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**The Role of Skills, Knowledge, and Competencies in the  
Consumer Adaptation Process of Immigrants to Multicultural  
Marketplaces: an Analysis of the Food Consumption  
Practices of Mexican Immigrants to the UK**

**CECILIA IBARRA CANTU**

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield

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# **The Role of Skills, Knowledge, and Competencies in the Consumer Adaptation Process of Immigrants to Multicultural Marketplaces: an Analysis of the Food Consumption Practices of Mexican Immigrants to the UK**

This thesis analyses the role that skills, knowledge, and competencies play in the process of consumer multiculturalisation of immigrant consumers. Adopting Demangeot et al.'s (2015) multifaceted conceptualisation of multicultural marketplaces and focusing on the food consumption practices of Mexican immigrant consumers to the UK, the thesis seeks to extend the scope of consumer multiculturalisation beyond identity construction. This research adopts a qualitative methodology involving in-depth interviews and participant observation with twenty Mexican immigrants residing in the UK, supplementing this with an analysis of posts on social media sites uploaded by members of the Mexican diaspora in the UK. The study is framed by adopting practice theory as a conceptual lens, and the data is analysed using a thematic approach.

A practice theory lens allows the researcher to study practices, comprising competencies, materials, and meanings (Shove et al., 2012) as opposed to individual consumers as the unit of analysis, analysing the dynamic interactions of these three elements in the context of the immigrants' food consumption practices, thus examining culture in action.

The study contributes to the theory of consumer multiculturalisation in a number of ways. First it adds to previous studies that focus only on consumption by identifying that immigrant consumers engage in a creative form of 'prosumption' (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010), akin to '*craft consumption*' (Campbell, 2005) as they create and innovate while adapting to the many cultural forces comprising multicultural marketplaces. Second, it broadens the focus from the individual consumer by acknowledging that immigrant consumers create social networks, through which they engage in sharing knowledge, skills, and competencies related to food, thus increasing the complex global forces operating within multicultural marketplaces. Third, it deepens our understanding of cultural authenticity by highlighting the performative role of immigrant consumers in the food authentication process.

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# 1 Introduction

Marketers and other decision makers have remarked on the increasing movement of people between different countries, inspiring researchers to conduct studies on consumer acculturation and multiculturalism since these processes affect immigrants' consumption.

When I arrived in the UK to study for a PhD my focus was not on immigrant consumers, acculturation or multiculturalism. However, the compelling histories of my fellow Mexican citizens living in the UK regarding their efforts to eat Mexican food in the UK made me radically change the focus of my PhD investigation. Trying to contact participants for my original thesis project, which intended to examine the consumption of local food, I joined a Facebook group of Mexican immigrants living in the UK. When I began to browse the posts, I discovered that the majority were related to food, and specifically how to cook Mexican dishes using ingredients they could find in the UK, thus converting ingredients from a variety of cultures into typical Mexican dishes, such as '*pozole*', '*tamales*', and '*gorditas*'. As a Mexican immigrant myself, I felt very much drawn to try the recipes, and my research instinct told me that here I had stumbled upon an interesting consumption phenomenon that warranted changing the focus of my PhD. Thus, the present thesis examines how Mexican immigrants adapt to the multicultural marketplace (Demangeot, Broderick, & Craig, 2015) present in the UK, focusing on the practices associated with Mexican food consumption.

A commonly quoted definition of consumer acculturation is: '*the general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country*' (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 33). Whilst consumer



multiculturalism is defined as: ‘*a process of changes in the cultural identification and consumption behaviours of individuals that happen when the individual, social group and/or society as a whole come into continuous contact with multiple cultures*’ (Kipnis, Broderick & Demangeot, 2014, p. 243). Another important definition related to my topic is Demangeot et al.’s (2015) conceptualization of multicultural marketplaces ‘*as a place-centred environment (whether physical or virtual), where the marketers, consumers, brands, ideologies and institutions of multiple cultures converge at one point of concurrent interaction, while also being potentially connected to multiple cultures in other localities*’ (p. 121) [Italics added]. The notion of a multicultural marketplace implies a process of consumer multiculturalism rather than consumer acculturation. In a multicultural marketplace, consumers, marketers, and brands originating from a plethora of cultures live together, interact, and influence each other (Demangeot et al., 2015).

This chapter is structured as follows. First, in Section 1.1, I provide a brief background discussion, showing the importance of the migration flows across the world, including those of Mexican immigrants. Section 1.2 describes the socio-demographic profile of Mexican immigrants throughout the world and specifically in the UK. Next, Section 1.3 explains how market forces have reshaped regional cuisines, analysing specifically the association that Mexicans make between their culture and their food, the popularity of Mexican food across the world, and finally how Tex-Mex food has been conflated with Mexican food. In Section 1.4 I summarise previous research on consumer acculturation and multiculturalism, discussing its limitations and explaining the originality and relevancy of my research. Section 1.5 provides a preliminary overview of practice theory and why practice theory is adopted as a pertinent theoretical framework for this

research. In Section 1.6 I state the aim and the objectives of this research, explaining how they seek to respond to the limitations found in previous studies on consumer acculturation; and multiculturalisation and finally, in Section 1.7 I explain an overview of the methodology selected, Section 1.8 explicates the article that issued from this thesis and finally, in Section 1.9 I explain the structure of this thesis.

Migration across the world has inserted a plethora of cultures into different marketplaces. The following section explains how immigration has evolved and how Mexican immigrants are part of this phenomenon.

## **1.1 Importance of immigration in the world**

According to the United Nations' International Migration Report (2017) the number of international migrants is increasing worldwide, rising from 220 million in 2010 to 258 million in 2017 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2017). Developed countries are the main recipients of immigrants. Two-thirds of international migrants moved to live in just twenty countries of the world. The largest receivers of immigrants are the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, Germany, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2017).

Migration towards the UK has been decreasing evenly, as net migration from the European Union (EU) has declined. Net migration from June 2015 to June 2016 was +189,000; in the year from March 2017 to March 2018, it was +87,000. Most of the immigrants came from the EU; however, non-EU migration has increased evenly since the year 2016 (Office for National Statistics, 2018).

There is a continuous movement of Mexican immigrants to different countries. In 2017, India and Mexico were the countries of origin of most of the international migrants in the world. Mexicans moving to live in the United States of America (USA) comprise the largest population in the world moving from one single country to another (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2017).

Statistics show that 9.6 million Mexicans moved to live in a different country in 2000, increasing to 13 million in 2017 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2017). Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom are the countries that report having the largest populations of Mexicans immigrants after the USA (Gobierno Federal Mexicano, 2018). According to the Office for National Statistics in the UK, the 2011 census showed a population of 9,771 Mexicans living in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2011). In the 2016 Annual Population Survey, the figure had increased to approximately 16,000 Mexicans living in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2018).

## **1.2 The profile of Mexican immigrants**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016, Mexicans living in the USA settled mostly in the states of California (37%), Texas (22%), and Illinois (6%). The main concentrations of Mexicans could be found in the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles (1,696,000), Chicago (650,000), and Houston (622,000) (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). According to the annual population survey in the UK in 2016, most Mexicans were living in the London area, numbering approximately 7,000. Another 2,000 were living in the South West area of England (which includes several counties, such as Cornwall), a similar number in the South East (which includes counties such as the Isle

of Wight) and in the East (including counties such as Bedford and Luton). There is a lack of publicly available information regarding the profile of Mexicans living in the UK; however, there are some statistics referring to Latino populations, which can aid understanding of the profile of Mexicans living in the UK. Findings of a study conducted among the Latino community in London (McIlwaine & Cock, 2016) indicate that 70% of Latin Americans studied at high school (equivalent to secondary school in the UK) and beyond and 13% of them have a postgraduate qualification. Many of them have emigrated because of the lack of economic opportunities in their home countries. This profile of Latin Americans in the UK is very different from that of the Mexicans living in the USA. The highly publicised profile of Mexican immigrants in the USA is of low-skilled illegal workers, who are not proficient in English, have lower levels of education, are in poverty, and do not have health insurance (Englekirk & Marín, 2018). Again, the main motivation of Mexicans to move to the USA has been to improve their economic situation.

This thesis analyses the food consumption practices of Mexican immigrants in the UK, and thus, it is important to describe how Mexican food is perceived outside of Mexico so as to clarify Mexican consumers' experiences of their food culture abroad. The next section deals with this issue.

### **1.3 The commodification of Mexican food outside of Mexico**

#### **1.3.1 Market forces and the reshaping of 'foreign' regional cuisines**

The inequalities of power relations in multicultural marketplaces are reflected in the reshaping of regional cultural cuisines outside of their countries of origin (Fonseca,

2005; Dey et al., 2019; Bardhi et al., 2010), going through a process of commodification. This occurs mainly, though not entirely, in respect of non-Western cuisine in Western countries. In this regard, Fonseca (2005) recounts how Latin American cuisine has been adopted as being fashionable and elegant in restaurants in the United States, but that some ingredients have been changed in order to be more acceptable to Western tastes. For example, instead of using 'pig feet, ears, and tails', which are common in traditional Latin American dishes, chefs in these up-market restaurants in America use 'ox or beef tongue' (2005, p. 116), thus reshaping and 'aestheticizing' these dishes for a Western marketplace. Fonseca (2005) suggests that in these cases customers are less interested in the level of authenticity of these foreign cuisines, and more interested in the way that their consumption of these cuisines reflect their cosmopolitanism (Fonseca, 2005). We can appreciate how Latin American dishes went through a process of 'commodification', becoming something consumable for these cosmopolitan consumers . Other research on food consumption has also shown how typical foreign regional cuisines have been reshaped in the context of multicultural Western marketplaces. In the process, dishes are distorted in particular ways and then these versions are adopted globally by consumers in various other countries, showing again a process of commodification. For example, Dey et al. (2019) discuss the fact that the 'Provençal food served in French restaurants across the world' is not 'exactly the same as those served in Provence' and that 'Chicken Madras' which is a popular dish in 'British Indian' restaurants would not be recognised by people from Chennai, formerly known as Madras (2019, p. 783). Bardhi et al. (2010) have also commented previously on how Westernised versions of 'ethnic foods have become part of the dietary habits and local food tastes in various countries' (p. 134). These authors mention specifically Westernised and Americanised versions of Mexican and Chinese regional foods, and

comment also on the ‘Döner kebab version of the Turkish food in Northern Europe’ (Bardhi et al., 2010, p. 134).

The aestheticisation and reshaping of Mexican food in many countries across the globe, including in the UK, can be considered as part of a more general process of commodification of regional cuisines. That said, it is important to recognise the particularities of this commodification in that Western marketplaces have taken typical Tex-Mex dishes and cuisine and represented these as being authentic Mexican cuisine. It is important to recognise, however, that Tex-Mex food has its own place with distinctive flavours and dishes associated with particular regions of the United States, not far from its border with Mexico (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017). I will come back to discuss this in depth in subsection 1.3.4. The next subsections therefore move on to examine the complexity of Mexican food culture and cuisine.

### **1.3.2 Mexican food and culture**

Food in Mexico is greatly associated with culture. In many ways, Mexicans show their culture by consuming food with which they identify (Pilcher, 1998). The origin of several Mexican dishes can be traced to ancient Mexican cultures, such as the Aztec and the Maya, and nowadays, many of these dishes are still part of the diet of Mexicans. The origin of tortillas made with Mexican maize can be traced by researchers to the origin of maize in the Valley of Tehuacan in Central Mexico (Long, Long-Solis, & Vargas, 2005) and ‘*tamales*’ [a typical Mexican dish made of dough and stuffed with different stews] were part of Aztec festivals; their consumption was evidenced in ancient ‘codices’ written by Spanish priests who witnessed how Aztec women cooked them (Pilcher, 1998). These two dishes are still consumed by Mexicans in villages and large cities all

over Mexico; for example, the annual per capita consumption of tortillas by Mexicans in urban areas is 56.7 kilograms as against 79.5 kilograms in rural areas (Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Sustentable y la Soberanía Alimentaria, 2014). The cuisine from Michoacan, a State located in Western Mexico, was recognized by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2010).

There is no doubt of the historical origins of many Mexican dishes; nonetheless, there is not a single, unique Mexican cuisine. Regional differences and historical external influences have marked many dishes that make Mexican food different in the North, Central, and South of Mexico (Long et al., 2005). In the North of Mexico, beef is widely consumed, while in Central Mexico, meat-based soups are common, and in the South, Mayan recipes such as the '*cochinita pibil*' [Mexican stew prepared with pork] are very popular. Despite these differences, many common elements transcend the regional differences, such as the consumption of tortillas, chilli sauces, and beans, among other ingredients, and typical dishes such as '*tamales*', '*pozoles*' [Mexican stew prepared with corn], and '*tingas*' [Mexican stew prepared with a red chilli stew] (Long et al., 2005).

Specific dishes are eaten on national and religious holidays all over Mexico, besides those that are eaten every day. For example, on 'Dia de la Candelaria' [Candlemas] Mexicans eat '*tamales*' and on Independence Day, '*pozole*'; for breakfast, '*chilakiles*' [stew made with red or green chilli sauce with tortillas and cheese], and in the street, tacos or '*tortas*' [Mexican sandwich, stuffed with different ingredients] are the usual

dishes for lunch. In many villages in Central Mexico, religious celebrations are associated with eating '*mole*' [Mexican stew prepared with chocolate and chilli sauce], which is cooked in vast quantities so all the inhabitants in a village can eat it in a communal celebration.

Even though we cannot speak of a unique Mexican cuisine, we can observe that there are very distinctive foods that are recognized all over Mexico and that are part of the Mexican culture. The next section shows how Mexican food has been popularized in other countries.

### **1.3.3 Popularity of Mexican food across the world**

Mexican food is recognised all over the world. In a survey conducted in 2019 in 15 countries, Mexican cuisine was in the top ten, being ranked in sixth place; Italian cuisine was the most popular (Smith, 2019). In a ranking of the most popular foods in the world, '*tortas poblanas*', [Tortas from Puebla, a state in Central Mexico] a street food, were ranked number two (AtlasMedia Ltd., 2021) and CNN ranked Mexican cuisine as the second on their list of the ten best foods in the world (Li, 2021).

Celebrities such as Diana Kennedy, a British food writer authority on Mexican cooking, and Martha Stewart, an American television presenter, have helped in the popularisation of some Mexican dishes. Diana Kennedy recognised the several cuisines present in Mexico, helping many people to learn that there are more Mexican dishes than just the world-renowned tacos through her cookery books (Prado, 2020), and Martha Stewart through her popular television programme taught how to cook '*tamales*' and '*tingas*', among other typical Mexican dishes (Abarca, 2004).



Even though Mexican food is popular in many countries, evidence has shown that some dishes which are globalised as supposedly Mexican in origin nonetheless originated in the United States and were popularised in other countries by American entrepreneurs (Pilcher, 2008; 2012). I comment on this below.

#### **1.3.4 Tex-Mex food marketed as being authentically Mexican**

Years of marketing and branding strategies have ensured that Tex-Mex (an abbreviation of Texas-Mexico) food has become synonymous with Mexican food in many countries. How this misconception began deserves a more in-depth explanation.

Many dishes created in the USA are mistakenly identified as being genuinely Mexican outside Mexico. The use of the term Tex-Mex can be traced back to the 1960s (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017). The quintessential Tex-Mex dish, '*chilli con carne*' [chilli with meat] is defined by Wheaton and Carroll (2017) as an 'Americanized dish' cooked using 'Mexican ingredients' (p. 150). '*Fajitas*' and '*nachos*', two other emblematic dishes of Tex-Mex food, can be traced back to south of the Mexican border, perhaps from Texas before it became part of the USA (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017). The origin of '*burritos*', an emblematic dish of Tex-Mex food, is uncertain: Wheaton and Carroll (2017) state that it was created in California whereas Pilcher (2008, 2012) traces its origin to somewhere near the border between Mexico and the United States. With the emergence of tinned food, tinned chilli became very popular in the USA, and brands such as *Gebhardt and Wolf* began to advertise it as 'authentic Mexican' (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017, p. 150). The arrival of packaged food boosted Tex-Mex food and the use of the term during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017).

Nowadays, deliberate strategies from global restaurant chains have helped in the globalisation of Tex-Mex food, furthering a worldwide misconception regarding Mexican food (Pilcher 2009). I present examples of how Tex-Mex food is advertised by two brands in the UK and Australia in Appendix A.

When Mexicans travel abroad and find Tex-Mex food advertised as being authentic Mexican food, they do not recognise it as being Mexican. I experienced this myself. The first time I shopped in a UK supermarket, I felt relief when I saw a section dedicated to Mexican food, however, my feelings soon turned to disappointment when I did not recognize many of the dishes that the Tex-Mex food brand *Old El Paso* advertised as being Mexican. In any supermarket across the world, customers can buy Tex-Mex food brands, such as *Old El Paso* and find different types of tortillas, although none of them are manufactured with Mexican maize (Knutson, 2016).

In the UK, Tex-Mex food is also very popular, and its popularity is increasing. Many supermarkets in the UK sell '*fajitas*', '*burritos*', and '*nachos*' as Mexican food (Olbrich, 2016). In 2015, around 30% of UK families had tried Mexican food during the previous few years and expressed interest in trying new Mexican foods (Robinson, 2015). In 2016, Waitrose's sales of pork fajitas increased by a phenomenal 867%, and 50% of UK families declared that they preferred Mexican food because it is easy to prepare and family-friendly (Olbrich, 2016).

Several scholars and opinion leaders have fueled the controversy. Diana Kennedy 'vilified Mexican-American food' in one of her books; the Mexican Nobel laureate Octavio Paz expressed the view that when the social idea of the melting pot was applied

to the art of cooking, it resulted in ‘abominations’; and Eric Hobsbawm, an important British historian, branded Tex-Mex food as ‘a barbaric mutation’ when comparing it to Mexican cuisine (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017, p. 148).

In summary, while much has been written about Mexican food (Pilcher, 2009, 2012; Wheaton & Carroll, 2017), we know very little about the food habits of Mexican immigrants and how their food habits are influenced by the diversity of cultures present in contemporary multicultural marketplaces (Demangeot et al., 2015) and other globalizing forces, such as that represented by Tex-Mex food. This thesis examines the food habits of Mexican immigrant consumers living in the UK in particular.

The last three sections have demonstrated the importance of migration in the world, focusing on the way in which Mexican immigrants are part of these cultural flows. In addition, I have discussed the strong association between Mexicans’ culture and their food and how Tex-Mex food is mistakenly advertised as authentically Mexican in Western countries, all in order to provide background for my research. Now I proceed to provide an overview of the different approaches adopted to study consumer acculturation and multiculturalization in previous research, discussing their limitations.

#### **1.4 Previous research on consumer acculturation**

Researchers have examined the process of consumer acculturation and multiculturalization, largely approaching the phenomenon by analysing how immigrants construct and reflect their identity achieved mostly by conducting qualitative studies (Askegaard, Arnould, & Kjeldgaard, 2005; Oswald, 1999; Üstüner & Holt, 2007) or by trying to relate identities with global consumer culture (Cleveland, Laroche, & Hallab, 2013; Cleveland, Rojas-

Méndez, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2016) through conducting quantitative studies. For these studies, the way immigrants consume while adapting to live in a new host culture is explained by in terms of how they want to construct their new identity and how they reflect this through their different consumption behaviours. Other researchers have focused on understanding the state of mind of immigrants during the consumer acculturation process, in so doing examining their perceptions, motivations, and attitudes (Galalae, Kipnis, & Demangeot, 2020; Jamal, 1998; Kizgin, Jamal, & Richard, 2018). This body of research sheds light on the mental states of immigrants while they experience the consumer acculturation or multiculturalization process. However, within this body of research it is rare to see a discussion of the actual activities and behaviours of these immigrants when facing new consumer marketplaces. As a consequence, other researchers have analysed the way immigrants behave while undergoing the consumer acculturation or multiculturalization process (Bundy, 2017; Demangeot & Sankaran, 2012; Dey et al., 2019), focusing mainly on shopping activities and on analysing strategies adopted.

Another strand of research has tried to understand how marketplaces have increased in complexity, by studying how immigrants can influence the consumption practices of mainstream consumers (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015; Cruz, Seo, & Buchanan-Oliver, 2018; Luedicke, 2015) and how different cultural flows can change the way consumers appropriate services (and goods) when they are adopted and adapted by different cultures, thereby distorting their original significance (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012), demonstrating the complex cultural forces present in multicultural marketplaces (Demangeot et al., 2015).

Overall, all the above mentioned studies have aided understanding of the different features involved in the consumer acculturation and multiculturalization process, yet with the exception of Peñaloza (1994) and Cappellini and Yen (2013), few have focused on trying to understand the adaptation process specifically. While Peñaloza (1994) has described the way immigrants adapted to the new cultural marketplace, her analysis adopted a two-cultures framework. Thus, she described how immigrants applied the skills learned in their home country, as a framework to develop new skills to adapt to the new cultural context, through a process of trial-and-error. However, she neglected to consider the way other cultures might influence this process. Cappellini and Yen (2013) studied how immigrants adapt to consume food in their new host country, analysing how social ties influence their food choices, examining this from the perspective of three cultures: home, host, and global consumer culture. The researchers defined the strategies that immigrants adopted over time. While these two studies provide a starting point from which to develop our understanding of the adaptation process, it is important to also take into consideration the complexity of cultural forces present in multicultural marketplaces (Demangeot et al., 2015).

Moreover, previous studies on consumer acculturation and multiculturalization focusing on food consumption have tried to understand the link between foods and culture either by presupposing the cultural association of food, rather than asking participants (Cleveland & Xu, 2019; Jamal, 1998) thereby neglecting consumer subjectivity. Or by analysing only the way participants verbally explained the cultural association of food (Bundy, 2017; Chytkova, 2011; Dey et al., 2019) and are so doing missing other ways through which they could demonstrate their culture, for example, through their behaviour. These studies helped to advance knowledge in the field, but have neglected the process

through which different meanings are associated with food during the consumer acculturation and multiculturalization process of immigrants. The few studies that have analysed this process have recruited participants that are living among other cultures only temporarily, such as tourists (Bardhi, Ostberg, & Bengtsson, 2010) and students (Yu, Yen, Cappellini, & Wang, 2019).

From this brief overview, we can appreciate that there are a number of research gaps in the field. The next section presents how this study intends to respond to these gaps.

### **1.5 Aim and objectives of the research**

The present study aims to develop an understanding of the role of knowledge, skills, and competencies in the adaptation process of Mexican immigrants to the multicultural marketplace present in the UK by analysing their consumption of food.

Three objectives are indicated, in order to achieve the overall aim:

- 1.-To understand the role of materials in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural marketplace
- 2.-To understand the role of meanings in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural marketplace
- 3.-To analyse the ramifications of immigrant consumers adapting to the multicultural food marketplace.

This study focuses on food consumption because food is a culturally bounded good (Chytkova, 2011; Cleveland et al., 2016). The activities that immigrants carry out associated with their acquisition and consumption of food are clearly interrelated with

their adaptation to the food cultures present in new marketplaces. An additional reason to focus on how Mexicans adapt their food consumption practices while living in the UK is to follow up on and advance Peñaloza's (1994) analysis of how Mexican immigrants used their previous knowledge and skills in order to adapt to living in the United States. Circumstances are very different for Mexican immigrants living in the UK, compared to the USA. Mexico and the UK are separated by an ocean and, in general, the presence of Latinos in the UK is largely ignored by the media in general and marketing practitioners in particular. This omission, together with a desire to provide a first glimpse of the way Mexican immigrants have to go to great lengths in order to be able to maintain their ethnic food consumption while living in the UK is what led me to focus my study on this issue.

## **1.6 The practice theory approach**

Adopting practice theory as a conceptual lens helps me to analyse the role of knowledge, skills, and competencies in the adaptation process of immigrant consumers to multicultural marketplaces in several ways, the most important of which I will discuss in the following paragraphs.

First, it helps me to shift the focus, and hence the unit of analysis, from the individual consumer to the concept of practice. Practices, or as some authors refer to them - social practices - are activities and 'doings', and as Warde (2005) suggests, it is important to note that consumption occurs as a 'moment' (p. 137) within a social practice. This shift in focus – away from the individual consumer and the moment of consumption - helps me to analyse other features involved in the social practice of food consumption. That is to say, it allows me to contextualise both the consumer and (food) consumption within

the everyday lived experiences of settling to live in a new country, thereby adopting a complementary approach to advance upon previous research on consumer acculturation and multiculturalization.

Second, by analysing the dynamics between the three elements that make up the food consumption social practices of immigrants, I can bring to the fore the role of knowledge, skills, and competencies in the consumer multiculturalization process. Schatzki (2010) defines practices as ‘organized spatial-temporal manifolds of human activity... organized by understandings, rules, and normative teleologies’ (p. 129). This idea was later taken further by Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) who define social practices as a ‘conjunction of elements, consequently figuring as an entity which can be spoken about and ... drawn upon as a set of resources ... At the same time, social practices exist as performances’ (p. 7), and proceed to define three elements that link together in the moment that a practice is carried out. The elements are:

- (1) Materials, which are things or items
- (2) Competencies, described as ‘shared understandings of good or appropriate performance in terms of which specific enactments are judged’ and
- (3) Meanings, which represent ‘the social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment’ (Shove et al, 2012, p. 23).

Shove et al. (2012) explain that these three elements link dynamically every time the practice is performed. As can be observed, the element of ‘competencies’ defined above include those which imply understanding of how to do an activity, including know-how, knowledge, and/or skills. Therefore, by applying the practice theory approach developed by Shove et al. (2012) to analyse the food consumption practices of Mexican



immigrants adapting to the multicultural marketplace in the UK, I will be able to separate the elements that form the food consumption practices of the participants, allowing me to bring to the fore the role of knowledge, skills, and competencies in the consumer multiculturalization process.

## **1.7 Methodology applied**

In order to make sense of the lived experiences of Mexican immigrants in the context of the multicultural marketplace present in the UK, I adopted an existential-phenomenological approach (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989) based upon a constructionist ontology, taking into account the wider ‘context of context’ of these lived experiences (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011).

Data collection is based on semi-structured interviews and participant observation. In addition, I also conducted netnography (Kozinets, 2002) analysing posts in Facebook groups comprising Mexican immigrants.

Interview participants were recruited via posts in the aforementioned Facebook groups. Twenty participants actively took part in the study; the table in Chapter 4 presents their characteristics. With each of these twenty participants I conducted an initial in depth interview followed by at least one other shorter, follow-up interview to understand their process of adaptation, inquiring into their past, current, and sometimes future consumption of food. Participant observation allowed me to accompany some of them on shopping trips to purchase food, I also observed some participants cooking, and I also had the pleasure of dining with some of them, in order to triangulate data and observe their activities. Rapport was generated with these participants and some of them

also shared photos of other meals they had cooked and their feelings and comments about their experiences associated with these meals via Whatsapp or Facebook messages, spontaneously.

Pseudonyms are used throughout to ensure the anonymity of participants. Interview transcriptions, field notes, Facebook posts, and pictures were translated from Spanish to English and captured in Nvivo software. Data analysis was conducted, applying a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Spiggle, 1994), following abductive logical reasoning (Bajc, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2013).

## **1.8 Publications arising from this work**

Parts of this thesis has been published in an article that appeared in the special issue “Cross-Cultural Research Current Topics and Challenges” of the Journal of Business research, in volume 134 of September 2021. The article was titled “Consumer multiculturalisation in multicultural marketplaces: Mexican immigrants’ responses to the global consumer culture construction of Tex-Mex as Mexican food” and was available online since May 26, 2021. My main supervisor Dr Fiona Cheetham and I co-authored this paper, and I contributed with the data coming from this thesis, the writing was a joint effort. This thesis does not infringe the copyright statements of the Journal of Business research. Next, I detail which parts of this thesis have been incorporated in the article.

The introductory argument of the article is based in the next thesis parts: Section 1.1 Importance of immigration in the world; specifically on the increasing of multiculturalism in the world; subsection 1.3.4 Tex-Mex food marketed as being

authentically Mexican; regarding the history of Tex-Mex food and how it was misconceived as Mexican, and Section 2.9 Food and the process of consumer multiculturalisation, regarding the association and symbolism of food and the consumer multiculturalisation process. Also, the introduction section of the article incorporates the increasing complexity of multicultural marketplaces and, the dynamic complex interactions between different elements, as arguments to develop the research presented in the article. These arguments are included in Chapter 2 Literature Review and in Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework of this thesis, repeatedly, to develop the different approach I apply here to study the consumer multiculturalisation process of immigrants. The article and this thesis exhibit the same data collection and data analysis methods. This is mentioned in Section 3. Materials and methods of the article, and in this thesis in Chapter 4 Methodology, specifically, subsections 4.2 Philosophical underpinnings, 4.4 Data collection and 4.5 Data analysis.

Regarding Section 4 of the article titled Analysis of findings, it includes parts of Chapter 6 Creating a sense of Mexico of this thesis. The first subsection of the article 4.1 Varied engagements with Tex-Mex describes what this thesis includes in subsections 6.4.1 to 6.4.3. The evidence regarding Layla and her husband that this thesis includes in subsection 6.4.3 is included and analysed in Section 4.1 of the article.

The 'creolisation' concept that I develop in Section 6.3 Creolisation' to create a sense of something Mexican in this thesis is included in subsection 4.2 Creolisation cooking practices to craft 'authentic' Mexican food of the article. Specifically, the example of Mara and the way she remembers how to cook Mexican beans back in Mexico is included in subsection 6.2 Preparing and cooking 'Mexican' outside of Mexico of this

thesis and how Lena learned to cook Milanesas in the UK, including Image 6.3.1.1, are part of this thesis in subsection 6.3.1 Creolisation through improvisation to create authentic Mexican dishes. The conclusions regarding craft consumption (Campbell, 2005) expressed at the end of subsection 4.2 in the article are the same that I include in this thesis as part of my theoretical contributions, which can be found in the summary of this thesis and discussed in Chapter 7 Discussion and Chapter 8 Conclusions.

The argument of the article in subsection 4.3. Clarifying practices to introduce non-Mexicans to 'authentic' Mexican cuisine is similar to the one applied in this thesis in subsection 6.4.3 Teaching others to appreciate 'authentic' Mexican food. Both, the article, and this thesis include the example of Isabella and the way she taught non-Mexicans how to eat tacos in her daughter's birthday party. Image 6.4.3.2 is included in this thesis and in the article too.

## **1.9 Structure of the thesis**

The organisation of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 provides a critical examination of previous studies in the field of consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation. Chapter 3 explains the practice theory framework adopted. Chapter 4 explains the methodology applied to collect and analyse data. Chapters 5 and 6 examine and discuss the findings of the study, Chapter 7 discusses research contributions, and Chapter 8 presents conclusions of the research.

Now that I have provided the background to this study, the next chapter critically reviews previous academic literature on consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I provide a critical examination of the approaches different studies have taken to develop our understanding of the consumer acculturation and consumer multiculturalisation process, highlighting how different studies have neglected to focus on the adaptation process; with specific regard to the role of skills, knowledge and competencies as well as the social nature of the processes of consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation.

I draw on the typology of reviews developed by Grant and Booth (2009) to clarify the approach taken. Grant and Booth describe a ‘critical review’ as one which has as its final product a model that ‘may constitute a synthesis of existing models or schools of thought’ (2009, p. 93). In addition, a critical review aims to ‘identify the most significant items in the field’ analysing them by identifying the ‘conceptual contribution to embody existing or derive new theory’ (2009, p. 94). In this regard, I analysed each of the articles reviewed in this chapter in order to understand how the authors have approached the conceptualisation of acculturation and/or multiculturalisation phenomena. As a result, my analysis groups articles into five specific aspects as follows: 1) construction and reflection of identities, 2) associations with global consumer culture, 3) dispositions and mental states, 4) diverse aspects of consumer behaviour and 5) descriptions of the adaptation process.

Besides critically reviewing the literature, I present ‘new frameworks and perspectives on the topic’ (Torraco, 2016, p. 404), with this fulfilling the requirements to be an

integrative literature review. Next, I describe how this chapter has been structured to accomplish these goals.

This chapter is structured as follows: Section 2.2 briefly discusses the origin of consumer acculturation studies within cross-cultural psychology research. Next, section 2.3 analyses how most researchers have advanced our understanding of consumer acculturation and multiculturalism by focusing on the analysis of the construction and reflection of different identities. Section 2.4 examines how different studies have associated acculturation to global consumer culture with ethnic and national identities, adopting quantitative methods to do so. In Section 2.5, I outline and discuss several studies that have moved away from an identity formation and reflection approach, examining different mental processes such as motivations and perspectives that reflect dispositions or mental states adopted before or during the consumer multiculturalism process. Section 2.6 provides a critical examination of the stream of studies that has focused on different aspects of consumer behaviour to gain insights into the consumer acculturation and multiculturalism process. Section 2.7 discusses studies that have highlighted the complexity that immigrants face during the consumer multiculturalism process, including the role that marketing, as an institution, plays. The few studies that have examined the ‘adaptation processes’ involved in consumer acculturation and multiculturalism are evaluated in Section 2.8. In Section 2.9, I focus on those studies in the field that have analysed how immigrants relate their culture with the food they consume. Finally, in section 2.10, I summarise the way these different streams of research have approached the study of consumer acculturation and multiculturalism and signal their limitations. Then I evaluate how multicultural marketplaces, consumer activities and the role of society in the consumer multiculturalism process could be

conceptualised in order to gain new insights into the complexities of the adaptation process involved in the consumer multiculturalisation process.

## **2.2 The conceptual foundations of consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation: Cross-cultural psychology and acculturation.**

Studies in cross-cultural psychology lay the foundations for the concept of acculturation, from which many studies of *consumer acculturation* have developed. The main objective of studies in cross-cultural psychology were to compare the psychological variables that influence or determine the behaviours of individuals (Krumov & Larsen, 2014). Examples here include how culture influences the process of translation between different languages (Brislin, 1970), as well as the relationship between culture and human values, including the reflection of values in behaviour (Schwartz et al., 2001).

Taking for granted the relationship between culture and human behaviour evidenced by studies within cross-cultural psychology (e.g. Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992), Berry (1992, 1997) developed a framework to explain how individuals adapt to a different culture; that is to say, how individuals acculturate. In so doing Berry (1992, 1997) did not adopt the assimilationist paradigm underpinning several consumer acculturation studies (e.g. Valencia, 1985; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983) instead he introduced a two framework approach, in which home and host cultures are seen as independent factors in the acculturation process. Thus, Berry's (1997) framework proposed that individuals could adopt one of four acculturation strategies, depending on each individual's attitude toward their own culture and the mainstream culture of the

host country. These four strategies comprise: (1) integration, if individuals decide to maintain characteristics of their own culture, and adopt others of the host culture; (2) assimilation, when individuals decide to withdraw from their own culture and adopt the mainstream culture; (3) separation /segregation, when individuals decide not to adopt any features related to a culture different to their own, and finally; (4) marginalization, when individuals do not relate to either culture. As well, Berry (1992) recognised that the acculturation process leads to changes, manifested in both mental and behavioural shifts. In Berry's (1992) model of acculturation, the behavioural shifts could be quite dramatic, if the individual adopts an assimilationist strategy or much less dramatic, if the individual adopts one of the other three strategies. Interestingly, Berry distinguished two phenomena related to behavioural shifts while acculturating: 'learning behaviours from the new culture and shedding features of one's original culture' (1992, p. 74), thus acknowledging the key role of knowledge in the acculturation process.

In spite of this, research on acculturation has mainly adopted a psychological approach, thus focusing on the mental processes relating to adapting to a new culture. In this regard, studies have focused on the measurement of different constructs, such as acculturative stress (Rudmin, 2009), or personality, self-identity, and psychosocial adjustment (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). More recently, however, authors such as Ozer and Schwartz (2021) and Swartz, Hartmann and Vue (2021) have examined how foreign workers and other immigrants perceive their adaptation to the new country.

Other studies have incorporated both mental and behavioural changes. For example, Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) examined the sociocultural and psychological adjustment of immigrants in Nepal, measuring the cognitive and behavioural shifts. In a recent



study, Lewis (2021) studied the behavioural shifts of acculturating students within a higher education context.

Research on acculturation has acknowledged the complexity of the adaptation process of immigrants to different cultures. Warning us of the danger of adopting simplistic frameworks to study cultures in society, Hermans and Harry (1998) were critical of the academic ‘tradition’ of adopting frameworks that assume dichotomies instead of recognising the cultural complexity that globalisation has caused. In this regard, these authors argue that many studies within cross-cultural psychology have adopted a West *versus* the Others approach, to understand the influence of culture.

In terms of ‘consumer acculturation’ many studies in the discipline of marketing and consumer research are based on the aforementioned psychology literature, and particularly on the work of Berry (1992 and 1997; e.g., Cleveland et al., 2016; Peñaloza, 1994; Sobol et al., 2018).

Having summarised very briefly a number of seminar studies on acculturation within the cross-cultural psychology literature, I move on now to analyse the different approaches adopted in the analysis of consumer acculturation, where the present study fits.

### **2.3 Constructing and reflecting social and cultural identities**

The vast majority of studies on consumer acculturation over the past 20 years have focused on the way in which immigrants reflect their self and construct their identity through their consumption, adopting different identities through the symbolic meanings

associated with consumption. These studies have adopted mainly qualitative research methods such as ethnography and in-depth interviews in the collection of primary data so as to understand the formation of identities. The academic discussion has focused on the fluidity of the identities adopted and the way the context can facilitate the adoption of identities. First, I present how the different studies were conducted and next I discuss the limitations of the approach adopted by these researchers in the next paragraphs.

Based on the assumptions of Berry (1992), the ground-breaking study conducted by Peñaloza (1994) examined the process of acculturation of Mexicans living in the United States describing the way immigrants strategically adopted different identities while consuming. Peñaloza modelled a roadmap through which she identified *how* immigrants adopted each of the strategies suggested by Berry (1992), while being influenced by different actors present in the marketplace in the United States. These ideas developed initially by Peñaloza (1994) were subsequently advanced by Oswald (1999) and Askegaard et al. (2005).

The study conducted by Peñaloza (1994) analysed the consumer acculturation process of Mexican immigrants in the United States (I will discuss this process in terms of the insights it provides on the adaptation processes involved in consumer acculturation in Section 2.8 of this chapter). Her ethnographic analysis focused on how Mexican immigrants moved between two cultures while consuming in the United States. Thus, the author proposed a two-culture framework, applying it to make sense of how immigrants moved between the USA and their Mexican culture making a 'clean national distinction' (p. 51) between the two and focusing on this as an individual process on the part of the consumer. Earlier in her study, Peñaloza acknowledged the

way the environment influences the consumer acculturation of Mexican immigrants, conceptualising it as the sociocultural and economic environment present in the USA. Marketing was a key acculturating agent present in the USA environment, this since marketers have targeted Latinos living in the USA influencing how Mexican immigrants consume.

Peñaloza developed her analysis describing how immigrants ‘crossed borders’ between these two cultural frameworks (1994, p. 33) however, she concluded that the ‘consumption patterns’ exhibited by her participants ‘did not support’ her proposed framework (p. 51). For Peñaloza, the way Mexican immigrants consumed while acculturating to the United States was a result of the ‘complex dynamics of cultural influences, marketing strategies, and individual agency rather than being completely culturally determined or determining’ (p. 51). She explained the consumption behaviour of immigrants as ‘strategic displays’ describing it as the ‘performance of appropriate signs...tailored to the particular situational contexts’ (p. 51).

Peñaloza concludes that ‘culture was a variable commodity that was exchanged—divorced from previous referential cultural domains and reattached to new ones’ (p. 51) for her participants. With this, Peñaloza portrayed immigrants’ construction of an identity based on their consumption as an unfinished process, adopting and changing identities (cultural and social) according to the situations faced, individualising the process. The author showed how the assimilationist model outlined in previous studies of consumer acculturation (e.g. Valencia, 1985; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983) does not explain all the consumption patterns and behaviours demonstrated by Mexican immigrants in the USA. Many Mexican brands, chain stores and products can be easily

found in the United States, therefore helping Mexicans in their acculturation process and even more, due to the increasing trade between Mexico and the USA, mainstream Americans have also adopted many products and services associated with Mexico, helping in the ‘institutionalisation’ of Mexican culture in the USA (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 50).

Thereof, Peñaloza mentioned briefly how the ‘dynamics of intercultural contact’ shaped consumer acculturation resulting in ‘greater market similarities and differences’ (1994, p. 51) with this signalling the importance of including other cultural forces in a dynamic process, although, this idea was not developed in her work. Peñaloza (1994) examined the ‘outcomes’ or ‘strategies’ adopted by immigrants finding contradictions in the positions adopted by the same individual: some products and services from the American culture were assimilated, however others were rejected, showing resistance patterns. Some of the products that were assimilated were used in ways that reflected ties to Mexican culture, thus showing what she describes as a ‘maintenance outcome’. Also, Mexican immigrants segregated themselves, living in neighbourhoods different to those inhabited by mainstream Americans. As commented before, I will come back to discuss the way Peñaloza (1994) analysed the adaptation process, nonetheless, this study suggested several ways to gain insights into the phenomenon in comparison to previous studies (Faber, O’Guinn, & McCarty, 1987; Saegert, Hoover, & Hilger, 1985; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983), that other academics developed further, and will now be discussed.

Oswald (1999) analysed consumer acculturation focusing on the way Haitian immigrants living in the USA ‘swapped identities’ while consuming. Oswald’s (1999)

background assumptions to her study showcase many similarities to the one conducted by Peñaloza (1994), mainly in the way immigrants adopted strategic identities and by observing the importance of the economic, social and cultural context in which immigrants acculturated (although, not analysing the role of it). Thus, similar to the study conducted by Peñaloza (1994), Oswald (1999) analysed the way her participants moved between different socio-cultural frameworks; however, Oswald (1999) did broaden the frameworks, examining how her participants described and conceptualised their experiences and the products they consumed, giving to them cultural as well as racial, religious and lineage meanings.

It is important to notice that terms were not homologous in these two studies: while Peñaloza (1994) used ‘environment’ and ‘context’ referring to the socio-cultural and economic factors present in the United States, Oswald (1999) describes how her participants ‘context shifted’ or moved between ‘cultural worlds’ (p. 303) referring to the different frameworks between which her participants moved. Thus, instead of trying to examine the experiences and product meanings in line with a clear-cut two-culture framework, that is to say, home and host culture, Oswald (1999) defined four different ‘competing cultural categories’ (p. 308). The first competing cultural category she described as ‘Haitian middle class’ reflecting high class Catholic immigrants whose main language is French, with a culture described as ‘French/Caribbean’ conceptualised by immigrants themselves as ‘us’, that is to say, immigrants conceived themselves as being part of this group. In opposition, were the ‘low class’ Haitians, whose main language was ‘Creole’, who had a Voodoo religion, an African/Caribbean culture and who were conceptualised by immigrants as ‘them’. On the other hand, there was the ‘mainstream Americans’ class, who spoke English, had a Christian religion, reflected a

European/American culture and who were also conceptualised by immigrants as 'them'. Finally, there was the 'Haitian middle class' immigrants, whose language was 'Creole', and who adopted a Voodoo and Christian religion, reflecting a 'Caribbean' culture and were also conceptualised as 'us' by immigrants. Thus, by analysing this 'semiotic of performance' (Oswald, 1999, p. 313), Oswald (1999) was able to examine how her participants moved between these different 'worlds', giving different meanings to their consumption, reflecting and constructing different identities, that is to say, 'culture swapping'.

Therefore, Oswald (1999) clarified how the 'strategic identities' described by Peñaloza (1994) could be explained by other sociocultural factors, not only by applying the two-culture or bi-national cultural framework defined by Peñaloza (1994). Nonetheless, Oswald (1999) concurred with Peñaloza (1994) on the important role played by marketers, influencing the way immigrants consume, and therefore, influencing the way immigrants could reflect and construct their identities. While Oswald (1999) advances our understanding of consumer acculturation, her main focus is on the way immigrants 'culture swap'. Thus, for Peñaloza (1994) and Oswald (1999) the drivers behind the consumption of immigrants while acculturating into a new host country are their reflections and constructions of different identities strategically adopted in line with the different situations faced. It is also important to note that the outcomes of both their analyses are at an individual level, relying heavily on the reflection of the self.

Advancing the study of the adoption of identities and attending to the call made by Peñaloza (1994) to study consumer acculturation in different environments, Askegaard et al. (2005) analysed how Greenlandic Inuits consumed while acculturating in

Denmark. Askegaard et al. (2005) argued that the frameworks applied by Peñaloza (1994) and Oswald (1999) were too 'clear-cut', thus not allowing for a more fluid conceptualisation of identity positions. Askegaard et al. (2005) claimed, as well, that because the studies conducted by Peñaloza (1994) and Oswald (1999) took place in the USA, researchers could not perceive the influence of 'global consumer culture' on immigrants' consumption because of the similarities between the USA culture and a Westernised 'transnational consumer culture' (p. 160).

Askegaard et al. (2005) developed a 'blurred borders' framework (p. 163) emphasising how the history and culture between the two countries and cultures resulted in the blurred borders between these two cultures. The authors stated that 'Greenlandic, Danish, and transnational acculturative forces stand in a competing yet co-productive relation to each other' (p. 168). For Askegaard et al. (2005), immigrants 'use products and consumption practices to negotiate differences between cultures while extracting contingent identities derived from the differences' (p. 161) therefore, even though Greenlandic Inuit immigrants demonstrated what Oswald (1999) called 'culture swapping', it was not a 'seamless process' rather it was an 'ongoing conciliation involving existential desires for distinctive roots and serious concerns about deracination and identity questions' (Askegaard et al., 2005, p. 165).

Askegaard et al. (2005) conceptualised the way immigrants constructed their identities as a 'phenomenological struggle' (p. 161) and described the identity positions adopted by Greenlandic Inuits as 'contingent' and 'fluid' (p. 168). Thus, the way Greenlandic Inuits adopted different identities was not a matter of 'culture swapping' in a performative way, as described by Oswald (1999) nor a 'strategic display' according to

the situation faced, as asserted by Peñaloza (1994); rather Greenlandic Inuits struggled to ‘extract a sense of real identity from acculturative experiences’ (p. 169). For Askegaard et al. (2005) ‘exposure to a host culture that is at base a consumer culture’ led immigrants to socially reconstruct their culture of origin as ‘something consumable’ trying to ‘assert and anchor for identity in a fluid social context’ (p. 169).

The way immigrants adopted ethnic identities as portrayed by Askegaard et al. (2005) is more fluid and contingent than the explanations provided by Oswald (1999) and Peñaloza (1994). Askegaard et al. (2005) describe four ‘outcomes’ of the ‘negotiation’ between the three ‘institutional acculturation forces’ (p. 166) present in Denmark: Greenlandic, Danish, and global consumer culture. The outcomes are: (1) a ‘Greenlandic Hyperculture’ identity reflected when immigrants consume and display symbols of their Greenlandic culture, implying ‘cultural maintenance and authenticity’ (p. 166); (2) the ‘Oscillating pendulum’ identity, which was adopted when Greenlandic immigrants expressed that they missed Greenlandic experiences related to ‘food, sociality, seasonality and nature’ however, accepting that they liked the Denmark consumerist culture present where they now lived; (3) ‘the Danish cookie’, adopted by the ‘newcomer enamoured with the market freedoms’ (p. 167); and finally, (4) the ‘Best-of-both-worlder’ identity, adopted by those who ‘value both social worlds and cultures’ as well as having ‘favourable attitudes toward consumables emblematic of both environments’ (p. 167), referring mainly to the way immigrants purchase goods and services.

Askegaard et al. (2005) stressed the importance of the context, when they stated that ‘ethnicity...is contextually constructed’ (p. 167) and that the identity positions they



define have a 'contextual nature' (p. 168). Thus, the study conducted by Askegaard et al. (2005) illuminates how identities can be explained contextually, and how when immigrants move to a 'consumer culture' they construct and reflect their identity fluidly through their consumption.

In the studies conducted by Peñaloza (1994), Oswald (1999) and Askegaard et al. (2005), the social circumstances of the participants were not analysed whereas, Üstüner and Holt (2007) studied specifically the way 'differences in social and cultural structures...lead to differing patterns of consumer acculturation' (p.42). The authors therefore consider how sociocultural and economic factors influence the identities adopted by immigrants, thus affecting the way immigrants consume. Differently to the way previous studies have been conducted, Üstüner and Holt (2007) studied how Turkish rural peasants moved to live to squatter communities outside the city of Ankara, thus not focusing on the movement between different countries to study consumer acculturation but rather focusing on the consumption of women (mothers and daughters) as they move from a rural to an urban context. The authors defined three social 'structures' that influenced the identities of participants: social class position, consumer culture and ideology ('ideological compatibility of minority and dominant cultures', p. 43), thus focusing on the 'sociocultural structuring of acculturation' (p. 44).

Üstüner and Holt (2007) define a model of 'dominated acculturation' (p. 44) which differs from previous research in the three structural characteristics described above since peasants 'have little of the economic, social, and cultural capital necessary to participate in consumer culture' (p. 44). In addition, the ideologies of the peasants and

individuals living in Westernised consumer cultures are opposed, sometimes marginalising peasants.

Üstüner and Holt (2007) studied how their participants moved between two frameworks: the consumer culture present in the city and their previous life, where this consumer culture was absent. The authors examined how women tried to adopt different identities as ‘collective identity projects’, thus differentiating from previous studies that have focused individually on how immigrants adopt different identities with a focus on nationality (Askegaard et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994). By comparison Üstüner and Holt (2007) explain that because their participants had ‘common structural positions’ they ‘collectively construct their consumer identities’ (p. 54).

The researchers define three collective identities as follows: (1) a ‘counterhegemonic identity project’ adopted by mothers who successfully recreated their previous life in the village, ‘shutting out’ the consumer culture of the city of Ankara, and so creating a ‘feeling of their locally produced culture’ (p. 54); (2) a ‘hegemonic identity project’ through which daughters tried unsuccessfully to ‘pursue’ the ‘dominant culture as myth’, collectively developing ‘episodic rituals’ through which they ‘viscerally experienced’ (p. 54) the dominant consumer culture; the authors claim that this hegemonic identity is not an ‘outcome’ like those defined by Peñaloza (1994) and Askegaard et al. (2005) because this identity is adopted only now and then, in an ‘episodic’ way (p. 55); and finally (3) the authors describe how women immigrants with a ‘lack of economic, social, and cultural capital’ resulted in ‘shattered identity projects’ whereby they gave up adopting the hegemonic consumerist culture present in the city of Ankara as well as the culture of the village (as adopted by their mothers).

These three identities are defined by Üstüner and Holt (2007) as ‘structural outcome[s]’ produced by the ‘particular social and cultural...context’ (p. 55). Üstüner and Holt (2007) claim that the model of immigrants seeking to reflect and construct different identities during the process of consumer acculturation, as conceptualised in previous studies (Askegaard et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994), could not be applied to all contexts, since the environmental ‘structural factors’ could operate to prevent immigrants from adopting certain identities, thus affecting their consumption. Then, even though Üstüner and Holt (2007) adopted a slightly different perspective to study consumer acculturation, they still focus on the identities adopted by immigrants as a way to advance our understanding of consumer acculturation.

Challenging the work of Üstüner and Holt (2007), Chytkova (2011) argues that in spite of various environmental structural factors, immigrants can still develop different identities. She conducted a study regarding the consumer acculturation of Romanian women in Italy, focusing on the meanings they give to their experiences as immigrants, their perceptions regarding their role as women in both their previous and new lives, and their cooking and consumption habits. Chytkova (2011) argues that in Italy, Romanian women are not targeted by marketers, thus the Romanian culture was not legitimised in Italy, as has been the case of the Mexican and Haitian cultures in the USA, as discussed in previous research above (Askegaard et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994). In addition, Romanian women are usually homemakers, or they occupy manual labour positions, thus they position themselves ‘at the bottom of the symbolic social ladder with limited capital resources’ (p. 271) with this limiting their participation in the consumer culture present in Italy. To conduct her analysis, Chytkova (2011) applied a framework based not only on two cultures, as in Peñaloza;s (1994)

study, instead, it was based on the women's perceptions of their social position and the food of their home country against the host country, thus similar to the framework developed by Oswald (1999). However, instead of the 'clear-cut' categories as in Oswald's study, Chytкова (2011) conceptualised the gender identities of Romanian women as 'fluid', thus similar to how Askegaard et al. (2005) had theorised and described identity.

Chytкова (2011) elaborated how women enact their identities 'in different contextual situations' changing 'even in the course of seconds' (Chytкова, 2011, p. 283). The gender identities are conceptualised on a 'continuum' where the 'traditional' woman's role, as defined by their home culture, is at one extreme, and the 'modern' woman's role, as conceptualised in the host culture, is at the other extreme. Thus, Chytкова (2011) concludes that in a context similar to that studied by Üstüner and Holt (2007) and differently from those examined by Peñaloza (1994), Oswald (1999) and Askegaard et al. (2005), 'dominated immigrants can still use marketplace resources in a creative way' to develop 'multiple, hybrid identities' (Chytкова, 2011, p. 288).

Nonetheless, Chytкова (2011) admits that in the study conducted by Üstüner and Holt (2007), there was only one gender identity legitimised by the host culture, giving women little space to adopt other 'legitimated' identities, differently to the study conducted by Chytкова (2011), where the context in the host country 'provided resources to re-negotiate the constrictions of their original gender script' allowing immigrants to adopt 'different legitimate gender roles' (p. 289). However, the author accepted that there are limitations to the different identities that immigrants can adopt, since they 'are subject to certain social structures' thus not being 'completely free

agents ...assembling their identity at will' (p. 289). Chytkova (2011) acknowledges that the main limitations of her study lie in not taking into account the role of 'cultural capital' which 'in terms of education and consumer culture knowledge' could act as a 'facilitator' in the construction of the gender identity of women immigrants, allowing them 'to become conscious of the discourses that define their gender roles in their home and host society' (p. 289) thus letting them act freely. While Chytkova (2011) advances the understanding of the consumer acculturation of immigrants by showing how the identity construction approach, as developed by Peñaloza (1994), Oswald (1999) and Askegaard et al. (2005) can be applied in contexts where the sociocultural and economic environment does not 'legitimise' the different identities that immigrants are able to adopt individually and/or collectively, ultimately, the main insights of this study are in the conformation of identities (and the social and economic structures) that are reflected in consumption behaviours.

The studies reviewed so far have analysed identity construction and reflection by taking into account either two cultures: host and home culture (Chytkova, 2011; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007) or three cultures: host, home and global consumer culture (Askegaard et al., 2005). Few studies of consumer acculturation have been conducted acknowledging that consumers face multicultural marketplaces (Demangeot et al., 2015) and the complex dynamics present in these markets. In the next paragraphs I examine studies on consumer multiculturalisation, albeit that these studies still focus on individual identity construction.

In a detailed conceptual paper Kipnis, Broderick, and Demangeot (2014) developed the notion of consumer multiculturalisation, defining this as, '*a process of changes in the*

*cultural identification and consumption behaviours of individuals that happen when the individual, social group and/or society as a whole come into continuous contact with multiple cultures'* (p. 243) [Italics added]. Their conceptualisation proposes that it is not only immigrants who undergo a consumer multiculturalisation process, but that mainstream consumers are also 'exposed to a diverse range of local, global and foreign cultural meanings' (p. 231). Nonetheless the authors still examine consumer multiculturalisation from the perspective of identity construction and reflection. A later paper by Kipnis, Demangeot, Pullig, and Broderick (2019) applied this framework to segment mainstream consumers in two countries: the UK and the Ukraine, applying a 'Consumer Multicultural Identity Affiliation (CMIA) Framework' (p. 126), thus broadening the approach adopted in previous studies of consumer acculturation so as to include local, foreign and global cultures. The authors conducted a mixed method study with their statistical analysis revealing 'the presence of mono-, bi- and multicultural identity' (p. 134) clusters. Even though the authors did not examine immigrant consumers directly, their study demonstrates that additional factors, such as those introduced by marketers, should also be included in the analysis of consumer multiculturalisation. I discuss these studies in section 2.7 below.

Porto da Rocha and Strehlau (2020) applied Kipnis et al.'s (2019) framework to analyse the adoption of the Brazilian martial art - capoeira - in Germany, acknowledging that consumers 'can construct their identities' from the diversity and heterogeneity of resources that 'the global cultural supermarket' provides (p. 194). These researchers conducted a qualitative study to understand the meanings and reasons for consumers in Germany learning capoeira in Germany, and the impact of this on the construction of their identities. The researchers interpreted the meanings that 'the capoeiristas

themselves' gave to having adopted 'capoeira in their lives, remained in it and...helped to shape it' (p. 198). Porto da Rocha and Strehlau (2020) argued that 'consumers...found a universal shared meaning' when they decided to adopt capoeira, 'grouping them in a community not related with their home countries' (p. 206) and therefore developing a sense of 'distinctiveness' differentiating themselves from 'some aspects of their home culture' (p. 206). The researchers discovered, however, that capoeiristas identified with the 'capoeira way of life', not with Brazilian culture per se (p. 206) thus observing that there are complex cultural dynamics that result in these kinds of conceptualisations by consumers, although they do not pursue this any further. Porto da Rocha and Strehlau (2020) explain how the 'exoticism' perceived by consumers in Germany impelled them to adopt the capoeira lifestyle, thus not evaluating the country of origin as one of the main drivers to consume, rather deciding to adopt capoeira because it was 'different' (p. 206).

Having examined how a number of studies have analysed consumer acculturation and consumer multiculturalism by adopting the 'postmodern identity seeker' (Campbell, 2005) approach, I turn now to evaluating their studies and to the limitations of their approach. This stream of contemporary research allows us to understand that the process of consumer acculturation is not as straightforward as earlier consumer acculturation studies assume (e.g. Valencia, 1985; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983), which presented what has been termed an assimilationist process. Yet still these later studies tended not to acknowledge the complexity of cultural flows that influence identity construction. In several of these studies, the researchers concluded that the complexity of markets is increasing, including how a global consumer culture has an influence on consumer acculturation (Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994). Nonetheless, they still applied

relatively rigid sociocultural frameworks that do not take account of this cultural complexity, and these studies continued to focus on a process of ‘consumer acculturation’ even in the face of complex multicultural marketplaces (Demangeot et al., 2015). We can appreciate that in the studies conducted by Askegaard et al. (2005) and Chytкова (2011), the adoption of ‘blurred borders’ frameworks allowed researchers to analyse the fluidity of the identities adopted by immigrant consumers, however they still none went as far as recognising a process of consumer multiculturalisation (Kipnis et al., 2014), as an outcome of the complexities present in multicultural marketplaces (Demangeot et al., 2015).

With the exception of the study conducted by Peñaloza (1994), this stream of contemporary research on consumer acculturation has focused almost entirely on the issue of identity, thus overlooking how consumers actually adapt to survive and even thrive in the context of multicultural marketplaces. By adaptation, I am referring to what immigrant consumers actually do during the process of consumer multiculturalisation; this process of doing could include how they acquire skills and knowledge and how meanings develop and circulate among social networks, markets, and cultures. This brings me to a second aspect that is often overlooked by this stream of research; the social nature of the consumer multiculturalisation process.

The studies reviewed above do hint at the social nature of the consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation process, but they do not investigate this in all its complexity. As an example, when researchers observe how their participants have developed relationships with other immigrants and/or members of various mainstream cultures during the consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation process, their analyses tend to focus on the



implications for belonging to or standing apart from different identity groups. I would suggest that the process of consumer acculturation and/or multiculturalization is social in nature, that is to say, the individuals that go through this process influence and are influenced by others; these influences are likely to be reflected in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and other competencies related to their purchasing and consumption. Many of the studies reviewed thus far have neglected to examine this important feature of the consumer acculturation/ multiculturalization process.

While the studies reviewed in this section have used mainly qualitative research methods to gain insights into the consumer acculturation process, other researchers have adopted a quantitative stance to understand the phenomenon, nonetheless still focusing on the notion of identity studying how it relates to perspectives and attitudes toward the immigrants' own culture and other cultures, and how this influences different consumption behaviours. I will review these studies in the next subsection.

## **2.4 Relating consumer identities to global consumer culture**

Several studies have tried to understand the relationship between identities and different consumption behaviours during the process of consumer acculturation and multiculturalization, adopting a cross-sectional and quantitative approach, collecting data via surveys. These studies have investigated participants' perceptions and attitudes examining relations with different factors and consumption behaviours. Some studies have supported what qualitative studies in the field have reported, such as the adoption of multiple identities during the consumer acculturation/multiculturalization process (Kipnis et al., 2019; Peñaloza, 1994). Thus, in the next paragraphs I present how several

of these studies examined these relationships and next I discuss the limits of their approach.

Acculturation to global consumer culture has been a recurrent theme in this stream of research. These studies have been conducted applying a cross-sectional survey method, adopting the scale developed by Cleveland and Laroche (2007) to measure acculturation to global consumer culture, mainly examining relationships between the adoption of global consumer culture, ethnic identity and several consumption behaviours including other factors, such as religiosity and consumer ethnocentrism. For example, Cleveland et al. (2013) studied how acculturation to global consumer culture is related with Lebanese ethnic identity, religiosity (Muslim and Christian), motivational individual-level values, materialism (having material products as a major goal in life), ethnocentrism (bias for local products and services, in preference to global ones) and numerous consumption behaviours such as consumption of food, use of toiletries and importance of having domestic appliances. Statistical analysis indicates how acculturation to global consumer culture has a negative relationship with Lebanese ethnic identity for Muslims; while for Christians it has no impact (variables were independent).

The study shines a light in how the relationship between acculturation to global consumer, Lebanese ethnic identity and religiosity impacts upon the consumption of several products and services among Lebanese individuals, implying that within national boundaries, acculturation to global consumer culture is not uniform. This study supplements the study of Askegaard et al. (2005), who highlighted the role that global consumer culture could play on consumer acculturation by showing how global

consumer culture influences consumption (and identities) as well. Later, Cleveland et al. (2016) conducted a follow-up study also adopting a cross-sectional quantitative approach. This study compared the ways in which acculturation to global consumer culture was adopted between Chilean consumers and Canadian consumers, examining its relations with national identity, consumer ethnocentrism and materialism, and how this affected several consumption behaviours. Statistical analysis indicates how the combined effects of national identity and acculturation to global consumer culture impacts on the consumption of different products and services varied across products categories and between countries, thus supporting what Cleveland et al. (2013) had discovered earlier regarding the non-uniform adoption of global consumer culture.

Regarding the bond with national culture, Cleveland et al. (2016) discovered that the strongest impact of culture was on food, while the weakest was on appliances. Cleveland et al. (2016) argue that the independence between acculturation to global consumer culture and national identity ‘provides compelling evidence that the acquisition of AGCC [acculturation to global consumer culture] does not lead to the erosion of home-culture identity’ (p. 1097) thus, corroborating the notion that consumers adopt multiple identity positions, as outlined in the previous section above (Askegaard et al., 2005; Chytкова, 2011; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007), clarifying the role of global consumer culture versus ethnic identity. Also, Cleveland et al. (2016) argue that ‘globalization has made uneven inroads...changes are everywhere but partial, occurring at separate speeds/intensities for different regions, markets, and individuals’ (p. 1099) therefore, strengthening their argument regarding the fact that global consumer culture does not show a uniform adoption inside nations or among individuals. The next study strengthened this last argument even further. This

time, Sobol, Cleveland, and Laroche (2018) conducted a longitudinal study, adopting the survey method, measuring the influence of global consumer culture and its relationship with the local culture in the Netherlands. Statistical analysis indicates that acculturation to the global consumer culture has increased over time.

Also, the researchers argued that ‘NEID [National Ethnic Identity] and AGCC [Acculturation to Global Consumer Culture] and their interaction term accounted for the largest share of behavioural variation in half the product categories’ suggesting that ‘it appears that AGCC’s effects on consumption are strengthening, however without compromising the role of NEID’ (p. 350). Interestingly Sobol et al. (2018) demonstrated, again, that ‘NEID ... positively associates with the consumption of products traditionally bound to local culture (local food and clothing)’ while ‘AGCC figures prominently in behaviours bound with global or foreign cultural conventions (e.g. electronics and luxuries)’ (p. 340). This study adds to previous research on acculturation to global consumer culture (Cleveland et al., 2013, 2016) showing its role and interactions with other cultures.

A study conducted by Cleveland and Xu (2019) moved the focus from studying acculturation to global consumer culture within a particular cultural group (that is, Canadians with no immigrants) to studying its role in the consumer acculturation of Chinese immigrants living in Canada, applying the same cross-sectional survey method. In addition, the researchers included the role of a subculture present in the environment: the South-Asian culture. The analysis indicated a ‘direct positive’ effect of ‘Chinese identity on identification to GCC, and South-Asian acculturation’ (p. 250) allowing the researchers to conclude that immigrants displayed an integrationist pattern, and that

‘minorities acculturate to the predominant group, but also to the global consumer culture (GCC)’ (p. 250). Researchers found some unexpected results: acculturation to global consumer culture reinforced the consumption of Chinese traditional food and this was reinforced by cosmopolitanism, whereas the expected relation between cosmopolitanism and the consumption of South-Asian food was not found in the analysis. Due to these results, the researchers suggested ‘that the degree to which each of a set of multiple social/cultural identities is activated depends partly on the symbolism present within the consumption context, perhaps including verbal/visual cues elicited by brands’ (p. 257). This implies that their results also corroborate that immigrants adopt a range of different identities as described in the qualitative studies reviewed previously (Askegaard et al., 2005; Chytkova, 2011; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007) in this research even adding other subcultures. The researchers stated that with this study they ‘shed light on immigrants’ cultural adaptation to a host society that is diverse and pluralistic’ (p. 250).

Overall, these quantitative studies advance our understanding of the consumer acculturation process by clarifying that the role of global consumer culture provides an additional cultural element that should be included in our analyses. Nonetheless, the typical ‘one shot’ collection of data and the analysis through which findings tend to be stated as relationships between variables, limits our understanding and inhibits the opportunity to develop insights into the adaptation process of individuals (mainstream or immigrants) as they go through the consumer acculturation and multiculturalization processes. These results moved other researchers to understand consumer acculturation as a multiculturalization process (Kipnis et al., 2014) in multicultural marketplaces

(Demangeot et al., 2015) in which immigrants interact with several cultures as well as with other globalisation effects (Sharifonnasabi, Bardhi, & Luedicke, 2020).

In the next section I move on to discuss how other researchers have analysed the drivers of consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation by moving away from the focus on identity and adopting a different approach, involving understanding immigrants' mental processes.

## **2.5 Studying the mental processes of consumers**

The studies that I discuss in this section develop insights into consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation by focusing their analyses on consumers' mental processes. Mental activities such as attitudes, perceptions, meanings, and motivations are examined in order to understand the state of mind before or during consumer acculturation or multiculturalisation, thus taking a different approach to the studies which analyse identity formation and reflection. Next, I present the main insights of this stream of studies before moving on to discuss the limitations of these studies.

Adopting a different approach to previous studies in the field that focus on the formation of identities (e.g. Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994), Jamal (1998) conducted a qualitative study focusing on the 'interpretations of meanings associated with food consumption' (p. 222) of Pakistanies living in the UK. The researcher identified the perceptions that first and second generations of immigrants associated with their traditional Pakistani food, as well as with British food. The author clarified how different generations of immigrants had different perceptions of their food, thus first generation of Pakistani immigrants favoured their traditional home food, while for the

younger second generation, British food was more appealing. Mainly, this study further insights in the acculturation process of immigrants, highlighting their perceptions (which are mental states) instead of discussing identities formations.

Applying a similar stance, Kizgin et al. (2018) examine the perceptions and attitudes toward acculturation and enculturation to understand its association with several consumption behaviours ‘across public and private life domains’ (p. 320), conducting a cross-sectional survey method. This study recruited Turkish immigrants living in the Netherlands. The authors analysed how perceptions toward host and home culture, comparing public and private domains, could impact the consumption of products associated with home and host cultures. The analysis showed how immigrants maintained their heritage culture (consuming products associated with it) in the private domain, while publicly adopted a positive attitude to assimilate to the host culture, consuming products associated with it. The researchers concluded that immigrants acquired skills and knowledge that allowed them to function in their new context, but that this did not imply that they withdrew from their heritage culture. This study is particularly interesting because it highlights the importance of skills and knowledge in the acculturation process, albeit that the authors do not analyse this aspect of acculturation in any depth.

Jamal (1998) and Kizgin et al. (2018) analyse consumer acculturation from the perspective of a two cultures framework: host and home culture, whereas the study conducted by Galalae et al. (2020) study consumer multiculturalisation from the perspective of the concept of the multicultural marketplace developed by Demangeot et al. (2015). The authors assume that both mainstream and immigrant consumers undergo

a process of consumer multiculturalisation because they have ‘interactions with multiple cultures [that] occur routinely, voluntarily and involuntarily’ (p. 162) to which consumers must adapt. While the study adopts an innovative approach that recognises the complexity of multicultural marketplaces, their focus is on consumers mental processes; analysing ‘why consumers engage with products and services assigned with diverse cultural meanings’ (p. 160). That is to say, the researchers focused on motivations as a precursor to consumer behaviours, rather than exploring the actual behaviours relating to consumer multiculturalisation. The analysis evidenced that ‘consumers can be multiculturally adaptive’ (p. 169) showing how marketing activities mediate ‘intercultural exchange in conditions where lived multicultural... is routine’ and that future streams of research should focus on ‘theorizing market practices as mechanisms facilitating conviviality in multicultural locales’ (p. 169), with this underlying the role that marketing activities can play in the consumer multiculturalisation process.

These studies advance our understanding of consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation, by shining a light on the mental activities (motivations, perceptions and attitudes) of individuals that underpin and drive the processes of acculturation and multiculturalisation. However, they do not focus on actual behaviours, and as we know from extensive work in this area there is a known attitude-behaviour gap (Ajzen, 1991). The next section moves on to examine actual behaviour.

## **2.6 Examining consumer behaviours**

In this section I analyse a small number of studies that have examined consumer acculturation by not only focusing on consumers’ mental activities, but also looking at



certain behaviours. These behaviours are most often the purchasing and subsequent use of different goods and services.

For example, focusing on the shopping behaviours of British immigrants in France, Bundy (2017) examined ‘how the food acculturation [of immigrants] ... translates into their buyer behaviours’ (p. 1080), focusing on a particular group of ‘wealthy transient migrants’ (p. 1088). Because of the social and economic status of these immigrants in the new country, the author notes that contrary to the ‘dominated acculturation’ context of some studies (e.g. Üstüner & Holt, 2007), Bundy (2017) studied the phenomenon in an ‘embraced acculturation’ (p. 1089) context. The author states that the consumer acculturation process appears to be more straightforward in his study than in some previous studies (e.g. Askegaard et al., 2005; Peñaloza, 1994) but complex in that each individual in his study tended to evidence different acculturation strategies intertwined.

Bundy (2017) describes ‘the retailers mix variables’ that expatriates react to and outlines their store format preferences, in comparison to those of local consumers, highlighting the differences. He also mentions, but does not analyse in-depth, other ways in which British expatriates acquire food outside of the usual retail outlets, such as ‘purchases during their business or leisure trips to the UK’ (p. 1086) demonstrating that immigrants travel with food from the UK back to France. The study conducted by Bundy (2017) helps to understand the consumer acculturation process of wealthy immigrants, shining a light on important aspects of consumer behaviour such as the frequency of shopping and the types of stores that immigrants patronise, as well as the fact that participants bring food from their home country into their new host country. However, Bundy (2017) does not explore these behaviours in any depth. Thus, Bundy

(2017) provides a glimpse of the adaptation process, which future research could study in more detail.

Several studies focus on different consumption activities carried out by individuals undergoing the consumer multiculturalisation process. In a study conducted in London, Dey et al. (2019) examine the 'food consumption behaviour' of 'ethnic consumers' (p. 771). Using qualitative methods such as interviews and participant observations, the researchers analysed 'why and how' immigrants 'interact with mainstream and other ethnic cultures and how that is reflected in their food purchase and consumption' (p. 778). Dey et al. (2019) asked their participants their perceptions regarding their cultural integration in London as well as which was their usual routine regarding food consumption, including their favourite foods and brands. Also, they had dinner with their participants and joined them to do their usual food shopping in supermarkets, besides other activities such as visiting ethnic restaurants with participants.

The researchers interpreted immigrants verbal statements related with their consumption of food and how they associated it with their culture and the multiplicity of cultures present in the UK. The author's analysis indicates four strategies reflected by immigrants during their food consumption behaviours: *rebellion*, reflecting a 'desire for assimilation towards other cultures by overcoming their own cultural barriers'; *refrainment*, reflecting when immigrants 'intend to adopt other cultural attributes as long as they do not cross their perceived cultural boundaries'; *rarefaction*, when immigrants 'choose to adopt attributes as long as they do not cross their perceived cultural boundaries' and finally; *resonance*, a strategy when they 'choose to adopt the attributes of other cultures that resonate with their ancestral cultural ethos' (p. 782),

making a clear difference with the acculturation strategies developed by Berry (1997). Thus, Dey et al. (2019) analysed how their participants purchased food from general retail outlets and how they cooked and ate it, focusing on the way participants explained its association with their culture and the diversity of cultures present in the vicinity, showing how multicultural marketplaces influence the way consumers behave. These findings raise questions related with the different activities through which immigrants adapt to the new multicultural marketplaces, since Dey et al. (2019), similar to Bundy (2017), evidence other ways whereby immigrants adapt to their new multicultural marketplace: for example, when Bundy (2017) evidences how immigrants travel with food and when Dey et al. (2019) show how immigrants cook traditional ethnic dishes, using ingredients found in the UK. These authors thereby hint at other behaviours that are part of the consumer multiculturalisation process and that thus warrant further analysis.

Embracing the complexities found in multicultural marketplaces, Demangeot and Sankaran, (2012) conducted a study regarding how, in a 'multicultural environment' in which there is no 'dominant culture', individuals 'deal with the products or consumption practices of different cultures' (p. 760), conducting their study in United Arab Emirates. The researchers used in-depth interviews to research the consumption behaviour of their participants, acknowledging, interestingly, that 'many decisions are based on the situational context rather than deeply held values' (p. 762), thus suggesting the presence of influences from other sources, different from the consumers themselves. The authors clarified their approach suggesting that their 'study conceptualises cultural pluralism as behaviour rather than as an attitude or disposition' (p. 769). They also explained that 'consumption does not necessarily involve a purchase, nor even, at times, any deliberate decision to use a product' (p. 763). Thus, these authors focused on a

range of activities relevant to consumer acculturation, beyond shopping, taking into account ways through which consumers have access to goods and services different from purchasing them such as when they are offered gifts.

By applying an 'interpretative analysis of the data' (p. 769), the researchers described four different strategies through which these participants used to consume in this multicultural marketplace: (1) cultural experimentalism, through which individuals try to expose themselves to cultures different of theirs, through their consumption activities, therefore liking to experiment and experience new cultures. Individuals in this group change products and services frequently. (2) cultural extensionism, through which individuals adopt products from other cultures, progressively moving slowly out from their comfort zone. Once these products have been adopted, they lose their 'foreignness' (p. 773) and the process is not reversed; (3) cultural purism, adopted by individuals who want to maintain their culture, therefore being selective and careful with those products that are associated with other cultures, restraining their selection to few cultures; and (4), cultural passivity, that is to say, the participants are not impelled by any cultural form of consumption, with the authors describing this strategy as a 'form of inertia and lack of engagement with other cultures' (p. 774) thus differentiating from the acculturation strategies of Berry (1997).

Also, the researchers analysed how different characteristics, not only the individual ones, worked as antecedents and consequences of adopting the different strategies. The researchers argue that factors that influenced the adoption of and switching between the different strategies were the different cultures present in the environment, personal involvement with the product category as well as different values and traits associated

with the individual. Regarding the consequences, the researchers argue that these were reflected as behaviours, mainly as trying new products frequently, therefore going through a processing and deliberation of the information coming many times from their awareness of how products were associated with specific cultures, many times generating loyalty therefore influencing the diversity of cultures present in each individual products portfolio. Demangeot and Sankaran, (2012) assert that the way consumers adopt the different strategies do not lay in a continuum explaining that participants adopted the different strategies without following any pattern. Their research is thus consistent with that of Dey et al.'s (2019) regarding the non-linear aspects of adoption and the possibility of engagement with the diverse cultures present in multicultural marketplaces.

The study conducted by Demangeot and Sankaran (2012) demonstrated how, in multicultural marketplaces, the diversity of cultures influences the way in which consumers behave, emphasising the necessity of broadening the spectrum of the behaviours analysed, including in their study behaviours whereby their participants consume goods not by their own choice, such as when the goods are gifts. Therefore, together with the evidence regarding activities voluntarily carried out by participants commented upon in the studies of Bundy (2017) and Dey et al. (2019) above, the evidence casts doubt on whether there are other activities related to the consumer multiculturalisation process that have not been properly analysed and that can help us to advance our insights into the phenomenon.

The next section analyses the complexity of the multicultural marketplaces within which consumers acculturate and/or multiculturalise studying how participants are influenced by a diversity of cultural forces.

## **2.7 Analysing the complexity of transcultural flows, globalisation, and the role of institutions.**

In a theoretical paper, Luedicke (2011) proposed conceptualising the consumer acculturation process as ‘a circular system of mutual observation and adaptation’ (p. 240) in which both host and immigrant cultures are influenced. Empirical evidence has since provided considerable support to this model (see Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015; Cruz et al., 2018; Luedicke, 2015). Other studies have advanced our understanding even further by analysing the complexities of contemporary multicultural marketplaces and the complex cultural flows that shape the process of consumer multiculturalisation, including the role of different institutions, such as those dedicated to marketing (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012; Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020). In the following paragraphs, I examine how different studies have conceptualised different cultural flows and interactions, comprising multicultural marketplaces and the process of multiculturalisation, as well as discussing some of the limitations of these studies.

In a study that collected data through in-depth interviews in several locations with indigenous Austrian residents and Turkish immigrants, Luedicke (2015) analysed how ‘indigenous consumers interpret...immigrant consumer acculturation practices as manifestations of uninvited changes in their community authority, and equality relationships to the immigrants and how they often respond with discrimination’ (p. 124). The author explained how indigenous consumers respond ‘by abandoning brands

and places, reworking local status rules, bullying immigrants away from their consumption spheres, and protesting against local brands that accommodate immigrants' needs' (p. 124) thus demonstrating how immigrants' consumption behaviour can affect the consumer behaviour of indigenous consumers. The author asserts that his analysis advances research on 'consumer relationships' by 'exploring the different ways in which relational configurations shape (and are shaped by) the interactions of consumers, brands, and other market participants' (p. 125). This study sheds light on how cultural flows are complex that is to say, it is not only the case that immigrant culture is influenced by mainstream culture, but there are also other relationships and forces that interact and shape the consumer adaptation process of immigrants. This raises questions regarding the complexity of cultural forces involved in the consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation process that is not always considered by other studies in the field.

In spite of Luedicke's (2011, 2015) findings, other studies have continued to adopt the bicultural approach to analyse consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation. For example, in an empirical follow-up to Luedicke's (2011) conceptual study, Cruz and Buchanan-Oliver (2015) examined the phenomenon of 'reverse acculturation' (p. 442) through the analysis of a diverse and broad spectrum of social practices performed by Southeast Asian immigrants in New Zealand. Relying on interviews and aided by a diversity of psychological techniques, the researchers adopted practice theory as a theoretical lens to frame their analysis of the different activities carried out by immigrants to form a 'bridging' between their Southeast Asian culture and the host culture (p. 444). This conceptual lens helped the researchers to identify three different elements that form bridging practices: (1) ways to verbally (or through other verbal

media) explain to members of other cultures traits associated with immigrants own culture, that is to say articulations (2) enactments associated with immigrants' own culture, using physical materials and finally; (3) the feelings and moods involved in these bridging practices mainly associated with 'underlying tensions and anxieties', therefore the researchers referred to them as 'contestations'(p. 452) . The authors assert that bridging practices 'create shared social spaces' and 'facilitate the intensification of intercultural translation' (p. 442). This study advances our understanding of the process through which immigrant consumers acculturate or multiculturalize by showing the various ways in which immigrants can have an effect on the consumption of native consumers, as theorised by Luedicke (2011). In so doing Cruz and Buchanan-Oliver (2015) are able to demonstrate the importance of social relations in this process. The authors recognise a limitation of their study when they acknowledge that bridging practices are 'only one facet of a complex set of intercultural flows' (p. 454), therefore acknowledging that the complex cultural flows present in multicultural marketplaces should be studied further.

Cruz, Seo, and Buchanan-Oliver (2018) picked up the subject again, advancing our understanding by acknowledging that multicultural marketplaces affect the way these 'bridging practices' are conceptualised, this time analysing 'transcultural practices' (p. 317) in a religious framework. The authors analysed individual narratives collected through in-depth interviews with immigrants from Southeast Asia who have moved to settle in Auckland, New Zealand. The researchers explained that the variation in the religious affiliations between their participants helped them to explore the phenomenon of transcultural practices by examining a diversity of religions and cultures. The analysis showed how diverse and complex the ways through which culture flows in



multicultural marketplaces can be, evidencing how these transcultural practices promoted the exchange of cultural flows, with these showing how complex cultural flows can influence consumer behaviour in multicultural marketplaces. This study extends the studies conducted by Cruz and Buchanan-Oliver (2015) and Luedicke (2015). In addition, the authors show the important role that intercultural competencies play in the consumer multiculturalisation process, raising questions regarding the role of knowledge, skills, and competencies outside of the religious context and as an important aspect of the process of consumer multiculturalisation.

In my opinion, however, the study that best captures and describes the increasing cultural complexities of the consumer multiculturalisation process is a study conducted by Askegaard and Eckhardt (2012). This study examines how Indian consumers have re-appropriated yoga, after it has been sanctioned by Western cultural flows, thus conceptualising the phenomenon as ‘glocal yoga’ (p. 45). The researchers conducted interviews and observations in order to obtain data from ‘middle class yoga consumers’ in India, the country where yoga originated finding that these consumers have adopted different conceptions and perceptions of the westernised version of yoga, because of the complex cultural flows that have influenced it. Askegaard and Eckhardt’s (2012) analysis demonstrates how ‘global flows’ including the influence of marketing activities, increases the complexity of the meanings associated with different goods and services found in multicultural marketplaces. This is reflected in the complex meanings associated with the various ways in which practitioners ‘re-appropriate’ yoga, and I would argue that these same ‘global flows’ are an important aspect of the process of consumer multiculturalisation. I commented on the way goods are reshaped when they go through a commodification process, this with the goal of being accepted by

cosmopolitan and usually Western customers in Section 1.3. Thus, immigrant consumers face globalising forces arising from how a diversity of traditional practices (and, I argue, goods as well) have gone through this ‘sanctioning process’ in Western cultures (and maybe others), prior to then being re-appropriated by the original culture now with a manifold of meanings.

The complexity of multicultural marketplaces is increased by the engagement of different institutions, and specifically those dedicated to marketing. In this regard, Veresiu and Giesler (2018) conducted a qualitative study with respect to how different institutions in Canada have an influence on the ways in which immigrants view their ‘ethnic consumer subjectivity’ (p. 556). Politicians promote a specific ethnic ‘ideal citizen-type’ based on consumption, with the idea of ‘attenuating ethnic group conflicts’ (2018, p. 554), nonetheless emphasizing the differences, thus fetishising ‘the stranger and his/her strangeness’ (2018, p. 554). This notion is taken up by market researchers, who with their research activities legitimise the ideal ethnic citizenship. Informed by this research, retailers subsequently provide consumers with the required products and services needed to embody this ethnic ideal citizen-type. Finally, consumers (both indigenous and immigrants) adopt this proposed ideal ethnic identity. The authors argue that this depicts a ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’ since it ‘represents an ideology that prescribes the coexistence of different ethnicities through individual consumption choice by connecting market competition with social inclusion’ and, even further, this form of multiculturalism ‘reduce[s] ethnicity to exoticized market categories’ (2018, p. 554).

The impact of marketing on intercultural relations has been examined by Vorster, Kipnis, Bebek, and Demangeot (2020) in the context of the post-apartheid South Africa. In this study, the researchers analysed how specific marketing campaigns promoted intercultural relationships. The analysis of these campaigns revealed the role that marketing plays in promoting certain kinds of intercultural relationships and downplaying others, which were not aligned with the policy of the Rainbow Nation being promoted by Government and other institutions in South Africa. Then, researchers analysed how marketers depicted interracial interactions, for example, how a white person interacted with a non-white person; categorising each campaign into one of three groups: a) if there was no or little interaction, b) if the interaction was staged in a special occasion (mainly, national important dates) and c) if the interaction happened in an ordinary, everyday occasion, finding that the majority of marketing campaigns in fact did not promote interaction in everyday occasions, mostly depicting interracial interactions in special occasions. The authors therefore suggest the adoption of 'Intercultural Marketing' in order to create 'convivial superdiversity' (2020, p. 61), whereby marketing adopts a brokering role to promote superdiverse societies. That is to say, intercultural marketing strategies go beyond ethnic marketing, so as to promote real 'conviviality and synergy' in the 'superdiverse communities' (2020, p. 61) that exist in multicultural marketplaces. This research demonstrates how marketers can add other forces to multicultural marketplaces, coming from diverse institutions present in the context.

In summary, the studies reviewed here uncover a complex diversity of cultural flows that immigrant consumers face and, as a number of the studies suggest, contribute to add complexity to the consumer multiculturalisation process, when they relocate to live in

another (mostly Western) country. Taken together these studies indicate the merit of conceptualising the cultural adaptation processes of these immigrant consumers in terms of consumer multiculturalisation, rather than straightforward acculturation, thus acknowledging the multicultural marketplaces in which these immigrant consumers are now living. The multicultural marketplace comprises the transcultural flows between immigrant and indigenous consumers (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015; Cruz, Seo, & Buchanan-Oliver, 2018; Luedicke, 2015), complex global cultural flows (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012), and the various ways in which different institutions conceptualise their ideal 'multicultural' citizen (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018), including those that marketing institutions promote (Vorster et al., 2020). While some studies (e.g. Cruz et al., 2018) begin to identify some of the different activities through which immigrant consumers share and adopt consumption practices in these new contexts, further research is needed in order to explore these more fully, particularly in regard to the development and application of skills and knowledge.

Having analysed literature on the consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation process, I now move to focus attention onto the few studies within this literature that have examined acculturation and multiculturalisation specifically in terms of the adaptation process.

## **2.8 Describing the adaptation process**

As discussed in Section 2.1.1 above, Peñaloza's (1994) study examines the consumer acculturation process of Mexican immigrants in the United States demonstrating how immigrants adopt different strategic identities while going through the process. In addition to her focus on identity strategies, Peñaloza proposes a model that depicts

several of the changes and factors involved in the acculturation process. Her empirical research indicates that individual differences in demographic variables, language usage, recency of arrival to the USA, ethnic identity, and environmental factors among others, leads to a differentiation in the skills needed to adapt to the new consumption environment. Two groups of 'agents' (p. 48) help in the acculturation process: one group aligns with Mexican culture and the other group with USA culture. Agents include family, friends and media as well as institutions, this last one including 'commercial, educational and religious' (p. 48) institutions. Interestingly, Peñaloza (1994) also identifies the Mexican diaspora as being important actors in the consumer acculturation process of Mexican immigrants. For example, she describes how Mexicans who have already settled in the United States help each other and help other Mexicans to arrive and settle in the USA.

Peñaloza (1994) conceptualises the adaptation process in terms of several sub-processes, including 'movement, translation and adaptation' (p. 49). Thus, Mexican immigrants begin with 'movement' when they travel from Mexico to the USA and settle. Once in the new country, these immigrants need to develop 'key translation skills' in order to 'develop faculties' in the language, currency and social systems. Then 'through experiential trial-and-error' immigrants learn how to 'adapt' to the 'new consumer environment' (p. 49). Here we see Peñaloza (1994) opening up the adaptation process of immigrant consumers to scrutiny, hinting at the critical role of skills, knowledge, and learning through trial-and-error. However, her work falls short in terms of developing her analysis of these aspects in theoretical detail. I argue that there is more in the adaptation process, than that explained by Peñaloza (1994). Instead, Peñaloza (1994) moves her focus from adaptation to the 'outcomes' or 'strategies'

adopted by immigrants as discussed in section 2.2, namely assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation. Thus, while Peñaloza's (1994) comprehensive and insightful analysis acknowledges the complexities in the consumer acculturation process, in my view her work falls short in terms of the depth of her analysis of the various activities and practices through which Mexican immigrant consumers adapt to the new marketplace. For example, in her ethnographic account, she touches only very briefly on the fact that some Mexican consumers 'grow their own food' (p. 42), but she does not dwell on the significance of this. In addition, she provides us with a glimpse of how goods and services could be used differently to how individuals from the mainstream culture use them, when she suggests that Mexican consumers use 'products and services...in ways that maintained ties to their previous culture' (p. 33), but she does not pursue this in any detail.

A second study which, like Peñaloza (1994), draws our attention more specifically towards the adaptation process within acculturation was conducted by Cappellini and Yen (2013). This study analyses the consumer acculturation of Chinese students in the UK, in respect of their food consumption practices in the context of the host (UK) and home (Chinese) cultures as well as in the presence of global consumer culture. The researchers examine the food consumption practices of Chinese students over time and in connection with their social ties, analysing the strategies adopted by the students, via their activities, and the cultural symbolism of the food they purchased and consumed. Chinese students began by eating food associated with global consumer culture (such as Kentucky Fried Chicken) in order to avoid UK food as well as learning how to cook Chinese food in order to eat and share it with other Chinese students, as they used to eating in China. In the next months, their social ties with British people increased and as

a result their knowledge of British food also increased, and thus Chinese students learned to cook some British dishes. The authors conclude that there is a 'progressive learning of the host culture' demonstrating how this 'increases over time and how participants' ties influence their consumption of home, host and GCC [Global consumer culture] food' (2013, p. 973). The participants in the study showed a combination of resistance and maintenance strategies and these 'outcomes oscillate during their stay' (2013, p. 973).

Cappellini and Yen's findings therefore suggest that 'ethnic identity and acculturation to the host culture are two different, albeit, linked, processes and one does not exclude the other' (2013, p. 973). The strategies adopted by the students were influenced by their social ties. The researchers defined social relations according to ethnicity, that is to say, ethnic (Chinese) and non-ethnic (British or other cultures) social ties; and in two levels: strong as those maintained with friends and weak as those maintained with acquaintances. Then those with stronger ethnic ties show higher levels of maintenance of their Chinese culture and those with weaker ethnic ties resisted adopting host culture foods by adopting global consumer culture foods. Individuals with non-ethnic ties do not consume host foods only, these participants show a 'wider understanding of host culture' (p. 973); with some of these participants integrating some host culture food products into their meals, while others radicalised their maintenance strategy in relation to Chinese food culture.

This study extends our understanding of the role of global consumer culture in the consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation process. It does so by demonstrating that for some consumers, global consumer culture products, in the food category at least,

facilitate the acculturation process, while others use global consumer culture products to resist the host culture and, for still others global consumer culture products serve as a 'common terrain' thus facilitating 'mutual understanding amongst immigrants and host fellow consumers' (p. 973). By shining a light on the some of the social activities and practices of immigrant consumers – here with the focus being specifically on food related practices, when taking the findings of this study together with those of Peñaloza's (1994) study, these two studies indicate the value in focusing future research on the actual activities, behaviours and practices that immigrant consumers engage in as they learn how to adapt to live within new cultural settings, at the same time as managing to keep important aspects of their own culture alive. I believe that such a focus will help to generate new insights in respect of the process of consumer multiculturalisation in multicultural marketplaces.

In summary, while these two studies hint at the adaptation process through which consumers acculturate and multiculturalise, they do not investigate this in sufficient empirical detail to be able to draw theoretical insights. Both studies raise questions relating to how the participants in their respective studies went from not really understanding their new consumption environments to successfully acquiring the knowledge and skills to be able to adapt to living in these new environments. Immigrant consumers adapting to live in multicultural marketplaces must apply certain skills and knowledge learnt previously, yet I assume that they must have to also develop new skills and knowledge, and as both of the above studies seem to suggest, there is clearly a social element involved in this process.



In the next section I summarise my critical evaluation of the literature that I have reviewed in this chapter and then, in Section 2.8, I move on to suggest how a new approach can help to advance theoretical insights in the analysis of consumer multiculturalisation, explaining the conceptual framework adopted in this thesis.

## **2.9 Food and the process of consumer multiculturalisation**

In this section I discuss how the academic literature on consumer acculturation and consumer multiculturalisation develops our understanding of how immigrant consumers associate their consumption of food with different cultures. In subsection 2.8.1, I discuss studies which presuppose the association between the consumption of food and specific cultures to be as the researcher understands it and are therefore guilty of failing to take into account their participants' point of view. In subsection 2.8.2, I discuss how other researchers have tried to understand how their participants associate their consumption of food with different cultures, mainly through verbal descriptions. Finally, in subsection 2.8.3, I summarise all these approaches and explain the limitations of these approaches.

### **2.9.1 A priori cultural categorisation of foods and consumer acculturation**

Some researchers associate the consumption of particular foods with specific cultures by drawing on a priori cultural categorisation of foods rather than taking into account how participants perceive these foods. This has sometimes led to confusing results (Cleveland & Xu, 2019).

In a qualitative study conducted by Jamal (1998), the researcher analysed how Pakistanis living in the UK perceived their own cultural food as well as British food.

However, the researcher categorised foods a priori as being either British or Pakistani rather than leaving this aspect for his participants to interpret. For example, when a descendent of the first generation of Pakistanis living in the UK commented on how his father was reluctant to eat ‘junk food or fast food’, such as ‘fish and chips’, ‘pizzas, pasties and flans’ (p. 224), the researcher concludes that these are ‘mainstream English foods’. Similarly, Cappellini and Yen (2013) investigated how social ties affected the food consumption practices of Chinese students in the UK through a qualitative study. Once again, the researchers categorised foods – this time, as being Chinese, British, or global based on a priori understandings. For example, one participant explained that during the first few weeks after arriving in the UK, she ate fish and chips in a pub and did not like it, comparing it with her preference for KFC. The researchers concluded that the consumer acculturation of this participant ‘began in China through consuming GCC [Global Consumer Culture] rather than UK food’ (Cappellini & Yen, 2013, p. 970).

Another approach was adopted by Cleveland and Xu (2019) in a quantitative study into how Chinese immigrants to Canada not only have to adapt to the mainstream Canadian food culture, but they also have to adapt to the South Asian food culture present in Canada. The researchers based their association of foods with specific cultures on a previous study relating to the frequency of consumption of several foods by each of these populations (Jain, 1999). For example, French fries and hamburgers were associated with Global/Canadian culture, Chow-mein and Jasmine green tea with Chinese culture, and Naan bread and Curry with South Asian culture. After conducting a survey and statistical analyses, the researchers found, as expected, that the consumption of global and Canadian foods were negatively associated with Chinese

ethnic identity and positively associated with Canadian, South Asian and global consumer cultures. However, two results did not match the researchers' predictions: 'increasing identification with GCC [global consumer culture] ... reinforced the consumption of Chinese foods' (p. 257) and the consumption of South Asian food was not positively related with cosmopolitanism. Cleveland and Xu (2019) argued that it might be that since minority groups (such as those coming from South Asia) lived in close proximity to other foreign/immigrant cultural groups, their food was not perceived as being exotic by these Chinese immigrants to Canada.

Other research suggests that because of the increasing diversity of cultural forces present in many multicultural locations; many foods can no longer be easily associated with specific cultures. Thus, individual consumers are likely to categorise the consumption of different foods according to different and more flexible cultural frameworks. An example is the study on consumer acculturation conducted by Yu, Yen, Cappellini, and Wang (2019) regarding the strategies adopted by British expatriates in China, analysing their food and media consumption. In an interview extract, one participant who cooked pasta for his friends explained how he made sense of the meaning of his consumption of pasta: 'it's not actually British food, but...it is also kind of British food ... this is the food that I grew up with' (Yu et al., 2019, p. 9). We can appreciate that, for this sojourner, the culture with which he associates pasta is not completely clear, but he definitely knows it from his childhood. Another example is the way that typical foods that might be linked easily with specific cultures, such as Sushi and Peking Duck, are globalised and adopted in Western countries, albeit that their original ingredients have been replaced, thereby transforming them into a totally different dish. These globalised versions do not match the dishes from which they

originated as I discussed previously in subsection 1.3.1, and so they are not acknowledged as pertaining to their own culture by immigrants coming from the original culture (Dey et al., 2019). For example, Chinese visitors living in the UK do not recognise many of the dishes served in Chinese takeaways in the UK as coming from their culture (Yen, Cappellini, Wang, & Nguyen, 2018). Even though these examples come from studies whose participants know that they will return to their homeland after a short stay, they point to the benefits of adopting an emic approach to studying food in the context of the process of consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation, as suggested by the studies in the next subsection.

### **2.9.2 Meaning of food and consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation**

Several studies have acknowledged that participants associate different meanings and cultures with particular foods, thus examining how participants subjectively explain associations between the consumption of different foods and cultures.

For example, applying a two-culture framework, and a qualitative methodology, Jamal (1996) explored how British consumers associate different meanings with foods. The researcher explained that he used the term ‘ethnic food’ when the respondents talked about foods originated in the ‘Indian subcontinent (e.g. Pakistani and Indian)’ such as ‘curry or Asian curry or Asian food’ (p. 14). Therefore, the researcher examined how British consumers make sense of foods, associating different meanings with these foods; he explained the differences between generations and genders, as well as how younger generations have incorporated these ethnic foods into their everyday meals. The author concluded that British consumers have acculturated to these ethnic foods, and sometimes they have even over-acculturated when they showed a preference for

some tastes, more than the same Pakistanis where these tastes originated. Similarly, Chytkova (2011) encouraged her participants to explain how they made sense of their food, once again applying only a two-culture framework and a qualitative approach. Chytkova (2011) analysed the different social and cultural meanings that Romanian women living in Italy gave to foods associated with their own culture as well as that of their host country. The participants explained how they made sense of their food consumption experiences associated with the Romanian and Italian cultures, thus reflecting a diversity of social and cultural identities. Another example of a qualitative approach is the study conducted by Bundy (2017), who also adopted a two-culture frame. He analysed how British expatriates living in France explained how they made sense of their food shopping experiences, as outcomes of the different strategies adopted in the process of consumer acculturation. Following this, the same participants explained their associations between different food products and the two-culture framework: British and French. For example, if a British participant referred to their use of 'English flour' (p. 1083), the researcher interpreted this as referring to the adoption of a maintenance strategy. The researcher found that British expatriates adopted three different strategies: maintenance, when they keep eating the same food as when they lived in the UK; hybridity, because they begin to also eat food related to the host culture; and hyperculture, where immigrants take some of their own cultural foods and dishes as being emblematic of their culture, as explained in Section 2.5, above.

Sobol et al. (2018) conducted a longitudinal quantitative study to understand how Dutch consumers associated their consumption of food either with global consumer culture or with their own culture, and how this changed over time. The researchers conducted a preliminary study in which they asked participants with which culture they associated

specific products, thus categorising them as either local traditional Dutch foods or as global foods. Only those foods strongly associated with these two categories were incorporated in the second, larger study, which explored how ‘the interplay between the local and global cultures’ had evolved (p. 340). An ethnic (Dutch) identity was found to be associated with the consumption of local food and clothes; whereas global and foreign cultures were associated with the consumption of electronics and luxuries; these behaviours were consistent over time.

Taking a slightly different approach, Dey et al. (2019) analysed how immigrants living in London associated their food consumption experiences with a diversity of cultures. This gave the participants an opportunity to verbally explain their associations between foods, their own culture, and the diversity of cultures present in London. The researchers found that their participants showed ‘cultural hybridity’, embracing other cultures while also maintaining their own culture, describing four strategies adopted by their participants: rebellion, rarefaction, resonance, and refrainment. These are as described in Section 2.6, above.

The studies presented and discussed in this section have sought to understand how their participants associate cultural meanings with their food consumption subjectively. However, the researchers have analysed these associations mainly as acculturation strategies (Bundy, 2017; Dey et al., 2019; Jamal, 1996) or in relation to how the associations reflect the adoption of different identities (Chytkova, 2011).

Only a few studies have attempted to understand the process through which different meanings are associated with food and how this might change when participants

experience a different cultural context (e.g. Bardhi et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2019). Nonetheless these studies have recruited sojourners and/or expatriates, that is to say, participants who have moved to places where they experience a different culture only temporarily, either as tourists (Bardhi et al., 2010) or as temporary workers or students (Yu et al., 2019). Bardhi et al. (2010) analysed how United States tourists categorised their food consumption experiences during a short visit to China. The researchers found that familiarity with the Americanised versions of Chinese food made it difficult for the American tourists to adapt to the Chinese foods found in China, with the result that participants resorted to eating foods which they associated with the familiarity of home, such as pizza and hamburgers, so as to maintain category borders, thereby differentiating themselves from what they conceptualised as the culturally foreign 'Other'.

Yu et al. (2019) studied how Chinese sojourners studied and consumed food during their stay in the UK. These Chinese students selected food based on the experience, either as ordinary weekday meals or as extraordinary meals during weekends. During their working days, Chinese sojourners preferred to cook their own Chinese meals, patronise Chinese restaurants or eat global brands foods such as Subways and Dominos. The mainstream food (British) was not so successfully adopted even though sojourners tried it at the beginning of their stay. Other world food was adopted during celebratory and weekend meals, as having a different experience. The authors found differences between those staying in urban areas against those in rural areas. The researchers concluded that the 'complex food choices' made by these sojourners reflected their 'swift transformative identity' (Yu et al., 2019, p. 198).

### **2.9.3 Conclusions**

While the studies reviewed in section 2.9.1 can be criticised for a lack of understanding of consumer subjectivity, those in section 2.9.2 raise questions in respect of how – or the processes through which - participants develop their subjective associations between the consumption of different cultural foods and cultural identity. The studies of Bardhi et al. (2010) and Yu et al. (2019) provide some indication of the complexity of this subjective process, and as such suggest the merit of focusing research in this area to develop our understanding further, as one ramification of the adaptation process of immigrant consumers to multicultural marketplaces.

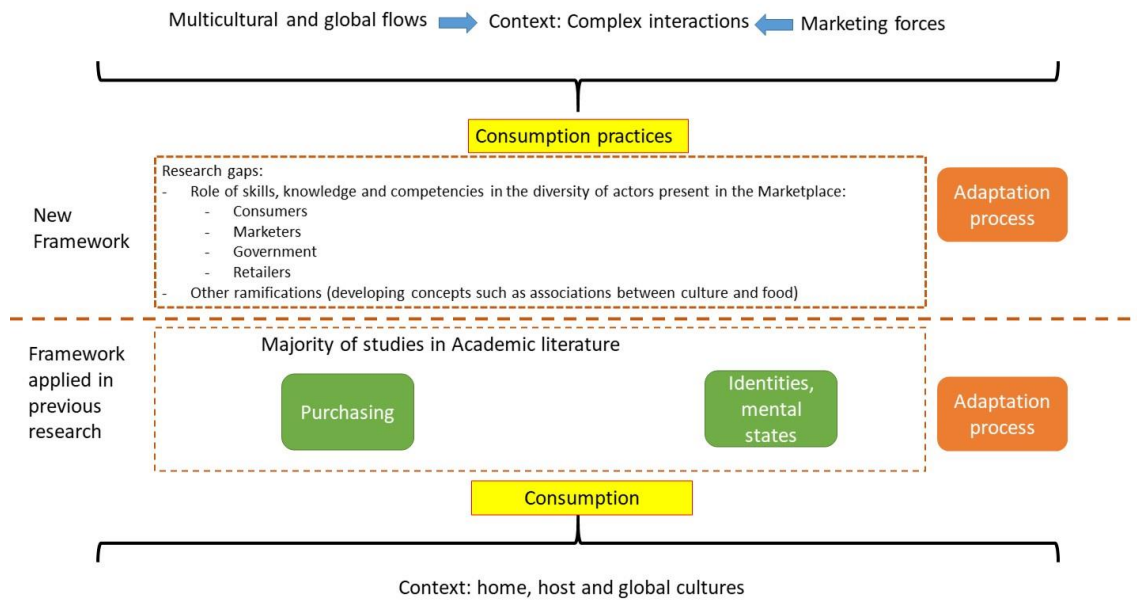
### **2.10 Summary**

In this chapter I began by commenting on how the analysis of consumer acculturation has its foundations in studies of acculturation, originating in in the discipline of cross-cultural psychology. Although the goal of these studies in cross-cultural psychology was to understand how culture influences behaviour, research focused mainly on the mental (cognitive and emotional) states of individuals, with few studies addressing behaviour during the adaptation process.

With regard to consumer acculturation, studies suggest that immigrant consumers reflect and construct their identities through consumption in multicultural marketplaces, and that the fluidity of their identities reflects the complexity of multicultural marketplaces. A very small number of studies have moved their analyses beyond the overly narrow focus on mental processes, thus also acknowledging the importance of focusing on consumption related activities, behaviours, and practices as part of the consumer multiculturalisation process.



Figure 2.10.1 Research gaps resulting from adopting a framework that acknowledges complexity.



As argued in this chapter, most studies on consumer acculturation have adopted a relatively simplistic analytical framework, focusing on only two or three cultures. In so doing these studies ignore the complexity of multiculturalism in the context of multicultural marketplaces. These studies therefore overlook the complex interactions between a myriad of actors present in multicultural marketplaces, including transcultural flows, global consumer culture as well as the roles of institutional agents, including marketing. I propose to adopt a framework that seeks to incorporate this complexity, which can be seen at the top of Figure 2.10.1. below.

Further research is needed to develop our understanding of the complexities of the adaptation process in the context of multicultural marketplaces, including the social aspects of cultural adaptation, and the role of skills, knowledge and competencies.

Moreover, the adaptation of immigrant consumers to multicultural marketplaces might have ramifications expressed in consumption. One particularly interesting form of consumption activity is related to the way that immigrant consumers develop their associations between food and culture, as discussed in Section 2.8.

Thus Figure 2.10.1 also identifies the research gap that this thesis seeks to address; that is the role of skills, knowledge, and competencies in consumers' adaptation process in the specific context of food.

I have identified gaps in the extant literature on consumer acculturation and clarified the scope of the proposed research on consumer multiculturalization in multicultural marketplaces in the context of food consumption. I now move on to discuss the practice theory based theoretical framework that I intend to adopt to frame my analysis and to justify the value in adopting this theoretical approach.

## **3 Conceptual framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this section I present the conceptual tenets of this thesis and the theoretical lens that I will apply to frame the collection and analysis of my empirical data on the food consumption practices of Mexican immigrant consumers as they adapt to living in the UK. This section is structured as follows: Section 3.2 introduces the practice theory approach that I am proposing to adopt to guide my empirical research. Next, Section 3.3 discusses the concept of practice, and analyses how different authors have defined the various elements that form a practice. In this section I focus in particular on the value of Shove et al.'s (2012) synthesis of previous research into a conceptual framework comprising three main elements; materials, competencies and meanings. In Section 3.4, I continue with my evaluation of Shove et al.'s (2012) work and examine how links between these three elements are constructed and broken and the consequences of this for the development of social practices. Section 3.5 discusses Shove et al.'s (2012) concept of 'modes of circulation' which provides a way of explaining how practices are shared between populations and practitioners. Section 3.6 discusses Schatzki's (2001, 2002) concepts of 'practical intelligibility' and 'general understandings', and how they can be applied to empirical studies. The section 3.9 concludes with a summary of my arguments to substantiate my decision to adopt a practice theory approach to the analysis of the process of consumer multiculturalisation so as to generate insights in relation to consumer adaptation processes.

## **3.2 A practice theory approach to the analysis of consumer**

### **multiculturalisation**

I propose to apply a practice theory approach to gain insights into the complexities involved in the process of consumer multiculturalisation, focusing specifically on how Mexican immigrants adapt to living in the UK multicultural marketplace. As discussed previously, complex cultural dynamics typify contemporary multicultural marketplaces, with consumers (local and immigrant), consumer goods, services, brands and marketing activities all being affected by and contributing to these global cultural forces. This suggests the need to incorporate these various constituent cultural elements within our analysis in order to understand the lived experiences of immigrant consumers in such multicultural contexts.

The various ways in which Mexican immigrant consumers adapt to the new consumer environment in the UK is shaped by their social interactions with other Mexican immigrants, as well as with members of the multicultural host culture and with other immigrant consumers from different cultures. That is to say verbal communications, actions and tacit assumptions provide us with access into the social influences shaping the way these Mexican immigrant consumers understand the consumer marketplace within which they are now living. I am suggesting that by adopting practice theory as a conceptual lens to analyse the lived experiences of these Mexican immigrant consumers as they adapt to living in the UK, that it will be possible to make sense of these dynamic cultural interactions, and in so doing to shine further light on the consumer multiculturalisation process. To construct my argument, I move now to explain the main features of practice theory.

### **3.3 Practice theory and constituent elements**

Bourdieu (1990) and Giddens (1984) both provide conceptual analyses of social practices and their features, providing the basic tenets that later on other authors including Reckwitz (2002), Schatzki (2001, 2002, 2005, 2010) and Shove et al. (2012) have applied empirically, and in so doing have developed conceptual frameworks that assist empirical researchers. For example, the practice theory approach developed by Shove et al. (2012) has been applied to several empirical contexts (Borch, Vittersø, & Stø, 2015; Shove & Walker, 2014). The present study draws on the ideas developed by Shove et al. (2012), Schatzki (2001, 2002, 2005, 2010), Weenink and Spaargaren (2016), and Welch and Warde (2017).

Schatzki (2001) define a practice as ‘a set of doings and sayings that is organized by a pool of understandings, a set of rules, and ... a teleoaffective structure’ (p. 58). For Schatzki (2001) the element of ‘teleoaffective structure’ associates feelings and states of mind with how practitioners carry out practices, defining the term as how ‘practical intelligibility is teleologically and affectively determined’ (p. 60). The first part of this definition, practical intelligibility, can be explained as what makes sense to practitioners when they engage in an activity, and the second part, ‘teleologically and affectively determined’, implies that the activity is subject to the state of mind, as moods and feelings, in the moment of engaging in any activity. I will say more about the role of practical intelligibility in the definition of general understandings in subsection 2.7.5 below.

Shove et al. (2012) take the ideas of Schatzki (2001, 2002, 2010) as discussed above to develop a different approach to studying the dynamics of practices, adding to it the term

‘social’, thereby highlighting the social nature of practices. Shove et al. (2012) define a social practice as a ‘conjunction of elements, consequently figuring as an entity which can be spoken about and ... drawn upon as a set of resources ... At the same time, social practices exist as performances’ (p. 7). Shove et al. (2012) describe three basic elements that form a social practice:

- (1) Materials, which are things or items
- (2) Competencies, described as ‘shared understandings of good or appropriate performance in terms of which specific enactments are judged’ and
- (3) Meanings, which represent ‘the social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment’ (p. 23)

Shove et al. (2012) explain that the interdependent relations between these three elements form a practice. In the next few paragraphs, I explain how Shove et al. (2012) summarise the diverse elements mentioned in the definitions developed by other authors, such as (Schatzki, 2001, 2002, 2010) and Reckwitz (2002).

### **3.3.1 Materials**

Several authors include physical things as important elements within practices. Shove et al. (2012) and Spaargaren, Weenink, & Lamers (2016) talk about ‘materials’, Reckwitz (2002) uses the terms ‘things’ and ‘objects’, while Schatzki (2005) asserts that a practice is carried out among ‘material entities’ (p. 472). ‘Materials’ can refer solely to the use of the body of the practitioner, for example, the practice of reflecting on the future (Reckwitz, 2002). It can also involve the layout (the place and its features) in which the practice is carried out, or it can additionally include other human beings,

organisms, or things in nature (Schatzki, 2010). It is clear that for many authors physical materials are conceived as being an important part of social practices. However, they should not be seen as being the most important part of a social practice; rather they are one element. Warde (2005) clarifies the partial role of materials within the context of consumption practices, by suggesting that we should shift the analytical focus away from the moments of purchasing of materials for consumption, to the analysis of the role of these materials within the practice itself. In this regard, Warde (2005) argues that materials interact with other elements of the practice and are thus deployed in line with how the practice is organized by the practitioner. Thus, materials are acquired in a moment of the practice because they are needed to perform the practice or because it gives the practitioner the opportunity to be better in the practice (Warde, 2005). For example, if somebody wants to cook a sauce and purchase a blender to mix the ingredients, is the practice of cooking the sauce what caused the purchase, thereby the analysis should be focused on the practice. In summary, a practice theory perspective of consumption focuses on the interactions of materials with other elements of the practice, rather than on the purchasing moment per se.

### **3.3.2 Competencies**

When practitioners engage in a social practice, they are acting and performing according to ways of understanding and knowledge; that is to say they are applying skills and know-how. Reckwitz (2002) defines knowledge in the context of a practice, as particular ways of ‘understanding the world’ (p. 253). For Schatzki (2002), the element of ‘practical understandings’ comprises ‘a skill or capacity that underlies activity’ (p. 79), including ‘knowing how to X, knowing how to identify X-ings, and knowing how to prompt as well as respond to X-ings’ (p. 77). Shove et al. (2012)

suggest that it makes sense to group all of these concepts such as knowledge, know-how, and skills, together under the concept of ‘competencies’, which also includes a ‘grasp of the shifting norms that shape understanding’ (Hand, Shove & Southerton, 2007, p. 671). That is to say, the concept of competencies includes how others socially ‘shape’ knowledge, know-how, and skills. Therefore, we can analyse how individuals develop knowledge and skills, and how, these competencies are shared and thus shaped socially.

### **3.3.3 Meanings**

There are different types of mental activities involved in a practice, such as meanings (Shove et al., 2012) and emotions (Reckwitz, 2002), this last being implied in Schatzki’s (2005) ‘teleoaffective structure’ referred to above. Emotions, meanings, feelings, and states of mind play a role in social practices. Schatzki (2001) states that during certain practices, the way individuals feel causes them to react in ways that may not always accord with what an observer might qualify as a reasoned response. How the practitioner feels and reacts is highly associated with the symbolic meaning of the practice, i.e. what it means for the practitioner to engage in the practice (Shove et al., 2012); meanings are shaped by how this element interacts with the other elements of the social practice, described above. Since feelings, emotions, and meanings can change the course of practices, they are an important element of the practice to be analysed. Shove et al. (2012) use the concept of ‘meanings’ to include all those states of mind, emotions and feelings that influence the way practices are carried out.

We can appreciate now how the approach developed by Shove et al. (2012) synthesises a range of theoretical ideas from other authors of practice theory, in order to produce a



relatively simplified framework, which thereby facilitates empirical analysis. The next two Subsections, 2.7.3 and 2.7.4, discuss other important features of Shove et al.'s (2012) concept of social practices.

### **3.4 Links among the elements of a social practice**

Each of the elements of social practice mentioned in the above paragraphs can be analysed separately, but in order to understand the role that each plays in a practice, analysis of the interaction with other elements is needed (Shove et al., 2012; Spaargaren et al., 2016). Thus, when a practice is carried out, the elements that form it are linked. These links could be modified and/or broken each time a participant performs a practice (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012). This implies that when a practice is carried out, links are created, but at the same time, each of the elements affects the others, potentially changing them. It is the central role of this linking that Shove et al. (2012) emphasise as being important in a practice theory analytical approach. When the links among elements cannot be sustained, practices disintegrate. Analysing how the elements are linked in the moment of the practice helps to facilitate our understanding of the dynamics of the practice, giving as a result a whole picture of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, adopting social practice as a theoretical lens for conducting empirical research necessitates analysis of the different elements that form a practice, how each element interacts with others, and how they are maintained, change, or circulate, as I present in the next subsection.

### **3.5 Modes of circulation**

Modes of circulation refer to the process of how each of the three elements - materials, competencies, and meanings - 'circulate' or 'travel'; that is to say, how they move

between individuals and/or between societies, either through being part of the same social practice or by becoming part of new social practices (Shove et al., 2012). As Shove et al. (2012) remind us, it is important to also keep in mind the ways in which the three elements link and reshape each other while practitioners engage in a social practice.

Materials circulate when they are moved physically. This movement may necessitate some changes in the materials (for example, some foods need to be frozen in order to travel from one place to another). Shove et al. (2012) emphasize the importance of practitioners' access to the materials that are required in order to perform a social practice. They draw our attention to circumstances when access to specific materials is not possible, and in these circumstances, they suggest that other materials can sometimes act as substitutes. They suggest that when materials have a 'closed script', that is to say, when substitution is not possible, these materials are considered to have a 'tightly defined' relation with other elements in the practice (p. 47).

The way materials circulate is relatively easy to understand, because of their physicality, however competencies and meanings circulate differently. Some of the more obvious ways through which competencies travel include 'learning by doing' and when novice practitioners are trained by master practitioners (Nicolini, 2013; Shove et al., 2012). Besides these, there are other mechanisms through which competencies circulate and to understand these Shove et al. (2012) develop the concepts of 'abstraction' and 'reversal' (p. 48). In this regard they suggest that knowledge can be 'abstracted' from a particular context or location, which could be in written form, such as in the case of cooking recipes. The knowledge encapsulated in these recipes can then travel and be 'reversed'

when the recipe is followed in a different location and the dish is prepared. When knowledge is shared and becomes commonly accepted or ‘standardised’ (p. 50), the process of sharing could have an effect; that is to say changing the knowledge in some way and therefore changing the practice in which this knowledge is involved. Shove et al. (2012) suggest furthermore, that since other social practices often share the same knowledge, skills, and competencies, that changes in this element can transform several practices, which might ultimately be reflected in changing the ‘social fabric’ (p. 52), that is to say, changing society as a whole.

Meanings circulate differently again. In this regard, Shove et al. (2012) note that meanings are ‘unavoidably relative, situated and emergent’, although they acknowledge that there are instances in which meanings can circulate in a ‘relatively uncontested’ (p. 53) way. We can find several examples in which meanings ‘travel’ without being changed (for example, the symbols associated with national flags); nonetheless, there are other circumstances where a process of re-classification occurs. Here, ‘old connotations’ are ‘shaken off and new connections’ (p. 53) are made (for example, when utilitarian goods are inherited and become a symbol of past life). The social significance of taking part in certain social practices reflects the dynamics involved in the circulation of meanings. That is to say, when a social practice is shared and becomes increasingly popular, so the meanings associated with it can evolve and change. Shove et al. (2012) exemplify this process of change by showing us how walking with sticks, involved in the practice of Nordic walking, was initially associated with meanings of ‘frailty’ and that over time, walking with sticks has become connected with meanings of ‘vitality and wellbeing’ (p. 53). Thus, Shove et al. (2012) suggest that ‘meanings are extended and eroded as a result of dynamic processes of association’ (p. 55). Also,

many meanings are ‘mediated’, by marketing and brand communications, for example happiness associated with drinking a Coca Cola. However, these mediated meanings might not necessarily ‘stick’ (p. 55); individuals might not accept these mediated meanings. In these cases, they may adopt a particular practice but give it a different meaning.

Another feature involved with the circulation of meanings is the way ‘individuals locate...within society’ by getting involved in certain social practices, and then becoming recognised as being experts or masters in a practice, or conversely as being novices, when they are in the process of learning it (Nicolini, 2013; Shove et al., 2012).

### **3.6 Practical intelligibility and general understandings**

In this subsection, I present the main features of the concepts of ‘practical intelligibility’ and ‘general understandings’, developed by Schatzki (2001, 2002) and picked up by Weenink and Spaargaren (2016) and Welch and Warde (2017). My aim in this section is to demonstrate the potential insights to be gained by supplementing Shove et al.’s (2012) conceptualisation of social practices with these additional concepts.

In the practice theory conceptualisation developed by Schatzki (2002), practical understandings, which are the skills and knowledge involved in the performance of social practices, are a property of the practice, and practical intelligibility ‘governs action by specifying what an actor does next in the continuous flow of activity’ (p. 75). Thus, it is through practical intelligibility that practitioners make sense of a situation, and select what to do, with the practical understandings involved in the practice leading them towards how to perform the practice. If there is an apparent contradiction in my

shift of focus from the practice to the individual; the term ‘general understandings’ helps shift the focus once again back to the practice. As Welch and Warde (2017) argue, general understandings ‘inform practical intelligibility and govern activity by conditioning practical intelligibility’ (2017, p. 186). Thus, applying the concept of general understandings to examine social practices does not imply focusing our analysis in the individual because, in the end, several social practices share the same ‘general understandings’, for example, as culture.

Welch and Warde (2017) argue that the concept of general understandings can help researchers to appreciate the connection between culture and action by analysing the connection between general understandings and how practices are constituted. Welch and Warde (2017) inform us that there are ‘discursive’ and ‘non-discursive’ aspects of general understandings (p. 188). They explain that general understandings can be transferred ‘from discourse to praxis’, for example when certain concepts ‘make possible certain common practices’ such as those of ‘public sphere ... market economy and ... sovereign people’ (ibid) which were converted by practitioners into social practices. For example, the concept of market economy governs many business activities, such as those carried out by entrepreneurs and businessmen, the concept act in the background and is taken for granted. The concept was first coined by Adam Smith and then, these different praxis emanated from it.

Conversely, practices can originate a concept, that later is discursively applied, that is to say, when general understandings are transferred from ‘praxis to discourse’ or how ‘general understandings arise unbidden from practice’ (Welch & Warde, 2017, p. 189). For example, consumers begin to show a preference for eating at McDonald’s

hamburgers or drink a coffee from Starbucks to show their adherence to a common global culture not associated with any country, and later on, this phenomenon was researched and the term ‘global consumer culture’ was coined (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007).

A third scenario could imply both: tacit and verbally agreed understandings. Welch and Warde (2017) exemplify this third scenario with the concept of ‘authenticity’. They argue that authenticity ‘figures as diffuse background understanding ...activated and transmitted by *diverse discursive* and *material elements* of popular and consumer culture’, becoming a ‘pre reflexive background understanding to the concept of identity’ (p. 192, my emphasis added), and conclude that seekers of authenticity ‘*do not have to resort to discursive articulations* in order to recognise and embody authenticity’ (p. 192, my emphasis added). Practitioners have a sense of what they are doing as a group, because the common terrain that ‘general understandings’ entails make them aware of ‘what a set of doings and sayings’ implies (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 70). In other words, when a group of individuals are enacting a social practice based upon common general understandings, they do not need to agree verbally on what they are doing, they know what these social practices imply, for example, ‘authenticity of’ through a deployment of their common culture.

We can appreciate therefore that by analysing social practices in conjunction with Welch and Warde’s (2017) conceptualisation regarding how authenticity is deployed tacitly through behaviours - or verbally when it is communicated through language – that culture acts as a form of general understanding, which shapes social practices.

Now that I have explained the several terms and concepts involved in social practice theory and their potential for application to guide empirical analysis, I wish to now summarise the key concepts and ideas that I will adopt to study empirically the process of consumer multiculturalisation focusing on the food consumption practices of Mexican immigrants as they adapt to living in the UK.

### **3.7 Summary and justification for adopting practice theory as the theoretical lens**

I am arguing that by adopting Shove et al.'s (2012) practice theory framework as a conceptual lens, it will be possible to gain insights into the adaptation process of immigrant consumers to multicultural marketplaces by shifting the analytical focus to centre on consumption related practices instead of the usual focus on individual consumers. Practices imply activities and enactments; therefore, the approach is therefore slightly different and, yet, complementary to mainstream literature on consumer acculturation and consumer multiculturalisation. As discussed in the previous chapter this literature has tended to focus on the internal mental processes of immigrant consumers (Cleveland, Laroche, Takahashi, 2015; Galalae et al., 2020; Kizgin et al., 2018) and the strategies by which these consumers construct and reflect their cultural identities through consumption (Askegaard et al., 2005; Kipnis et al., 2019; Oswald, 1999; Porto da Rocha & Strehlau, 2020).

As discussed above, practices are made up of three elements: materials, competencies, and meanings. These are linked in the moment that practices are enacted (Shove et al., 2012). Examining the different elements that form food related practices and analysing the dynamic interactions between these elements in the context of consumer

multiculturalization foregrounds the role of competencies in the consumer multiculturalization process. As discussed in the previous chapter, the role of competencies remains an under studied aspect of consumer multiculturalization. Thus, in order to understand this dynamic process, my analysis will focus in particular on how competencies interact with the other elements of social practice; that is to say, the interactions between competencies and materials, and between competencies and meanings. I explain this in depth in the introductory sections of Chapters 4 and 5, so here I will confine myself to explaining how this helps me to gain insights into the phenomenon of consumer multiculturalization.

Following how competencies interact with the other two elements before and during the consumer multiculturalization process helps me to understand how these elements influence each other, how this is reflected in consumption related activities, and how these consumption activities change during the consumer multiculturalization process. In so doing I am able to examine the consumer adaptation process evolving, taking into account the mutual influences between Mexican immigrant culture and the myriad other cultures (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015; Cruz et al., 2018; Luedicke, 2015) in the UK multicultural marketplace, and beyond.

Applying the analysis of the modes of circulation developed by Shove et al. (2012) will help me to follow how knowledge, skills, and competencies are developed, learned and shared among Mexican immigrants and with members of other cultures, in a multicultural marketplace, thus suggesting a more complex picture of the consumer adaptation process than the translation and adaptation of skills outlined in previous studies of consumer acculturation (e.g. Peñaloza, 1994). Studying how competencies,

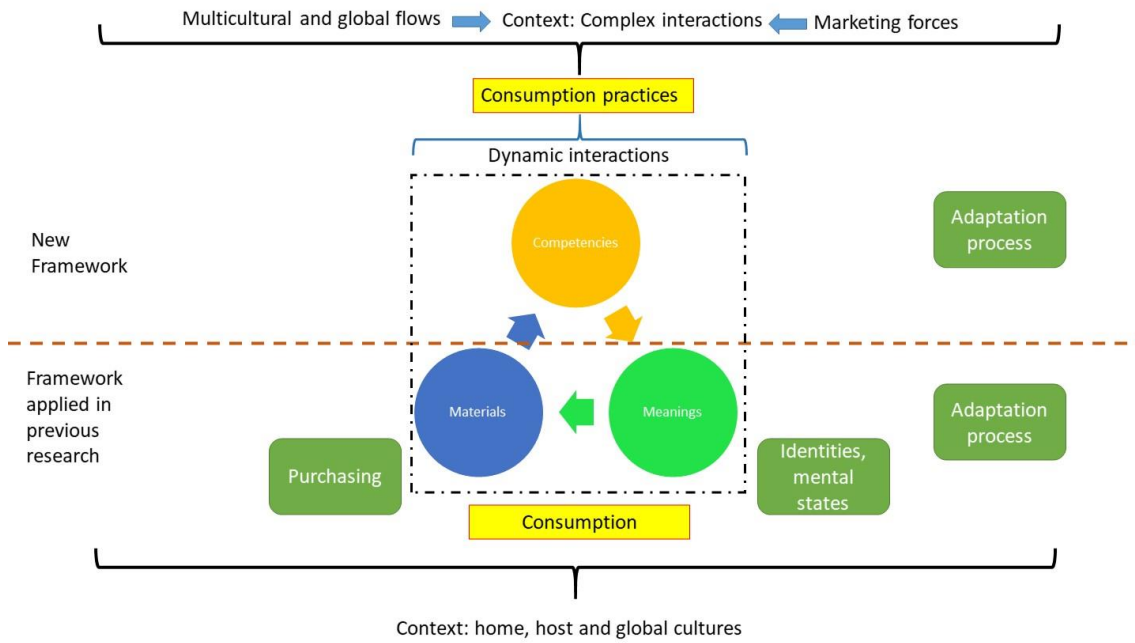


meanings, and materials circulate helps us to broaden the focus beyond host and immigrant cultures (e.g. Askegaard et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994) so as to incorporate a much broader range of cultural interactions (c.f. Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Dey et al., 2019) as well as acknowledging the role of globalising forces in the process (c.f. Cleveland & Xu, 2019; Kipnis et al., 2014), including the specific influence of marketing (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020). By adopting this approach, features involved in different social practices, which have been neglected in previous research on consumer acculturation can be brought into view.

I will analyse how Mexican immigrants' social food consumption practices share 'general understandings' (Shatzki, 2002) of their 'culture in action' (Welch & Warde, 2017). These shared elements help to foreground other ramifications of the adaptation process, for example, showing how tacitly shared knowledge acts in the background, as their common culture. Thus, one ramification of this perspective will be to understand the way Mexican immigrant consumers authenticate food while undergoing the consumer multiculturalisation process in the UK.

The approach described above is depicted in Figure 3.7 below which provides a visual representation of the shift in focus that the adoption of a practice theory conceptual framework entails, so as to gain insights into the consumers' adaptation process to multicultural marketplaces.

Figure 3.7.1 The approach to study consumer acculturation adopted in the present study.



Now that I have explained how by adopting practice theory as my theoretical lens, I believe it will be possible to gain new insights into the consumer multiculturalization process, I will move in the next chapter to outline the methodology underpinning the study.

## **4 Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I explain the reasoning that supports the qualitative approach adopted in the present research to achieve my objectives and aim, including the philosophical underpinnings and researcher positionality. The chapter is structured as follows. Section 4.2 presents the philosophical bases justifying the adoption of a phenomenological paradigm. Section 4.3 explains the position that I adopt as a researcher, based on my cultural background and the approach adopted to study a multicultural marketplace, applying the framework developed by Kipnis, Bebek, and Bröckerhoff (2021). Section 4.4 presents the way in which my objectives are aligned with my data collection methods and an explanation of how the different methods were applied. Section 4.5 shows how I conducted the data analysis, and Section 4.6 concludes by summarising and paving the way for the presentation of my findings.

### **4.2 Philosophical underpinnings**

The consumer multiculturalisation process is a social phenomenon. As such, consumers construct their reality within society and society shapes consumer experiences (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011), therefore, the phenomena here understood as the consumer multiculturalisation process are in a ‘constant state of revision’ (Bryman, 2016, p. 33) and cannot be conceptualised as something that is there waiting to be discovered, outside of the individuals who undergo the process (Crotty, 1998). Thus, in order to gain insights into the consumer experiences whereby immigrant consumers develop knowledge, skills, and competencies, it is necessary to try to understand these experiences in the context in which they are lived, that is to say, to adopt an existential phenomenological paradigm (Thompson et al., 1989). Existential phenomenology is a ‘paradigm that

seeks to attain a first-person description of experience' (Thompson et al., 1989, p. 133). It does not 'seek to study individuals separated from the environments in which they live or the interaction of the two (which implies separation); rather, the study is of the totality of human-being-in-the-world' (Thompson et al., 1989, p. 135). Existential phenomenology is 'anti-objectivist and thoroughly constructionist' (Crotty, 1998, p. 61).

Accepting that reality and knowledge are socially constructed implies the rejection of a positivistic approach to understanding the phenomenon of consumer multiculturalization. A socially constructed reality that is revised constantly cannot be investigated as fixed and as waiting to be discovered outside of the individuals involved (Crotty, 1998).

Therefore, a social constructionist approach to developing knowledge is appropriate to gain insight into the consumer multiculturalization process, that is to say, knowledge is 'developed and transmitted within an essentially social context' (Crotty, 1998, p. 42), which is aligned with the adoption of the existential phenomenological paradigm. This also implies that we cannot apply quantitative methods to collect data; numerical data is restrictive and does not enable a 'thick' description of consumer experiences. I will come back to provide a detailed discussion of my selection of methods in Section 4.4, at present it is important to acknowledge that Thompson et al. (1989) suggest that researchers should employ in-depth phenomenological interviews to obtain a thorough description of the experiences as lived by the same consumers; in this context the lived experiences of Mexican immigrants while going through the process of adaptation to the multicultural marketplace present in the UK. This allows the researcher to interpret consumption experiences in the context of the same lived experience.

While the adoption of a phenomenological paradigm implies the inclusion of a sociocultural context layer to the analysis, in their insightful article on the ‘context of context’ Askegaard and Linnet (2011) argue that in order to gain insights into the phenomenon studied, it is necessary to include another layer, that of the ‘influences of market and social systems’ (p. 381). In fact, Askegaard and Linnet (2011) suggest that analysing consumption through the theoretical lens of practice theory helps to contextualise consumption, once again indicating that practice theory is aligned with the adoption of a phenomenological paradigm.

The adoption of practice theory as a theoretical framework complements the adoption of an existential phenomenological approach. Practice theory shifts the focus of analysis away from the individual consumer’s rational understanding of a phenomenon to understand it in the context of the lived experience (Thompson et al., 1989), because the unit of analysis is the activity, or practice and not the individual. From the discussion of my theoretical framework in Chapter 3, we can appreciate that individuals make sense of their world through the way competencies, meanings, and materials are linked and are carried out as practices (Shove et al., 2012). When these elements circulate, change, and are adopted by other practitioners, each of these elements reflects society and culture (Welch & Warde, 2017) and, at the same time, these practices have the power to change the social fabric (Shove et al., 2012).

As a consequence of adopting a social constructionist paradigm, it is important to acknowledge that the researcher is influenced, in her turn, by society; therefore, I need to analyse my own position within this research, which I now proceed to do.

### **4.3 Researcher positionality**

The adoption of an existential phenomenological paradigm to study the process of consumer multiculturalisation implies that my position as researcher is also dynamic. My analysis and means of creating new knowledge is influenced by my sociocultural characteristics and previous experiences. I could argue that being a Mexican living in the UK facilitates my interpretation of cultural nuances that could be missed by an outsider; however, Kipnis et al., (2021) caution researchers in relation to these and other simplistic ways of understanding researcher positionality when researching multicultural marketplaces. Although this valuable article was published after I collected and analysed my data, there is value in applying the concepts which Kipnis et al. (2021) describe to aid understanding of my positionality as a researcher into the phenomenon being studied. In the next paragraphs I summarise some of the most important points to demonstrate how I understood my cultural positionality as a researcher. Appendix B contains Table B.1 and B.2 with the relevant analysis.

#### **4.3.1 Personal introspections on researcher cultural positionality**

In order to understand the dynamic stances adopted by researchers when conducting research in multicultural marketplaces, Kipnis et al. (2021) recommend analysing how the researcher moves between different stances on a continuum from a total outsider - total insider. In so doing the authors define eight different positions based on the sharing of social and spatial parameters with different stakeholders involved in the study, including participants, as follows: 1) 'total indigenous insider', 2) 'partial insider/indigenous associate', 3) 'returning insider/outsider from within (homecomer)', 4) 'adopted outsider/external insider', 5) 'boundary spanner outsider- situational

associate’, 6) ‘total outsider’, 7) ‘transnational race/ethnic diaspora associate’ and 8) ‘world citizen/third culture kid’ (p. 406).

A first analysis of my perspective as a researcher studying a phenomenon in a multicultural marketplace eliminates those identities with which I do not share nationality, ethnic/racial identity and background, therefore withdrawing identities 4 to 8. My analysis indicates that I move dynamically between the positions of a ‘total indigenous insider’ and a ‘returning insider/outsider from within (homecomer)’ during the different stages of my study. Table B.1 in Appendix B shows a more detailed analysis of the cultural features that I share with my participants based on my social and spatial position when compared with theirs. Social here refers to ‘national/ethnic/racial identity and background’ and spatial to ‘locale situatedness as that of origin and residence’ (Kipnis et al., 2021, p. 406). For example, when I recruited participants, my researcher cultural positionality was of a ‘total indigenous insider’, which implies that I shared with my participants the same social and spatial characteristics, such that I asked for help by appealing to our common origin and culture. Later, I positioned myself as a ‘partial insider’ when conducting interviews and participant observation with those Mexican immigrants who came from a different region in Mexico from me. This was mainly with participants coming from the North of Mexico, whereas I am from Central Mexico, I thus needed to understand some concepts, ideas, and food consumption practices that I did not share.

Finally, I adopted an identity of ‘returning insider/outsider from within’ when I positioned myself as an international student, differentiating myself from my participants, who were immigrants living in the UK, with no planned date of return, thus

not sharing ‘residence’ with me (in the long term, only temporarily). In addition, I argue that I adopted this position when I tried to examine the phenomenon objectively, that is to say, when I bracketed trying to understand the participants’ experiences as immigrants who know and therefore make sense of their experiences in the multicultural marketplace present in the UK. Thus, I adopted this last position during data collection and data analysis, and when theorising my findings.

#### **4.3.2 Operationalising researcher cultural positionalities**

Kipnis et al. (2021) suggest how to operationalise the researcher’s cultural positionalities, showing the weaknesses and strengths of adopting them at different stages of research. Considerations go from evaluating how the researcher’s cultural positionality influences engagement with participants during data collection to analyse if there are ‘under-represented/oppressed perspectives’ (p. 410) and how the researcher cultural positionality adopted gives them voice. The authors suggest analysing ‘psychological’ and ‘relational emplacement/displacement tensions’ where the ‘emplacement/displacement’ is understood as mechanisms that underlie researcher cultural positionality dynamics. For example, between the psychological emplacement/displacement tensions there are ‘cultural shock’, ‘over emphasis of similarities between cultures’, and ‘differences of imagined vs real homeland’. On the other hand, tensions between cultures and other-imposed expectations regarding worldview are relational emplacement/displacement tensions. Table B.2 in Appendix B shows an analysis of the weaknesses and strengths of adopting these various researcher cultural positionalities, which I will now discuss.



During the data collection stage of my research, adopting a position of ‘total insider’ helped me to recruit participants by appealing to our common culture; nonetheless, this position could affect my perceptions when I began to develop a more personal tie with each participant. The solution was to adopt again the posture of the outsider, that is to say, to forget during data collection the friendship that was developing and to locate myself as an international doctoral student, therefore adopting an ‘outsider position’. In this stage, I positioned myself as a ‘partial insider/indigenous associate’ when engaging in discussion with Mexican immigrants raised in the South or North of Mexico, who, as commented upon in Chapter 1, have distinctive characteristics in their food consumption, which are different to those in Central Mexico where I was raised. To include this nuance, I tried to ask ‘non-biased questions’, to avoid imposing my pre-existing understanding of their food consumption. Follow-up interviews helped me to understand these differences.

Finally, adopting a ‘returning insider/outsider from within’, locating myself as an international PhD student, could have hindered me in maintaining a rapport with some of my earliest recruited participants, some of whom later left the study. One way to avoid this could have been to adopt the ‘total insider’ position, thus appealing to our common culture instead of highlighting my differences. Another difficulty I found when I adopted this ‘outsider’ position was in understanding the differences between Mexican immigrants’ food consumption practices while living in Mexico and their practices now, living in the multicultural marketplace of the UK. I had to adopt the position of the outsider, inquiring through my interviews about these differences with which I was not familiar. Follow-up interviews allowed me to improve my understanding.

During data analysis, adopting a ‘total insider’ position helped me to understand the way participants explained their experiences in Spanish, applying slang and local dialects which I incorporated into the analysis. The ‘partial insider’ position helped me to identify that, even though there were some cultural nuances in the food consumption practices of Mexican immigrants coming from the North of Mexico, there were also many similarities that I could incorporate into the analysis. The adoption of the ‘outsider position’, during data analysis may have affected my interpretation of the data, because immigrants make sense of their experiences in their new multicultural marketplace context, with which I was yet not familiar. This was mitigated through the follow-up interviews because I began to analyse data while I was still collecting it, following an iterative and abductive process. This is explained in Section 4.5.

Finally, during the ‘theorising and learning’ stage (Kipnis et al., 2021, p. 404), adopting a ‘total insider’ position helped me to conceptualise the way these Mexican immigrants made sense of their consumer multiculturalisation process through our common culture. The ‘partial insider’ stance helped in giving voice to different groups of Mexican immigrants, those who were not raised in Central Mexico, at the same time as being able to recognise that their consumption experiences in multicultural marketplaces still aligned with our common culture. Finally, the ‘outsider’ researcher positionality allowed me to conceptualise the differences between how Mexicans made sense of their food consumption in Mexico and how they did so in the multicultural marketplace present in the UK.

In summary, the analysis of the different cultural positions that I adopted during the different stages of the study can help to bring into focus some of the strengths and

limitations of my methodological approach in trying to best capture the role that knowledge, skills, and competencies play in the consumer multiculturalization process of Mexican immigrants. I have applied this framework retrospectively to make sense of my researcher positionality over the course of this research.

Now that I have shown my researcher positionality and how it could be linked with the methodology, I move on to explain the rationale for the methods applied in this study.

## **4.4 Data collection**

### **4.4.1 Introduction**

The adoption of practice theory as a conceptual lens implies the use of multiple methods of data collection. I explain the reasoning behind my data collection approach in section 4.4.2 and how it was conducted in the field in section 4.4.3

### **4.4.2 Reasoning behind collection of data**

Before I began data collection, I obtained ethical approval from the Business School's Research Ethics Committee. Appendix C provides the notification of approval, demonstrating that my research complied with the University of Huddersfield's procedures.

In order to capture how Mexican immigrants experience the consumer multiculturalization process in the UK, I needed to collect data in respect of the social practices comprising their food related consumption activities. I therefore adopted a multimodal approach (Rossolatos, 2015) as I felt that this would help me to better understand immigrant consumers' consumption experiences. To adopt a multimodal approach requires the

addition of ‘visual, oral, tactile, sonic (or aural), visuospatial...and kinetic’ data (Rossolatos, 2015, p. 432) to interview data. That is to say, in addition to recording the spoken words through interviews and conversations with my participants I also collected data relating to their movement, body positions, sounds, tones of voice etc, which helped me to understand in more depth the role that knowledge, skills and competencies play in the consumption practices of immigrants.

Aligned with adopting an existential-phenomenological paradigm (Thompson et al., 1989), this study adopted qualitative methods to collect data. In Table D.1 in Appendix D, I show the alignment between the different methods selected and how each of them helped me to incorporate different features of the way Mexican immigrants develop competencies while adapting to the multicultural marketplace found in the UK.

To collect data, I planned to contact Mexican immigrants through Mexican immigrants Facebook groups, and then follow a snowball sampling approach, asking them about other Mexican immigrants in order to contact them.

I decided to conduct individual interviews with participants to take advantage of the flexibility allowed by the method, and to obtain a detailed description of the experiences of immigrant consumers. During interviews, following the interview guide helped me to obtain verbal data regarding different ‘modes’ (Rossolatos, 2015) through which I could make sense of the participants’ experiences. That is to say, I noted their descriptions of specific movements and paid attention to their tone of voice during our conversations, since these additional modes could imply specific meanings associated to what the participants were saying. For example, if the participant was annoyed or exhausted by

the experience being recalled, the tone of voice could indicate this. When it was pertinent, I based my follow-up questions on the answers of participants so as to understand their experiences in depth. Table 4.4.1.1 below explains why I decided to include each of the questions in both the first in-depth semi-structured interviews and the follow-up semi-structured interviews.

*Table 4.4.1.1 Reasoning behind the questions in the interview guides*

Questions.	Reasoning
First in-depth semi-structured interview.	
1. Introductory questions: How old are you? Are you married, single? Do you have children? Where were you born? ...and where did you live in Mexico?	To ascertain the profile of the participant
2. Can you describe the various activities that you undertook when purchasing food while living in Mexico?  (Prompts: What foods do you remember buying? Who used to go with you? How do you remember feeling during each of these activities? From which types of retailers do you remember purchasing?)	To obtain a description of the food consumption practices of participants before arriving to live in the UK.  To understand how participants developed knowledge, skills, and competencies involved in their food consumption social practices before arriving in the UK.
3. What about what you used to eat while living in Mexico?  (Prompts: Who used to cook in your house? Did you cook while living in Mexico? Who taught you to cook? What were your favourite dishes? Which foods did you dislike? Do you have any specific memory about how you learned to cook? Is there any family recipe that you remember?)	
4. Before arriving in the UK, where did you live? (added after conducting my first round of interviews)	
5. What did you eat in that country? (added after conducting my first round of interviews)  (Prompts: Did you cook? What did you cook? How did you learn to cook that dish? Where do you remember obtaining your food? Is there any experience with eating/obtaining food that you especially remember?)	
6. When did you arrive in the UK? With whom?	To understand how participants made sense of the multicultural marketplace present in the UK when they arrived.

<p>7. What do you remember eating when you arrived in the UK? (Prompts: Where did you purchase your first meals? What did you think of them? Do you remember your feelings in that moment? What about any first experience eating/cooking a British food item?)</p>	<p>To understand how participants developed skills, knowledge, and competencies to adapt to the multicultural marketplace in the UK. To look for derivations, consequences, and/or repercussions of their past food consumption practices in the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies involved in the process of adaptation to the multicultural marketplace.</p>
<p>8. Can you describe for me your usual routine to obtain your food now? (Prompts: Where do you buy/obtain your food/ingredients? Do you plan ahead? Do you cook? Who cooks in your house? Do you like what you eat? What dishes do you like/dislike? Is there any dish that you wish/wished to cook? How was that experience?)</p> <p>9. Have you tried the Tex-Mex food sold as Mexican in the UK? (added after conducting my first round of interviews) (Prompts: Where did you find it? Did you like it? How was your experience?)</p> <p>10. Are you planning to return to Mexico in the short/long term? (Prompts: What are your cravings, regarding the food you used to eat in Mexico?)</p>	<p>To obtain a description of the current food consumption practices of participants. To understand how participants developed skills, knowledge, and competencies to adapt to the multicultural marketplace in the UK. To look for derivations, consequences, and/or repercussions of their past and current food consumption practices in the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies involved in the process of adaptation to the multicultural marketplace.</p>
<p>Follow-up semi-structured interview.</p>	
<p>1. Can you tell me about what you ate during the last week? (Prompts: Did you go to where you usually purchase your food? What did you purchase? Were there any changes in your routine? About what you told me you were planning in our last interview, how was it?)</p> <p>2. What did you cook during the last week? (Prompts: ...or who cooked? Did you help? Where did you obtain the food/ingredients?)</p> <p>3. Did you go out to have dinner / any meal? (Prompts: What did you eat/buy? Where did you buy it? How was the experience? Did you like/dislike something from there?)</p>	<p>To obtain a description of the current food consumption practices of participants. To understand how participants develop skills, knowledge, and competencies to adapt to the multicultural marketplace in the UK. To follow-up derivations, consequences, and/or repercussions of their past and current food consumption practices in the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies involved in the process of adaptation to the multicultural marketplace and/or to deepen understanding.</p>

<p>4. Are you planning to cook/eat something special in the next few days? (Prompts: What? Where are you planning to obtain the ingredients?)</p>	
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Thus, questions posed during interviews helped me to achieve my first and second Research Objectives: to understand the role of materials and to understand the role of meanings in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural marketplace, achieving this by analysing how materials and competencies, and how meanings and competencies, linked in the food consumption practices described by participants. Also, the questions in the follow-up interviews helped me to understand how immigrant consumers developed knowledge, skills, and competencies by tracking the way participants carried out several activities. During both types of interviews, I added questions to understand some of the ramifications of the way that immigrant consumers carried out their food consumption practices. For example, when asking about their feelings during an experience, I asked, in addition, whether they felt that they were eating an ‘authentic’ Mexican dish, even though they had described something they had cooked using materials associated with other cultures present in the multicultural marketplace.

I decided to conduct participant observation to obtain, first-hand, observational data on other ‘modes’ (Rossolatos, 2015), thus paying attention to the movements, and postures in different scenarios, to reactions to sounds and to the use of a different tone of voice, which could help me to obtain a richer description of what the participant was experiencing. In addition, participant observation helped me to triangulate what the participants had recalled during interviews. This allowed me to gain a first-hand experience of the context in which the food consumption experiences of participants

developed. That is to say, of the interaction between the multicultural marketplace and the food consumption practices. Also, participant observation allowed me to observe how immigrant consumers interact with others, either members of other cultures or of their own culture, during their food consumption activities. With this I corroborated what they had told me during our interviews and, sometimes, I obtained extra data so as to understand their experiences and the ramifications of the adaptation process in more detail. Thus, participant observation helped me to address Research Objectives 1 and 2 more fully, that is to say, helped me to understand how Mexican immigrants developed consumer competency, interacting with the multicultural marketplace then associating materials with competencies and/or meanings with competencies during their food consumption social practices. Also, interacting and observing the way participants carried out their food consumption social practices gave me the opportunity to obtain data regarding the consequences, derivations, and/or repercussions of the adaptation process, thus helping me to address Research Objective 3, which is to analyse the ramifications of the adaptation process.

Netnography is ethnography conducted via the internet (Kozinets, 2002). It helps researchers to gain insights into the culture of communities, being less costly and ‘more naturalistic and unobtrusive’ (2002, p. 61) than physical interviews and focus groups. I had previously joined multiple Facebook groups of Mexicans living in the UK when I first arrived to live in the UK. I was therefore aware of the kind of data that I could obtain from conducting netnographic research in these Facebook groups. I requested permission from the Facebook group administrators to conduct research within these groups, and it was granted on the condition that I preserved the anonymity of participants and Facebook groups too. Whilst the participants in these groups posted



with regard to many different topics related to living in the UK as an immigrant, many posts were dedicated to food. All of the groups showed frequent activity/interactivity, and many of the participants also included photographs and emojis in their posts, which enriched the written data. These factors suggested that Facebook groups such as these were suitable for conducting a netnography (Kozinets, 2002). The netnography also provided the additional advantage of being able to recruit participants for interviews and participant observation.

In addition, it was desirable to corroborate the interview data as well as the data obtained from participant observations, which could be restricted by the time shared with the participants. Thus, the Facebook posts allowed me to obtain additional data regarding the sharing of knowledge, skills, and competencies. Not only this, I was able to observe the social interactions of participants thus widening the social circle that could be observed during participant observation, which was generally restricted to interactions with sellers and members of the participant's family. Thus, conducting netnographic research through Facebook allowed me to broaden my perspective to include interactions with other members of the Mexican diaspora, gaining further insights into the culture of the group. This helped me to address my Research Objectives 1 and 2 with regard to understanding how participants develop consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural marketplace, by developing, sharing, and shaping knowledge, skills, and competencies during these social interactions. I was thus able to focus on analysing both the role of materials (Objective 1) and the role of meanings (Objective 2) in this process.

Also, the posts in the Facebook groups allowed me to incorporate other data, by looking for the derivations, consequences, and/or repercussions of the sharing and shaping of knowledge, skills, and competencies, to understand the ramifications of these practices; thus, helping me to address Research Objective 3.

#### **4.4.2 Data collection procedure**

Mexican immigrants residing in the UK were recruited to take part in the study using a snowball sampling technique, with individuals being approached via social media networks. Posts were uploaded in two Facebook groups comprising Mexicans living in the UK, with the permission of the administrations of these groups. In the posts, I described my profile and asked for participants who could be interested in taking part in my research, explaining that those who wanted to participate needed to be in charge of the food consumption in their household (sometimes or all the time) and be an adult, over the age of 18. These posts were written in Spanish. An example of one of the posts, translated into English, can be found in Appendix E. Most of my participants were recruited via these posts, and some of them forwarded my posts to friends and other members of the group. Once they answered, I contacted them through direct messages, explaining in more detail what the research was about and what their participation would involve. If they still agreed to take part, I proceeded to ask for an email address to send them the Information Sheet and Consent Form, copies of which can be found in Appendix F, sections F.1 and F.2.

Once the participant returned the signed consent form, through a photo attached to the email or sent through Facebook messenger, I contacted her/him again via a direct message, asking for a date and time to conduct our first interview, explaining that it

would last around an hour. At the beginning of the first interview, I reiterated that I would not disclose her/his identity, and that I only needed to record her/his voice, even if the interview was conducted via video chat. Because of internet issues, most of the interviews were conducted only by voice chat. The interview guide can be found in Section G.1 in Appendix G and I explain why I decided to include each of the questions in the interview guide in Table 4.4.1.1 above. A transcription of one initial in-depth interview can be found in Section H.1 in Appendix H. Because interviews were conducted through internet voice chat, participants were at home, but I did not ask about that. All the interviews were conducted in Spanish and voice recorded.

After conducting the first interviews, I found that some of the participants had lived in other countries after moving from Mexico and before arriving in the UK, which is why I included Questions 4 and 5 in the interview guide. Another repetitive subject that participants kept raising during these interviews was that of the Tex-Mex food brands found in several countries, and advertised as Mexican, thus I added Question 9 to the interview guide. After conducting the first interview, we agreed on a date and time for our second interview, usually a month later.

During the first stage of interviewing, I conducted a total of thirty-five initial interviews. However, ten participants could not be contacted for further interviews, so they were withdrawn from the study. Of the remaining twenty-five participants, I decided not to include five of them in the final sample due to the low quality of data; for example, because participants interrupted the interviews to attend to other activities or because their answers indicated a low level of engagement. Before the second interview, I contacted participants via a direct message a day before the agreed date, to remind them

about our interview. Some did not have any issue; others asked to change the date of their second interview due to being on holiday or having to attend other activities. The second and subsequent interviews lasted up to fifteen minutes and topics covered included what the participants had cooked and eaten during the previous week, if they had travelled to Mexico during the holidays, what they had eaten and whether their British partners had travelled with them, including follow up questions on topics commented upon during our previous interview, for example, dishes that they had planned to cook or ingredients they had hoped to obtain either in the UK or during their travels back to Mexico. An example of one of the short interviews conducted can be found in Section H.2 in Appendix H. Table 4.4.2.1 below shows the profile of the twenty participants that comprised the final sample. The reader can appreciate that half of the participants had lived in other countries before arriving in the UK. Pseudonyms are used to ensure the anonymity of participants.

Table 4.4.2.1 Profile of participants

	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Children	Marital status	Nationality of spouse	Time living in the UK at time of first interview	State and Region of Mexico where participant was raised	Countries lived in before UK	Country moved to after contact
1	Dolores	Female	34	Yes	Married	British	6 months	Mexico City, Central	Mexico, Argentina	India
2	Linda	Female	65	Yes	Married	British	7 years	Unknown	Mexico, USA	
3	Mara	Female	33	No	Married	Mexican	2 weeks	Mexico City, Central	Mexico, Canada	
4	Lena	Female	36	No	Married	British	11 months	Puebla, Central	Mexico	
5	Daisy	Female	29	No	Married	British	2 years	Michoacan, Central	Mexico, USA	
6	Hannah	Female	46	Yes	Married	British	6 years	Mexico City, Central	Mexico	
7	Summer	Female	41	Yes	Un-married	N/A	4 months	Nuevo Leon, North	Mexico, USA	
8	Gracie	Female	30	No	Married	British	3 years, 6 m.	Mexico City, Central	Mexico	Germany
9	Delilah	Female	34	No	Married	British	10 months	Guanajuato, North-Central	Mexico	
10	Calista	Female	34	Yes	Married	British	2 years	Mexico City, Central	Mexico	
11	Isabella	Female	54	Yes	Married	German	5 years	State of Mexico, Central	Mexico, Belgium, France, China, Germany, UK	
12	Jacey	Female	31	Yes	Married	Venezuelan	8 Years	Morelos, Central	Mexico, Switzerland	
13	Macy	Female	33	No	Married	Dominican Republic	4 years	State of Mexico, Central	Mexico, Spain, Australia	Australia
14	Naira	Female	38	Yes	Married	Spain	1 year, 6 m.	State of Mexico, Central	Mexico, USA, Germany	
15	Margaret	Female	30	No	Married	British	1 year	Nuevo Leon, North	Mexico	
16	Parisa	Female	49	Yes	Married	British	25 years	Jalisco, West-Central	Mexico	
17	Layla	Female	37	No	Married	British	3 years	Mexico City, Central	Mexico	
18	Teresa	Female	42	Yes	Married	Mexican	17 years	Veracruz, East-Central	Mexico	
19	Caleb	Male	29	No	Un-married	N/A	4 years	Mexico City, Central	Mexico	
20	Ryan	Male	42	Yes	Married	Mexican	6 months	Mexico City, Central	Mexico, Korea, USA	

All the interviews were conducted in Spanish, transcribed, and translated to English.

Three of my participants moved to live to a different country during the follow-up interviews; this is detailed in Table 4.4.2.1

I conducted a second interview with fifteen participants, third interviews with ten, and a fourth and fifth with only one of my twenty participants. Even though I tried to contact participants to agree to the follow-up interviews, I decided to not risk causing annoyance, only contacting them twice before the meetings. With two of my participants, I only conducted one (long) first interview, although I also conducted participant observation with them. Another two participants were contacted and interviewed only once. I decided to cease the collection of data because data saturation was reached (as I explain in detail in Section 4.5), meaning that I did not find any new data in the last interviews conducted with either of the participants in question.

Participant observations were conducted with those who were agreeable (eight participants in total), and where the visits were feasible. Problems in arranging to conduct participant observations included the participants living too far from my location (Huddersfield) to the point where I could not afford the transportation costs and overnight stay that would be required (for example, Linda in Wales) and the participants lacking the time to spend with me, because of their jobs or other issues. Eight Mexican women agreed to such a visit and permitted me to conduct participant observation with them whilst they engaged in food shopping. Two participants were accompanied by their partners, both of whom were British, the other six shopped alone or with their children. I accompanied all of them to shop in supermarkets, one to a shopping centre, and one to an Indian food store in addition to the supermarket. Seven participants

allowed me to observe their cooking, and I joined six of them to share in a family meal with them. One was alone with her baby. Only one out of these six participants did not agree to my taking photos. I took field notes, noting down ideas while accompanying the participants as they carried out all these food related activities, which I later captured in a document, trying to remember the details of my experience. Please see Appendix I for an example of the field notes that I made during one of these visits. Spontaneously, seven of the twenty participants shared photos of their dishes and their thoughts with me through Facebook messenger or Whatsapp from time to time, allowing me to ask some questions regarding their photos.

Regarding the Facebook posts, the administration organiser of two Facebook groups of Mexicans living in the UK were contacted. In fact, both organisers were participants in the study. They allowed me to analyse the Facebook posts regarding food, if I agreed to conceal the identity of participants. I selected all posts that I could collect between January 2018 and March 2019 for analysis. In most of the posts, participants shared where to find ingredients, recipes, and utensils, and some commented about their feelings regarding some meals and experiences related to specific food, such as Tex-Mex, found in the supermarket and at restaurants and other retailers. Because I recruited some of my participants through these Facebook groups, some of the Mexican immigrants that I interviewed and with whom I conducted participant observation also took part in some of the Facebook posts that I collected and analysed. I use the same pseudonyms for these participants when presenting data from their posts, interviews, and participant observation.

As can be appreciated from Table 4.4.2.1, eighteen females and two males engaged with my research. The final data set comprises of twenty long interviews, twenty-seven shorter follow-up interviews, eight sets of field notes from the participant observations, seven spontaneously written messages, sixty-two photographs, and thirty Facebook posts regarding food.

Now that I have described the process of my data collection, I move on in the next section to explain how I analysed all the data collected.

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

Interviews, Facebook posts, messages, and field notes were translated from Spanish to English, trying to preserve their original meanings. In addition, they were reviewed externally by an English native speaker and then captured in Nvivo software.

Data collection was guided by data saturation (Bowen, 2008; Fusch & Ness, 2015) and abductive logic (Bajc, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2012). Abductive logic is the process of attaining a social scientific account related to data collected. It implies what academic authors have called ‘guessing’ (Bajc, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2012). The process of abductive logic begins when something catches the researcher’s attention during data collection work. This could be patterns of meaning and/or issues of potential interest that later could be used when performing thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher can imagine many explanations for each noteworthy event; she selects the one that seems the most plausible. This explanation is subject to further examination, which can lead the researcher back to the empirical data or perhaps indicates a need to go back to the field and collect additional data, working to create the best ‘theoretical narrative’ (Bajc, 2012, p. 82).



In the present study, the analysis of the data began during the data collection process. In this phase I applied abductive reasoning (Bajc, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2012), paying attention to the data collected, looking for data that could help me to gain insights into how Mexican immigrants develop competencies to adapt to the multicultural marketplace. The abductive reasoning continued during the following phase, in which I transcribed the data collected up to that time, reading and rereading it, noting down initial ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These phases were not linear. I continued collecting data while transcribing, reading it and noting down some preliminary ideas. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), I began to search for potential codes and themes. At the same time, I applied the ‘guessing’ (Bajc, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2012) described above. Some events during data collection drew my attention, thus impelling me to try to find the underlying themes (Bajc, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2012; Spiggle, 1994), such as those related to the consumption of Tex-Mex food. This process of collecting data, transcribing, capturing, guessing, and returning to the field to collect new data, using new approaches (adapting interviews and focusing on certain events when applying the other methods to collect data) continued until data saturation was reached (Bowen, 2008; Fusch & Ness, 2015) and all data was collected and captured in Nvivo software (Bajc, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2012; Spiggle, 1994).

The process explained above ended when I proceeded to finish my thematic analysis of the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first level of abstraction was the generation of codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which were aligned with my theoretical framework, thus coding the different food consumption practices carried out by participants, such as ‘eating’, ‘shopping’, ‘cooking’, and ‘obtaining ingredients’.

Afterwards, the next step of abstraction was to categorise the codes (Spiggle, 1994), adopting a theoretical analysis approach (Bajc, 2012). Thus, I looked at how participants tended to link competencies with materials and competencies with meanings, obtaining a first categorisation of the food consumption social practices conducted by Mexican immigrants. After generating the first round of coding and categorisation (the coding could change later, as will be explained below), my search for themes began (Braun & Clarke, 2006), joining categories, using the process of abstraction, as explained by Spiggle (1994), thus trying to find the best ‘higher-order conceptual constructs’ (Spiggle, 1994, p. 493) by gathering those categories that shared underlying constructs. This was an iterative process, going back and forth, reviewing the generated codes against the categories and the potential themes (Spiggle, 1994). While all these activities could be interpreted as pure desk work, these activities were conducted while data collection was still ongoing, therefore alternating the activities and following abductive reasoning (Bajc, 2012; Scott & Garner, 2012).

In the case of the linking of competencies with material practices, I abstracted five food consumption social practices: 1) ‘locating Mexican food retailers’, 2) ‘adopting food from other ethnicities’, 3) ‘smuggling food from Mexico into the UK’, 4) ‘cultivating Mexican food’, and 5) ‘breaking the rules’. In the case of linking meanings and competencies, five food consumption social practices were abstracted: 1) ‘creolisation through improvisation to create authentic Mexican dishes’, 2) ‘creolisation through applying Mexican concepts’, 3) ‘rejecting the meanings associated with Tex-Mex food’, 4) ‘learning to accept some Tex-Mex food’, and 5) ‘teaching others to appreciate ‘authentic’ Mexican food’. Finally, three themes were defined: ‘acquisition of food’, ‘creation of a sense of Mexico’, and ‘authenticating Mexican food’.

## **4.6 Summary and conclusions**

To summarise, the activities described above to collect data and analyse it were performed in a coordinated and simultaneous fashion which helped me to overcome the learning curve that, as a novice researcher, I had to face. I had to overcome some limitations, for example, even though my initial plan was to conduct six follow-up interviews with each participant, one per month, this could not be achieved, due to structural limitations that I noted above; nonetheless, the flexibility of qualitative methods allowed me to fill these ‘gaps’ by collecting data through other methods, for example, by asking things of the participants through Whatsapp messages.

The following two chapters present the results of my analysis, showing how Mexican immigrants develop food competencies to adapt to the multicultural marketplace present in the UK, and beyond, in a categorised and descriptive fashion.

## **5 Acquiring food and sharing the knowledge**

### **5.1 Introduction**

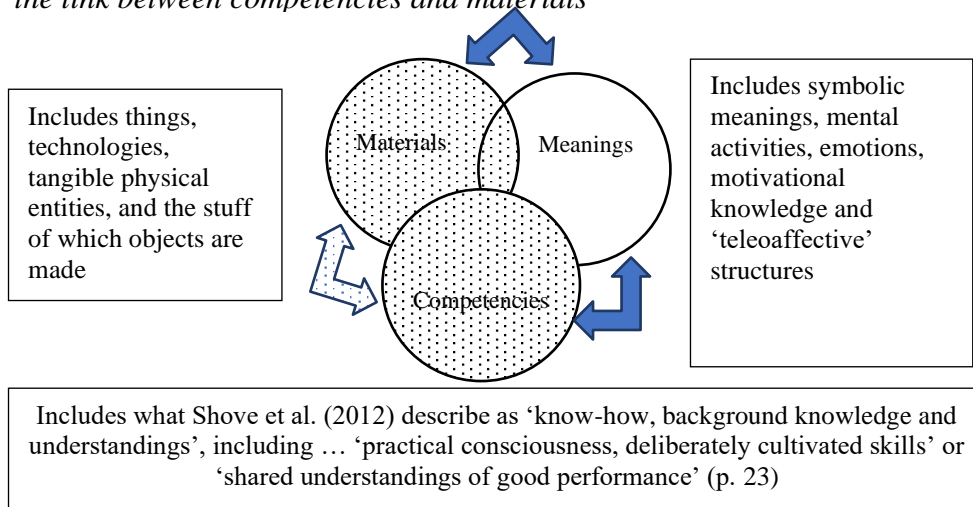
This chapter examines the consumer multiculturalization process of Mexican immigrants from the perspective of their acquisition of Mexican food. All of the Mexican participants in this study incorporate at least some Mexican food into their everyday lives in the UK, in order for them to continue sensing their Mexican ethnicity. At the same time, they all acknowledge that in addition to Mexican food, they also consume food from a range of different food cultures. Therefore, it could be argued that the participants have adopted an integrationist strategy (Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki, 1989). As we shall see, the multicultural food marketplace in the UK influences this process, by providing a range of opportunities to acquire the Mexican food items that the participants want, at the same time as providing various alternatives or substitutes when the Mexican food items required are not available. As this chapter demonstrates, these circumstances increase the complexity of the consumer multiculturalization process.

In the context of the process of consumer multiculturalization, the development of consumer competencies becomes particularly relevant (Cross & Gilly, 2014; Demangeot et al., 2015) and is not as straightforward as translating previous competencies in the new host country (Peñaloza, 1994). As the participants in this study show, the development of new competencies often not related to the previous ones, is required. These new consumer competencies are frequently developed through sharing knowledge with other immigrant consumers to the extent that new and alternative

acquisition practices become normalised among these immigrant consumers, sometimes challenging traditional supply chains.

In order to develop the analysis of Mexican immigrants' food acquisition practices in some detail, I draw on the work of Shove et al. (2012) and focus primarily on the development of the (shared) competencies necessary for acquiring Mexican food (see Figure 4.1.1 below), as identified through primary research with Mexican participants. Here, materials are the Mexican food items, ingredients, acceptable substitutes, and other objects that the participants feel that they need to acquire and produce 'authentic' Mexican dishes. Competencies include knowledge, know-how, understanding, abilities, and skills (Shove et al., 2012), which participants had acquired previously and/or developed individually and in collaboration with other Mexican immigrants while going through their adaptation process. To develop my analysis I draw on the concepts of 'ability' as something which is present 'since childbirth', for example, how to recognise people (Lizardo, 2009, p. 721); of 'skills, knowledge and know-how', which are 'learned by experience and training' (Røpke, 2009, p. 2492); and finally, I draw in the notion of competencies that imply the previous concepts: abilities, skills, knowledge, and know-how (Shove et al., 2012), and a 'grasp of the shifting norms that shape understanding' of a practice that is to say, how the others socially 'shape' knowledge, know-how, and skills (Hand, Shove & Southerton, 2007, p. 671). Meanings are not absent from the analysis in this chapter; however, my primary focus is in identifying and understanding the ways in which the two elements - materials and competences - are related, as shown in Figure 5.1.1.

*Figure 5.1.1 The theoretical framework applied in Chapter 5 emphasising the link between competencies and materials*



In this analysis I draw on the notion of 'modes of circulation' developed by Shove et al. (2012) to explain how 'practices are distributed within and between societies' and how they 'travel' (p. 43). Modes of circulation refer to how practices 'spread' among practitioners in different places and become a usual way of doing something; that is to say, how a particular way of associating materials, meanings, and competencies is disseminated to different populations other than that of origin. For example, preparing 'nachos', a dish associated with Mexico, with yellow or cheddar cheese has become usual in many countries outside of Mexico, providing an example of the circulation of a food preparation practice. Thus, a way to understand how different practices 'travel' from population to population (or also from practitioner to practitioner) implies understanding how each of the three elements of the practice (materials, meanings, and competencies) can be communicated to or understood by another population (or practitioner). Therefore, here I apply Shove et al.'s (2012) notion of circulation and focus my analysis on the way competences and materials circulate and are linked.

By applying this notion of circulation, materials can be seen to circulate when they are physically moved, thus giving access to them to practitioners (Shove et al., 2012). I analyse how importers physically relocate materials in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, and how the participants physically relocate materials by themselves in Subsections 5.4.1 and 5.4.3. This relocation could affect the material during transportation. Subsection 5.4.2 analyses when materials are not physically relocated.

On the topic of finding substitutes, Shove et al. (2012) explain: ‘while it is sometimes possible to use alternatives or substitutes [for materials] ...many material components have...a ‘closed’ script’, meaning that their role, and relation to other artefacts, is ‘tightly defined’ (p. 47). Thus, Section 5.2 and Subsection 5.4.1 analyses when materials are carried directly from Mexico, developing the theoretical discussion of what is ‘closed script’ in the context of Mexican food items as well as its application, and Section 5.3 and Subsections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 deal with when materials are acquired abroad, but still have a closed script. Section 5.4 deals with when materials do not have a ‘closed script’ (Shove et al., 2012).

Regarding competencies, Shove et al. (2012) argue that ‘the concepts of abstraction and reversal are useful’ to understand how competencies circulate (p. 48). The process of abstraction refers to either a memory of a particular way to apply a previously learnt piece of knowledge or a material record of this, for example, a recipe book which the immigrants might carry with them. I analyse how Mexican immigrants could easily reverse knowledge because they have access to all the materials needed to do so in Subsections 5.4.1 and 5.4.3, and when they do not have access to all the materials needed in Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4, and Subsection 5.4.2. Sections 5.2 to 5.4 show how

new knowledge can be acquired by practitioners, here Mexican immigrants, by ‘learn[ing] through doing’ (Shove et al., 2012, p. 48). Once this new knowledge has been acquired, there are different circumstances that allow it to circulate from person to person and from society to society (Shove et al., 2012). The usual way through which knowledge spreads is when masters teach novice practitioners (Nicolini, 2013; Shove et al., 2012), which here I analyse in Sections 5.2, 5.3 and Subsections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.

Multicultural marketplaces raise questions regarding how socially constructed concepts such as ‘authenticity’ are developed, applied, and conveyed during the consumer multiculturalisation process. The present chapter analyses how Mexican immigrants convey their notions of ‘authenticity’, tacitly, by performing it, and/or explicitly, by saying it (Welch & Warde, 2017). Thus, they first develop the notion or idea of ‘authentic’ food, drawing on their lived experiences back home, and then act on it through performance, therefore solidifying the idea. To explain this, I draw upon the notion of ‘general understandings’ developed by Schatzki (2002) and discussed by Welch and Warde (2017). General understandings are ‘ideational elements common to multiple practices’ which are ‘formulated in both doings and sayings’ that ‘sits across the boundary between the discursive and the non-discursive’ (2017, p. 184). The theoretical discussion of how ‘authenticity’ in relation to Mexican food is conveyed tacitly is analysed in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 and Subsections 5.4.1 and 5.4.3 and is conveyed both tacitly and explicitly in Subsection 5.4.2. General understandings gather together several practices, acting as an ‘integrative element’ of practices; that is to say, general understandings tie the ‘various activities of the participants together into a coherent set of doings and sayings’ (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 70). Welch and Warde (2017) argue that sometimes ‘general understandings arise unbidden from practice’ (p. 190),



here, the way general understandings arise from a practice is analysed in Subsection 5.4.3.

The next sections analyse a variety of ways in which Mexican immigrants acquire Mexican food, developing and transferring a variety of competencies, linking them to a variety of materials, and taking advantage of the opportunities that the multicultural marketplace offers to them, while at the same time facing its complexity. Thus, Section 5.2 analyses how competences and materials are involved in how Mexican immigrants acquire food while they search for retailers of Mexican food.

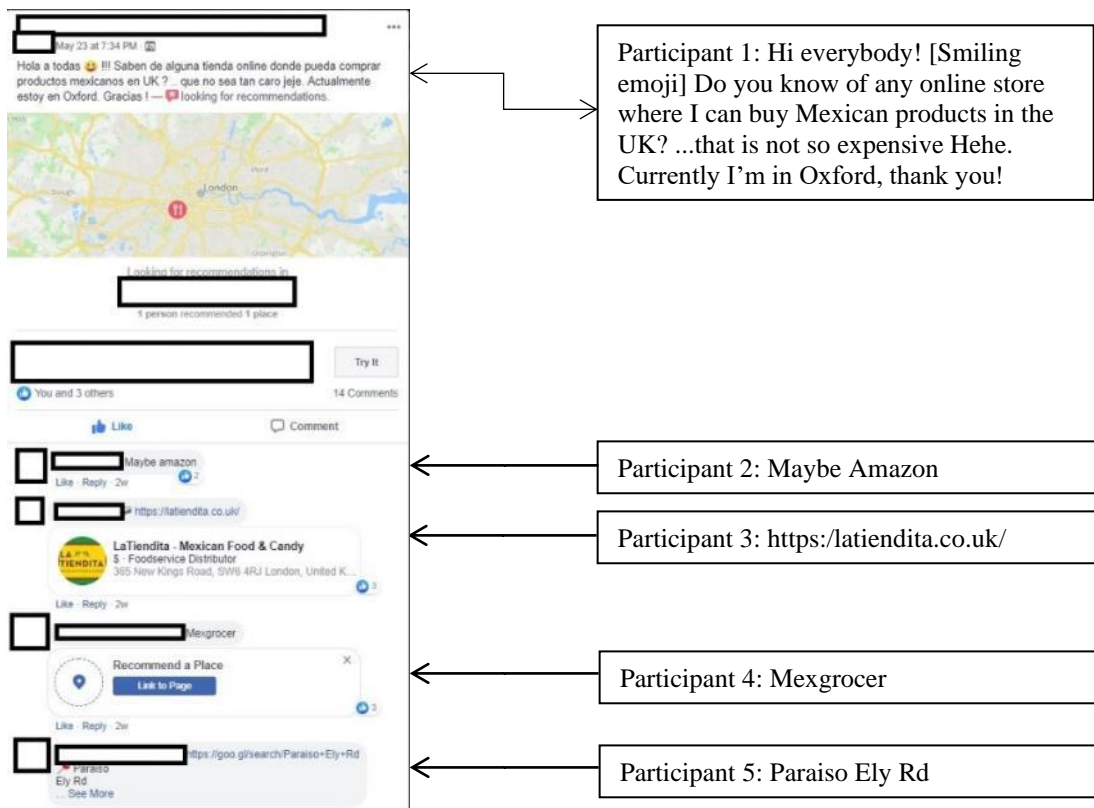
## **5.2 Locating Mexican food retailers**

Previous studies have analysed the way immigrants shop during their consumer acculturation process (Bundy, 2017; Rabikowska & Burrell, 2009; Vallianatos & Raine, 2008) mainly focusing on the outcomes and strategies adopted by immigrants to acculturate. My analysis in this section supplements these studies by foregrounding the role of competencies in the process of consumer acculturation, or more specifically consumer multiculturalisation, as well as highlighting the ways in which the multicultural marketplace affects the process.

It is clear from my research that many Mexican immigrants are keen to try to find 'authentic' Mexican food, and one way to acquire it is to try to find specialist Mexican food stores in their new host country. Previous studies have documented how, sometimes, it is difficult for immigrants to find their ethnic food in the host country (Vallianatos & Raine, 2008).

While Mexican immigrants can buy Mexican food items from these specialist stores in the UK, the products are often expensive. Posts on Facebook groups from Mexican immigrants living in the UK indicate that they tend to ask other Mexican immigrants where they can find Mexican food products at a more reasonable price in the UK (see Figure 5.2.1 below):

*Figure 5.2.1 A Mexican living in the UK asks in a Facebook group where to find Mexican products*



Previous studies have evidenced mainly how immigrants shop for their ethnic food, finding it easily, because the host and home countries are geographically quite close, framing the study bi-culturally (Bundy, 2017; Peñaloza, 1994). For example, Peñaloza (1994) commented how for Mexican immigrants living in the USA, ‘stores ... offered many products from Mexico... in response to the preferences of their Mexican clientele’

and how her participants 'did not have to change their food consumption very much' (p. 43).

However, multiculturalism and the global flows present in current marketplaces (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012) have increased the complexity of the market supply; we can add to this the physical distance between Mexico and the UK that raises the delivery costs for importers, thus increasing the price for consumers. An increase in the supply of ethnic food, including a proliferation of ethnic food stores in the UK, selling mainly South Asian, Arabic, and/or Polish food, has been evidenced in previous studies as well (Rabikowska & Burrell, 2009; Vallianatos & Raine, 2008). The multicultural marketplace present in the UK has made Mexican immigrants struggle to find these stores and to locate Mexican food products that, as Participant 1 in Figure 5.2.1 is commenting, are not 'so expensive'. Those that have found Mexican food stores in the UK, that have learned where they can find these places by 'doing' (Shove et al., 2012), become 'masters' and answer the 'novice' practitioner (Nicolini, 2013; Shove et al., 2012), sharing their knowledge in this regard. As Figure 5.2.1 above indicates, some members of the Facebook group recommend stores specialising in importing Mexican products to the UK, for example Mexgrocer and Mestizo Mexican market. Mexgrocer sells only online, while Mestizo has a physical store in London and sells online as well.

In their study regarding the different types of shops in which Polish immigrants can find Polish food in London, Rabikowska and Burrell (2009) documented how non-Polish ethnic stores, such as Asian food stores, also have a Polish food section, with this also evidencing how the multicultural marketplace increases the difficulty of easily finding particular ethnic food. Thus, Mexican immigrants need to develop special knowledge

and skills in order to locate Mexican food in various different retail stores from a diversity of cultures, as Daisy demonstrated during our second interview. Daisy was born and raised in central Mexico, and before arriving to the UK, she lived for a year in the United States. I began to interview Daisy when she had been living with her British husband in the UK for eleven months. She recalled how she discovered a retailer of Mexican products in her locality “*by chance*”:

*“... going toward, there we found this little Mexican store, and we stayed there like two hours looking... amazed; “Oh, look they have Maseca [brand of Mexican flour to prepare tortillas], and they have these seeds... and ‘epazote’ leaves [Mexican herb used to season food]” and, like, we were enchanted [chuckles]...”*

The way Daisy found a store selling Mexican products “*by chance*” is not really a coincidence. Mexican immigrants indicate that they find these places, either because, like Daisy, they look inside many different stores, thus discovering by expending considerable effort, or by paying considerable attention to different cues that indicate where they might find Mexican food: maybe they saw a Mexican product outside the store, as mentioned below in Figure 5.2.2. They learn to look for these stores and for cues, once again developing new skills through ‘doing’ (Shove et al., 2012). Daisy explains how amazed they were at having found their beloved Mexican food in this store. Importers take care of the way food is packaged and transported. For example, tins and dried products are generally not affected by the way they are transported; on the other hand, cheese and some fresh products, such as vegetables and fruits, are frozen and therefore could be affected during transportation (Shove et al., 2012), which increases the transportation cost as well.

The previous knowledge of how to cook using these Mexican products, which has been ‘abstracted’ when Mexican immigrants move to live to the UK, cannot be ‘reversed’ in the new country (Shove et al., 2012). That is to say, Mexican immigrants could not cook ‘authentic’ Mexican dishes in the UK, mainly because for Mexican immigrants some ingredients could not be replaced with substitutes; thus, these ingredients have a ‘closed script’ (Shove et al., 2012, p. 47) for the participants: they therefore have to search out the importers of Mexican food.

This new knowledge is shared with other Mexican immigrants, as Figure 5.2.2 indicates:

*Figure 5.2.2 A Mexican immigrant shares with others where to locate Mexican food*

Participant 1: Hi beautiful Mexican women. For those that live in the North of London (or nearby) I found this store of international products and they sell loads of tasty Mexican food. The store’s name is Panzers and is in St. John’s Wood.

Participant 2: Thank you

Participant 1: You’re welcome

Participant 3: Yes, I love it!! And the coffee is very good

Participant 4: Thank you for the information

Participant 1: You’re welcome dear

Participant 5: This is worth gold!!

Participant 1: Yes, and outside of the store they have the fruit and there are Manila mangoes! You drool over

Participant 5: [heart eyes emoji]

The participants in Figure 5.2.2 express their gratitude to Participant 1 who is sharing her knowledge. Participant 1 comments that outside of the store there are Manila mangoes, which are Mangoes that are also found in Mexico, which gave her a cue for what else might be found inside. Thus, she found the Mexican food that she is showing in the post and is sharing with the other participants. The other participants recognise the food that they used to consume back at home in Mexico, which was clearly important to them as indicated by Participant 5, who expresses that this finding is ‘worth gold!’ Because Mexican immigrants share their discoveries and findings, such knowledge of where to find the stores and which cues could indicate that they sell authentic Mexican food items starts to become common knowledge among other Mexican immigrants, converting it into a social practice that is shaped by the members of the Mexican diaspora, that is to say, they dictate what is allowed in this practice and what is not.

The example from Daisy and the example of the Mexican immigrants interacting in the Facebook groups in Figures 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 above show how important it is for many Mexican immigrants to have found Mexican food retailers, where they can find what they know are authentic Mexican products coming directly from Mexico. These examples show how even though participants are not ‘discursively’ saying that they are looking for authentic Mexican products, all are ‘enacting’ the concept, based on common ‘general understandings’ of what constitutes authentic Mexican food (Welch & Warde, 2017). Previous studies regarding how consumers evaluate the authenticity of food have been conducted (Chousou & Mattas, 2019; Groves, 2001), but they have not considered this in the context of the consumer acculturation process. Similar to how consumers evaluate food authenticity in their home country, the participants in the

present study evaluate the food found in the Mexican food stores in the UK as being authentic because they can trace the place where it was produced and, in the case of packaged products, the brands and packaging are recognised as being produced in Mexico (Groves, 2001).

This section has demonstrated that Mexican immigrants have to develop new knowledge and skills in order to acquire ‘authentic’ Mexican food while going through the process of consumer multiculturalisation in the UK. This social practice includes competencies related to locating retailers of authentic Mexican food, so that Mexican immigrants can gain access to these Mexican materials. Thus, while previous studies have analysed the acculturation strategies adopted by immigrants for shopping in a new host country (Bundy, 2017; Rabikowska & Burrell, 2009; Vallianatos & Raine, 2008), my analysis shows that Mexican immigrants have had to develop new knowledge and skills that are different from the ‘key translation skills’ described by Peñaloza (1994). Nonetheless, I concur with Peñaloza’s (1994) description of Mexican immigrants learning ‘through experiential trial-and-error’ to adapt to the ‘new consumer environment’ (p. 49). Here I detail how Mexican immigrants share their findings, commenting upon how they develop their new knowledge, a process that is implied in Cappellini and Yen’s (2013) analysis on the influence of social ties in the consumer acculturation process. In addition, we can see that the UK multicultural marketplace has added complexity to the consumer multiculturalisation process for food, at least, when these Mexican immigrants try to continue to acquire their Mexican food as they were used to doing previously.

There are common elements that we can appreciate between the way Daisy and the participants in Figure 5.2.2 carry out this food consumption social practice, such as how they can recognise cultural clues, outside of stores, that have not been agreed verbally by these participants. Indeed, we can appreciate that they appear to be driven by the same ‘general understandings’ (Schatzki, 2010). For example, in Figure 5.2.2, even though the participants are communicating, they are not verbally agreeing on why they have to look for these importers. Therefore, we can gain an insight into how their culture, as a common element in the background, shapes their consumption activities.

The following section shows how Mexican immigrants deal with the multicultural supply of food found in the plethora of ethnic food stores that can be found in the UK.

### **5.3 Adopting food from other ethnicities.**

When Mexican immigrants try to make sense of the various foods coming from different cultures in the multicultural marketplace supply present in the UK, they acquire a variety of competencies by shopping in ethnic food stores, such as Chinese, Turkish, and Indian, where they find food items that resonate with their past life in Mexico (Dey et al., 2019).

An example of the way Mexican immigrants acquire food from ethnic food stores is provided by Lena. Lena was born and raised in Central Mexico, and left Mexico to work on a cruise ship where she met her husband, who is from Scotland. For Lena it is important to find fresh and hot chillis while living abroad (later on, she developed the skills needed to cultivate them herself, as Section 5.4.2 shows). During our first interview, Lena told me where she had found fresh and hot chillis in the UK:



*“...in front of my house there’s a store of Mediterranean products, and there, for example, the chillies, I found them fresh and because the owner comes from a culture where they eat chilli food as well, then I can find there chillies that seem fresh and that are really hot, not like those in a plastic bag from the supermarket”*

When I asked her how she knew that she could find these chillis there, she explained:

*“...at the beginning... in the markets, what I didn’t find were fresh chillies, then, I had to buy them at the supermarket, well, of course, they aren’t hot! Then, I began to search where to find them, then, my husband, he was raised in the British culture, and he knows that people of other cultures and nationalities, they cook food using hot chillies as well, then he told me: “you can try to find in this place, or in this other place, maybe you can find them there” and it’s how I began to go to these places to find chillies”*

I could appreciate the feelings that Lena associated with her experience by adopting a multimodal stance (Rossolatos, 2015). For example, the tone of voice used by Lena when explaining that chillies in local markets and supermarkets were not hot and how she expressed relief when she found hot chillies in other ethnicities stores.

Lena is explaining how she developed the new skill of looking in ethnic food stores associated with other food cultures, for food that is equivalent to her own food culture. Thus, by trial and error, that is, by ‘learning by doing’ (Shove et al., 2012), and helped by her husband, she now knows that in other cultures’ ethnic food stores she can find Mexican food equivalents, that is to say, ingredients such as fresh hot chillis, which cannot be substituted, thus they have a ‘closed script’ (Shove et al., 2012) in Mexican cuisine recipes. Now that Lena knows that she can find fresh hot chillis in a Mediterranean ethnic food store that is close to where she lives, she has included it in her usual way to acquire food, that is to say, it becomes a usual food consumption

practice. The diversity of ethnic food stores that can be found in the UK helps Mexican immigrants to find what they need in order to cook their ‘authentic’ Mexican dishes.

Many Mexican immigrants in the UK do not know that they can find Mexican food equivalents in other cultures’ ethnic food stores, so when one of them makes such a find, they share this discovery with others, as Figure 5.3.1 shows.

Figure 5.3.1 A Mexican immigrant shares where she found ‘jicama’ [Mexican yam]



Participant 1: ‘Jicama’ [Mexican yam] loving girls, in China Town (London) you can find it for only £7.99 per kilo, they are tasty [emojis of faces licking their lips]. I bought it yesterday and I keep them in the fridge so they last me longer.

Participant 2: What do they call it? It is a delight

Participant 1: It is ‘Yam bean’

Participant 3: Here in Scotland, I can’t find it in any market or Chinese store [emoji of a sad face]

Participant 5: Look for it in the Turkish shop ones, they sell as well!

Participant 6: How cheap! Where exactly?

Participant 1: Wait, I put the address in my wall

Here, a Mexican immigrant is sharing with the others where she found Mexican yam in the UK. The other participants enthusiastically ask her where she has found it.

Participant 2 asks what the name in English is, so she can ask for it properly in the ethnic store. Thus, knowledge is being shared and those that had not acquired this knowledge (novices) are learning from those that have previously 'learned through doing' (Shove et al., 2012), such as Lena and Participants 1 and 5 in Figure 5.3.1, who are skilled practitioners (masters) (Nicolini, 2013; Shove et al., 2012). When Mexican immigrants integrate this social practice of acquiring food in other ethnicities' food stores, in their everyday lives, it spreads between the members of the Mexican diaspora in the UK, so this becomes a usual way to acquire Mexican food equivalents for Mexican immigrants. We can appreciate from the previous examples how the multicultural marketplace has helped the participants to keep acquiring their Mexican food.

A similar process is lived by Mexican immigrants when they search for their ethnic food in UK supermarkets. Previous studies on consumer acculturation have shown how immigrants are familiar with supermarkets and that this is consequently the most popular retail environment for recent immigrants to go to in order to purchase food in their new host country (Bundy, 2017). Immigrants might find the same products in supermarkets in the new host country as in their home country because of the physical proximity between the countries, as was the case in Bundy's (2017) study of British immigrants acculturating in France, where British could find the same products in France as in the UK. However when countries are not as physically close, as is the case with the UK and Mexico, immigrants might need to search the international food aisle

in supermarkets (Bundy, 2017; Demangeot et al., 2015) in order to find the particular ethnic food items they require; in this case Mexican food.

All of the participants in the present study described having shopped in supermarkets while previously living in Mexico and thus, it was common practice for them to visit supermarkets when they first arrived in the UK. However, these Mexican immigrants have had to develop new knowledge and understanding of the food products and brands available in these supermarkets in the UK, and particularly when trying to find the Mexican food items that they would normally use in their everyday cooking back home in Mexico. The difference between what Mexican immigrants face when trying to find their own ethnic food in food stores associated with specific cultures compared with supermarkets is that in the first case, food is generally associated with a particular culture (e.g. Mediterranean or Chinese), whereas in supermarkets there are very often aisles which are dedicated to food associated with several cultures, and supermarkets being the arbiters of the cultural association. This can be appreciated in Figure 5.3.3, below which I analyse in the next paragraphs.

The following conversation with Hannah demonstrates a typical approach to searching for Mexican food in supermarkets in the UK. Hannah explained to me what she did the first time she visited a supermarket in the UK:

*“I went into the supermarket...and I began to search in the international food aisle...I got disappointed because there was nothing, but well...you find the ‘jalapeños’, you find the ‘tostitos’ [Mexican type of crisps] and you find...not the same ingredients [as in Mexico]...there are too many [Mexican foods] that you don’t find here, like the ‘poblano’ chilli, or the green ‘tomatillo’, but you find something that is similar”*

By adopting a multimodal stance (Rossolatos, 2015) we can appreciate the description of Hannah's movements up and down the supermarket aisles, demonstrating her commitment to the search for what she wants. Later, her tone of voice, made me appreciate the disappointment she experienced in not being able to find what she wanted even in the international food aisle of the supermarket.

Also, in this example, Hannah compares what she found in the supermarket in the UK to what she was used to purchasing back in Mexico. She lists what she was able to find as well as identifying the various food items that she could not find. It appears that she was unable to find the majority of ingredients that she was used to buying back home in Mexico. Hannah was raised in Central Mexico, where she acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies regarding food. Moving to the UK, she 'abstracted' all the relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies that when she settled in the UK she had to 'reverse' (Shove et al., 2012) such as the ingredients to prepare typical Mexican dishes and how to cook them. Her feelings of nostalgia and remembrance give 'practical intelligibility' (Schatzki, 2010) to her search for Mexican food including the particular flavours of the food she used to eat back home in Mexico. However, as indicated in the extract above, Hannah could not find the Mexican ingredients necessary to be able to apply the previous knowledge, skills, and competencies that she tried to 'reverse' (Shove et al., 2012) so as to recreate the flavours associated with her past life in Mexico. Thus, Hannah tried to find similar products and this has required the development of new skills. That is to say she has had to search for ingredients that are as similar as possible to Mexican ingredients among the multicultural offerings available in supermarkets which she was not familiar with. Figures 5.3.2 and 5.3.3

evidence how Mexican immigrants have found substitutes for Mexican ingredients in the UK supermarkets to cook some Mexican dishes, sharing what they have discovered.

Figure 5.3.2 Mexican immigrants suggest a cheese found in supermarkets to substitute for a Mexican cheese.

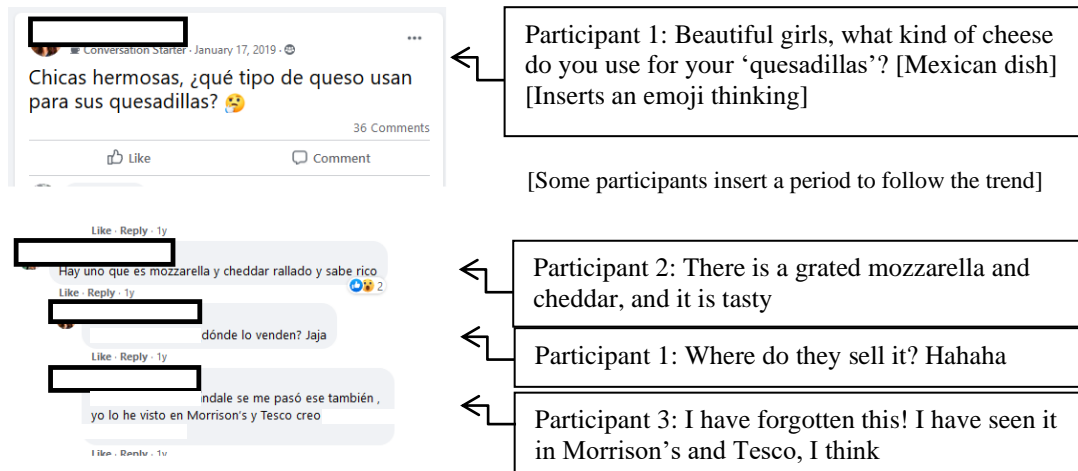


Figure 5.3.2 shows how a Mexican immigrant tried to cook 'quesadillas' [folded tortillas cooked in a pan with Mexican cheese], while living in the UK. The knowledge required to cook 'quesadillas' travelled with this Mexican immigrant from Mexico to the UK as 'abstracted' (Shove et al., 2012) knowledge. However, when she tried to 'reverse' this knowledge (Shove et al., 2012), she realised that neither the tortillas nor the Mexican cheese could be found easily in the UK. For these Mexican immigrants, it makes sense to look for the best substitutes in supermarkets, the most convenient place where they shop for food.

Figure 5.3.3 A Mexican immigrant shares with others what she has found in a UK supermarket.



Participant 1: Girls, I found 'jamaica' [hibiscus flower] in Asda, very good price: 100 grams for £1.20. You can find it in the aisle where the Greek food is



Participant 2: Run to ASDA online, hope I am lucky

Participant 2: They don't have online [emoji of a sad face], I was already feeling excited. I will look for it in the store nearest to me.

Participant 3: In which Asda?

Participant 1: [Tagging Participant 3] I found it in the Trafford Asda

Participant 3: [Tagging Participant 1] Thank you

Participant 4: Thank you [name of Participant 1] for your tips! Last time I went for my 'tortillero' [A container to keep tortillas warm]

Parisa: Thank you for letting us know

Participant 6: Thank you [name of Participant 1] good tip

Participant 7: In the Asda near my house I have never seen it, but the Sainsbury has it ... as well as 'ancho' [Mexican chilli] and 'chipotle'

Participant 8: It is new [tagging Participant 7], I haven't seen it before

Participant 9: Thank you [emoji of hands clapping]

Participant 10: Is the one that I usually buy, I recommend it a lot.

Their feelings of remembrance and nostalgia for the Mexican flavours associated with the '*quesadillas*' give 'practical intelligibility' (Schatzki, 2010) to trying different cheeses found in the supermarket, until they find the one that is most similar to the flavours they remember from their past life in Mexico. From the broad offering found in the supermarket, Participant 3 in Figure 5.3.2 is advising Participant 1 to use cheeses from UK supermarkets. The new knowledge of using Mozzarella or Cheddar cheese to cook Mexican '*quesadillas*' was developed through the process of trying out different cheeses, tasting them and finding the most similar to the Mexican one, that is to say, Participant 2 in Figure 5.3.2 'learned through doing' (Shove et al., 2012), thus developing a new competency that now is shared with the other Mexican immigrants, who accept it and will adopt it as a conventional way of cooking '*quesadillas*' here in the UK. Also, we can appreciate how here the Mexican cheese does not have a 'closed script' (Shove et al., 2012) when Mexican immigrants cook *quesadillas*. The role played by the Mexican cheese in the recipe can be played by the substitute materials, here Mozzarella and Cheddar.

In Figure 5.3.3 a Mexican immigrant is sharing with the other members of a Facebook group that she found '*jamaica*' [hibiscus flower] in the Greek food section in a UK supermarket. The other members, also Mexican immigrants living in the UK, are interested and express their gratitude to her for sharing this useful information. We can appreciate that Parisa took part in this exchange on Facebook, as well as taking part in interviews and participant observation with me. Participant 7 shares with the others that in another UK supermarket she found Mexican chillis, specifically the '*ancho*' and '*chipotle*' chillis. We can observe that all of them agree 'tacitly' (Welch & Warde, 2017), not verbally, that even though the '*jamaica*' has been classified as Greek by the



UK supermarket, these Mexican immigrants are going to use this ingredient as they would have done back home in Mexico. That is to say, they are going to apply the competencies that they ‘abstracted’ from their past life in Mexico and ‘reverse’ them (Shove et al., 2012) when they cook using this hibiscus flower.

Mexican immigrants are challenged by the diversity of cultures they can face in the multicultural marketplace of the UK, so they develop these new competencies of looking for equivalents of Mexican food in other ethnicities food stores and in the supermarkets and share what they have found with the other members of the Mexican diaspora.

Peñaloza (1994) analysed how Mexican immigrants ‘translated’ knowledge and used it as a framework to acculturate to consuming in the United States. Here, we can appreciate that some knowledge and skills could be translated; nonetheless the multicultural marketplace increases the complexity of supply, thus the participants in the present study have to develop new knowledge and skills, going beyond merely needing to translate and reuse their previously learned knowledge and skills, as in the aforementioned study. Here I present the process whereby immigrants need to adapt to where to acquire their food, when they encounter the diversity of foods associated with other cultures present in the UK multicultural marketplace, and detail the role played by knowledge, skills, and competencies in this process.

These findings build upon previous studies that have analysed the adaptation process (Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Peñaloza, 1994); however, here I also take into account the added complexity of the multicultural marketplace present in the UK (Demangeot et al.,

2015). Previous studies have analysed this with a focus on immigrants' formation and reflection of identities (Kipnis et al., 2019). However, here I present the way in which the immigrant diaspora plays a role in the adaptation process, by sharing knowledge, skills, and competencies with one another, thereby adding to the studies that have considered the influence of social ties in the consumer acculturation process, such as that conducted by Cappellini and Yen (2013). The present research thus advances knowledge in this area.

The yam beans found in a Chinese food store, shown above in Figure 5.3.1, are 'authenticated' by Mexican immigrants when they include them in their usual consumption practices, and by this they are showing how their culture is 'practised' (Welch & Warde, 2017). That is to say, the way Mexican immigrants, such as Lena and the participants in Figure 5.3.1, act is informed by common 'general understandings' that can be interpreted as their common culture within which they were raised. They are not agreeing discursively rather, authenticity here is tacit; there is a common agreement that it is good to try to find this Mexican yam equivalent in Chinese or Turkish food stores, showing in the process how they share 'general understandings' (Welch & Warde, 2017).

This analysis extends the way that food 'authenticity' has been studied previously. Studies regarding food authenticity have mainly focused on the way consumers evaluate brand information, such as origin certificates, and/or if something is produced in a traditional and homemade way (Chousou & Mattas, 2019; Groves, 2001). Other research on consumption has applied a different approach to understand how consumers conceptualise authenticity from the perspective of the consumer, applying an emic

approach (Gannon & Prothero, 2016; Goulding & Derbaix, 2019). The present study advances this emic perspective on food authenticity, by applying a practice theory approach so as to understand the nuances and details relating to *how* immigrants create and convey their notion of authentic food. Similar to these previous studies, Mexican immigrants authenticate food through ‘authenticating acts’ (Arnould & Price, 2000).

These acts are the social practice itself, of looking for Mexican food equivalents in other ethnicities’ food stores and in supermarkets, together with the act of cooking it, in the Mexican way (I will analyse this in some detail in chapter 6). Thus, my participants authenticate the foods they find, through ‘authoritative performances’ (Arnould & Price, 2000). That is to say, Mexican immigrants share and ‘shape’ this social practice, subsequently expressing their group values and acknowledging that the food acquired, and subsequently produced, through this social practice is authentically Mexican. Therefore, here we are moving from how the majority of previous studies have analysed culturally bound objects and experiences, probing participants to identify associations (Dey et al., 2019; Galalae et al., 2020) by analysing instead the common elements present in their food consumption practices as a manifestation of their culture.

My research takes a different approach to understanding the association between food consumption and cultural meanings. Instead of analysing how participants verbally explain these associations as other researchers have done (Bundy, 2017; Dey et al., 2019; Jamal, 1996; Sobol et al., 2018) or, worse, presupposing the cultural associations of foods without inquiring of the participants point of view (Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Cleveland & Xu, 2019; Jamal, 1998), my approach is to analyse the way they develop the association. That is to say, through performances and enactments that demonstrate

their common culture. How immigrants embody home culture practices in order to re-enact their culture has been studied previously (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2020), nonetheless here I am adding to this literature how Mexican immigrants embed a concept ('authentic Mexican food') in the embodiment, making it part of their culture.

Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 show how participants have developed competencies to find Mexican food and Mexican food equivalents in usual retail outlets. As mentioned earlier, products found in Mexican food stores and importers, as well as in other ethnic food stores are often quite expensive and the stores and well stocked supermarkets are often located in urban centres, such as London and Manchester, far from where many, but not all, of the participants in this study live. Therefore, a number of Mexican immigrants try to acquire Mexican food items from other sources, rather than purchasing them from usual retailers' outlets, as the next section analyses.

#### **5.4 Acquiring Mexican food outside of the usual retailer outlets**

Previous studies on consumer acculturation have focused mainly on the way immigrants acquire and consume food through the usual retailer outlets, such as supermarkets and grocery stores (Kizgin et al., 2018; Oswald, 1999; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983; Askegaard et al., 2005; Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Dey et al., 2019) neglecting other ways in which immigrants can acquire and consume food. As the present section evidences, many of the Mexican immigrants in this study develop and apply competencies that allow them to acquire Mexican food outside of the traditional supply chains, previously studied. In the next three subsections I analyse three different ways in which Mexican immigrants acquire food outside of the usual retail outlets. In the fourth section I present some conclusions and discuss my analysis thus far.

#### 5.4.1 Smuggling food from Mexico into the UK

Many times, Mexican immigrants want ‘the real thing’ and therefore one fairly common way to obtain authentic Mexican food whilst living in the UK is to bring it with oneself in a suitcase from Mexico, or to ask other Mexicans who come to the UK to bring food items in their luggage for you; thus ‘relocating’ (Shove et al., 2012) the food giving access to it to Mexican immigrants.

One example of acquiring authentic Mexican food items by smuggling them into the UK from Mexico is provided by Mara. Mara was born and raised in Central Mexico and is married to a Mexican man. She lived in Canada, returned to Mexico and then moved to the UK to be with her husband while he was studying in the UK. I began to interview Mara two weeks after she first arrived to the UK, bringing with her a large suitcase full of Mexican food. Three months after our first interview, Mara told me that her mother-in-law had visited, bringing Mexican food sent by Mara’s mother with her; she told me:

*“...the thing is that my mother-in-law came and brought me many things from there [Mexico]. She came in August, then... I hadn’t been here very long, she came with my sister-in-law and they brought us a suitcase full of food... they brought us dough, I made tortillas! She brought this little machine, to do the tortillas, so I made tortillas, she brought mole [Mexican dish], “abuelita” chocolate [a Mexican brand of chocolate to prepare hot chocolate], alegrías [a Mexican sweet snack made of amaranth], horchata [Mexican rice milk], cajeta [Mexican soft toffee] ... I can make you an impressive list! Beans ... so I haven’t searched for anything here, I have a lot of provisions, thank God!”*

The intonation in Mara’s voice signals how she was feeling in the moment of re-living her experience, denoting happiness and somehow pride, when she asserts that she can give me an impressive list of what foods she received (c.f. Rossolatos, 2015).

During our third interview, Mara told me how she had obtained some sachets to prepare Mexican rice milk: “well, some friends that came recently [from Mexico], they brought me horchata sachets to prepare horchata water”. Some months later, Mara travelled to Mexico, and I asked her if she had brought some food from Mexico back with her, she answered:

*“Everything, I bring everything! [laughs] Well I brought a sauce that my mother makes, home-made... mole, beans. Here you can find beans, but, they don't taste the same to me. I brought some bags of soup, I brought “maizena”, [a Mexican brand to prepare atole, a Mexican drink]... I brought cajeta, strawberry, vanilla, of all the flavours! Two bags of flour to make tortillas... What else? Candies! I brought chilli powder...”Tajin” [Mexican brand of chilli powder]. What else did I bring? Sachets to prepare fresh drinks, what else? Ah, I brought some cubes to prepare “cochinita pibil” [Mexican dish]. What's the name? Let me see what's the name... here it is, the name is “achiote, pasta de adobo”, and that is all”.*

In their study regarding how Polish immigrants acculturated to the UK, Rabikowska and Burrell (2009) discussed how ‘food was an important component of the packing... and precious suitcase space’ (p. 215). The authors did not analyse how these Polish immigrants developed competencies related to carrying their food. Focusing on this issue, it is relevant to note that when Mara moved to live to the UK, she travelled with her previous knowledge associated with authentic Mexican food as an abstraction (Shove et al., 2012). For example, her previous knowledge about how to cook ‘cochinita pibil’, when she was living in Mexico, was abstracted as a recipe either in her memory or in a written recipe. She then transported the necessary materials in her suitcase, for instance, the cubes to prepare the ‘cochinita pibil’. In this case she was able to easily ‘reverse’ her knowledge (Shove et al., 2012), thus not having to look for

'anything' as she explained at the end of the extract from our second interview detailed above. For Mara, it was impossible to substitute for the materials with which she travelled or that her relatives and friends brought for her. Both the '*cubes*' to make '*cochinita pibil*' and the '*powder*' to prepare Mexican '*atole*' have a 'closed script' (Shove et al., 2012, p.47), so they had to be physically relocated by Mara, literally carrying these Mexican food items directly from Mexico, so she could have access to them when she wanted.

Mara had to develop some understanding and know-how about how to travel with all the food items in her suitcase, because, for example, there are some limits on the weight and the kind of food that can be transported from one country to the other. Again, we can appreciate that Mara learned 'by doing' (Shove et al., 2012) – in the sense that in the past some of the food that she tried to bring into the UK was confiscated; thus, she avoids bringing these items again, and advises her mother and sister-in-law about how to travel with particular items of Mexican food (I will return to analyse this sharing of knowledge in more detail shortly referring to Figures 5.4.1.1 and 5.4.1.2 below).

A different example of smuggling food into the UK is given by Ryan. Ryan is a Mexican man, raised in Central Mexico who is married to a Mexican woman and is currently living in the UK with his wife and their little girl. Ryan had previously lived in Korea and the United States for several years before arriving to live in the UK. He explained to me how, since he was a little boy, he had developed the knowledge of how to cook Mexican food. He shared this knowledge with others when he moved to live in Korea, by advising Mexican restaurants in that country on how to cook 'authentic' Mexican dishes, either by teaching them because the owners were not Mexican or by

helping Mexican owners to find appropriate substitutes for Mexican ingredients that could not be easily found in Korea. He shared with me how he had transported a large bush of ‘*epazote*’ [an endemic herb from Mexico, used to season different Mexican dishes] from Mexico to different countries where he had lived, most recently arriving in the UK with it:

*“Now that I have arrived from the United States, I brought with me a whole bush of ‘epazote’, so, I have ‘epazote’ for three years! Or even more...I brought it dry... it was like three kilos of dry ‘epazote’. Since I went to Korea, I brought it with me. In the United States, my wife told me, there you can find everything, so I didn’t have any trouble, but when I knew we were moving to here [the UK], I put it to dry and I brought it with me, my ‘epazote’. Because it, you can’t find it [here in the UK]. It is really difficult to find!”*

Ryan has developed special skills in order to ensure that he is able to travel with much loved Mexican food items – here the ‘*epazote*’ bush. He performed some specific tasks (such as learning how to dry the herb) so as to be able to travel with it from country to country, possibly even breaking the government importation rules of these countries. To be successful in his ‘food smuggling’ Ryan had to understand the best way to pack the dried ‘*epazote*’, in which suitcase to pack it, how much it weighs when dried, and various other aspects so as to ensure that his ‘*epazote*’ arrived safely in the UK.


The ‘*epazote*’ has a ‘closed script’ (Shove et al., 2012, p. 47) in Mexican recipes, that is to say, the ‘*epazote*’ could not be replaced by any non-Mexican seasoning in the various countries in which Ryan has lived, so he had to literally package it in his suitcase and carry it with him, relocating it physically. In this example, the process of transportation affected somehow the materials, because, as Ryan explained, he had to dry the ‘*epazote*’ in order to be able to carry it. Thus, this is an example of how materials might change as



a result of the process of transportation and also how other materials, such as suitcases, have to be used in the process of transportation (Shove et al., 2012). However, for Ryan, this does not affect the result of applying the necessary skills to cook the '*epazote*'.

Importantly, when food items have been carried successfully from Mexico and have arrived safely in the UK, it is not uncommon to publish a post, showing off the results! With this, the knowledge is shared and thus, it gradually becomes a common way of 'competently' acquiring Mexican food (Shove et al., 2012). The post in Figure 5.4.1.1 below, from a Facebook group comprising Mexican immigrants to the UK, provides an example of this:

Figure 5.4.1.1 A Mexican immigrant shares with others food that she has carried from Mexico to the UK, showing off the results.



Buenos británicos días mexicanas!!! De vuelta en casita después de seis semanas disfrutadas en mi amado Chihuahua. Y como no hay fecha próxima para volver, había que surtirse bien!!!

and 62 others 14 Comments

Like Comment

Participant 1: Good British days [greeting] Mexicans!! I'm back at home after six months of enjoying my beloved Chihuahua [State in Mexico]. And because there isn't a date to go back, I have had to stock up as well as possible!!

Participant 2: Welcome [emoji smiling] – Wow, very well assorted, it looks like a shop, what are you going to sell? Haha! When do we meet?

Participant 3: I want everything!! How tasty!!

Participant 4: Welcome 'paisana'!!! [Referring to a compatriot, and adds a 'minion' figure raising hands]

Participant 5: Enough to survive!

Participant 6: Wowwwww, well, rather, healthy envy, haha!

Participant 7: Wow! A fully stocked pantry. Enjoy and welcome!

Participant 8: Great! Welcome! You're the same as me, literally, you carry even the 'molcajete' [meaning she carries everything, molcajete is a Mexican mortar] and the essential 'Vitacilina' [brand of a Mexican ointment]

Participant 9: Hey! How many kilos is that? With the big tin and everything! I love it!

Participant 10: Very tasty! Now you can keep enjoying the Mexican food, welcome and greetings

**Hannah**: 'Vitacilina' what a good medicine! [Repeating the jingle of a Mexican advertisement]

Participant 12: How exciting! Thank you for asking if I needed something but I understand that when you go, you come back full! I'm happy that you enjoyed our beautiful Chihuahua! And your mother as well, welcome and to keep living with the hope of coming back soon!

Participant 13: Amazing! I think that the suitcase was heavy! Now it's time to cook Mexican food!

Figure 5.4.1.1 (continued)

Chicas ay disculpen la demora de la respuesta, pero entre cambios de horario, sueño al mí y casa patas pa'míba jaja ando del tingo al tingo!!! Pues así que éramos 5 aquí que todos las maletas para documentar las cargués de comida!!! Y traía poca ropa que eché en las de mano. Y [redacted] mi "niño" mayor me dice que parece mercado de abastos aquí jaja [redacted] se decía con toda confianza, hasta estuve esperando a último momento para que me mandaras un mensaje para ver si le traía algo, y dime con toda confianza si necesitas algo que te comparta, yo sé cómo es la necesidad jaja. Besos a todas y si alguien necesita una cosita pida con confianza, que aquí estamos para apoyarnos!!!

Miren hasta de contrabando me pude tate unos chiles chilaca de mi amado Chihuahua 🤪

Participant 1: Girls, I'm sorry for the delay in answering, but between the change in time, being sleepy and a house in a messahaha! I go 'del tingo al tingo'!! [meaning she is very busy]. What happened is that we are 5, so I filled all the checked suitcases with food, hahaha!! And I carried very few clothes that I put in the cabinet suitcases. And yes X [name of Participant 2, answering to her] my oldest son said that it looked like wholesale food market!! Hahaha. Y [Name of Participant 12, answering], as I told you, feel free to ask for something, I waited for your message until the last minute in case you needed something, do not hesitate to ask if you need me to share something with you, I know what is to be in need, haha. Kisses to everybody and if somebody needs something, do not hesitate to ask, we are here to support each other!

Participant 1: Look, I even could smuggle some 'chilaca' chillis from my beloved Chihuahua [winking emoji]

In Figure 5.4.1.1, Participant 1 is showing off what she carried directly from Mexico. She knows that to carry all these food items directly from Mexico was not an easy task and required special knowledge and skills relating to how to accommodate everything in the suitcases, what the national laws say about what is and what is not allowed to get into the country, and so on. Participant 9 wants to know how many kilos were in the suitcases of Participant 1, meaning that she wants Participant 1 to share with the others how she has been able to carry everything, that is to say, she wants the 'know-how' (Shove et al., 2012). When Participant 1 answers the comments, in the final section of Figure 5.4.1.1, she is showing how the competencies can be spread to the other Mexican immigrants, first by sharing the knowledge of how she transported all the Mexican food items that she 'shows off' in the photograph, and second, when she offers to bring Mexican food items for Participant 12 as well as offering to share her Mexican food items with all the other Mexican immigrants in the Facebook group. Finally she shows off how well she has mastered this knowledge of transporting Mexican food to the UK, in that she even managed to smuggle something that she knows is difficult to carry and

get into the UK, namely '*chilaca*' chillis [a type of chillis found in Chihuahua]. Hannah took part in this post, commenting about one of the items ("Vitacilina").

The examples of Mara and the participants in Figure 5.4.1.1, including Hannah, show how different materials have been transported without being changed; the tins of food and other food items displayed in the photograph can be identified by the other participants, such as the '*Vitacilina*' which Hannah and Participant 8 comment on.

Another important aspect to note is how other materials are associated with the competencies of the Mexican immigrants who engage in such food smuggling, that is to say, how suitcases are a material part of the practice. The suitcases have to be handled and used to transport the food directly from Mexico, thus, they are linked with the new competencies needed to smuggle Mexican food into the UK.

We can appreciate that immigrants are not only carrying processed food to the new country, as previous studies on acculturation have evidenced (Rabikowska & Burrell, 2009), they also try to carry all kind of foods, particularly those that have a 'closed script' (Shove et al., 2012) in their recipes. Also, the proliferation of ethnic food stores did not replace this practice of smuggling food into the UK (Rabikowska & Burrell, 2009) at least for the participants in the present study.

When Participant 10 in Figure 5.4.1.1 states that now participant 1 can '*keep enjoying Mexican food*' even though she is outside of Mexico, to which Participant 13 agrees, they are both acknowledging that now Participant 1 can apply the knowledge that she has 'abstracted' (Shove et al., 2012) in the form of Mexican recipes in her mind of how to cook Mexican dishes, and that she can do it with the required materials, i.e. authentic

ingredients transported directly from Mexico. Participants 10 and 13 say she can now ‘*cook Mexican food*’, insinuating that in the past, without these ingredients, she could not cook ‘authentic’ Mexican food. Thus, like Ryan and Mara, these participants are sharing ‘general understandings’ of the concept of authentic Mexican food, enacting it and sharing it through a network of Mexican immigrants tacitly, that is to say, they are not agreeing discursively on what is authentic, they are taking for granted that all of them have the same ‘general understandings’ (Welch and Warde, 2017) of what is authentic Mexican food, and also they are discursively conveying it, as Participants 10 and 13 comment in Figure 5.4.1.1. Here, participants are authenticating their food by evaluating its origin, as previous studies on authenticity of food have evidenced (Chousou & Mattas, 2019; Groves, 2001). However, this study is advancing previous research by now understanding how, in the context of the multiculturalisation process, consumers conceptualise ‘authentic’ Mexican food. Participants are authenticating food by performing the social practice of smuggling food into the UK, as an ‘authenticating act’ (Arnould & Price, 2000) and also, by acknowledging it as a group, as an ‘authoritative performance’ (Arnould & Price, 2000).

Mexicans returning for the first time to Mexico and coming back to the UK often ask others what food they can legally (safely) bring back into the country, as is evidenced in the Facebook posts presented in Figure 5.4.1.2 below:

Figure 5.4.1.2 A Mexican immigrant asks others about how to travel to the UK with Mexican food



Participant 1: Hi everybody! I'm going to cross the UK border with my spouse visa and, as a good Mexican; I want to bring with me everything from here! Hahahaha! Has somebody travelled with food in the hand luggage? I bring things in the checked luggage but I want to bring the 'Sabritas' [Mexican brand of crisps] in my hand luggage, I don't know if somebody has done it before. I appreciate your comments and advice.

Participant 2: They say nothing about the Sabritas. Fruit, vegetables, seeds, cold meats and dairy, you can't [travel with them]

Participant 3: You can travel with the Sabritas in the hand luggage, just no gels and liquids

Participant 4: As far as I know, in the hand luggage you can't bring food and liquids (or up to a certain amount). When I travelled last year, I was bringing biscuits and they confiscated them when I passed through security.

Participant 5: I have passed with crisps, Japanese peanuts and biscuits, no problem at all, in the [use an emoji of the USA flag] and here [in Mexico]. What type of biscuits?

Participant 4: An ordinary packet of 'Chokis' or 'Emperador' [Mexican brands of biscuits]. Maybe it's my bad luck, they have confiscated eeeverything from me!! Hahaha!! That's why I don't bring anything, in my hand luggage, haha!

The knowledge developed by smuggling Mexican food into the country is shared among the Mexican diaspora, with those who are experts sharing their knowledge and experience – developed through trial and error, i.e. ‘doing’ - with those who are novice learners (Nicolini, 2013, Shove et al., 2012), and the other practitioners recognising them as such. Thus, Participant 1 in Figure 5.4.1.2, clearly a novice, wants to be recognised as a ‘good Mexican’, so asks others what to do to be successful in transporting Mexican food into the UK. When the participant asserts that she wants to be recognised as a good Mexican, she is showing, as well, how this practice is socially

shaped. The others share their experience and knowledge with this novice learner. In this way, those who want to know how to transport food items safely in their suitcases will learn from others who have already done it successfully and, as well, according to how the other Mexican immigrants 'allow' it to be done. Now that knowledge is being 'circulated', other Mexican immigrants could adopt these food smuggling activities competently, thus adopting a 'collective' way to go through the consumer multiculturalisation process to the UK.

In summary, in this section I have analysed how Mexican immigrants develop new skills and knowledge to smuggle food into the UK, competencies which are shared with other Mexican immigrants, so that food smuggling becomes an accustomed way to acquire Mexican food, that is to say, this is now a normalised social practice of food acquisition and consumption. Here, Mexican food has a 'closed script' (Shove et al., 2012) for these Mexican immigrants, so it has to be physically relocated from Mexico to the UK. The UK multicultural marketplace is not offering them enough sufficiently similar food items to the foods found in Mexico, so it is 'pushing' them to develop these new competencies.

Suitcase smuggling is not the only way in which Mexican immigrants obtain authentic Mexican food items outside of the traditional supply chain, by innovating, creating, and producing. In this regard, another common way to obtain such food items is by cultivating their own food. The next section analyses this.

#### 5.4.2 Cultivating Mexican food

A different way in which Mexican immigrants address the shortcomings and expensive fees and prices in the multicultural food supply chains found in the UK is by cultivating their own (Mexican) food items, thus engaging in the production and consumption (Ritzer, 2014; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010) of the necessary ingredients they need to be able to cook ‘authentic’ Mexican dishes while developing new competences.

That immigrants sometimes engage in cultivating their own food has been mentioned in previous studies (Peñaloza, 1994), and others have mentioned how immigrants translate this knowledge to their new country (Franzen & Smith, 2010); nonetheless, the competencies needed to engage in this practice have not been analysed previously. The activity implies several different skills and requires specialised knowledge that goes beyond the ‘translation’ of skills (Peñaloza, 1994). For those Mexicans who were not used to cultivating their own food while living in Mexico (this is not a common practice in big cities in Mexico), they not only had to learn how to sow seeds and take care of their plants, they also had to learn about the climate and the seasons of the year in the UK. The climate and seasons in the UK are very different from those of Mexico, thus not all types of plants can be cultivated throughout the year. Lena developed these skills when she could not find certain Mexican vegetables such as tomatillo and chillis in the UK. I first interviewed Lena eleven months after she had moved to the UK with her husband. She told me during our first interview:

*“...what drew my attention was that somebody posted [in Facebook] about a tomatillo [green tomato] plant, and then I began to search... [now] I have my own seeds, and I’m trying to grow my own plants in my little apartment, and they there go!”*



During our second interview, I asked Lena how her plants were going, and she replied:

*“They are doing well, they are really big, they are almost reaching the roof and I don’t know what we are going to do with them. I want them not to grow anymore! [Chuckles]”*

I asked her if the plants had produced tomatillos, she told me: *“No, they haven’t. The ones of chilli, yes! The chilli plants are producing chillis”*. When I asked if she knew when the tomatillo plant will produce tomatillos she told me:

*“I don’t have idea of how long the cycle is, I just keep taking care of them. They have flowers and everything, but I think it’s like the chillies, after the flower then the process begins... that is what I’m waiting for, because they have a lot of flowers, so I hope that soon we’ll see something there [chuckles]”*.

Later when I visited Lena, I saw that she had planted chilli and tomatillo plants in pots which she kept in her tiny apartment. The plants had grown so tall that they had reached the ceiling (see Image 5.4.2.1 below). I wrote in my field notes:

*“The plants are tall, they have reached the ceiling. The tomatillo plants have not produced, and they don’t have flowers now but the chilli plants are producing very well, they have pots with plants near their windows, some in their bedroom, and others in their living room. I noticed how Lena’s husband takes care of the plants during my visit, watering them and cutting the dry parts of the plants”*.

*Image 5.4.2.1 Chilli plant with a chilli in Lena's apartment*



During my visit, and adopting a multimodal stance (Rossolatos, 2015), I could appreciate how taking care of the plants was now part of the everyday lives of Lena and her husband.

Lena wanted to obtain Mexican chillis and tomatillos to cook authentic Mexican dishes; because she knew how to grow plants while living in Mexico, she ‘abstracted’ this knowledge before moving to the UK. When she arrived in the UK, she tried to ‘reverse’ this knowledge (Shove et al., 2012), however, she realised that she needed to develop new skills and acquire new knowledge to grow her own chillis and tomatillos while living in the UK in her little apartment. She acquired these skills by ‘learning through doing’ (Shove et al., 2012), that is to say, the ‘translated’ skills and knowledge (Peñaloza, 1994) that she had about cultivating food in Mexico were not enough to cultivate her plants in the UK, so she had to develop new skills to be successful in this endeavour.

Like Lena, other Mexican immigrants have also developed cultivation skills and knowledge which they share with the other Mexican immigrants, as can be seen in Figure 5.4.2.1 below.

*Figure 5.4.2.1 A Mexican immigrant shares her cultivation knowledge with others*



Participant 1: Hi girls, I'm new to this group, however I've been living in Great Britain, in Wales for several years. One of the things that I have always wanted to do is to cook Mexican food as authentically as possible. That's why I have been cultivating in my garden a few ingredients that are hard to find here. This post is to tell you how big my 'poblano' chillis, Jalapeños and my tomatillos have grown, successfully. If anybody is interested in growing their own plants, I have seeds to send to you. Just send me a message. This is the season to begin with them. Greetings.

Figure 5.4.2.1 (continued)

[The replies continue, other participants ask for information and seeds]

<p>Gracias por la oferta. Yo tengo semillas pero no se ni por dónde empezar. Nos podrías orientar poco a poco. Gracias otra vez. Que delicia</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 2: Thank you for your offer. I have seeds but I don't know where to start. Could you guide us, bit by bit? Thank you again. What a delight.</p>
<p>Yo estoy igual [redacted] nos puedes orientar por favor</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 3: [Tagging Participant 2] same here, [Tagging Participant 1] could you guide us please? [Inserts a worried emoji]</p>
<p>Tomates una pregunta, yo estaré tres años más, en eso alcanzan a crecer?</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 4: Tomatoes [referring to tomatillos, insert an emoji licking lips] a question, I'll be here three years, do they grow in this time?</p>
<p>Los tomates son anuales... sólo te durarán la temporada</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 5: The tomatoes [referring to tomatillos] are annual... they will only last for the season</p>
<p>lo que digo es el crecimiento-maduración de la mata antes de poder recolectar</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 4: [Tagging participant 5] I'm asking about the growing-maturation of the plant, before you can collect [the tomatillos]</p>
<p>er es que mencionas que estarás 3 años. La planta sólo dura 1 temporada, como quien dice, la siembras, crece, te da los tomates y se muere. Se le llama anual pero realmente sólo son unos meses... lo de que te de frutos o crezca bien también depende de muchísimas cosas incluyendo los cuidados que le des. No se si me explico. A algunas del grupo les ha funcionado la siembra en macetas. A mi me fue mucho mejor sembrando en tierra en el jardín... las que deje en macetas me dieron pocos tomatillos...</p> <p>Like Reply Edit</p>	<p>Participant 5: [Tagging Participant 4] Look, it's that you said that you will stay 3 years. The plant only lasts 1 season, this is to say, you plant it, it grows, gives tomatoes [referring to tomatillos] and it dies. I said it is annual but really it is only some months... if it produces or grows well, depends as well as in many things, including the care that you give to it. I don't know if I explained well. Some [Mexicans] in the group have been successful growing them in pots. It was better for me to plant in the garden... the ones that I leave in the pots gave me very few tomatillos....</p>
<p>ok, pensé que era como otras en donde la mata tarda en crecer años antes de darte frutos. Gracias</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 4: [Tagging Participant 5] Ok, I thought that were like others [plants], where the plant grows for years before producing. Thank you [smiling emoji]</p>
<p>no me estoy preparando para plantar mis verduras. Te mando mensaje</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 6: [Answering to Participant 1] I'm preparing to plant my little vegetables. I send you a message [smiling emoji]</p>
<p>Gracias Yo necesito todo, ya he plantado y nada se dió.</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 7: Thank you [name of Participant 1] I need everything, I have planted and nothing grows :( [Meaning a sad face]</p>
<p>Que lindo Me encantaría tener semillas de tomatillo. En cuanto las vendes? Y podrías orientarme en como plantarlas? Gracias</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 8: How kind [name of Participant 1]! I would love to have tomatillo seeds. How much do they sell for? Could you guide me on how to plant them? Thank you</p>
<p>Hola a todos! Muchas gracias por sus comentarios. Si todavía necesitan semillas tengo suficientes para todo el grupo. Por favor envíen un mensaje en messenger para que las pueda poner dentro del grupo y nos podamos comunicar y pueda enviarles las semillas. También pueden compartir como plantarlas y cuidarlas. Todas pueden participar y es para compartir las ideas. Ye envíen un par de mensajes en el grupo si no están dentro todavía y quieren entrar por favor envíen un mienensaje.</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Participant 1 [replying to all the participants]: Hi to everybody! Thank you so much for your comments. If you still need seeds I have enough for all the group. Please, send a message in messenger so I can include you in the group and we can communicate and I can send you the seeds. As well to share how to plant and take care of them. All can participate and the new Facebook group is for sharing ideas. I sent a couple of messages in the group, if you are not in the group already, and you want to come in, please send me a message.</p>

The posts in the Facebook group show how new knowledge has to be developed. The Mexicans who were used to cultivating plants while living in Mexico abstracted this knowledge and tried to reverse it in the UK, finding that because the seasons in Mexico are not the same as in the UK, they needed to develop a more specialised knowledge, as indicated by Participant 2, who wants to know where to start. For those who have to learn from scratch, this requires the development of a completely new knowledge and set of skills. The interactions between Participants 4 and 5 show the way knowledge is shared through networks and community. Participant 4 wants to know how much time is needed to obtain fruit from the plants, and Participant 5 is clarifying how long the cycle of the plant is, so as to obtain a product, and how the plant dies at the end of the production time. This knowledge is new for Participant 4, and thus shows how specialised knowledge and specialised skills have to be applied to produce the tomatillos, chillis, and other fresh products from the plants. As well, different materials are involved with the new skills and knowledge of cultivating their own food, for example, participants comment about seeds, pots, gardens, and soil. Some of these materials could be physically relocated, by being imported and sold by retailers or carried directly from Mexico by the immigrants, such as the seeds and some pots, or others could come from the variety of cultures present in the UK that share similar artefacts and seeds, for example some types of chillis.

Participant 1 is proud of what she has achieved and states that even though she has been living in the UK for several years, now she has enough confidence to be in the group and to show off what she has achieved, demonstrating how she has learned by doing (Shove et al., 2012) and offers to share seeds and knowledge with the other participants.

Others reply enthusiastically, moving Participant 1 to open a new Facebook group where she can share her knowledge with the others. Thus, for other Mexican immigrants, to cultivate their own food will become another way of acquiring some of the necessary fresh foods, so as to be able to cook 'authentic' Mexican dishes, promoting a 'collective' strategy to acquire food, that is to say, a food consumption social practice.

In this Facebook post, Participant 1 comment how the food she has grown herself will help her to cook 'Mexican food as authentic as possible', thus discursively making the concept of 'authentic' Mexican food 'explicit' (Welch & Warde, 2017). Participant 1 is acknowledging verbally that by cultivating these vegetables she is performing an 'authenticating act' (Arnould & Price, 2000). The others demonstrate their agreement with her when they ask for seeds and that she share her knowledge as well, thus demonstrating how 'general understandings' of the concept of cooking 'authentic' Mexican food are shared by all of them as well as with Lena from the previous example. Thus, they are enacting authenticity, by growing their own food (Arnould & Price, 2000), and they are conveying it 'discursively' (Welch & Warde, 2017) as well. This analysis extends previous academic research regarding how consumers evaluate food authenticity. The participants in the present study are developing an emic concept of authentic food since the food they are cultivating is acknowledged as being authentic by associating it with all the activities performed to produce it and by this being recognised by their peers (the other Mexican immigrants living in the UK) as an appropriate way of acquiring 'authentic' Mexican food. This demonstrates how for immigrant consumers the authentication of food items goes beyond simply tracing origins or evaluating physical features (Chousou & Mattas, 2019; Groves, 2001), but that authenticity is also

developed personally, and is shared in a community, as previous studies in other fields have demonstrated, such as in the case of beauty bloggers (Gannon & Prothero, 2016) and the collectors of vinyl records (Goulding & Derbaix, 2019), that is to say, outside the domain of consumer acculturation.

Here, as in previous sections, the participants tried to reverse previously abstracted knowledge (Shove et al., 2012) acquired before moving to the UK. Once they settled and found that they could not acquire certain fresh Mexican foods easily in the UK, they opted to learn new skills. That is, they developed the relevant knowledge and understanding to be able to cultivate their own fresh Mexican ingredients, with this practice moving the acquisition process outside of the usual retail outlets that have been analysed in previous studies of consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation (Askegaard et al., 2005; Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Collins, 2008; Dey et al., 2019). The majority learned through doing; once they were confident of their new skills, they shared this knowledge with other Mexican immigrants, mainly when those who have ‘mastered’ the social practice of cultivating their own food taught ‘novice’ practitioners (Nicolini, 2013; Shove et al., 2012). When going through the consumer multiculturalisation process, these Mexican immigrants became ‘prosumers’ (Ritzer, 2014; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010), conveying their notion of ‘authenticity’ either tacitly or discursively (Welch & Warde, 2017) through their enactments and the subsequent sharing of this with other members of the Mexican diaspora in the UK. We can appreciate that when these participants have searched for other ways to acquire their own ethnic foods, outside of the usual retailer outlets analysed in previous studies (Askegaard et al., 2005; Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Collins, 2008; Dey et al., 2019), they do so by innovating and creating

processes that move them to the production side of the production-consumption continuum (Ritzer, 2014).

Besides cultivating their own food, another way in which Mexican immigrants acquire food outside of traditional supply chains is by breaking the (sometimes unwritten) rules and conventions of the ‘host’ culture, which is the subject of the next section.

#### **5.4.3 Breaking the rules to acquire food items for Mexican cuisine**

This section examines the special skills developed by Mexican immigrants who acquire food items associated with Mexican cooking in less traditional ways; i.e. by ‘breaking the rules’, thus evidencing the innovativeness and creativity of the participants in this study as they adapt materials with no utilitarian purpose in other cultures for their own usage.. One example of this is provided by Linda’s account of how she dared to obtain squash blossoms in a local market in the UK. Linda is a 64 year old woman who moved from Mexico to live in the United States with her husband, more than thirty years ago. She moved from the USA to the UK, seven years ago, and during our third interview, Linda recalled how she had obtained ‘*flor de Calabaza*’ (squash blossoms) to cook a Mexican soup as follows:

*“...yesterday I cooked this ‘flor de Calabaza’ soup because at the Tuesday market, I talked with the lady who brings the vegetables and I told her that I use the squash blossoms and she gives them to me, as a gift, every time she comes, and you can’t imagine how grateful I am, because those flowers are really expensive! If you buy them in other markets... in stores, for example, in London... oofff! They charge you £30 for a pound. So, if this lady gives them to me every week... for me this is a really big present!”*



The reason the British seller gives these blossoms to Linda for free is that squash flowers are not generally eaten in the UK and they are therefore largely considered to be rubbish/waste. For Linda, these squash blossoms cannot be substituted for, so they have a 'closed script' in her Mexican recipes (Shove et al., 2012). Not only has Linda dared to ask for something that others consider to be rubbish/waste, therefore 'breaking the rules' and conventions, and potentially facing ridicule for this, she was also able to obtain them for free, knowing that in other specialist food stores in the UK, this food item is extremely expensive. Linda 'reversed' her knowledge of how to cook squash blossoms that was 'abstracted' (Shove et al., 2012) before moving to the UK. When she realised that the British seller disposed of something that she could use in her cooking, she asked for them. She now knows that there are some foods that are conventionally cooked and eaten within Mexican food culture but that in the British food culture are generally disposed of; that is to say, she has acquired the knowledge that she can obtain valuable ingredients for the preparation of Mexican food other than by purchasing them from specialist retailers.

Ryan provides a similar example of 'breaking the rules' in order to obtain particular food items that he associates with Mexican cuisine. Ryan explained to me how he found corn leaves to cook 'tamales' [Mexican dish in which corn leaves are very important] while living in Korea:

*"... they don't sell the corn leaf to make tamales [in Korea] then, in the season when the corn gets into ... Korea, I went to the supermarket [there]... everybody buys corn in the supermarket and strips the leaves off. I asked to the employees if they could sell me the leaves and they told me that they were rubbish, that I could take them for free, so, I took my bags with the leaves, I carried them and put them to dry in my house and that is how I made tamales! [Chuckles]"*

We can notice that, similar to Linda, Ryan dared to ask for something that is considered rubbish/waste in Korea. Thus, like Linda, Ryan ‘reversed’ his knowledge of how to cook tamales that he ‘abstracted’ before moving to Korea (Shove et al., 2012) and found he could obtain one of the ingredients of this Mexican recipe for free. Ryan acquired the same knowledge as that acquired by Linda: he learnt that there are some ingredients that can be acquired for free, because in another culture they have no utilitarian purpose, they are considered useless.

Linda and Ryan ‘learned by doing’ (Shove et al., 2012) that by daring to break with convention that they could acquire the necessary materials that would allow them to cook ‘authentic’ Mexican food. However, Ryan went even further in that he actually broke the law when he discovered the black market in Korea where he could obtain certain other food items, which were not imported conventionally into Korea for political reasons. Ryan explained to me how he acquired ‘Mexican’ green lemons while living there:

*“The green lemon or the lime as it is known in the UK, we could find it only in the black market with the Arabs, and it was very expensive, it was three green lemons for seven dollars”*

Ryan then explained to me what happened in Korea:

*“The problem with Korea is that it is a closed market, they protect their market, don’t let anything get in [being imported] ...[into] Korea...they consume what is domestic...that’s why I told you that [the green lemon] you got it in the black market, with the Arabs, they smuggled it, how? I don’t know. The green lemon was forbidden, or the lime. And many things [are] the same”.*

Ryan developed special skills to obtain the food items he associates with Mexican cooking. He dared to purchase on the black market despite knowing that the food items had been smuggled illegally into Korea. Thus Ryan dared to break the rules in order to acquire green lemons (and various other Mexican food items) from non-traditional sources. Ryan wanted to 'reverse' his knowledge of how to use green lemons in Mexican cuisine (Shove et al. 2012), while living in Korea. When he could not find the necessary materials via the conventional supply chains, he had to find alternative means, thus developing the skills of acquiring Mexican food items on the black market.

What impelled both Linda and Ryan to 'break the rules' was their desire to produce 'authentic' Mexican dishes. They have common 'general understandings' of what they are doing (Welch & Warde, 2017) and even though they do not use the word 'authentic' explicitly, nonetheless they are 'enacting' the concept of 'authenticity' in their home cuisine by breaking the rules in order to acquire the necessary food items to prepare their respective Mexican dishes. The authenticity of these dishes depends not on the origin of the materials used, i.e. the squash and limes could have been grown anywhere in the world (c.f. Groves, 2001), but rather it depends on how these Mexican consumers apply their previous knowledge of these ingredients in the recipes for these Mexican dishes in their new host country. Thus they both convey their notion of 'authenticity' when they perform this practice, as an 'authenticating act' (Arnould and Price 2000). We can appreciate that even though the participants are not communicating with each other, they are enacting similarly; both Linda and Ryan (and other participants) developed a new competency to acquire the necessary ingredients to cook 'authentic' Mexican dishes by daring to break the rules. Thus, here we can appreciate how the 'general understandings' (Schatzki, 2002, Welch & Warde, 2017), arose unbidden from

this practice, and are conveyed through this practice, related with the development of competencies to find materials that can be ‘authenticated’ through the application of their cooking skills.

#### **5.4.4 Conclusions**

While previous studies in this field have studied consumer behaviour during the consumer acculturation process (Bundy, 2017; Demangeot & Sankaran, 2012; Dey et al., 2019), the majority have focused on the way in which immigrants acquire goods and services through the usual retail outlets, such as supermarkets (Askegaard et al., 2005; Bundy, 2017; Dey et al., 2019; Peñaloza, 1994). Few studies have described other ways in which immigrants might acquire goods, and those that do, tend to downplay these alternative means of acquiring goods (Bundy, 2017; Peñaloza, 1994). The analysis in this section builds upon previous research on consumer multiculturalization by clarifying the role that knowledge, skills, and competencies play in the adaptation process of consumers in multicultural marketplaces, by analysing the activities by means of which immigrants acquire food, outside of the usual retail outlets.

The details obtained by my analysis supplements the findings of previous research in a number of specific ways. First, immigrants are generating new processes through which to acquire their Mexican food. These processes imply the development of new competencies and can be considered in relation to the production-consumption continuum defined by Ritzer (2014), in which the consumers, i.e. immigrants, perform and innovate processes that could form part of the supply chain through which producers deliver food to consumers, such that these immigrants become ‘prosumers’ (Ritzer, 2014; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Second, I have shown the role that other

immigrants play in the adaptation process, bringing to the fore the social nature of the adaptation process that previous research has studied (Cappellini & Yen, 2013) but adding to this by detailing the role that other immigrants play in the adaptation process, emphasising how they share and shape knowledge, skills and competencies. Finally, here I have shown how immigrants associate their own culture with the food they acquire through these alternative methods, that is to say, how they ‘authenticate’ it by performing these different food consumption social practices, which shows how their common ‘general understandings’ (Schatzki, 2010) act in the background, as ‘culture in action’ (Welch & Warde, 2017), at odds with how other researchers have analysed the connection of food and culture, mainly through how the immigrants verbally explain it (Bundy, 2017; Dey et al., 2019; Jamal, 1996; Sobol et al., 2018).

The final section of this chapter makes a summary of the theoretical insights made throughout this chapter.

## **5.5 Knowledge, skills and competencies during the acquisition of foods in multicultural marketplaces.**

This chapter builds upon and extends previous research on consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation by showing how Mexican immigrant consumers engage in the process of consumer multiculturalisation (Demangeot et al., 2015; Kipnis et al., 2014) which requires not only translating and reusing previously learned knowledge and skills (Rabikowska & Burrell, 2009; Peñaloza, 1994), but also developing new competencies, skills and knowledge developed through ‘doing’. These ‘doing’ activities include looking for Mexican food retailers, adopting food from non-Mexican food stores and finding substitutes in supermarkets. The process of learning by ‘doing’ entails

purchasing from traditional retail outlets as previous studies have analysed (Askegaard et al., 2005; Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Collins, 2008; Dey et al., 2019), but it also involves participants acquiring Mexican food and various substitutes through a variety of other means including smuggling Mexican food from Mexico to the UK, cultivating their own food and breaking the rules, with the multicultural marketplace becoming an ally in this complex adaptation process. Besides clarifying the role of knowledge, skills and competencies involved in the adaptation process of immigrant consumers, my analysis also shows how immigrant consumers share knowledge, skills, and competencies with other immigrants, thereby bringing to the foreground the social nature of the adaptation process embedded within the consumer multiculturalization process.

Examining these various acquisition processes shows how the participants become ‘prosumers’ (Ritzer, 2014; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010), when they innovate and create new ways to acquire the foods they need and want. The identification of various creative and productive aspects of food acquisition serves to extend previous research in the field of consumer acculturation and consumer multiculturalization (Askegaard et al., 2005; Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Collins, 2008; Dey et al., 2019), as well as providing empirical corroboration to the theoretical ideas on consumer multiculturalization put forward by Demangeot et al. (2015).

Finally, the analysis in this chapter also shines a light on *how* immigrant consumers develop and convey emic notions of ‘authentic’ Mexican food, by enacting social practices associated with food consumption, thus indicating that immigrant consumers construct an association between their food and their culture through their

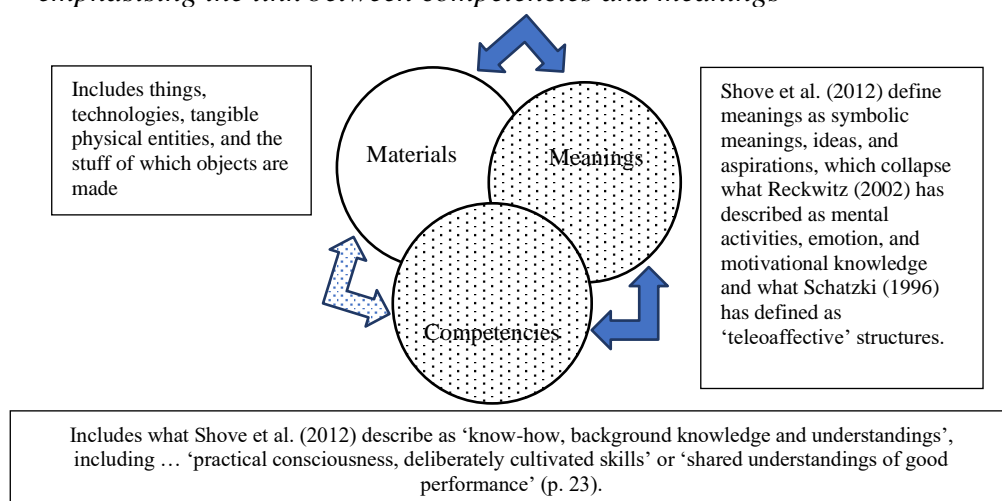
performances, thereby advancing our understanding on an issue that previously has been analysed only in terms of participants' own verbal explanations (Bundy, 2017; Dey et al., 2019). By incorporating analysis of the 'authenticity of food' into my analysis of consumer multiculturalisation, I both build upon previous studies on the authenticity of food (Chousou & Mattas, 2019; Groves, 2001) and develop theoretical understanding of consumer multiculturalisation.

## 6 Creating a sense of Mexico

### 6.1 Introduction

The present chapter examines how in the context of their consumer multiculturalisation in the UK, Mexican immigrants transform physical materials and experiences connected to a variety of other cultures in order to create something related to their past life in Mexico. Central to this process of transformation is the development and application of different competencies on the part of Mexican immigrant consumers. To analyse this, I draw on the notion of circulation (Shove et al., 2012) again, this time to analyse how competencies and meanings circulate and are linked during Mexican immigrants' food consumption practices. As Figure 6.1.1 shows, materials are always present in practices; nonetheless, in this chapter I focus my analysis on the link between competencies and meanings.

*Figure 6.1.1 The theoretical framework applied in Chapter 6, emphasising the link between competencies and meanings*



To do this, I apply the notion of competencies which include knowledge, know-how, understandings, abilities, and skills (Shove et al., 2012), as defined in Chapter 5. I



examine how competencies are shared between populations and practices (Shove et al., 2012). Thus, I analyse how Mexican immigrants ‘reverse’ already ‘abstracted’ (Shove et al., 2012) knowledge in different ways. Thus, in Section 6.2, I analyse how knowledge was ‘abstracted’ in two ways: as a written document and as a memory, via observation, and Section 6.3 examines how memories are ‘abstracted’ and ‘reversed’ (Shove et al., 2012) only as memories. When Mexican immigrants do not have access to the required materials, which could be ingredients or utensils, in order to obtain ‘authentic’ Mexican food, they have to ‘learn through doing’ (Shove et al., 2012), that is to say, they develop new competencies in order to obtain something similar to what they used to consume back in Mexico. I analyse this in Section 6.2.

Regarding meanings, Shove et al. (2012) explain that we have to acknowledge that meanings are ‘unavoidably relative, situated and emergent’ (2012, p. 53), that is to say, when compared with competencies; meanings are not a stable element in practices. Nonetheless, I analyse here how meanings are conveyed and explained by Mexican immigrants during their consumer multiculturalisation process. Meanings can go through a ‘dynamic process’ (Shove et al., 2012) that can ‘extend’ meanings, thus supplementing original meanings with others. I analyse this in Section 6.2 and Subsection 6.3.2. In other instances, meanings are ‘disassociated’ or ‘shaken off’ (Shove et al., 2012) from a practice, thus new associations with different meanings are formed. I analyse this in Subsection 6.3.2. In section 6.4, I examine how meanings circulate via media, meaning how they are ‘mediated’ (Shove et al., 2012), and how sometimes they are not associated with the other elements in the practice; implying that meanings do not ‘stick’ (Shove et al., 2012) which I analyse specifically in subsection 6.4.1.

In order to understand better why Mexican immigrants act as they do, I draw on Schatzki's (2005, 2010) notion of 'practical intelligibility', which is not contrary to Shove et al.'s (2012) conceptualisation of social practices, rather it supplements it by incorporating moods and emotions (as I discussed broadly in Chapter 2). Thus, according to Schatzki (2005, 2010) and Weenink and Spaargaren (2016), emotions, states of mind, moods, and feelings give 'practical intelligibility' to the 'state of affairs', moving practitioners to act as they do. I analyse this in Subsection 6.3.2. In other instances, some competencies remain 'dormant' until the proper meanings (and specific materials) enable Mexican immigrants to 'awaken' them, that is to say 'relevant elements need to co-exist if practices are to extend or endure' (Shove et al., 2012, p. 57). I analyse this way of preserving practices in Sections 6.2 and 6.3.

In the present chapter I analyse how Mexican immigrants also convey their socially constructed notions of authenticity. To do this, I draw again on the notion of 'general understandings' (Schatzki, 2010) and how Welch and Warde (2017) apply this to study 'authenticity'. Thus, the participants convey their notion of authenticity either tacitly, which I analyse in Sections 6.2 and 6.3 and Subsection 6.4.1, or discursively, which I analyse in Subsection 6.4.2.

By analysing how competencies and meanings link, I show how participants apply Mexican notions to both tangible physical elements and to non-tangible elements, so as to create a sense of Mexico; these elements are related to a diversity of cultures present in the multicultural marketplace in the UK. Many Mexican immigrants learn to be in charge of the food in their household after they move to live outside of Mexico, thus applying competencies learned in Mexico for the first time when they settle in their new

host country. In the next section I analyse how these competencies become meaningful outside of Mexico.

## **6.2 Preparing and cooking ‘Mexican’ outside of Mexico.**

While the majority of participants arrived in the UK with at least some basic Mexican cooking skills, often such skills and other knowledge only become charged with meanings related to Mexico outside of Mexico. Sometimes this might be because for many of them it is the first time they are fully responsible for the preparation of food in their households. Thus, the way they acquire the knowledge and skills to be able to cook while living abroad is by asking their parents or relatives – hence, developing cooking knowledge and skills provide a means to link directly to meanings of family and home. Isabella remembered how she received her mother’s recipes by fax while living in China, which helped her to cook Mexican food in this country, as she recounted:

*“Back then, the fax machine was widely used, so my mother sent to me the instructions with careful explanations, all via fax. I received rolls and rolls of fax. That's how I learned to cook. Back then when I was living in China, they allowed us to have a lot of space on the planes, I used to bring with me many ingredients from Mexico, I had all the things that my mother explained for me in the recipes”*

Even though Isabella had learned basic recipes to cook Mexican food from her parents while being raised in Mexico, it was in China that she actually developed the skills to cook Mexican recipes, helped by her mother. Isabella’s mother used to write down Mexican recipes for her, that is to say, her mother ‘abstracted’ this knowledge as a written document so that Isabella could ‘reverse’ it (Shove et al., 2012). Isabella did not know how to cook many Mexican recipes when she was living in Mexico. For her, the knowledge and skills relating to cooking these Mexican recipes were ordinary, everyday

knowledge. However, when she arrived in China, and realising that she could gain access to many Mexican ingredients, the knowledge and skills related with these recipes became meaningful for her, motivating her to cook Mexican food. The knowledge and skills that in the past were related with routinised meanings of normal everyday life 'extended' (Shove et al., 2012) and became meaningful, since the recipes that she received through the fax machine represented the family ties with her parents and, at the same time, her everyday life in China, as well.

In the previous example, Isabella could cook authentic Mexican dishes because she had the authentic ingredients to do so, even though she was living in Shanghai; however, when the ingredients are not available, the knowledge and skills linked with the meanings 'authenticate' what is cooked, as the next example of Hannah shows. Hannah related the skills of '*echar las tortillas*' [literally, throwing the tortillas] meaningfully with a particular memory of 'growing up' back home in Mexico. '*Echar las tortillas*' means the process of flattening the dough using the hands and cooking it in a '*comal*' [flat round baking tray], usually using the hands to turn around each piece of tortilla, until they are baked.

In the UK, various brands of tortillas can be found in many supermarkets; however, the flavour of these products is different from those found in Mexico. Due to the different flavour, many Mexicans who have moved to live to the UK do not purchase pre-packaged tortillas from supermarkets and other stores, preferring to prepare their own tortillas. The Mexican flour used to prepare them (usually the Mexican brand Maseca) can be found in Mexican food stores in the UK, but participants find it very expensive. Thus, they often resort to using flours from other cultures, such as the Colombian flour

named 'Pam', which is cheaper and can sometimes even be found in supermarkets in the UK. During my visit to interview Hannah, she indicated how this skill became laden with meanings of home, as she recalled:

*“When I was in Mexico, my mother and my aunt used to ‘echar tortillas’ quickly, in less than ten minutes they had a bunch of this size of tortillas (showing me a considerable height from the table). My aunt used to tell me that I would never get married if I didn’t learn to ‘echar las tortillas’. But I wanted to learn to drive... Back then I used to steal the family car while my dad was sleeping... instead of learning to ‘echar las tortillas’, I preferred to learn to drive!”*

Interestingly, Hannah married a British man and moved to live in the UK, and it was here where she actually learned to ‘echar las tortillas’. Learning this new skill of preparing tortillas in the traditional Mexican way only after moving to live in the UK serves to demonstrate how, for Hannah, to learn this new skill became meaningful because she associated it with what she used to do to avoid learning it in Mexico! Before moving to the UK, she did not feel that acquiring the knowledge and skills to ‘echar las tortillas’ was important; however, when she arrived in the UK, she felt the need to develop her food skills in this area. In the process of developing this new skill whilst living in the UK, Hannah began remembering her family and the way she had interacted with them in relation to this skill when she was living in Mexico. The knowledge of how to ‘echar tortillas’ was ‘abstracted’ (Shove et al., 2012) by Hannah from her recollection of how she had watched her mother and her aunt how to do it years ago in her memory. The meanings associated with this knowledge and skill were ‘dormant’ (Shove et al., 2012) until Hannah got married and moved to the UK. Only then did this skill become meaningful, as a way to remember her family as well, ‘awakening’ (Shove et al., 2012) the association between competencies and meanings. Hannah did not want to acquire tortillas from the supermarket, as a substitute for the

tortillas prepared as described above. For her, it is important that these tortillas are prepared as she knew them in Mexico, even if she acquires flour that is not Mexican such as the above-mentioned brand of flour from Colombia named 'Pam'.

Another example in which we can appreciate the association of meanings and competencies is provided in the following example from Mara who was raised in Central Mexico. During my third interview with Mara, eight months after her arrival in the UK, Mara mentioned that she was currently working in a restaurant that specialised in cooking burritos. She recounted how the owners of this 'burrito' restaurant were keen to know more about Mexican food, she explained:

*[the owners had asked her] "Do you know if the beans are right? [Mexican style] in the pressure cooker" and I say: "Well, yes, but you don't put... for example, I remember that my grandmother, when I lived with my grandmother, she cooked them [the beans] in an earthen pot and she added 'epazote' [Mexican herb] and onion and... well, and here, they don't have an earthen pot and, no, I mean, the beans are good in the pressure cooker and I add salt and I try that they taste... like the [Mexican] style but it's not the same, it lacks the herb, the 'epazote', the taste of the earthen pot, well, I remember a lot that at my grandmother's home, at my mother's home, that was the way of cooking them. And yes, they [the British owners] asked me: "Give us a recipe" and there is one familiar recipe of 'frijoles charros' or 'rancheros' I don't know, in Mexico it was with 'bayos' [a kind of beans] with 'chile poblano' [Mexican chilli], corn, fried and they seasoned them with lard, then the lard gives a lot of flavour to the beans and they are spicy because of the chilli slices of the 'chile poblano' and the corn; I told them, but no. They have a concept, they are opening different stores...they are 26 years old, they love Mexican food, and blah, blah, but they are married to their recipes and they haven't widened their scope [for new recipes]"*

Mara, differently from Isabella, already had the knowledge and skills related to how to cook beans as she had learned this from her mother and grandmother back home in Mexico. Because beans are a staple food in Mexico, the meanings associated with these

knowledge and skills connect to everyday routines of living in Mexico. When she moved to the UK and was questioned by her boss on how to cook the beans so they would be ‘authentically’ Mexican, Mara remembered how her mother and grandmother used to cook beans back in Mexico, that is to say, she ‘reversed’ the knowledge that she has ‘abstracted’ in her mind (Shove et al., 2012) as a memory.

*Figure 6.2.1 A Mexican immigrant tells the others how Mexican she feels when she eats oranges with a UK chilli powder*

Participant 1: Feeling Mexicana!! Who else eats oranges this way, once in a while?

Participant 2: Tasty!! How did that not occur to me with that chilli powder? Is it tasty?

Participant 3: [emoji raising a hand meaning that she does it that way as well]

**Lena:** Me! But I add a bit of Tajin [Mexican brand of chilli powder] just because of nostalgia! [laughing emojis]

Participant 5: Me, I'm just eating some now!! [followed by a photo with oranges and Tajin chilli powder]

Participant 6: Great minds think alike, hahaha!! I think today we crave it

Participant 7: Mmm [meaning it is tasty]

Participant 8: Very tasty!

Participant 9: Me!! tasty!! [grinning emoji]

Participant 10: I add chilli to everything, hehehe!!

Participant 11: [Image of a dog with its arms rubbing its tummy]

Participant 12: I add salt of 'maguey' worm [this salt is typically taken with Mezcal, an alcoholic Mexican drink]

As Mara asserts, she is trying to apply her previous knowledge of how to cook Mexican beans using the materials available in the UK, replacing the earthen pot with a pressure cooker and adding other ingredients to which she has access in the UK; but she acknowledges that it is not the same. She does not relate the result of using the pressure cooker with her previous knowledge of how to cook beans back in Mexico, as she evidences when she says that the beans lack the flavours of the earthen pot and the other ingredients to which she does not have access in the UK. Thus, even though she has previous experience related to the skills needed to cook Mexican beans, now she is ‘learning [and indeed, teaching] through doing’ (Shove et al., 2012), using what she has access to in the UK; however, what she obtained is not completely associated with Mexico. The meanings of the beans cooked in a pressure cooker have been ‘disassociated’ (Shove et al., 2012) from the previous competencies she learned from her mother and grandmother. Now the beans cooked using a pressure cooker are related to the ‘burritos’ business and with the concept of Mexican food adopted by her new British employers. In summary, even though Mara still associates the knowledge of how to cook Mexican beans with how she was raised, in the process of consumer multiculturalisation in the UK she has had to develop new skills and knowledge to cook Mexican beans that resembles but is not directly associated with her previous meanings and understandings. The previous association of the knowledge and skills to cook Mexican beans with the meaning of her family life back in Mexico is still there, ‘dormant’ (Shove et al., 2012); the food can still be associated with Mara’s family, however, the other elements associated with the practice of cooking Mexican beans are not present. Thus, at any moment, if she can apply again the ‘correct’ competencies to cook beans as she knew while being raised in Mexico, that is to say, to associate again



these competencies with these meanings, she will 'awaken' the 'dormant' association (Shove et al., 2012). The example in Figure 6.2.1 below explores how Mexican immigrants share these visceral experiences of the specific food related competencies they associate with Mexico with other members of the Mexican diaspora in the UK.

In Figure 6.2.1, Mexican immigrants are sharing the experiential meaning of eating oranges with chilli powder. As we can see, one of my participants, Lena, took part in this post. We can appreciate that it is not the orange per se that is adopted by the participants as a symbol of their past life, back in Mexico. Rather, it is the way they are preparing the orange that is associated with their past life; that is to say, the participants acquired the knowledge and skills to prepare oranges with chilli powder in Mexico and when they were living in Mexico this was associated with routine meanings of everyday life and would therefore not have been something to talk about in this way. However, when the participants moved to live in the UK, the knowledge and skills of cutting the oranges using a knife, peeling it from the skin, and adding chilli powder (as can be appreciated in Figure 6.2.1) now begins to take on symbolic meanings related to their life back in Mexico. What we can notice in this example is how competencies and meanings related to the way Mexicans prepare oranges with chilli powder were 'dormant' (Shove et al., 2012) until they moved to the UK. In the UK, the process of consumer multiculturalisation led these Mexican immigrants to supplement the previous meanings of the normality of the everyday, 'extending' (Shove et al., 2012) them, by adding meanings associated with their past life back in Mexico. We can appreciate this in the way Participant 2 comments that she had not realised she could use chilli powder from the UK to eat oranges this way, thus 'awakening' this previous knowledge (Shove et al., 2012) and taking an element that is not actually Mexican to apply this

competency, thus creating a sense of Mexico. In summary, the way competencies and meanings were linked while living in Mexico related to everyday normality, stayed 'dormant' (Shove et al., 2012) until during consumer multiculturalisation the elements of the practice were linked again (here using a UK chilli powder) in a different context. In this new context, the previous meanings have been supplemented, such that this food related competence is now linked symbolically with the participants' past life in Mexico.

The way participants interact in the Facebook post in Figure 6.2.1, together with the ways in which Mara, Hannah, and Isabella make their competencies of cooking Mexican recipes meaningful by relating them back to their lives in Mexico, are fed by common 'general understandings' (Welch & Warde, 2017). In Figure 6.2.1, participants are not working out how to correctly prepare the oranges with chilli powder so that they are 'authentically' Mexican, rather they are 'enacting' authenticity, that is to say, they share a common competency with the same meanings, and this does not require explanation. It is not discursively expressed (Welch & Warde, 2017), it is a tacit, common understanding that enables the participants to act as they do so and thereby recognise each other as peers. They do not need to discuss the fact that this is an 'authentically' Mexican way of eating oranges, instead, they are showing implicitly that all of them understand what Participant 1 means when she says '*feeling Mexicana!!*' in Figure 6.2.1. Thus, we can appreciate how Mexican immigrants 'authenticate' what they are doing (whether this is preparing oranges with chilli or cooking Mexican beans in an earthen pot) by applying the knowledge and skills learned back home in Mexico, thus showing the role of competencies in the 'authenticating acts' and the 'authoritative performances' (Arnould & Price, 2000) performed by the participants. Therefore,

authenticity stems not only from community agreement (Gannon & Prothero, 2016) and the way Mexican immigrants physically act (Goulding & Derbaix, 2019), it depends, as well, on the knowledge and skills related to what is authenticated.

As in Chapter 5, the participants in this section showed here how they ‘reversed’ already ‘abstracted’ knowledge (Shove et al., 2012) contained as a recipe either in material form as a written document, or in memory, so as to cook Mexican dishes and revive experiences linked with their life back in Mexico. The meanings associated with these dishes were supplemented as a result of the geographical context in which their knowledge and skills were reversed. That is to say, when the necessary materials are available in the UK, relevant knowledge and skills are applied and the food items produced, previously conceived as everyday mundane items, now take on new meanings relating to Mexico. Thus these mundane foods now provide a means to revive their past life in Mexico.

When the necessary materials are not available and alternatives have to be used, the application of knowledge and skills in conjunction with these unsatisfactory alternatives leads to the food items acquiring a different meaning, as the example of Mara and the pressure cooker indicates, and these food items do not serve as a link to home. Another feature analysed in this section is how the meanings associated with specific competencies can remain ‘dormant’ (Shove et al., 2012) until the appropriate materials can be associated with them, thus awakening the association. Previous research on consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation has analysed meanings independently of competencies, focusing mainly on the culture associated either with experiences or symbols (Dey et al., 2019; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994). In the present thesis, I seek

instead to advance knowledge in the field by showing how competencies can be associated with meanings during the adaptation process embedded in the consumer multiculturalisation process, supplementing the results of research on the adaptation process (Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Peñaloza, 1994).

In addition, this section supplements what has been evidenced in Chapter 5, where I analysed how common elements in the background reflected the culture of immigrants, as performances, here I have also shown how, by applying competencies, the participants authenticate food through ‘authenticating acts’ and ‘authoritative performances’ (Arnould & Price, 2000) in which food items begin to take on meanings related to the participants’ past lives in Mexico. Thus, my research extends our understanding of food ‘authenticity’ by moving analytical attention beyond a focus on the physical features of the food (Chousou & Mattas, 2019; Groves, 2001), to also acknowledging the active role of consumers, and specifically the importance of consumer competencies.

Similar to the examples shown in this section, other participants relate competencies with meanings of home; however, in many instances they actually take elements from other cultures and transform them into something that they relate to their past life in Mexico. This process of ‘creolisation’ which combines multiple elements from different cultures to create a sense of something Mexican is analysed in the next section, relating it to the way participants conceptualise and convey what is, for them, ‘authentic’ Mexican food.

## 6.3 ‘Creolisation’ to create a sense of something Mexican

### 6.3.1 Creolisation through improvisation to create authentic Mexican dishes.

The application of knowledge and skills learned in Mexico in the context of the UK multicultural marketplace is not always easy for immigrants. Lena had to improvise in order to acquire the necessary elements she needed to cook what she recognised as Mexican ‘*milanesas*’ [a Mexican dish prepared with flattened meat]. In Mexico, the flattened meat cuts to prepare ‘*milanesas*’ can be found easily both in supermarkets and at any butchers. Indeed, it is usual for Mexican butchers to adapt their meat cuts according to what their customers want. It is very common for Mexicans to have a preferred butcher, who knows how his regular customers prefer their meat cuts. Peñaloza (1994) evidenced how Mexican immigrants could easily find ‘*carnicerias*’ [butchers’ shops] to obtain their preferred meat cuts during their consumer acculturation to the United States, however, the participants in the present study certainly could not find the same service in the UK. After trying, unsuccessfully to find this cut of meat in various supermarkets in the UK, Lena tried to explain to several UK butchers how to cut the meat to satisfy her needs. She explained to me:

*“Here, no matter how much I explained to the butcher, no matter that you search for the right terms on the Internet, in a dictionary, or wherever you can, the butcher doesn’t understand... in Mexico, you asked for any type of meat, you described to the butcher how you wanted it ... and the butcher always, always, gave to you the cut as you wanted. Here [in the UK]... I have tried to become a friend of the butcher, to see if because they know me, one of those [times I go to purchase] they give me the meat as I want it, and no...”*

Lena began to search for a multiplicity of items in order to cook ‘*milanesas*’. First, she obtained satisfactory meat cuts from a delivery service that specialised in meat cuts for sportspeople, coming from different places in the UK. Afterwards, her husband bought

a little hammer (see Image 6.3.1.1), knives, and other artefacts, from a British store, which they used to flatten the meat cuts. During our third interview, she recounted:

*“...the cut of the steak they sent us... is thick, but it has no nerves. So what we did was to cut it, to flatten it and then with the typical recipe, with flour with eggs and with the breadcrumbs that he [her husband] bought... it is Polish and the granules are very thick... With this, it was more or less the same [as in Mexico], with the hammer”*

*Image 6.3.1.1 British hammer acquired by Lena to cook ‘milanesas’ in the UK*



From the account of the experience of Lena we can appreciate how she mixed ingredients from the UK and Poland to obtain a Mexican ‘*milanesa*’. She learned how to cook *milanesas* when she was living in Mexico. This knowledge was ‘abstracted’ and then ‘reversed’ (Shove et al., 2012) when Lena settled in the UK. Contrary to what happened with Hannah and Mara in Section 6.2, whose competencies and meanings were ‘dormant’ (Shove et al., 2012) until the elements necessary to revive them were associated again, while living in the UK; Lena’s knowledge and skills were not kept ‘dormant’. Instead, she kept them alive, by improvising in order to obtain all the necessary elements to revive these knowledge, skills and meanings. For Lena, the meanings linked with the knowledge and skills of cooking ‘*milanesas*’ are related to her

family life back in Mexico, since she learned to cook mainly from her mother, so these skills are meaningfully enacted by Lena. From this analysis we can appreciate the ‘creolisation’ process through which a British meat and ham and Polish flour are linked with Mexican cooking skills in order to create the final Mexican dish of ‘*milanesas*’.

Previous studies on consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation have applied the term ‘creolisation’ to denote a mix of cultures that cannot be associated with a single culture (Cleveland, 2012, 2018; Dey et al., 2019). For example, Cleveland et al. (2015) examined how the Japanese adopted one of several different identities, describing them as: ‘global, local, and possibly creole (hybridized)’ identities (p. 381). Studies on consumer acculturation have also evidenced how immigrant consumers mix foods coming from a diversity of cultures thus creating creolised foods (Dey et al., 2019; Oswald, 1999). For example, Oswald (1999) recounted how one of her participants experienced ‘blending Haitian and American tradition’ when, during the Thanksgiving dinner, her mother served ‘a casserole of turkey, beans and rice’ (p. 309). However, what we appreciate in the analysis of the way Lena cooked ‘*milanesas*’ is in fact a mixing of cultural elements such that the final dish is recognised by Lena as being definitively Mexican, rather than something that is hybrid and new. In this example, Lena developed new competencies too, being creative and innovating while trying to recreate the experience of eating ‘*milanesas*’ while living in the UK.

Regarding how Lena is applying her subjective notion of authenticity, it is clear that for her, the origin of the different material ingredients is not what makes the final dish Mexican; instead it is the way she is applying her knowledge and skills to create the

'*milanesas*' that authenticates the dish, and thus knowledge and skills are equally as important, if not more important than the physical materials per se, in the practice of producing an authentic Mexican dish. Thus consumer competencies are key for the 'authenticating acts' and 'authoritative performances' (Arnould & Price, 2000), that serve to 'authenticate' the Mexican dish.

The participants in the present study also engage in creolisation practices to create a sense of Mexico by applying Mexican concepts and traditions; this phenomenon is analysed in the next subsection.

### **6.3.2 Creolisation through applying Mexican concepts, traditions and the '*Mi marchanta*' experience**

Participants explained how they tried to revive their past life in Mexico by applying Mexican concepts, traditions and beliefs to transform different elements related to a diversity of cultures found in multicultural marketplaces. Ryan provided an example when he explained how he had learned a Mexican tradition related to how to obtain well cooked '*tamales*':

*“Well, for the ‘tamales’, it is really typical that ... and funny as well, a little difficult to believe is that ... in the moment of cooking the ‘tamales’, if you get angry or somebody else gets angry [in the kitchen], the ‘tamales’ didn’t cook well, they get ‘pintos’, meaning that some parts are well cooked and others not, so, that was my first experience with the ‘tamales’, I don’t know what happened that we get angry and they come up that way...So I learned”*

Ryan decided to give cooking lessons to Mexicans and non-Mexicans while living in the USA, Korea, and currently in the UK. He recounted to me that it is usual for him to use a variety of tools, such as kitchen appliances, utensils, ingredients, and so on, that



are connected with a variety of cultures, beside the fact that the participants in his cooking lessons were usually raised in a variety of cultures. He explained to me how he advises his students regarding this Mexican tradition relating to curbing one's emotions whilst cooking tamales:

*“...now that I am an adult, when I know that [we are] going to cook ‘tamales’ for the first time, I tell them: ‘do not get angry, and if you don’t know, it is better that everybody who is not cooking to go outside of the kitchen, and let only the cookers to be there, because if not, the ‘tamales’ don’t get well cooked’. And I have had bad experiences with grown up people, who are the ones who cook the ‘tamales’, and they try not to get angry because of this funny circumstance, or strange, I don’t know what can it be [referring to the tradition]?”*

From the above extract of my interview with Ryan we can appreciate how he is applying this Mexican tradition to a variety of elements from different cultures such as the utensils, the students, the ingredients of the ‘tamales’, and so on, to obtain an experience that is related to Mexico, that is to say, by introducing this Mexican tradition into the “‘creolised’ cooking experience, Ryan is able to create an experience that relates with how he was raised in Mexico. Ryan ‘abstracted’ and ‘reversed’ (Shove et al., 2012) the competencies needed to cook tamales, including those related to this Mexican tradition. While these competencies were related with meanings of normal, everyday food while living in Mexico; these meanings were ‘shaken off’ (Shove et al., 2012), because to cook tamales now, while living in the UK, is not an everyday practice for Mexican immigrants since it requires obtaining both ingredients and cooking utensils that are not easy to get, while living in countries far from Mexico (I recounted how Ryan obtained corn leaves to cook tamales while living in Korea in an unorthodox way in Chapter 5, Section 5.5). So now, besides the meanings related to his past life in

Mexico, cooking tamales is now also associated with meanings of their being something special that can only be obtained once in a while.

Previous studies on consumer acculturation have examined the role of traditions in the process of acculturation, mainly analysing how traditions form a key part in maintaining immigrants' identities (Askegaard et al., 2005; Bardhi et al., 2010; Cruz et al., 2018). In Askegaard et al.'s (2005) study, traditions provide a way to 'reclaim' an immigrant's ethnic identity or a way to construct 'otherness', in a stereotyped and political way (p. 165). Cruz et al. (2018) analysed how, in multicultural marketplaces, religious traditions exhibited 'transcultural properties', that is to say, the different religions shared similar practices. Bardhi et al. (2010) examined how traditional foods were consumed by American tourists while visiting China, thus showing how tradition still structured these tourists' eating, even during a short stay in a different culture. Here, I am evidencing how a Mexican tradition is used as an additional ingredient in the mixing and joining of elements from different cultures. That is to say, in the context of 'creolising cooking practices' competencies associated with this Mexican tradition are applied which link with Ryan's life back in Mexico, thus obtaining a sense of a Mexican experience, enabled by the multicultural marketplace. This extends what previous studies on acculturation and multiculturalisation have analysed regarding traditions and shows how competencies play a key role so Ryan can give a meaning associated with Mexico to his 'creolisation' experience.

Another tradition applied by participants to obtain a Mexican experience is the concept of '*mi marchanta*', which involves having a close relationship with sellers in small retailers. The majority of my participants reported having bought food from local

markets, ‘*tianguis*’ [local food markets that set up in Mexico City on particular days and places each week] or similar small retailers in Mexico and in other countries where they had lived prior to the UK. What characterises these local food markets is the personal attention of the sellers, in contrast to supermarkets, where customers rarely interact with staff. When Mexican consumers become regular customers of a particular small seller, creating a close relationship with the sellers, even one of friendship, it is usual that they refer to them as ‘*mi marchanta*’ or ‘*mi marchante*’, meaning that they have become something like their personal seller. Mexican consumers adopt this concept and apply it to the sellers in other small retail stores such as small supermarkets, corner stores, butchers, and fishmongers. To become a regular customer of these small retailers usually implies that customers can ask for special favours, special food, or discounts. Thus, the whole experience of going to shop in local food markets and in small retailers is special for Mexican immigrants, and thus when living abroad many try to seek out and to shop in these places. Whilst this is not particularly complex, nonetheless, Mexican immigrants develop certain knowledge and skills so as to create a bond with these sellers, and thereby obtain special treatment.

Dolores applied the Mexican tradition of ‘*mi marchanta*’ to explain her experience of shopping at a small retailer when living in Argentina. She recalled for me how she obtained certain special ingredients by becoming a regular customer:

*“...there are many Bolivian and Peruvian women who have small stores or stalls in the streets, so you go walking in the street and you see them... I had ‘mi marchanta’, a Bolivian woman who always had for me chilli or avocado ... if I wanted [different] chillis ... celery [that] is very unusual in Argentina ... she got for me green lemon...”*

The knowledge and skills related with having her '*marchanta*' while living in Argentina were applied to relive Dolores' past life in Mexico. She applied the knowledge and skills she had learned while living in Mexico to create a close relationship with this Bolivian woman so she could relate her with this Mexican concept of '*mi marchanta*'. Thus, by becoming a regular customer and by getting to know each other over time, Dolores was able to think of the seller as her '*marchanta*'. Dolores actively tried to recreate her Mexican shopping experiences, thus looking for where to socialise with the sellers and obtain her special food, successfully 'abstracting' and 'reversing' (Shove et al., 2012) her knowledge and skills to have a close relationship with this Bolivian woman. The meanings associated with these competencies were 'extended' (Shove et al., 2012), previous meanings of 'normal, everyday' were supplemented with meanings related to her past life in Mexico.

For Dolores, her feelings of nostalgia and remembrance gave 'practical intelligibility' (Schatzki, 2010; Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016) to looking for this '*marchante*' and to buying from her regularly while living in Argentina. From this example, we can appreciate how Dolores mixed several elements that can be related with a diversity of cultures so as to obtain a Mexican experience: the Argentinian context, the Bolivian woman, the culture associated with the food sold, and so on. These elements were mixed, creating a 'creole' experience; however, for Dolores, the result of this 'creolisation' of elements, ultimately related to her past life in Mexico. Like Dolores, other participants also recounted how they had successfully or unsuccessfully recreated this experience, which henceforth I refer to as the '*mi marchanta*' experience, while living abroad.

How Dolores explained her experience in Argentina helps to understand how other Mexican immigrants have also conceptualised their lived experiences in multicultural marketplaces as being ‘Mexican’ via ‘*mi marchanta*’, even though they do not discursively express the concept explicitly. An example of this is provided by Isabella: her experience helps to illustrate how Mexican immigrants prefer to frequent local markets and small sellers rather than supermarkets and other big retailers in order to develop a shopping experience that might be considered similar to ‘*mi marchanta*’. When she was living in Mexico, Isabella used to go to local markets since she was a child accompanying her mother. During our first interview, she remembered how she attended a ‘*mercado sobre ruedas*’ [market on wheels that could move to different parts of the city] in Mexico City, with her mother. She remembered: “*there is a market to which we have gone for years. Since I was a little girl, since we moved there, I was like eleven years old; we went to that market...*”.

When Isabella moved to Belgium, she could not easily visit local markets since she could not drive in the new country, so once in a while she would go with her husband to a local market that was quite far from where she lived. After that, she remembered when she moved to Paris, where she recalled how she found a ‘*tianguis*’ in a convenient place which she could visit once a week. After living in Paris, she moved to Germany, where she found Mexican ingredients in another local market; she told me about her experience:

*“...around every two weeks I used to go to the town centre because there was a market... they sold many fresh ingredients, they brought products from many countries. There it was, after many years, when I saw fruit from Mexico again. We ate Manila mangoes, we had eaten them many years before in Mexico... and they were selling them in that place. There was a stall from Spanish people and half of the stall*

*was of Mexican ingredients so they have tins of 'huitlacoche' [a Mexican fungus that grows in the corn] and of 'flores de Calabaza' [squash blossoms] and bags of flour [to prepare tortillas] as well, they have all that so, we were OK with that stuff. They were expensive!"*

When I asked her about any language difficulties, Isabella answered: “*The girl who helped clients spoke Spanish; she had been married to a Mexican, that's why she spoke Spanish, even though she was no longer married to the Mexican! [chuckles]*”. In the anecdote narrated by Isabella above, she demonstrates familiarity with the woman helping at the stall in the market, thus resembling the ‘*mi marchanta*’ experience. Isabella associated the experience of visiting local markets with normal, everyday life back home in Mexico; however, living outside of Mexico, the meaning of this mundane experience has now been supplemented with those related to her past life back in Mexico, remembering how she used to go with her mother. This included not only the material arrangements such as the stalls, the sellers, the food, and so on, it also included the sensory experiences, such as the smells, the other visitors to the market, and the way to socialise with the sellers, that is to say, to live the ‘*mi marchanta*’ shopping experience.

As can be noted, Isabella applied her previous skills to find the best stall in the market in Germany so as to become a regular customer, acquiring the Mexican food that she wanted from the stall where she had created a relationship with the woman who could speak Spanish. For Isabella, similar to Dolores, her feelings of nostalgia and remembrance gave ‘practical intelligibility’ (Schatzki, 2010; Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016) to looking for a local market and to visiting it while living outside of Mexico. In the case of the German market that she remembers especially, these feelings and moods gave ‘practical intelligibility’ (Schatzki, 2005) to how Isabella acted, travelling there to

revive her Mexican shopping experience every two weeks. Even if she did not use the term itself to refer to this experience, what she is describing is the same experience as that lived by Dolores in Argentina. That is to say, when Isabella is applying the knowledge and skills learned in Mexico in the context of a multicultural marketplace in another country, she is still obtaining what for her is a Mexican experience. I am suggesting that the ‘creolisation’ of the various cultural elements comprising local markets in various places resulted in something that Isabella could relate to her past life in Mexico. To visit local markets whilst living in these various different countries was not just an ‘everyday’ experience, as it was back in Mexico, instead the experience becomes symbolic of Mexico. Thus, the meanings associated with these shopping competencies were ‘extended’ (Shove et al., 2012) while maintaining their previous association with ‘everyday life’, ultimately creating a ‘Mexican experience, albeit through a process of creolisation.

Jacey provides another example of how the experience of shopping from local markets and small retailers helps Mexican immigrants to associate their knowledge and skills with their past life in Mexico, applying the concept of the ‘*mi marchanta*’ shopping experience, while not using the term discursively. When I visited Jacey, she demonstrated familiarity with the people in the stalls also. Jacey lived in Central Mexico during her childhood. Afterwards, she studied in Switzerland, and then moved to the UK. She is married to a Venezuelan man and is the mother of a one-year-old baby. When I visited her, we went to a shopping centre. This place has an annex with stalls similar to Mexico’s markets. We visited several stalls, and I noticed how she talked and socialised with the people in the stalls. After I met her and her baby, we first visited a stall where a Mexican man was the owner. He served Jacey with familiarity,

speaking in Spanish and commenting even on aspects of Jacey's family life, such as the weight gained during Jacey's pregnancy. Afterwards, we went to a fish stall, where Jacey informed me that the owners were from Poland, once again demonstrating her familiarity. I added the following to my field notes:

*"...I noticed how everyone knew her and said hello to the baby. It was the same way when we went around the fish stall. The woman behind the counter greeted her very familiarly, commenting on the age of the baby and greeting her. The other employee, younger, approached from the back of the shelf to greet her as well"*

After Jacey finished her shopping at the fish stall, we went to a fruit and vegetable stall attended by an Asian seller. Finally, we went to collect some Christmas decorations ordered by Jacey from a seller who had a strong Middle Eastern accent. Like Isabella, Jacey had successfully recreated the experience of going to the local market like she used to do while living in Mexico; however, here she experienced a mix of food and people connected to a diversity of cultures, but in so doing she was able to obtain an experience that she could relate with her past life in Mexico. That is to say, she obtained the '*mi marchanta*' experience albeit that this was achieved through a 'creolisation' of elements.

Jacey used to go with her mother or even with her entire family to the local market when she lived in Mexico. When she arrived to live in the UK, she found a place near her house where she could recreate the experience and apply her previous knowledge and skills, thus 'awakening' this association of competencies and meanings that had been 'dormant' (Shove et al., 2012) for some time. As in the examples of Dolores and Isabella, Jacey reinstates the whole '*mi marchanta*' shopping experience including socialising with the sellers and looking for the best places to obtain the best products




and services that she can. However, different from Isabella, Jacey could not recreate this experience when she was living in Switzerland, as a student, prior to coming to the UK, hence the knowledge, skills, and their linked meanings remained ‘dormant’ (Shove et al., 2012) until the practice of purchasing, consuming food from local markets, and socialising with the sellers was revived. We can appreciate that the multicultural marketplace present in the UK did not stop Dolores, Isabella and Jacey from restoring this “*mi marchanta* experience”. On the contrary, through a process of ‘creolising’ various cultural elements available in the UK multicultural marketplace, Mexican immigrant consumers are able to revive the Mexican experience, that is to say, the diversity of products, people and spaces in the multicultural marketplace allows them to apply the Mexican concept of ‘*mi marchanta*’.

This process operates at the social level as well as the individual level because Mexican immigrants living abroad invariably share where to find local markets, so they can revive the ‘*mi marchanta*’ experience when shopping in these places, as indicated in Figure 6.3.2.1 below:

In Figure 6.3.2.1, participant 1 is sharing what she found in a local market, in this case, tomatillos. The other participants are interested not only in the ingredients found, but in where to find the local market. As participant 2 observes, the participants look somehow desperate in asking for the location of the market. Participant 1 answers about how to locate the market. Participant 9 asks for the location of the local market and Participant 1 explains how to locate the market: Participant 9 answers saying that her husband only ‘wants to go and buy them’ [the tomatillos] and ‘does not like the shopping’, meaning that he does not like the ‘*mi marchanta*’ experience of looking in every stall in the

market and socialising with the sellers, applying the knowledge and skills acquired back in Mexico. All the participants are asking for the location of the market so they can visit it and apply their knowledge and skills so as to relive the shopping experience with which they were familiar back home in Mexico.

Figure 6.3.2.1 **Linda** shares what she found in a local market and the location of the market



Chicas sabias que venden tomatillos en el mercado fresco de St. Nicolas, en Bristol? Y muy baratos. Me compré 5 kilos. Ahora si haré una rica salita con tomates y chile cascabel.

20 24 Comments

Like Comment

y dónde consigues el cascabel?

Like Reply 2y

En Otomi en Cliftonville.

Like Reply 2y

gracias

Like Reply 2y

Write a reply...

Esto en el Belfast verdad?

Like Reply 2y

Donde está ese mercado?????

Like Reply 2y

Es en Londres?????

Like Reply 2y

Especifica ubicación por favor.

Like Reply 2y

ja ja ja, sonamos con desesperación, pero please ubicanos en esos mercados?

Like Reply 2y

Belfast?

Like Reply 2y

Hendon, es en Bristol. Disculpen se me olvida que este grupo es para todo el Reino Unido.

Like Reply 2y

Bristol me queda 45 minutos wow...

Like Reply 2y

Perdón el mercado se pone los miércoles en St Nicholas Market.

[Other participants ask for the place]

podrías darme la ubicación exacta por favor?

Like Reply 2y

Yo solo se llegar en camión está cerca del mall Galleries por la parte del agua. Búscalo en Google seguro te darán todo ahí Saint Nicholas Market Bristol.

Like Reply 2y

La verdad es que mi esposo va a ir y dice que el Mercado es grande tipico hombre que no le gusta el shopping y solo quieren ir comprarlos y regresar

Like Reply 2y

**Linda:** Girls, do you know that they sell tomatillos in the open air market of St Nicholas, in Bristol? And very cheap. I bought 5 kilos. Now I will do a tasty sauce with tomatillos and 'cascabel' chilli [type of Mexican chilli]

Participant 2: And where do you find the cascabel chilli?

**Linda:** In Otomi in Cliftonville

Participant 2: **Linda** Thank you

**Linda:** [Inserts an smiling emoji]

Participant 2: This is in Belfast, isn't it?

Participant 3: Where is that market?

Participant 3: Is it in London?

Participant 4: Specify the location, please

Participant 5: [inserts an amazed emoji]

Participant 6: [inserts a fullstop, meaning she wants to follow this trend]

Participant 2: Hahaha, we sound desperate, but please [name of Participant 1] locate this market for us [laughing emojis]

**Linda:** Belfast?

**Linda:** I'm sorry, it is in Bristol. Sorry, I forgot this group is for all the United Kingdom

Participant 7: Bristol is 45 minutes from where I am, wow...

Participant 8: [Tags another Mexican immigrant, so she knows about the post]

**Linda:** Sorry, the market is set out on Wednesday in St Nicholas' Market

Participant 9: **Linda** could you give the exact location please?

**Linda:** I only know how to get there by bus, it is near the Galleries mall, by the side of the water. Search for it in Google, for sure it is going to give you all [the information to locate it] Saint Nicholas Market, Bristol.

Participant 9: To be honest, my husband is going and he says that the market is very big, typical man that doesn't like the shopping and only wants to go and buy them and come back [emoji meaning disappointment]

Dolores, Isabella, Jacey, and the participants in Figure 6.3.2.1 (which also includes a post from Linda) are keen to visit local food markets so as to recreate the Mexican experience of '*mi marchanta*', albeit that this is achieved through the 'creolisation' of different cultural elements, by applying shopping related competencies associated with meanings connected to their past life in Mexico. Excluding the way Dolores explained her experience in Argentina, the association of the different elements in the experience is 'tacit'; that is to say, the participants are not 'discursively' explaining '*mi marchanta*' either to me or to each other. Instead, it is the 'general understandings' (Schatzki, 2010) implicit to '*mi marchanta*' which, I am arguing, underlies their enactments and thoughts, and that they make intelligible through what they are doing (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016). Thus, Isabella, Jacey, Dolores, and the participants in Figure 6.3.2.1 share common 'general understandings' (Schatzki, 2010) through which they 'authenticate' what they were doing in various foreign locales as being Mexican by applying competencies related to the development of the '*mi marchanta*' experience.

In these examples, through a process of 'creolisation' in which they mix elements that can be related with a diversity of cultures, such as sellers, food, languages, and so on present in the multicultural marketplace of the UK, they obtain what they understand as being an 'authentic' Mexican shopping experience. This analysis shows the critical role of consumer competencies in this process of consumer multiculturalisation, and so how 'general understandings' shared between immigrant consumers gives 'practical intelligibility' to how they are acting (Schatzki, 2010).

The multicultural marketplace broadens the opportunities for immigrant consumers to reinvigorate their home culture, here by creolising elements coming from a diversity of

cultures by applying competencies related to Mexican meanings; with this they deploy their ethnicity through their food consumption.

### **6.3.3 Creolisation and the role of competencies in creating a sense of Mexico**

In section 6.3 I have discussed the role of knowledge and skills, i.e. competencies in the adaptation process of immigrant consumers seeking to revive Mexican food related experiences.

Creolisation refers to the outcome of blending cultural elements to create a new cultural element. In the field of language, many articles apply the term to denote the outcome of blending two languages (McWhorter, 2001) and in anthropology to denote specific groups of people, usually descendants of a mix of different racial groups (Palmié, 2006). In marketing, the term creolisation has been applied mainly to denote the outcome of mixing material elements from different culture. For example, Groves (2001) uses the term to denote the Anglicization of foreign foods. In the context of studying binational households, Cross and Gilly (2017) also analyse creolisation as the outcome of blending materials; for example, the Thanksgiving turkey being seasoned with Mexican ingredients. Here, the different materials being added (e.g. Mexican spices) are insufficient to create something ‘new’ which cannot be associated specifically with either one of the two cultures (c.f. Dey et al., 2019, Oswald, 1999). the final dish remained as Thanksgiving turkey dinner. In the present study, I am applying the term creolisation to denote the blending of different types of cultural elements; not just physical materials, but also other elements such as cultural concepts and traditions. Moreover, by also employing knowledge, skills and competencies into this mix, what

transpires is not something that they conceive of as being culturally ‘new’ but rather something that becomes definitively Mexican for these immigrant consumers.

These Mexican immigrants have had to acquire new knowledge and develop new skills, taking a creative approach and innovating in order to associate the outcome of their creolisation practices with meanings related to their previous life in Mexico. The way these Mexican immigrants employ various elements in these creolisation processes helps us to gain new insights into the role that knowledge and skills - competencies - play in the adaptation process, by showing a creative and innovative side of the process. This creative and innovative aspect of the consumer multiculturation process is new and will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter.

My analysis also shows that the multicultural marketplace assists immigrant consumers in this process by availing them of a diversity of elements that they are able to transform into a Mexican experience through this process of creolisation. Thus, here I describe a different perspective on consumer multiculturation in comparison to either the development of identities (Kipnis et al., 2019) or the strategies employed (Dey et al., 2019).

Besides clarifying the role of competencies in the adaptation process, we can appreciate that there is a link between the processes described here and the process of ‘authentication’ discussed in Chapter 5. Here, we can appreciate that the ‘authenticating acts’ and ‘authoritative performances’ (Arnould & Price, 2000) additionally imply creativity and innovation.

Despite the fact that Mexican immigrants to the UK are familiar with supermarkets from food shopping back home in Mexico, the next section indicates that they still need to develop new competencies when they shop in supermarkets in the UK, since it is here that they first encounter cultural food products known as Tex-Mex, which as we shall see causes a great deal of consternation among many Mexican immigrant consumers to the UK.

## **6.4 Engaging with Tex-Mex food**

In this section I discuss a variety of ways in which Mexican immigrants engage with Tex-Mex food whilst living in the UK, analysing the role that institutions, including marketing and branding, play in this process. In subsection 6.4.1, I examine how a number of Mexican immigrant consumers simply cannot relate to Tex-Mex food, and therefore reject it outright. Subsection 6.4.2 discusses how other Mexican immigrants have learnt to accept at least some Tex-Mex foods into their cooking practices in order to create a sense of Mexico. Finally, subsection 6.4.3 outlines how still others have developed a new competency, one that could be described as a ‘learning-teaching’ process, through which they create an understanding and sense of Mexico for others, thus educating them to recognise the distinction between Mexican food and Tex-Mex food.

### **6.4.1 Rejecting the meanings associated with Tex-Mex food**

For many Mexican immigrants to the UK, their first encounter with Tex-Mex food, which is invariably advertised in the UK as being ‘authentic’ Mexican food, is at the supermarket. Caleb, a Mexican man living in the UK, typifies the group of Mexican immigrant consumers who simply cannot relate to the idea of Tex-Mex food as being

authentically Mexican. Caleb was raised in Central Mexico, is unmarried and has a girlfriend from the UK. He has been living in the UK for four years and, during our first interview, he commented to me:

*“... the fajita kit that they sell, that I still can't understand – what is a damn fajita [chuckles], yes, it makes me laugh as well, but... for me a fajita is a meat cut, it's how you ask the butcher to cut the meat for you... it is not a recipe, and here it has a completely different meaning... I don't dare to buy it because I don't know what it is!”*

Caleb discovered that his notion of a fajita is very different to that presented by Tex-Mex food brands, here in the UK. As the above quote indicates, prior to moving to the UK, for Caleb a ‘fajita’ referred to a particular chicken meat cut. Caleb learned how to cook from his mother in Mexico. When he moved to the UK, this knowledge and the associated cooking skills travelled with him ‘abstracted’ as memories (Shove et al., 2012). Thus, for Caleb, when he applies these cooking skills in the UK, he recreates his past life, remembering his family life back home in Mexico. Therefore, when he first encountered ‘fajita kits’ in a supermarket in the UK, he was left feeling bemused. This Tex-Mex food did not equate with Mexican food as far as he was concerned.

As suggested above, Tex-Mex products sold in the UK are frequently advertised as being authentically Mexican, as can be appreciated from the images shown in Appendix A. That is to say, these food brands are trying to associate their brands in general and certain food items in particular with the flavours and meanings of Mexico. Thus, as Shove et al. (2012) suggest these meanings are being ‘mediated’ by these Tex-Mex food brands. However, as can be seen from the extract above, these brand meanings do not resonate with other elements of Mexican food practices with which Caleb is familiar. Thus, Caleb is unable to apply the cooking skills that he associates with the term



‘fajitas’ to the Tex-Mex fajita-kit. Here we can appreciate how Caleb’s feelings are giving ‘practical intelligibility’ (Schatzki, 2010) to the way he reacts towards the Tex-Mex product, saying that he does not ‘dare to buy it’. The disparity between what the package communicates (authentic Mexican) and how Caleb understands ‘authentic Mexican’ is significant. It is clear that the message that the brand is attempting to communicate through its packaging and other marketing communications tools does not ‘stick’ (Shove et al., 2012) with the other elements of the social practice of cooking fajitas, with which Caleb is familiar. Previous research has examined the role that institutions such as marketing can play in the multiculturalisation and acculturation process of immigrants and non-immigrants (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020). My research provides empirical evidence reflecting how the role of marketing can increase the complexity of the multiculturalisation process of immigrants, when confronted with brands that attempt to ‘reshape’ foreign regional dishes and present them as being ‘authentic’ in the context of a multicultural society and marketplace.

Caleb is not the only Mexican immigrant living in the UK who cannot reconcile the ‘mediated’ meanings of these Tex-Mex brands as being authentically Mexican with how they understand and apply relevant skills to cook Mexican dishes, so as to revive Mexican experiences. Figure 6.4.1.1 presents a Mexican immigrant asking others whether they have tried a particular Tex-Mex food item, namely nachos, found in a supermarket in the UK:

Figure 6.4.1.1 A Mexican immigrant asks the others if they have tried an Old El Paso product

Participant 1: Have you tried this?

Participant 2: No

Participant 3: No

Participant 4: No, and I didn't think to do it [laughing emoji]

Participant 5: No, hahaha, did you buy it? In Mexico now they sell similar kits, to make 'chilakiles' [Mexican dish]

Participant 1: No, it feels weird. I still haven't fallen so low, hahaha!

Participant 7: Never... once I bought a sauce of this brand and it was very sweet. I better do everything from scratch, even though it takes me longer [laughing emoji]

Participant 5: They do not understand that the 'salsa' doesn't have sugar XD [meaning laughing]

Participant 7: [inserts an image with the word 'guácala' meaning that it tastes awful]

We can appreciate how some of the participants in Figure 6.4.1.1 are trying to 'reverse' specific cooking skills from back home in Mexico that are 'abstracted' (Shove et al.,

2012) as a written recipe or in memory, in order to apply them to the Tex-Mex product shown in the image. For example, when Participant 5 says that now in Mexico you can buy something similar to cook a traditional Mexican breakfast dish named ‘chilakiles’ [toasted tortillas, cooked with green or red spicy sauce and cheese], we can appreciate that this participant is trying to make sense of the ‘nachos’ in relation to her past life back in Mexico. Participant 7 is explaining how she tried to revive her sense of Mexico, by trying to ‘reverse’ (Shove et al., 2012) the knowledge of cooking with Mexican sauces, using a sauce of the same brand as the nachos, yet she was unable to revive her Mexican experience because, as she explains, the flavour did not match her knowledge of how this Mexican sauce should taste: the Tex-Mex version was ‘very sweet’ as she explains it. Therefore, she prefers to cook ‘everything from scratch’ so that she can recreate what for her is an ‘authentic’ Mexican sauce (that is not too sweet). Participant 5 agrees with what Participant 7 comments, thereby showing how they share common ‘general understandings’ (Schatzki, 2010; Welch & Warde, 2017).

The whole image of the packaging, the word ‘Mexican’ below the name, and the other signifiers, such as the Mexican hat above the name of the product, give a sense of a Mexican product, these symbols, and the messages that the brand uses, such as bringing an ‘authentic Mexican feast’ to its customers, as can be appreciated in the advertisements in Appendix A, overall attempt to ‘sell’ a Mexican experience to customers. However, this is not accepted by many Mexican immigrant consumers, as Participant 1 says: there is something that is not right for her; that is to say, the ‘mediated’ meanings are not ‘sticking’ (Shove et al., 2012) with the other elements of the food consumption practices of these Mexican immigrants. The knowledge and skills required to cook Mexican dishes as learnt back home, and that the participants associate

with meanings related to their past life in Mexico cannot be applied to these food items, and thus, they do not accept that *Old El Paso* branded foods are ‘authentic’ Mexican foods. Brands such as this do not help them to revive a sense of Mexico while living in the UK. Once again, we can appreciate the role of marketing in respect of the adaptation process. Mexican immigrants cannot make the association between the ‘reshaped’ food sold by the brand and their knowledge and understanding of their regional and traditional cuisines, therefore rejecting the product, thus increasing the complexity of the multicultural forces at play within multicultural marketplaces.

However, not all the participants in this study completely reject Tex-Mex food; the next section analyses how other participants have learned to accept at least some Tex-Mex products, and as a consequence of this they are able to create experiences that relate to their past life in Mexico.

#### **6.4.2 Learning to accept some Tex-Mex food**

Delilah provides an example of how Mexican immigrants apply their understanding of Mexican food in order to try to make sense of Tex-Mex food. Delilah is a 34-year-old Mexican woman married to a British man; she was raised in North-Central Mexico and moved from Mexico to the UK ten months before I recruited her to participate in this study. Delilah told me her reaction when she found *Old El Paso* food products in the supermarket:

*“...my first impression was ‘this is not Mexican’, but when you feel desperate, you think, ‘Well, I’m not going to try the enchilada kit, because it doesn’t seem tasty, but I can give the pickle jalapeños or the fried beans a try”*

After trying the fried beans, Delilah has continued to purchase them, although she still misses the true Mexican flavour. As she told me: “... *regarding the fried beans... they taste 90% similar to the Mexican*”. Similarly, to Caleb, Delilah learned about ingredients, utensils, staples and Mexican food in general from her mother in Mexico. Thus, when she found these fried beans in the UK, she tried to ‘reverse’ (Shove et al., 2012) her understanding of what fried beans are in Mexico so as to apply this knowledge to the fried beans that she found in the supermarket, trying them out in her cooking so as to relive experiences related to her life back in Mexico.

Nonetheless, Delilah first impression of these fried beans from the Tex-Mex brand was that the product ‘is not Mexican’ but, as she says, her feelings of nostalgia and desperation gave ‘practical intelligibility’ (Schatzki, 2010) to try these fried beans. Thus, differently to Caleb and to the participants in Figure 6.4.1.1, Delilah ‘dared’ to try the fried beans, which ended up being ‘90 percent’ successful in helping her to recreate a Mexican experience, similar to that she was used to. Nonetheless, as can be read in the extract above of my interview with Delilah, with regard to the enchilada kit she still could not reconcile the ‘mediated’ (Shove et al., 2012) meanings that the brand is trying to communicate with her own Mexican experiences. As she puts it, she is not trying the enchilada kit because ‘it doesn’t seem tasty’. An ‘enchilada’ in Mexico is cooked with fresh tortillas and hot sauce, which for Delilah would be impossible to find inside a package. Thus, Delilah was unable to relate the Tex-Mex enchilada kit to the Mexican ‘*enchiladas*’ that she was used to back home in Mexico. Hence, once again, the mediated meanings that the brand is trying to communicate, do not ‘stick’ (Shove et al., 2012) with the other elements that Delilah is familiar with.

From the analysis above, we can appreciate that Delilah has acquired new knowledge that is to say, she has learned, through trial and error, that she can use at least some Tex-Mex products in her cooking so as to obtain something that is sufficiently similar to the dishes that she is familiar with from back home so as to be able to relive her Mexican eating experiences. Other Mexican immigrants have developed new skills to apply to Tex-Mex products, as Figure 6.4.2.1 shows.

Figure 6.4.2.1 A Mexican immigrant suggests how to cook Mexican ‘tostadas’ using tortillas from a brand that is advertised as ‘authentically’ Mexican

August 18, 2018 · 🌐

Se pueden hacer tostadas calentando entre 2-3 mins. en el microondas, éstas tortillas y saben muy ricas y éste queso tiene el sabor del queso blanco de México 🧀

53 🍌🍷🍷 24 Comments

Like Comment

De new es ese queso??  
Like Reply · 1y

Hola... es Polaco lowicki. Curd cheese en asda 🇵🇱

<https://groceries.asda.com/.../lowicz-half.../910000275064>

Online Food Shopping - ASDA  
GROCERIES.ASDA.COM  
Online Food Shopping - ASDA  
Groceries

Like Reply · 2y

Write a reply...

Graaacias, que buenos tips!!  
Like Reply · 2y

Por nada Que paisana 🇲🇽  
Like Reply · 2y

También es parecido el queso Lancashire (el crumbly).  
Like Reply · 2y

Oh voy a probar ese también gracias Mariela 🇲🇽  
Like Reply · 2y

Write a reply...

Gracias x el tip  
Like Reply · 2y Edited

Participant 1: You can make ‘tostadas’ [Mexican toast] heating these tortillas 2-3 minutes in the microwave oven, and they are tasty, and this cheese has the flavour of Mexican white cheese.

Participant 2: Where did you find this cheese?

Participant 1: Hi...It is Lowicki Polish curd cheese, from Asda

Participant 1: [shares a link to the supermarket webpage]

Me: Thank you, this is a good tip!!

Participant 1: You’re welcome ‘paisana’ [fellow countrywoman]

Participant 4: Lancashire cheese is similar as well (the ‘crumbly’ one)

Participant 1: Oh, I’m going to try that as well, thank you [tagging Participant 4]

Participant 5: Thank you for the tip

In Figure 6.4.2.1, a Mexican immigrant shares with others how she makes Mexican ‘*tostadas*’ using *Old El Paso* tortillas. **I took part in this post.** It is evident that she has learned through the process of doing (Shove et al., 2012) how to cook ‘*tostadas*’, applying the knowledge of what ‘*tostadas*’ are in Mexico, and how they are cooked there, by frying them in a pan with oil, in order to develop new cooking skills to be able to use tortillas from a Tex-Mex brand, here using a microwave, so as to obtain a flavour that enables her to recreate the Mexican experience of eating ‘*tostadas*’. Participant 1 is sharing this new knowledge with the others. Therefore, in contrast to Delilah who learned to accept the Tex-Mex brand as being close enough to be able to tolerate, here, Participant 1 has developed a new cooking skill so as to obtain a Mexican ‘*tostada*’ using Tex-Mex tortillas.

We can discern some similarities between the social practice of adopting food from other ethnicities as discussed in Section 5.3 of Chapter 5, and the creolisation practices to create an authentically Mexican dish, as discussed in subsection 6.3.1 of this chapter. The main difference between these two practices and the present discussion surrounding the adoption of Tex-Mex products is in the meanings that the Tex-Mex brands seek to create. As already indicated, these Mexican immigrants relate to these meanings by learning new knowledge, by developing new cooking skills, and by sharing these competencies with each other. For these Mexican immigrants, these meanings do not stick with the other elements of their food consumption practices, that is to say, they could not apply their previous knowledge and understanding to make sense of these Tex-Mex foods. Instead, they had to develop new skills to be able to cook these Tex-Mex foods, such that they could then associate the ‘fried beans’ and the ‘tortillas’ with

experiences of their past lives in Mexico. For Participant 1 in Figure 6.4.2.1, as well as for Delilah, the disparity of these meanings is ‘solved’ by the application of this new competency that makes them creative and innovative.

Some Tex-Mex dishes have been adopted in the North of Mexico, in a sort of cultural reappropriation process (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012), as Teresa explained to me during our first interview, thus showing the complexity of the global flows to which these Mexican immigrants have to adapt in the multicultural marketplace of UK. Teresa was raised in East-Central Mexico and came with her Mexican husband to the UK seventeen years ago. He was raised in the North of Mexico, so he was familiar with some Mexican dishes that are similar to Tex-Mex food before they arrived in the UK. She explained to me her understanding of what happened with the ‘appropriation’ of the burrito in the North of Mexico, as well as other Tex-Mex dishes as follows:

*“... my husband had an argument with other Mexicans because they think that the ‘burrito’ is not a Mexican food, and then, my husband got upset because, of course, the ‘burrito’ is from Mexico, he is from the North and in Sonora [state in the North of Mexico] they eat “burritos”, in fact the ‘percheron’ donkey [animal] are from Sonora. So they are not... they don’t prepare it as they prepare it here [in the UK], or in the United States, but the burrito is from Mexico... then, well, I think that we, as Mexicans, because Mexico is so big and we have always focussed on the centre of the country, for us, Mexico is Mexico City and a few [cities] of the South, we forget about the North, then, when the people say that in Mexico the ‘burritos’ do not exist, that there is no ‘chile con carne’ [chilli with meat], in Mexico [that is not true because], there is ‘carne con chile’ [meat with chilli], but not the ‘chile con carne’, but the ‘carne con chile’, it exists. I mean, in Sonora, in Sinaloa, in Baja California [states in the North of Mexico, on the border with the United States], they eat ‘carne con chile’, it doesn’t have beans, but they eat ‘carne con chile’. It’s a dish totally different from what is known here [in the UK] then I told them: “it is not ‘chile con carne’, it is ‘carne con chile’”. In Mexico we eat ‘carne con chile’, and it is totally different. The ‘totopos’ [tortilla chips], of course we eat ‘totopos’, every day we eat ‘totopos’, in fact, in the North there is a place where they cook the ‘totopos’ with ‘barbacoa’*



*[Mexican dish prepared with goat meat or beef, cooked buried between banana leaves and warm rocks], with... they call them 'tostitos', and then, all the time they are eating 'tostitos', then they are from Mexico. All that is Mexican food, the problem is how they sell it here [in the UK] it's not how you can find it in Mexico, and the difference is that the 'totopos'... we don't eat them as a meal, we eat them as a snack, as a side dish, or a starter, it is not a main dish, but we ate totopos, and we ate them with everything, if you put them in a sauce, even only with chilli, or with guacamole, with this, with the other, but we ate them, it's not a main dish, it is a snack but it is from Mexico''*

Teresa is explaining that her husband was familiar with burritos back home in Mexico because he was raised in the North of Mexico and there, they do indeed eat burritos. The fact that he was familiar with the burrito is not a great surprise; since the origin of the burrito is not at all clear (Pilcher, 2009, 2012). According to Wheaton and Carroll (2017), the burrito was created in California, while Pilcher (2009, 2012) asserts that it was created somewhere near the border between Mexico and the United States! However, Teresa explains that the burrito that is eaten in the North of Mexico is not prepared in the same way as it is in the United States, and that it is different from what they found in the UK.

Through this discussion, we can appreciate how global forces, embracing a diversity of cultures, together with the influence of marketers of what are now global brands, have adapted the burrito in order for it to be accepted by different cultures, yet despite these differences the name is the same. In a similar vein, Teresa explains how she has known different versions of '*chile con carne*', rendered in many countries as '*chilli con carne*' literally meaning 'chilli with meat'. This dish was created, beyond dispute, in the United States, in San Antonio (Wheaton & Carroll, 2017) and Teresa is discussing that, in fact, Mexicans do not eat '*chilli con carne*', they eat what she knows as '*carne con chile*'. That is to say, meat with chilli, or spicy meat, however this is different to the

dish that is eaten in the United States and in the UK. Once again, this is another example of how food items and cuisines have moved from country to country, being adapted differently yet keeping almost the same name. Teresa goes on to give examples of other dishes that she was familiar with in Mexico, but which have been adopted in other countries but with some changes, such as the '*totopos*', known in the UK as tortilla chips or '*nachos*' in Tex-Mex food. My discussion with Teresa shows us how immigrants have developed their knowledge and understanding to recognise foods which 'resonate' (Dey et al., 2019) with their own food cultures, even though they have been distorted by the global forces present in multicultural marketplaces, thereby adding complexity to the adaptation process. I will return to discuss the cultural reappropriation of food in chapter 7.

In summary, this section has analysed how immigrant consumers develop their understanding, knowledge and skills in order to adopt Tex-Mex food products, rejecting the 'mediated' meanings (Shove et al., 2012) of these brands through the application of competencies which operate to replace these mediated meanings with their own meanings related to their past lives back in Mexico. My analysis therefore builds upon Peñaloza's (1994) analysis of the adaptation process of immigrants in a two-culture frame by also considering the global forces present in multicultural marketplaces (Demangeot et al., 2015).

The following section analyses circumstances where Mexican immigrants do not only 'learn' new competencies, they end up becoming 'teachers', when they instruct members of other cultures about the differences between Tex-Mex food and the food that they recognise as being authentically Mexican.

### 6.4.3 Teaching others to appreciate ‘authentic’ Mexican food

Mexican immigrants try to make sense of Tex-Mex food in a variety of ways; by rejecting it outright, by trying to find similarities between it and Mexican food, by learning how to cook with Tex-Mex, and finally by ‘correcting’ the misconception that Tex-Mex food is ‘authentic’ Mexican food, as communicated through global marketing communications and branding, thus educating people from other cultures. An example of this is provided by Layla. Layla was born and raised in Central Mexico and moved to live in the UK three years ago, after marrying a British man. During our first interview I asked her if she had tried to find Mexican food in her local supermarket and in the course of her ensuing response she said: “*my husband likes quesadillas but with [white] flour tortillas from Old El Paso and with cheddar cheese, that's why I did not mention them as Mexican*” and added: “*Yes, [Old] El Paso of [white] flour... and he feels Mexican but I say no, it's like eating burritos*”. For Layla, burritos are not associated with meanings of Mexico. Because Layla was raised in Central Mexico, she learned that ‘quesadillas’ were properly cooked with Mexican tortillas, which are made with non-white flour (see the example of Hannah that I discussed in Section 6.2, where I explain the type of flour used to cook tortillas in Mexico compared to the UK). Therefore, the Mexican flavours cannot be obtained when her husband cooks ‘quesadillas’ with tortillas that are used to cook burritos, which for Layla are not Mexican.

Here we see that Layla is trying to ensure that her husband does not relate the consumption of the white flour tortillas of this brand with Mexico. For Layla, the meanings ‘mediated’ by this Tex-Mex brand do not ‘stick’ (Shove et al., 2012) with the other elements that form the practice of consuming Mexican ‘quesadillas’. She

therefore tries to correct the meanings that her husband has accepted. Even though Layla has not been successful in this respect, we can appreciate that she is at least trying to teach her husband about how ‘quesadillas’ should be cooked with non-white tortillas. Binational couples and families have to negotiate their cultural differences, including their decisions regarding food (Cross & Gilly, 2014; Rogan et al., 2018). In the experience recalled by Layla, we can appreciate how she is trying that her husband conciliates his way of cooking ‘quesadillas’ with what for her is the proper Mexican way of cooking them, thus creating tensions around the food (Rogan et al., 2018). Previous research has evidenced how binational couples negotiate their cultural differences applying a two-culture framework (Cross & Gilly, 2014; Rogan et al., 2018), the difference with the evidence showed above is that the influence of Tex-Mex food, conceived as Mexican by the husband, is another cultural force that has not been commented in previous research in the field.

Another example is given by Isabella. When I visited Isabella, she recounted how she had organised a ‘*taquiza*’ [a Mexican party where only tacos are eaten] to celebrate the birthday of her daughter; she recalled:

*“...I told them: [the party guests] ‘put some beans and then you add either picadillo [mincemeat cooked Mexican style] or tinga [chicken cooked Mexican style], but not both [she laughed]; then you can add what you want, as side dish, lettuce, sour cream, cheese, whatever, and sauce... they gobbled it up! ... Since then, they can’t stop talking about the Mexican night. My daughter told me: ‘Mommy, they love you! Now they love you!’ I accept the love.”*

Isabella went on to say “*I told them: if you are expecting Tex-Mex, you are wrong!*”

Here, we see Isabella teaching the British friends of her daughter what real Mexican tacos are like and what counts as a real Mexican experience, organising this ‘*taquiza*’ so

as to demonstrate. Interestingly, Isabella actually learned to cook Mexican recipes only when she moved abroad, using the Mexican recipes that her mother had sent to her when she was living in China, as I described in Section 6.2. She told me that she had first encountered Tex-Mex food when she moved from China to live to Belgium and, similarly to Caleb and Delilah, whom I discussed in Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 above, it was difficult for Isabella to adopt some of these products; in the main, she rejected Tex-Mex food. Thus, as exemplified in the excerpt of the interview above, she takes the opportunity to teach members of other cultures about Mexican food, as she understands it. In so doing she draws a distinction between Mexican and Tex-Mex food, providing an opportunity for her daughter's friends to have an authentically Mexican experience, which she creates by organising the '*taquiza*' party. This involved cooking Mexican food for them and using Mexican utensils such as the '*tortilleras*' [a basket to hold warm tortillas] and '*cazuelitas*' [earthen pots for sauces], as shown in images 6.4.3.1 and 6.4.3.2 below, which Isabella shared with me when I visited her shortly after this party. She also explained to her guests the correct way to prepare and to eat Mexican tacos. From this example, we can appreciate that Isabella is developing new skills so as to teach others about Mexican food and to provide them with a Mexican eating experience. She first became a 'student' when she was learning these new skills of teaching to others about what counts as Mexican food and a Mexican eating experience, differentiating this from what the brands selling Tex-Mex food offer then also becoming a 'teacher'. Thus, Isabella is engaging in what might best be described as a 'learning new competencies – teaching new competencies' process.

*Image 6.4.3.2 A Mexican 'tortillera', used by Isabella in her 'taquiza' party*



*Image 6.4.3.1 A Mexican 'cazuelita' with guacamole, used by Isabella in her 'taquiza' party*



Previous research that has analysed the adaptation process involved in the consumer acculturation and multiculturalization process, such as that of Cappellini and Yen (2013), Galalae et al. (2020) and Peñaloza (1994) has only analysed how the immigrant consumer is influenced by and adapts to the mainstream consumer culture, host and/or other cultures present in the host country. However, here we see evidence of the consumer multiculturalization process also operating in the reverse direction, that is to say, immigrant consumers influencing members of the mainstream culture. My research therefore adds a competency-based perspective to an emerging body of work that has identified the notion of reverse acculturation (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015; Cruz et al., 2018; Luedicke, 2015).

#### **6.4.4 Tex-Mex food and the role of knowledge, skills and competencies in the adaptation process**

In this section I have detailed the role that knowledge, skills, and competencies play in the adaptation process of immigrant consumers to multicultural marketplaces in respect of their engagement with Tex-Mex food, the meanings of which has been distorted by global marketing and branding communications, as the advertisements found in Appendix A of this thesis show, thus posing a challenge for Mexican immigrants. As discussed, some Mexican immigrants cannot find any similarities between Tex Mex and the food that they recognise as being Mexican, neither can develop new skills and competencies in order to adopt these products; they therefore reject Tex Mex food and the ‘mediated’ meanings of these various brands. Other Mexican immigrants develop new knowledge, skills, and competencies to be able to cook these products and to transform them into something that enables them to recreate the experience of eating something that echoes Mexico for them. Finally, still other Mexican immigrants develop skills, knowledge, and competencies not only to educate members of other cultures in respect of Mexican food, differentiating this from Tex-Mex food, but also to develop new knowledge, skills, and competencies to provide them with the experience of Mexican food culture. I have described this as engaging in a ‘learning new competencies – teaching new competencies’ process.

#### **6.5 Competencies and the creation of Mexican experiences.**

The present chapter has provided empirical evidence to demonstrate how immigrant consumers associate meanings with back-ground knowledge, understanding, know-how, and skills – that is to say with competencies - while going through the process of

consumer multiculturalism as they adapt to living in the UK. By foregrounding the role of consumer competencies in this adaptation process my analysis has uncovered a process of creolisation in which a variety of elements (not only physical materials) from a diversity of cultures are combined to create foods that are recognised by the participants as being Mexican and experiences that provide a sense of Mexico. Furthermore, the creolisation embedded within the adaptation process, exhibits a productivity, creativity and innovativeness that has not been seen in previous studies (Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Peñaloza, 1994). Here, as in Chapter 5, the multicultural marketplace acts as an ally, by offering immigrants a diversity of elements that can be creolised in order to obtain a Mexican experience.

The association between meanings and competencies is also related to the way in which immigrants 'authenticate' their food, because it is by applying competencies through 'authenticating acts' and 'authoritative performances' (Arnould & Price, 2000) that food items begin to take on meanings related to the participants' past lives in Mexico, once again highlighting the productivity, creativity and innovation commented upon before.

Some participants reject Tex-Mex food products because they cannot reconcile the mediated meanings communicated by these global brands, while others 'reappropriate' (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012) at least some Tex-Mex foods thus transforming them into something that resembles a sense of Mexico for the participants. Finally, some participants engage in a process of 'learning new competencies - teaching new competencies' thus engaging in a form of reverse acculturation (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015; Cruz et al., 2018; Luedicke, 2015) as part of their adaptation process.



The next chapter discusses the results of my analysis in relation to the consumer acculturation and multiculturalization literature.

## **7 Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I present an overview of my findings, summarise the theoretical and practical contributions of my research and advance the conceptual development of multiculturalisation theory, offering a conceptual model. In the next Section 7.2, I return to consider the overall aim and objectives of the study as stated in the introduction, and how this research has taken a different theoretical approach in order to understand the consumer multiculturalisation process from the perspective of consumer adaptation. Next, Sections 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 discuss how the outcomes of this research provide insights into consumer multiculturalisation and the ramifications of this to multiculturalisation theory.

### **7.2 Focusing on consumer competencies**

As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, previous research on consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation has focused mainly on how immigrants form and reflect different identities (Askegaard et al., 2005; Kipnis et al., 2019; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007) and in the mental processes adopted (Galalae et al., 2020; Jamal, 1998; Kizgin et al., 2018). This body of research tends to neglect the influence of institutions present in multicultural marketplaces, including marketers (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020) on the process of acculturation/multiculturalisation. Those studies that have moved beyond the exclusive focus on mental processes to also analyse the behaviours of immigrant consumers during the process of acculturation/multiculturalisation have focused mainly on purchasing behaviours and the acculturation strategies adopted by immigrants (Bundy, 2017; Demangeot & Sankaran, 2012; Dey et al., 2019). Studies on consumer acculturation/multiculturalisation tend not to consider the complex cultural forces

present in multicultural marketplaces introduced by global forces that result in processes of reappropriation (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012), by transcultural practices (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015; Cruz et al., 2018) and by other institutions, such as those related to marketing (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020). The few studies that have analysed the adaptation process of immigrants to new marketplaces in the context of acculturation/multiculturalisation have been conducted using frameworks comprising of only two cultures – host and immigrant cultures (Peñaloza, 1994) or three cultures – host, immigrant, and global consumer culture (Cappellini & Yen, 2013). With the exception of Peñaloza (1994), very few studies have analysed the way immigrants develop competencies to consume in new (multicultural) marketplaces.

Another aspect of the consumer acculturation/multiculturalisation process that has been under researched, in the context of food consumption, is *how* immigrants associate culture with their consumption of food. Studies have presupposed an association between the consumption of food and specific cultures from the perspective of the researchers, thus neglecting to consider their participants' point of view (Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Cleveland & Xu, 2019; Jamal, 1998). Other studies that have tried to understand how their participants associate their consumption of food with different cultures, have approached this mainly through verbal descriptions (Jamal, 1996; Chytikova, 2011; Bundy, 2017; Dey et al., 2019). A small number of studies have examined the process through which individuals associate culture and food, however these studies have focused in short stays (Bardhi et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2019).

From the previous summary of the academic literature on consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation, we can appreciate the need to develop understanding in respect of *how*

immigrants develop competencies to consume in multicultural marketplaces (Demangeot et al., 2015).

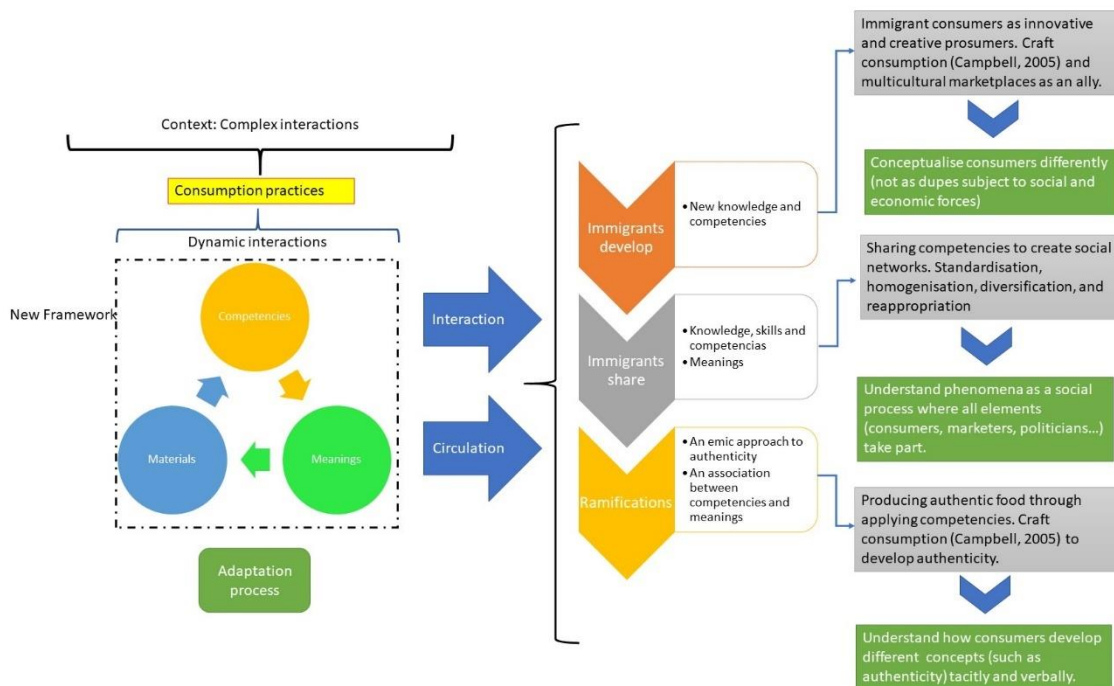
In Chapter 1, I stated that the overall aim of the study was to develop an understanding of the role of knowledge, skills, and competencies in the adaptation process of Mexican immigrants to the multicultural marketplace present in the UK by analysing their consumption of food. I set out three objectives to enable me to achieve this overall aim:

1. To understand the role of materials in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural food marketplace;
2. To understand the role of cultural meanings in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural food marketplace; and
3. To analyse the ramifications of immigrant consumers adapting to the multicultural food marketplace.

In order to shift the focus away from identities and mental activities *per se*, and towards the development of consumer competencies, the study adopted practice theory as a theoretical lens. Adopting this approach does not mean that my research excludes mental processes and identity issues; rather it moves these aspects from centre stage. This allowed me to analyse practices instead of individuals, thus looking at consumption as a moment within wider practices (Warde, 2005), instead of analysing the moment of consumption *per se*, as previous studies have done. The practice theory approach developed by Shove et al. (2012) permitted me to study the dynamic linking of competencies with the other two elements that constitute practices, thus analysing how competencies link with materials in Chapter 5 and how competencies link with

meanings in Chapter 6. By examining how practices ‘circulate’ (Shove et al., 2012), my research tuned into the social aspects of food related practices. The study therefore expands the scope of the consumption activities analysed in previous studies, to also include analysis of (1) the various means by which immigrant consumers acquire foods outside of the usual retail outlets (Chapter 5, Section 5.4) and; (2) how they have employed goods and other elements associated with a diversity of cultures in innovative and creative ways (Chapter 6, Section 6.3). In addition, applying the concept of ‘general understandings’ developed by Schatzki (2012) and advanced by Welch and Warde (2017) has allowed me to understand the productive and performative aspects involved in the authentication of food. My practice theory informed analysis therefore indicates that immigrant consumers; (1) become prosumers (Ritzer, 2014; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010) as they create and innovate in respect of their food consumption practices, while adapting to the many cultural forces comprising multicultural marketplaces; (2) create social networks, through which they engage in sharing knowledge, skills, and competencies related to food, thus increasing the complex global forces operating within multicultural marketplaces; and, (3) apply competencies to construct an emic conception of the authenticity of food through which they associate food with their own culture. In the following subsections I explain and discuss each of these contributions of my analysis. In Appendix J, I present a table describing how my objectives are aligned with the theoretical contributions of my analysis and below Figure 7.2.1 summarise the outcomes of this study and reflect further considerations of the outcomes.

Figure 7.2.1 Summary of the outcomes and further considerations.



The next sections discuss the outcomes of my research, as depicted in Figure 7.2.1.

### 7.3 Immigrant consumers as innovative and creative prosumers

During the process of adapting to live in multicultural marketplaces, immigrant consumers must learn new knowledge and develop new skills and competencies in order to be able to consume food that resembles foods with which they are familiar from their home culture. In so doing they become prosumers, innovating, and creating.

In Chapter 5, I examined how, in order to acquire their food, immigrant consumers have to develop new knowledge and skills so as to understand where to find importers and retailers of Mexican food, ethnic food stores from which they could acquire fresh foods or ingredients similar to those found in their home country, and how supermarkets have

classified various cultural foods in their international food aisles. In addition, immigrants have developed new knowledge and skills so as to acquire food outside of the usual retailers. That is to say, they have learned how to smuggle food into the UK in suitcases, how to cultivate it, or how to obtain it by breaking various rules; indicating again their creativity and innovation in order to acquire the foods they desire. Here we can appreciate that the new knowledge, skills, creativity, and innovation of these immigrant consumers serves to “produce” new ways of acquiring food.

The analysis developed in Chapter 6 suggests that after acquiring these various foods, immigrants still have to develop additional new knowledge, skills, and competencies in order to obtain something that resembles their home (food) culture. Thus, immigrant consumers engage in processes of creolisation involving physical and non-physical elements, such as concepts, ingredients, utensils, and even individuals, associated with a variety of different cultures, including their own, embracing and mixing these various elements in order to obtain foods and experiences through which they can relate to their own (food) culture. That is to say, they apply a creolisation process through which they obtain an experience that allows them to remember home. Also, in Chapter 6 I analysed how immigrants show creativity and innovation when they develop new knowledge and skills in order to find similarities between Tex-Mex - distorted global versions of their ethnic food – and their emic perspective of Mexican food; learning how to cook with at least some Tex-Mex foods in order to transform them so as to produce something which better resembles Mexican food. Here I show how institutions increase the complexity in multicultural marketplaces through additional influences, such as those created by marketing (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020) that interact with other institutions and consumers’ influences.

From these examples we can appreciate how immigrant consumers produce and consume, in creative and innovative ways, thereby becoming ‘prosumers’ (Ritzer, 2014; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). It is important to highlight here that the multicultural marketplace becomes an ally to these immigrants, offering a wide range of elements, associated with a wide range of cultures, through which they are able to create their own ethnic foods and food related experiences. The various ways in which these immigrant consumers are creative and innovative in the process of food consumption resonates with Campbell’s (2005) notion of the ‘craft consumer’ which involves any *‘consumption activity in which the ‘product’ concerned is essentially both ‘made and designed by the same person’ and to which the consumer typically brings skill, knowledge, judgement and passion while being motivated by a desire for self-expression’* (p. 23, italics added). Drawing on Campbell (2005) I am arguing that immigrant consumers *‘bring’* skills and knowledge to produce – *‘make and design’* experiences that recreate their culture of origin. Immigrants *‘design’* these experiences by planning, acquiring, making, and producing something that allows them to relive their culture, as a form of *‘self-expression’* that is to say, as a way to express their ethnicity. The notion of the *craft consumer* (Campbell, 2005) provides a means to supplement previous studies regarding how immigrants construct and reflect their identity while undergoing the consumer acculturation and/or multiculturalisation process (Askegaard et al., 2005; Kipnis et al., 2019; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007), since *craft consumption* implies that consumers manipulate not just physical materials but also the symbolic meanings associated with what they produce in order to *‘maintain a given impression, identity or lifestyle’* (Campbell, 2005, p. 24). Campbell (2005) makes a good point by exemplifying craft consumption with the preparation of food;



nonetheless, here I am not only applying the term to the way immigrants cook, but I am also arguing that the adaptation process to multicultural marketplaces implies that immigrants become *craft consumers* (Campbell, 2005). The adoption of Shove et al.'s (2012) approach to practice theory as a conceptual framework to examine consumer multiculturalisation helped to bring the creative and productive notion implied by crafting to the fore in my analysis of the immigrant consumers adaptation processes involved in the process of multiculturalisation.

My research therefore builds upon previous studies that have identified that immigrants purchase and consume goods and services associated with a variety of cultures in multicultural marketplaces, by showing the creative, innovative, and productive aspects of the adaptation process. One implication of this is that several consumption activities analysed, in previous research, as a means through which immigrants adopt different cultural identities could have other meanings for immigrant consumers. As I have shown, acquiring, and using goods and services associated with other cultures present in multicultural marketplaces may actually lead to reaffirming the immigrants' own culture, rather than necessarily signalling a different cultural identity. This outcome of my research suggests the importance of recognising that consumers are active and creative individuals, capable of transforming various resources present in the multicultural marketplace, beyond the concepts introduced by marketers (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020), such as that of Tex-Mex food as authentic Mexican food; thus, challenging previous conceptualisations that depict immigrant consumers as dupes subject to the various forces present in marketplaces. I depicted this outcome of my research on the right-hand side of Figure 7.2.1 on page 232 above.

## **7.4 Sharing competencies to create social networks**

Immigrant consumers share the new knowledge, skills, and competencies that they develop during their adaptation process with one another. They also share aspects of their culture with members of other cultures, thus increasing the complexity of the cultural forces present within multicultural marketplaces.

In Chapter 5 I examined how immigrants share new competencies with each other in order to acquire their food. For instance, when an immigrant finds an ingredient that helps her/him to cook an ethnic dish, they share where others can find it, as in the example of the Mexican yam that was found in a Chinese food store and the ‘jamaica’ [hibiscus flowers] in the Greek food section in a supermarket. By these means they extend their new knowledge through networks of immigrants, such that over time, these ways of acquiring food become accepted practice between immigrant consumers. In addition, immigrant consumers share how to acquire food outside of the usual retailer outlets, such as when they share their know-how relating to smuggling food in their suitcases or to cultivating their own food, again making these practices become a normal way for immigrants to acquire their desired food.

In Chapter 6, I discussed how immigrant consumers share with each other how to mix elements that they associate with other cultures in order to produce either a dish or an experience that resonates with their Mexican culture. That is to say, they share how to ‘creolise’ elements; for example, when they share how to prepare oranges the way they used to do back home in Mexico, using a chilli powder from the UK, or when they share how to prepare Mexican ‘tostadas’ using tortillas from a Tex-Mex brand. The outcomes

of these creolisation processes subsequently become an accepted means to produce experiences and dishes related to their Mexican culture.

Another aspect of the social nature of the consumer multiculturalisation process analysed in Chapter 6 relates to how immigrants try to correct the misconceptions that members of other cultures have of their ethnic cuisine, developing competencies to teach others how to cook and/or eat Mexican food. This process of educating others about Mexican (food) culture often involves immigrants developing the necessary competencies in order to 'reappropriate' (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012) Tex-Mex foods, the cultural meanings of which have been distorted by cultural forces, introduced by marketers and possibly, other institutions (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020), changing the original ethnic dishes so as to be accepted by other cultures, while mostly retaining the original ethnic name of the food. This was evidenced with respect to the way Mexican immigrants learnt to find similarities and develop competencies to acquire Tex-Mex food products and transform them into something that resembles a sense of their past life in Mexico.

This implies that immigrants not only face cultural influences associated with the diversity of cultures (including global ones) present in multicultural marketplaces, but in addition, they are influenced by their peers and not purely to help them to adopt and adapt to the new marketplace, as showed by Peñaloza (1994): immigrants also face the cultural influence of their peers to reaffirm their ethnicity and even share their culture with members of other cultures. It also shows how marketing institutions play a role in the consumer multiculturalisation process (Veresiu & Giesler, 2018; Vorster et al., 2020) by introducing meanings of materials that may be adopted and/or resisted by

mainstream and immigrant consumers, thereby increasing the complexity of the adaptation process to multicultural marketplaces.

There are other implications regarding how immigrants share knowledge, skills, and competencies through social networks. As discussed in previous paragraphs, the sharing of these new competencies and food consumption practices ‘standardises’ them (Shove et al., 2012), thereby making them common ways to adopt and adapt the diverse elements present in multicultural marketplaces. This has repercussions in the configurations of marketplaces. We can appreciate that taking elements associated with a diversity of cultures present in multicultural marketplaces and transforming these elements into something related to one’s own culture might result in either a homogenisation of the market or a reaffirmation of the diverse cultures presents in the marketplace. The homogenisation of the market might be an outcome of how immigrant consumers adopt elements that are associated with a different culture in the multicultural marketplace (for example, the hibiscus flower associated with Greek culture by a British supermarket) and then associate it with their own culture, thereby blurring the differences between cultures, homogenising them. For example, we may ask to what extent spaghetti and pizza are still Italian, since for many consumers (immigrants and non-immigrants) these dishes are related to their own culture because they have known them since their childhood in their home country. On the other hand, the outcome of the adoption of these diverse cultural elements that immigrants creolise to link the result with their own culture maintains the diversity of cultures present in the same marketplace. These two cultural forces (homogenisation and diversification) shape a multicultural marketplace; to what extent one is stronger than the other informs the researcher about market asymmetry and cultural consumer empowerment. Assumptions

in several consumer acculturation investigations imply that Western cultural forces surpass those present in many developing countries (Askegaard et al., 2005; Chytкова, 2011; Üstüner & Holt, 2007); nonetheless, the present study challenges these assumptions, showing how immigrants ‘fight’ against these global forces. The evidence analysed in the present study shows how Mexican immigrants react to how Tex-Mex food is advertised outside of Mexico as authentically Mexican. Immigrant’s craft consume (Campbell, 2005) using this globalised, distorted version of their ethnic food in order to obtain something related to their culture, then imposing their own culture.

How social practices might travel with immigrant consumers is related with the role that social networks play in the ‘standardisation’ of competencies in order to link food and culture. As I have shown, some of my participants have lived for several years in different countries where they have been influenced by a diversity of cultural forces, thereby carrying their food consumption social practices wherever they move, influencing both mainstream and other cultures’ members.

It is important for future researchers to acknowledge the sharing of knowledge, skills and competencies. Instead of conceptualising the consumer multiculturalisation process as an individualistic mental process, it is important to recognise its embeddedness in the social and material contexts in which different agents - consumers and institutions for example - dynamically, shape phenomena.

## **7.5 Producing authentic food through applying competencies**

During the process of adapting to the new multicultural food marketplace, immigrant consumers develop and share their emic conceptions of what constitutes ‘authentic

Mexican food'. This can be seen in the process of performing the social practices through which they acquire food, since these practices reflect their common culture, as discussed in Chapter 5. This does not require explicit agreement in advance, instead immigrant consumers recognise cultural clues that tell them where they might find food that they recognise as Mexican, for example in Chinese or Turkish food stores, sharing what they find and where they find it, knowing that their peers will tacitly agree with them. That is to say, their common culture is a tacit element that acts in the background and shapes their food consumption practices.

In Chapter 6, I analysed how Mexican immigrant consumers apply certain competencies so as to create an emic notion of 'authentic' Mexican food through creolisation practices. That is to say, when Mexican immigrants develop the necessary knowledge and skills, in order to combine elements taken from a diversity of cultures to produce something that they can relate to their own culture, they *ipso facto* authenticate the result as being Mexican. This same process of 'authentication' through the application of competencies is also used to transform certain Tex-Mex food items into dishes that can be recognisable as being Mexican. During this process, food and culture are linked dynamically, a process I will discuss in some detail below.

The creative and innovative aspects of this authenticating process also resonate with the notion of *craft consumption* discussed above. Campbell (2005) outlines the relationship between *craft consumption* and authenticity by means of self-expression. When immigrant consumers engage in creolisation practices to produce what they recognise as being Mexican food and/or Mexican experiences, they are engaging in self-expression. It is this self-expression – through their creative and productive acts as *craft consumers*

(Campbell, 2005) - that explains how immigrants are able to relate these foods and experiences to their own culture.

Applying the concept of general understandings (Shatzki, 2012), my analysis of the way immigrant consumers engage in social practices shines a light on how they construct and deploy their concept of the 'authenticity of food' which is communicated verbally and/or tacitly. That is to say, the concept of authenticity is derived from the background culture which informs how immigrants engage in various food consumption practices.

Finally, this study problematises the link between culture and nationality. A number of previous studies have treated culture as being synonymous with nationality (Cleveland et al., 2013; Cleveland & Xu, 2019; Peñaloza, 1994). However, in this study I take a different approach in that I analyse how immigrant consumers develop and enact their concept of authentic food culture. I therefore move away from the way in which culture has been conceptualised in previous studies on consumer acculturation and multiculturalisation; as symbols and associations of nationality (Cleveland et al., 2013; Cleveland & Xu, 2019; Peñaloza, 1994), usually relying only on what has been verbally expressed (Dey et al., 2019; Galalae et al., 2020; Oswald, 1999). That is to say, previous studies have focused only on symbols (i.e. symbolic meanings) and have missed other ways in which culture is made manifest. This thesis has analysed how immigrant consumers 'do' their culture, through their performance of social practices. The new framework proposed in Figure 7.2.1 above invites researchers to investigate how consumers construct their understanding of the meanings of things, such as food, and the relevance of this to the process of consumer multiculturalisation.

## **7.6 Engagement in multicultural marketplaces**

The present study furthers our understanding of the ways in which immigrant consumers engage with multicultural marketplaces, in the context of increasing global immigration. By seeking to analyse the complexity comprising consumer multiculturalisation in the context of the multicultural marketplace, my research has advanced our understanding beyond the mixing of only two cultures (Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994) by acknowledging the multicultural flows of products, meanings and people that immigrants can face (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012; Cruz et al., 2018).

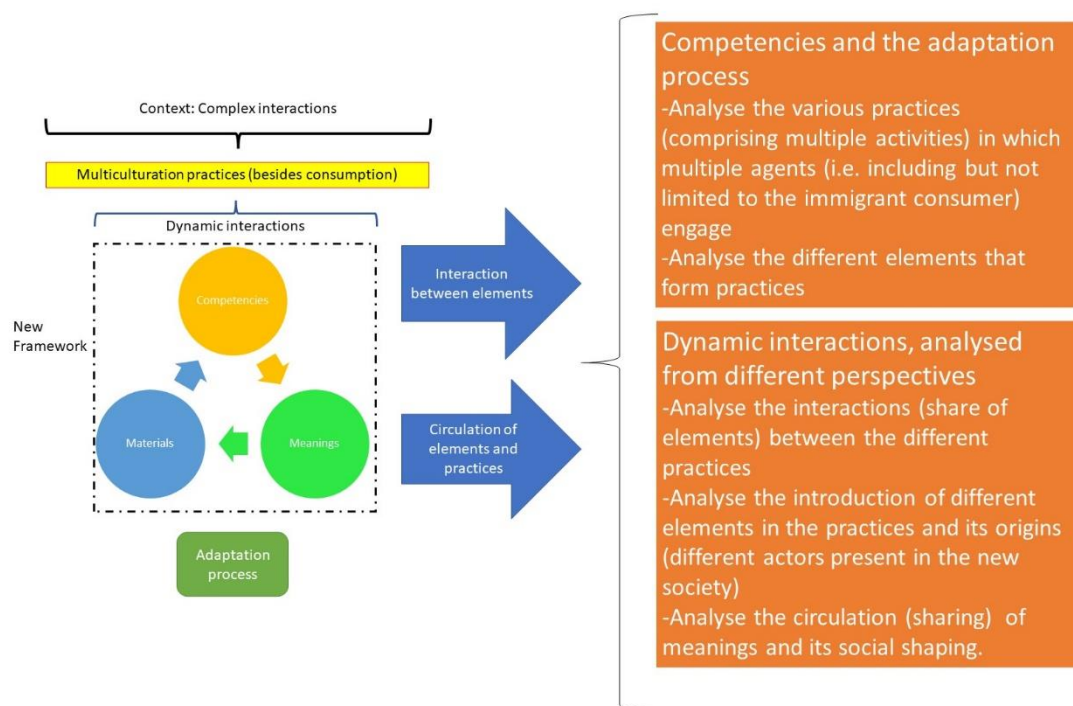


## 8 Conclusions

### 8.1 Advancing the conceptual development of multiculturalism theory: beyond consumer acculturation theory

This section summarises how the present study advances the conceptual development of multiculturalism theory, as depicted on the right-hand side of figure 8.1.1 below.

Figure 8.1.1 Proposals to advance multiculturalism theory.



A practice theory perspective on consumer multiculturalism serves to foreground the important role of competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills and understandings) and illuminates the process of adaptation as being a core aspect in the process of consumer multiculturalism. This is not to undermine the importance of analysing the individual psychology of consumers going through the process of multiculturalism, but rather to add a new dimension to the analysis of this process. That is to say, future research in

this area would benefit from focusing on not just what consumers think and feel, but also on what they do. This takes us to a second important point, which is the focus on practices, rather than people *per se*.

Shifting the (main) focus of analysis from people to practices leads to the foregrounding of the dynamic interactions of the various elements comprising social practices in the context of consumer multiculturalisation. In this study I adopted the framework proposed by Shove et al. (2012), nonetheless other practice theory frameworks could be adopted (e.g. Schatzki's (2005, 2010) practice theory framework) in order to understand which elements are dynamically interacting when different activities are carried out by different agents (including but not limited to immigrant consumers) in the context of consumer multiculturalisation within multicultural marketplaces. Whilst my research focused on the development and sharing of competencies among immigrant consumers in the process of adapting to new multicultural marketplaces, other researchers could examine the development and circulation of competencies and the process of adaptation from the perspective of other agents within the multicultural marketplace. For example, from the perspective of cultural industries and institutions (e.g. advertising and branding agencies), as they adapt to target new consumer segments. Or the circulation and sharing of competencies between immigrant and 'resident' consumers.

Finally, a practice theory approach to the analysis of consumer multiculturalisation foregrounds the role of creativity, innovation, and productivity – prosumption and craft consumption - in the process of adapting to multicultural marketplaces. My research demonstrates how immigrant consumers adopt a myriad of elements (not only physical materials), blending them through a creolisation process involving creative practices

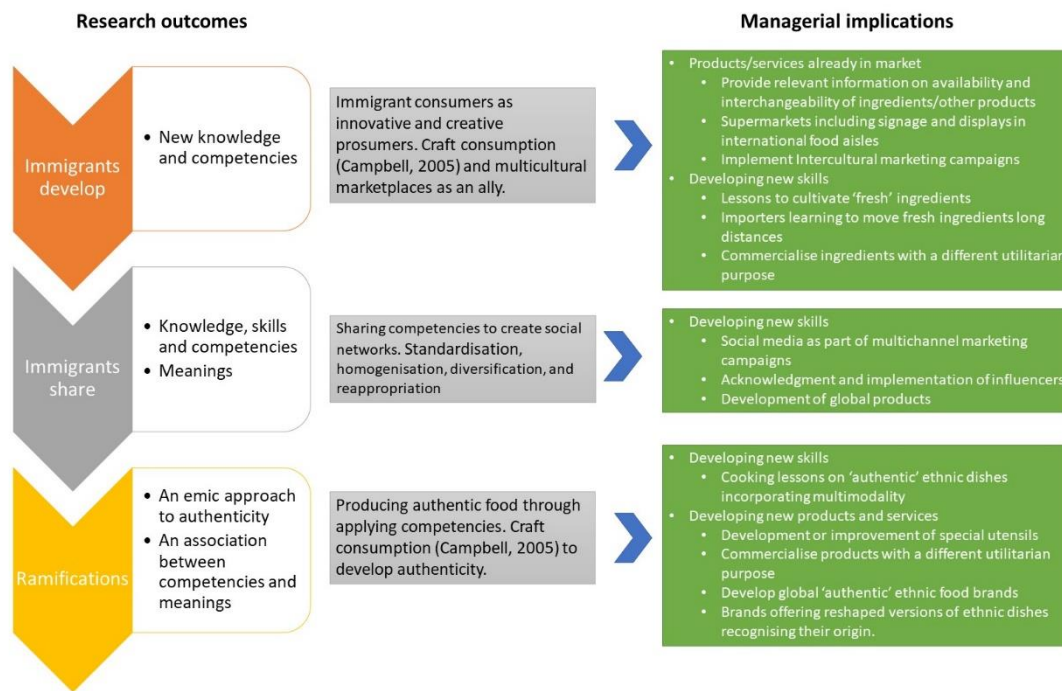
which effectively transform them into culturally specific and recognisable items, emically speaking. My research therefore extends previous approaches to creolisation theory which not only focus mainly on the blending of physical materials but also on the blending of cultures (Cross & Gilly, 2017; Dey et al., 2019; Oswald, 1999). Future research could explore the ramifications of this creative form of creolisation in the context of consumer multiculturalisation in terms of its impacts on the cultural complexity of multicultural marketplaces and from the perspective of other agents (resident consumers etc).

The next section moves on to consider the managerial implications of my analysis.

## **8.2 Managerial implications.**

In the next sections I explain the managerial implications of my research. These managerial implications are aligned with the outcomes of this research, which I summarise in Appendix J. Figure 8.2.1 below depicts this alignment and summarise the managerial implications.

Figure 8.2.1 Alignment of managerial implications with the research outcomes shown in Appendix J.



### 8.2.1 Improving marketing communications

This research indicates that immigrant consumers search for ethnic food items from their own food culture as well as from other food cultures (as close substitutes for their own), within ethnic food stores and in the international aisles of supermarkets. This suggests an opportunity for marketers who, by recognising increasing multiculturalism (Elliot & Nakata, 2013) could help immigrant and cosmopolitan consumers alike by providing relevant information – on product websites and/or supermarket websites and in relevant magazines - on the range, availability and even interchangeability of various food items. For example, indicating to those interested in cooking particular ethnic dishes, what other ethnicities use the same ingredients and where these ingredients can be found. In respect of supermarkets, such marketing communications could also include signage and in store displays in the international food aisles. In addition, it may

be appropriate for marketing communications campaigns and messaging to recognise and embrace the increasing multiculturalism of marketplaces (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2021; Kipnis et al., 2014), and in so doing avoid focussing overly on ethnic marketing communications campaigns, in favour of developing intercultural marketing communications campaigns (Kipnis et al., 2020).

### **8.2.2 Developing consumers' skills and understandings**

Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial businesses ought to keep abreast of changing interests in different (food) cultures among consumers in general, since this provides marketing opportunities for the development of new services connected to the development of food related skills. For example, offering cooking courses designed to develop skills on how to prepare 'authentic' ethnic dishes (not only Mexican), with these courses being provided either physically or virtually. These may be particularly appealing to cosmopolitan consumers who want to experience different cultures (Parzer & Astleithner, 2018). It would also be relevant to incorporate into these courses embodiments and sounds, that is to say a 'multimodal' experience as part of the ethnic experience of cooking these dishes. As part of these courses, providers might provide additional services to develop skills on cultivating and obtaining fresh ingredients used in these ethnic dishes.

Related to this, and connecting to sustainability and reducing waste, another opportunity could be to increase consumer awareness on how specific ingredients that are generally discarded in the UK can be used; for example, the use of corn leaves which are used in cooking Mexican *tamales*.

### **8.2.3 Developing new products and services**

This research has identified how immigrant consumers use social media to share knowledge on how to obtain the necessary ingredients to prepare ‘authentic’ ethnic dishes. A first implication is to recognise the importance of incorporating social media into marketing communications strategies. In so doing, a second implication is that marketers can work with ‘lead’ consumers identified through social media, such as those recognised as being ‘masters’ by their fellow immigrants, to develop new products and services. These ‘lead’ consumers should be recognised as ‘influencers’, and could thus become part of marketing communications campaigns (Wibisono & Ruldeviyani, 2021; Zhuang et al., 2021).

Those consumers interested in learning how to cook ‘authentic’ ethnic dishes may well increase the demand for additional products such as the necessary utensils required to cook these dishes, in an authentic way. This provides product development opportunities for businesses, including importers, within multicultural marketplaces.

Finally, the intercultural sharing of knowledge among consumers in multicultural societies relating to each other’s ethnic cuisines provides opportunities for new product development, in the context of this research, this could be the development of brands of ‘authentic’ Mexican foods, clearly differentiated from Tex-Mex brands (Cambridge, 2002).

The next section discusses some methodological contributions of this thesis.

### **8.3 Methodological contributions**

The majority of studies in the field are based on ethnography and participant observation (Cruz et al., 2018; Dey et al., 2019; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994) and/or semi-structured and in-depth interviews (Askegaard et al., 2005; Porto da Rocha & Strehlau, 2020). The mix of methods adopted in this study by following a multimodal approach (Rossolatos, 2015) incorporating in-depth interviews, participant observation and netnography allowed me to capture new insights relevant to the consumer multiculturalisation process. For example, how social networks are used as a way to share new knowledge, as a way to develop new competencies, and even to investigate how other members of the Mexican diaspora engage with and shape the consumption of specific foods, for example, how others deal with Tex-Mex food (See Figure 6.4.1.1 in Chapter 6). Also, other participants shared with me their meals and ingredients through Whatsapp spontaneously, thus showing how sharing through virtual social media is part of their consumption experience.

The next, and final section outlines some of the limitations of this research and provides suggestions for future research.

### **8.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research**

Inevitably this study has some limitations that must be acknowledged. One relates to the focus on how Mexican immigrants seek out Mexican food. In the introductory section of Chapter 5, I explained that Mexican immigrants tend to adopt an integrationist strategy, thereby consuming and relating to a variety of other cultures present in the UK multicultural marketplace. During the course of my discussions, it was clear that engaging with foods from various ‘foreign’ cultures was reasonably straightforward;

their greatest challenge was in being able to also maintain their consumption of at least some ‘authentic’ Mexican food while living in the UK. Most of our conversations concerned where they had found Mexican ingredients to cook and recollections of which Mexican dishes they had eaten or cooked in the previous week. Thus, my study focused in particular on their attempts to integrate Mexican foods into their daily lives rather than on the wide array of other foods that my participants also enjoyed.

As commented in previous sections of this chapter, future research can adopt a practice theory perspective to understand not only the mental activities of individuals going through a consumer multiculturalisation process (Galalae et al., 2020; Jamal, 1998; Kizgin et al., 2018) and through a multiculturalisation process in general (Rudmin, 2009; Ryder et al., 2000), but also to focus on social practices, then analysing the interactions between the various elements comprising social practices. This new research could advance the studies conducted by Veresiu and Giesler, 2018 and Vorster et al., 2020, regarding the role that institutions, such as marketers, have in the consumer multiculturalisation process, and the multiculturalisation process of individuals.

Another strand of research is to understand how institutions, and other agents in modern multicultural marketplaces develop understanding, new knowledge, and skills to adapt to these multicultural societies. Demangeot et al., 2015 commented on conduct further research to understand how international marketing organisations adapt to these multicultural marketplaces, then further research is needed in this same direction, focusing in the practices developed by organisations and in the dynamic interactions of elements in these practices. Prosumption (Ritzer, 2014; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010) and



craft consumption (Campbell, 2005) can be an interesting focus of these potential future research.

Previous research on consumer multiculturalisation has focused on the consumption of different goods and services (Galalae et al., 2020), few have focused on the consumption of only one good or service (Dey et al., 2019), and most have been conducted in Western developed countries (Broderick et al., 2011; Peñaloza, 1994). Future investigations can research other minority culture immigrants in multicultural marketplaces and other goods and services that can be culturally bound as far as they are concerned. For example, to research British immigrants living in Mexico City and investigate their consumption of clothes that let them be creative and reflect their ethnicity.

Previous research about consumer acculturation adopting a longitudinal approach has been conducted (Sobol et al., 2018). Other research could be conducted longitudinally, that is to say, by following immigrants as they engage in relocating to live in another country; thus, examining their consumption related activities immediately before the move, early after arrival as they encounter new multicultural marketplaces, and then much later once they have ‘adapted’ to live within the new country, analysing the diverse social practices in which immigrants engage and how different social and economic institutions take part in the adaptation process.

As I have shown, some of my participants have lived for several years in different countries where they have been influenced by a diversity of cultural forces, thereby carrying their food consumption social practices wherever they move, influencing both

mainstream and other cultures' members. Further research should produce insights into this phenomenon.

This thesis shines a light on how immigrant consumers developed their notion of authenticity while adapting to the multicultural food marketplace. Later on, they communicated their notion either verbally and/or tacitly, that is to say, the notion is derived from the background culture which informs how immigrants engage in several food consumption practices. Previous studies regarding how consumers evaluate the authenticity of food have been conducted (Chousou & Mattas, 2019; Groves, 2001), but they have not considered this in the context of the consumer acculturation process. Future research can analyse how other concepts for example, those that marketers use in their communications and advertisements, are developed and applied by immigrant consumers in the context of their adaptation to multicultural marketplaces.

Immigrant consumers also face the cultural influence of their peers to reaffirm their ethnicity and even share their culture with members of other cultures. Cappellini and Yen (2013) gave us a glimpse of this, but further research is needed in order to gain insights into this phenomenon. Researchers in the field should broaden their perspective: they should not confine themselves to effects associated with other cultures different from the immigrant's own, they should include cultural influences that make immigrants reaffirm their culture. Another aspect is that researchers can study other activities through which immigrants react to and resist distorted products that try to mimic their culture, and their role in the consumer multiculturalisation process.

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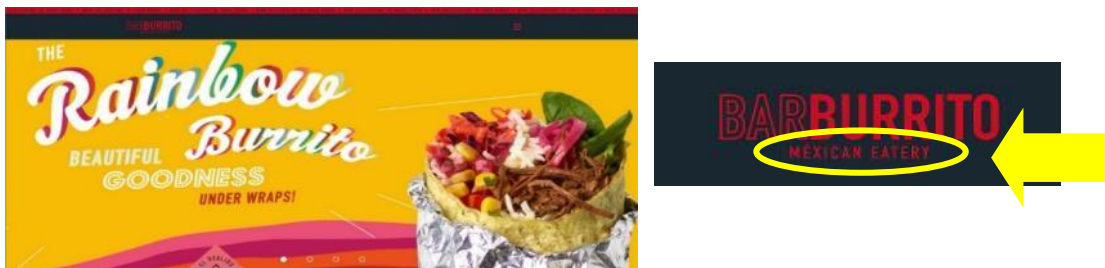
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## Appendices

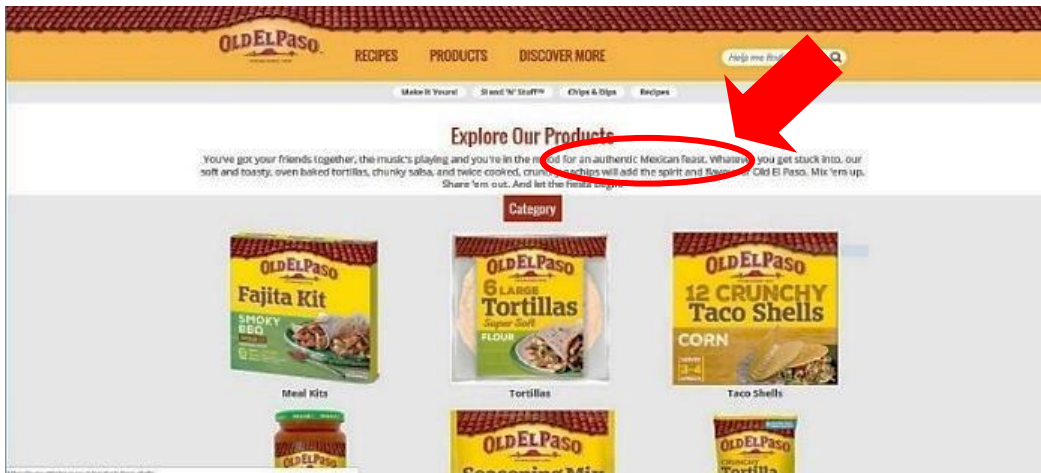
### Appendix A. Examples of Advertisements for brands of Tex-Mex food as ‘authentic’ Mexican food in the UK and Australia.

Image A.1 Advertisement from the web page of a burritos restaurant in the UK, claiming it is a ‘Mexican eatery’.



Note. Barburrito (2019). <https://www.barburrito.co.uk/>.

Image A.2 Advertisement from the web page of Old El Paso in the UK, claiming it brings an ‘authentic Mexican feast’ to its customers.



Note. Old El Paso (2019). <https://www.oldel Paso.co.uk/>

Image A.3 Advertisement from the webpage of Old El Paso in Australia, claiming its products are 'Mexican'.



Note. Old el Paso (2019). <https://www.oldel Paso.com.au/>

## Appendix B. Researcher cultural positionality tables

*Table B.1 Analysis of researcher cultural positionality*

	Facets of cultural identity shared (or potentially shared) with participants		Stages of the study in which RCP was adopted
Forms of RCP adopted dynamically during the study	Social: shares national/ethnic/racial identity and background	Spatial: Shares locale situatedness, origin, and residence	
1) Total indigenous insider	Sharing nationality, ethnicity, racial identity and background with participants	Sharing locale situatedness (at the time of the study, in the UK), origin and residence (again, the UK)	When recruiting participants
2) Partial insider/indigenous associate	Participants coming from a different state/region in Mexico; selected facets of national/ethnic/racial identity and background shared	Same as 1)	During data collection
3) Returning insider/outsider from within (homecomer)	Same as 1)	Sharing locale situatedness (at the time of the study, in the UK), origin, but not residence (researcher, as international student, going back to Mexico)	When recruiting participants, data collection, data analysis, and theorising and learning

Source: adapted from Kipnis et al. (2021), p. 406.



Table B.2 Analysis of weaknesses and strengths of adopting the different researcher cultural positionality

	Researcher cultural positionalities		
Research process phase	1) Total indigenous insider	2) Partial insider/indigenous associate	3) Returning insider/outsider from within (homecomer)
<p>1. Acquisition of meaningful data</p> <p>- How is my researcher cultural positionality situated in relation to positionality of participants?</p> <p>- How does my researcher cultural positionality impact on my ability to engage with participants during data collection?</p> <p>- What researcher cultural positionality or combination thereof would entail the most advantageous position to minimize anticipated biases and acquire rich, socio-spatially situated data?</p>	<p>By appealing to being Mexican I could recruit participants on social media.</p> <p>I engaged easily with other Mexican immigrants, perhaps creating a friendship that could affect my perception (over-rapport).</p> <p>Solution: when perceiving a bias, adopt a position of ‘returning insider/outsider from within’. Participant observation helped in my detachment from the experience.</p>	<p>Mexican immigrants coming from distant regions from Mexico (North and South), showed some cultural features different from mine (researcher), raised in Central Mexico.</p> <p>Implications: Possible bias in instruments and data collection, expecting specific behaviours.</p> <p>Solution: Non-biased questions. Using follow up interviews to ask about these differences, if not clear.</p>	<p>Some Mexican immigrants looked at me as an outsider, due to my being positioned as an international PhD student, more than as a Mexican immigrant</p> <p>Implications: Not building rapport with participants, possible alienation, withdrawing from study.</p> <p>Solution: Adoption of a ‘Total indigenous insider’ position, when perceiving insufficient rapport with participants. Not knowing enough about the multicultural marketplace (type of retailers, cultures present, globalised versions of food...)</p> <p>Solution: Adjusting methods to incorporate these features</p>

Table B.2 (continue)

<p>2. Data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have I experienced research cultural positionality shifts in earlier phases of research process? What where the tensions prompting these shifts?</li> <li>- How do my research cultural positionality stances and shifts inform interpretation of data?</li> <li>- Are perspectives represented by my researcher cultural positionality reflected in the findings in an equal manner?</li> <li>- Do under-represented perspectives have voice in my analysis and interpretation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding of cultural nuances, slang, and local dialects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrating the way these subcultures present in Mexico understand their experiences in the UK into my analysis.</li> </ul>	<p>Possibly neglecting context-specific emergent meanings and misinterpretation due to unawareness of ‘performance’ aspects in populations’ this because of not being an immigrant and not knowing the context (multicultural marketplace) well.</p> <p>Solution: follow-up interviews allowed me to increase understanding and ask about particular behaviours in the context of Mexican immigrants’ experiences (some data analysis was done during collection of data).</p>
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Table B.2 (continue)

<p>3. Theorizing and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How are my cultural affiliations situating me in this study?</li> <li>- Does my researcher cultural positionality afford consideration of the investigated phenomena at proximity and distance, and what are the associated benefits and risks of each perspective?</li> <li>- What emplacement/displacement tensions I can anticipate / am I experiencing from negotiating and performing my RCP in relation to stakeholders?</li> </ul> <p>Are there underrepresented/oppressed perspectives on the inquired phenomena; if so, is (and how) my researcher cultural positionality ‘giving them voice’?</p>	<p>Being a Mexican allowed me to understand and conceptualise Mexican immigrant experiences, including the social dimensions involved in consumer multiculturalisation.</p>	<p>Including perspectives from different regions of Mexico enriched the data and improved understanding, showing patterns.</p>	<p>Adopting a non-Mexican immigrant posture allowed me to understand Mexican immigrant experiences in the multicultural marketplace, detaching my Mexican side and looking for the differences from food shopping experiences in Mexico.</p>
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Source: adapted from Kipnis et al. (2021), p. 410.

# Appendix C. Notification of the approval from the Business School Research Ethics Committee

Email - Cecilia Ibarra Cantu (Researcher) - Outlook - Mozilla Firefox

https://outlook.office.com/mail/deeplink?popoutv2=1&version=20210301002.04

Reply | Delete | Junk | Block | ...

**RE: PGR Ethical review form, second application - BUSETHICS17/18:011**

**AT** Alex Thompson  
Mon 29/01/2018 11:49  
To: Cecilia Ibarra Cantu (Researcher)  
Cc: Andrew Jenkins; Fiona Cheetham; John Lever; Martin Smith

Dear Cecilia,

I have been asked to forward the following to you:

Thank you for your response to the Business School Research Ethics Committee. I confirm that your application is now approved.

Dr Andrew Jenkins  
Chair of the Business School Research Ethics Committee

Regards,

**Alex Thompson**  
Course Administrator  
01484 472529  
[m.a.thompson@hud.ac.uk](mailto:m.a.thompson@hud.ac.uk)  
[www.hud.ac.uk](http://www.hud.ac.uk)  
Huddersfield Business School  
University of Huddersfield | Queensgate | Huddersfield | HD1 3DH

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## Appendix D. Alignment between research objectives and methods applied

Table D.1 Alignment between research objectives and methods applied. Tools and aims.

Research objectives	Methods applied				
Occasion	First, in-depth semi-structured interview	Follow-up semi-structured interviews	Participant observation	Facebook posts	Whatsapp/Facebook messages
Tools	Questions 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9 in the interview guide.	Questions 1 to 5 in the interview guide.	Field notes and photos.	Photos and conversations in the posts.	Photos and conversations.
1. To understand the role of materials in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural marketplace	Understand linking of materials and competencies in current and past food consumption practices.	Follow the development of competencies.	Obtain a first-hand sense of the context in multicultural marketplaces. Triangulation of data. Understand social life of participants.	Sharing and social shaping of the food consumption practices linking competencies.- materials.	Social networking, supplement data collected previously.
2. To understand the role of meanings in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural marketplace	Understand the linking of meanings and competencies in current and past food consumption practices.	Follow the development of competencies.	Obtain a first-hand sense of the context of multicultural marketplaces. Triangulation of data. Understand social life of participants.	Sharing and social shaping of the food consumption practices linking competencies.- meanings.	Social networking, supplement data collected previously.
3. To analyse the ramifications of immigrant consumers' adaptation to the	Analyse derivations, consequences, and/or repercussions of current and past food	Analyse derivations, consequences and/or repercussions of the development of competencies in food	Analyse derivations, consequences, and/or repercussions of the context in which food consumption	Analyse derivations, of sharing and social shaping of food consumption practices and the	Opportunities to understand the derivations, consequences, and/or repercussions

multicultural food marketplace	consumption practices.	consumption practices.	practices are carried out and of social life.	creation of social networks.	detected while applying the other tools.
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## Appendix E. Example of a post asking for participants



**Researcher:** Good afternoon everybody. My name is Cecilia Ibarra Cantú and I am currently studying for a PhD at the University of Huddersfield, I am looking for Mexican participants living in the UK, or about to move [to], who are in charge of food at home (buying, cooking...) always or sometimes (smiling emoji), it doesn't matter where you buy or what you eat. Essentially, it is interviews and a short visit (if possible). Please, if you can help me, let me know by replying to this post, I will be very grateful. Greetings again (the photo is just to attract participants, hehe) (grinning emoji). To those who are already participating, thank you very much and sorry for being repetitive.



**Participant 1:** [I am] in Manchester, what can I do for you?

**Participant 2:** I am in Nottingham... is it ok? Does that work for you?

**Researcher:** Yes, thank you very much, I'll send you an inbox (smiling emoji)

**Participant 3:** If you still need people, I'm happy to participate

**Researcher:** A thousand thanks; I'll send you an inbox

**Participant 4:** Same here, I'm happy to participate #brotherlysolidarity (smiling emoji)

# Appendix F. Copies of Information sheet and consent form

## F.1 Information sheet



October 31st, 2017.

**The University Of Huddersfield  
Business School Research Ethics Committee  
Participant Information Sheet (E3)  
[Consumer]**

**Title of Project**

**A cross-cultural study of the practice of British and Mexican locavorism.**

**INFORMATION SHEET Version 1.**

You are being invited to take part in a study about local food consumption. Before you decide to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with the researcher whose contact information is at the end of this information sheet, if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

➤ **What is the study about?**

The purpose of this study is to understand the practice of sustainable local food consumption (otherwise known as locavorism).

➤ **Why I have been approached?**

You have been asked to participate because you are an adult, of more than 18 years old, and you are in charge of the food for yourself and your family.

➤ **Do I have to take part?**

It is your decision whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. You have the right to withdraw (without giving a reason) from the research up to two weeks after each of the activities described in the next paragraph.

➤ **What will I need to do?**

If you agree to take part in the research, you will take part in the following

activities:

- The researcher will accompany you to observe your shopping experience when purchasing local food. This activity will last approximately one hour.
- You will take part in an interview that will last for approximately one hour and will be digitally recorded, with your permission. Questions will be associated with yours and your family's consumption of local food.



- One month after the first interview, the researcher will contact you to conduct a short interview that will last for approximately fifteen minutes and will be digitally recorded, with your permission. Questions will be associated with your experiences of purchasing and consuming local food during the previous month. This will be repeated a further 5 times at the end of each one month period.

➤ **Will my identity be disclosed?**

All information disclosed within the interview will be kept confidential (unless you indicate that you or anyone else is at risk of serious harm, in which case you will inform of this to the researcher and the pertinent decisions will be made).

➤ **What will happen to the information?**

All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure and any identifying material, such as names will be removed in order to ensure your anonymity. It is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be published in a journal or report. However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

➤ **Who can I contact for further information?**

If you require any further information about the research, please contact the researcher as follows:

Name: Cecilia Ibarra Cantu

E-mail: Cecilia.IbarraCantu@hud.ac.uk

Telephone: 01484 471177 in Huddersfield, United Kingdom

## F.2 Example of consent form

University of  
**HUDDERSFIELD**  
 Inspiring tomorrow's professionals


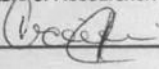
**CONSENT FORM**  
**[Consumer]**

**Title of Research Project: The acculturation process of Mexicans living in the UK.**

It is important that you read, understand and sign the consent form. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate, if you require any further details please contact your researcher.

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this study as outlined in the information sheet version 1, dated September 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2018.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I consent to taking part in this the study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research up to two weeks after the observation and/or each interview, communicating this to the researcher whose details appear in the information sheet version 1, dated September 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2018.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of a pseudonym)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions for a period of 3 years at the University of Huddersfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand that no person other than the researcher and her academic supervisor will have access to the information provided	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of pseudonym in the report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and print and sign below.

Signature of Participant:  <hr/> Print: <span style="background-color: white; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 1.2em; vertical-align: middle;"></span> <hr/> Date: 12 NOV 2018 <hr/>	Signature of Researcher:  <hr/> Print: Cecilia Ibarra Cantu <hr/> Date: 28/01/2019 <hr/>
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(One copy to be retained by Participant / one copy to be retained by Researcher)

## **Appendix G. Interview Guides**

After inviting participants to take part in the research, I will give them a copy of the “Participant Information Sheet” and will request their signature to indicate their consent to take part in the study via the “Consent Form”. The place and time of the interview will be agreed with each of the participants. The following broad topic areas/questions will be used to guide the semi-structured interviews with participants:

### **G.1 First in-depth interview guide**

1. Introductory questions: How old are you? Are you married, single? Do you have children? Where were you born? ...and where did you live in Mexico?
2. Can you describe the various activities that you undertook when purchasing food while living in Mexico?

(Prompts: What foods do you remember buying? Who used to go with you? How do you remember feeling during each of these activities? From which types of retailers do you remember purchasing?)

3. What about what you used to eat while living in Mexico?

(Prompts: Who used to cook in your house? Did you cook while living in Mexico? Who taught you to cook? What were your favourite dishes? Which foods did you dislike? Do you have any specific memory about how you learned to cook? Is there any family recipe that you remember?)

4. Before arriving in the UK, where did you live? (added after conducting my first round of interviews)
5. What did you eat in that country? (added after conducting my first round of interviews)

(Prompts: Did you cook? What did you cook? How did you learn to cook that dish?

Where do you remember obtaining your food? Is there any experience with eating/obtaining food that you specially remember? )

6. When did you arrive in the UK? With whom?

7. What do you remember eating when you arrived in the UK?

(Prompts: Where did you purchase your first meals? What did you think of them? Do you remember your feelings in that moment? What about any first experience eating/cooking a British food item?)

8. Can you describe for me your usual routine to obtain your food now?

(Prompts: Where do you buy/obtain your food/ingredients? Do you plan ahead? Do you cook? Who cooks in your house? Do you like what you eat? What dishes do you like/dislike? Is there any dish that you wish/wished to cook? How was that experience?)

9. Have you tried the Tex-Mex food sold as Mexican in the UK? (added after conducting my first round of interviews)

(Prompts: Where did you find it? Did you like it? How was your experience?)

10. Are you planning to return to Mexico in the short/long term?

(Prompts: What are your cravings, regarding the food you used to eat in Mexico?)

Thank you for the interview.

## **G.2 Short follow up semi-structured interview**

1. Can you tell me about what you ate during last week?

(Prompts: Did you go to where you usually purchase your food? What did you purchase? Were there any changes in your routine? About what you told me you were planning in our last interview, how was it?)

2. What did you cook during the last week?

(Prompts: ...or who cooked? Did you help? Where did you obtain the food/ingredients?)

3. Did you go out to have dinner/ any meal?

(Prompts: What did you eat/buy? Where did you buy it? How was the experience? Did you like/dislike something from there? )

4. Are you planning to cook/eat something special in the next few days?

(Prompts: What? Where are you planning to obtain the ingredients?)

Thank you for the interview.

## Appendix H. Examples of interview transcriptions

### H.1 Ryan, first in depth interview

04/03/19

(I): Interviewer

(E): Interviewee

(I): Good morning, I'm with a Mexican who is living currently in the UK. Hello, good morning

(E): Good morning

(I): Where were you born? And where did you live? When you were in Mexico

(E): I was born in Mexico City; I always lived in Mexico City, in the north, in the Gustavo A. Madero County

(I): Are you married, single?

(E): I'm married, I have two children, one of seven and other of two years old, and we arrived to London on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

(I): So you just arrived on September 2018

(E): Yes, exactly

(I): Tell me. Before you arrived to the UK, where did you live?

(E): [Laughs] it is something funny! Before we moved to the UK we lived in the United States, we were five years living there in the Midwest, in the centre of the United States, we were there five years. And before we were three years and a half living in South Korea and before there, in Mexico City

01:41

(I): Interesting. Let's begin with Mexico city. What did you eat when you were in Mexico?

(E): Well, I have never been vegan, vegetarian and nothing like that, so I ate of everything. I have always said that the Mexican cuisine, if it is not the best of the world,

it is one of the five best in the world. You know, talking about the street food, it is really tasty because it has oil, so that makes it highly attractive, so tacos, [inaudible] tortas, tamales, birria, pozole, all that is sold in the street, everything is tasty. But at home, the funny thing is ... as we said a while ago, we aren't vegan nor vegetarian... we used to cook not so Mexican, instead something more... we could say that Mediterranean. Salads, vegetables, vegetable soup, pasta soup, it wasn't so Mexican, not the typical Mexican stew, like the 'calabacitas', the 'mole', the chicken in a cream, not very thorough.

(I): And you didn't cook...once in a while, for a birthday or something like 'pozole', or something like that?

(E): Yes, of course. I cook since I was seven years old, I have loved to cook always, I cook every day and you know, in a party or in a family gathering, that they were every eight days, between my brothers, my mother and I, well, it was always something Mexican, something heavy, I mean, seafood, chicken or grilled meat or some stew, really Mexican.

(I): You told me that for every day meals you used to eat more Mediterranean, but did you eat it with tortillas or sauces or things like that?

(E): That is something funny of me, because while I am really Mexican for eat, or that I like a lot the tacos and all that stuff, I do not eat tortillas, beans and sauces so often, even though I ate really spicy. If you give to me something really spicy, I ate it without any problem and if it is not spicy, I don't... I am not like many Mexicans that to everything, they have to add lemon or chilli sauce. This characteristic have helped me to do not struggle abroad.

(I): So you cook since you were seven years old, who taught you? Your mom or you by yourself or how did you learn?

(E): Well, I began to cook alone, not because I needed, it was because of I liked to eat tasty what lead me to begin to cook. The usual, when you are a child, you put a chair near the stove to cook some scrambled eggs with ham, everything was to indulge myself and so, bit by bit, I went learning. When I was eight I begin to beak breads. The first time I cooked tamales was when I was thirteen years old, I begin to do more things

(I): I can imagine, but tell me who taught you to cook?

(E): The one who taught me a lot was my paternal grandmother, because my mother doesn't have a way with cooking, to be honest. That is other of the things that I don't have, that of: "you do not cook as my mother". My mother, unfortunately, does not love to cook, then, by logic, the seasoning, change [the way to give a special flavour to the dishes] then, the one who taught me or to who I asked was my paternal grandmother.

(I): She was the one who taught you how to cook the tamales, for example?

(E): Yes, yes, she and an aunt who sold 'atole' and 'tamales', they taught me how to cook tamales

(I): Do you have any specific memory of when they taught you?

(E): Well, for the tamales, it is really typical that ... and funny as well, a little difficult to believe is that ...in the moment of be cooking the tamales, if you get angry or somebody get angry, the tamales didn't cook well, they get "pintos" meaning that some parts are well cooked and others not, so, that was my first experience with the tamales, I don't know what happened that we get angry and they come up that way. These are funny things, that are hard to believe but yes, it's true, I don't know what is it or if it is a coincidence, I don't know. So I learned, and yes... now that I am an adult, when I know that somebody is going to cook tamales for the first time, I told them, do not get angry, and if you don't know is better that everybody who is not cooking go out of the kitchen, and let only the cookers to be there, because if not, the tamales don't get well cooked. And I have had bad experiences with grown up people, who are the ones who cook the tamales, and they try not to get angry because of this funny circumstance, or strange, I don't know what can it be

08:12

(I): Who used to do the shopping in your house?

(E): Well, when I was a teenager, I used to go with my mother, but when I turned twenty, who used to do the shopping was me, because I worked since I was really young, I'm a lawyer. My father died young so, in reality, we were my sisters, my mother and I, alone. To do the shopping and to cook, usually, I did them, when I was single. When I finished to work at night, I went to the supermarket and when I returned home, I asked to my mother for some help, cut this or something like that and so, I



cooked at night so she [the mother] had something to bring with her for eat during the next day, and to leave something for my younger sister. So cooking and shopping the ingredients, I have always done it

9:15

(I): And did you go to the market, in Mexico City?

(E): Yes, yes. Some stuff we used to buy it at the supermarket, because it was more convenient, but vegetables and fruits, we bought them in what we call 'tianguis' or markets on wheels

(I): Did you buy in the 'tianguis'?

(E): Not always because, the 'tianguis' used to install on Tuesday, when my mother finished to work, she hurried so she could buy the vegetables and fruits for the week, and I bought the dairy, fabric soap, etc., all that stuff, I bought it in the supermarket

10:07

(I): So from Mexico you moved to South Korea

(E): Exactly

(I): Told me how was it, what food was you expecting to find, what did you find, how your food changed?

(E): Well, as typical Mexican, and as everybody, you try to bring with you some stock up of your food to where you are travelling, because you don't know what you are going to find. Well, that was some time ago, now, with the globalisation of the information and the internet, many things have changed. Now you can get into Facebook forums and ask what you can find there, and they answer you what you can find there, what you have to bring that you can't find there. Now it's easier, but before, ten years ago, this was just beginning. So, when we moved to Korea, because I get married before moving to Korea, you know, I filled a suitcase with fifty kilos of many things, 'maseca', a hand flour grinder to grind maize and make tortillas, in case I didn't find 'maseca', I bring a machine ... one of those in which you turn the handle and the tortillas come out ... not the classic one in which you press; chipotle chillies, things in cans, 'pozole' maize, things that could help me at the beginning. And it was curious that while it is a distant country, in the other side of the world, with totally different habits to the Western side of the world [he gasps, like trying to remember how difficult was it]

we arrived and what we found, well, there was a “Saraes” store, they were selling frozen tortillas, chipotles...and that was all. That was when we arrived to Korea, so... a chipotle, when the chillies finish, the chipotles... you can use them as the cured chillies. You could find tomatoes, pumpkins, carrots, few vegetables, so you adapt! We didn't have any problem. When we arrived, the avocado was beginning to arrive and the mango, very expensive! Each avocado costed eight dollars, ten years ago, when we left South Korea, the avocado costed three dollars. From eight, when we arrived, it lowered to three. The green lemon, or the lime as it is known in the UK, we only could find it in the black market with the Arabs, and it was very expensive, it was three lemons for seven dollars and the lemon, the yellow one in the UK, it always maintained in the same price, it was fifty cents of dollar for each lemon, a bit cheaper. As time passed by... because there was a “Mexican food boom”, in Seoul, in the capital city, more ingredients came into [the country], it began with the green tomato for us, that abroad is called “tomatillo”, some dry chillies began to arrive, the most common as guajillo and ancho, the bottled sauces began to arrive, the ‘pozolero’ maize began to arrive, well, with all this stuff you were better!! You have other alternatives for cook

Because I have to be honest, everybody think that South Korea is a super power in everything and no. They are the new rich of the world, a good experiment of the United States that went really well, and the majority of the people effectively, assist to university, but culturally they are really behind because in sixty, seventy years they have done a lot but cultural differences are very wide, from one generation to the other. But it is a really poor country regarding food sources. Then, all that you find of vegetables are carrots, potatoes and pumpkins. Because their land, eighty percent are mountains and the rest twenty percent, they use it to grow rice and the few vegetables that you can find. They ate many roots, as Peru. When they ate many roots that indicates you that it is a poor country, in food. Because they eat what they have, and what they have? Roots.

15:50

(I): What are you referring to, when you said the “Mexican food boom”?

(E): Several Koreans, who have lived in California, arrived and opened Mexican restaurants. There was an “American” man [from the United States] who arrived and

opened a Mexican restaurant in Seoul, so it was a boom, everybody wanted Mexican food. Many Mexican restaurants opened. Unfortunately, there was only one Mexican restaurant of a Mexican; I opened it with them because from the embassy, you have the contacts... I mean, I am not a chef but I am a cooker, so, one of the many jobs that I have there was to advise the restaurants, when they wanted to renew or modify their menu, because they were Korean who had lived in California, they didn't have the know of what is Mexican cuisine, with the exception of the Tex-Mex. So, with the little ingredients that you could find there, I made a varied menu as the famous "torta" of us, of 'milanesa', sausages, ham, the tinga, that they didn't know, some enchiladas variety... and that is how I spent some of my time there, assessing Mexican restaurants and unfortunately there was only one restaurant of a Mexican, but many restaurants were opened

(I): But then, the first restaurants that opened, that were owned by people who weren't from Mexico I can imagine that... as you said, you helped them so they could really sell Mexican food, more of the centre [of Mexico] I suppose... but you were there, what was the general idea of the Mexican food? was it more like Tex-Mex, or do they have an idea that there were more things?

(E): Unfortunately, blaming the Americans and the fool Mexicans, including me, the Mexican food has been made known by the Americans. So, is the classic taco of mincemeat with cheese, tomato and cream, those are from Taco bell or Taco inn, so everybody has this concept. I have found Mexican food in all the countries where I have been and in the ninety percent, it is this way.

(I): But in the restaurant of the Mexican person... or I can imagine that part of your job was like, change this idea?

(E): Yes, yes, we tried to change it. We introduced many Mexican things and as is usual, you have to adapt the food to the flavour of each country that happens with the Chinese that happens with many of the food. So, many of the food adapted, not toward the Tex-Mex, instead to the Korean side and yes, it was a good experiment, we introduced more Mexican things like tacos al pastor, a good "enchiladas rojas". Sometimes they cooked "rajas con crema" but not with 'poblano' chilli, it was with a [inaudible] chilli that gives us the flavour. I think I have been lucky to find ingredients because I don't cook only with Mexican ingredients; instead I try to adapt what I have and make it Mexican. In the majority of the cases, it goes well.

(I): And that chilli that you say you discovered, that is not like the ‘poblano’, but more or less, as you said, you have to search between the local ones and so... there wasn’t the possibility of contact somebody in Mexico and import them, sort of?

(E): There were all the possibilities of contact so many Mexicans to bring avocados, to bring lemons and the green tomato or tomatillo or to bring Mexican supplies. The problem with Korea is that it is a closed market, they protect their market, don’t let nothing to get in because... of the good things that Korea has is that they consume what is domestic, hardly they are going to consume something from abroad, unless they don’t have it, then it is...the green lemon... that’s why I told you that you got it in the black market, with the Arabs, they smuggled it, how? I don’t know. The green lemon was forbidden, or the lime. And many things the same. I knew many Mexican businessman who wanted to bring their products into Korea, but it is a very close market, they don’t let you in.

(I): Did you find of this Mexican food brands, that you can find in the supermarkets here, as OldElpaso, in the supermarket, there?

(E): No, that didn’t exist...no, I’m lying, there were these maize tortillas, OldElpaso, the Arabs sold them, it was a sixty tortillas pack, like one kilo and a bit

(I): but it wasn’t in the supermarket?

(E): That was with the Arabs. In the supermarket, when they opened a little and Mexican ingredients arrived, in the most expensive supermarket, something like a “Liverpool” [Mexican luxury store], it had its food department, you could find there the chipotles and sauces of “La costeña” [Mexican brand]. The canned beans [you can find them] with the Arabs, everything that [inaudible] you could find it with the Arabs!

(I): And how did you discover that the Arabs had all this stuff?

(E): I have always been a “pata de perro” [Mexican saying meaning that he likes to walk a lot] and a food researcher!! When I arrived here, to London, during the first week... after the fifth day since I arrived, I had visited like eight supermarkets of all the chains, so I knew what they sell in each supermarket, I knew how much to pay in each supermarket and that’s the first thing I do, I arrive and I begin to see where are the supermarkets, I go for a stroll, I see what is there, what can I adapt or what can I use, I don’t buy a thing, and so, I go from supermarket to supermarket. Then I begin to cook as usually, I don’t suffer! As the majority

(I): Any dish that you cooked in Korea, that you specially remember, that has been difficult to cook, or to adapt, any ingredient.

(E): Yes, the green enchiladas. It was really difficult because there weren't tomatillo or green tomatoes, it was really difficult. So, none of the Korean knew the green sauce, because everything is cooked based in the tomato. So I was the only one who cooked green enchiladas, the embassy knew. Sometimes I went to cook with the embassy cooker to good clubs to teach them Mexican food because I adapted everything. I made green enchiladas, making false green tomato blending garlic, onion and salt and to give to it the green colour I used spinach and I added coriander to give to it more flavour. It doesn't taste exactly the same but it gives to you the feeling that you were actually eating green sauce. I teach this to some restaurants because they didn't know. Later on, it was easier because tomatillo was coming in, in the big can, and with that, from there further, it was really easy!!

(I): And did you cook tamales there [in Korea]?

(E): Once I made tamales, but the funny thing of making tamales is that ...well, because they don't sell the corn leaf to make tamales then, on the season when the corn gets into Seoul, Korea, I went to the supermarket, everybody buy the corn in the supermarket and strip the leaves off. I asked to the employees if they could sell to me the leaves and they told me that it was garbage, that I can take it so, I took my bags with the leaves, I carry them and put them to dry in my house and that is how I made tamales! [Laughs]

(I): Tell me what happened when you moved from South Korea to the United States, what happened with your food there?

(E): Well, living in the United States is very comfortable; you find there all the Mexican stuff. I think that a really specialised ingredient, could be hard to find, but you can find epazote, that nobody knows it, in any part of the world, only at the centre [of Mexico], not in the North, not in the South of Mexico, they don't know it, it is really local, as the "papalo" [Mexican herb], I don't know where are you from...

(I): Well, I'm from Puebla, at the centre, I know about the papalo and the epazote

(E): Oh, yes, because of the "cemitas" [Mexican dish], it has it. The 'papalo' is something from the centre of Mexico, if you go to the south, they don't know it and in the North, neither, they only know about meat! [Laughs]. So, you could find everything, you could find several brands of tortilla, 'epazote', almost all the dry chillies, the green

tomato, the 'achiote', everything. But while you could find everything, in the area where I was, it was Kansas City, Missouri, is in the middle of the country, to the north to the south, to the east to the west and the 90 to 95% percent of the Mexican immigrants in that area came from the North of Mexico. They cooked bad, really bad!! [like angry] I get angry because I went to the Mexican restaurants and [they served] very ugly tacos, everything bad done!! My experience with the Mexican food there was very bad because Mexicans, there they don't know how to cook. My theory is that, they are from the north and unfortunately they never travelled to the centre and in no way to the south of the country, where we have a totally different cuisine and really tasty. When I realise that nobody knew how to cook "tacos al pastor" [Mexican dish] I bought my "trompo" [vertical spit]. I have it here in London, I have my "comal" [Mexican hotplate] to make street tacos, I have my grill, I have my tortillas machine, I have my machine to make "chorizo" because I learned to cook chorizo in Korea, because there you can't find it and I had to cook it, so I have it. I have my machine to make "churros". As you can notice, I love the food!! [laughs] I'm not a chef, I'm a lawyer so, yes, in the United States I didn't have any problem with any ingredient. The Mexican food was really bad...give me a moment please...

(I): Yes, yes

(E): [A child voice in the background] So, yes, the Mexican food really bad. In the United States you don't have any problem with nothing...

(I): I want to go back to South Korea because I want to know if you learned to cook any Korean dish

(E): I have a lot of contact with Peruvian people, I have family... on the law jargon it is named putative, I mean by affection and I cook good Peruvian dishes. I had a Peruvian friend who lived in Japan and sometimes when he visited me in Korea, I cooked for him the rice with chicken, it is a rice in coriander sauce with cooked chicken, so, yes, I know how to cook Peruvian dishes [He misunderstood the question]

(I): But Korean?

(E): Pardon?

(I): Korean

(E): Korean no, because I don't like it

(I): You arrived to Korea and you keep cooking Mexican dishes? You didn't adapt any, you didn't learn to cook any Korean dish, any ingredient that you think: "I'll do something similar to a Korean dish", no?

(E): No, no, I'm in a fight with Korean food [I struggle with it] I think it is the worst food I have tried in the world, it is bad

(I): Why? Give me an example of a something bad that you don't like

(E): Because, as I told you, it is a country poor in ingredients. All is based in potatoes, carrots and pumpkins. They only eat pork meat because the beef meat is very expensive and there aren't, they aren't used to it. Then, everything, everything... they have for breakfast, lunch and dinner the same thing, there isn't a wide variety, they eat rice and add to it something named "Kinche" that is a fermented lettuce, very spicy. I never tried, the first time you try it, it tastes as something spoiled, fermented, spicy. It is like the tortilla. And there are soups, usually spicy soups, more spicy than Mexican's. That's why Korea have the first place in stomach cancer because everything is very hot and spicy, more than the Mexican, and they eat a lot of chilli, of the Indian chilli which is the hottest chilli in the world, the second place is for the "habanero" [Mexican chilli] and the third place is for the Thai one, in spicy levels. There I had the worst burn in my life [laughs], yes, the Korean woman told me: "it's spicy" and I said: "yes" thinking: "it's not hot" Oh my God!! I don't know what happened to me that time!

(I): What were you eating that time, what did you eat with that chilli?

(E): It's a strange thing that they do, something like cheese eggs but they are of rice paste, with no flavour, with nothing...and I get burned that time, and I wanted to taste that because when I arrive, I like to taste everything. If I don't like it, is something different and ...So, I arrived and tried it...and it is like biting something doughy, with no flavour, and sticky and spicy, because it had Thai chilli and I couldn't bear it, I couldn't...[some laughs] and I eat a lot of chilli!! I eat very hot

(I): As a good Mexican...

(E): Very spicy, like two habanero chillies in one taco

(I): Really? [Laughs]

(E): That's why when they told me: "it's spicy" I don't believe it, but yes, that time I learned that yes, when it is Thai or Indian chilli, you have to be careful!! [Laughs]

(I): Ok, and in the United States, something different that you have introduced in your cuisine? Or that you have known?

(E): Well, no, no, no. As I told you, the food is very simple, meagre. There isn't a wide variety, in the United States food. What I knew pretty well, because they taught me, was the barbecue, because the Kansas City barbecue is considered as the best and yes, it's smoked meat. It lasts to be cooked between four and eight hours, it depends on how you cook it. The curious thing about this is that you use fruity wood, could be pear, apple or cherry and the meat absorbs and tastes as the fruity wooden. Very good, very good! But you have to cook it at home, because not any restaurant knows about these flavours. They give me the lessons about how to cook this, they taught me, and it was very good!! They gave me to taste the one with pear wood, with apple wood, and you taste it and it's true, it is very good!! Very good! All the other things, the true is that they don't have any [good] cuisine. You go to the North, you go to the South, you go to one beach, to the other beach, they are the same, there isn't any [distinctive] food.

(I): You learned to cook this meat that you told me, with different woods

(E): Yes, yes, I learned

(I): But in your everyday cooking, you stayed cooking the same?

(E): Yes, my food base has been always... we eat a lot of fish, roasted, in breadcrumbs, "Vizcaina" style, "Veracruz" style, roasted chicken, roasted beef, every day we eat salad, we eat one day pasta soup, the next vegetable soup, the next potato soup, and because we don't eat beans and tortillas, as a culture, we don't miss that Mexican part. I like them, yes, I like the cooked tortilla, yes but not as a habit to eat with the food

(I): Ok. So tell me, after the United States, you arrived to the UK

(E): London

(I): Tell me how it was

(E): Well, it surprised me, I wanted to arrive and open a handmade tortillas business, I bring with me all the machines but It gives me a pleasant surprise, there are many tortillas of different qualities. I found a very good tortilla, very good, as good as the one from Mexico, because not even in the United States I found good tortilla. I even cooked "tacos de canasta" [Mexican dish] with this tortilla, from here, from London, it didn't break. The tortilla was perfect. Here, the problem is how expensive it is. And there are



meat cuts that you can't find, usually a steak, a pork, there aren't. But I always have adapted everything. I found a meat cut, beefsteak style, in one of the supermarkets, the only supermarket that sold this meat cut and because I have [something] to flatten, I flat it and I get my "bistec". There is of everything, they have introduced very good sauces, dry chillies, you find the majority of the chillies, you find purple 'maseca', to do purple tortillas, normal 'maseca', different brands of chilli, of sauces. You find "huitlacoche" [Mexican fungus from the corn], you find "flor de Calabaza" [pumpkin flower], you find tomatillo, of course, you find 'poblano' chilli, so, I haven't suffered.

(I): Where do you find "flor de Calabaza"? Tell me

(E): The blue one, only "Mestizo" [A Mexican store in London] sells it, but it has finished, I have the last two packs that there were. At the end of March arrives the new load, there, they receive the blue dough

(I): But the "flor de Calabaza"? do you get it at "Mestizo" as well?

(E): Yes, everything canned, as expected, it can't be fresh, the "poblano" [chilli] as well. Mestizo has good prices, nothing is cheap, unfortunately. There are other little stores which sell some Mexican products but they are even more expensive. The green chilli... I adapt everything that I get, the chilli I get it with the Arabs; it is an Arab-Indian chilli and it is like a green chilli. The meat to do "bisteces" and "Milanesas", I buy it in other supermarket. I go to three supermarkets and the Arabs, who are the ones who sell the best vegetables and have better prices. And there you find guavas, papaya, the big papaya, not the little one that they sell in the supermarkets. The lemon, very cheap. They sell you ten lemons for one pound. In the supermarket, they sell you three lemons for 45 pence. London is very comfortable for everything; I haven't suffered here because of nothing. As I told you, I have cooked "tacos de canasta", I haven't cooked "tamales" yet, "tacos de suadero", what else? Pozole, they sell pozole here, "maiz pozolero". The true is that it is a really comfortable country, there is everything but of course, it is expensive. I found the cream to eat, Mexican style, the French one. For the cheese "Canasta" style, I use the Feta, it gives [to the food] a good taste. Because I tried several, even a Polish one, but it didn't has salt, so you have to add salt and that changes its flavour. I'm beginning to make catering of Mexican food. The last week I made "ceviche", Peruvian style, because I don't like the Mexican style, I made [inaudible] of huitlacoche and of mole with chicken, guacamole, I have other for tomorrow.

Tomorrow will be guacamole, a chipotle and tuna mousse, I can't remember what more. And I have other for the next week.

42:13

(I): Were there in South Korea markets, to buy vegetables and fruits, stuff like that?

(E): Yes, do you know? I found there something that I couldn't find in the United States nor in London. There is a supply centre, like the one in Mexico City. It is the national supply centre. Independently, each city has a little supply centre and there I found everything. They even had a food truck and there I could buy dishes and stuff that I needed because it was very cheap! The tomato kilogram in the supermarket costed fifteen dollars and in the supply centre I could buy ten kilograms for the same fifteen dollars. So the gap in prices was big. Here [in the UK] I have tried to find the supply centre, but no. I haven't found it.

43:18

(I): And have you gone to the butcher's shops here?

(E): Yes, yes, I have gone, I haven't bought, but I have gone and yes, yes, you find everything. If there are Arabians and Arab stores, you can do what you want. Everything can be adapted.

(I): Because you told me that you have your instruments to cut the meat and get the cuts that you want, but, have you gone to the butcheries to ask for any cut or do you find them at the supermarket?

(E): No. I buy all of them at the supermarket. If I need a piece of meat, I go and buy it in the supermarket, because it is not so much, what I want. Because to buy for a catering, to do for a party, the meat is very expensive, very expensive.

(I): But have you thought, at any moment, to try to find meat in other place or the one of the supermarket is good for you?

(E): Yes, yes. I know that there is a meat market, here, in London, but I haven't gone, in Brixton, it is an area of Central American [people] ...it's a bit Latino, like Elephant and Castle, but there is a lot of people from Jamaica and many Arabian, there, it is an excellent place to buy, more than Elephant and Castle. In Brixton. There are butcher's shops, there is a [colonial?] market, and there's fish, I have found there the best fishes,

because there is a wide variety and the price is really cheap, and there are butcher's shops as well. And I have seen many cuts, of pork, of beef, so it's good, it's good.

(I): And in your family dynamic, are you the only one who cook?

(E): Yes, I have always cooked. Since I get married, I cook, I am the only one who cook.

(I): And your wife didn't say to you, I crave this, or the other...

(E): Yes, whatever she craves, I cook for her.

(I): And your children, they are young, but do they eat the same as you or do they eat different?

(E): No, they eat different because... my daughter, who is two years old can't eat what we eat, and my son, who is seven years old, we are just introducing him to eat everything. Always with the kids, you struggle a little. I mean... It is different of when we were younger... you ate what your parents wanted, they give you purslanes or "moronga" [Mexican dish] and if you didn't like it, you have to eat it. I think that has changed a little, I mean, they eat a lot of roasted things, they eat vegetables, not as many... compared with the 95% of my son's friends, in the United States and here, my son eats a lot of vegetables, soup, salad, and everything he eats is roasted.

(I): Any dish that you haven't been able to cook here, nor in Korea, nor in the United States, only in Mexico?

(E): Well, yes, yes, could be the "pipian" with "chilacayote" [Mexican vegetable] because the chilacayote is something from the centre of the country, as well. But instead, I use pumpkin, is not the same flavour, but it is almost the same. I love the 'chilacayote', is a vegetable that I like in a salty dish as in a sweet one. It fascinates me, but nobody know it, so, you can't find it...even more, you don't find it in the North of the country [Mexico]!! So, it is really difficult that you find it here. The "gusano de maguey" [worm from a cactacea, cactus plant]. All the others thing, I haven't found myself with no possibilities to cook them

(I): Any family recipe, that you knew when you was seven years old and you have cooked all your life?

(E): The mushrooms soup, but the traditional one, not the red one. The traditional has wild mushrooms; I make it here with champignon mushroom, it is the same flavour.

The secret is the 'epazote'. Now that I arrived from the United States, I bring with me a whole bush of 'epazote', so, I have 'epazote' for three years! Or even more

(I): Did you plant it? [Grow it?]

(E): No, no. I bring it dry. I asked my mother to buy one...it was like three kilos of dry 'epazote'. Since I went to Korea, I bring it with me. In the United States, my wife told me, there you can find of everything, so I didn't have any trouble, when I knew we were moving to here, I put it to dry and I bring with me my 'epazote'. Because it, you can't find it. It is really difficult to find. Yes, the mushroom soup, I have always liked it.

Other recipe that I know since I was a child and that I love it is the apple salad, it is easy to do and here you can find everything

(I): Have you had the opportunity to try British dishes?

(E): Few, but to be honest, I don't like them. For example the pies, they are for me...very simple [no unusual], pretty tasteless. Well, I love the fish and chips because I love the fish, I really love the fish and chips, I can eat everyday fish and chips.

(I): Something that you have find of the British food or of the... the one that is eat a lot here, the Arab one, from middle east, what's its name?

(E): Well, everything that tastes like Indian, I love it. I am a kebab fan. I learned to cook Arab food in the United States, as well. Besides knowing to cook, I know a lot about the history of cooking, so I can tell you what's the origin of the food, if it is one hundred percent Mexican or if it is not. So, the "tacos al pastor" are not Mexican, they originated when the Lebanese migration arrived to Mexico, that's when the vertical spits where introduced and instead of using chicken or lamb, they put pork, and that's how the taco al pastor was born. I have my vertical spit so when I arrived to the United States I used to cook kebabs and 'schwarmas'. I like all the food of the world!! Except the Korean one...

(I): Have you added to your everyday meals the kebabs and the 'schwarmas'?

(E): Yes, yes, I have added things of many countries, 'schwarmas', humus, I make humus as a side dish. I adapt it. The Italian pasta, I make a good Sushi. Sometimes my wife go to the Sushis that are sold in other places...I make it really Japanese, well, I have the opportunity to know many countries and the original food of many countries, so I always try to make it really original, as it can be. Not adapting it to the Mexican,

no. The flavour as it is. So, once a week we have for dinner sushi, twice a week we ate kebabs and so, different things that we have added, of international food to our traditional way of eating

(I): And have you tasted the ‘schwarmas’ and kebabs that are sold here in the UK?

(E): Oh, yes! I have found here the best of the world! Yes, they are the best. But they are from one place, and they are very good.

(I): So, just from one specific place, in London?

(E): Yes, because Arabs are from a wide region, each country cook them in a different way. The ones that I like are Iran style, they are very good, depending of which Arab [country] they are from, they are modified. Is like the Mexican food as well. The tacos from Mexico city are different of those from Puebla city...now, you have the Arab tacos, those in front of the cathedral which are great, compared with a taco from the North, the flavour is so different. Is not that they are bad, is just that they are different.

(I): Any dish that you are thinking to do on the next days, that you need more preparation, something like that...special

(E): Oh, yes, I am going to cook “mole verde”, I will see if they sell it, already cooked, or I will try to do the ‘mole verde’, but with a peanut base, so it became thick and I will add to it pumpkin seeds, and add to it the green colour, based on vegetables, radish leaves, lettuce, coriander...what the traditional ‘mole verde’ has, of vegetables

(I): What is what you think you will not find? That you need to look for?

(E): What I need is the unpeeled green tomato; I have seen many photos that it is sold, but I still haven’t find it. Maybe, it will be hard, but I have to find it. Not canned, fresh.

(I): The last question. How often do you go to Mexico?

(E): Well now, the last time I went was in July and I’m planning to return until December. It is not the same to be in the United States and travel to Mexico three, four times per year, to be here. The cost is very high.

(I): Did you return with your suitcase with a lot of food stuff, or no?

(E): No, not so much. Because when we were to traveling to here [the UK], now with the Internet, and the social networks, you get information of many things. The only

thing that I bring was the 'epazote', is what you don't find. Besides my pots and pans, everything to cook.

(I): Well, that's all for this interview, I will stop the recorder...

## **H.2 Hannah, second Interview**

28/01/2019

(I): Good morning, I'm with a Mexican woman who is currently living in the UK.

(E): Good morning.

(I): Tell me since our last interview, what have you eat? During Christmas and New Year celebrations, what did you eat?

(E): I was very lucky because I stayed with my sister during Christmas and New Year celebrations and she is an excellent, excellent cooker. She is very precise, takes care of the ingredients, the preparation and she focuses a lot. I helped her because she was in charge of everything. She told me: "wash this, cut this" and that's what I did. I went with her to buy the ingredients. She did many things, a lot, because she had as thirty people invited to her house. She cooked two turkeys, a big ham, it comes honeyed and smoked, cooked spaghetti as well and other pasta, like noodles, like spaghetti but made of rice with vegetables, she added green beans and carrots. She did a Neapolitan crème caramel, what else did she cook? Apple salad, guacamole, it was a big party! She began with the preparation two days before, when we injected the turkey, well, she told me how to do everything. I have never cooked a stuffed turkey before and she, every year cooks it, and now that she has many guests she cooked two. I helped her to inject them, two days before, with milk and the day when she started to cook, she injected them with wine. After that, she cooked the stuffed, Mexican style because she learned it from our mother. She prepared the stuffed with mincemeat of beef and pork and she added olives and prunes, pistachios, walnuts, almonds and cook everything with tomatoes, onions, garlics, it is like "picadillo" [Mexican dish] is what I think. When this was ready, she added "achiote" [Mexican mix of herbs and chillies] with orange juice to the turkey. She smeared it over the turkey and added butter and then she put the stuffed inside the

turkey and all around it and put all this into the oven, I think, like three hours, the two turkeys. She has two ovens and two stoves, one in the basement and other in the kitchen, that's how she cooked the two turkeys. The most delicious thing that you can imagine! I helped her, I helped but she ordered me "wash the tomatoes" and I went and washed the tomatoes, "cut them in little pieces" and "get an onion" and I get it and "get the olives" ... I was like an assistant!! [Laughs] Because I wanted to help because she was doing everything and a lot of work and there were a lot of food that she had to cook, I had to help her, I involved in everything, I watched how she cooked everything, but, to be honest, I don't think I can cook as tasty as she gets it because she is very precise, and takes care of every detail, that everything is detailed, finely cut. Everything was delicious. They buy the entire ham, of the size of a turkey, but it is a smoked ham. She only unwrapped it and put it in water two days before cooking it, in a big tray with water and into the fridge, for two days. It makes it less salty. Two days after, she removed it of the water, rinsed it, put it in a tray and into the oven. It was very tasty! They sliced it and the people served it with the apple salad and the spaghetti.

(I): Oh, how tasty

(E): Yes, everything was tasty. She bought a cake. She ordered it because it was decorated with Christmas motifs. She put in the table grapes, strawberries and a table with different cheeses, ten different cheeses with biscuits and that's what we had for dinner: turkey with spaghetti, guacamole, apple salad. To be honest, I didn't tasted the ham because I like the turkey more. For me it was as if my mother had cooked it. I served myself turkey like three times with spaghetti and guacamole, oh, delicious, delicious!! She put other tray with salmon, salmon with olive oil, lemon juice and pickled capers. I fancy it, I didn't touch it, when I returned to taste it, it has finished! The tray was empty! [Laugh]. I wanted to taste the salmon; however, I had eaten a lot.



Besides, she prepared punch. Without all the ingredients, without anything, she told me: “I don’t have tamarind but I’m going to prepare it with hibiscus flower”, I said: “With hibiscus flowers? How is it going to taste?” It was so tasty! She bought two gallons... I thought they were of orange juice but no, it was cider apple. I went to the trash to see them! Because I asked her: “what did you add?” because it tasted as Mexican punch and I asked: “what did you add?” because I couldn’t watch how she prepared it, I went to take a bath and she stayed in the kitchen preparing it, and during the party I opened the pot and it smelled and tasted delicious!! So I asked: “What did you do?” She boiled the hibiscus flower and added the two gallons of apple cider, I asked: “Was it orange juice?” and she told me: “no, cider apple” and I said: “same as orange juice” and she: “no, is not the same”. I asked her to show me the gallons and she said that she had discarded them, so I went to the bins and saw in the labels “cider apple”. I’m going to look for it here in the UK because I’m going to do it and it must taste the same because she only mixed the hibiscus flower water and the two gallons of cider apple with sugar, and added apples and she found guavas... well, I can find them in the China suburb so...she added apples, guavas and what else? I think that was all, the hibiscus flower, apple, the sugar and the cider apple and it tasted as Mexican punch, as if she had added tamarind, but she didn’t have. It was very tasty! I think the cider apple was acid, like the tamarind water. It was very tasty. That’s what we eat as Christmas dinner and for the New Year’s dinner; one of her friends organized a party at her house. Because the husband is from Vietnam, she cooked pork meat...as a curry, pork meat with potatoes in a chilli sauce, it seemed as tomato but it was brown, as with mustard, I don’t know how she cooked it. They cooked rice as well. They put many things in a table: fried fish, cheeses, candies, salad. There was a turkey as well, but I don’t like those turkeys because they are stuffed with something like bread, they have like bread in little pieces

(like breadcrumbs) inside, that's the stuffed, oh, no, I don't like it. Only by seeing the turkey, I thought: "no, the turkey no". I better tasted the pork meat with the tomato sauce with the rice. I ate the cheeses... there were shrimps, a salad with shrimps and tomatoes, vegetables, I ate of this salad and I served myself two times the pork meat with the rice. So, yes, that's what we ate the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup>. After that, here, in my house. But I stayed with my sister and my sister is... she could write a cooking book. My sister learned a lot from my mother because my sister was a lot of time in the kitchen with my mother, my sister likes a lot to cook, she enjoys it. What she cooks is tasty, she knows and she is very precise.

(I): And when you were younger, did you get involved with your mother and sister, when they cooked the turkey?

(E): In Mexico? With my mother? No, no. My sister yes, and she still cook it every year. Me, no because... I have been here for six years and we stay with my mother in law. My mother in law always cooks the roast beef and besides that, my mother in law doesn't like help. Nobody in the kitchen with her. She says that if you want to help, don't get into the kitchen [laughs]. For me, it's better! I'm not so good, I only sit to eat, it's embarrassing but well...she doesn't want me to help. The turkey that my sister cooked, my mother have cooked it all her life, my mother always cooked in Christmas the turkey and on 31<sup>st</sup> the pork leg. During Christmas the turkey and in New Year's celebration, the pork leg. But on Christmas my mother cook the turkey and "romeritos" [Mexican traditional Christmas dish] and cod. My mother always do all of these dishes. No matter if she is all the day in the kitchen, even if she is alone, she cook three big pots. And then she gifts it to all the neighbours!! [laughs]. I tell her: "mother, don't cook so many food!" For her is very important to have a lot of food the 24<sup>th</sup>. She get used to... we were five siblings, we were seven in the house, my mother always cooked a lot

of food, and she still do it, even though she is alone with my brother, she still cook turkey, cod and ‘romeritos’. I crave ‘romeritos’.

(I): Are you going to try to cook them?

(E): I can’t find here the ingredients. It includes these herbs, the ‘romeritos’, those you can’t find them here in the UK. There aren’t, and then you can’t cook them

(I): Any other dish that you will try? As the cider apple with hibiscus flower?

(E): Yes, I want to try the punch. I will search for the gallons of cider apple and if I find it... I have hibiscus flower already because two Mexican friends gave it to me some as a present. I have two bags of hibiscus flower; I only need the cider apple. The canes and the guavas, you can find them in the China neighbourhood, apples, you can find them in any store. The only thing that I need to find is the gallon of cider apple. I took a photo of it. I should have it somewhere.

(I): How did you know that you could find canes and guavas in the China neighbourhood? Had you been there and you had seen them?

(E): Yes because before, I used to go a lot to the China neighbourhood to buy things. Now, not so often, because I have been finding ingredients here, in the stores near my house, as the chillies and so I found them here in the stores. Before, because I didn’t know many things, it was easier for me to go there and find the things, but there, in the China neighbourhood they sell “chicharron” [Mexican snack made of the skin of the pig], they sell a half of kilogram bag of chillies for two, three pounds, so before, I used to go and bring with me two, three bags, they lasted to me like half of a year! [Laughs]. They sell there guavas, papayas, canes, they sell of everything! They sell “charalitos” [little fishes sold as snacks in Mexico] as well.

(I): So now, instead of going to the China neighbourhood, you have found many things near your house, in which stores have you found these things?

(E): In all the stores, in all the stores. Well, here, specifically, the store that is near my house is ASDA and I find the “chile de arbol” [Mexican chilli] in the jars, where they sell the spices. Of course, there is a big difference in the price but if I buy a jar, which costs 90 p, and they sell “habanero”, “de arbol”, “chipotle” [types of Mexican chillies], you can find of any chilli in those jars, even though it is less and it costs more, but I don’t have to travel so far. For me is easier to buy these little jars.

(I): Apart of what you eat on Christmas and New Year’s dinner, has something else attracted you, there, with your sister?

(E): Oh, yeah, the “putin” that’s the name of the dish, the putin. It is fried potatoes with melted cheese and gravy. Is traditional from there, in Quebec, because it is a French province, and that’s how it’s called, putin, it is delicious. The bagels are like salty donuts with sesame seeds, I ate a pair of bagels. You open them and put them in the toaster, when they are ready you can add Philadelphia cheese and salmon, or Philadelphia cheese and ham. Very tasty, I used to have it for breakfast with a coffee. That’s how they are called: bagels. Those were the two things I craved: the putin and the bagels

(I): Are you going to cook them here?

(E): They are sold here, in the bakery area but they don’t taste the same, here they are more hard and with more dough and in Montreal they are crunchy, more toasted. And I had bought them and had made them here in the UK, but I bought a bag that had six pieces and only I ate them, that’s why I don’t want to buy them because, the children and my husband didn’t ate them and I have all the bag for myself, it’s a lot for me. Only if I crave it a lot, yes, I buy it

(I): And the putin?

(E): Oh no, that no, because I don't know how to prepare the gravy and the cheese is not the same because the cheese that they use is like "Oaxaca" cheese [Mexican cheese] Are like squares of Oaxaca cheese so, It is difficult for me to do the gravy. Yes. What I'm going to do is the punch, I'm going to try it

(I): And did you cook something to your sister that she had liked? Sort of...

(E): I gave to her the "cochinita pibil" recipe [Mexican recipe], I didn't cook because we were outside every day, doing the shopping and celebrating and eating outside, and after that, we cooked. But after the 24<sup>th</sup> we had a lot of food for three or four days, we didn't find what to do with it, because she did a lot!! [laughs] I didn't cook, I cooked nothing but I gave to her a recipe of cochinita pibil and just yesterday I asked her if she had cooked it, she answered me that no, but I'll try to do it because... I have a friend who gave me a recipe, I had cooked it before and I liked how it tasted, I gave it to my sister and she told me that she liked how it tasted but now, they gave to me a new one so I send it to her, asked her to cook it and if it is good, I'm going to do it [laughs]

(I): She should try it first

(E): She should try first and tell me if it is good or no, so I can cook it as well, so I just tell her the 'cochinita pibil' recipe.

(I): And where did you get the old 'cochinita pibil' recipe?

(E): A friend, a Mexican friend who lives here, she is from Merida [Mexican city] gave it to me. Once she invited me to eat to her house, tacos of 'cochinita pibil' and I liked it a lot, and I told my sister, I told her: "I went to my friend's house, the one from Yucatan [Mexican state] and she gave to us 'cochinita pibil', it was delicious" and my sister told me: "Ask her the recipe and you give it to me later" so, I gave it to her. Now, I have this that is easier, that's why I gave this new recipe to her!

(I): But you used to eat 'cochinita pibil' in Mexico...

(E): Oh, yes, because in Mexico, it is sold everywhere, they sell tacos, and the Yucatan restaurants, they sell everywhere the 'cochinita pibil' tacos and I like them a lot, a lot. In the 'tianguis' you can find the stall that only sells 'cochinita pibil' tacos so you can go there and order like... ten tacos!! [Laughs] I like them a lot, I like the flavour of the purple onion, I like it a lot. In Mexico I ate 'cochinita pibil' tacos.

(I): Did you bring any ingredient from Canada?

(E): No, no, because, as you know, I have my two children, my son is two years old and my daughter is seven. I have learned that if I travel with a lot of luggage I can't hold my children, especially in the escalator. I have learned, I prefer to travel light. I wanted to bring some stuff, I wanted to bring maple syrup, it is very famous and cheap there, but I thought, no, I don't want to carry anything and my sister told me: "I have jars there, take one with you" but no, no, don't give me nothing, I don't want to pay extra-luggage and I want to have my hands free to hold my children

(I): Of course

(E): That's why I didn't bring a thing. Yes, I wanted to bring things, but no, I wanted to travel light, so I can hold my children.

(I): That's all for this interview, I will stop my recorder

## Appendix I. Example of Field notes

Visit to Hannah

12/11/2018

Hannah is a young woman who came to England to stay a year, but she's stayed already six. She currently lives with her husband, born in England, in the same town in which he was born, "everyone knows me, if I wanted to" echarme una cana al aire "(cheat to my husband) I couldn't, I always meet all the relatives of my husband" she told me. She has two children, one very small as two years old and a bigger one, as of six. Although the young son spoke in English, he understood Spanish and the daughter speaks perfect in Spanish. She passed by me before going to do some shopping at the ASDA supermarket in her car, with her two children. It was raining, so when we got to the supermarket, she had to take out the stroller to put her son in it, while I moved towards the super so as not to disturb and not get wet. She took a basket, we only bought some things to complete her shopping because she told me that she had already bought a chicken the day before. We buy a cucumber, French fries, a pineapple, tomatoes, onions and Nuggets, "they're the ones kids like," he said to me. The girl asked for tamales and tacos for dinner. When we came out it was not raining, but there was a rainbow, when we were already in the car and I pointed it out to her, she stopped to take some pictures, even going over the street where she had to turn. He returned to the car and turned to take the right street toward her house. When we arrived, she told me that they have lived in this house for 4 years. She told me that she was going to cook a rice with corn. She pulled out a bag of rice, and read for me: "long grain White rice easy cook". She also explained that it was difficult to adapt to the schedule, because "usually the children eat earlier" she told me. She put English sausages to cook for the boy, as she explained. She

put water to boil in a kettle, put olive oil and sunflower oil in a deep frying pan. Apart, in another pot made black beans in water, she commented: "beans and rice, is what my mom always had." She showed me how to put butter, onions and beans to make tacos with beans. She showed me Maseca flour and a press that her mother had brought him from Mexico, "I always have tortillas" she said "children always like tortillas". She told me that she knew that she could find some tortillas from the brand "La Reyna de las Tortillas", very popular, "the taqueras one", she explained. Tortillas taqueras are used to prepare small street tacos in Mexico.

I asked her if she used a list to do the shopping, "no," she explained, "I buy what comes to my mind, if I make a list, then I forget the list," she said.

She cooked chicken with salt, onion and garlic. I asked her where she got her recipes from, she explained that when she got married, she did not know how to cook and then she talked to her mother on the phone and wrote down what she was saying. She remembered how when she was a little girl, her mom wake up early to go to the mill and grind corn to make tortillas.

I asked her if it had been difficult for her to get used to drive in the UK, she told me no, she told me: "I remember that in Mexico my mom and my aunt made tortillas very fast, in less than ten minutes they already had a big bunch (she showed me a considerable height from the table). When I was young, my aunt told me that I had to learn to throw tortillas, otherwise I would not get married, but I was not interested in that. I remember that I noticed when I was in the car with my dad, to see how he was driving. One day I told my sister, I think I can drive, and as soon as my dad felt asleep I would tell my sister, help me get the car out and so that my dad will not wake up, we would push the car to get it out without turning it on, and outside I would turn it on and we would go for



ride around the block. I did not learn to throw tortillas, but I learned to drive !!

(laughing). Then even my mom asked me to take her to the super in the car. And now, when I arrived in England, I had to learn how to make tortillas! "

While she was talking to me, she added the boiling water to the rice, "the British people do not put oil in the rice, but I do use olive oil," she explained. "The children eat rice," she told me. Completed the water with chicken broth, garlic, onion, Swiss Knorr, corn and carrots. In a food processor, she put tomatoes, garlic and onions, "I prefer the processor instead of the blender," she told me. She added the mixture to the chicken with parsley and basil.

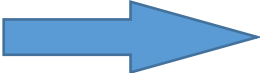

"My husband likes tortillas with sauce" she said, "oh, I forget the cherry tomatoes" she said, she hastened to split them and toss them to the chicken. She kept in the fridge what's left over of chicken broth. She seasoned the mixture with a chicken seasoning "so it is tastier" she said. She showed me that in her cupboard she had cans of chipotles, maseca and frozen tortillas. "Cooking Mexican is very laborious," she told me, "that's why I only cook that way once or twice a week."


When I asked her where she bought fresh ingredients, she explained that in the Chinese neighborhoods she obtained dried chilies, in Turkish shops she found jalapeño chillies, cheeses and pips with salt and sometimes tomatillos in vinegar to make entomatados and jicamas [Mexican dishes].

An anecdote that shows that Hannah is a busy homemaker is that as soon as the husband came to eat, he opened a beer and made her see that she had his sweatshirt on backwards. "I've walked like that all day" she said laughing. I said that I thought that it was that way.

## Appendix J. Table showing relations between research objectives, findings, analysis, outcomes and implications

Table J.1 Relations between the research objectives, findings, analysis outcomes, and implications

Research objectives	Findings statements	Outcome/consequence	Theoretical contribution
1. To understand the role of materials in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural food marketplace	Chapter 5 - Immigrants develop:  - new knowledge by finding alternative sources for their food  - competencies to acquire their food from sources other than usual retailer stores		7.2.1 Immigrant consumers as innovative and creative prosumers. Craft consumption (Campbell, 2005) and multicultural marketplaces as an ally.
	Chapter 5 - Immigrants share with other immigrants:  -where to acquire food  - competencies to obtain food from sources other than usual retail stores		7.2.2 Sharing competencies to create social networks. Standardisation, homogenisation, diversification, and reappropriation.
2. To understand the role of meanings in the process of developing consumer competency to adapt to the multicultural food marketplace	Chapter 6 - Immigrants engage in:  - creolisation of various elements from a diversity of cultures to produce a sense of Mexico  - developing competencies to challenge and educate others regarding the meanings		7.2.1 Immigrant consumers as innovative and creative prosumers. Craft consumption (Campbell, 2005) and multicultural marketplaces as an ally.

	<p>distorted by global versions of their ethnic food</p> <p>Chapter 6 - Immigrants share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- meanings related with the global version of their ethnic food</li> <li>- competencies to challenge and educate others regarding the meanings distorted by global versions of their ethnic food</li> </ul>		<p>7.2.2 Sharing competencies to create social networks. Standardisation, homogenisation, diversification, and reappropriation.</p>
<p>3. To analyse the ramifications of immigrant consumers adapting to the multicultural food marketplace.</p>	<p>Chapter 5 - Immigrants share common elements between food consumption practices, developing an emic approach to authenticity</p> <p>Chapter 6 - Immigrants associate meanings of previous life with competencies</p>		<p>7.2.3 Producing authentic food through applying competencies. Craft consumption (Campbell, 2005) to develop authenticity.</p>

Source: adapted from Bloomberg and Volpe (2018)