping or dining experience for consumers inside and outside the borough. This is in line with the Council’s aim of keeping our wealth in the borough by spending in Brent” (available at <http://www.24dash.com/news/communities/2007-07-23-arsenal-star-to-kick-off-portuguese-business-forum>, accessed on 29/02/2008). A Brazilian Day was organized with the support of the Council, which provided an opportunity to showcase Brazilian food outside its ethnic group as well as promoting integration within the neighbourhood and beyond. More recently, Brent Council has promoted a catering course aimed at the Portuguese speaking community in the area to prepare for the 2012 Olympics. In an interview for a Brazilian magazine in London, a representative of Brent’s council said:

It’s almost impossible not to notice the large amount of Brazilian-run [sic] businesses popping up all over Harlesden and Willesden. Many proudly display their national colours. They’ve become an important part of Brent” (Samuel Caldbeck, manager of Brent Council’s Town Centre Regeneration department; in an interview for London’s Brazilian magazine ‘Jungle Drums’, issue 52, October 2007)

Thus the visibility of Brazilian food business in the area is in part deployed to create a positive gastronomic, cultural and economic imagination of place for both Brazilians and non-Brazilians, from Harlesden and beyond. However, such overt, placed branding of Brazilian identity, and more generally the visibility offered by Brazilian retail spaces, can also be considered problematic for some members of the Brazilian community. Brazilian migration in the UK is marked by a high number of undocumented migrants - many of whom are regular customers of these places - who would rather not call attention to their presence. The visibility of Brazilians in Harlesden provoked immigration raids by the Home Office in 2008 which, for example, led to the deportation of staff and customers from both of my case study

retail outlets. This has a negative impact on Brazilian businesses in the areas in general, at least for a while after, as customers either avoid going to these places altogether or come in and leave quickly. In April 2010, the immigration authorities came again to a Brazilian hairdresser next door to *Mercearia Brasil*, detaining and subsequently deporting a Brazilian woman. According to the shop staff, as a result some people left the area, scared, and some even chose to go back to Brazil.

Whilst doing my ethnographic research I too witnessed a police raid, which at first did not seem connected to migration issues but later, as the case developed, was revealed to be related to the following incident:

When I arrive at *Mercearia Brasil* I notice that there is a motorbike lying on the opposite pavement and that there is a police road block. People gather on the pavement in front of MB and I see Angelo standing there too, with the other Brazilians that work at the hairdresser next to the grocery shop. I get closer and ask what has happened but nobody knows much. Angelo says that he saw a police car chasing after two motorbikes. One of them fell down on the pavement and a couple run away. The other motorbike managed to escape the police road block by driving up on to the pavement. Angelo thinks they were Brazilian. There is now a queue of buses on both sides of the road and police cars arrive with dogs. Another Brazilian guy, middle aged, bald and wearing flip-flops asks what is happening. Angelo explains. The flip-flop guy says he knows the people; they live with him in a flat just in front of where the motorbike is lying. 'Are they Brazilians?' Angelo asks. "No, *Mineiros*", the guy replies, laughing through his decayed teeth. "They arrived two weeks ago". They must have run away for fear of deportation, someone says. Surely they will be able to get to them by the registration number, someone else says. The guy laughs and says the motorbike was not registered at this address. His phone rings and he says it is the fugitives. They are hiding in another Brazilian shop down the road. He leaves.

There are mixed reactions about the fugitives among the Brazilian crowd. What's their life like in Brazil if they have to go through this? How could they have the courage to run away? They were faster than the police... What a spectacular escape! What would their feelings be now? A nervous wreck or feeling elated after the escape?

The guy in flip-flops comes back. He reports they are far away now. People heave a sigh of relief. (Fieldnotes, *Mercelandia Brasil*, 06/06/2010)

Inside the shops, stories and experiences about being undocumented were frequently exchanged too:

A lady that came in to the shop says she has been caught in the bus because she has not paid the fare. Carina warns her that they also check immigration status and she has heard of cases of deportation following bus fare evasion. (Fieldnotes, *Mercelandia Brasil*, 14/06/2010)

A day later, one of the staff is caught evading the bus fare and they indeed check her legal status. Other stories could be more dramatic:

Carina gets a phone call. She tells us later that it is a friend whose husband got deported. He was caught at work and could not even grab his phone. The wife is desperate because she cannot speak English and doesn't know where he is. She has tried to get in touch with Brazilian organizations but they want to charge her a joining fee to provide any information. She is probably going to go back to Brazil too, because they have a little boy and she cannot cope on her own. (Fieldnotes, *Mercelandia Brasil*, 09/07/2010)

The promotion of Brazilian identity by Brazilian shops thus raises an interesting paradox. Whilst imprinting a positive Brazilian identity in Harlesden through their colourful façades and the food sold on their premises, these places have also called attention to less positive aspects of Brazilian



migration related to the undocumented status of a great part of London's Brazilian population. For undocumented Brazilians, the success of making Brazilian identity visible in Harlesden is not entirely welcome as it makes shops a target for the policing of migration status. At the same time as offering a place of sociability, these shops therefore also make such sociability a risky activity. For the shop owners too such visibility is double-edged: it is central to attracting custom, as well as being a source of personal pride; but it can also compromise the viability of their business, as their main consumers tend to shy away after raids. Instead of being considered solely as a place of refuge or a positive affirmation of presence, retail spaces like *Mercearia Brasil* and *Sabor Mineiro* can, sometimes, represent a place of danger and vulnerability.

#### **4.4 Translocalizing Brazilian life**

Thus far, I have shown how the experience of being Brazilian in London is partly constructed through the commercial spaces of shops and restaurants / cafes. Through ethnographic fieldwork in two such food outlets in Harlesden (*Mercearia Brasil* and *Sabor Mineiro*) I have focused on how they claim small parts of the city and make them sociable and homely for Brazilian migrants and, at the same time, make the Brazilian presence in London visible, a visibility that is both a source of comfort and a source of concern. My argument in part has been that food outlets are an important spatial form in 'localizing' the diasporic Brazilian presence in London. In the final part of this chapter I want to turn more explicitly to the 'translocal' nature of these places; to how they are places that locate one both in Harlesden and elsewhere; both in the 'here and now' and the 'there and then'.

I do that through a discussion organised into three parts. I start by considering more directly how these spaces are made to be Brazilian, or more specifically part of a common 'Brazilianess' that can be accessed by their Brazilian customers. Here, then, I want to examine the common Brazilian ground that underlies the 'homely' sociality discussed in the previous part of

this chapter. That common ground, I suggest, is forged in part via the foods sold (whether those be the goods of the grocery shop or the meals of the café), but also by the commonalities felt through the staging of public discourse (including both shared substantive interests and the pleasures of hearing one's mother tongue). However, such feelings of common ground are of course created in these particular places in particular ways; they are not innate. In the second part I therefore focus on the constructed and contested character of the common 'Brazilianess' produced, paying particular attention to how it negotiates ideas of commonality and of difference, ideas of the nation and ideas of region and locality. Moreover, to operate effectively as translocalizing spaces, these sites require the interpellation of a common public culture into the varied biographies and identities of Brazilian customers. In the third part of this discussion of the 'translocalization' produced in these retail spaces, I therefore focus on the role of memory in stitching together diverse individuals and a common place, the immediacy of life in London and an imaginative sense of (past) Brazilian life. In sum, my analysis examines how the creation of these spaces of belonging and diasporic 'communities of consumption' presupposes some sort of common ground (food, for example) but at the same time allows for different forms of 'Brazilianess' to be remembered, enacted and negotiated.

#### 4.4.1 **Having something in common**

As I discussed in Chapter 2, Brazilians are a relatively new group in the British diaspora space; they are also a diverse group, varying in lengths of residence and legal status in London and because of different regional and social origins in Brazil. The idea of 'Brazilianess' as an ethnic marker, and the choice of national parameters for collective identification, is a process in construction, one which comes about because of displacement and ensuing contact with significant others. In this sense, food as a cultural product has a paradoxical role: it reinforces and plays an active role in the construction of the idea of being Brazilian, or more specifically a displaced Brazilian, but it also can

be an arena where meanings of 'Brazilianess' and its representation are disputed (see also Frangella, , 2010a for a discussion on the circulation of Brazilian images and goods in London).

I want to begin the discussion of these issues by considering how a common 'Brazilianess' is fashioned through food; and thus with the role of national identity in the formation of diasporic identities and translocal spaces (Westwood and Phizaclea, 2000). The role of restaurants and food stores as key sites of identity-making and identity confirmation among diaspora populations has been highlighted in previous studies: by Linger (2001), Mankekar (2005) and Collins (2008) among others. Linger, who studied Brazilian-Japanese migrants in Japan explains:

By definition they are places of commensality, and commensality tends to map people into groups – family, caste, gender, class set, community of believers. Eating together reinforces sentiments of sameness, even distinction, as people share a table and incorporate common substances into the body. Moreover, foods themselves are powerfully evocative. They can signify well-being or sickness, security or danger; they conjure up times, places, whole scenes from the past, or, perhaps, visions of the future. Finally eating in a restaurant is a practice requiring knowledge of a cultural script. That is, jointly with others one produces a culturally specific social event. Hence a restaurant provides important symbolic resources for building an identity. (Linger, 2001:76)

This is what I saw frequently with Brazilians from the most varied backgrounds, who came to these shops in search of the common cultural script that might be provided by food. Of course the offer on the shelves or on the table was always incomplete, in the sense that it provided limited resources and was rarely able to express the multiple identities and affiliations that any diasporic subject might possess. These retailers could never simply restore the same complex cultural positionings and distinctions that food had allowed before migration; the 'other' had changed and class, origin, gender, religion had

different connotations in London's diasporic circumstances. Rather, 'Brazilian' became a label that could work across all sorts of differences. Brazilian food retail in London involved the creation of a homogenizing 'food culture' that enabled the reproduction of a national "culture" in the diaspora (Mankekar, 2005: 204).

Displacement thus provided some sort of common ground for Brazilian customers. Let me exemplify this in terms of consumption habits and processes of class distinction. The social positioning of food retail spaces is complex. Brazilian grocery shopping, for example, is not an activity restricted to the most recent migrants or economic migrants. Brazilian clients in grocery shops come from all walks of life:

Carina observes the way people talk, in order to identify to what social strata Brazilians customers belong to. She has twice met her clients in the airport flying first class to Brazil. A famous footballer drops in every month. Is food consumption differentiated by social class? It is difficult to judge in terms of what they consume. One because regardless of what social class they were in Brazil, after a while any Brazilian immigrant who has a job here, be it as a cleaner or as a courier, has increased or similar spending power. Funnily enough there is a movement in the opposite direction: affluent Brazilians who live in London come to shop here. There isn't a variety in terms of the products and brands sold. They are all mass marketed, mid range products. There is no 'posh' (upmarket) delicatessen/grocery shop in London that sells Brazilian produce. (Field notes Mercearia Brazil, 04/06/2010)

Brazilian food does not come cheap, especially for immigrants keen to save money, and even some of the retailers seem surprised at the price people are prepared to pay for a taste of home. Apart from beans, rice, manioc flour and meat, all other products sold in the grocery shops are non-essentials: they are treats. However, price did not prevent 'economic' migrants from shopping in these places. On the contrary, as the shopkeeper pointed out, even Brazilians

who came to London to save money did not abstain from their home food. In *Mercearia Brasil*, the banal activity of grocery shopping, therefore, brings the diasporic nation together.

Nevertheless, to say that these places affirmed an essentialised Brazilian identity, created because of displacement, may blind us to the processes of how the sorts of national brands stocked in *Mercearia Brasil* not only fed the diasporic belly and imagination but acquired new meanings. As discussed in Chapter 3, the importing of Brazilian brands by Brazilian entrepreneurs was restricted by import rules, therefore only a small variety of products and brands were sold. These were mass marketed, mid-range products, sold throughout Brazil, and therefore present in most Brazilian kitchens: beans, chicken stock, coffee, soft drinks, seasoned flour, etc. They were, in Brazil, more ubiquitous than special; mundane commercial products, more than national brands. However, these consumer objects acquired new meanings in the diasporic setting, namely the capacity to evoke familiarity for a large number of Brazilians, thus enabling the construction of collective spaces of belonging based on shared tastes and consumption practices. These brands became a way giving form to diasporic culture; and a means to 'transport' consumers 'home'. As Sutton (2001: 84) points out 'there is an imagined community implied in the act of eating food 'from home' while in exile, in the embodied knowledge that others are eating the same food'. It becomes then a 'mundane reminder that keeps national identity near the surface of daily life' (Palmer, 1998: 192, drawing on Billig's concept of 'banal nationalism').



Figure 4.9 Peanut crumble



Figure 4.10 Sack of loose black beans - Mercaria Brazil



Figure 4.11 Plate of food at Sabor Mineiro



Figure 4.12 Retailing familiarity - Merceria Brasil



Apart from the food itself, a number of other factors may contribute to the reconfiguration of a banal food shopping experience into a reminder of 'home' and 'homeland'. Mankekar (2002), in her fascinating analysis of Indian grocery stores in California, observed that the diasporic Indians who went to those shops were not only in search of specific products but interested in having an 'Indian shopping experience'. More generally, it has been argued that 'ethnic' restaurants and grocery stores rely heavily on embodied and sensual characteristics to attract customers and to make them feel at home. Bodies, language, smells, tastes, textures, objects are recourses to convey a sense of the homeland and constitute an important aspect of the consumption experience (Collins, 2008, Mankekar, 2005). Collins (2008), in his study of the places patronised by South Korean international students in Auckland, describes some of these characteristics: a) the presence of 'bodies' in these establishments - not only young Korean customers, but also the serving staff and cooks are Korean; b) linguistic homogeneity; c) the senses of smell, taste and touch provided by the food, the way it is cooked and presented, and the utensils provided; d) a display of Korean objects on the walls, including masks, paintings, calendars, advertisements, drinks bottles, as a recourse to convey the 'Korean-ness of the place' and promote a 'sense of familiarity'. The notion of familiarity explored by Collins (2008:156) is thus experienced in 'a corporeal way to refer to sights, sounds, tastes, smells and touches that are known and as such stimulates feelings of comfort and belonging amongst those who experience them' (see also Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Scheller 2003; Choo 2004; Cwiertka 2002; Law 2001).

In the translocalization of 'Brazilian life' through retail spaces in Harlesden all of these elements were present. They were not, however, 'curated' to present a neat version of 'Brazilianess'. It was the mixture of everything, defined mainly by food provision, but aided by the presence of other Brazilians speaking Portuguese, Brazilian magazines and especially, in *Sabor Mineiro*, a TV constantly tuned to a Brazilian channel that made these spaces 'Brazilian' in London. For many of the regular clients, Brazil was consumed daily via the TV programmes as they sat and ate.



What is on TV is not at all appetising. A guy from Blumenau beats his girlfriend on the streets. After that a series of news talking about robbery, corruption, murder... Everybody has their eyes glued to the TV. I notice that people came and go, Brazilian people who maybe work nearby, 'motoboy's, that stop to have lunch, and they carry on consuming Brazil. It is the moment that they get in touch with Brazilian news. Everybody stopped eating, silenced by the news and then when the news had finished they all start talking at the same time; how violent Brazil can be... (Field notes, Sabor Mineiro, 07/07/2010)

Sometimes it was hard to digest the kind of programme as images and narratives invaded the lunch hour with news about violence, corruption and disasters. At other times, I was caught watching a 'novela' (soap opera) and, in seeing a familiar face, invaded by nostalgic feelings (and I didn't even like the programme in Brazil!). In either case, TV programmes always gave ground to comments and exchanges among customers and the staff and it was an opportunity to catch up with what was going on in Brazil. Additionally, the fieldwork coincided with the World Cup, and football clearly was common ground for the expression of national belonging.



**Figure 4.13** Watching football at Sabor Mineiro cafe

#### 4.4.2 'Brazilianess' remade and contested

I have been arguing, then, that shops like *Mercearia Brasil* and cafés like *Sabor Mineiro* were social as well as commercial spaces; that their socialities in part derived from the fashioning of a 'Brazilian' space in London; and that, in consequence, they were felt to offer a 'translocal' experience, in which one could be in London and Brazil at the same time. I have been at pains to emphasise that this 'Brazilianess' was not a quality that could be simply imported; rather, it was made in London, through engagements with foods and people who became marked as notably Brazilian in and through the diasporic situation. Nonetheless, it operated through recognition of some sort of common ground, some sort of national culture.

I want now to consider more directly the tensions and disjunctions implicated in this making of a diasporic national common ground. One of the most obvious signs of this would be, of course, disinterest in or dislike or suspicion of Brazilian retail outlets by some diasporic Brazilians. I discussed such views in Chapter 4, and I return to them in Chapter 6's discussion of domestic culinary cultures; but since the current chapter is focused on what happens in these Brazilian retail outlets, the people who do not frequent them are not my main concern here. Instead, my focus is on how the production of a "'Brazilianess' in common' relates to the reproduction of differences and to the contestation of what such a 'Brazilianess' is.

In shops and cafés representations of 'Brazilianess' in London were constantly being negotiated. The experiences and ideas of what it means to be Brazilian in Brazil and in London were routinely exchanged among Brazilians and non-Brazilians, as exemplified by the extracts below:

A Portuguese guy who is delivering some products teases the clients about their assumptions about Brazil: "In Brazil the sun shines constantly and never rains". He then asks a Brazilian client if he likes carnival and football. The Brazilian says he likes football but not carnival. The Portuguese guy teases him saying

that he is not a true Brazilian. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 18/06/2010)

The topic goes back to peculiar food habits and he teases his wife by saying she likes to eat mango slices sprinkled with manioc flour. She laughs timidly. "I always do, since a child, everyone in Bahia does that too, I think". "Bahianos, they like manioc flour with everything", he laughs. Carina says that in her family they used to eat freshly baked bread with watermelon. We all laugh and she says she never heard of this anywhere else. (Fieldnotes *Mercearia Brasil*, 09/07/2010)

A member of staff tells me that people from Goiás are not very well regarded by other Brazilians, especially southern Brazilians. "They are known for forging documents; taking bank loans and then running away to Brazil; and the women dress very provocatively and scantily. In the South we don't know much about 'goianos', so there is a cultural shock among Brazilians here. They will do anything to get money. A woman comes here with her lover and two days after with her husband", she says. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 16/06/2010)

On the table next to us people start to talk about violence in Brazil. A Brazilian client turns to the Lebanese guy who is sitting at another table and volunteers an explanation for how the drug barons in Rio's shanty towns decree that all the shops close down when the Brazilian team is playing. (Fieldnotes, *Sabor Mineiro*, 15/06/2010)

As my field notes show, these exchanges range from debating stereotypes of Brazilian culture, both negative (organised criminality and violence) and positive (sunshine, football and carnival), to comparing and making fun of differences in food habits in different regions of Brazil, to strongly felt differentiations relating to region, race and class, stereotyping "mineiros" and 'goianos' migrants negatively as 'dodgy men' and 'easy women'.

The translocalization of 'Brazilian' life did not lose its regional and local accents. In the context of migration patterns to the UK (see Chapter 2), the differentiation between Northern and Southern Brazilians was particularly apparent. Behind the stereotypes lie strategies used by many (but not all) undocumented migrants that come from all over Brazil: opening bank accounts using forged passports, running away from the police or even resorting to prostitution to achieve a financial dream. 'Mineiros' and 'goianos', however, come to represent these 'negative' aspects of Brazilian migration in London. Maxine Margolis, in her book *An Invisible Minority: Brazilians in New York City* also talks about how *mineiros* 'are vilified' (Margolis, 2009: 33 - 34) by other Brazilian migrants. She attributes this to the discourse of urban superiority that runs through Brazilian society. In my research I found that these stereotypes were sometimes articulated in terms of South versus North. To frame it somewhat schematically, immigrants of European descent from Brazil's south considered themselves to be richer, whiter and more sophisticated. They not only looked down on, but did not want to be identified with, 'goianos' and 'mineiros', economic migrants from the states of Goiás and Minas Gerais who were seen as too keen to live a Brazilian life in the UK. This superiority is also due to the fact that southerners usually have European passports, thus allowing them to remain in the country for as long as they choose and also to enter and leave as they wish. Of course, this north/south divide cannot be generalised for the whole Brazilian population in London; however, what was blatant was how *goianos* and *mineiros* were denigrated by other Brazilians.

Thus, the project of creating spaces of collective belonging in the diaspora is not simply a matter of establishing commonality (and commensality), but intersected by points of tension between movement and attachment, suture (Hall, 1990) and departure, outside and inside (Fortier, 2000b). In this sense, food does not only symbolise social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and recreation (Sutton, 2001: 102). Let us look at the example of *Sabor Mineiro*. At the heart of this space of experience and sociability is its home cooked 'mineiro' food. The role of food in the construction of 'mineiro' identity has already been discussed by Brazilian

scholars (Abdala, 1997), so this cuisine already arrives in London charged with a strong regional cultural identification. In Brazil, (as anywhere else) the specificities of regional cuisines and the identities they represent are, of course, the result of social constructions. Despite its claims of ownership, 'cozinha mineira' was in fact brought to Minas by the *Bandeirantes* from São Paulo in the colonial period and dishes which are considered *Mineiros* are common in the centre and in some south west regions of Brazil, especially São Paulo and Goiás (Dutra, 2004). This appropriation, however, allows 'cozinha mineira' as a brand to go beyond its regional origins to become synonymous with good food throughout Brazil. The choice of retaining this regional marker in London, then, reflects the culinary skills of the owner who is from Minas Gerais and the demands of the shared tastes of the main groups of Brazilians in London: *Mineiros*, *Paulistas* and *Goianos*. This evocation of regional belongings association to attract customers was also a strategy used by Turkish businessman in Ehrkamp's research (2005:355). She argues that such economic strategies are efficient because translocal ties matter to migrants. However, this choice of retaining a regional marker is also made with the presupposed idea that 'cozinha mineira' holds a positive image in Brazil, as reiterated by the owner to me, and therefore fit to represent 'Brazilian' food in London.

The popularity of regional food from Minas Gerais and Goiás as representative of 'Brazilian' cuisine in London is challenged by Brazilian 'foodies'. In the Brazilian BBC blog *À Mesa*, a post by Thomas Pappon questions which Brazilian culinary models are successful outside Brazil, apart from *churrascarias*. A reader replies pointing out that: 'most Brazilian places in London serve 'home-made food' a term in fact used to cover precarious facilities, improvised service and lack of creativity in the food. Food served in buffets stays exposed all day. The menu is always the same: half-way between the *Mineira* and *Goiana* culinary traditions. Rarely find a fish or seafood dish. It is as if Brazil was a big wilderness, without sea...'<sup>90</sup> What comes to represent 'Brazilian' food lends itself to challenge because it is deeply marked by the taste

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<sup>90</sup> (Author's translation) (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/portuguese/amesa/2010/02/em-busca-do-mocoto.html> accessed on 19/01/2011).

of its diasporic subjects who may not represent the tastes of 'foodies' or other gastronomic élites.

Brazilian social and regional divisions are thus presented and represented imaginatively in accounts of food consumption in London. Brazilian food commerce provides a place where a diverse displaced nation meets, sometimes for the first time. When fellow Brazilians who have very distinct cultural registers meet in public spaces, unspoken behaviour expectations held by owners and staff can be broken - such as women customers dressing too scantily or displays of affection by same sex couples. Drawing on Fortier's work, what I want to stress here is that 'the materialization of places as/of belonging results from a combination of competing definitions of history and presence, as well as from the circulation of different lives and experiences of identity' (Fortier, 2000a:112). Food stores, therefore, can be sites where 'variable notions of homelands' are constructed and contested (see also Mankekar (2005:203). Such retail spaces can 'bring together objects, practices and bodies that may have had little connection in the homeland, but which now come to constitute a shared diaspora space'. That sharing is not always without tensions and reassertions of difference.

#### **4.4.3 Translocal 'Brazilianess' as the working of memory**

Fortier argues that 'the definitions of the identity of a place, in migration, are largely grounded in the interplay of remembrances and materializations' (2000a:112). Food, in these two retail spaces, provided a medium through which stories and histories were told and remembered, places were described, identities formed and community imagined (cf. Seremetakis, 1994a). Due to its multi-sensorial appeal, food (Vroon 1997:95 apud Sutton, 2001) was a catalyst for the remembrance of past spaces. The appearance, smell and taste of food, as well as the visual appeal of branded food packaging, formed what Holtzman (2006) calls 'mnemonic cues': reminders of past gustatory landscapes. The powerful mnemonic cues transmitted by the act of eating might be explained,

according to Sutton (2001), by how smell and tastes function. Unlike colours, which can be easily recalled to mind, recalling a scent involves bringing to mind the experiences linked to that scent. Thus, smells not only trigger emotionally charged memories but also can connect easily with 'episodic memories' (Vroon 1997, apud Sutton, 2001: 89), that is, the memory of autobiographical events such as times, places and associated emotions.

In *Remembrances of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (2001), David Sutton demonstrates how Greeks from the island of Kalymnos organised sophisticated banquets with the explicit intention of making them memorable for those who took part. By recalling and talking about these repasts in years to come they reinforced the importance of eating and remembering together as a way to create a collective sense of belonging. Food not only triggers memories but also helps people to articulate the past. Woodward (2007: 152) call this the narrativisation of objects, 'meaning the way people talk about objects as a way of talking about their lives, values and experiences.' In my research in *Mercearia Brasil* I witnessed many times how people responded emotionally to the visual aspect of familiar brands and shared these memories with fellow shoppers. Whilst this was done mostly in a spontaneous response, food and brands in these two settings (and indeed throughout the research) could also be consciously deployed to build personal and collective narratives and memories for oneself and for others. An example of this was narrated by the cashier in *Mercearia Brasil*. A Brazilian gay man often brought along his English partner to the shop on Saturdays. He would go round the shop with his partner, picking things up, pointing, smelling and tasting whilst telling stories about the foods and the memories associated with them. Of course, as Halbwachs (1992) notes, memory processes are as much about what is forgotten as about what is remembered. Furthermore, food could also bring negative memories, as I mentioned in Chapter three. Nonetheless, the capacity of familiar foods and brands to be the trigger for stories and memories of the diasporic subject cannot be neglected.

The extract below was one of my favourite moments in the whole research process. It was an exchange in *Sabor Mineiro* restaurant between a Brazilian woman and her English companion is a good illustration of the process of recollection through eating and the satiation of a diasporic longing. For that reason, I present my fieldnotes at some length:

I sit down with my plate and notice a couple sitting at a table opposite mine. The dining space is small; the tables are close to each other. It's great for hearing people's conversation.

She explains to him, in English, the grammar of the dish: there are two types of beans: black and carioca... this is... She speaks without an accent but the way she talks is so passionate about the dish, disclosing little bits of reminiscences between mouthfuls, that it reveals that she is Brazilian. 'This food wasn't in my mother's cooking repertoire; I would eat in my neighbour's house when I was small. She did not invite me very often because she had her own kids to feed...' They are both in their late forties, early fifties I presume. She has long hair, with grey showing, and he is balding and slightly overweight and wears an old grey, patterned jumper. 'The flavours are all lovely!' She seems more excited than him about the encounter with Brazilian food, closing her eyes between mouthfuls and saying: 'This was a desire of several years. It reaches a path that Chinese food cannot reach', she says in perfect English, without a trace of an accent. He observes that the manioc doesn't have much flavour; she teaches him to eat it with a bit of meat. She mentions to him that Portuguese words that she hasn't used or thought of for years are popping into her mind: *açougueiro* (butcher). 'It is all this meat, I suppose', he says. They are reaching the end of their lunch and by now I have hardly eaten mine, trying to listen to their conversation, taking notes and trying to figure out the gaps in her story. He points out that this is a very filling meal. 'After this you will feel full for 24 hours. In Brazil, people will have a nap after a lunch like this. I feel like a pig, but who cares, you can eat as much as you want for six



quid.' He gets up to pay and I ask her if she is Brazilian and if she comes here often. She tells me her name. She left Sao Paulo when she was 12 years old and never went back to Brazil and has no contact with other Brazilians. She hadn't eaten Brazilian food for over 30 years, apart from a couple of times when she tried to cook beans 'to the best of her ability'. She saw the place a couple of weeks ago and decided to try the food and meet other Brazilian people. (Fieldnotes, *Sabor Mineiro*, 14/06/2010)

Smells, tastes and the visual aspects of food and brands then, very often triggered memories of places and people.

P. reminisces that in her mother's house there is a mango tree and an avocado tree. When the avocados were ripe she would make a smoothie with the fruit, milk and crushed sweet peanuts. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 18/06/2010)

The blonde girl picks up a Knorr chicken stock and says: My grandma had them in her kitchen (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil* - 18/06/2010)

Crucial, in the context of the discussion here, is the localised character of such memories. What was remembered was not Brazil as a nation; rather food was related to particular and situated experiences, people and places from the home country. The Brazil evoked was a 'lived in Brazil': domestic and gendered (with smells of grandma's and mother's food in the kitchen), nostalgic (tastier), localised (the fruit tree in the backyard). In consequence, the work of memory associated with foods cuts across the framings of 'Brazilianess' so far discussed in this section. It is not simply a national framing; but nor is it a framing that is preoccupied with insisting on regional and / or social differentiations. Rather, general feelings of national belonging, and more specific feelings of collective attachment and differentiation, are woven together in memories that are also, fundamentally, personal. The extracted fieldnotes below, for example, show how these accounts can both emphasise differences, i.e. regional tastes and 'ethnic' markers in Brazil and, at the same

time, narrate senses of national identity, by distinguishing Brazilian tastes from that of 'others', and also make both these scales of belonging part of a personal, embodied subjectivity:

[Patricia reminisces that in her mother's house there is a mango tree and an avocado tree. When the avocados were ripe she would make a 'smoothie' mixing avocados, milk and crushed peanuts. We all laugh and Carina observes that it must be a very calorific drink. 'You don't need to have dinner if you drink that in the afternoon' says Carina. 'I do; and we would have meat, rice, *tropeiro* beans and pasta for dinner', replies Patricia. 'All that? Rice and pasta together?' Carina says laughing. They comment on how it is strange for us that avocados are eaten as a savoury food too, unlike Brazil, where they are eaten as a dessert.

I ask Patricia about the recipe for 'galinhada' (chicken cooked with rice). She says that first she fries onions until golden, then adds the seasoned chicken and fries it until golden, adding very little water. Carina asks if she uses tomato paste. She says no. Then add the rice and water. 'In Santa Catarina, we call this risotto. It is very moist and we eat it with bread' says Carina. 'With bread? That's what I call fattening'. 'In German immigration areas in the South of Brazil they would eat it with *Cuca* (a type of sweet bread) and jam'. Patricia laughs her head off at the thought of having sweet bread and jam together with savoury food. (Fieldnotes, *Mercearia Brasil*, 09/07/2010)

The multisensory capacity of food provided the material support for the narration of diasporic memories. These memories form the substrate for the creation of a fluid, dynamic but embodied Brazilian diasporic culture in these mundane spaces of consumption. Although individual in their content, these memories are enmeshed and based in the wider social contexts within which individuals live (Halbwachs, 1990). These recollections are not fixed and

retrieved from the past, but situated in the present. It is from the perspective of migrants in London that these memories are deployed. These recollections not only provide meaning to themselves and for others, they also help to situate subjects in relation to their multiple emotional belongings. It is often through memory work that the most powerful forms of translocalization are enacted. It is through memory that the here and now is connected to a there and then. It is through memory that ideas of national belonging, regional differentiation and embodied selfhood become sutured together, rather than pulling apart. It is oftentimes through memory that shops like *Mercearia Brasil* and cafés like *Sabor Mineiro* can produce the profound senses of connection and distance that food can provoke within diasporic culture.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Shops like *Mercearia Brasil* and cafes like *Sabor Mineiro* are social as well as commercial spaces. Brazilian shops and restaurants, in this regard, provide the public locations where both the collective and private emotional aspects of identification and belonging can be played out. As such they form community spaces that all Brazilians in various ways relate to, whether by visiting regularly, occasionally, or avoiding. One of the main ways in which they developed this community role was through their forms of sociality, which in turn provided comfort, familiarity and a 'sense of home' to fellow Brazilians.

These commercial outlets also offer a 'translocal' experience: one could be in London and Brazil at the same time. Brazilian life is translocalized in these places materially through the commonalities of brands and food; sensorially via not only food but commonalities of language and media provision and consumption; socially through the staging of conversations with common preoccupations (such as Brazilian football); and emotionally, as all these aspects of place and their sociality prompt more subjective re-connections, for example through memories.

These commercial ventures provide visibility for Brazilian identity in London, both as a positive affirmation and as a problematic identification. The visibility of Brazilian food business in the area is in part deployed to create a positive gastronomic, cultural and economic imagination of place for both Brazilians and non-Brazilians, from Harlesden and beyond. However, such overt, placed branding of Brazilian identity, and more generally the visibility offered by Brazilian retail spaces, can also be considered problematic for some members of the Brazilian community of a population of which many members are 'undocumented' and wary of being visible to state authorities.

To operate effectively as translocalizing spaces, these sites require the interpellation of a common public culture into the varied biographies and identities of Brazilian customers. The sense of 'Brazilianess' re-created in these settings was not a quality that could be simply imported; rather, it was made in London, through engagements with foods and people who became marked as notably Brazilian in and through the diasporic situation. Nonetheless, it operated through recognition of some sort of common ground, some sort of national culture. However they are also spaces where 'Brazilianess' is re-made and contested. The constructed and contested character of the common 'Brazilianess' negotiates ideas of commonality and of difference, ideas of the nation and ideas of region and locality. In sum, the creation of these spaces of belonging and diasporic 'communities of consumption' presupposes some sort of common ground (food, for example) but at the same time allows for different forms of 'Brazilianess' to be remembered, performed and negotiated.

In discussing the 'translocalization' produced in these retail spaces, I have highlighted the role of memory work - triggered by the sensory aspects of food - in stitching together both diverse individuals and a common place, and the immediacy of life in London and an imaginative sense of (past) Brazilian life. It is often through memory work that the most powerful forms of translocalization are enacted. It is through memory that the here and now is connected to a there and then. It is through memory that ideas of national belonging, regional differentiation and embodied selfhood become sutured

together, rather than pulling apart. These recollections not only provide meaning to themselves and for others, they also help to situate subjects in relation to their multiple emotional belongings. It is oftentimes through memory that shops like *Mercearia Brasil* and cafes like *Sabor Mineiro* can produce the profound senses of connection and distance that food can provoke within diasporic culture.

## **5 Chapter Six - At home with Brazilians in Harlesden**

## 5.1 Introduction

This final empirical chapter brings another perspective to Brazilian food consumption in London, complementing the previous chapter's focus on the commercial, public culture of Brazilian food with an in-depth, ethnographic focus on the domestic spaces inhabited by Brazilian migrants. Building on Gill Valentine's (1999) analysis of the spatial dynamics of food and eating in domestic settings, I analyse how home operates as a (food) consumption site where mobile individuals negotiate their identities and engage in home-making practices. In so doing I add to the scarce literature concerning the intersection between migration, material culture and consumption practices (Basu and Coleman, 2008). My account draws on both respondents' narratives - where food was used for talking about things, as 'part of the stories we tell about ourselves and others, our experiences and values, meanings' (Woodward, 2007: 152) - and observation of food practices and consumption in two mixed Brazilian households in Harlesden, London Borough of Brent.

Before I outline the arguments to be developed in this chapter, let me present the accommodation and households in which the work was undertaken. The research was based in two flats. Both belong to an acquaintance of mine, Celso, who bought the first flat twelve years ago, nine years after first arriving in the UK. At the time of the research, Celso shared his three-bedroom ground floor flat (Number 19) with a floating number of lodgers. He has his own room while the lodgers divided the other two bedrooms, each having two sets of bunk beds. When I arrived in the UK four years ago there were eight people living there; three years later there were five people. The flat had a kitchen, a common living room (with a satellite TV featuring Brazilian channels, a computer with broadband, a dining table, chairs and a sofa), a small garden, a small toilet and a separate bathroom. All these facilities were shared. The other flat (Number 63) is where Celso's ex-wife (Sonia) lived with two of their children. (Sonia also had a 30-year-old

daughter who lived in Brazil, and together she and Celso had an adopted son (25) who lived separately with his girlfriend in London. Number 63 was a first floor flat with a garden, three bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen and a common living room (again with satellite TV featuring Brazilian channels, a computer with broadband, dining table and chairs and a sofa). For some time Sonia shared a bedroom with their 22-year-old son, Eraldo. Her 26-year-old daughter, Berenice, lived in the converted loft, which had a bathroom, bedroom, kitchen and dining space. The other two rooms each had two sets of bunk beds where a number between eight and four lodgers were accommodated.

Celso found his lodgers through word of mouth, advertisements in 'Gumtree' and in a London guide published in Brazil. Most, but not all, who lived there were Brazilians. The length of occupancy varied: a Filipino lodger had stayed four years, some stayed just a few days. The average stay lasted around six months. Some people left to return to Brazil or move elsewhere, only to return a few months later. At the time I carried out the interviews and began to record my observations (between July 2009 and April 2010) all the occupants of Number 19 were male, but that had not always been the case. Both the lack of space due to sharing and the high turnover of lodgers are not a peculiarity of this household, but reflect wider dwelling practices of many Brazilian (and other) migrants in London (Evans et al., 2011).

There were a number of connections and similarities between the two flats. The main link was Celso's ownership of each. Sonia administered the flat in which she lived in exchange for free rent for her and their son Eraldo. She was responsible for paying the bills and getting new lodgers, although this could be negotiated between her and Celso when there was a surplus of applicants. Family life was also lived across the two flats, and as Celso and Sonia remained on good terms they visited each other frequently, to eat, chat and resolve issues with the flat and the family. The same can be said of their children, Eraldo and Berenice. Sometimes the lodgers from the two flats came together for parties and celebrations, but the extent of this varied



according to who was living there at the time. As a snapshot guide, Tables 6.1 and 6.2 provide some basic information about the people who lived in the flats in November 2009, Brazilians and non-Brazilians. All the Brazilians listed were also interviewed. Informal chats with non-Brazilians were held in a regular basis during my visits.



**Figure 5.1 Flat 19's kitchen and garden**



**Figure 5.2 Berenice's kitchen and Flat 63's kitchen**



**Figure 5.3 Preparing dinner at flat 63 and eating dinner at flat 19**

**Table 5.1 Brief details of household composition in Flat 63 in November 2009**

Berenice	Celso and Sonia's daughter, late 20s, Psychology undergraduate, works full-time in the H.R. Department of a food catering company. Has been in London for over 12 years.
Nazrim	Female, French of North African descent, mid 20s, film producer and part-time waitress in an Italian food shop.
Dimitri	Male, Greek, early twenties, unknown activities. Has been in London for less than 6 months
Sonia	Brazilian female, from Paraná, early fifties, dependant visa. Works in an Italian bakery. In the UK since 2002. Good knowledge of English.
Eraldo	Brazilian male, 21, Celso and Sonia's son. In the UK since 1994.
Vera	Brazilian female, early 40s; works as a waitress in a Nando's restaurant. Has been in London for a year, used to work as a graphic designer back in Brazil. Comes from Santa Catarina and is near fluent in English.

**Table 5.2 Brief details of household composition in Flat 19 in November 2009**

Celso	Landlord, Brazilian, late 40s, part-time minicab driver and studying for his London black cab badge, divorced and father of four. Holds an Italian passport. Comes from Santa Catarina. In Brazil worked as a bank clerk. Has lived in London since 1989, in Harlesden since 1997. Speaks fluent English and Italian.
Renato	Brazilian single male in his early 40s, has a full time cleaning job and a part-time job in a Brazilian restaurant. Has been in England for over a year, lived in Portugal for around 10 years; holds a Portuguese passport. Comes from Parana, and used to work in sales. Limited knowledge of English.

Mauro	Brazilian single male in his early 40s, has sporadic jobs as a car body repairs mechanic (his trade). Comes from Bahia. Lived in Portugal for 8 years before coming to the UK 6 months ago with his friend Renato. Holds a Portuguese passport. Very limited knowledge of English.
Marcos	Brazilian single male, 28, from Goiás, where he was a university student. In the UK since 2007, holds an Italian passport and works as a courier.
William	Brazilian male, late twenties, from Espírito Santo. Used to work as a manager in a Human Resources department. In the UK since June 2009. Works in a restaurant in Chelsea washing dishes. Limited knowledge of English.
Francesco	Italian in his thirties, vet., three months in the UK. Occupation not known.
Santos	Brazilian-Portuguese male (was born in Brazil to a Portuguese family and moved to Portugal in his early teens), mid-thirties, six months in the UK, works as a waiter in a hotel.

The family's living arrangements were considered unusual by relatives and acquaintances back in Brazil, and this was sometimes mentioned by the family members. Celso's decision to migrate to the UK was considered by Sonia and the children to be the cause of the family break up; something that had generated a lot of pain for those involved. However, being migrants in London gave the family both the space and anonymity to deal with their family problems on their own terms. Away from the unwritten social rules that dictate that divorced couples live apart, Sonia and Celso had reached an agreement that allowed some sort of family life to take place. This arrangement was also out of sheer necessity, as rent prices were high and it made financial sense for Sonia to live in Celso's property. These arrangements were subject to all sorts of contingencies, however. Towards

the end of 2010 (after my ethnographic research in the flats was largely concluded), Celso sold his flat and moved back to Number 63 (with two of his lodgers, Renato and William); Sonia moved out to live on her own and came back eight months later; Eraldo also moved out for six months and then came back; and Berenice moved out after buying a separate flat at the beginning of 2011.

Of course, such family arrangements are not specific to migrants, or even Brazilian migrants. What they highlight is both the 'diverse and complex nature of modern households' (Valentine, 1999: 494) and the tendency for migration to further complicate the social and spatial relations of domesticity and its culinary cultures. Scholars have pointed out the complexity of homes in the context of diaspora and movement: 'Staying, leaving and journeying are integrally associated with notions of home' (Mallett, 2004), making it 'a simultaneously floating and rooted signifier' (Brah, 1996:3). For example, for migrants home can be made mobile, established through repetition and domestic habits rather than a fixed location (Wise, 2000). On the other hand, a sense of home and domesticity in relation to specific physical spaces is also in play, as shown in recent geographical research which attests generally to the 'stickiness' of place and its importance in mediating migrants' belonging (Cheng, 2010) and more specifically to the importance of the domestic home in understanding experiences of migration (Hatfield, 2010).

The analysis in this chapter therefore deals with both the notion of home as a process (Rapport and Dawson, 1998, Morley, 2000) and home as a place (Tuan, 1997, Wise, 2000), treating them as two complementary and contradictory realities of migrant experience. The analysis also recognises the complex location of home for migrants. 'Home' was often located in Brazil: implied in what migrants left behind, their longing for it, or in their plans to work and save money to build it in the future. But home was also being constructed, and at stake, in London, both in a wider circuit of relations and places of sociality (see Chapter 5) and in the socio-material

relations of domestic space. As Hatfield argues, 'ideas of homes dislocated from places should not usurp understandings of homes as physical dwellings but operate alongside them, emphasising the complex nature of what 'home' might be' (Hatfield, 2010: 55). As suggested by Blunt and Varley (2004:3) 'geographies of home transverse scales from the domestic to the global in both material and symbolic ways [and] household geographies are intimately bound up with national and transnational geographies'.

This is especially true in a mixed migrant household. What makes a household a home? How does one make a home among strangers? I often wondered about these questions in relation to my respondents' living conditions. For most of the people in these two households a conjunction of house/home was either a project for the future or a memory of their previous dwellings, usually in another country. Householders sacrificed comfort and abdicated a way of life that they were used to in order to save money and have their own dream home one day. Making a home among strangers in such overcrowded conditions - even if most of them spoke the same language - was something they first experienced in London. Home, for them, was never simply grounded or bounded, but linked to other times and spaces. The domestic was a transient social space that had to be negotiated with strangers. Home had to be made, materially, imaginatively, and through social and emotional relationships (Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 23). This homemaking was not an easy task. One of the biggest challenges for the householders was to share a small space with so many people. Here, Miller's (2002) notion of 'accommodation' resonates. For Miller, 'home' relates not only to the need to find a place to live but also involves the process of adaptation between the house and householders (accommodating); i.e. "it may imply our changing of a home to suit ourselves, but also imply the need to change ourselves in order to suit our accommodation" (Miller 2010: 96). A third meaning for the term relates to the need to compromise with other household members.

For the family unit there was the challenge of dealing with new incomers in search of familiarity and 'home' at the same time as accommodating the expectations of what should be a normal family life. The fact that Celso, the father and landlord, had managed to buy property in London came with the hefty price of taking in lodgers. On many occasions his children, and even Celso himself, complained that having lived in London for all these years they still did not have a house or even a decent room to themselves. Negotiating and compromising spatially had to be exercised on a daily basis as householders had to 'accommodate' their needs with half a dozen or more in the (relatively small) spaces of the house: sharing small bedrooms, where four people slept in bunk beds, one bathroom, a small kitchen and a common eating space. More generally it meant accommodating new ways of cooking, eating, or being a family, a man, a woman, or a Brazilian.

It was in this mixture of displacement and imagined homes, in a crowded space of difference and similarities, temporary lodgings, changes and continuities that some sort of homemaking took place and helped these migrants to settle into the everyday life of the city. As Blunt and Dowling put it: 'Geographies of home are both material and symbolic and are located on thresholds between memory and nostalgia for the past, everyday life in the present, and future dreams and fears' (Blunt and Varley, 2004: 3). As I found out in this research, these thresholds very often lead to the kitchen or to the table ( for ethnographic research conducted in domestic kitchens see also Duruz, 2010, Duruz, 2008, Abarca, 2006). Notwithstanding past research on diasporic culture and domestic decoration, the flats displayed few signs that reminded you of Brazil via decoration or objects in common areas. In the bedrooms a photo of a close relative sometimes disputed limited space with toiletries. Celso, Sonia and Berenice -- as permanent residents -- displayed more memories of Brazil in their private spaces, mainly photos and souvenirs. However, it was food, in the materiality of its ingredients and utensils; in its practices of cooking, preparing and eating; in its mnemonic capacity to reproduce sensory culinary landscapes, thus abridging times and

spaces; and its affordance of social and emotional relationships that was central in the creation of senses of identity, home and belonging.

This relationship between objects and subjects has been theoretically developed in the study of material culture through the concept of objectification. Objectification processes are at the core of Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' (1977, 1984, 1990) and his ideas have been further developed by Miller (1987) in relation to material forms. Tilley's way of defining these processes is particularly apt. He says that 'through making, using, exchanging, consuming, interacting, and living with things people make themselves in the process. The object world is thus absolutely central to an understanding of the identities of individual persons and societies. Or, to put it another way, without the things – material culture – we could neither be ourselves nor know ourselves' (Tilley, 2001: 61).

In migration processes there are certain peculiarities with respect to the materialities of creating a home, the consumption practices that go with it and the social relations engendered by these practices. Rosales (2010) has rightly argued that it is not only 'disruption, loss, deconstruction, change and instability that should be taken into consideration but also [...] continuities and logics of reproduction' (Rosales, 2010: 519). This chapter's constant theme is of the two-way relations between diasporic food culture and the domestic space / domestic home making. Each shapes the other: diasporic food culture is made through the domestic; the domestic is partly forged in relation to diasporic food cultures. This relationship recalls some of the changes and continuities discussed by the focus groups and presented in Chapter 4, such as those affecting domestic practice and routines. However, the ethnographic research also allows a deeper examination of the dialectic relationship between diasporic food culture and the domestic space in terms of the forms of sociality and commensality within the households; in terms of the sensorial engagements in everyday life found in the two households; in terms of the gendering of domestic and familial social relations; and in terms of the imagined location and identity associated with home. The chapter is

structured via discussion of these five sets of issues, beginning with questions of domestic practice and routine.

## **5.2 Situating domestic food practices in the two households**

I start, then, with an account of the routine household practices in which diasporic food culture is embedded. My substantive remit is twofold. Later in this section I turn to consider how food habits are reproduced as similar but different in the diasporic home. But before that, I want to focus on everyday habits, and to consider the most routine aspects of domestic food life. In that spirit I start with a discussion of food storage and squabbles over pilfering, before turning to routine eating habits.

The kitchens and eating spaces in these two mixed households had very complex geographies. The kitchens were considered public spaces but micro-divisions in terms of storage space delineated very clear boundaries for each householder's food. Each had to buy his/her own food and keep it in a designated space in the cupboard or the fridge: "Each has their own shelf and cupboard. Fridge space is divided. Everything is divided; all spaces are divided" <sup>91</sup> (personal interview with Vera). Such divisions, although stipulated when a new person moved in, were not rigid, but constantly negotiated. 'Pinching' each other's food on a small scale was tolerated, but with new lodgers coming and going, tensions and conflicts related to food ownership were common. I often heard grievances expressed during my months of fieldwork in the flats. Householders dealt with these situations by complaining out loud, so as not to single anyone out but also to give warning to the culprit. Failing that, the matter would be taken to the landlord who would place written remarks in strategic places; for example a notice placed on the front of the fridge in one of the flats saying: 'Please do not touch other

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<sup>91</sup> Vera: Individualmente. Cada um tem a sua prateleira, o seu armário. A geladeira é dividida. Tudo é dividido. Todos os espaços são divididos.



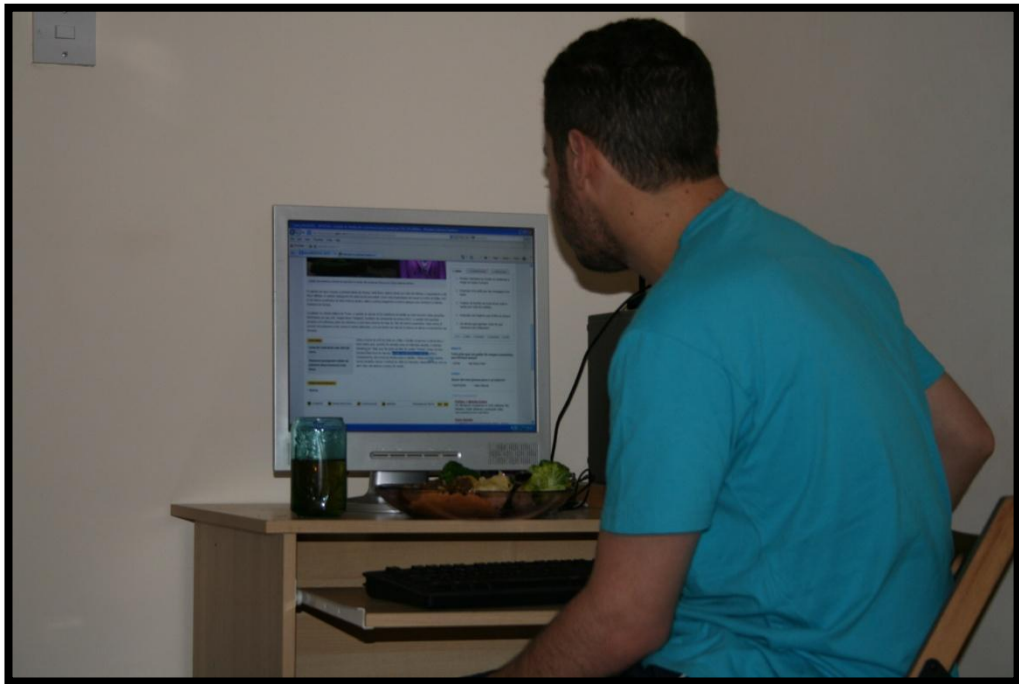
people's food without asking'. The last resort would be to talk to the person thought to be involved.



Figure 5.4 Sonia's food cupboard – Flat 63 and Celso's food cupboard at flat 19



**Figure 5.5** Cooking 'vaca atolada' at flat 19; preparing Sunday lunch at flat 19



**Figure 5.6** Marcos eating in front of the computer



**Figure 5.7** William's first attempt at cooking rice, beans, chicken and salad

Because daily meal times were usually dictated by individual work schedules all the interviewees but one, who ordered Brazilian take-away food, had to skip lunch and have their main meal in the evenings when they had time to cook. This was different from their lives in Brazil, where the main meal of the day would be eaten at lunch-time. Cooking was done when one got home from work or before work, if employment involved late / night shifts. Usually people ate on their own, in front of the computer or TV (see Figure 6.6). Having to last all day without a 'proper' hot meal (which usually meant Brazilian beans and rice) was a major source of complaint, especially for the male participants.

According to Swidler (Swidler, 2001: 74, following Sudnow 1978, Bourdieu, 1976, 1984) 'practices' are 'understood as routine activities (rather than consciously chosen actions) notable for their unconscious, automatic, unthought character. Practices can be the routines of individual actors, inscribed in the way their use their bodies, in their habits, in their taken-for-granted sense of space, dress, food, musical taste – in the social routines they know so well as to be able to improvise spontaneously without a second thought'. Echoing a common sentiment found in the focus group discussions (see Chapter 4), household members often articulated their preference for 'Brazilian food' (defined mainly as beans, rice, meat and salad) and related this in terms of a habit or routine activity which had been partially disrupted and had to be reinstated. It was 'the food they had been brought up with', a 'habit', considered a 'proper meal' that was able to sustain, and something that they could not do without:

Ah, there is nothing better. I don't know; it is the tradition, the culture, isn't it? [...] You get used to eating it from when you are small, beans and rice...<sup>92</sup> (Interview with Marcos, 31/10/2009)

[...] Yesterday, for example, I arrived home and I was crazy because I had not eaten beans for fifteen days. I needed it. [...] [With other types of food] you fill your tummy, the hunger goes away, but that characteristic thing is missing... I wouldn't say it

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<sup>92</sup> Ah, não tem nada melhor. Sei lá, é costume, é cultura, né? [...] A gente é acostumado, desde pequeno, né? É arroz, comer feijão...

is always like this, because I am open to finding out about other culinary cultures, but... [...] it is an important part. I love fish, but I could not eat that my whole life. [...] It has to be beans, rice and meat. It has to be beef: braised steak with onions or a roasted joint. (Interview with Renato, 31/10/2009)<sup>93</sup>

The ethnographic work in the households revealed, though, that the craving for 'continuation' of food practices claimed by some participants was not an easy process. It did not mean that everything just continued to be the same; it entailed complex processes of learning, remembering, adapting, resisting, incorporating, and creating. Migrants had sometimes to learn to cook for the first time. Even if they knew how to cook, they had to find ingredients both in Brazilian and non-Brazilian shops, whilst watching their budget. Cooking Brazilian rice and beans everyday was desirable, but not possible. In reality they cooked them weekly or fortnightly, in quantities that lasted for two or three days (Goode et al., 1984: 73, call this 'cyclical structural patterns'). Had I just visited the house on a few occasions I might have missed this pattern, which was related mainly to both demanding work schedules and the fact that there was only one pressure cooker in each household. The pressure cooker is a very valuable technology for producing 'Brazilian' food, as it allows beans to be cooked without having to be soaked overnight. Marcos, for example, mentioned that when he arrived in London he had to ask a friend to cook for him, because she had a pressure cooker. In this extract from my field notes, William has just learned to use the flat's pressure cooker to cook beans, with the help of his flatmates:

William is eating beans, chicken, rice and salad and I ask who has cooked it. He points his finger at his chest whilst chewing his food. He arrived a month ago and has eaten out in Brazilian

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<sup>93</sup> É... por exemplo, ontem eu cheguei aqui louco, já fazia 15 dias que eu não comia feijão . Precisava.... Você preenche o estômago, sente que passou a fome e tal, mas falta aquela coisa característica... Não digo sempre, porque também estou aberto a conhecer outras culinárias, tal tal tal, mas... [...] mas faz parte. Não tem como negar isso. Eu adoro peixe, mas fosse para comer peixe a vida inteira a partir de agora, não dava... [...] Feijão, arroz e carne[...] Tem que ter carne. Tem que ter carne na panela, um bife frito acebolado, uma carne assada no forno...

restaurants most of the time. He had told me that because he is shy, he cannot ask for what he wants in a place where people cannot speak Portuguese. Besides, he is very conservative in his eating habits and only eats food that he knows. Who has told him, I ask, how to cook? He says that Celso and Renato guided him on the first occasion, because he was afraid of using the pressure cooker. He offers me some, but I say that I have already eaten; could I take a picture to include in my research, though? (Field notes, 25/11/2009)

Another extract six months later shows that William has expanded his expertise to Brazilian desserts:

There is a strong smell of burnt sugar when I enter the house. William is in the kitchen, looking a bit puzzled at a pan. He asks if I know how to caramelize sugar. I look at the pan and say that we have to start again. I ask him to add hot water to the sugar: 1 measure sugar and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of water. First, melt the sugar on a low heat, then add the boiling water, slowly. He is not convinced water should be used but agrees. 'How long should it boil for?', he asks. I say I don't know. 'How will I know when it is going to be ready?' By the smell and colour, I say; it should be a brilliant caramel and how can I explain, not smell burnt. I say that I'm not even sure, because I have not cooked it for a long time, and I do doubt for a moment that this is the right way to do it, but it turns out to be alright. So there you go, how is that for researcher interference in the field? (Fieldnotes, 10/06/2010)

So although a significant number of the participants carried on cooking and eating Brazilian food whilst in London, the culinary framing of 'Brazilian food' and the food practices associated with its reproduction underwent various changes. With less time and space available, a smaller repertoire of Brazilian dishes was cooked (a change that was also referenced by the focus group participants). Brazilian beans with rice and a piece of meat, chicken and potato mayonnaise salad, these were the most common reproductions of Brazilian food within the households on a daily basis. Even within this small

repertoire, however, people adapted and invented, and Sonia's and Vera's experiences were exemplary of such adaptations. In the interview with Sonia she describes her search for alternative ingredients for Brazilian dishes:

You cook Brazilian food but use ingredients that aren't from Brazil. Manioc flour, for example, I used to go all the way to Mercearia Brasil to buy Brazilian manioc flour, but sometimes they didn't have it. One day I discovered that there was another type, I don't know if it was from Africa, with another name, but it is the same thing, isn't it? (...) Brazilian beans are very good, but if I cannot find them nearby, I buy another type, because the flavour is the same. The important thing is my own seasoning. (Interview with Sonia, 23/02/2010)

Sonia also learnt different ways to cook Brazilian beans with Brazilian friends she met in London. Her friend from Minas Gerais taught her this recipe for 'feijão tropeiro', which is traditionally made with left over beans. Sonia changed the main ingredient, black beans, for a more practical and readily available option. The dish is described in this excerpt from my field notes:

I peeked inside the serving dish, which was covered with a tea cloth: sort of 'tropeiro' but with red kidney beans. Celso said it was Sonia's dish. Later on, I asked her how to make it. She said she got the recipe after eating it at a friend's house. Basically, rinse and pat dry the contents of a red kidney bean tin. Fry it in a little bit of oil for five minutes. In another pan, fry a few rashers of chopped smoked bacon with a tiny bit of oil, and add one finely chopped onion, one pressed clove of garlic, and three peppers (she used a red, a yellow and a green, for colour, she said). Keep stirring until the onions and peppers are soft. Add the beans, one whole egg and 4 tablespoons of toasted manioc flour. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. (Fieldnotes, 17/05/2010)

However, Vera was the one that went the furthest. In her interview she mentioned that she had 'messed about' with a recipe for baked beans. At the

time I forgot to ask for more details, but later she posted me the recipe on *Facebook*. It said:

The said recipe is a version of baked beans, but cooked with black beans. I fry chopped onions, garlic, a lot of chopped, peeled and deseeded tomatoes plus a tin of tomato sauce; add the cooked black beans, leaving it to simmer until all is cooked. It is served with sausages, bacon & mushrooms! Yummy!!<sup>94</sup> (Facebook post, 16/06/2010).

Consumption practices in these two domestic settings were not bounded, but connected to other spaces; people's access to food outside the home affected the way the domestic environment functioned as a consumption site (Valentine, 1999). Sonia, who worked in an Italian bakery, not only had her meals there, but often brought home large quantities of left over pizzas, breads, biscuits, croissants and sandwiches which were shared among the lodgers. Eraldo, the son, very often would have takeaways such as pizza, kebabs and Chinese. Renato worked in a Brazilian restaurant and would frequently eat his meals there too. Mauro did not cook at home, but ordered a Brazilian take-away for lunch, every day. William ate out in Brazilian restaurants in the area most of the time, after the first month after his arrival. However, when he went to work in a Chinese restaurant he refused to eat Chinese food, because he did not want to 'change himself' (an issue I will consider explicitly later in the chapter).

The provenance of ingredients was not considered crucial for householders. This produced a mixed picture on the use of Brazilian retailers and the consumption of Brazilian goods and brands. Even though they lived in close proximity to a number of Brazilian grocers, two people had never been to one. They preferred to buy Brazilian products in a so-called 'international supermarket', because it was closer and better value for money. Sonia, whose cooking repertoire was more diversified, valued some Brazilian ingredients and

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<sup>94</sup> 'O tal feijao que te falei eh uma versao do Baked Beans feita com feijao preto. Refogo cebola, alho, bastante tomate sem pele e sem semente, uma lata de molho de tomates e junto o feijao. Cozinho tudo junto e sirvo com sausages, bacon & mushrooms! yamy!!'

brands which either could not be found in non-Brazilian outlets or did not have the same consistency or flavour: seasoned manioc flour, pasteurized cream, corn flour, and granulated chocolate, for example. She also mentioned how, once in a Brazilian grocer, she would then buy other treats. Following her frequent trips to Brazil, Sonia would also bring back luggage full of treats, some of which she would share with Berenice, who likewise would bring food in her luggage on returning from Brazil. However, a survey of the households' cupboards, fridges and kitchens did not reveal a preponderance of Brazilian products. Beans, manioc flour, instant cereals and chocolate mixtures were the most commonly found items, living next to other brands and products. Because of their busy schedule, dishes that were easy to prepare, such as pasta, omelettes and pizzas, were also eaten. However, even if they prepared a pizza, for example, they often tried to make it 'more Brazilian':

Marcos came back from work with a bag full of shopping. I asked what he was going to cook. He said that he was going to prepare a Brazilian pizza. I was curious and went to the kitchen with him. He took a chicken breast and prepared it with onions, garlic and tomatoes. When it was done he shredded the chicken breast. He had bought a pizza base, with tomato and mozzarella topping, but made it 'Brazilian' by topping it with the seasoned shredded chicken, sweet corn, olives, mozzarella cheese and oregano (Field notes, 30/10/2009)





Figure 5.8 Berenice's treats from a trip to Brazil; Sonia's food cupboard

The established difference between everyday food and party food had also been blurred in London, Sonia told me. A frugal/everyday dish such as beans and rice gained the status of weekend/party food and became good enough to present to guests. It worked both as a taste of home for Brazilians and as a taste of the exotic and the nation when hosting non-Brazilians:

There is no difference for me. If it is Sunday and I am going to invite someone – I have had parties for 15 people here at home – I cooked beans, refried beans, salad, braised meat, stroganoff [which in Brazil would be a weekend food], potato mayonnaise salad, and this kind of thing. I think here the day isn't so important; everyday is day (...) of beans. In Brazil you won't eat beans on Sunday. I mean, in our culture, at least in my family, Monday is the day you start eating beans. For me there isn't this difference anymore. When I cook for someone, I always cook beans. I can cook something else: braised beef, my praised mayonnaise salad, lasagne, stroganoff, because Eraldo and I like it, salad. I haven't varied a lot<sup>95</sup>. (Interview with Sonia, 23/02/2010)

As a concluding note for this section, I would like to raise the ambiguity that arises from the continuities of food practices in migratory contexts in relation to 'practicality' and domestic life. Considered as a matter of routine everyday life, shopping, cooking and eating practices had to be re-considered and reconfigured to accommodate the realities of their working life as migrants and the domestic life situation into which they were placed. There was a constant pressure in the migrant household to be 'practical', especially in terms

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<sup>95</sup> Mas aqui pra mim não faz diferença. Se é domingo, se eu vou convidar alguém - eu já fiz festas aqui com 15 pessoas - e eu fiz o feijão, o virado de feijão, fiz a salada, fiz a carne, o estrogonofe, que no Brasil seria uma comida de final de semana, maionese, essas coisas. Então aqui não tem essa importância do dia, eu acho que todo dia é dia de... [...] Todo dia é dia de feijão. No domingo no Brasil não se come feijão. Quer dizer, na nossa cultura, pelo menos na minha família, feijão começa na segunda-feira. Mas pra mim não tem essa diferença. Quando eu faço comida pra alguém, eu sempre faço feijão. Posso fazer outra coisa - uma carne de panela, um estrogonofe que eu gosto, a maionese bem elogiada, a lasanha, uma boa salada -, mas eu não tenho mudado muito. No Brasil eu diversificava mais a comida porque eu tinha aquela a coisa de cozinhar todos os dias, então você perde um pouco esse ritmo de cozinhar; estava sempre criando. Aqui, como eu cozinho poucas vezes, vem o feijão, vem a lasanha, ou vem o frango com batata, uma carne assada, um estrogonofe que o Eduardo gosta. Eu acho que eu não tenho diversificado muito aqui.

of the time and money spent on food preparation and consumption. Cooking at home was cheaper than eating out, which led many household members to learn to cook for the first time, usually guided by their Brazilians flatmates. That they chose to learn to cook beans, a dish that demanded attention, time but a minimum of skill, was telling of the meaning and endurance of 'practice' beyond 'practicality'. Food practices, in this sense, could be considered as a form of resistance, a way of creating comfort and familiarity through tastes and smells. 'Practices' could also be considered as rehearsals for new ways of being, through the incorporation of 'practical' ingredients and techniques, by creating and innovating.

### **5.3 Communal eating in the households**

Although most of the cooking and eating took place on an individual basis within the daily routines of both households, participants also engaged in communal eating on occasions. This section considers how commensality, the act or practice of eating at the same table, took on special meaning in these two households. Sharing the same language, nationality and food tastes within the same household did not automatically mean sharing 'home' as a collective project. Communal eating occasions were used by Sonia and Celso to stitch together the separate lives of the householders, thus turning mere lodgings into a homely place. For the lodgers it was an opportunity to relax and enjoy each other's company. Even though they lived under the same roof, daily contact was minimal, due to their different working hours. These occasions often marked both the arrival and departure points of migrant lives in the two households, and opened up the boundaries of domestic life by bringing friends and previous lodgers together with the current members of the households.

In terms of daily routines, then, eating together was very much dependent on the dispositions and shared tastes of the people who were living in the house at a particular time, as well as the degree of coincidence in their

work/study schedules. Making sure the costs and the labour were shared was also always an important consideration, given the emphasis for most of these Brazilian migrants on working hard to save money. Generally, eating together was not a common practice.

Sometimes people say 'let's cook something together today' then things are bought and the cost is shared and it's cooked and eaten together. (Interview with Vera, 07/10/2009)<sup>96</sup>

When there were more Brazilians living here we cooked together (...) Sometimes it was the same food. They shared the same tastes, so we cooked together. But when there are different nationalities, sometimes... It also depends on the rhythm of life each one is having, sometimes people are studying and working, and rarely at home... Now the people that are living here cook for themselves. (Interview with Berenice, 28/02/2010)

However, both the landlord and the landlady occasionally cooked for all members of the household as an overt strategy to create a shared sense of belonging among the householders. On these occasions they usually would pay for the cost of the meal themselves. Whilst Sonia liked to cook Brazilian dishes, especially a potato mayonnaise salad which had something of a legendary status among household members present and past, Celso never cooked Brazilian food for his guests. Because he had learned to cook when he lived with an Italian family in London, his dishes were usually pasta, chicken and fish. Brazilian male lodgers often complained that his food was 'too fancy'. There was also reluctance to open up the private space of eating together as a family and eating with other members of the household on a regular basis, as the quotation from Berenice given above points out.

My visits were a prompt for commensality, too. I got to know some of the householders quite well and they were incredibly hospitable and generous

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<sup>96</sup> Individualmente. Cada um tem a sua prateleira, o seu armário. A geladeira é dividida. Tudo é dividido. Todos os espaços são divididos. Às vezes tem pessoas que "ah, hoje vamos fazer alguma coisa juntos" e tal, então compra-se, divide e se cozinha junto; come junto.

with their food. As a way of reciprocating I cooked for the households a few times. Such 'occasions' (not regular but important events) called for more elaborate dishes or for trying new things out. On one such occasion, two lodgers who had just arrived from Brazil had brought with them a special pan to cook a typical dish from their region. This was requested by Celso, who knew them from Brazil and considered that this would be interesting for my research, as well as to other residents.

The twins' arrival with a special pan for 'barreado' has prompted an invitation for me and my family to go to dinner at Celso's. The dish is considered typical from Paraná, where the girls come from. According to the girls, it was a dish eaten by the coastal populations of Paraná and became more popular recently with the growth of tourism and a greater interest in cultural heritage. This type of explanation was more elaborate than the usual narrative given to me by the other participants in the house, who never referred to their dishes in these terms but rather framed them, for example, in terms of 'family' traditions. When I got there the dish was already cooking. They explained that less 'noble' cuts of meat were being slow cooked (twelve hours in Brazil, six in London) in a clay pan with bacon, onions, garlic, cumin, bay leaves and oregano. The name 'barreado' is taken from a regional technique of sealing the pan with a clay like-mixture, which is made of manioc flour and water. After this long period of cooking the meat was incredibly tender with a rich sauce and it was served with manioc flour and bananas. (Field notes, May 2011)



**Figure 5.9 Pan for cooking 'barreado'**

Non-Brazilian lodgers also showcased their cuisines by cooking for other members of the households, although more conservative Brazilian tastes did not always appreciate or even try the offerings. When a Filipino lodger lived at the house, I never saw a Brazilian lodger accept his food and they would very often refer to it in negative terms. During a visit made by Dimitri's mother (Dimitri was a Greek lodger), she cooked a dinner for all the lodgers in Number 63. I was not there, but both Celso and Sonia commented that people tried it, but not very enthusiastically. Celso, on the other hand, was very keen to try the food of his non-Brazilian lodgers and would often use my visits as an opportunity for that to happen. The extract below is from one of these occasions and describes the whole process from shopping for the ingredients,

preparing and eating together, as well as the refusal of some lodgers to eat what they considered 'different food':

I meet Celso and Berenice as I walk towards the flat. They were carrying a case of wine that Berenice had got from work. We all stop at the fishmongers in Harlesden High Street. Celso chooses sea bass and tiger prawns, which Santos is going to prepare. I really like going to these fish shops in Harlesden as they have an incredible variety of seafood. I buy a tin of coconut water, looking for a taste of tropical paradise but it tastes and smells disgusting; I return it but no refund! Nothing like the ones you taste in Brazil, freshly cut and on the beach! Berenice and I look around the fish stalls and talk about when she came to Brazil to visit me and we cooked oysters, and how cheap and tasty they were. We walk home whilst Celso goes to Tesco to buy the rest of the ingredients.

When we are all at home, Celso gets worried about Santos being delayed. He is not answering calls and was supposed to have started the dinner. When Santos gets in, he is not pleased because his roommates keep leaving the bedroom door ajar and all the food smells get in. He gives his roommates a mouthful. Celso reminds him that I am in the room and only then does he say hello.

He has been living in the house for a bit now and Celso is completely fascinated by his cooking skills. He is a trained chef and cooks Portuguese dishes, seafood being his speciality. Sonia and Berenice do not like his attitude; sometimes he is friendly and at other times he can be extremely rude. Renato says that this is a very 'Portuguese attitude'. Even though he was born in Brazil, people in the house find he has a Portuguese 'way', as they say.

Berenice decides not to stay for dinner and Celso is a bit upset. Later on, she says that she doesn't always feel like mixing with a

lot of people from the house, she would much prefer to have dinner only with a few, at her choice.

I am supposed to help Santos with his cooking and Celso tells me (when Santos isn't listening) to pay Santos lots of compliments about his food. Celso also instructs Santos to treat me as a kitchen helper, much the same way that he treats the guys in the house when they help: short and brutal.

Celso comes in and out of the kitchen to smoke in the door that leads to the garden (the kitchen is so small, and there is hardly space for two) and cracks jokes. I take notes of how to prepare the dishes:

1) 'Gambas a la planche'

Season the tiger prawns with coarse sea salt, orange juice, a packet of dried cream of mussel soup, piri-piri sauce, beer, port wine. Grill for 5 minutes.

2) 'Batatas ao murro'

Cook the potatoes with a generous amount of coarse sea salt and some sprigs of parsley. When they are soft punch them with a closed fist and season with olive oil.

3) 'Robalo assado'

Prepare a bed of half sliced onions, tomatoes and peppers. Season the sea bass (robalo) with salt, lemon and olive oil.

In a liquidiser, mix 1 tin of tomato, ½ onion and ½ pepper.

Arrange in a baking tray: Bed of onion etc., seabass, potatoes, tomato sauce, fresh coriander. Bake in the oven for 45 minutes.

4) Arroz temperado

Fry 1/2 sliced onion in olive oil, add 8 garlic cloves and 1 spoon salt + 2 cups rice. Add 4 cups boiling water. Cook until water dries.



Eraldo turns up when the dinner is ready. William is around but does not eat with us as he had just ordered a pizza. They challenge him for his lack of interest in different types of food. Celso told him that he didn't need to help with the cost of the meal. Santos asks how much it was, but Celso refuses to say and tells him that this is his offering to celebrate my visit. (Field notes, January 2010)



**Figure 5.10 Santos's seafood feast**

With so many people coming and going, farewell parties happened on a regular basis and were important moments for the household to come together. There were no fast rules about who would pay, buy, prepare, serve and clean afterwards, so a lot of negotiation went on and much depended on the personal relationships and the financial circumstances of those involved. Sometimes the costs would be shared among the flatmates; at other times the person who was leaving paid for the meal; sometimes the landlord/landlady covered the costs. Former flatmates and friends were invited to these social gatherings, thus loosening the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' (Valentine, 1999). As for the food itself, it helped to mark the moments of departure in migrant life:

Celso asked me to cook a 'Vaca Atolada' for Andre's farewell party. The atmosphere was gloomy before his departure because he hasn't been able to find a steady job in the UK, so he has decided to go back to Portugal. He told me that his son's birthday (his son lived in Brazil) was coming soon and he had promised to buy him a computer, but did not have the money nor the courage to face his son and explain. He knew Santos, Renato and Mauro from Portugal, and was sorry to leave his friends.

Celso and his Italian girlfriend, Berenice, Santos, Mauro, Renato, William, Renato were there, plus an Equatorian guy who is studying 'the knowledge' with Celso and his Brazilian girlfriend, as well as Denilson, a Brazilian musician, who is a friend of Renato. I brought along my daughter too.

When we arrived, Renato had already prepared a pan of 'vaca atolada', and later we compare the different techniques we use. (I put the meat to boil, in order to extract the grease and also don't use tomato, as the Brazilian butcher suggested to me in an interview).

They talk about the Brazilian restaurants in London, and Santos says that 'vaca atolada' is not a dish to be served in a restaurant

because it is not visually attractive. (Field notes, December 2009)

In the summer, people gathered in Number 19's backyard / garden as often as the weather permitted, usually for a barbecue. These occasions were seen as an opportunity to 'take a little trip to Brazil'. However, this was not always a nice trip for everyone, as my field notes recall:

Prior to the party there were big negotiations about who was to take part, to buy things, to cook and to contribute financially. Someone was not going to eat meat because it was Lent, so he said he should not pay the same amount. Some people that came to the party had been previous lodgers or were friends. The men got drinking and after a while things were not very pleasant. One of the lodgers is very annoying when he gets drunk! He started to make comments about getting married to the Italian lodger who was living in the house in order to get an Italian passport.

She held her ground but he just went on and on. Then someone had a homophobic rant, saying that homosexuals should be executed and the landlord had a right go at him for being so prejudiced and said that he could go to jail for saying things like that. This person then went on to attack women saying that he felt sorry for them, because they all wanted to be like men. By this time I was so fed up with hearing all this, I almost jumped down his throat, but realized there was no point in a discussion with a drunk and ignorant person and besides I was a visitor there. When I told one of the females who lives there that I thought the girls who live in the house should have been firmer with him, she shrugged her shoulders and said she got annoyed but didn't feel like challenging him. (Field notes, June 2008)

Thus, the ethnographic work revealed that food rituals of sociality at home were not commonly part of everyday domestic life, but nonetheless

considered an important occasional feature of Brazilian migrant culture in both households: to forge social bonds among householders; to mark arrivals and departures of migrant householders; and to open up the boundaries of home life to guests. Because most of the people that lived in the flats were Brazilian, these gatherings promoted to some extent the reproduction of Brazilian life in the diaspora. As such, they brought to the fore senses both of sameness and of difference, as well as discussions in which national, regional and gender stereotypes were reinforced and (not as much as I might have hoped) challenged. The events combined, then, a coming together and a sense of the differences within the collective. Negotiations were not limited to views or tastes, but also involved practical dealings related to who was going to buy, prepare and clean up. However, these parties also opened up social and cultural boundaries, with the participation of non-Brazilians and people outside the household. As far as food was concerned, the gatherings expanded the possibility of trying new foods beyond the daily fare. Domestic gatherings played an important part in disseminating the variety of Brazilian cuisine - brought to London by migrants from different parts of Brazil - both to other Brazilians and to non-Brazilians. Sharing food on these occasions was thus an opportunity to taste Brazil in new ways. Moreover, culinary boundaries were also stretched by the introduction of new dishes by non-Brazilian lodgers. Here, my own research was implicated in the processes I describe. I fully acknowledge that my own presence and research agenda both promoted and affected these gatherings, in particular being enlisted by the landlord as another way of creating occasions for communal cooking and eating. It is also with my own subjectivity and experience in mind that I start the next section, focusing on how the sensorial aspects of migrant food in domestic spaces bridge time and space.

## 5.4 Sensorial engagement with food in everyday life

In the previous two sections I have focused on the routines of household food practices and on their occasional implication in the fostering of collective senses of belonging and identity. I now want to develop that discussion by taking a more sensuous approach. I want to think about how food produces sensorial engagements in these domestic spaces, engagements that often take the inhabitants elsewhere, through their power to trigger memories of other times, places and people. The narrative moves across the senses of sight, taste and smell in particular.

When I mentioned to a colleague that I was doing research on Brazilian food among migrants in London, she told me an interesting story about her food consumption habits as a Brazilian-Japanese migrant in Japan. She said: 'Do you know, every time I go somewhere where there is a Brazilian shop, I buy some food: beans, manioc flour, cheese bread mixture. I never cook it; it stays there in my cupboard, so that when I open it I remind myself of Brazil.' I came to think of this story in relation to my own food cupboard. I also have had a bag of brown muscovado sugar for nearly a year, sent by my mother in Brazil via my brother. The sugar is produced by my friend Maria, from my home town. It sits near a packet of manioc starch 'Ensolarado do Sul', that I received from friends. They took the packet of manioc starch out of their kitchen cupboard and gave it to me because my mother had forgotten to buy me some. Even though I cook a lot of Brazilian food, I saved these two packets as a token. I like their presence there in my cupboard, as a reminder of the loved ones involved in their provisioning. For me, those people and their places live inside the cupboard with the sugar and flour.

For Berenice, such an emotional relationship with the visual and material presence of food from Brazil was sporadic. It came to prominence especially when she and / or her mother brought food products in their luggage from Brazil, most commonly packets of sweets and snacks like the ones she used to eat as a child in Brazil. They were left displayed for a week or two on

the kitchen surfaces of her tiny loft (see Figure 6.11). Their materiality had a recursive capacity; their presence stretched the memories of a recent holiday and connected her to a distant childhood life. Food's power to affect went 'beyond the taste', she said.



**Figure 5.11 Berenice's childhood foods**

In fact Berenice did not cook much Brazilian food. She did not learn to cook with her mother, as she came to London quite young to live with her father. She did, however, have a recipe book. In it she collected not so much her mother's food but her maternal grandmother's recipes, which she gathered every time she went to visit her in Brazil. In one of my visits I asked if I could have a look at her recipe book and Sonia's. As we sat and I flicked the pages, I asked them questions, and was surprised how these recipes brought me feelings and recollections.

She didn't cook them, she said, but as we went through the recipes – which were quite economical in their instructions -they provided a visual link to memories of her grandmother's kitchen. That was a space which we both knew. I asked if she had a recipe for the small doughnuts her grandmother made with manioc

starch (rosquinhas de polvilho). She didn't and we both laughed at how difficult it was to make them, as you had to press the dough between the palms of your hand in a circular motion, without breaking it. How easy it appeared in her grandmother's hand; and how the dough exhaled a sour pungent smell! And then we looked through Sonia's recipe book too, and we were reminded of our shared past in Brazil. Her recipe for homemade bread took us right back to an afternoon coffee in her kitchen; when our kids were toddlers and I was planning to come to England. (Fieldnotes 28/02/2010)

It was fortuitous for my research that Sonia, Berenice and I had shared not only those 'tasty' recipes but also a common story as migrants. As we talked through those tastes, memories and experiences, it was evident that the recipes had left a slightly different 'taste' in each of our mouths. When we talked about Sonia's bread recipe, we talked about a time that had marked our lives as migrants: for Berenice it was not having her father around when he left to go to England. For Sonia, the recipes spoke to being left by her husband to care for four kids. And for me, these stories of past kitchens and of migration brought to the fore the pain of leaving my baby boy. Memories, then, can have a bitter taste too. They were not only encoded in those recipes but were also part of our embodied and shared experience as migrants. Recipes and brands, then, were visual reminders that feed diasporic longing. In an examination of the links between the sensory aspects of food, memory and identity in transnational contexts, Choo argues just that, of how: the 'sensory experiences of food contain memories, feelings, histories, places and moments in time. Likewise, changes in these sensory experiences encode broader societal change and provide reference points between then and now, here and there. They contain collective embodied memories, encoded by shared experiences and points of identification and there is a symbiotic relationship between senses and memory – with sensory experiences contained within memories and at the same time memories contained within sensory experiences, a tantalising co-dependency' (Choo, 2004: 209).



Rosca de Povoão da Srta Nancy  
 3 copm poivilho azedo  
 2 copm farinha de mandioca  
 2 copm farinha de milho  
 1 xic água fervendo  
 Escalda - mexer e ficar uma  
 Sal a gosto  
 2 copm margarina  
 3 copm azeite  
 2 gemas  
 Misturar bem (± 500g)  
 Povoão e meia xic água morna  
 Amassar bem e assar

Pão Faveiro p/ pinelas  
 30g fermento 1/2 xic  
 1/2 colher (sopa) sal 1/2 xic  
 3 colheres (sopa) óleo de milho  
 3 xic (che) trigo  
 1 xic margarina  
 1 xic (che) água morna  
 fazer o pão e deixar crescer 1 hora.  
 Fazer duas bengalas (2 pães) deixar  
 crescer. Apurar o forno (180°C) fazer  
 cortes, pinelou a gema e soltar a oleim

Figure 5.12 Berenice's and Sonia's recipe books



Sonia and Berenice were the only ones in the household that had recipe books. For other householders, food was to be had as an experience, an embodied act. They did not follow recipes; their cooking was accomplished with the help of their bodies, by looking, tasting and feeling the food. In a group discussion, it was put to me that deployment of the senses and an intuitive and embodied approach to cooking was seen as a 'Brazilian trait' and contrasted to a more 'rational' way used in cooking by the English. During a conversation in one of the flats' occasional parties, a Brazilian female guest who worked as a cleaner in English households said: 'My boss, she measures everything. She counts the portions and names the people who she is cooking for as she pours the rice into the pan; she measures everything, the salt, the oil, the water, and the time. That is so different to how we cook. We just estimate with our eyes, our hands, by the taste, looks and smells. They are more scientifically minded about their cooking.' (Field notes, April 2009). In conversations with householders about how they used the senses in cooking they said that 'all came together'. Celso elaborated on this by saying, 'with a sweet corn, I'll prod it with my fingers or maybe bite it to see its consistency and to judge how long it will take to cook. When it is boiling, the smell will give me the first signal of its readiness; but the final test will be the mouth' (fieldnotes April 2009).

It is not my intention to endorse or challenge this cultural characterisation; rather my interest is in how the senses project potentially profound mnemonic triggers onto the routine practices of cooking. These more mundane and practical uses of the visual mnemonics of food are apparent too as Sonia and I consider a Brazilian dish I was attempting, having been directed to it by a Brazilian butcher:

Sonia arrived later when the dish was almost ready. I asked her to try it out. She thought it was a bit pale and asked if I had put in tomatoes. The recipe didn't call for tomatoes and because I wanted to do the lighter version, I had boiled instead of fried the meat. She said that my mum had told her to use a single skinned and peeled tomato to give dishes some colour without an overpowering tomato taste. We settled for paprika. Later on

I found out that this recipe often uses saffron or annatto.  
07/10/2009

The excerpt above also discloses how much our tastes are mediated by our *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990, Bourdieu, 1984, Bourdieu, 1977) In judging a dish, Sonia still used the knowledge she had learnt with my mother about giving the dish a more attractive colour. Saffron and Annatto were not part of her (or my) choice of ingredients. Discussions on gustatory taste were often held during cooking and eating. Commonly these involved comparisons: generally between Brazilian and English taste; and between cooks, dishes, and Brazilian restaurants. Taste was implicated, then, in both the construction of a sense of Self and Other based on national difference; and in the recognition of much greater complexity and diversity within the constructed entity that was 'Brazilian' food. So, for example, 'Brazilian' food was often praised as being more 'varied' and 'tasty' than 'bland' English food, as evidenced by this recorded group discussion with the householders.

Celso: I want to know... what's English food about? I don't see an English restaurant, just English breakfast.

Graça: Roast. If you go to pubs they serve it.

Celso: That's not much is it? A roast...

Graça: Shepherd's pie...

Renato: You have to admit. These are not exciting dishes...

Celso: How about regional food? As we have in Brazil?

Renato: There isn't... They have poor taste in food.

Graça: Steak and kidney pie ... Ah, Haggis!?

Renato: C'mon!

Graça: Yorkshire pudding?

Renato: Such a poor cuisine...

Graça: I'll cook you some English food...

[...]

Renato: They have such poor imagination...

Celso: They don't explore with their cooking...

Berenice: It is because we live in London and there aren't many English people here.

Celso: Berenice, Berenice, Berenice.... Even if you go to the seaside all you have is English breakfast.

Berenice: Because that's what they are used to eating.

Celso: Doesn't matter! They could change. They don't need to eat only that...

Renato: I don't think there is an English cuisine; otherwise you would be able to tell me a variety of dishes with seafood, meats. I sincerely think English people lack imagination.

Celso: Must be...

Berenice: We don't know...

Graça: How about fish dishes Berenice, that one...

B: Fish fingers? (Laughs)<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Celso: Mas qual é... eu quero saber, até hoje, o quê que é comida inglesa que eu não sei? Não vejo nenhum restaurante inglês; só vejo breakfast.

Graça: Ah, é um roast.

Renato: Ah, agora, convenhamos, né? Tem um roast. Tem um roast. E tem um roast, tá!

Graça: Shepherd's pie.

Renato: Convenhamos, né?! Tudo comidinha sem graça...

Celso: Não, por exemplo, comidas regionais, né? Como tem no Brasil.

Renato: Não, não existe!

Graça: Steak and kidney pie... Ah, haggis!?

Renato: Ai, pára!

Graça: Yorkshire pudding...

Celso: Não existe! É uma pobreza de gosto!

Graça: Vou fazer um dia para vocês aqui, uma comida inglesa, tá?

[...]

Renato: Na verdade, eles são pobres de imaginação, mesmo.

Celso: Como é que eles não exploram isso?!

Berenice: Não, mas, sinceramente, a gente mora em Londres, que a porcentagem de inglês é muito pequena, mesmo.

Graça: Ah é...

Celso: Berenice! Berenice! Berenice! Tu vai para qualquer lugar da costa, tá entendendo? O café da manhã é English breakfast...

Berenice: Por que isso é o café da manhã deles!

Celso: Mas não interessa! Eles podem mudar isso aí. Não precisa ser só isso.

Renato: Eu acho que não existe culinária inglesa, senão vocês saberiam dizer o quê que tinha de frutos do mar, de peixes, de porco... Não, sinceramente, eu acho que inglês é pobre de imaginação.

Celso: Deve ser! Só tem essa resposta, meu!

Berenice: E a gente também não conhece...

Graça: Qual peixe, Berenice? Como é que é aquele que tem um...

As Weiss (1997: 7) argues, 'taste is simultaneously subjective, objective, and qualificative'. Less pejoratively, the attachment some of the respondents showed in relation to 'Brazilian' food was also portrayed in terms of 'a taste you are used to'. On the other hand, household members were well aware that the taste of 'Brazilian food' was in practice richly differentiated. I have already mentioned Sonia's legendary potato mayonnaise salad; others knew that its taste was not easy for them to match (though Roberto often asked Sonia to taste his potato mayonnaise salad and give her expert opinion). After Andre left, Renato and I cooked the same dish, but it came out totally different, and we later tried to work out what had caused this. As a sense, taste was both called upon as evidence for nationalised differences, but also highlighted the practical and specific accomplishment of food preparation.

I have discussed so far both the visual and taste impact of food. Let me now turn to the sense of smell. Although people often reported during interviews that familiar smells brought them good memories and pleasant feelings, personal experience in my fieldwork and observation of how people reacted to food smells highlighted less pleasing sensations. People complained about the 'strange' smell of the Filipino lodger's food and Celso complained that Mauro's take-away food made the house stink. For Mauro, it was the smell of bacon cooking that repelled; he said it reminded him of the smell of dead bodies, from when he worked as a rescuer for the army. A further example of this was when I went to the Brazilian butchers to buy the meat for cooking the dish I mentioned above. I was overwhelmed by the visceral smell of raw meat as I opened the door. It was cold and raining outside, one of those cold and dark early winter evenings. It was nauseating and nearly put me off buying the meat. I cannot reproduce the smell, just 'picture' it.

The senses mediate our everyday experiences and our social and spatial relations, as Paul Rodaway argues (1994). For him 'the sensuous – the experience of the senses – is the ground base on which a wider geographical understanding can be constructed' (1994, 3). The study of people's

engagement with food through its smell, texture, aroma and even the visual capacity of recipes and brands to evoke home - what Longhurst, Johnston et al. (2009: 335) term a 'visceral approach' - speaks '*their* emotional and affective relations with place'. This discussion of the senses and memory also brought to the fore my own position as an embodied researcher; as a sentient diasporic body and bearer of memories, which were entangled with those of the family. Sensory engagements with food were especially powerful for how they stitched together such a memory function and routine, embodied encounters with food. Memory's power to displace - to take us elsewhere, to other times and places - thereby became part of the mundane fabric of these households' culinary lives. This discussion of food and memory does not end here. In what follows, I turn my focus on to the relations between food, family and gender roles, but it will be apparent, for example, that remembrances triggered by eating and cooking feature as an important part of diasporic family life.

## **5.5 Food, family and gender roles**

The centrality of food in the production of 'family' identities, and in the negotiation of gender relationships and divisions of labour within the household, has already been noted by earlier studies in sociology and anthropology (see Mennel et al., 1992 for a summary). Whilst these studies have made important contributions, it is argued that they do not cover the complexity of contemporary domestic arrangements which may not be based around nuclear families with young children (Valentine, 1999). More recent research has explored the complex relationships between food and family life (Jackson, 2009). The mixed nature of the two domestic settings under consideration here certainly brings interesting insights into the complex arrangements in migrant households. It also contributes to an understanding of how food consumption practices participate in the experiences of migrant and transnational families and individuals, highlighting often neglected social and cultural aspects of family migration. In this next section I therefore pay special

attention to how domestic food practices reshape the narration and constitution of family, gender and ethnic identities.

Recent work has called attention to how migration and diasporic experiences are gendered (Yeoh and Willis, 2005, Hussain, 2005, Aitchison et al., 2007, Al-Ali and Koser, 2002, Pessar and Mahler, 2003). Cheng's study (2010) of highly skilled Taiwanese migrant households in China has highlighted women's role in 'reproducing home'. Female respondents in her research decided to return to the kitchen so that they could reproduce the 'taste of home' that their partners expected (Cheng, 2010: 144). Recent feminist migration studies (Gedalof, 2009) have pointed out that migrant women's practices of cultural reproduction are still undervalued, under-studied and under-theorized. Gedalof quotes Marion Young, who calls for a feminist re-evaluation of home by arguing that 'much of the unnoticed labour of women is this basic activity of meaning maintenance' (Young, 1997 quoted in Gedalof 2009:92). This labour helps to form feminine family positions, notably that of mother (De Vault, 1991).

The work of repetition and preservation that mothers undertake, which forms a great part of what establishing home as a place is about, should not be romanticized nor dismissed according to Young, but seen as a work of 'renewing meaning'. Gedalof complements this thesis: 'It is through repetition, telling and retelling, that home as a materialization of identities is created; and if that repetition necessarily involves reinterpretation [...] then we need to see those identities and home-spaces as dynamic in their own right' (Gedalof, 2009: 93). Without trying to reinforce dominant associations between home and femininity, what I want to bring forward is the significance of food as a 'mothering practice' and its ability to reproduce and make home for the family, providing continuity and a link to Brazil.

Both siblings, although in their twenties, regarded Sonia's cooking highly and considered it to be charged with motherly affection. The fact that the children lived in the same house as the mother also meant that she ended up cooking for them more often. She carried on cooking the same food that she

used to cook in Brazil, but both siblings did not frame it in terms of Brazilian food; it was 'mum's food' that appealed to their palates 'Hum... I like Brazilian, I mean I like my mum's food. (...) It's different like, the food. It's just the taste that you get, it is not like going to a restaurant; it's like mom's cooked it' (Interview with Eraldo, 25/01/2010). Berenice made a point that she would miss her mother's food, not Brazilian food. Neither Brazilian restaurants nor her own take on Brazilian cooking satisfied her because they did not match her mother's cooking. Nurturing with food was seen by the daughter and the son as a mothering practice and therefore it had a special meaning to them. It was as if the purpose of her cooking was linked to their existence 'If my mum was on her own she certainly would not cook, but because there is me and my brother, she has to cook' (Interview with Berenice, 28/02/2010). For Sonia, sharing of food with her son, which happened on a more frequent basis (the daughter had her own cooking space in the loft conversion), also had a profound meaning. When her son moved to Geneva she expressed her sadness by saying: 'He was the person who ate with me every day' (Field notes, 5/4/2010).

On the other hand, she welcomed the 'flexibility' of not having to abide to set times for meals, pointing to the fact that these changes in meal formats and times had a gendered effect:

It changed a lot, because in Brazil you have coffee, lunch and dinner. Lunch is at midday and dinner at 7 or 8 pm. Now I cook when I feel hungry. I am not sure if this has only happened to me, but I think it is the same with a lot of people. If I feel hungry, I make beans, rice, meat; I don't have to wait until 8 o'clock in the evening or midday. Usually lunch is 2, 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Even if you arrange with someone to have lunch, you don't arrange for midday. I like it, I like this flexibility. Another thing that has changed is that I don't see the need to have lunch and dinner every day. I used to cook more, now I cook a few times a week. I don't have small children any more, I suppose... (...) In Brazil I would diversify more, because I had to cook every day, I was always creating new things. You kind of lose

the rhythm. Maybe this happens due to lack of time or because I always end up eating at work. When I get home I don't need to cook. (Interview with Sonia, 23/02/2010)

Sonia's experience mirrors that of some of the female respondents from the focus groups who found that migration partially liberated them from the kitchen, although in Sonia's case this was also due to the fact that her children were grown up. Such changes in household circumstances highlight 'how households, gender identities and food consumption practices are all (re)negotiated and (re) produced throughout the multiple stages which make up an individual's life course.' (Valentine, 1999:506). For the siblings, however, mother's food still provided an enduring and tangible link to Brazilian heritage in their daily lives. Their only other contact with things Brazilian was through their visits to Brazil every two or three years and in their domestic lives with all the lodgers. Eraldo, despite all his coming and going 'feels quite English' and was adamant that if he went to live in Brazil he would not fit in anymore. He did have a Brazilian appetite, though, he said. Berenice, on the other hand, felt '100% Brazilian', but also could not picture herself living in Brazil. She did mention how she felt as though she had only 'superficial roots' in the UK because she had not established connections dating back a long time and because she did not have her extended family or childhood friends nearby. Berenice did not cook Brazilian food and if it was not for her mother's cooking downstairs, she would rarely eat it. One of the only Brazilian ingredients that she kept in her cupboard was manioc flour which she used with roast chicken. She kept a recipe book with some Brazilian recipes - from her mother and paternal grandmother - and cuttings from magazines and internet sites. When she travelled to Brazil she usually would bring back packs of sweets and snacks.

Claims that meals produce 'home' and 'family' (De Vault, 1991); that food and food occasions have a role in 'unifying the family' and creating family 'identity' (Lupton 1994); and that a 'proper meal' is 'itself constitutive of the family as a cohesive social unit' (Charles and Kerr, 1986 quoted in Bell and



Valentine, 1997:63) have already been emphasised in the sociological literature and by writers working on consumption. More recent work on migration has also underlined how eating together is an important point of continuity for migrants (Hatfield, 2010). In Hatfield's research with British elite transnational households, one of the respondents mentions Saturday breakfast as 'one of the most unbroken traditions of being at home' (Interviewee quoted in Hatfield, 2010:155), carried out in different homes and locations in the family's moves between Singapore and the UK. Hatfield notes that for some participants 'making a point of eating together is one way of ensuring that the 'family time' is had on a weekly basis' (Hatfield, 2010:155).

In my own research, family meals allowed for a continuity of family life by recreating the sensory landscape of home, according to Berenice. When her mother cooks the same food that she used to cook in Brazil such as polenta with chicken or meat, refried beans and boiled cassava, she says:

Ah, it reminds me of there. It is kind of, we are speaking Portuguese, then dad and Eraldo arrive and it seems that we are there. Sometimes it seems that we forget that we are on the other side of the world.<sup>98</sup> (Interview with Berenice, 28/02/2010)

It also is interesting to note that although particular foods are mentioned in the daughter's account she also places importance on the people that accompany such meals. Eating together with the members of a family means continuity and togetherness for the family, as if there had been no uprooting. This account resonates with participants' experiences in the previous chapter on consumption whose memories of family meals were closely related to the social relationships that accompany them (see also Lupton 1994).

This link between food, memory and home was also proclaimed by Celso. Talking about the reasons for cooking one of the few Brazilian dishes in his repertoire he mentions how it reminds him of his mother's food:

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I eat Brazilian food only every now and again. (...) But myself, when I cook... I don't know if it can be considered totally Brazilian, but I cook fried steak with onions. I like fried steak and onions with rice and salad. It reminds me my mother's food.<sup>99</sup>

Maybe one of the things that evokes memories is the smell of onions being fried; it reminds me of my childhood – me getting home, my mother cooking. This is more or less what evokes memories. Ah, yes, my mother... my school finished at 1 pm. As the whole family would have had lunch at midday, when I arrived home there was a plate of food for me in the oven. That's why reheated food, especially if it is left over beans and rice that I reheat the next day, reminds me of that moment: I would arrive home from school, open up the oven and the food was there.<sup>100</sup>

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99 *Ãhm... eu, como é que eu posso te explicar?... Comida brasileira não é que eu tenha mantido uma... não como muita comida brasileira. Às vezes, quando a Sueli faz, convida... vou lá, como lá. Entende? Um feijão com arroz, um aipim, uma costela na panela - muito gostoso. Mas, eu não sei se já comentei sobre isso, a comida brasileira me pesa muito. Estou acostumado com coisas mais leves, por exemplo pasta, macarrão - estilo italiano me cai melhor no meu estômago. E me acostumei mais com comidas mais leves, entende? Durante esses anos... Comida brasileira, digamos, eu como de vez em quando.*

*Graça: O quê que você cozinha, aqui, à brasileira?*

*Celso: Praticamente nada. Eu como, às vezes, o que os outros cozinham. O Rogério gosta de fazer muito um feijão na panela e tal, mas eu, quando faço que... não sei se é considerado totalmente brasileiro, mas é um bife com cebola. Gosto de um bife com cebola, um arroz e uma salada, entende? Me lembra a comida da mãe.*

<sup>100</sup> *O que me... talvez uma das coisas que me faz lembrar é o cheiro da cebola fritando, me lembra minha infância - chegando em casa, minha mãe cozinhando. Isso é o que me faz mais ou menos lembrar. (...) Ah, sim, que a mãe... a minha escola terminava a 1 hora da tarde, com toda a minha família almoçava ao meio-dia, aí eu chegava em casa e tinha aquele prato de comida no forno que a mãe deixa ali pra mim. Então, a comida requeitada, principalmente se é arroz e feijão que eu vou comer no outro dia, me lembra aquele momento: eu chegando da escola e abrindo o forno e a comida estava ali.*



**Figure 5.13 Family meal at flat 63**



**Figure 5.14 Family meal at flat 63**

The reason people's memories of home very often include food, argues Morgan, is because 'food represents a particularly strong form of anchorage in the past, its strength deriving in part from the familial relationships in which the serving and preparing of foods are located... Food, then, serves as one of the links between historical time, individual time and household time' (Morgan, 1996a: 166). Not all family meals are happy meals, though. Food memories can be unpleasant and refusal to share food can be seen as rejection. In the extract

from my field notes below I comment on an occasion when Celso prepared a meal for his wife and daughter, following his son's departure to Geneva:

Celso invited Berenice to come over to eat but she refused saying she had already eaten. Celso says in a mocking way that he hasn't been very successful in getting Berenice and her boyfriend over for a meal or getting invited by them. She answers defensively that she hasn't been cooking and has been busy with her MBA. Sonia comes over later, but is also not eating because she doesn't like seafood. When we sit down to eat she mentions that when she was a child she used to eat a lot of fish caught by her father, but one day he got a fishbone stuck in his throat and later on developed a lump that became cancerous. Perhaps, she says, that is the reason that she is not fond of fish. Memories came about illnesses in the family (she had quite a few brothers and sisters who died of cancer). She gets quite emotional and says she wants to stop talking about it because she is feeling a bit vulnerable. (Field notes, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2010)

Food still retained its importance in family life even when all the members could not be bodily present to share a meal. Transnational families, such as Roberto's, whose wife and two children lived in Brazil, lived their family life via the Internet (which further complicates the notion of home as a private sphere). Every night after coming home from his work on a building site and after having prepared his dinner he talked to his family via Skype and they would ask what food he had prepared that night. He also would ask what they were eating just as an excuse to chat. Weekends were particularly hard for Roberto, especially when the extended family back in Brazil gathered for meals and teased him showing or talking about the food they were preparing or eating. The children often asked Roberto what dishes he would prepare for them on his return, as they were very fond of his cooking. His wife also

commented on their daily menu in Brazil, supermarket bills and children's eating patterns.

Fathering through food over the Internet was also exercised in less positive ways. Roberto would discipline his children's eating (and other matters), for example, and this was sometimes done by shouting at them via Skype, usually after having had a few beers to unwind. On one occasion Berenice talked to him and suggested he dealt with the situation differently. These difficulties of fathering from abroad are discussed by Pribilsky in his research with Ecuadorian migrant men living in New York. He mentions how 'transnational fathers' struggled to establish relationships with their children 'outside the rigid structure of respect that defined the relationship they had with their fathers' (Pribilsky, 2007).

Roberto's engagement with cooking was a result of his move to London, and is an example of how migration changes some men's relationship with domesticity. None of the men in the two households had much experience of running a house or cooking prior to their move to the UK and all had learnt how to cook by force of circumstance<sup>101</sup>:

I learnt [to cook] here. I was forced by the circumstances. [In Brazil] there's aunt's house, girlfriend's, a maid and men get lazy. Here, you eat out, you end up spending a lot. If not, you eat bread and canned sardines. That's what happened to me. For a year, that's all I ate... I learnt with my wife (...) when we lived on our own I ended up taking part in everything. I spent time in the kitchen learning and I ended up enjoying it. Nowadays, at home they say, it's Sunday you do the cooking. They demand that I cook for them, today they asked me what dishes I am going to

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<sup>101</sup> This is not to be taken as representative of all Brazilian men in London. Indeed male respondents from both the focus group and visitors to the house, mentioned how in Brazil they had to learn to cook and look after the house and younger siblings, forced by circumstances such as their mother and father having to go out to work. However, according to the staff in grocery shops, a lack of culinary skills is a common situation for Brazilian young males who come to the UK.

prepare for them when I come back... (Roberto, interview, 13/11/2010) <sup>102</sup>

It was difficult at the beginning because if you only eat fast food you get weak (...) after that, there was a girl, I forget her name, and she would cook beans for me. I lived with some people and they did not know how to cook. It was then that I started to learn. She would only cook the beans because she had a pressure cooker. At home I would season it and cook rice and steak (...) after a while I started to learn how to cook lasagne, I started to cook better (Interview, Marcos, 31/10/2009) <sup>103</sup>

In Brazil I didn't cook for myself. I lived on my own, but I did not cook. Every now and again, two or three times a week, I used to have lunch in my mother's house. I never cooked. [...] What I have learned here is how to cook beans, which I saw Celso cooking one day and I learnt. The rest I learnt with my mother. [...] But I invent things too. [...] I had a good notion because my best friend cooks very well. He used to cook a lot but was always inventing new stuff and I didn't like it. But I always saw him preparing lots of things. That's what I was talking about, sometimes when people come to London, they don't realise their own potential. Here, because they need to do something, they are obliged to, they start to do it and realise they enjoy doing it and that they are able to do it. The majority of Brazilians that I have met here cook well. I don't know if they

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<sup>102</sup> Aprendi aqui. A necessidade me forçou a aprender. Tem a casa da tia, namorada, a empregada, o cara acomoda. Se você comer na rua o dinheiro não dá. Se você ficar comendo só pão com sardinha... foi o que aconteceu comigo, um ano comendo só pão com sardinha, sofri... (...) aprendi com a minha mulher (...) ia cozinhando, o casal sozinho dentro de casa, você acaba participando de tudo. Ai eu fui na cozinha aprendendo e me dedicando mais e passei a gostar. Ate que hoje lá em casa eles dizem, hoje é domingo, e você que vai fazer a comida. Eles cobram, hoje mesmo cobraram o que eu vou cozinhar para eles quando eu voltar.

<sup>103</sup> Não, no começo, tava muito difícil porque, quer dizer, essas comidas aí, se ficar comendo só lanche, você fica fraco, entendeu? No começo, na primeira semana, eu pisava no chão, o chão tremia. Porque você fica fraco. Ah, é verdade. Aí, depois, qual o nome daquela menina... esqueci o nome dela. Levava feijão pra cozinha pra mim, aí eu morava com os colegas, e eles não sabiam cozinhar. Aí depois eu fui começando a aprender. [...] Não... só feijão. Só feijão cozido. Ela só cozinhava porque ela tinha panela de pressão. Ela levava pra casa, eu fazia refogava, fazia arroz, sabia... fritar uma carne... [...] Mas, depois, aí você vai aprendendo a fazer lasanha, faz alguma coisa e tal. Aí você vai melhorando.

learned it here, if they enjoy it or if they learn to enjoy it. I think I am heading that way (laughs)<sup>104</sup> (William, interview, 24/11/2009).

Whilst such accounts partly mirror past studies of other Latin American migrants, such as the Ecuadorian men in Pribilsky's research in New York, who had to 'attend to their domestic tasks and errands because they had no choice' (2007:250), in my research male respondents also often reported a sense of pride in their cooking and other domestic duties. Washing clothes, tidying their bedroom and cooking were taken seriously by (most) of the men in the household and domestic skills were often compared with those of other male and female flatmates. Nonetheless, such work was still defined in terms of traditional gender roles: so if men performed their domestic tasks well they were said to be 'uma moça' (a young girl) meaning they performed as was expected of a young girl; if a female flatmate did not know how to cook and keep her things tidy, she was criticised for not conforming to this gender role which, in the men's opinion, defined what it means to be a woman.

Another aspect of men's cooking practices was that whilst some of them incorporated other culinary cultures in their cooking (such as Celso, who learnt to cook whilst living with his second wife's mother, who was Italian), most men tried to reproduce the food they were familiar with in Brazil. This partly reflected the fact that they learnt from other Brazilians they lived with, but it also reflected the common practice of phoning their mothers and asking for advice, or less directly drawing from memories of other people's cooking,

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<sup>104</sup>Porque lá no Brasil eu não cozinhava mesmo. Eu morava sozinho, mas não cozinhava. De vez em quando, duas ou três vezes na semana, eu almoçava na casa da minha mãe. Só. Eu nunca cozinhava.[...] O que eu aprendei a fazer aqui foi o feijão que num dia que eu vi o Celso fazendo eu aprendi, e o resto foi realmente eu vendo a minha mãe fazer. [...] Mas também eu vou inventando. Tipo carne, eu fui inventando.[...] Eu tinha noção porque o meu melhor amigo, ele cozinhava muito bem. E ele fazia muita comida, mas ele é uma pessoa que inventava muita moda e eu não gostava. Mas eu sempre via ele fazendo muita coisa... Na verdade, era o que eu estava falando, quando chega aqui em Londres, a pessoa ela às vezes não sabe que ela tem o dom de fazer aquilo. Aqui, com ela é obrigada a fazer, ela além de ter sido forçada a fazer, ela começa gostar e vê que sabe fazer. Aí aqui, a maioria das pessoas que eu vejo, brasileiro, tudo cozinha bem. Eu não sei se aprender, e não sei se é porque gosta, eu não sei se é porque aprende a gostar. Sei lá. Aí eu acho que eu estou entrando nessa. (risos)

mothers and friends. Memory as a repository for observed domestic practices is superbly described by Luce Giard regarding her own relationship to cooking:

Yet my childhood gaze had seen and memorised certain gestures, and my sense memory had kept track of certain tastes, smells, and colours. I already knew all the sounds: the gentle hiss of simmering water, the sputtering of melting meat drippings, and the dull thud of the kneading hand. A recipe or an inductive word sufficed to arouse a strange anamnesis whereby ancient knowledge and primitive experiences were reactivated in fragments of which I was the heiress and guardian without wanting to be. (Giard, 1998: 153)

Whereas Giard put this in terms of a 'woman's knowledge' that she had incorporated despite her resistance, the extract from William's testimony presented above shows that this knowledge is also absorbed by men, and in various situations that go beyond the mother's home. Either drawing cooking knowledge from memory, friends or family, Brazilian food allowed these men to carry on with a 'habit' by (re)producing the taste of home on daily basis. They realised that through cooking they could make their daily life as a migrant more homely, and they cherished this newly acquired domestic skill.

Men's engagement with cooking and cleaning and the intersection between masculinity and domesticity is an issue which has been comparatively under-explored in past studies of home (Gorman-Murray, 2008: 397, Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 112). Among the few exceptions are the studies of Datta (2008) and Walsh (2011), which by considering the relationship between migration, masculinities and home have provided important accounts that confirm how 'the meanings of home and men's identities are co-constitutive and interrelational' (Gorman-Murray, 2008:369). For example, in Datta's research she examined how for Polish builders in London the act of building homes implies the reproduction of masculinities and the construction of a difference between Polish and English masculinity. She argues that:



As migrant men, Polish builders' sexualised politics of building produce particular constructions of cultural identities. These identities use binary markers of 'Polish' and 'English' homes to describe their location within such embodied building acts in ways that are entangled both with the cultural politics and physical landscapes of homes. [...] These identity constructions, however, are conspicuous in the marked absence of women, which suggests how a deeply masculine act of building validates the identities of Polish men – an act which differentiates them from English men for whom home is a commodity to be purchased' (Datta, 2008: 529).

Similarly, Walsh in her research on migrant masculinities in domestic spaces, has shown that even though work was presented as central to white British masculinities in the discourses of British migrants in Dubai, everyday domestic home-making practices such as the displays of objects around the home, watering plants, are actually significant 'in performing men's belonging in migration' (Walsh, 2011).

Male participants' positive engagement with cooking and other domestic chores in my research signals how migration can allow for alternative conceptions of masculinities, and how 'through their individual housework practices men and women may in fact perform genders that refer to, resist or challenge hegemonic discourses' (Pink, 2004: 43). Men's capacity to re-create home through cooking Brazilian food, for example, is thoroughly incorporated in their narrative of being Brazilian male migrants. However, such acceptance of changing gender practices and acts at home cannot be taken as a sign that 'gender ideologies and scripts' as a whole have altered, as noted by McIlwaine (2010) in her research with Latin American migrants in London. Two examples from the households in my research confirm this.

In the very early stages of the research I got to know one of the male household members in the flats, Beto. Very often I asked him for recipes and he gave me food gifts such as his homemade pepper sauce. He not only was an excellent cook but everybody in the household often commented what a tidy

person he was, 'for a man'. Later he told me how, as the eldest child, from a very early age he had to cook for his brothers and sisters and do the housework in general. Beto had a girlfriend in Brazil and after two unsuccessful attempts she managed to join him in London. On her arrival he threw a party and cooked a special meal, to which I was invited. A few weeks later I went to visit the flat and they were gone. I was told he had been physically abusing her and they left because Berenice called the police.

Mauro's case illustrates how hegemonic understandings of home, and of masculine identities such as the man as the provider, can also still cling on for some migrants:

I have taken after my Dad a lot, especially with domestic stuff. [...] My father was like this: I am the man of the house, I give orders, I do things and I provide everything my children need. I am a bit like that, not that I am sexist. I have had three women, I don't have one now; I live on my own. Thank God, I think that with men nowadays this concept has changed, the world is more diverse. Women have become more independent, that kind of thing. I am not a sexist type but I think that when I have a woman, it is because I can provide for her. My father always told me that when a man has a woman, a family, he has to be the head of the family, the family needs you. In other words, you are the man, the head, you don't fall. [...]

I think that there is a division in the house. The woman looks after the kitchen and the house and the man maintains it. I ask about the kitchen: what is needed? So it doesn't lack anything [...] But how it is going to be done, or who is going to do it, I don't know. [...] I have this understanding. [...] So when people are getting together to have some food my part is to buy what is needed. Now how it is going to be done in the kitchen, I don't get involved because I have never done.

[...] I have always had food served at the table, this kind of thing; if it is necessary to cook I will cook, but just the basic, right? [...]  
(Mauro, interview, 18/11/2009)<sup>105</sup>

To summarise, taken for granted food consumption practices in these two households revealed just how key food is for the (re)production of 'family' and in the negotiation of gender relationships. For Sonia's children, 'familiar' food cooked by their mother provided continuity to family life and an enduring and tangible link to Brazilian heritage in their daily lives. Food still retained its importance in family life even when all the members could not be bodily present to share a meal. Whilst the siblings emphasised the traditional nurturing role of the mother, Sonia felt that migration had liberated her from some of the expected gender roles in relation to cooking. Domestic life in the diasporic home also allowed for alternative conceptions of masculinity. Some male respondents cherished the fact that their newly acquired cooking skills allowed them to re-create home and incorporated this in their narrative of Brazilian male migrant identity. However, such acceptance of changing gender practices and acts at home did not necessarily change hegemonic understanding of gender relations more generally.

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<sup>105</sup>Eu até dentro de casa puxei muito mais meu velho, sabe?... [...] que meu pai era um tipo de pessoa assim: eu sou o homem da casa, eu mando, eu faço, e os meus filhos não passam necessidade. E eu sou meio essa coisa, não de machismo, mas eu já tive três mulheres, hoje não tenho, vivo só, mas, graças a Deus, eu acho que o homem, hoje, esse conceito tá mais mudado, o mundo tá mais diversificado, né? A mulher se tornou mais independente, essa coisa. Mas eu não sou um tipo machista. Eu acho que quando eu tenho mulher, é que eu posso ter e eu dou assistência. Meu pai sempre me dizia que quando um homem tem uma mulher, tem uma família, e você, o cabeça da casa, e que a família precisa de você. Então, tipo assim, é, em outras palavras, você é o homem, você é a cabeça, você não cai. [...]  
Tipo assim, acho que uma casa tem duas divisões: a mulher cuida da cozinha, a mulher cuida da casa e o homem mantém uma casa. Da cozinha pra dentro eu que pergunto: o que é que falta? Para não faltar. [...] Agora, como vai fazer e da cozinha, essas coisas, eu não me meto, porque eu nunca fui disso. Eu sempre tinha comida na mesa, essas coisas, que se precisar fazer comida eu faço, mas assim o básico, né?

## 5.6 Eating Brazilianess: imagine taking away the beans from my life?!

In this final substantive section of the chapter I want to bring out into the open an issue that has been implicit to date, by paying explicit attention to the issue of how food in these domestic settings was 'symbolically' deployed, to talk about, to display and to construct a sense of 'Brazilianess' in the household and more generally in London. Whereas Berenice and Eraldo, for example, always mentioned 'mother's food' as being at stake in memories of 'home cooking', other householders made more direct links between food and a 'Brazilian' identity. This linkage was a matter of contention among the households' members. It evidenced tensions and differences, both in relation to varied social and cultural backgrounds in Brazil and with respect to varying projects as migrants in London. My argument, then, is that food in these domestic settings was often connected (more or less directly) to the reproduction of Brazilianess in diaspora; but that reproduction was diverse and subject to contention. What it might mean to 'eat Brazilian' was by no means agreed.

Recognition of 'Brazilianess' through food practices could have positive and negative connotations and refer to the individual as well as to the collective. An example of this was the emphasis placed by those I spoke to on the individual approach to the practices of cooking and eating in the household, something that was seen as typical of the Brazilian migrant condition:

People are individualist. (...) Each one cooks his own food. This is the system that we use. There is no other sense of community apart from this one. In this house, and as far as I know of Brazilian habits, it is like this. (...) I have my space in the fridge, my own things... no one can touch it or there's a fight. These [attitudes] are [typical] of Brazilian immigrants...<sup>106</sup> (Interview with Renato, 31/10/2009)

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<sup>106</sup> R: Aqui é todo mundo individualista.

On the other hand, a collective Brazilian identity was imagined through food. This connection was made explicitly by Renato himself. Despite his sense of a highly separated and encapsulated migrant domestic existence, he had a strong sense that Brazilian food was 'part of us', thus framing (even individualised) Brazilian food consumption as a collective experience connecting Brazilians. He used the famous phrase 'we are what we eat' and went on to say that Brazilian food was important to him and his sense of identity:

To recognize who I am, it is part of your whole identity what you eat, isn't it? Can you imagine a situation where they send you to the North Pole and all you have to eat is dolphin, seal, whale meat? You are going to die; you may not die [...] but this is bound to cause some psychological damage. Something would happen. Offer me a fortune and tell me: "you cannot eat beans and rice for the rest of your life!" I don't want it. It is true. Imagine taking away the beans from my life?!<sup>107</sup> (Interview with Renato, 31/10/2009)

Such gut resistance to a change in food habits, the emotional investment in the construction of a shared sense of Brazilianess, and the importance placed on the domestic sphere in the reproduction of the nation's tastes outside its borders, parallel some of the findings discussed in Chapter Four. For William, who had recently arrived in London, such resistance to changing food habits

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Graça: É?

R: É. Cada um faz para si. É esse sistema que a gente vive. Não tem outro senso de comunidade aqui senão este. Nesta casa, e pelo o que eu conheço dos hábitos brasileiros, é mais ou menos assim. (...)

G: Mas no dia-a-dia...

R: Mas no dia-a-dia é no 'separate'. Cada um para si.

Graça: E daí como é que funciona? Você tem a sua...

R: O meu compartimento dentro da geladeira, minhas coisinhas... ninguém pode mexer senão dá briga. Essas coisas de brasileiro imigrante, né?

<sup>107</sup> Para reconhecer quem eu sou, porque faz parte da identidade do seu todo o que você come também, não é? Já imaginou uma situação em que você, te mandam para o Polo Norte e você vai ser obrigada a comer foca... golfinho... baleia...? Você vai morrer, pode não morrer, pode não ficar desidratado com isso, mas vai causar algum mal psicológico. Alguma coisa vai acontecer. Por isso que eu acho que as pessoas são aquilo que comem também. Paga uma fortuna pra mim e diz: "Você não vai mais comer arroz com feijão nunca!; eu te dou um milhão!" Eu não quero.

exemplified his resistance to change at a deeper level. For him, it was a positive reaction rather than a fearful or anxious one; it was a way to keep true to what he knows well and likes about himself; it was a form of self-affirmation:

(...) First of all is the taste. I really like Brazilian food. It does make me feel more Brazilian. I wouldn't like to learn to like the things from here. [...] I don't. I am fine the way I am. Not only in terms of food, everything. Everybody tells me: 'Ah, as time goes by you are going to change, you are going to adapt, in relation to everything...' I don't want to change my personality, the way I am. I don't want to change. I have told everybody this. Everybody who says: 'ah, you are going to change! Because London is not going to, it is you that has to change!' But I don't want to. I will do whatever I can so as not to change.<sup>108</sup>  
(Interview with William, 24/11/2009)

Others too saw Brazilian food as affirmative. Sonia, as we have seen, 'practiced' her 'Brazilianess' through cooking. She did this not only as part of her family's domestic culture but in the public sphere as well. For her, culinary activity is a 'nourishing art' a 'place of happiness, pleasure, and discovery' to paraphrase Giard (1998:151). She had a very dynamic social life within the Brazilian community in London and was an active member of the Brazilian Catholic church in Harlesden, taking part in fundraising activities and trips abroad. She also frequently went out to Brazilian venues around London, and she had a wide circle of Brazilian friends and acquaintances with whom, for example, she would commemorate birthdays. Food played an important role in all these activities: the fundraising activities in the Church usually involved the members helping with cooking; and at her birthday celebrations she usually

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<sup>108</sup> Mas eu acho que sim, essa coisa da comida... Mas eu acho que primeiro vem o gosto. Porque eu gosto mesmo da comida brasileira. Realmente. Mas me faz sentir mais brasileiro, sim. Eu não queria aprender a gostar das coisas daqui. [...] Eu sou bem do jeito que eu sou. Não só na comida, o resto tudo. As pessoas aqui, elas mudas. Todo mundo fala: "ah, com o tempo você vai mudar, você vai se adaptar, em relação a tudo, principalmente..." Eu não quero mudar a minha pessoa, o meu jeito de ser. Não quero mudar. Já falei com todo mundo isso. Todo mundo que fala: "ah, você vai mudar!" Porque não é Londres que muda, você é que tem que mudar. Mas eu não quero. O que eu puder fazer para não mudar, eu não quero mudar.

made traditional Brazilian party food. She was a Brazilian in London and proud of it and cooking was a prime way of displaying her 'Brazilianess'.

Not everyone in the house shared this narrative of Brazilian identity through food, however. In fact, food also provided the material evidence and enactment of difference among Brazilians in London. For example, Vera and Celso set their tastes apart from 'other' Brazilians and positioned themselves as open-minded about food and worldly in terms of food tastes. Vera saw herself as someone who liked and adapted easily to new tastes, as cosmopolitan. She was in tune with contemporary food trends in London, visiting local food markets and eating local and seasonal food. Celso did not consider food as defining his belonging to Brazilian culture and, as discussed before, preferred Italian cuisine to Brazilian. He only cooked one Brazilian dish because it reminded him of his mother: rice with fried steak and onions. Both Celso and Vera were very critical about the level of attachment to established culinary habits and the conservative attitude to food that many Brazilians they met in London had (including other members of the flats' households). The inability to change and incorporate new tastes and behaviours was framed negatively, linked with narrow-mindedness, and considered inconsistent with cultural mobility:

People that I know do not like to try different things. They are people that are focused in that type of food. They like Brazilian food and they think that only Brazilian food can fill and sustain them. [...] They do not change. They do not like the smell of other food. They make a face when they see something with a different colour. I do not know how to explain... They are not open-minded about food, do you understand?<sup>109</sup> (Interview with Celso, 24/01/2010)

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<sup>109</sup> As pessoas que eu conheço não gostam de variar. São pessoas muito... são centradas naquele tipo de comida. Gostam da comida brasileira, e acham que a comida brasileira é a que enche, a que sustem. Sustem?

Graça: Sustenta.

Sustenta. E... e não mudam, acham que aquilo é aquilo, e não gostam de mudar. Não gostam do cheiro de outras comidas. Fazem cara feia olhando uma coisa de cor diferente... Não sei como explicar bem, mas... not minded about...é, sobre... comida, está entendendo?

Living in an area populated by Brazilians more interested in perpetuating their own culture than learning new ways was hard for Vera and interfered with her plans of immersing herself in English culture:

The other aspect is that this is an area full of Brazilian people, Brazilian restaurants, Brazilian cafés... That is what happens: there are a lot of Brazilians and they only consume Brazilian food when they can. Or, they will go down to Tesco to buy things to make beans, rice and steak with onions. They are stuck in a circle and they do not open their eyes to learn other things. They do not live the country's culture; they don't even know the country's geography. They barely know who was or who is the Prime Minister or the history of England, why this city is the way it is, do you know what I mean? (...) They don't have any idea, they don't drink tea, don't eat sausages, potatoes, they don't drink the beer – because they consider the beer bad, they drink *Brahma*, *Skol*...they go and try to find *Brahma*, *Skol*. And when they see *guaraná*, they buy *guaraná*, when they see *coxinha*, they buy *coxinha* and they eat *coxinha* and drink *guaraná*. I honestly don't eat *coxinha* and *guaraná* and I'm not going to pay for it. It is not that I don't like it, but I am not here to live the Brazilian world. I came to open up my taste for things of things that are here (laughs).<sup>110</sup> (Interview with Vera, 07/10/2009)

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<sup>110</sup> Então, enfim, tem esse aspecto, e o outro: é um bairro que tem muito brasileiro, então tem muito restaurante brasileiro, muito café brasileiro, muita birrosca brasileira - como eu digo. (risos). Aí, acontece o seguinte, moram muitos brasileiros e eles consomem só produtos brasileiros, quando eles podem. Ou, senão eles vão no Tesco para feijão, arroz, bife com cebola. Aí eles costumam ficar num ciclo e eles não abrem os olhos para aprender outras coisas. Não vivem a cultura do país, eles não conhecem nem a geografia do país. Eles mal sabem quem foi ou quem é o atual Primeiro Ministro ou como é que foi a história da Inglaterra, por quê que essa cidade é assim, entende? Como é que isso começou, como que foi... eles não têm idéia, eles não tomam chá, não comem salsicha, não comem batata, não tomam cerveja - porque a cerveja daqui é ruim para eles, eles tomam *Brahma*, *Skol*... vão ali tentar achar *Brahma*, *Skol*. E quando eles vêem *guaraná*, eles compram *guaraná*, e quando eles vêem *coxinha*, eles compram *coxinha* e comem *coxinha* com *guaraná*. E, honestamente, eu não como *coxinha* com *guaraná* nem vou pagar por isso aqui, não que não goste, mas eu não estou aqui para viver o mundo brasileiro. Eu vim para ampliar o meu gosto por isso aqui. Acho que defendo; hoje eu tenho alguns amigos



For Vera, what we have seen to be a typically Brazilian migrant cooking utensil – the pressure cooker – provokes not a warm sense of belonging, but an aversion, illustrating how an ‘object may lend itself equally to the expression of difference, indicating the separate domains to which people or aspects of people belong’ (Miller 1987:130):

There is a pressure cooker in this house – as far as I know this is a Brazilian custom. I have been everywhere, I lived in other places. None had a pressure cooker, only Brazilians. So there is a pressure cooker here. The pan broke; they bought another one urgently, because they cannot do without it. Everybody cooks in the pressure cooker. And they cook Brazilian food: ribs in the pressure cooker. (Interview with Vera, 07/10/2009)<sup>111</sup>

It is not that she does not like Brazilian food, she pointed out many times. It is that she does not want to live a Brazilian life here in London. Vera comes from a different social class to many of the people she shared a house and worked with. She said many times that she wanted to reinvent herself away from ethnic stereotypes; she didn’t say that she was Brazilian when she introduced herself to people, but that she was German or Italian. She comes from a region in Brazil proud of its European heritage and with a problematic history of assimilation into Brazilian national identity. Carnival, beaches and samba never appealed to her in Brazil and she refuses to be seen as merely a Brazilian in London with a shared national culture.

Vera’s account also shows the different projects migrants have, and its implications for domestic food practices. Whereas for most people in the house there is a high emotional investment in keeping up their food practices and the memories associated with them, for Vera, ‘forgetting is part of an active process

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ingleses e às vezes eu defendo mais a terra deles do que eles mesmos! (risos) Mas, enfim... mas eu sou solidário em suas causas e eu não... estou fugindo da conversa do bairro, mas resumidamente a história do bairro é isso.

<sup>111</sup> Nessa casa tem uma panela de pressão - que é o costume brasileiro pelo o que eu já vi, assim, andei por aí tudo assim, e vivi em outros lugares - ninguém tem panela de pressão, só brasileiro. Então aqui tem uma panela de pressão. A panela já quebrou, já compraram outra urgentemente porque não pode faltar. Então todos cozinham na panela de pressão. E cozinham comida brasileira: costela na panela de pressão...

of creating a new and shared identity in a new setting' (Connerton, 2006: 320). Whereas this is an act of her own accord, as a migrant in London, it brings to mind the struggles of her ancestors, German and Italian migrants in the south of Brazil, who were forced to 'forget' their language and traditions as part of the draconian policies of nationalization that the Brazilian government imposed on migrant populations between 1937 and 1945 (Seyferth, 1997). That cultural history of 'nationalisation' is given a paradoxical twist in London, lending itself to a rejection of Brazilian national belonging and a desire to cultivate European tastes. But that is another story. What has been argued here is that cooking and eating are an arena where notions and projects of 'Brazilianess' are disputed on a daily basis in these two flats in Harlesden. In the domestic diasporic home, everyday food habits and practices can take the form of 'small acts of resistance' against the complexity of change - getting reconceptualised as 'Brazilian' in the process; or past habits and practices can be considered as impediments for the fashioning of another 'self', that does not look back to 'home' but around itself for new relations of belonging. Food practices were also used to stage outward-directed engagement with others. Such identity manifestations, allowed the migrants to engage with others on their own terms, luring 'others' into social and gastronomical exchanges.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter's constant theme has been the two-way relationships between food consumption and the practice of everyday life in domestic space. Food consumption was considered one of the main domains in which migrants had to accommodate change; but also was a domain where continuity was fiercely defended. Considered as a matter of routine everyday life, shopping, cooking and eating practices had to be re-considered and reconfigured to accommodate the realities of working lives as migrants and the domestic contexts they now inhabited. There was a constant pressure in the migrant

household to be 'practical', especially in terms of the time and money spent with food preparation and consumption.

On the other hand, food played a vital role in forging new forms of diasporic domesticity. These changes were sometimes cast as losses; but they could also be perceived as positive, for example as liberations from established gender roles and as stimulating exposure to new skills (such as men learning to cook), new tastes and London's cosmopolitan commercial foodscapes. Here, then, domestic food practices could be considered as rehearsals for new ways of being, as creating and innovating.

Although food practices were still a key site for the (re)production of 'family' and gender relationships, substantial changes provoked by migration led to a reconfiguration of such practices. Domestic food practices reshaped the narration and constitution of family, gender and ethnic identities. Family meals allowed for a continuity of family life by recreating the sensory landscape of home, and food still retained its importance in family life even when all the members could not be bodily present to share a meal. Domestic life in the diasporic home also allowed for alternative conceptions of masculinity. However, such acceptance of changing gender practices and acts at home did not necessarily change hegemonic understanding of gender relations more generally, especially among men.

The analysis also has recognised the complex location of home for migrants. 'Home' was often located in Brazil: implied in what migrants left behind, their longing for it, or in their plans of working and saving money to build it in the future. But home was also being constructed, and at stake, in London, both in a wider circle of relations and places of sociality and in the socio-material relations of domestic space. The mixed nature of the two domestic settings under consideration here certainly brings interesting insights into the complex arrangements in migrant households.

## **6 Chapter Seven - Conclusion: Geographies of Food and Migration**

In concluding this thesis, I return to the main objectives set out in the Introduction, considering them in relation to the principal findings developed across the substantive chapters. Those objectives were framed in the form of three questions relating more specifically to the empirical findings: 1) How is 'Brazilianess' constructed, represented and contested through diasporic culinary culture in London; 2) what investments do diasporic Brazilians have in the consumption of Brazilian food; and, 3) how are these constructions of, and investments in, Brazilian food implicated in the production of both public and domestic spaces? These were followed by two questions that related to broader theoretical debates: 1) How can food - as material culture and as an embodied practice - contribute to understanding meanings of home, identity and belonging among diasporic populations? 2) How is Brazilian food translocalised? In this final chapter, I take each of these questions in turn. In so doing, I also suggest the potential broader contributions this thesis makes to studies of food, migration and the Brazilian diaspora. Finally, the Conclusion turns to consider in brief future agendas for research. Here I focus on aspects of diasporic Brazilian food culture that this research suggests are fruitful for further work, although they were tangential to the thesis itself.

### **6.1 How is 'Brazilianess' constructed, represented and contested through diasporic culinary culture in London?**

This thesis presented an analysis of 'Brazilian' food in London. In so doing, it did not simply categorise food as Brazilian, but rather sought to analyse how that 'Brazilianess' was a quality that was constructed, represented and contested through the forms of culinary culture examined. In part, this involved exploration of the demographic character of the circuits of Brazilian food in London. Here, a general finding was that migrant Brazilians are important to this food's provision and consumption and that, in consequence, Brazilian food in London is implicated in the production of a diasporic culture. For instance, this research has shown that the setting up of importing systems by Brazilian

entrepreneurs was central to the development of a stronger Brazilian food scene in London. It allowed the expansion of the Brazilian grocery trade and the establishment of a more varied circuit of food provision. Fuelled by a growing demand for Brazilian groceries from an increased number of Brazilian customers, the sector has grown more than tenfold in the last decade, from no more than six outlets to more than seventy. Other facilitating factors for this growth are the availability of financial and practical support from food importers, distributors, Brazilian organizations and also Brazilian accountancy firms that have facilitated the process of opening up a business. The fact that a significant proportion of Brazilian migrants have acquired entitlement to stay in the country due to marriage and European ancestry is also relevant, as it means that people can make long-term plans and set up businesses. The low capital cost involved in setting up food businesses could also be said to account for this type of migrant entrepreneurship (Sassen, 1995, Portes, 1995). Brazilian grocery traders in London, for the most part, have maintained stocks of Brazilian groceries and focused mainly on Brazilian clients. On the other hand, Brazilian groceries are sold in non-Brazilian outlets in areas where there are large numbers of Brazilian customers. Very few Brazilian entrepreneurs in the grocery business venture outside their own enclave, either to market Brazilian products to non-Brazilians or to sell non-Brazilian products in their shops. The situation is slightly different in the restaurant sector. Here, although there is also a strong focus on the migrant Brazilian population as a customer base, for many outlets this is combined with the selling of Brazilian food and a Brazilian experience to a wider range of London residents. Such cross-cultural marketing, along with the demand for Brazilian imported products from non-Brazilian entrepreneurs, points to a widening of networks of provision beyond any 'ethnic enclave', and to that extent endorses the call for a conceptualization of these transnational spaces of food provision as 'multiply inhabited', as suggested by Crang, Dwyer and Jackson (2003). Nonetheless, the overall picture is one in which Brazilian food in London has a primarily diasporic rather than more generally globalised quality. Brazilian migrants are prime actors as both providers and consumers.

The 'making' of Brazilian food in London is, of course, more than just a matter of demographic preponderance. It is a wider culinary-cultural production that involves people, things and ideas. Specifically, through both an extensive overview of the system of Brazilian food provision in London and more in-depth research on particular places of provision, I have shown that this 'Brazilianess' is fashioned through both the material culture of food provision and the social lives of public spaces such as restaurants, cafés and grocery shops. I argued that the im/material disconnections from, and reconnections to, Brazil within the food provision system are central to the construction of 'Brazilianess' in London. Particular issues considered within the thesis included ingredients, chefs, and food's ability to 'take one back home' through memory processes. This research has shown how Brazilian diasporic culinary culture is a constant compromise between diasporic longings, tastes and memories, mainstream tastes, chefs' abilities, and entrepreneurial activities. Bringing the chefs' narratives to the fore, for example, delivered important insights into the constant process of research, trial and error, and customers' input into the re-creation of Brazilian diasporic food culture in food outlets. This was a specific illustration of the agency of migrants as providers and as consumers in the shaping of a national cuisine abroad. Alongside imported products and brands, chefs provide a material connection to Brazil by being able to reproduce and recreate Brazilian tastes and aromas through the food they cook. By adapting, researching, creating and incorporating they make it possible for some sort of 'Brazilianess'-- as a culinary form – to be recreated and re-signified outside Brazil. In this recreation some culinary forms become more popular than others. Examples of this include the popularity of *churrascarias* in London's restaurant provision of Brazilian food, the role played by simple dishes like beans and rice for the majority of Brazilians in materialising a Brazilian food when eating in, or indeed the emergence of particular brands (like *farofa Yoki* and *Guaraná Antarctica*) as representations of 'Brazilianess' in grocery shopping. In part, then, the construction of a Brazilian food involves a simplification of the complexity of food provision and consumption in Brazil, and the emergence of particular forms that come to represent 'Brazilianess' in

London. On the other hand, there was also flexibility in this production of 'Brazilianess'. For instance, the research documented both the sale and the domestic customisation of fast food in a 'Brazilian style', such as pizza with 'Brazilian' toppings. This reflects not only how global food trends have been incorporated into Brazilian palates in Brazil but also how these trends are appropriated by Brazilians in London who, through a process of adding and changing, come to consider them as their own 'culinary culture'.

The thesis has examined these processes from the perspectives of both food providers and consumers. With regard to the latter, the ongoing presence of Brazilian food in these Brazilians' lives was also rarely simply a continuation of foodways from the homeland. Instead, the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in particular suggested that this presence was generated via what I termed a 'return' to Brazilian foods, re-connections that were forged as part of processes of disconnection and displacement from the homeland. In some cases this notion of 'returning' to Brazilian food was literal; respondents discussed how a concern for Brazilian food grew over time spent in London. However, more generally, 'return' offers a metaphor for thinking about how Brazilian food consumption becomes 'displaced' in the diaspora setting. In London, 'Brazilian food' – a notion with little purchase or meaning in Brazil -- becomes an object of discussion and practice for consumers, translated from past everyday food practices 'at home' through the mediation of food provision systems in London as well as the everyday routines with which these systems mesh. Particular meals (notably rice and beans, but not solely), branded products and (for some) restaurants / food providers then take on this 'Brazilian' meaning for consumers. The resultant food routines varied amongst the participants. For some, Brazilian food was very much everyday food, though now freshly weighted with national significance. For others, it became 'occasional', in both senses of the term: not regular or everyday; and a notable event that could constitute Brazilian identity, in both collective events and in individual or household routines.



The research findings presented here therefore show how Brazilian food comes into being in London. Moreover, they also suggest that Brazilian food as a cultural product has a paradoxical role: it reinforces and plays an active role in the construction of the idea of being Brazilian, or more specifically a displaced Brazilian; but it also can be an arena where meanings of 'Brazilianess' and its representation are disputed. Brazilian social and regional divisions are represented imaginatively in food provision in London. Brazilian food commerce provides a place where a diverse displaced nation meets, sometimes for the first time. This diversity, and its associated contestations, are evidenced, for example, by the popularization of 'goiano' and 'mineiro' food and culture in London, reflecting trends in migrants' origins and tastes. Migrant food culture has therefore given visibility to alternative forms of 'Brazilianess' that go beyond those represented by the cultures of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. The 'Brazilianess' of food in London, I have argued, is thus not an essentialised cultural form travelling untroubled across national borders but is dynamic and transnationally emergent, 'on the move and in the making'.

## **6.2 What investments do diasporic Brazilians have in the consumption of Brazilian food?**

As well as considering how, and in what forms, Brazilian food was re-produced in London, the thesis has also examined what such re-productions might be used for. It has analysed, then, the investment in the consumption of Brazilian food in London. In general terms, the research has suggested that such investment sits within a terrain that we can describe as a 'cultural economy'. Brazilian food in London entangles questions of money and meaning; of business and belonging; of retailing and relationships. More specifically, the thesis has examined such entanglements through at least three different emphases on Brazilian food consumption, casting it in terms of identity, emotion and practice. Here I use those three foci to summarise some of the thesis's key findings and arguments in this area.

For example, the data from the focus group and the household research revealed that there were many reasons behind migrants' decisions to eat 'familiar' food in diasporic circumstances. Three principle discursive themes emerged from the data collected in the focus groups: 1) eating and preparing 'Brazilian food' was considered as a continuation of a habit; 2) eating 'Brazilian food' filled an emotional need derived from a feeling of homesickness; and 3) eating and preparing 'Brazilian' food was a way to display and construct a sense of 'Brazilianess' in London. Displacement was again a central issue for the food consumption experience. Moving countries certainly broke established patterns of food consumption, leading to adaptations in eating habits and strategies to find channels of provision of familiar foods. Being far from home provoked desires and emotions of longing and homesickness which were partially assuaged by the consumption of familiar foods and the reproduction of home cooking. Furthermore, in their encounter with different food cultures, displaced Brazilians used food to establish difference from others thus allowing them to construct a sense of self and collective images of 'Brazilianess'.

Let me start with this last kind of investment; an investment in identity. Both in the focus group discussions and in the household research, it was evident that food played a role in the construction of personal and familial biographies, and also in constructing senses of collective identity and in presenting Brazilian culture in London. The designation, making and eating of Brazilian food was thus part of the designation, making and experience of a diasporic Brazilian community. Participants in the research recognised food as an important arena for identity work, even if they themselves were uneasy about the forms of identity that predominated. For some, Brazilian food enabled a defence, indeed an assertion, of identity. This could involve an investment focused on the self and its interior well-being, as when the ingestion of food was felt to nourish a sense of self. It could entail a more outward-directed engagement with others, as when Brazilian food was used to present some sense of self to 'audiences' or 'guests'. However, there was also testimony from research subjects about how Brazilian food could be implicated in an anxious parochialism that curtailed the cosmopolitan possibilities of diasporic

living. In these accounts, Brazilian food, especially in the somewhat simplified forms that it often took in the diasporic setting, constrained the development of diasporic identity projects. Also at stake, as discussed above, were the forms that Brazilian identity might take and their relationships with the complex contours of identity within Brazil (notably with respect to regionalism, ethnicity and class). Thus Brazilian food was a medium through which performances of being Brazilian in London could be staged; through which Brazilian identity could be articulated to others; but also through which inclusions to, and exclusions from, Brazilian identity in London were forged.

As well as showing the connections between food and identity, the research findings also suggested a second kind of investment in the consumption of Brazilian food: the emotional. Whilst I was keen to recognise that food consumption can be routine, mundane and practical (of which more below) the research data also demonstrated its emotionally charged character. In considering this emotional dimension of consumption practices in situations of displacement, I expanded on the existent body of work on 'emotional geographies' (Anderson and Smith, 2001, Thien, 2005, Koskela, 2000, Nash, 1998, Smith, 2000, Widdowfield, 2000) and wider scholarship that recognises the importance of emotions in social life and indeed in social research (Williams, 2001, Neu, 2000, Pugmire, 1998). The emotional tone of Brazilian food consumption could be complex, but across different sites of empirical research – interviews with food businesses; group discussions with consumers; ethnographic observation in a shop and café; and ethnographic interviewing with residents in Harlesden - the feelings of nostalgia and/or homesickness were cast as a powerful trigger for diasporic consumption. Brazilian food and its spaces of consumption are largely supported by Brazilians who miss the tastes of home. Brazilian food entrepreneurs have named this commercial activity 'economia da saudade' (a homesickness economy). Their business is to offer migrants the possibility of being at home in the host society through the consumption of familiar brands, foods and sensorial landscapes.

For many Brazilians in London, food was emotionally powerful, bound up with embodied feelings and cultural narratives of nostalgia, longing and belonging. These feelings were deeply personal, indeed embodied, felt in the gut; but they were not private or confined to the production of an interiorised subjectivity. They were bound up in social relations, through the sharing of feelings in particular sites of food consumption (and indeed particular moments of research practice) as well as the tensions that could surround such sharing (brought to the fore in the evidence from the two Harlesden households in Chapter 6). The geographies implicated in these emotions had a relational quality. Food studies more generally have recognised how food connects together scales of attention ranging from the body to the globe (Bell and Valentine 1997); diaspora studies recognise that diasporic culture interpolates the local and global. In that vein, it was notable that food ingested at particular times and in particular places stimulated social relationships and feelings that stretched both time and space. The research presented here highlighted in particular the role of memory in stitching together the immediacy of life in London and an imaginative sense of (past) Brazilian life. Smells, tastes and the visual aspects of food and food products were seen to trigger memories of places and people. These recollections were not fixed and retrieved from the past, but situated in the present. It was from the perspective of migrants in London that these memories were deployed. General feelings of national belonging, and more specific feelings of collective attachment and differentiation, were woven together in memories that were also, fundamentally, personal. It was often through memory that the here and now was connected to a there and then.

If identity and emotion characterise two kinds of investment made in Brazilian food consumption, then a third was more 'practical' in character. The research presented in this thesis explicitly considered what has until recently been a neglected aspect of consumption, its implication in the practices of everyday life (Gronow and Warde, 2001b, Shove et al., 2007). For example, in Chapter Four it was apparent that for many participants in the focus groups food consumption was articulated in terms of habit or routine activity. They

described Brazilian food in terms of being used to a particular kind of food which they grew up with, something which was part of their routine, and to which they perhaps never gave much thought prior to their migration to the UK. It was when confronted by difference that the diasporic body explicitly recognised and claimed the habitual in terms of a national taste.

Here, then, culinary culture was about doing as well as meaning. In investigating this more practical dimension to food consumption the thesis has presented two main sets of findings. These consider the two-way relationships between food consumption and the practice of everyday life. On the one hand, the research considered how diasporic food consumption is shaped by changing contexts of practice. On the other hand, it has also considered how food consumption is generative of the wider practice of everyday life. Let me illustrate both these arguments.

On the one hand, migration to London affected everyday life and hence the habits and routines of food consumption. This was explored in particular through the analysis of domestic life in Chapter Six. Changes to food habits were partly related to changing contexts of food provision, both the access afforded to other culinary cultures as well as to the difficulties and limitations in accessing Brazilian ingredients and systems of provision. More generally, though, the changed lifestyles adopted by migrants also posed limitations, in terms of the time they had available to source and prepare food and the frequent lack of domestic infrastructures for cooking. Considered as a matter of routine everyday life, shopping, cooking and eating practices had to be re-considered and reconfigured to accommodate the realities of working lives as migrants and the domestic contexts they now inhabited. There was a constant pressure in the migrant household to be 'practical', especially in terms of the time and money spent on food preparation and consumption. On the other hand, food consumption was not only shaped by the changing contexts of everyday life; it helped to reshape them. Consider, for instance, the account of domesticity developed in Chapter Six. Here, I presented evidence that food played a vital role in forging new forms of diasporic domesticity. These changes

were sometimes cast as losses; but they could also be perceived as positive, for example as liberation from established gender roles and as stimulating exposure to new skills (such as men learning to cook), new tastes and London's cosmopolitan commercial foodscapes. Here, then, domestic food practices could be considered as rehearsals for new ways of being, for creating and innovating.

### **6.3 How are constructions of, and investments in, Brazilian food implicated in the production of public and domestic spaces?**

The third and final objective of the thesis has been to examine how diasporic constructions of, and investments in, Brazilian food are spatially constituted. Specifically, the research focused on both public spaces of food provision and the private space of the home. Let me start with domestic space.

In the discussion above, I outlined some principal arguments made in the thesis with regard to the relations between food consumption and the production of domestic space by Brazilian migrants in London. To reiterate, the research findings suggested that food played an important role in fashioning new forms of domesticity in London. Food practices were a key site for the (re)production of family and gender relations. The analysis also recognised the complex location of home for migrants. Domestic space, and domestic food consumption, was implicated in forms of 'home' that were distributed across both space and time. For the Brazilians researched, homes were being constructed, and at stake, in London. But these homes were not only in the here and now. They were also located in Brazil: implied in what migrants left behind, their longing for it, or in their plans to work and save money to build it in the future.

In terms of the public culture of Brazilian food in London, the research demonstrated that its commercial provision produced spaces that were not 'purely commercial'. Shops, cafés and restaurants were also sites of socialisation and solace. The ethnographic research undertaken in *Sabor*

*Mineiro* and *Mercearia Brasil* illustrated how food retail plays an active role in forging significant, visible, public spaces of belonging for some Brazilians in London. Such outlets form community spaces that all Brazilians in various ways relate to: whether by visiting regularly, occasionally, or avoiding. One of the main ways in which they developed this community role was through their forms of sociality, which in turn provided comfort, familiarity and a 'sense of home' to many Brazilians. In a sense, then, these public spaces were also domestic spaces, stretching the production of 'home' beyond a more narrowly defined domestic realm. Such homeliness is forged in part via the foods sold (whether those be the goods of the grocery shop or the meals of the café), and in part by the commonalities felt through the staging of public discourses (the pleasures of hearing one's mother tongue; the television presenting Brazilian programmes; the conversations about Brazilian football). Of course, this homeliness, like all constructions of home, was not unproblematic. The offer on the shelves or on the table was always incomplete, in the sense that it provided limited resources and was rarely able to express the multiple identities and affiliations that any diasporic subject might hold. These food retailers could never restore the same complex cultural positioning and distinctions that food had allowed before migration. Brazilian food retail in London involved the creation of a homogenizing food culture that enabled the reproduction of a national culture in the diaspora (cf Mankekar 2005). As such, these outlets were spaces where 'Brazilianess' was re-made and contested, where there were politics of inclusion and exclusion, and where new cultural boundaries were drawn. One of the most obvious signs of the tensions and disjunctions implicated in this making of a diasporic national common ground was the dislike, suspicion or disinterest shown to Brazilian retail outlets by some diasporic Brazilians. Brazilian food commerce provides a place where a diverse displaced nation meets, sometimes for the first time. Such retail spaces can bring together objects, practices and bodies that may have had little connection in the homeland, but which now come to constitute a shared diaspora space. That sharing is not always without tensions and reassertions of difference.

Commercial food outlets are also social spaces, and as such not without their antagonisms.

In Chapter Five I argued that such spaces were marked by two interrelated spatial dynamics: they both localize and translocalize. Generally, whilst diaspora studies have considered processes of dislocation, less attention has been given to the settling of migrant populations. This thesis has considered how a relatively new group of migrants gets 'situated' in the 'super-diverse' context of London. Food outlets are an important spatial form in 'localizing' the diasporic Brazilian presence in London and thus providing a space for the active construction, representation and contesting of diasporic Brazilian culinary culture. Brazilian food commerce, I argued, both claims space for and gives visibility to Brazilian identity in London. Brazilian shops in general are one of the most visible signs of the Brazilian presence in London. With their overtly Brazilian façades they disseminate images and meanings of 'Brazilianess' for Brazilians and non-Brazilians alike. They create a 'banal' form of national identity in which 'Brazilianess' is literally 'flagged', as the national symbol sits in shop windows luring clients into commercial, social and cultural exchanges. This visibility via localization was seen to be double-edged; both an assertive claim upon the space of the city; but also a risky intervention into a national space where legal presence was often denied.

Ethnographically informed research in these public spaces of food commerce also allowed me to illustrate how Brazilian life is 'translocalized' in these places. Here, London is connected to Brazil. This happens in a number of ways: materially through the commonalities of brands and food; sensorially via not only food but commonalities of language and media provision and consumption; socially through the staging of conversations with common preoccupations; and emotionally, as all these aspects of place and their social environment prompt more subjective reconnections, for example through memories. Again, I argued that the working of memory has a particular power here, knitting together a common commercial culture, senses of national belonging and personal experiences of home and migration.



#### **6.4 How can food - as material culture and as an embodied practice - contribute to understanding meanings of home, identity and belonging among diasporic populations?**

This thesis has brought substantial empirical material to answer some of the challenging questions about the notion of 'home' posed by the literature on transnational migration, transnational communities and diaspora (Brah, 1996, Al-Ali and Koser, 2002, Ahmed, 2000) and more generally to geographies of home (Blunt and Dowling, 2006), mentioned in the introduction. Central to this thesis is the idea that food and its associated practices of shopping, preparing and eating is an important home-making practice for migrants - something which has already been argued in the literature (Duarte, 2005, Kneafsey and Cox, 2002, Linger, 2001, Hage, 1997). However, I believe I went a step further to show this home-making practice across a range of different scales. In this thesis I considered home as a process in construction and beyond the domestic realm. I also explored home as a research location, which allowed me to uncover the complexity of contemporary domestic arrangements in diasporic circumstances. Such arrangements may not always be based around a nuclear family with young children (Valentine, 1999) but can involve other people living in the same household. This research also provides a more nuanced and intimate view of how gender, ethnicity and kinship identities intersect in food practices.

Food practices, as I argue in Chapter 6, provide key moments for the reproduction of family, gender and ethnic relations. Nonetheless, more often than not, migration led to a reconfiguration of such practices. I will start with the family. As I mentioned before, family meals were central in the continuity of family life in diasporic circumstances, a ritual that brought members of the family together. Furthermore, food abridged time and space for a family experience fractured by migration. The sensory reminders triggered by the smell, texture and appearance of food and dishes and by the voices of the family took its members to other meals in other homes where the family had lived

before migrating. These imaginings point to the multi-locality of home and how it is re-constructed through memories. Food grounds home in the here and now but it also makes it possible to connect to various other homes. Moreover, the re-creation of family life through food sharing was enacted even while families were apart. As evidenced in the research group discussions and in the domestic observation, eating together not always entailed bodily presence. Food was often 'shared' via internet calls which allowed members of the family living in different places to be 'virtually' present in each others' home, thus complicating the notion of the domestic home as a private and bounded sphere.

Nourishing with food was seen as a mothering practice and some mothers were considered by and considered themselves as the guardian of the family eating habits, and therefore key to the reproduction/continuation of family life and of notions of home (and homeland) in diasporic circumstances. However, women also felt that diasporic life had in fact liberated them from previous gender roles in the domestic realm. Migration also changed men's relation to domesticity. The reported engagement male migrants established with food practices in the domestic sphere were considered to be positive, even if regarded as forced by the circumstances. Men's capacity to re-create home by cooking food from the homeland was thoroughly incorporated in their male migrant's narrative. Although this positive engagement with cooking (and other chores) could signal alternative conceptions of masculinities due to migration, it is unfortunate that these changing gender practices and acts at home cannot be taken as a sign that 'gender ideologies and scripts' (McIlwaine, 2010) have also changed. Hegemonic understandings of home and of masculine identities such as the man as a provider and more seriously the perpetration of domestic violence against women, were found in this study, thus corroborating wider trends in Latin American migration in London (McIlwaine, 2010). By looking at the intersection between masculinity and domesticity, this thesis brings an important contribution to studies of home in general and to studies of migrant masculinities in domestic spaces, both under researched themes (Gorman-Murray, 2008, Blunt and Dowling, 2006, Datta, 2008, Walsh, 2011).

I emphasised how food practices were also implied in an expanded notion of 'home' beyond the domestic space. Public spaces of food consumption such as cafes, grocery shops and restaurants not only reproduced 'sensory' experience of home through shared tastes, sounds and visual cues but also negotiate various notions of home via localised memories and particular tastes. However, two issues must be highlighted. First of all, the reminders of home triggered in these places were not always positive. Familiar tastes and smells may take people back to their homes; however, what happened there may bring painful memories of family life or may emphasise absence. Secondly, as pointed out by Brah, a distinction must be made between "feeling at home' and staking claim to a place as one's own' (Brah, 1996: 193). To be able to call a place home and to belong to a place are defined by citizenship entitlement. The practices of home making and the creation of collective places of belonging in public places such food shops are therefore intersected by fear, in a context where such visibility can be problematic for an 'undocumented' clientele. So the gaining of a sense of belonging and emplacement through food provision and consumption is not experienced the same way for all migrants. It is mediated by their national origins as well as by the national migration rules of the host land.

Although a great deal on this thesis was spent trying to figure out how a national cuisine gets recreated under diasporic circumstances and how migrants stake claims of ethnicity based in national origins through food practices, alternative forms of belonging and identity were also performed through food. Migrants changed, adapted and mixed different food cultures. In public spaces of consumption there was a constant interplay between constructing a common sense of diasporic national food culture and reproducing senses of difference and distinction; regional identities for example. Additionally, some people did not relate to this form of collective belonging created through food practices. Nostalgic longing for food was in some cases condemned by migrants themselves as closing the opportunities for a true emplacement: by choosing food from home migrants show they always

wanted to be 'there', in their homeland, never 'here', in the host land. Could these material practices be considered 'self-limiting' (Smith, 2011: 190) and hindering the construction of truly transnational and translocal belongings, in which migrants felt located 'here' and 'there'? To some migrants for whom the possibility of fully belonging 'here' was often denied, food shops were among the few public locations where both the collective and private emotional aspects of identification and belonging could be played out. As for nostalgic attachment, this cannot always be considered negative (Blunt, 2003). Longing and remembering home may be a way of negotiating belonging – even if a provisional one- from one's cultural term, as proposed by Erkamp (2005) and Hage (1997).

## **6.5 How is Brazilian food translocalised?**

My take on translocality is on the emplacement of these transnational flows - in this case food – in the host country. In Chapter 5 I discussed the two interrelated spatial dynamics in the public spaces of food consumption examined in this thesis: food shops I argued, both localise and translocalise migrant (food) culture. Food commerce, I argued, grounds migrant presence in the city and in neighbourhoods through the creation of sites of material life with distinctive food cultures. At the same time, food consumption (in its material and symbolic qualities), allows these sites to be connected across borders and this can happen in a number of scales both through provision and consumption.

Now, the translocalization of food is not always necessarily made up of dyadic local-local connections, as pointed out by Smith (2011: 185). This was clear in the case of transnational grocery food commerce. Heavily regulated, such commerce restricts the flows of groceries to mainly national brands who have managed to overcome the hurdles of having, for example, their labels translated. Entrepreneurs are also keen to cater for migrants from a range of

different backgrounds. The goods that manage to reach the local grocery shops in London are mass market national brands that appeal to a wide range of customers. The normative restrictions of international food commerce and the commercial interests of entrepreneurs, in this case, restrict local-local connections of food provision. This partially explains why there is a strong national component in the localisation of the food culture of this particular migrant group in London.

However, when analysis shifts to restaurants, other scales of attachment emerge. Here the translocalisation of food retains and reinforces regional and even local ties. This may be a reflection of the culinary background of food entrepreneurs, but more generally, in the case of regional ties, it relates to the regional tastes of the majority of the migrant populations who are consumers of these places. What is interesting about the translocalisation of food is that it gets reconceptualised. So a regional cuisine that was highly regarded in the home country gets downgraded by some members of the migrant population because it is associated with irregular migration. On the other hand, its demand from others in the migrant population slowly allows this regional cuisine to become representative of a diasporic national cuisine.

Local/local connections are also fostered via public places of food consumption and provision. This is exemplified in the close relationship some food entrepreneurs establish with migrants/consumers by reproducing some of the local/home-made dishes those migrants miss. In fact, the widespread culture of 'home-made food' that characterises the food commerce of this migrant population points to the home as other scale where food gets translocalised. In grocery shops the few iconic 'local' ingredients that managed to cross borders provided a material connection to specific locations in the home country, but even mass-marketed national brands bought in a London grocery shop in can make people speak of their multi-located embodied migrant experience in the form of remembrances.

It is, in fact, through these memories that the most powerful forms of translocalization are enacted. Experiences of food provision and consumption allows the material 're-location' to the homeland; the multisensory capacity of food and its ability to trigger individual and collective memories provides a direct link with localised experiences of other times and places. These could be the backyards, neighbourhoods, kitchen tables or relatives' houses back in their home country or other places where migrants had lived. Food provides a nostalgic attachment for migrants, and this nostalgic attachment is therefore an important element to the social construction of translocal projects, as posited by Smith (2011: 198).

## **6.6 Future agendas for research**

I want to conclude the thesis by very briefly outlining some avenues for further research that I believe it has illuminated. In the spirit of looking forward and outward, these agendas are not so much reiterations of principal arguments and materials as recognitions of aspects of diasporic Brazilian food culture that this research suggests would bear further scrutiny, although they were tangential to the thesis itself. I highlight three.

Firstly, the work undertaken here suggests that more could be said about the relations between different diasporic populations and their food cultures. For example, newly arrived migrants usually benefit from older and more established migrant groups both in terms of the channels of distribution and spaces of consumption. Work I undertook in New York, and especially in nearby Ironbound New Jersey, during the leadership of a series of student research projects on Brazilian food and diaspora culture, highlighted the complex relations between Brazilian and Portuguese migrants in that setting. This dynamic was also apparent in London, but inflected by a wider entangling of Brazilian food provision with other diasporic populations (especially African and Afro-Caribbean) and so-called 'international' food suppliers. Comparative

work between New York and London would further develop understanding of how place matters to diaspora cultures. More generally, exploring such cross-diaspora relations opens up an optic beyond that of host / native and migrant.

Second, my focus in this thesis has been on the belongings associated with diasporic food consumption. It would be fertile, I suggest, extending that analysis into the more explicitly 'moral' lexicons of consumer responsibility and solidarity. There is now a voluminous literature on ethical consumption that highlights concerns with how consumers are both disconnected from, and might be reconnected to, production, its people and places. This thesis has likewise argued that diasporic cultures of consumption operate through dual processes of disconnection and reconnection, of displacement and return. At an empirical level, more work could be undertaken to consider the presence, and indeed absence, of ethical consumption discourse and practice within diasporic consumer cultures. Conceptually, such work would obviously further elaborate the simplistic binary of Global Western / Northern consumer and Global Southern producer that critical scholarship on ethical consumption has identified.

Thirdly, throughout the thesis I have been at pains to signal the complexity of Brazilian culinary cultures in Brazil, and how the fashioning of a 'national' Brazilian cuisine is in many respects a 'transnational' phenomenon, driven in large part by the global Brazilian diaspora. My pre-doctoral research in Brazil considered, for example, the implications of food in the cultural dynamics of regionalized heritage production. Reflecting on that work from today's vantage point, it is interesting to consider what a 'diasporic lens' might offer on views of Brazilian food cultures 'at home'. In the face of current dynamics of internal migration, food patrimonialization, and indeed ethical consumption, it would be interesting to analyse how 'Brazilianess', as well as regional and local identities, is being re-cast in Brazil itself through the agencies of migrant food actors.

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## Appendix I - Research on Brazilian outlets

Outlet	Visited	Recorded interview	Non recorded interview	E-mail interview	Phone interview
1. 3 Victoria Grove, N16	✓		✓		
2. Beef Brazil - N15	✓		✓		
3. Brazilian Centre - N16	✓		✓		
4. Café Brasileiro - N12	✓		✓		
5. Casa de Carnes Boi Gordo - E8	✓		✓		
6. Lanchonete - N15	✓		✓		
7. Coco Bamboo - NW1	✓		✓		
8. Cravo e Canela - SW2	✓		✓		
9. Intertranscafe - W1D	✓		✓		
10. Bem Brasil - W1	✓		✓		
11. Katavento - NW10	✓		✓		
12. Oi Brasil - N15	✓				
13. Preto I - SW15	✓		✓		
14. Preto II - SW1					
15. Tia Maria - W8	✓	✓			
16. Victoria Tropical - SW1	✓		✓		
17. Recanto do Brasil - SW19	✓		✓		
18. Tropicalia - N16	✓		✓		
19. Cafe Rio - W1	✓	✓			
20. Fuxico - WC2	✓	✓			
21. Go Merceria - W1D	✓	✓			
22. Bello Cafe - WC2H	✓	✓			
23. Casa Brasil - W2	✓	✓			
24. Brazilian Gourmet - W1	✓	✓			
25. Barraco I - NW6	✓	✓			
26. Barraco II - NW10	✓				
27. Sabor Brasileiro -	✓	✓			

NW10					
28. Cafe do Brasil - NW10	✓	✓			
29. Gostosa Pizzeria - NW10	✓	✓			
30. Gostosa Deli - NW10					
31. Sabor Mineiro - NW10	✓	✓			
32. Ki Carnes - NW10	✓	✓			
33. Mercearia Brasil - NW10	✓	✓			
34. Brazilian Emporium - NW10	✓		✓		
35. Brazilian Emporium II - NW10					
36. Amber Grill - NW10	✓	✓			
37. Ipanema Café - W2	✓				✓
38. Sushinho - SW3 5UH				✓	
39. Favela Chic - EC2	✓			✓	
40. Basement Café - EC2	✓				✓
41. Bistro N3					✓
42. Corcovado Bar & Restaurant - NW10	✓		✓		✓
43. Casa de Carnes Brasil - NW10	✓		✓		✓
44. Tradição de Portugal/Delícias do Brasil - NW10	✓				✓
45. Tradição de Portugal/Delícias do Brasil - NW10					✓
46. Braziliãna - SE19					✓
47. Castello bar & restaurant - SE5					✓
48. Canela café I- W1	✓				✓
49. Canela café II - WC2					✓
50. Luso Brasileiro - E16					✓
51. Brazil Express - E15					✓
52. Bankete - E1	✓				✓

53. Raizes - E2	✓		✓		✓
54. Canecão - N7					✓
55. Comida - W1					✓
56. X- Burger - NW6					✓
57. Little Brazilian Coffee -NW10	✓		✓		
58. Rodizio Rico I - W2	✓		✓		
59. Rodizio Rico II - N1					
60. Rodizio Rico III - SE10					
61. Rodizio Rico IV - SW6					
62. Feijão com Arroz - W2	✓				
63. Made in Brazil - NW1	✓				
64. Buffet Brazil I- SW18					
65. Buffet Brazil II - SW15					
66. Guanabara WC2					
67. Fogo Vivo Restaurante - N4					
68. Kaktus Bar - NW10	✓				
69. Pasta Café -NW10	✓				
70. Novilho de Ouro Casa de Carnes					
71.					
72. Cantinho Brasileiro					
73. Xodó da Leninha - NW10 (closed down)	✓				
74.					
75. Braseiro NW10 (closed down)	✓				

## **Appendix II - Focus groups composition**

### **Focus group 1**

1-Teresa, late twenties, works as a secretary for a Brazilian community organization in London, from Franca, São Paulo. In the UK since December 2007. Lives with with Geraldo (husband) and his brother in North London.

2-Geraldo, late twenties, is a part time PhD student and waiter, from São Paulo. In the UK since 2007. Lives with his wife Tania and his brother in north London.

3-Andrea, early forties, university lecturer. From São Paulo but lived a long time in Brasília. In the UK since 1997. Lives in West London with her Goan husband.

4-Yolanda, mid-forties, divorced, lecturer and researcher. From São Paulo, has been in the UK since 199? Shares a flat with a Mexican female flatmate in east London.

### **Focus group 2**

5-Verônica, 29, from Campinas, São Paulo. She has been in the UK since 2007 and previously lived in Italy for four years. Studies for a degree and works as a model. Lives in north London with English husband and is expecting their first child.

6-Cristine, 28, from Frederico Westfallen, RS. She has been in the UK since 2005 and studies for a degree whilst working part-time as a waitress. She lives in Highgate, north London with two sisters and a nephew.

7- Eduardo, 38, lawyer and lives in Rio de Janeiro. He was in London as a tourist for 3 days and came accompanying Carolina. He has already travelled to Europe five times and to this is the third time he visits the UK.

8- Milton, 47, geologist, from Rio de Janeiro. Has been in the UK since 2008 and is doing a PhD. He lives with his wife and two kids outside London.

9- João, early twenties, from Recife. He has been in London since September 2010 and is doing and Masters Degree. He shares university accommodation with five other people.

10-Fernando, 32 years old, is from Rio de Janeiro. He has been in London since September 2010 and is doing and Master's degree. He lives on shared university accommodation.

### **Focus Group 3**

11- Ana Cristina, late 20s, from Minas Gerais, in London since August 2000. PhD student. Lives Palmers Green, New South Gate area, with her German fiancée and a friend from Minas Gerais.

12-Paula, early 30s, from São Paulo. She is studying for a master's degree. She has been in the UK since October 2009 and lives with Brazilian husband in Maida Vale.

13-Sandro, in his 30s, from Goiania (Goiás) and is in the UK since 2004. He works for a buiding company and lives on his own in Maida Vale.

14- César, 40s, from Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais. Lives in the UK since 2004, has previously lived in Ireland for three and a half years and in the U.S. Now lives in Palmer's Green, New South Gate area, with two friends. He does market research, teaches English to Brazilians, drives a van and is a musician is his time.

15-Anita, early 30s, single, from Rio de Janeiro. Lives in the UK since 2008 and has just finished her Master's degree. She lives in South London in shared accommodation.

### **Focus group 4**

16-Tatiana, early 30s, from Curitiba, Parana. In the UK since 2001, lives with her Brazilian husband in a studio flat in Harlesden. She has two part time jobs: as an office clerk and an assistant at the church.

17-Carlos, 17, lives with his mother and father in Harlesden. In the UK since 2009, is a full-time student.

18-Lucas, from Campo Mourão, Paraná, has just moved to the UK and is going to live with friend in Harlesden.

19- Rosangela, from São Paulo, in the Uk since 2008, lived four years in Portugal.Lives with husband and two children in Harlesden.

20-Marta, late forties, from São Paulo, has been in the UK since 2004, is an English student. She lives in Harlesden with her husband and three of her sons.

21-Dona Eulália, early sixties, from Maringá, Paraná, is married to Pastor Antonio. She has been in the UK since 2004. She lives in Harlesden with her husband and is Carlos' grandmother.

22-Pastor Antonio, early sixties, from Maringá, Paraná, in the UK since 2003, lives in Harlesden with his wife Eunice.

23-Karina, mid twenties, from Caxias do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul. She arrived in the UK in 2005, work as a receptionist and lives in Harlesden with her Brazilian husband.