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Food in the lives of Paris and Chicago residents

Coline Ferrant

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**Institut d'études politiques de Paris & Northwestern University
ECOLE DOCTORALE DE SCIENCES PO & THE GRADUATE
SCHOOL AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

Programme doctoral de sociologie

Observatoire sociologique du changement & Department of Sociology

Doctorat en Sociologie & Ph.D. in Sociology

Food in the Lives of Paris and Chicago Residents

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Dissertation chaired by Professor Marco Oberti and Professor Gary Fine

defended on December 17th, 2020

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Abstract

My dissertation research topic is the creation of quotidian judgements and practices related to food, amid the enduring social and spatial stratification of everyday life. The sites are two large and diverse cities: Paris (France) and Chicago (United States). The method is ethnographic fieldwork. The approach to sociological analysis is contextualism. Inspired by ideas from the sociology of culture and urban sociology, it suggests that contexts are space-bound and that spaces provide context for social action. Formally, the dissertation reads like a threefold set of ethnographic findings, theoretical arguments, and contributions to scholarship.

In the Introduction, I set up the research topic and explicate the analytical approach. I lay out the social and spatial singularities of the studied countries, cities, and neighborhoods. I report on the ethnographic methods and techniques, dataset, and relationships with informants. Lastly, I outline the findings, which I organize in three chapters. Each chapter explores a specific dimension of the research topic, formulates a distinct sociological question, and develops a theoretical argument in a grounded manner.

Chapter 1 documents the dietary tastes and culinary practices of first- and second-generation immigrants in Paris and Chicago. I identify three theoretical insights in research on food and immigration: the immigrant nutritional paradox, the reinvention of food traditions, and the deromanticization of culinary authenticity. The analysis centers on first- and second-generation immigrants as creative agents endowed with personal experience of various cultural contexts. First, I describe a shared taste for freshness and

naturalness. Second, I show how first- and second-generation immigrants craft quotidian culinary practices that they qualify as simple. Third, I document their perceptions of commonalities and singularities between the cuisines of the various countries they have lived in and the cuisines of fellow immigrant groups. Ultimately, I reach the insight that in both cities alike, first- and second-generation immigrants recraft their judgement of the good quotidian diet as simple cooking using fresh produce.

Chapter 2 studies food access and acquisition in mixed neighborhoods in Paris. I use an agentic approach, analyzing residents' perceptions of food environments, dispositions toward mobility and proximity, and acquisition practices. I find that first- and second-generation immigrants perceive the metropolis as a rich and diverse food environment, whereas natives perceive their neighborhood as a food-deficient environment. First- and second-generation immigrants endow mobility with self-efficacy, whereas natives construct proximity as a moral value. The acquisition practices of first- and second-generation immigrants consider price and types of foods; they span the metropolis. Those of natives consider types of foods; they center on their neighborhood.

Chapter 3 inquires into stale bread disposal practices in two French urban contexts: *cités* (suburban neighborhoods built as blocks of high-rises) and *villes* (street-centric inner-city neighborhoods). I use a meso-level approach, investigating how urbanity – a set of environmental, cultural, and interactional characteristics of an urban context – shapes practice, that is, behaviors with objects grounded in living conditions. I find that in *cités*, most residents toss stale bread in the garbage, others hang it in plastic bags on railings, and others litter it on the ground with any trash, whereas in *villes*, all residents toss bread

in the garbage. This is explained by differences in urbanity. Specifically, three characteristics of *cités*' urbanity are: (1) unused spaces that I call edge spaces, (2) a collective sentiment that I call communal pessimism, and (3) a binary opposition of communality vs. estrangement in residents' perceptions of spaces, uses of spaces, and interactions.

Introduction

In this Introduction, I set up the research topic, explicate the analytical approach, lay out the sites' contextual characteristics, describe the ethnographic data and methods, and outline the findings.

1. Research Topic

The research topic is the creation of quotidian judgements and practices related to food, amid the enduring social and spatial stratification of everyday life. In the following, I introduce this topic and explicate its theoretical background. I also provide some historical backdrop as it relates to the two studied countries (France and the United States).

1. 1. Introduction

Originally, my intellectual pull toward the topic of food came from enjoying the powerful truism that everyone eats and (hopefully) every day, and that it can be a simple everyday pleasure. From a corny perspective – if I may – food and eating point out to what makes us human – feeling and functioning things. From a psychological perspective, food and eating are basic needs (Maslow, 1954). And, from a humanistic perspective, food and eating are a universal source of aesthetic uplift (Korsmeyer, 1999). Now, for sure, these realizations are not sufficient for a sociological research study. This reminds canonical cautionary advice from sociologist Émile Durkheim in *The Rules of Sociological Method*

(2013 [1895]: 20): “Every individual drinks, sleeps, eats, or employs his reason, and society has every interest in seeing that these functions are regularly exercised. If therefore these facts were social ones, sociology would possess no subject matter peculiarly its own, and its domain would be confused with that of biology and psychology.”

Accordingly, from a sociological perspective, I study food and eating not as a mind-body problem, but as a creative set of judgements and practices grounded in social context. This invites two preliminary remarks. First, taking an essentially cultural approach (think: judgements, practices, and how they relate) to the topic of food is pretty traditional – perhaps even a bit passé. Indeed, the contemporary sociology of culture tends to focus on objects pertaining to intellectual and artistic activity – especially, the visual and performing arts (Chan, 2010; Coulangeon, 2011). Hence, it tends to neglect objects referring to mundane ways of life (Williams, 1976) while including “a refining and elevating element” and having “pleasure” as one of its “principal aims” (Said, 1993: xii-xiii) – which is the case of food. That current preference for art and intellect in the sociology of culture contrasts with older works, notably canonical *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* by Pierre Bourdieu (2010 [1979]), which investigated how tastes and practices related to paintings, music, and literature, yet also food, drinks, clothing, decoration, furniture, and cosmetics, reflected and shaped the French social structure in the 1960s. Second, the current social context wherein people create judgements and practices related to food is the enduring social and spatial stratification of everyday life. I turn to explicate it – theoretically and historically – in the following.

1. 2. Theoretical Background

In Western societies, until the 20th century, food was taking up a significant share in household budgets (especially among the poor), was subject to strict social and religious codification (de Garine, 1990; Elias, 2000 [1939]; Grieco et al., 2006), was in limited supply (mostly starch, fruits, and vegetables), and shortages were common (Bruegel, 2009). Since the second half of the 20th century, the global food system has been experiencing profound changes. Prices have been declining and the availability of processed foods is ever increasing (Popkin et al., 2012; Rosenheck, 2008).

Hypothetically, such hard-earned era of abundance could be conducive to a greater individualization of choices and a slackening of social differences. Yet, as early as 1997, in a now-seminal work in the sociology of food, British sociologist Alan Warde (1997) argued that the homogenization of the global food supply did not necessarily equate to the homogenization of consumption. Warde proceeded to identify two main theoretical approaches to explaining food consumption and its drivers. First, postmodernist theories posit the individualization of behaviors and the erosion of social class. They come in three variants. The theory of “arbitrary individual diversity” postulates the individualization and deregulation of dietary behaviors, as the rising availability and variety of foods trigger uncertainty and discomfort. The theory of “post-Fordist food” assumes that consumers are informed and at ease in their choices; they elaborate sophisticated lifestyles and form groups based on niche consumption behaviors. Per the theory of “mass consumption in a mass society,” the massification of production and distribution comes with the uniformization and standardization of tastes. Second, in contradiction with

postmodernism, the theory of the “persistence of social differentiation” explains that food practices continue to be socially differentiated. To put those theories to empirical test, Warde traced changes in food practices in the United Kingdom from 1968 to 1990 using statistical and textual data. He found that while institutional and media discourses emphasize variety and the food industry supply a large quantity and variety of foods, social differences – based on income, social class, gender, ethnicity, and generation – continue to shape practices. Since then, a robust empirical scholarship has continuously demonstrated the persistence of social and cultural differences in food practice on a global scale (Cardon et al., 2019; Gojard et al., 2006; Smith Maguire, 2017).

Now, refuting postmodernist theories is a battle that has perhaps already been won. For sure, postmodernism used to be fashionable (Callinicos, 1999; Crook, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 2000). David Evans (2001: 165) put it wittily: “While in the 1970s anything with the word 'Marxist' in its title could get published, in the 1980s and 1990s it was anything with the word 'postmodern' or 'postmodernism!'.” As early as the 1990s, postmodernist theories have received damning criticism for relying too heavily on abstraction, making empirically unverified and unverifiable claims (Demerath, 1996), and carrying normative underpinnings – especially, a congruence with the goals of consumer capitalism (Jameson, 1991). Since then, those theories and theorists have been getting old and there does not seem to be a new generation emerging (Antonio, 2000; Owen, 1997). Social change is unmistakably a challenge for sociological theory; pioneering French sociologist Henri Mendras even constructed it as a distinct research topic (Mendras and Forsé, 1983). It is indeed easy to overestimate change or persistence, along a dichotomy of nothing changes vs. everything changes. Herein lies the pitfall of postmodernism:

exaggerating change, namely, the decline of collective belonging and the triumph of the individual.

Still, there are two persistently famous sets of postmodernist arguments: the ungrounding of social life from local contexts and the emergence of classless and placeless identities. *The Consequences of Modernity* (1991) identified by British sociologist Anthony Giddens include the separation of time and space, the development of disembedding mechanisms, and the reflexive appropriation of knowledge. As a result of those structural shifts, individuals elaborate particularistic lifestyles and experience fluid identities (Bauman, 1983; Giddens, 1990, 1991; Urry, 1999). Theses of the “death of class” contend that social class is losing its local and material bases (Kingston, 2000; Pakulski and Waters, 1996). Mobility in all its forms is becoming standard, dissolving individuals’ territorial grounding and the social division of space (Beck, 2000, 2006; Urry, 1999). Yet, empirically committed urban sociologists find that residential and everyday mobility continue to be unequal and do not erase the social structuration of space (Oberti and Préteceille, 2004; Recchi, 2015).

Concerning food, cultural sociologists demonstrate the enduring stratification of judgements and practices, even in hidden and subtle ways. In this regard, an exemplary work is *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape* (2014) [2009] by Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann. The study population is foodies in the United States, defined as: “person[s] who devote considerable time and energy to eating and learning about good food, however 'good food' is defined.” (2014 [2009]: x) Johnston and Baumann highlight a paradox of the American cultural context: support of democratic

ideals and rejection of plain snobbery, together with high political and social inequality. They explain that the American gourmet foodscape features a tension between ideals of democracy and distinction. On the one hand, foodies endorse equality and inclusion, in being opened to learning from different food cultures. On the other hand, the gourmet foodscape perpetuates inequality, exclusion, and exploitation, by providing subtle ways to mark social status, sustaining divisive class and identity politics, and failing to question the current food system. Yes, the American 21st-century might be an age of post-scarcity, identities based on lifestyles rather than work, and social unacceptability of ostentation of wealth and status. Yet, the case of foodies reveals covert yet potent forms of inequality and stratification.

In detail, Johnston and Baumann's findings are the following. Foodie discourse relies on two frames: authenticity and exoticism. Authenticity values food framed as simple, bounded in time and space, personally relevant, and ethnically connoted. As such, it carries a genuine social and democratic attitude. Yet, authenticity inadvertently elicits elitism by valuing rare and pricey foods. Exoticism, on the one hand, promotes cosmopolitan openness. On the other hand, it seeks out and strives from postcolonial status hierarchies and stereotypes. Foodies are well-aware of issues in food politics and the food system. Yet, their positions are neither conscious of collective needs, nor concerned with solving social problems. Instead, they are individualized – dare we say, individualistic – and fixated on ethics and the environment. Foodie discourse trivializes class and status. Yet, it also fosters hierarchy and distinction by using food as means of displaying cultural sophistication. Foodie culture has generated unprecedented interest in food among men and encouraged women to entertain such manly pursuits as pleasure and

adventurousness. Yet, foodie couples tend to stick to a gendered division of housework. Women continue to be in charge of all the emotional labor related to food, like caring for everyone's health.

All in all, my theoretical pull toward the topic of food as a set of quotidian judgements and practices is that seminal works have provided nuanced but firm empirical rebuttal to notions of a declining social and spatial stratification of everyday life. Yes, food is quantitatively and qualitatively available to historically unprecedented levels. Yet, following Warde's *Consumption, Food, and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture* (1997) and subsequent scholarship, what is most striking is the persistence of social differences in food practices. Yes, ideals of cultural democracy are widespread. Yet, following Johnston and Baumann's *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape* (2014) [2009], what is most striking is the pervasiveness of hidden forms of inequality and stratification in quotidian judgements and practices.

1. 3. Historical Backdrop

Throughout the 20th century, French sociologists of consumption have used household budget surveys as data sources to analyze the social stratification of food practices (Bigot and Langlois, 2011; Chauvel, 1999; Grignon, 1988; Lhuissier, 2017). The genealogy of this method traces back to Frédéric Le Play's monographs, which examined the budgets of families working in various manufacturing sectors (1962) [1879]. In 1913, Maurice Halbwachs's pioneering study found that blue-collar workers (*ouvriers*) assigned 52% of their total expenditure to food. In 1946, the first nationally representative household

budget survey conducted by the French national statistics bureau found a similar share: a blue-collar family of four assigned 59% of its total expenditure to food, compared to 47% for civil servants and 24% for independent professionals (INSEE, 1947: 252-263).

In France, the postwar period (1946-1975) was one of prodigious catch-up economic expansion, earning the nickname “The Glorious Thirty” (Fourastié, 1979). Against that backdrop, Henri Mendras (1998) highlighted that standards of living among the working class had considerably improved, resulting in greater access to consumer goods once associated with the middle class (e.g., fridge, television). Mendras concluded that the French working class was entering a process of “middleization” (“*moyennisation*”). Yet, food consumption patterns remained differentiated by class. Pierre Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (2010) [1979] identified, well, a distinction between the working class’s taste of necessity and the middle class’s taste of liberty. Claude and Christiane Grignon (1980, 1981, 1988, 1999) got married, investigated the variations of working-class tastes, the singularities of peasant foodways, and the distinctions between popular and bourgeois consumption practices. In the United States, studies in consumer research demonstrated the salience of social class in explaining consumer behavior (Coleman, 1983; Levy, 1999 [1966]; Martineau, 1958; Schaninger, 1981).

Here and now, in the 21st-century, consider first and foremost the evidence of a decade-long decrease in the burden of food on household budgets. Based on 2014 national accounts, French households allocate an average of 20.4% of their consumption expenditure to food, compared to 34.6% in 1960. Moreover, the social differentiation of household consumption structure has shifted from food toward housing (Larochette and

Sanchez-Gonzalez, 2015). Since the 1970s, food is the only major consumption purpose to show a decrease in both average expenditure and differences in budget shares by income (Bigot and Langlois, 2011). Contrariwise, culture and leisure show an increase in both average expenditure and differences in budget shares by income. In 2018, Americans spend an average of 9.7% of their disposable income on food, evenly split between food at home (5.0%) and eating out (4.7%). From 1960 to 1998, the average share of disposable personal income spent on food decreased from 16.8 to 10.1%, mostly driven by a decline in the share of income spent on food at home (USDA, 2019). Hypothetically, the general decrease in food expenditure and its relative equalization regardless of living standard could mean that today, the quotidian judgements and practices related to food would no longer be explained by social position.

Against this backdrop, how do the French and the Americans create quotidian judgements and practices related to food – amid its decline as a budgetary burden, but its enduring social and cultural significance? For a productive exploration of this set of tensions – meaning and materiality, cultural identity and living conditions – my study population features working- and middle-class first- and second-generation immigrants from Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa in France, and from Mexico in the United States. Thereby, I assume that when it comes to materiality and living conditions, working- and middle-class people still have enough income to make choices (relative to the poor) but not enough to completely disregard money matters (relative to the upper classes). When it comes to meaning and cultural identity, first- and second-generation immigrants can leverage their personal experience of various cultural contexts.

2. Contextual Analysis

I explicate my approach to sociological analysis, which I characterize as contextual. In the following, I locate this approach in sociological scholarship, by synthesizing strands of ideas in the sociology of culture and in urban sociology.

2. 1. Contextualism in the Sociology of Culture

To appreciate the importance of context as it relates to the enduring social stratification of everyday life, three scholarships within the sociology of culture provide inspiration: context in action, the social space of lifestyles (associated with Pierre Bourdieu), and personal culture in context (associated with Bernard Lahire).

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2. 1. 1. Context in Action

If you think about it, the study of culture is all about context. In the words of anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973: 14): “Culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is, thickly – described.” Now, how to operationalize it? Scholarships have located context pretty much anywhere from macro-level structures and processes down to meso-level settings and relations. To take just a few examples, theories of practice examine the dialectic between social structure and human agency (Giddens, 1979, 1984). Studies in the anthropology of practices examine the potential for cultural change within traditional societies, with an

attention to cognitive structures – for example, Bourdieu’s essay on the Kabyle house (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972]). Developmental psychologist Jeffrey Arnett (1995) identifies seven contexts of socialization: the cultural belief system, the family, peers, neighborhood and community, school and work, media, and the legal system. Recent theoretical work in economic and organizational sociology examines the potential for change within economic and organizational contexts, with an attention to individual agency (McAdam and Fligstein, 2012).

Ironically, despite the pervasiveness of the notion of context in social theory, sociology lacks a consistent vocabulary for understanding how it shapes social action. In the words of cultural sociologists Michèle Lamont and Ann Swidler (2014: 160):

The difficulty of finding the right terminology for analyzing “situations” suggests the need for theoretical work that could clarify the choice of research methods for analyzing socially situated action. Erving Goffman developed a complex typology of situations, defined by the interactional rules that obtained in each, from behavior in public places (1963), to the rules that demarcated “front stage” and “backstage” in occupational settings (Goffman 1959), to the “frames” that people used to define what kind of situation they were in and what rules therefore applied (Goffman 1974). But most subsequent ethnography has shown less interest in a systematic analysis of kinds of situations. There are important analyses of specific idiocultures (Fine 2012) and examples like Eliasoph and Lichterman’s (2003) suggestion that “group styles” powerfully shape interactions. But we lack even a reasonable vocabulary for thinking about how specific “settings” (such as being

at home at the dinner table versus in a store or at work), particular “contexts” (as when a polarized political system gives even small gestures larger meanings), or enduring community contexts (such as a neighborhood community, with its own culturally marked geography, recognizable groups, and more or less stable personal ties) influence action.

2. 1. 2. *The Social Space of Lifestyles*

In his theoretical work on practice within context (understood as social structure), Bourdieu wanted to move beyond those usual “socially powerful oppositions,” like “individual / society, individual / collective, conscious / unconscious, interested / disinterested, objective / subjective, and so forth” (1998 [1994]: viii). A fundamental concept in this regard is the one of “social space,” alternatively, “social topology” (Bourdieu, 1985 [1984]: 723). It designates “an abstract representation, deliberately constructed, like a map, to give a bird's-eye view, a point of view on the whole set of points from which ordinary agents (including the sociologist and his reader, in their ordinary behaviour) see the social world.” (Bourdieu, 2010 [1979]: 165) Agents and social groups distinguish themselves by their relative positions within that space. Then, empirically, *Distinction* (2010) [1979] investigates the social space of lifestyles in the context of France in the 1960s.

Ironically, for all its lexicon of “space,” *Distinction* does not cover urban and rural issues – “space,” as it turns out, is synonymous with structure (Ripoll, 2013: 366). The only writing attentive to space and place in Bourdieu’s works is the chapter “Site Effects” in

The Weight of the World (2000) [1993]. Herein, Bourdieu cautioned against “substantialist thought about place,” instead inviting to “a rigorous analysis of the relations between the structures of social space and those of physical space” (123). Yet, he did not pursue such theoretical agenda further. Spatializing the social space of lifestyles has thus remained a declaration of principle. Besides, *The Weight of the World* has been invalidated for its lack of rigor in conducting and analyzing interviewing data (Mayer, 1995).

Bourdieu’s framework is also far from universal. It is attached to a singular spatial and temporal context: France in the 1960s. Specifically, *Distinction* (2010) [1979] analyzes data from surveys of the French national statistics bureau (INSEE) and interviews conducted by Bourdieu’s team in three French cities throughout the 1960s. In *Moral, Money and Manners* (1992), Michèle Lamont compares the lifestyles of the upper-middle class in France and in the United States. Her dataset includes in-depth interviews conducted in various French and American cities. Her analysis reveals that fundamental features of the French society prove not meaningful whatsoever in the United States. In particular, contrary to the French, the American upper-middle class displays little complex about cultural legitimacy.

2. 1. 3. Personal Culture in Context

Consider four theoretical approaches to culture in sociology. The first is individualism, postulating that in the modern world, culture has become a matter of free personal choices (Bauman, 1988; Featherstone, 2007 [1991]). That approach, however, has been

invalidated for its lack of empirical support and ideological motivation. The second and third approaches relate class to culture: homology, introduced by Bourdieu in *Distinction* (2010) [1979], and omnivorousness, originally developed by American sociologists Paul DiMaggio and Richard Peterson (DiMaggio, 1987; Peterson, 1992; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Peterson and Simkus, 1992). Homology postulates that culture is linked to class through a one-to-one correspondence and distinguishes classes in relation to one another: taste is, first and foremost, the distaste of the tastes of others. Omnivorousness, in its original formulation, suggests that diversity supersedes exclusion as the new operating principle of distinction. The upper classes combine legitimate and illegitimate tastes and practices, whereas the lower classes remain excluded to illegitimate tastes and practices. The fourth and last is a contextual approach to personal culture, developed by French sociologist Bernard Lahire and notably exported to Portuguese- (Lerrer Rosenfield et al., 2015) and Spanish-speaking sociology (Lahire et al., 2017). For the interest of the English-speaking sociologist reader, I discuss this approach in detail.

Lahire's works study "society in the folded state" (2011 [1998], 2013). The "unfolded state" involves institutions such as families, schools, and workplaces, whereas the "folded state" is in dispositions shaped by multiple socialization experiences. This invites to a sociology that is, in Lahire's vocabulary, "dispositionalist," "contextualist," and "multi-determinist," postulating that personal culture emerges when dispositions resulting from past socialization experiences meet contexts for action. Accordingly, sociologists should "implement a principle of specification of contexts" (2002a: 390), for example, specifying the opportunities and constraints that people experience. It is, emphatically, neither a sociology of the individual that denies social groups, nor a psychological approach.

Instead, it is the study of society at the level of the individual (2003, 2020), refraining from both the “cultural caricature” of social groups and the denial of personal singularities (2008).

Lahire's propositions invite a return to Bourdieu's concepts of disposition and habitus. Cultural theorists expose that their definitions have evolved throughout Bourdieu's works (Lizardo, 2014; Wacquant, 2016). Still, we can identify continual frames. In his late *Pascalian Meditations* (2000) [1997], Bourdieu concludes that dispositions are context-independent principles of determination of action. This implies, in Lahire's understanding, that dispositions à la Bourdieu are “reconstructed realities that are, as such, never directly observed” (2002a: 18), getting enacted in personal tastes and practices. Habitus indicates “systems of durable, transposable dispositions” (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972]: 72), meaning that “the generative schemes of the habitus are applied, by simple transfer, to the most dissimilar areas of practice” (Bourdieu, 2010 [1979]: 175). Lahire comments that those two properties – durability and transposability – make habitus a very particular case among the potential range of systems of dispositions: “We cannot talk about habitus lightly to talk about whatever effects of socialization. Talking about activist, catechetical, pugilistic, or academic habitus as we talk about class habitus, is ignoring the theoretical ambition carried by the concept of habitus, in indicating a system of durable, transposable dispositions.” (2013: 124)

Then, Lahire critiques how the homology scholarship uses the concepts of dispositions and habitus, arguing that those scholars deduce them from observable practices rather than examine their construction, incorporation, and transmission (2001: 128). Thus, those

concepts are assumed rather than empirically tested (2001: 129; 2013: 12). That is a problem since sociological concepts “should enable (and even compel to) empirical studies that could never be imagined without them.” (2013: 172) Similarly, the omnivorousness scholarship errs in formulating individual-level hypotheses (the existence of omnivore dispositions) but testing and measuring them through aggregate-level research methods (omnivorousness as distinctive of the upper classes). In the end, homology and omnivorousness alike invalidly interpret cultural trends associated with social categories as systems of dispositions attached to individuals (2003, 2013).

Furthermore, Lahire questions the properties of durability and transposability in Bourdieu's concept of disposition (Lahire, 2001: 126-130; 2002a: 18-24; 2004: 14-22). To begin with, dispositions are plural since individuals have had multiple socialization experiences. Far from durable, they are “more or less strong or weak, durable or ephemeral” (2013: 124). Per Bourdieu, transposability implies that dispositions would operate under an oversimple framework of “assimilation/adjustment”: “assimilation of situations to incorporated schemata and adjustment (correction) of previously acquired schemata to variations and changing situations” (Lahire, 2001: 136). Lahire complicates that framework: dispositions operate by “inhibition/activation,” depending on cultural objects, life situations, and contexts for action. Accordingly, empirical research in the sociology of culture can “compare systematically the social dispositions that are actualized according to the relevant context (domain of practices, sphere of activity, micro-context, type of interaction).” (2002b: 597)

Analytically, compared to individualism, homology, and cultural omnivorousness, a

contextual approach to personal culture thus investigates “intra-individual variation” in cultural tastes and practices. Empirically, Lahire's works distinguish “dissonant profiles,” whose cultural repertoire combines legitimate and illegitimate tastes and practices, from “consonant profiles,” whose tastes and practices are exclusively legitimate or illegitimate. Consonant profiles are mostly found in the extreme strata of the social space, wherein some individuals might not get to experience diverse social environments and life situations: the “small intellectual fractions of the dominant classes” and “the fractions of the most educationally deprived of the working class, who themselves are of working-class origin” (2014: 113).

Therefore, in acknowledging the multiplicity of experiences, agents, and institutions of socialization (Lahire, 2019), Lahire’s framework invites research on how social trajectories shape cultural tastes and practices. In *Distinction* (2010) [1979] and *The State Nobility* (1998) [1989], Bourdieu finds that “class defectors” (*transfuges de classe*), who experience significant upward social mobility (especially through education), generally display highly legitimate tastes and practices in areas invested by formal education (like literature), and less legitimate ones in other areas (like television). Per Lahire (2004, 2008), social mobility hypothetically facilitates a greater diversity of cultural tastes and practices because it is paved with experiences of diverse contexts for socialization.

2. 2. Contextualism in Urban Sociology

To appreciate the importance of context as it relates to the enduring spatial stratification of everyday life, three scholarships within urban sociology provide inspiration. I identify them as context-boundedness, space-mindedness, and neighborhood effects.

2. 2. 1. Context-Boundedness

Context-boundedness takes into serious account the diversity and singularity of cultural, economic, institutional, political, and social contexts around the world. It attaches findings and theories in urban and rural research to the social contexts that bore them, rather than universalize approaches born in the United States or Western Europe (Maloutas and Fujita, 2012).

As such, context-boundedness is skeptical of generalizations. In France, urban ethnographic studies tend to overgeneralize their findings (Préteceille, 2012: 156), whereas rural ethnographic studies have been traditionally more sensitive to contextual singularities (Renahy, 2010). In the United States, for example, Derek Hyra (2017) characterizes his study of gentrification in the neighborhood of U Street and Shaw in Washington, D.C. as “vertical,” that is, generalizing to the national and global scales findings obtained at the neighborhood level. This represents a bold aggrandizement of conventional methods in American urban ethnography. Early studies of the Chicago school centered on local life (Anderson, 2014 [1923]; Drake and Cayton, 2015 [1943]). Contemporary studies relate neighborhood dynamics to larger social processes

(Klinenberg, 2015 [2002]; Pattillo, 2013 [1999]; Stuart, 2016, 2020). Then, “vertical ethnography” purports to move from a mere contextualization of neighborhood-based findings toward a systematic evaluation of their generalizability. From a context-bound perspective, such an analytical leap might not pass muster with the singularities of local contexts, and thus lack validity – both internal and external.

2. 2. 2. Space-Mindedness

In the last decades, the social sciences have paid increasing attention to how space and place shape social life, to the point that some mentioned a “spatial turn” (Warf and Arias, 2009), allowing “a space for place” in sociological analysis (Gieryn, 2000). This “spatial turn” (Warf and Arias, 2009), in turn, has generalized the use of cartographic tools for data visualization – the “cartographic turn” (Chavignier and Lévy, 2015).

Analytically, space-mindedness is locating social contexts at three spatial scales: countries and cities – the loci of large social structures, and neighborhoods – wherein people live on a daily basis. Anthropologist George Marcus (1995) suggested “following the thing,” that is, studying how globalization shapes cultural objects in places around the world. To play on this phrase, space-mindedness is then “locating the thing,” in its multi-scale context: neighborhoods, cities, and countries. In contemporary American urban sociology, it is common to play on the analytical leverage of a three-level design. Ethnographic studies have compared neighborhoods of the same city (Wilson and Taub, 2006), neighborhoods across cities within the same country (Hyra, 2008), neighborhoods

within and across cities within the same country (Brown-Saracino, 2009, 2018), and neighborhoods of different cities and across countries (Bennett, 1997).

Lastly, space-mindedness reminds the traditions of community studies in the American (Gans, 1982 [1962]), British (Wilmott and Young, 2007 [1953]), French (Coing, 1966; Morin, 1970 [1967]), and Italian (Pizzorno, 2010 [1960]) urban and rural sociology: studying social life in place and taking interest in residents' routines. Those studies have specified the neighborhood as their unit of analysis, considering it as the prime locale of everyday life. Even recently, in *Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City*, American sociologist Mary Pattillo starts off with the pithy assumption that “people live locally” (2007: 2). Among those traditions, the Italian one – *studi di comunità* – strikes me as the most analytically original. It assumes that human settlements – cities, towns, villages – constitute unique and full-fledged local societies, endowed with a spatialized social consistence. This requires endeavoring a total analysis, broken down in two axes: horizontal and vertical. Per the horizontal axis, the analysis should study all aspects (cultural, economic, institutional, political, social) of the local society jointly since their arrangement is unique. Per the vertical axis, each of these local aspects reflects national and international processes.

2. 2. 3. *Neighborhood Effects*

Born in the American urban sociology, the neighborhood effect approach identifies the effects of neighborhood contexts on individual outcomes. Theoretically, it examines how the social space is inscribed in the literal, spatial space. Robert Sampson puts it as a

manifesto (2012: 22): “Neighborhoods are not merely settings in which individuals act out the dramas produced by autonomous and preset scripts, or empty vessels determined by ‘bigger’ external forces, but are important determinants of the quantity and quality of human behavior in their own right.” Neighborhood effect analyses integrate three levels: individuals, neighborhoods, and larger social structures (Wilson, 2012: viii). Moreover, they unravel the mechanisms linking neighborhoods to individual outcomes: “Social mechanisms provide theoretically plausible accounts of how neighborhoods bring about change in a given phenomenon.” (Sampson, 2012: 47)

Quantitative research operationalizes neighborhood contexts through various types of variables, like aggregate socioeconomic characteristics and the spatial distribution of infrastructure. Recent studies endeavor to move away from a dichotomous (yes or no) understanding of the effects of these neighborhood contexts. Patrick Sharkey and Jacob Faber (2014) synthesize these developments in a litany of questions: where, when, why, and for whom? In detail: what characteristics of neighborhood contexts shape individual outcomes? When in individual life courses? Through what processes, operating under what mechanisms and at which spatial scales? Reflecting and shaping what social stratification?

Qualitative research operationalizes neighborhood contexts as constituted of elements of various kinds, hence forming a “bundle of elements” (Brown-Saracino, 2015; Molotch, 2002). The term “bundle” aims to capture the multidimensional and dynamic nature and effect of neighborhood singularities, rather than parse them into isolated and static variables (Brown-Saracino, 2018; Molotch et al., 2000).

Now, international urban research emphasizes that basic assumptions of the neighborhood effect approach – especially, high residential segregation and concentrated poverty (Sampson, 2012; Sharkey, 2013; Wilson, 2012 [1987]) – are exceptional to the American urban society (Maloutas and Fujita, 2012). In Europe generally, and in France specifically, it is a comparatively rare line of research. And, the literature is inconclusive as to whether neighborhood effects constitute an internally valid approach for studying the urban society – in Europe generally (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Friedrichs et al. 2003; Oberti and Prêteceille, 2015) and in France specifically (Authier, 2007; Authier et al., 2007; Bacqué and Fol, 2007; Marpsat, 1999; Vallet, 2005).

2. 3. Application

2. 3. 1. This Dissertation Is

All those scholarships reveal four qualities about the concepts of context and space: lightheartedness, intuitiveness, empirical leverage, and promise of sociological contemplation. My approach to sociological analysis – contextualism – is thus straightforward: social contexts are space-bound and spaces provide context for social action. In emphasizing context, this approach is quite conservative concerning external validity (a.k.a. generalizability). It also invites to an understated approach to theory-building, since a theory is, well, a set of generalizable explanations. Formally, the dissertation foregrounds ethnographic materials, analysis, and interpretation, and puts theory to the background. I am uninterested in building one sole theory of mine; I prefer

deriving several empirically grounded theoretical arguments. Indeed, it would be terrible to witness inspiring and intuitively plain concepts like context and space lose their lightheartedness and potential for empirical play to become embroiled into turgid theoretical constructs. That being said, contextualism does not entail lack of theoretical engagement and ambition. Rather, it carries, fundamentally, a promise of discovery, in constantly suggesting new empirical studies in new contexts and revisiting all those theories held as universal.

This context-minded, empiricist approach to theory-building reminds the canons of postcolonial (Said, 1993, 2003 [1979]) and critical (Harvey, 1989) studies. Both scholarships have called for designing context-sensitive research designs, aided by intimate knowledge of and familiarity with the context of study. They refrain from grand, top-down theory-building, called “‘meta-narratives’ (large-scale theoretical interpretations purportedly of universal application)” by geographer David Harvey (1989: 9) and criticized as “abstract ideas that celebrate American or Western exceptionalism, denigrate the relevance of context, and regard other cultures with derisive contempt” by literary critic Edward Said (2003 [1979]: xix).

In analyzing the dissertation dataset, my aim is to reach consistent insights about the creation of quotidian judgements and practices related to food, contextualized within the analytical levels (sites, groups) that make up the research design, and complying with criteria of internal and external validity. Moreover, these insights are obtained from the specification of sites and groups as cases of study and the integration of relevant contextual characteristics (i.e., as varying, as held constant) in the analysis. In doing so, I

aim to “develop several overlapping yet distinct conceptual themes by pairing up the different case studies” (Jerolmack, 2013: 16), looking for “odd connections” instead of such sleek fabrications as “seamless generalizations, inclusive tables, or comparative grids” (Tsing, 2005: xi) – the reader won’t find any of those.

Substantively, my contextual approach to sociological analysis aims for consistent and contextualized insights – neither timid case studies, nor grandiose and overwrought generalities. Formally, in organizing the dissertation in distinct chapters, I prioritize clear empirical findings, controlled demonstrations, relevant ethnographic interpretation and analysis, grounded theoretical arguments, and meaningful engagements with selected scholarships.

2. 3. 2. This Dissertation Is Not

My dissertation research design is, emphatically, not a “comparison” as usually understood in canonical American social science – selecting cases according to decontextualized, static variables of interest (King et al., 1994). Instead, it is a contextualization. It acknowledges the diversity of groups and sites around the world and integrates it into sociological analysis. It endeavors the systematic grounding of social scientific findings within the cultural, economic, institutional, political, and social singularities of their context.

Relatedly, I did not “select” the cases of Paris and Chicago; Goutte d’Or, Aulnay-Nord, Pilsen, and Gage Park (incidentally, all neighborhoods close to my places of residence);

natives and first- and second-generation immigrants mostly from French-speaking countries, and Spanish- and English-speaking first- and second-generation immigrants from Mexico (incidentally, all ethnic groups whose cuisines I find delicious, for an optimally pleasant fieldwork experience). Rather – for lack of a less megalomaniac phrase – they selected me, given my cultural and linguistic skills and the particular time and space frame of my graduate career. Life is full of contingencies and opportunities. If life had me complete my education elsewhere, I would have studied other sites or groups. If anything, the selection principle is substantive: contexts of social and spatial diversity. Similarly, I did not “choose” to “collect more data” in Paris compared to Chicago. The reality is, as always, more trivial: I leveraged constraints and opportunities afforded by time, funding, and side research and teaching gigs.

Accordingly, my dissertation research design does not rely on a “selection” of a sole group (along dimensions of class, race, ethnicity, regional or national origin) or site (within Paris or Chicago). This has been the advice of well-meaning colleagues who forewarned of an “invalid” analysis, for containing “too much variation,” “too many variables,” “not controlling anything,” and the like. They suggested singling out, for example, Moroccan immigrants in Goutte d'Or. Under that design, I would also find out – as in Chapter 1 – that Moroccan immigrants in Goutte d'Or have a taste for simple cooking using fresh produce. I might also explain these practices as revealing a creative recraft of Moroccan culinary culture in Goutte d'Or. That finding would have a measure of internal validity. But it would have less complexity: we would simply learn that Moroccan immigrants' judgements and practices are grounded in a Moroccan immigrantness. Furthermore, that finding would be less the truth, since – as Chapter 1 demonstrates – such creative recraft

is not exclusive to a particular ethnic group. The truth has greater universality, concerning at least first- and second-generation immigrants living in Paris and in Chicago.

Thus, research designs that single out groups or sites out of forced epistemological fabrications (think: “variables,” “control,” “comparison”) can end up carrying deterministic, essentialist, and reductionist assumptions about motivation and behavior. By means of those contrived epistemological cathedrals, we might observe that informants of a single group in a single site behave in ways and could not but interpret such ways as tied to a seemingly monolithic culture of that group or site. Arguably, contextual, multi-group, multi-site research designs carry a lesser sense of epistemological control than comparative, single-group, single-site ones. But, hopefully, they yield a greater sense of empirical discovery. Put it as (lame) poetry: Roses are red, violets are blue. Research designs are means, valid findings are ends. Control is temporary, discovery is forever.

3. Contexts

I lay out social and spatial singularities of the research sites: France, the United States, Paris, Chicago, and neighborhoods within (Goutte d'Or, Aulnay-Nord, Pilsen, Gage Park).

3. 1. France and the United States

France and the United States are old and large countries of immigration. In France, the foreign-born population is 6.4 million in 2018, making up 9.6% of the total population (INSEE, 2019). In the United States, the foreign-born population is 39.9 million in 2010, making up 12.9% of the total population (Grieco et al., 2012). In France in 2018, 46% of immigrants were born in Africa (including 30% in Maghreb), 34% in Europe, and 15% in Asia (INSEE, 2019). In the United States in 2010, 53% of immigrants were born in Latin America and the Caribbean (including 29% in Mexico), 28% in Asia, 12% in Europe, and 4% in Africa (Grieco et al., 2012). Against this backdrop, my research centers on first- and second-generation immigrants from Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa in France and from Mexico in the United States, as the largest immigrant groups in the two countries. Note that these immigrant groups had contrasting histories with their host societies, involving colonialism in the case of people of Maghrebi and sub-Saharan African heritage in France and imperialism in the case of people of Mexican heritage in the United States.

Relatedly, France and the United States display contrasting ideas, politics, and policies

about diversity, universality, and inclusion. In comparative perspective, these differences are documented in copious historical and sociological literature (Horowitz and Noiriel, 1992; Lamont and Thévenot, 2000) and unraveled on the ground by several ethnographic studies, on such topics as class and culture (Lamont, 1992, 2000), the experience of upward social mobility (Naudet, 2018 [2012]), and the racialization of white converts to Islam (Galonnier, 2017). Now, for the purposes of a contextual approach to food in everyday life, I discuss three commonalities of the immigrant experience across the two countries: (1) the continuing residence in large cities, (2) the historical significance of working-class labor, and (3) the paradoxical popularity of their cuisines, in coexisting with the strain of inequality and discrimination.

In France, eight out of ten immigrants live in large urban areas, compared to six out of ten natives. Specifically, 38% of immigrants live in the Paris metropolis, compared to 17% of natives (INSEE, 2016). In the United States, despite a recent increase in migration to rural areas and small towns (Marrow, 2011; Massey, 2008), most immigrants continue to live in large metropolises (Wilson and Singer, 2011).

In France, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, labor migration was mostly from Europe (Belgium, Italy, Poland, Spain), and, in the postwar period, from Portugal and from the French colonies in Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa (Noiriel, 2016 [1988]; Verrière, 2000). France suffered massive infrastructural damage during World War II, resulting in demand of labor for reconstruction and development. Consequently, most immigrants belonged to the working class and acculturation mostly happened at work – in factories, on construction sites (Rea and Tripier, 2008; Siblot et al., 2015; Tripier,

1990). The working-class profile of immigrants is becoming less true in recent generations, much like the total French labor force. Still, children of immigrants often come from a working-class background. In 2008, 66% of second-generation immigrants had, at age 15, a father who was a manual worker, compared to 39% of natives. Relatedly, upward social mobility is common: between the ages of 35 and 50, one out of three children of immigrants has a higher skilled occupation than their father at the same age. This, though, also reflects nationwide processes of educational expansion and structural changes in the labor market. Lastly, all sociodemographic characteristics being equal (sex, education, father's occupation), the chances of upward social mobility do not significantly differ by country of origin (Okba, 2012).

Historically, Mexican migration to the United States emerged as the legal or tolerated recruitment of seasonal farm workers. Afterward, it evolved into a complex pattern of circular labor migration, driven by demand-pull factors in the United States, supply-push factors in Mexico, and cross-national social networks (Cornelius, 1998; Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores and Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997). Chicago, in particular, has continuously received labor migrants from Mexico throughout the 20th century, working in meatpacking, railroad, steel, and other manufacturing industries (Año Nuevo Kerr, 1976; Arredondo and Vaillant, 2004; Fernández 2012; *New American Economy*, 2018; Ramírez, 2011). In recent decades, however, American anti-immigrant policies have harmed that circular pattern, disincentivizing return migration and entrapping labor immigration (Corona and Tuirán, 1997; Giorguli Saucedo and Leite, 2011; Massey et al., 2009; Santibáñez Romellón, 1999; Tuirán and Ávila, 2011).

From 1965 onward, there is evidence of significant upward social mobility among the total second-generation immigrant population in the United States, compared to both first-generation immigrants and natives of the same age cohort (Tran, 2018). This pattern of second-generation upward social mobility holds true for Mexican immigrants as well. However, recent evidence reveals that compared to fellow Latino groups, Mexicans have significantly suffered from the economic effects of the Great Recession (2007-2009), resulting in risk for stagnation in the third- and higher-generations (Ariza, 2020; Tran and Valdez, 2017). Moreover, the Mexican first- and second-generation immigrant population shows internal stratification: the lower strata face vulnerability to racialization whereas the upper strata benefit from social proximity to the American mainstream (Alba et al., 2014; De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, 2003; Dowling, 2014; Jiménez, 2010).

Although outside my research scope, I must mention that in both countries, immigrants and their children are disproportionately stricken by poverty. In comparative perspective, poverty is estimated to affect 8.3% of the French population (2016) and 17.8% of the American population (2017). Both figures are based on a standardized OECD indicator, specifically, the ratio of the number of individuals (in a given age group) whose income falls below a poverty line defined as half the median household income of the total population (OECD, 2019). The French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) defines the poverty line as 60% of the median household income of the total population. Per that national indicator, in France in 2008, 28.5% of first-generation immigrants, 21.1 % of second-generation immigrants, and 10.6% of natives are poor (Lombardo and Pujol, 2011). In the United States, federal agencies measure poverty by comparing income against a threshold of basic needs (set at three times the cost of a

minimum, nutritionally adequate diet) adjusted for household size and composition. Per that national indicator, in the United States in 2012, 18.9% of households headed by a first-generation immigrant live below the poverty line, compared to 10.1% among the second-generation, 10.4% among the third- and higher-generations, and 11.8% among the total American population (Trevelyan et al., 2016). Also, in comparative perspective, food insecurity is estimated to affect 12.2% of French adults (2007) (Bocquier et al., 2015) and 11.5% of American adults (2018) (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019). Both figures are based on the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Sufficiency Indicator, defined as an inadequate amount of dietary intake due to lack of money or resources. Per that same indicator, in the United States in 2018, 16.2% of Latino heads of households are food-insecure (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019). No nationally representative data about food insecurity among immigrants or ethnic minorities is available in France.

All in all, in France and in the United States, immigrants and their children face inequality and discrimination in various realms of everyday life, like labor, legal and administrative categories, and ethnoracial symbolic boundaries (Safi, 2020). At the same time, immigrant cuisines – particularly, Mexican in the United States and Maghrebi in France – have become popular (Arellano, 2012; Maxwell and DeSoucey, 2016; Pilcher, 2012). This suggests the distressing assessment that French and American natives accept their fellow countrymen of immigrant heritage just for their food. Conversely, in the face of inequality and discrimination, first- and second-generation immigrants might endow food with social well-being and cultural uplift.

I thus hypothesize that for working- and middle-class, first- and second-generation immigrants in France and in the United States, a personal and familial history of immigration, and a situation of living in contexts of social and spatial diversity, facilitate creativity in everyday life, despite the strain of inequality and discrimination. I propose an ethnographic method, able to document personal judgements and practices and to eschew the deficit-assimilation views that have long marred research on disadvantaged groups. This research stance reminds critical traditions in French and in American sociology. On class, French sociologists Claude Grignon, Christine Grignon, and Jean-Claude Passeron urged to refrain from “miserabilism” – regarding working-class cultures in reference to domination only, hence reducing them to privation and deficiency – and “populism” alike – lionizing and romanticizing working-class ways of knowing, being, and doing, hence ignoring domination (Grignon and Grignon, 1980; Grignon and Passeron 1989). On immigration, ethnicity, and race, organic intellectuals in France and in the United States have provided knowledge on, and advocacy for, historically invisible and underserved groups. For example, in France, Abdelmalek Sayad documented the everyday lives of Algerian immigrants (2004) [1999], earning him recognition as “a Socrates of Algeria,” (Caloz-Tschopp, 1999) “the organic ethnologist of Algerian migration” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2000). In the United States, Louise Año Nuevo Kerr conducted pioneering research on the Mexican American experience in Chicago (1976) and contributed to institutionalizing Latino and transnational studies in American academia.

3. 2. Paris and Chicago

In comparative perspective, a major difference between the French and the American urban societies is higher socioeconomic segregation in the United States on indices of entropy and dissimilarity (Quillian and Lagrange, 2016). Chicago, in particular, is known as the “great American city”. It feels like a fabric of neighborhoods with strong and distinctive identities (Bennett, 2010; Diamond and Ndiaye, 2013; Hunter, 1974), hence reminding a fundamental feature of American character: voluntary association (Fischer, 2010). It represents an extreme version of the paradox of the American urban society: ethnic and racial diversity alongside staggering levels of residential segregation (Bennett et al., 2016; Koval, 2006; Sampson, 2012). In Paris in 1999, the average dissimilarity index between natives (born in metropolitan France to parents also born in metropolitan France) and immigrants from Africa is 0.3 – in detail: 0.334 with Algerians, 0.333 with Moroccans, 0.332 with Tunisians, and 0.330 with sub-Saharan Africans (Préteceille, 2009, 2012). This means: 30% of natives would need to move out of their census tract of residence, without being replaced, for the spatial distribution of natives and immigrants in Paris to be even. In Chicago in 2010, indices of dissimilarity are 0.767 between non-Hispanic whites and Black Americans (0.810 in 2000) and 0.572 between non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics (0.612 in 2000) (Acs et al., 2017).

I should mention that in transatlantic conversations about urban issues, the concept of ghetto – although uniquely American – gets the most attention. Two arguments conflict, which I call “comparable similarities” and “absolute singularities”. Per the comparable similarities argument, studies by French scholars wonder whether neighborhoods

categorized as “priority” by the national urban policy face a trajectory of “ghettoization,” via such bombastic titles as *Ghetto urbain : Ségrégation, violence, pauvreté en France aujourd'hui* (“Urban Ghetto: Segregation, Violence, Poverty in France Today”) (Lapeyronnie, 2008) and *Le ghetto français* (“The French Ghetto”) (Maurin, 2004). On the other side of the pond, American sociologist Derek Hyra (2014) identifies “parallel themes” between the French *cités* and the predominantly Black neighborhoods of Chicago’s South Side. Now, the problem with the “comparable similarities” scholarship is, in several examples, lack of empirical seriousness. Startlingly, Lapeyronnie (2008) conducts a case study in one neighborhood yet proceeds to generalize his findings to French “priority neighborhoods” and to compare them to American ghettos in a shadow manner. Hyra’s data collection in French *cités* consists of a couple of field “visits” over a few weeks (2014: 299).

Per the absolute singularities argument, Loïc Wacquant (2008) compares the American ghettos to the most stigmatized French *cités* in *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. Three phenomena indicate that those two types of marginalized urban environments are not similar whatsoever. First, American ghettos are much more homogeneous on ethnic and racial dimensions. Second, the public authorities are much more active in the French *cités*. Third, the police surveillance of the American ghetto is, well, uniquely American. This reminds the broader tendency of some American and Americanophile scholars to universalize American racial classifications, hence denoting little interest in understanding local contexts nor in conversing with local scholars who work on these issues (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999).

Within their respective countries, Paris and Chicago are particularly diverse. In 2013, 18.5% of residents of the Paris metropolis are foreign-born, which is double the proportion in the total French population (9.6%). Half of immigrants were born in Africa (including 29% in Maghreb), 27 % in Europe, and 18 % in Asia. 40% of under-25s have at least one immigrant parent (among these, nine out of ten were born in France); 20% have two immigrant parents (Boussad et al., 2017).

On the dimension of immigration, in 2018, 20.6% of Chicago residents are foreign-born, compared to a national proportion of 13.5% (USCB, 2019). One out of three under-18s have at least one immigrant parent; among these, nine out of ten were born in the United States (Vera Institute of Justice, 2018). On dimensions of race and ethnicity, 32.8% of Chicagoans are non-Hispanic whites, 30.1% are Black Americans, and 29.0% are Hispanics (USCB, 2019). Most Latinos in Chicago have Mexican (74.7% of the total Chicago Latino population) and Puerto Rican ancestry (13.2%). Compared to the Northside, the Southside is less ethnically diverse and has a larger proportion of residents of Mexican ancestry. The total Chicago Mexican population increased from 530,462 in 2000 to 612,139 in 2016 and is likely to keep growing based on demographic trends and population projections (Acosta-Córdova, 2017). For context, in the United States, the identifier “Hispanic” refers to language: people whose heritage language is Spanish. The identifier “Latino” refers to geography: people of Latin American ancestry. These two identifiers are often used interchangeably (Mora, 2014).

In Paris, the retail food environment is made of markets and brick-and-mortar stores. By tradition, markets (*marchés*) operate on selected days of the week and in the morning (de

la Pradelle, 1997, 2006 [1996]). Brick-and-mortar stores are of four sizes, per the French retail trade entry regulations: convenience stores (*épiceries*, with floor areas lower than 120 m²), small supermarkets (*supérettes*, 120 m² to 400 m²), supermarkets (*supermarchés*, 400 to 1,000 m²), and hypermarkets (*hypermarchés*, more than 1,000 m²). Per the Parisian urban planning scheme, there is no hypermarket within the city of Paris; all hypermarkets are in the suburbs.

In Chicago, the retail food environment is made of grocery stores, convenience stores, and membership-only warehouse clubs (e.g., Costco, Sam's Club). In some neighborhoods – identified as food deserts by public health authorities – access to food is difficult and limited to unhealthy choices. Most of these neighborhoods are predominantly Black and located on the South Side (Illinois Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2011; Kolak et al., 2018). Since 2011, the City of Chicago has been conducting a program incentivizing retail entry (excluding fast-food restaurants and convenience stores) and farmers' markets in census tracts located more than a mile away from any retailer whose floor area is larger than 10,000 square feet.

3. 3. Sites in Paris and Chicago

I conducted fieldwork in neighborhoods with a history of receiving labor migration: Goutte d'Or and Aulnay-Nord in Paris, and Pilsen and Gage Park in Chicago. In the following, I introduce the singularities of these sites. Note that I provide richer detail about Goutte d'Or and Aulnay-Nord, since the analyses I develop in Chapters 2 and 3 are neighborhood-based. In Chapter 1, by contrast, the levels of analysis are the cities (Paris

and Chicago) and the countries (France and the United States), rather than the neighborhoods proper.

3. 3. 1. *Goutte d'Or*

Goutte d'Or (pronunciation: [gut dɔʁ]) is a neighborhood in the 18th *arrondissement* (district) of Paris. (Paris is, administratively, both a city and a *département*, whose code is 75.) It has 23,498 inhabitants (2009) (INSEE, 2009). Several census tracts are categorized as “priority neighborhoods” by the national urban policy (*quartiers prioritaires de la politique de la ville, QPV*), that is, with a concentration of low-income residents. (To be precise, low income is defined as 60% of the ad hoc measure of reference median income, which is based on locally-weighted national median taxable income – 18,750 euros at the creation of *QPV* in 2015.)

For further context, in France, the “priority neighborhoods of the urban policy” include various types of urban environments: old and damaged inner-city centers (*centres anciens dégradés*) like Goutte d'Or, *cités* (located in small and middle cities and in the suburbs of large cities) like Aulnay-Nord, and small peripheral neighborhoods of fewer than twenty housing units (*quartiers périphériques de petites adresses*) (ONPV, 2017). In these neighborhoods, the national urban policy mostly aims at strengthening the action of public authorities, encouraging resident civic participation, and fostering neighborhood-based social relations (*lien social*) (Carrel, 2013; Cossart and Talpin, 2015; Tissot, 2007). It also promotes affirmative action programs for the benefit of residents. Note that differentiating on territorial criteria is at odds with the national ideal of egalitarianism. Theoretically, the

national urban policy thus stands “halfway between republican equality (*égalité républicaine*) and differentialist equity (*équité différentialiste*)” (Kokoreff, 2011; Kokoreff and Lapeyronnie, 2013).

Goutte d’Or’s problems have long been considered by the national urban policy. A renovation plan targeting insalubrious housing was implemented from 1984 to 1987. Later, Goutte d’Or has participated in a host of national categories, plans, programs, and projects, including the “Social Development of Neighborhoods” plan (*Développement Social des Quartiers, DSQ*) in 1984, the “Urban Solidarity Endowment” program (*Dotation de Solidarité Urbaine, DSU*) in 1989, the “Sensitive Urban Zone” category (*Zone Urbaine Sensible, ZUS*) in 1996, the “Urban Contract of Social Cohesion” (*Contrat Urbain de Cohésion Sociale, CUCS*) in 2007-2014 (Audry, 2010), and the “Urban Contract” plan (*Contrat de Ville*) in 1995-2000, 2000-2006, and 2015-2020 (Mairie de Paris, 2015).

In the second half of the 19th century, residents of Goutte d’Or were immigrants from the French provinces (e.g., Auvergne, Brittany) and working-class Parisians evicted from the central neighborhoods after Haussmann’s renovation. Most worked in factories and in construction. In later decades, labor migration turned international: Belgium, Italy, Poland, and Spain (since the 1900s), Maghreb (since the 1950s), and sub-Saharan Africa (since the 1970s) (Toubon and Messamah, 1990a, 1990b). Within the French urban society, Goutte d’Or has been historically perceived as a quintessential immigrant neighborhood – a supportive environment for first arrivals, residence, work, and entertainment, and an “area of reception, of transition, of grounding” (Toubon and

Messamah, 1990a: 11). 34.6% of the population is foreign-born (2006) (INSEE, 2006a).

The retail food environment features the Barbès market, which is among the cheapest in the metropolis (Lallement, 1998, 2005, 2010), and clusters of Maghrebi and sub-Saharan African stores. To be precise, store owners are not necessarily immigrants from Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa: some are from East Asia. The Maghrebi cluster, in the southern part of the neighborhood, features stores of fresh herbs (mint, parsley, coriander) and imported goods, cafés, and restaurants. It is often called Goutte d'Or, in a synecdoche. The sub-Saharan African cluster, in the northwestern part of the neighborhood, features *halal* butcher shops and stores of imported goods (e.g., cereals, dry legumes, herbs, spices) (Bouly de Lesdain, 1999; Rasoloniaina, 2012; Rives, 2010). It is called Château Rouge, which is also the name of the closest metro station. Urban anthropologists have called these clusters “little centralities” (Lallement, 2010: 87) and “minority centralities,” that is, spaces “characterized by a particular ethnic appropriation: its commercial vocation makes it a place of attraction for citizens of the same origin as shopkeepers, and, for various reasons (exoticism, affinity), for citizens of all origins” (Raulin, 2001: 177). Both the Barbès market and the ethnic store clusters attract customers from the entire metropolis.

A process of gentrification is ongoing. Préteceille (2007) identifies three types of gentrification processes in the Paris metropolis. The first is the expansion of upper-class neighborhoods, whose residents are mostly private-sector professionals, into adjacent working-class neighborhoods. The second reflects upward social mobility among residents of working-class neighborhoods. Most neighborhood cases fall into either of

these two types. A third type – akin to dominant theories of gentrification in the English-speaking scholarship (Brown-Saracino, 2016) – is the arrival of professionals in the public, scientific, media, and artistic fields. Goutte d’Or falls into that latter, minority type.

Yet, the gentrification process is stymied by three factors. The first is the importance of the stocks of substandard private housing and social housing (Bacqué and Fijalkow, 2006; Bacqué et al., 2011). In 2010, 17% of households live in social housing (compared to 15.8% in the entire Paris metropolis) (INSEE, 2010). That proportion increased by 25% from 2001 to 2009 (APUR, 2010). The second is the enduring presence of the Barbès market and the ethnic store clusters, unaffected by the commercial revitalization programs of the City of Paris (Clerval and Fleury, 2009; Fleury, 2010). The third is, relatedly, the presence of first- and second-generation immigrants in the street space as residents and customers (Chabrol, 2011; Milliot, 2013). This also makes Goutte d’Or a singular case within gentrified neighborhoods. Numerous studies across the Global North document changes in retail environments (Hubbard, 2018), especially, new food and beverage establishments that cater to recent middle-class native residents: “healthy” stores (Anguelovski, 2015), farmers’ markets (Hyra, 2017), gourmet stores (Tissot, 2015 [2011]), coffeehouses (Boyd, 2008; Hwang and Sampson, 2014; Hyra, 2008; Papachristos et al., 2011), bars (Lloyd, 2010 [2006]; Ocejo, 2014), and restaurants conceiving a singular atmosphere, such as retro (Burnett, 2014; Lehman-Frisch and Capron, 2007), funky (Zukin, 2011), cosmopolitan (Dinh, 2009; Shaw and Bagwell, 2012).

Additionally, an enduring singularity of Goutte d’Or is the public significance of poverty

(especially related to substance abuse) and the strength of the network of neighborhood organizations addressing it. In 2006, substance abuse social workers estimated that they were serving a client population of around 3,000, residing in Goutte d'Or and elsewhere in the metropolis as well (Bacqué and Fijalkow, 2006: 79). For comparison, the same year, the neighborhood had 23,190 inhabitants (INSEE, 2006a). Some illegal activities are taking place, like drug exchanges and street vending at the margins of the Barbès market. A significant portion of the neighborhood is categorized as “priority safety zone” (*Zone de Sécurité Prioritaire – ZSP*), which involves heightened police presence.

On socioeconomic dimensions, Goutte d'Or is at the same time a low-income and an unequal neighborhood. In 2009, the median income per consumption unit is 10,700 euros, compared to 21,292 euros in the entire Paris metropolis. The indicator of income dispersion per consumption unit (i.e., relation of interquartile range – third quartile minus first quartile – to the median) in 2007-2009 is 146.4%, compared to 96.3% in the Paris metropolis (INSEE, 2009). All in all, Goutte d'Or is, to a startling extent, a mixed neighborhood. In the tender words of city councilor Michel Neyreneuf and local architect Faraone Bogazzi (1988:101):

When observing “Goutte d'Or,” shaped by multiple events, everyone, depending on their own perspective, believes in discovering their “reality”:

- The City of Paris finds: the insalubrity that justifies its will to renovate in all directions,
- Journalists: “opinion pages,”
- Neighborhood organizations: what should be defended,

- Drugs: its marketplace,
- Police: maintaining order,
- Immigrants: their neighborhood,
- Shopkeepers: substantial benefits,
- Petty thieves: their indispensable market,
- Residents: their daily place of living.

Everyone has their reality; everyone has their belief.

3. 3. 2. *Aulnay-Nord*

Aulnay-Nord (pronunciation: [ɔ̃.nɛ.nɔʁ]) is a neighborhood in the city of Aulnay-sous-Bois (usually abridged as Aulnay), in the *département* of Seine-Saint-Denis in the northern inner suburbs of Paris. It has 22,866 inhabitants (2006) (INSEE, 2006b). Most census tracts are categorized as “priority neighborhoods of the urban policy”. The built environment is made of several blocks of high-rises (in French, *cités*) managed by social landlords. (In France, social housing is managed by publicly funded non-profit organizations.) These blocks are named, precisely, Cité Emmaüs, Les Étangs, La Rose des Vents (colloquially known as “Cité des 3000,” per the number of apartments – 3,132 exactly), and Les Merisiers. A first batch of high-rises was built in 1954 as part of a national plan for addressing the postwar housing shortage (France suffered massive infrastructural damage during the Second World War). A second batch was built in 1969 to accommodate workers of a nearby car factory. Today, the main employers of Aulnay-Nord residents are the Charles de Gaulle Airport (located just north of the neighborhood) and associated warehouses. 72% of households own a car, according to a representative

survey conducted by social landlords (communicated to me by housing officer Lorraine Régnier). Additionally, a minority of residents are owners of individual houses (in French, *pavillons*).

The retail food environment includes a market (in the neighborhood's central plaza), a hypermarket (on the neighborhood's fringes), and several supermarkets, patronized by residents from the neighborhood and from nearby suburbs as well. Contrariwise, the customer base of the smaller stores is mostly from Aulnay-Nord. Current urban policy programs include revitalizing the retail food environment, described as hamstrung by petty crime and geographic isolation (Epareca, 2008).

On socioeconomic dimensions, Aulnay-sous-Bois is dubbed “a double city within one city” (Cottard et al., 2012). The average household income of Aulnay-Nord is among the lowest in the Paris metropolis. In stark contrast, that of Aulnay-Sud (the adjacent neighborhood) is among the highest (Ville d'Aulnay-sous-Bois, 2009). What is more, Aulnay-Nord and Aulnay-Sud are physically separated by a highway (the Route nationale 2). Against this backdrop, professionals of the City of Aulnay-sous-Bois usually attribute Aulnay-Sud's problems to concentrated poverty. For instance, a report on urban development states that “the majority of [Aulnay-Nord] residents are in great difficulty and live in growing social and professional precariousness” and justifies action on nutrition citing “increasing rates of obesity and overweight for children less than 11 years – 19.5% in the northern neighborhoods, compared to 13.5% in the city” (Ville d'Aulnay-sous-Bois, 2012).

While quite homogeneous on the dimension of class, Aulnay-Nord is mixed when it comes to regional and national origin. 34% of residents are not French citizens, compared to 13% in the entire Paris metropolis (1999) (INSEE, 1999). (Until 1999, the French population census was complete and conducted once a decade; since 2004, it is rolling and conducted once a year. For accuracy, I refer to data from the most recent complete census.) Besides metropolitan France and the French Antilles, residents' main regions and countries of origin are Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey, Eastern Europe, and East, South, and Southeast Asia.

3. 3. 3. *Pilsen and Gage Park*

Pilsen is located on the West Side of Chicago. Latinos make up 81% of the population (2016) (Acosta-Córdova, 2017). Within Chicago, Pilsen is emblematic of the Mexican immigrant population as a safe environment for residing, working, socializing, and finding community – at churches, bars, restaurants, stores, and movie theaters. A process of gentrification is ongoing. On the one hand, community leaders of Mexican heritage organize against the displacement of Mexican residents and stores. On the other hand, non-Hispanic white middle-class newcomers regard Pilsen as a folkloric, exotic place to live, stereotyping Mexican residents as welcoming and *bons vivants* (Anderson and Sternberg, 2012; Betancur, 2005; Grossmann et al., 2000).

Gage Park is on the Southwest Side of Chicago. Latinos make up 92% of the population (2016) (Acosta-Córdova, 2017). Its housing stock is mostly composed of bungalows. The social structure is predominantly working-class. Among Chicago's 77 neighborhoods, it

ranks 71st on annual per capita income (\$12,171) yet 48th on the percentage of households living below the poverty line (23.4%) (Chicago Data Portal, 2014). Immigrants mostly came from Ireland and Eastern Europe in the early 20th century and from Mexico afterward. Gage Park is bordered by majority-Black neighborhoods and has a long history of community organizing aimed at uplifting its working-class identity, improving racial relations, and uniting against systemic racism (Stockwell, 2008).

4. Data and Methods

I describe the ethnographic methods, the collected dataset, and the techniques of data management and analysis. Next, I report on the sociodemographic characteristics of interviewed informants. Finally, I reflect on my relationships with informants.

4. 1. Ethnographic Methods and Fieldwork Techniques

4. 1. 1. Ethnographic Methods

The topic is the creation of quotidian judgements and practices related to food. Researching it invites attention to how people make these judgements and practices meaningful, by centering their truth, thoughts, and words. To reach these aims in a valid and reliable manner, I use naturalistic ethnographic methods, conveying these assumptions: caring about what informants care about, taking seriously what they take seriously, finding meaning in what they find meaningful. These methods are, primarily: (1) observation in public (streets, parks) and semi-public spaces (services, organizations, stores, markets), and in residents' homes, (2) conversational interviewing with residents. Secondly, to ground this ethnographic data within the singularities of local life, I conducted informational interviews with professionals of public services, neighborhood organizations, and stores (hereinafter referred to as “neighborhood professionals”).

I conducted field visits any day of the week and any hour of the day and night, to the extent that time schedules are socially differentiated (Lesnard, 2008, 2009; Lesnard and

De Saint-Pol, 2009). In doing so, I aimed to recruit informants based on probability sampling (Weiss, 1995), whereby residents of each neighborhood site have equal theoretical probability of being recruited. Relatedly, I recruited informants in natural conditions, while observing public and semi-public spaces. I thus spent time and effort on the field to build rapport. Pre-conversation time also provided means of observing local life – remember, per American baseball catcher Yogi Berra, that: “You can observe a lot by just watching.” (Helper, 2000) Therefore, I rarely conducted in-depth interviews on the spot. Rather, I had a first meeting, involving mostly greetings and casual conversation, to get a sense of the informant's character and personal constraints, hence initiating what French anthropologist Alban Bensa (2008:323) calls the “other-focused adjustment work”. Upon starting the interview, I had already built rapport. Afterward, I conducted the interview in a time and place of the informant's choice. Most of the time, informants offered to talk in their house, which I liked since it also enabled to observe their household equipment (especially, their kitchen).

Thus, interviews were grounded in informants' worlds and routines. In *The Ethnographic Interview* (1979), American anthropologist James Spradley prescribed: “Both questions and answers must be discovered from informants.” Similarly, French sociologist Stéphane Beaud (1996) proposed an “ethnographic approach to interviewing,” whereby interviews belong to “an ethnographic research study that gives [them] a frame of reference and that provides [them] with points of reference and comparison”.

I introduced interviews through a twofold prompt. First, I stated the research project: “I'm doing a research project on food in the neighborhood.” (In French: “*Je fais un travail de*

recherche sur l'alimentation dans le quartier.” In Spanish: “*Estoy haciendo un trabajo de investigación acerca de la comida en el barrio.*”) Second, I asked a guiding question: “How do you manage to put food on the table?” (“*Comment vous débrouillez-vous pour tout ce qui est alimentation ?*” “*¿Cómo se arregla usted con la comida?*”) In my experience, the phrase “food in the neighborhood” (rather than, say, “your food, personally”) yielded two benefits. First, it is congruent with the research goal of putting quotidian judgements and practices in local context. Second, it eases informants into opening up, by quietly suggesting that the research is not about them personally, but about a larger study population. That being said, emphatically, I did ask questions and expect answers about informants’ personal judgements and practices, not about they think their neighbors do. That is, in reference to approaches to the study of culture: the research is not about discourses, boundaries (Lamont and Molnár, 2002), or small-group formation (Fine, 2012). It focuses on cultural creation, not reception (Childress, 2019; Griswold, 1987).

Formally, I conducted interviews as a conversation (Becker, 1971). I did not have an interview guide, but rather, interviewing guidelines, as follows. I asked concrete questions, akin to those of an organic conversation. I refrained from introducing words that are external to informants’ conversation. I used responsive techniques, especially, picking up where informants interrupted their thinking. I like the French phrase for that: *relances miroir* – literally, “mirror follow-ups”. As a tactic, I jotted on my notebook those things informants said that I found particularly intriguing and wanted them to elaborate on.

With regard to content, the informants' conversation is both a description of routines and a set of personal meanings. Since informants speak from their perspective, their conversation is essentially interpretive. And, their conversation is descriptive as well since meaning-making is necessarily generated from proven events. Relatedly, informants use their own descriptive and interpretive vocabulary. This requires me to engage in a quest for understanding throughout the interview, which further determines the depth of informants' introspection. By introspection, I mean inviting informants to describe and reflect on their quotidian judgements and practices. This implies that I refrain from relying on ready-made questions. Rather, I try to support informants in their own descriptions and reflections, in their own terms.

Most interviews unfolded as follows. To start, I asked informants to describe their routines related to food: where they do their groceries, how much they spend on food, and the like. Next, whenever informants appeared well at ease, I turned to more introspective, less factual questions about the judgements that shape and support their practices. As the conversation was organically drawing to a close, I asked clarification questions (which I had been jotting) and collected any sociodemographic information that had not yet come up throughout the fieldwork relationship.

This implies that informants mention the aspects of their quotidian judgements and practices that are the most meaningful to them. Interviews are about engaging experiences; they do not aim for a total capture of the informant's quotidian judgements and practices. Informants make selections; they give importance to some aspects and omit others. My role as an interviewer is not to nudge informants into filling blanks in their

conversation; instead, it is to support their choices. They describe and interpret in certain ways, and this is precisely what I want to get: judgements and practices, from the perspectives of those who judge and practice. As an interviewer, I am at the service of informants' engagement in their own ways of describing and interpreting. Relatedly, in analyzing my interviewing data, I do not endeavor a total reconstruction of my study population's quotidian judgements and practices. Rather, I look to identify significant dimensions within.

Within the range of interview formats, conversational interviews are usually pitted against structured and semi-structured interviews. With regard to these, I do not contend that my conversational approach is intrinsically better – as usual, it depends on the research topic. Now, in the case of the creation of quotidian judgements and practices related to food, my experience is that interviews conducted as conversations improve data reliability. Early in my fieldwork, I tried out interview guides. In those instances, informants either became more reserved, doubting whether I was really a student or rather a social worker, or formulated responses that sounded too rationalized and self-satisfying (especially, conforming to ideals of being a skilled and dedicated homemaker).

4. 1. 2. Collected Dataset

I spent 217 days on the field over four years. Field visits lasted six to eight hours and spanned the entire time range of the day and night; that is, I was on the field over the morning, the afternoon, or the evening and night. Therein, I wrote jottings and recorded conversations. I qualify as “interview” proper field conversations that lasted from 45

minutes to *n* hours. With the informants' consent, most conversations were recorded. Others were not, either because informants did not consent to recording, or because I did not even ask due to the spontaneity of the encounter. In such cases, I jotted informants' keywords and phrases and a summary of the conversation.

In Paris, I conducted all interviews in French, except one in English (with Sri Lankan-born Sirimavo Lakshani) and two in Arabic (with Tunisian-born Kamel Souissi – his friend Omar Amokrane translated). In Chicago, I interviewed residents in Spanish (*n* = 21), English (5), or a combination (1), depending on their preference, and neighborhood professionals in English (18) and Spanish (5). Most informants were interviewed once. Indeed, in most fieldwork encounters, informants and I developed a tacit agreement whereby the condition for them to welcome a total stranger in their worlds and houses would be for me to leave their worlds upon leaving their houses. More rarely, I conducted multiple interviews with informants with whom I developed some familiarity (Table 0.1).

Table 0.1 – Number of interviews with (unique) informants

Number of interviews	Paris		Chicago	
	<i>Residents</i>	<i>Professionals</i>	<i>Residents</i>	<i>Professionals</i>
One	64	27	21	15
Two	14	2	4	8
Three			1	
Four	1			
Five	2			
Six	2		1	

I met most informants in fieldwork situations. More rarely, I contacted them upon referral by other informants, or, for professionals, via email. In Paris, I met 40 residents while

they were relaxing in the neighborhood public space (parks, plazas, streets, and the like), 23 while participating in neighborhood life (in councils, organizations, festivals, and the like), and 13 while performing everyday activities (at markets, stores, places of worship, restaurants, and the like). Seven were referred by other informants. In Chicago, I met 10 residents during everyday activities, 10 in instances of neighborhood life, and one in the public space. Six were referred by other residents.

Hanging out in the public space as a recruitment tactic worked better in Paris than in Chicago. This might be because the public space in European cities is, normatively and practically, street-centric and pedestrian-centered, in contrast to the car-centric, driver-centered American urban space (Häussermann and Haila, 2005; Sennett, 1990; Shortell and Brown, 2014). Besides, I tried avoiding the recruitment technique of “snowball sampling,” that is, appreciating informants by the yardstick of their inclusion in personal networks (Beaud and Weber, 2010). For my research approach, “snowball sampling” risks resulting in a concept of neighborhood life reduced to acquaintance networks, and, relatedly, ignoring disaffiliated individuals (Castel, 2000).

Concerning neighborhood professionals, in Paris, I met 12 right in their workplace and three impromptu while on the field (two in a neighborhood festival, one in a café). I contacted seven by their publicly available email and seven were referred by other informants. In Chicago, I met 15 in their workplace, contacted five by email, and six were referred to me.

4. 1. 3. *Techniques of Data Management and Analysis*

On the field, I was equipped with a dictation machine and a notebook on which I wrote jottings – mostly keywords and memorable “sensory details” (Emerson et al., 2011 [1995]: 32). Upon leaving the field, I unwound in public transportation. Indeed, to maintain a respectful distance toward informants (I elaborate on that below), I neither lived nor worked in my field sites. In Paris, I lived in Strasbourg-Saint-Denis (10th *arrondissement* of Paris) and worked at Sciences Po (7th *arrondissement*) and at the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (Ivry-sur-Seine, southeastern suburbs). In Chicago, I lived in Englewood (South Side) and worked at Northwestern University (Evanston, northern suburbs).

Once at home or at the office, I dedicated another six-to-eight-hour time span to data management. First, I expanded handwritten jottings into digital fieldnotes. Second, I made progress in transcribing interview recordings. Third, I wrote memos. Herein, I reflected on the day’s field experience, derived preliminary insights, and engaged in analysis integrating what I learned on the field, the research topic, and the scholarships that have informed and inspired my research approach. To write up the dissertation, I started by compiling, organizing, and revising those memos.

I conducted fieldwork, for the most part, in French in Paris and in Spanish in Chicago. Thus, in the dissertation, I translated most fieldnotes and informant quotes. Original materials are available upon request. Since meaning-making is steeped in linguistic cultures, I provide French and Spanish terms and idioms that are not readily translatable

into English. Talk materials in fieldnote extracts are my best recollection of the conversation; they may not be an exact rendering of informants' phrasing. I occasionally make minor edits for length and clarity, with attention not to alter informants' process of thought. Complete materials are available upon request as well.

I present the results of field data analysis as follows. First, I articulate a finding, that is, a pattern of judgement and practice shared across informants. Second, I provide data points for it: analytic summaries (obtained from a thematic coding of the dataset), selected representative fieldnotes and informant quotes, and whole-data counts.

4. 2. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Interviewed Informants

In this section, I present aggregate descriptive statistics of interviewed informants along important sociodemographic indicators. I suggest that the reader reads it like an exhibition catalog: go over what looks more interesting, glance through the rest.

Interviewed informants recruited in Paris (Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or) and Chicago are listed in Tables 0.2, 0.3, and 0.4, respectively, together with their occupation and immigration background. All names are pseudonyms. I use full names – first names and last names. While it is conventional to use first names only in the English-speaking world, in the French- and Spanish-speaking worlds, it is rather informal and can feel disrespectful and infantilizing.

Age of interviewed residents. 18 are aged 18 to 29, 42 are aged 30 to 44, 23 are aged 45

to 59, and 27 are aged 60 or more (Table 0.5).

Table 0.5 – Age of interviewed residents

Age	Paris	Chicago
18-29	14	4
30-44	32	10
45-59	18	5
60-+	19	8

Gender of interviewed residents. In Paris, 49 identify as men and 34 identify as women. In Chicago, 10 identify as men and 17 identify as women.

Immigrant background of interviewed residents and professionals. In Paris, among resident informants recruited in Goutte d'Or, 19 are immigrants and seven are French-born children of immigrants: I call them first- and second-generation immigrants. 12 were born in metropolitan France to parents also born in metropolitan France: I call them natives. About first-generation immigrants, 10 are from Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), seven are from sub-Saharan Africa (Angola, Cameroon, DR Congo, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal), one is from South Asia (Sri Lanka), and one is from South America (Peru). About the parents of second-generation immigrants, three are from Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco), two are from sub-Saharan Africa (Mali, Senegal), and two are from South America (Brazil).

Among resident informants recruited in Aulnay-Nord, 28 are immigrants and 10 are French-born children of immigrants. Three were born in metropolitan France to parents also born in metropolitan France and four were born in the French Antilles (Guadeloupe,

Martinique). About first-generation immigrants, 14 are from sub-Saharan Africa (Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, DR Congo, Mali, Senegal), nine are from North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Egypt), two are from South Asia (Sri Lanka), two are from Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos), and one is from Southern Europe (Portugal). About the parents of second-generation immigrants, four are from Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco) and six are from sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal).

In Chicago, 17 resident informants are immigrants from Mexico and five are U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrants. Additionally, two are immigrants from South America (Chile and Ecuador), two are non-Hispanic whites, and one is Native American.

Most immigrants left their country of origin in early adulthood (aged 18 to 40): 40 in Paris and 18 in Chicago. One interviewee in Paris and in Chicago migrated in middle adulthood (after 40); six interviewees in Paris migrated in their childhood (before 18). Several informants have had multiple immigrant experiences. Before migrating to the United States, Chilean-born Nadia Oropeza lived in Mexico. Before migrating to France, Algerian-born Wahiba Hammouche, Moroccan-born Hicham Essabr, and Senegalese-born Lassana Seck lived in Spain, Comorian-born Sakina Elbadawi lived in Algeria, and Algerian-born Sabri Khider lived in Greece. Sri-Lankan born Sirimavo Lakshani lived in Middle Eastern countries (Lebanon and United Arab Emirates) and Senegalese-born Souleymane Faye lived in neighboring West African countries (Mali and Ivory Coast).

In Paris, among interviewed professionals, two are immigrants from Senegal and two are immigrants from Morocco. One is a native of Guadeloupe (French Antilles). Eight are

French-born children of immigrants (three from Algeria, two from Morocco, one from Italy, one from Mali, one from Spain). In Chicago, four interviewed professionals are immigrants from Mexico and six are U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrants. One is an immigrant from Ecuador and another one is an immigrant from Poland.

Occupations of interviewed residents and professionals. I refer to residents' current occupation, or if unemployed or retired, the most recent one. In Paris, most first- and second-generation immigrant informants are manual or clerical workers; a minority hold managerial positions. Precise occupations include: accountant, adult educator, auto mechanic, business assistant, bus driver, childcare worker, construction worker, cosmetologist, drama teacher, executive assistant, fast-food worker, food packer, food preparation worker, garbage collector, hairdresser, homemaker, house painter, imam, incinerator operator, IT technician, janitor, kitchen helper, line cook, mechanic, medical laboratory technician, nurse, nursing assistant, palletizer operator, personal care assistant, plumber, production line worker, professor, retail clerk, restaurant manager, school aide, security guard, server, shipping clerk, street vendor, student, taxi driver, and warehouse clerk.

Most native informants are professionals in the public, scientific, media, and artistic fields. Precise occupations include: administrative assistant, archivist, automotive engineer, bus driver, chef, documentalist, environmental engineer, journalist, painter, political aide, professor, radio director, railway worker, retail clerk, tile installer, and student.

Lastly, precise occupations of neighborhood professionals include: butcher, community organizer, economic development officer, garbage collector, housing officer, local development officer, food cooperative manager, food truck manager, municipal councilor, neighborhood organizer, police officer, property manager, public health officer, restaurant manager, store manager, social worker, market vendor, tour guide, urban agriculture officer, waste management officer, and waste prevention officer

Household structure of interviewed residents. 27 residents live alone. Six live in a single-parent household. 29 live in a two-adult household without children and 26 in a two-adult household with children (under-18s). 13 live in a household made up of more than two adults (without children) and 9 in a household of more than two adults with children (Table 0.6).

Table 0.6 – Household structure of interviewed residents

Household structure	Paris	Chicago
One adult	23	4
One adult, with children	3	3
Two adults	22	7
Two adults, with children	20	6
More than two adults	8	5
More than two adults, with children	7	2

Neighborhood of residence. In Paris, 38 residents live in Aulnay-Nord (in the suburban city of Aulnay-sous-Bois) and 28 in Goutte d'Or (18th *arrondissement* of Paris) – the two neighborhoods where I conducted fieldwork. Six live in other *arrondissements* of Paris (19th and 20th), 10 live in other suburban cities (Clichy-sous-Bois, Courcouronnes,

Drancy, Mitry-Mory, Montfermeil, Nanterre, Saint-Denis, Sevran), and one lives in a provincial city (Bourges).

In Chicago, 13 residents live in Pilsen (West Side) and three live in Gage Park (Southwest Side). Four live in Bridgeport (South Side), two in Back of the Yards (Southwest Side), two in Irving Park (Northwest Side), one in Chicago Lawn (Southwest Side), and two in Cicero (a suburb adjacent to the West Side).

Ability status of interviewed residents. Disability is a primary factor of food insecurity and eating disorders (Coleman-Jensen, 2020; Fox et al., 2014; Heflin et al., 2019). In the dataset, one interviewee has limited mobility. No other informants face disabilities that I became aware of.

4. 3. Fieldwork Relationships

Writing about fieldwork relationships is a delicate genre. It can take the form of self-absorbed displays under the guise of reflexivity (Beaud and Weber, 2012), whereby readers end up learning more about the ethnographer's emotional states than about the ethnographees' social lives. Or, it can read like epic narratives of the ethnographer thwarting the traps set by facetious informants (Morrissette et al., 2014). Herein, my aim is to furnish all information that I think the reader needs to know in that it could affect the reliability of my ethnographic findings. Now, and with respect to the above, two disclaimers apply. First, this is what I try, but I let the reader decide whether I succeed. Second, everything is true, my errors of perception excepted. I break that down along the

two sides of the relationship: informants' reception of my research, and my positionality as a researcher.

4. 3. 1. Reception

Food is a topic that informants generally liked to talk about, endowing it with pride in their heritage. They commented that identifying and appreciating good food is distinctive of their ethnic group. As I repeatedly heard: "All of us [people of Maghrebi, sub-Saharan African, Mexican heritage] love food." "We like to eat." Itzel Gómez, born in the United States to Mexican-born parents, confirmed: "I haven't met a Latino who doesn't like the food from where they come from, their mom's or their grandma's." Middle-class informants received the research less warmly, sometimes questioning its significance. Abdelkarim Benchehida, a medical laboratory technician born in France to Algerian-born parents, verbalized: "In fact, I have trouble understanding your research topic. But perhaps it's because I never thought about it in that way."

Olivier Schwartz (2012) [1990], who studied the private lives of blue-collar workers in northern France, characterized fieldwork relationships as "a theft". This means, ethnographic research entails stealing from informants, since only ethnographers benefit from it. I think that stance can be nuanced. Since field encounters took place in natural conditions, informants had meaningful opportunities to participate in defining our fieldwork relationship. In general, women opened up about their difficulties, confiding in me as a younger peer. In Paris, several called me "honey" (in French, *ma chérie*, a term of endearment for people younger than oneself) throughout the conversation. Men

appreciated having met someone. At the end of the conversation, after I thanked him for participating, Madani Kessié reflected: “At first we did not know each other. We've seized the moment.” Salif Dramé commented: “Ah, it feels good to talk to people.” Rafik Mansouri called me “bro” (*frère*). Still, I cannot pretend to set informants' enjoyment of our encounter as a goal in itself. In the end, I am always the one who is requesting to initiate the fieldwork relationship – never are informants. They did not ask for it – they accepted to participate in it.

Moreover, several informants defined the relationship as an exchange of gifts. Marta Cárdenas contemplated: “The good thing is that you're having the opportunity. So, enjoy it, live it up! And then you'll tell: 'I had the opportunity to know a Mexican lady!' (laughs) That's the beauty of life. You get to know people that become part of your life, and tomorrow, you never know, perhaps you'll need that person. You see? Because everyone needs everyone and no one's... what it's called... self-sufficient.” For that matter, although in most cases I left informants' private worlds as rapidly as I entered them, several asked me to give back in various ways later on. For example, I kept Omar Amokrane's identity documents while he was homeless. I conversed in French with the children of Consuelo Wolff. I gave to Boris Nzinga the contact information of a farmer in Brittany for whom I used to work in the summer. I shared memories of the neighborhood of Iztapalapa (Mexico City) with Encarnación Márquez, where she was born and raised and could not return for 23 years. Indeed, the literature abounds with examples of ethnographers giving back to informants, in a respectful and ethical manner. Estelle d'Halluin (2005: 69) assisted asylum seekers in Paris. Mitchell Duneier (1999: 69) stored at his house the goods of book and magazine vendors of Greenwich Village (New York). Randol Contreras, who

observed drug robbers in the South Bronx (New York), explicitly wrote: “I did not participate in any illegal activities.” (2009: 473). All such deeds constitute a counter-gift to informants’ “gift of words” (Bouillon, 2005: 82-87).

Neighborhood professionals in Paris were sometimes surprised by a research project about “food in the neighborhood,” understanding it as a topic of national politics. In Goutte d'Or, some were even suspicious that I was concealing my true motives. They complained of unfair portrayals, by academics and journalists alike, of them condoning the neighborhood’s gentrification process. Comparatively, in Aulnay-Nord, I was very well-received, given the stale bread problem (addressed in Chapter 3). Professionals commented that they “couldn't understand” why residents hang or litter stale bread and were pleased to have an outsider cast an inquisitive look at it. By contrast, in Chicago, neighborhood professionals were generally eager to discuss, framing food as a local, community-grounded issue.

4. 3. 2. Positionality

American sociologists sometimes advise that researchers and informants belong to the same group (Buford May, 2014; Young, 2004). I have reservations about that guideline. First, I think the issue is topic-dependent. For topics of the quotidian, the existence of social differences between researchers and informants might well improve data reliability. I found informants to be markedly explicit in their descriptions and interpretations, probably because they were talking to an outsider to their worlds. If I were an insider, perhaps they would find that pointless to spell out things that are so mundane, instead

feeling forced to “overinterpret” their practices in an effort to please me as an interviewer (Lahire, 1996, 1998).

Belonging to the same group as the researcher might even generate discomfort. I felt that informants accepted to open up and confide in me precisely because I was a stranger, someone whom they would never meet again in protracted face-to-face interaction, and who is very different from them. For topics of the quotidian, the “role” of the insider might not be “acceptable” for informants, to use the terminology of interactionist sociologist Everett Hughes in *The Sociological Eye* (1971). Informants were especially wary of gossip, like in the conversation below.

I meet Sakina Elbadawi, a Comorian-born homemaker, on the marketplace of Aulnay-Nord.

SE: I like you a lot, Coline. You're smiling and discreet. The first time I saw you, do you remember? I thought you were a boy!

CF: Ah, it's confusing because I have short hair.

SE: Yes, I like your tomboyish aspect. Because I don't like everything that's about: “girlfriends from the neighborhood”. Like: “There, Coline said so to what's-her-name.” “Oh, you didn't answer my text.” No, I don't like that. I stay with my family, my cousins, my husband. Girlfriends: I avoid.

Ultimately, I believe that rather than in-group or out-group belonging, what has been of import in fieldwork relationships was showing quiet, genuine interest in informants' worldviews and willingness to write about their experiences in a fair and truthful manner.

Relatedly, I set as a rule of conduct to talk and behave calmly, eschewing loud words and emotional displays. Informants appeared to expect a demeanor like that. For example, Armando Flores said he liked my presence, commenting: “You’re very simple, very sincere, as if we knew each other for a long time.”

Social status and social distance are multidimensional. It is naïve to assume that sharing membership to one social group with informants confers primordial interpersonal advantage. It is vain to try suppressing social distance or performing social proximity. Rather, for productive fieldwork relationships, ethnographers ought to acknowledge all such dimensions and devise appropriate tactics for managing distance. On the one hand, I apparently benefited from being regarded as a student – ergo, free from prejudices and willing to learn. Playing the student card is a rapport-building tactic that has long been mentioned in ethnographic scholarship (Bain, 1950; Bizeul, 1998; Douglas, 1976; Rubin and Rubin, 2005 [1995]; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). After thanking them for participating, several informants replied that they were “glad to help me out with schoolwork”. Upon spending the morning together – talking, buying groceries, cooking, and eating – Elena López concluded: “Your report's going to be badass.”

On the other hand, my privileged ethnic and racial status did weigh on fieldwork relationships. As a white native (in Paris) and a white European (in Chicago), I have never suffered from racialization and racism, and this in life-changing contrast to informants. In this regard, some informants in Paris and in Chicago did wonder whether there was any hidden agenda, any messy subtext to my research – exoticization at best, racialization at worst. They were keen to stick to our “initial communication contract” (Ghiglione,

1986): a conversational interview conducted by a student for academic purposes. That general concern took differing forms in the two contexts.

In Paris, first- and second-generation immigrants emphasized that they were “like everybody else,” “normal” people who live a normal life. Their vulnerability to cultural otherization fails the universalist utopia promised by French republicanism, under the motto “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”. In a nationally representative survey, 24% of immigrants and 19% of children of immigrants (compared to 3% of natives) say that while they identify as French, they perceive that their fellow countrymen do not regard them as such (Simon and Tiberj, 2018). In Aulnay-Nord, an additional source of stigmatization in residents' everyday lives is territorial: being a *cit * resident. Upon introducing my research project about “food in the neighborhood,” several informants replied in disbelief: “Here we live like everybody else.” The remainder of the encounter – a respectful and organic conversation – dissipated that initial unease. Boun Yang and Jean Ndoulou, with whom I spent several afternoons and evenings talking on the central plaza, joked that they had “adopted me” for being “interested in [them] for how we live, for another reason than drugs or riots”.

In Chicago, informants stressed that white America is eager to blame all sorts of social problems on ethnic and racial minority cultures. Eva Vald s, born in the United States to Mexican-born parents, rightly commented that the mainstream American public discourse attributes diabetes among Mexican Americans to the consumption to “Mexican food” (stereotyped as starch and meat fats) less than it explains obesity among non-Hispanic whites by the consumption of “white food” (stereotyped as fast food).

Conversely, some informants undertook to uplift our relationship by precisely challenging that ethnoracial order. In Paris, they ethnicized me as Breton, from the northwestern French region of Brittany – where I was born and raised. In French popular culture, Brittany is known for its rural and agricultural identity (notably, dairies, pigsties, fisheries), famous folklore (dances, songs, costumes), dramatic coastline, and egregiously rainy weather. Throughout the 20th century, many Breton workers migrated to Paris, where they were stereotyped as rustic and unsophisticated (Moch, 2012). Today, this is not the case anymore. Still, within the French national society, Brittany continues to be regarded as a culturally peculiar region. All in all, being identified as Breton did not draw me socially closer to informants of immigrant heritage, but it did detach me, culturally, from a prejudiced mainstream. Older immigrants who mixed with Breton workers (especially, in food service and in factories) remembered them as proud of their regional heritage. Children of immigrants accused me in jest of passing for French, in a form of redemptive humor. I jokingly admitted to my un-Frenchness to the amusement of Jamal Embarek, born in France to Algerian parents: “Well, this confirms that no one's genuinely French!”

In Chicago, informants complimented on my proficiency in Spanish and appreciation of Mexican culture. I had the chance to live one year in Mexico City as an undergraduate student and retain wonderful memories of that time, which I like to share, and which constitute, to some extent, “experiential data” (Maxwell, 2004 [1996]). Informants of Mexican heritage commented: “You speak better Spanish than my children.” “Our children are ashamed of speaking Spanish.” “All foreigners who've been there love

Mexico.” “Someone's interested in our culture.” “We become more emotional, more nationalist when we're out of our country.” On a deeper level, they derived humanist, universalist beauty from the fieldwork relationship. I propose to conclude that section with the wise words of Marta Cárdenas: “I think that's the loveliness, the beauty of life. Speaking various languages, communicating with various people, knowing another country... The most beautiful aspects of life are knowledge and food! I think so. You're nurturing yourself with other people, other thoughts, other ideas. Until coming to an understanding of what humanity is, because it's so difficult. The beautiful thing is that you're going to learn lots and lots and lots of things and you're going to spread the truth about what humanity is. No one's going to tell it to you: you lived it, you know how it is.”

Table 0.2 – Interviewed informants recruited in Aulnay-Nord

Residents of Aulnay-Nord

Abdelkarim Benchehida, medical laboratory technician, born in France to Algerian-born parents

Anatole Lissouba, professor, born in the Congo

Armando Lopes, taxi driver, born in Portugal

Badira Lamrani, janitor, born in Morocco

Boun Yang, shipping clerk, born in Laos

Boutros Naguib, bus driver, born in Egypt

Fatiha El Filali, nursing assistant, born in Morocco

Ganda Bathily, street vendor, born in Mali

Hicham Essabr, auto mechanic, born in Morocco

Houcine Chahbari, fast-food worker, born in France to Moroccan-born parents

Irène & Émile Sembolo, janitor & drama teacher, born in DR Congo

Jacques Okoundji, production line worker, born in the Congo

Jean Ndoulou, street vendor, born in the Congo

John Okoh, student, born in France to Ghanaian-born parents

Joseph Solo, palletizer operator, born in France to French- and Ivorian-born parents

Jules Biron, bus driver, born in Martinique (French Antilles)

Kao Vathanaka, production line worker, born in Cambodia

Loubna Ghoula, warehouse clerk, born France to Algerian-born parents

Malika Zamir, cosmetologist, born in Comoros

Marie-Claire Bertrand, administrative assistant, born in France to French-born parents

Martine Mwanza, personal care assistant, born in DR Congo

Michèle & Gilbert Zubar, homemaker & railway worker, born in France to French-born parents & born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles)

Mohamed Neghiz, construction worker, born in Algeria

Olivier Maximin, tile installer, born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles)

Omar Niang, restaurant manager, born in France to Senegalese-born parents

Rose Fotso, business assistant, born in Cameroon

Said Karroum, plumber, born in Morocco

Sakina Elbadawi, homemaker, born in Comoros

Salif Dramé, garbage collector, born in Mali

Sirimavo & Gamini Lakshani, janitor & line cook, born in Sri Lanka

Souleymane Faye, food preparation worker, born in Senegal

Wahiba Hammouche, homemaker, born in Algeria

Wassila Khezzar, server, born in Morocco

Zoubida Ferradj, janitor, born in Algeria

Residents of other locations

Cheick Kouyaté, construction worker, born in Mali, resident of Drancy

Christine Abasq, documentalist, born in France to French-born parents, resident of Aulnay-Sud

Ernestine Nzonzi, accountant, born in the Congo, resident of Bourges

Kadiatou Sidibé, student, born in France to Malian-born parents, resident of Saint-Denis

Kandia Dabo, student, born in France to Malian-born parents, resident of Saint-Denis

Madani Kessié, house painter, born in France to Ivorian parents, resident of Montfermeil

Taieb Derraji, food packer, born in France to Moroccan-born parents, resident of Mitry-Mory

Thierry Jougon, retail clerk, born in Martinique (French Antilles), resident of Sevran

Professionals

Amélie Baranski, waste prevention officer, born in France to French-born parents

Charline Maurice, stale bread officer, born in France to French-born parents

Fatima Ouazzani, market vendor, born in Morocco

Hélène Jamet, housing officer, born in France to French-born parents

Issouf Tigana, property manager, born in France to Malian-born parents

Jérôme Ribeiro, butcher, born in France to French-born parents

Karim Zem, waste management officer, born in France to Moroccan-born parents

Lorraine Régnier, housing officer, born in France to French-born parents

Majid Benhenia, butcher, born in Morocco

Monique Laporte, food cooperative manager, born in France to French-born parents

Nacer Mazari, food truck manager, born in France to Algerian-born parents

Nasreddine Rezgui, social worker, born in France to Algerian-born parents

Nora Hamoud, social worker, born in France to Algerian-born parents

Patrick Chevalier, city councilor, born in France to French-born parents

Philippe Nozières, police officer, born in France to French-born parents

Veronica Bocchi, social worker, born in France to Italian-born parents

Victor Fardin, garbage collector, born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles)

Table 0.3 – Interviewed informants recruited in Goutte d'Or

Residents of Goutte d'Or

Amédée Décembre, chef, born in France to French-born parents

Angayarkanni Jayasinghe, janitor, born in Sri Lanka

Belkacem Guerroumi, incinerator operator, born in France to Algerian- and Moroccan-born parents

Diane Kanza, janitor, born in DR Congo

Fabrice Mercier, automotive engineer, born in France to French-born parents

Fouad Brakni, construction worker, born in Algeria

Françoise Lépinay, documentalist, born in France to French-born parents

Juliette Thoraval, political aide, born in France to French-born parents

Kamel Souissi, fast-food worker, born in Tunisia

Kheloudja Elfassi, homemaker, born in Morocco

Kouassi Doumbia, security guard, born in Ivory Coast

Lassana Seck, production line worker, born in Senegal

Laure Guellec, environmental engineer, born in France to French-born parents

Lisa Vincent, student, born in France to French-born parents

Manon Delhoste, student, born in France to French-born parents

Omar Amokrane, street vendor, born in Algeria

Rachida Kateb, childcare worker, born in Algeria

Rafik Mansouri, line cook, born in France to French-born parents

Raúl Paredes, food preparation worker, born in Peru

Robert Attal, professor, born in France to French-born parents

Sabri Khider, imam, born in Algeria

Safia Leroy, school aide, born in Morocco

Sassouma Koné, nurse, born in France to Malian-born parents

Séverine Huet, archivist, born in France to French-born parents

Stéphane da Silva, adult educator, born in France to Brazilian- and French-born parents

Thierry Caillet, painter, born in France to French-born parents

Véronique Chantôme, radio director, born in France to French-born parents

Virginie Monvoisin, journalist, born in France to French-born parents

Residents of other locations

Abdessalam Soukhane, mechanic, born in Algeria, resident of Clichy-sous-Bois

Boris Nzinga, street vendor, born in Cameroon, resident of the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris

Géraldine Mbarga, executive assistant, born in Cameroon, resident of Nanterre

Ibrahim Diakité, kitchen helper, born in Mali, resident of the 20th *arrondissement* of Paris

Jamal Embarek, restaurant manager, born in France to Algerian-born parents, resident of the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris

Jean-Michel Santos, IT technician, born in France to parents born in Brazil and Martinique (French Antilles), resident of the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris

Mauricette Diop, accountant, born in France to Senegalese-born parents, resident of the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris

Mourad Zaoui, street vendor, born in Algeria, resident of the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris

Nasser Arezki, retail clerk, born in Algeria, resident of Saint-Denis

Saliou Brites, hairdresser, born in Angola, resident of Courcouronnes

Professionals

Abdelghani Cherkaoui, store manager, born in France to Moroccan-born parents

Alain Eysseric, neighborhood organizer, born in France to French-born parents

Auguste Le Bihan, store manager, born in France to French-born parents

Bérangère Gauchet, economic development officer, born in France to French-born parents

Celia Caballero, public health officer, born in France to Spanish-born parents

Fabienne Dillard, local development officer, born in France to French-born parents

Louis Mansaly, store manager, born in Senegal

Mansour Thiaw, restaurant manager, born in Senegal

Nicolas Delmas, police officer, born in France to French-born parents

Olivier Ferréol, urban agriculture officer, born in France to French-born parents

Paul Hesnault, store manager, born in France to French-born parents

Valérie Giovanelli, tour guide, born in France to French-born parents

Table 0.4 – Interviewed informants recruited in Chicago

Residents

Alejandro Becerril, production line worker, born in Mexico, resident of Gage Park

Armando Flores, kitchen helper, born in Mexico, resident of Pilsen

Camila Espinosa, electrician, born in Ecuador, resident of Gage Park

Constancia Munévar, homemaker, born in Mexico, resident of Chicago Lawn

Consuelo Wolff, business assistant, born in Mexico, resident of Irving Park

Cristina Muñoz, legal assistant, born in the U.S. to Cuban- and Mexican-born parents, resident of Irving Park

David Robertson, dog groomer, born the U.S. to U.S.-born parents, resident of Pilsen (non-Hispanic white)

Elena López, bus driver, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, resident of Pilsen

Emiliano García, sheet metal worker, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, resident of Pilsen

Encarnación Márquez, church clerk, born in Mexico, resident of Pilsen

Ignacio Figueroa, food preparation worker, born in Mexico, resident of Pilsen

José Chávez, journalist, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, resident of Back of the Yards

Inmaculada González, homemaker, born in Mexico, resident of Pilsen

Karlia Habib, student, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents, resident of Pilsen (non-Hispanic white)

Laura Ramírez, student, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, resident of Pilsen

María Hernández, nurse, born in Mexico, resident of Gage Park

Marta Cárdenas, homemaker, born in Mexico, resident of Back of the Yards

Nadia Oropeza, homemaker, born in Chile, resident of Pilsen

Natalia Rodríguez, seamstress, born in Mexico, resident of Bridgeport

Nick Smith, production line worker, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents, resident of Pilsen (Native American)

Nicolás Santoyo, construction worker, born in Mexico, resident of Cicero

Pamela Bórquez, church clerk, born in Mexico, resident of Pilsen

Rubén Aceves, forklift operator, born in Mexico, resident of Cicero

Sara Hinojosa, homemaker, born in Mexico, resident of Bridgeport

Sebastián Pérez, custodian, born in Mexico, resident of Bridgeport

Susana Ortega, homemaker, resident of Bridgeport

Teresa Granados, homemaker, born in Mexico, resident of Pilsen

Professionals

Adrianna Saffold, WIC childcare worker, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (Black American)

Ana Ward, public health officer, born in the U.S. to Mexican- and U.S.-born parents

Andrew Vu, sommelier, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (Asian)

Carlos Ayala, street vendor, born in Mexico

Małgorzata Koski, WIC nutritionist, born in Poland

Elizabeth O'Neill, youth worker, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (non-Hispanic white)

Emily Plasil, WIC director of nutrition services, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (non-Hispanic white)

Eva Valdés, social worker, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents

Felipe Cáceres, WIC site director, born in Mexico

Hugo Sánchez, community organizer, born in Ecuador

Itzel Gómez, community organizer, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents

Jamila Brown, WIC site director, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (Black American)

Jane Curley, food security officer, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (non-Hispanic white)

Javier Ortiz, housing officer, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents

Jessica Wonsey, WIC site director, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (Black American)

Kali Richardson, WIC site director, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (Black American)

Laquinta Wilson, WIC security guard, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (Black American)

Marisol Araos, WIC client services coordinator, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents

Matías Cortés, WIC client services coordinator, born in Mexico

Miguel Salinas, WIC client services coordinator, born in Mexico

Mona Johnson, WIC client services coordinator, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (Black American)

Nicole Becker, church clerk, born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents (non-Hispanic white)

Paulina Covarrubias, WIC client services coordinator, born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents

5. Outline

I organize the dissertation as a set of ethnographic findings, which the reader might read in the order of their liking. I sequence them in descending level of scope, dataset usage, and length. This means, in Chapter 1 compared to Chapter 2, the argument is more expansive in scope and the analysis uses more of the dataset, hence a longer piece of writing. Then, the same goes for Chapter 2 compared to Chapter 3.

- Chapter 1: Dietary Tastes and Culinary Practices of First- and Second-Generation Immigrants in Paris and Chicago;
- Chapter 2: An Agentic Approach to Food Access and Acquisition: The Case of Mixed Neighborhoods in the Paris Metropolis;
- Chapter 3: Urbanity in Practice: Disposing Stale Bread in French *Cités* and *Villes*.

Sociologist Wendy Griswold taught me to conceive research design as a tension between general and specific questions. General questions refer to the research's broader significance. Specific questions are those that can be addressed with data. Under that conception, the remainder of this Introduction laid out the general research design. Now, for each chapter, I introduce the specific topic, question, theoretical background, findings, and analytical design.

5. 1. Topics

The research topic is the creation of quotidian judgements and practices related to food,

amid the enduring social and spatial stratification of everyday life. Specifically, Chapter 1 documents dietary tastes and culinary practices. Chapter 2 analyzes perceptions of food access and acquisition practices. Chapter 3 inquires into stale bread disposal practices.

5. 2. Questions and Theoretical Backgrounds

The dissertation's guiding question is: How do people create quotidian judgements and practices related to food? Specifically, Chapter 1 formulates the question: How do immigrants and their children create dietary tastes and culinary practices for themselves? To address it, my analysis centers on immigrants and their children as creative agents endowed with personal experience of various cultural contexts. In developing it, I am inspired by three theoretical insights in research on food and immigration: the immigrant nutritional paradox, the reinvention of food traditions, and the deromanticization of culinary authenticity.

Chapter 2 formulates the question: How do urban residents access and acquire food? I use an agentic approach, deriving from the frameworks of food deserts and oases. Instead of centering on neighborhoods and their socioeconomic characteristics and retail food environment, this approach centers on residents and their perceptions of food environments, dispositions toward mobility and proximity, and acquisition practices.

Chapter 3 starts by framing stale bread disposal practices as a research and social problem alike. It is a research problem: in *cités*, most residents toss stale bread in the garbage, others hang it in plastic bags on railings, and others litter it on the ground with any trash.

However, in *villes*, all residents toss bread in the garbage, even under similar individual characteristics. It is a social problem: for *cités* residents, stale bread in collective spaces is an environmental nuisance. To solve that twofold problem, I formulate the question: How does urbanity – a set of environmental, cultural, and interactional characteristics of an urban context – shape practice, that is, behaviors with objects grounded in living conditions? To address it, I document *cités* residents' perceptions of tossing, hanging, and littering. I explain that *cités* and *villes* residents craft similar practices with fresh bread because their living conditions are similar, and that their practices with stale bread differ owing to differences in urbanity.

5. 3. Findings

Chapter 1 finds that in Paris and Chicago alike, first- and second-generation immigrants recraft their judgement of the good quotidian diet as simple cooking using fresh produce. They share a taste for freshness and naturalness, craft quotidian culinary practices that they qualify as simple, and observe and appreciate commonalities and singularities between the cuisines of the various countries they have lived in and the cuisines of their fellow immigrant groups.

Chapter 2 finds that in mixed neighborhoods in Paris, first- and second-generation immigrants perceive the metropolis as a rich and diverse food environment, whereas natives perceive their neighborhood as a food-deficient environment. First- and second-generation immigrants endow mobility with self-efficacy, whereas natives construct proximity as a moral value. The acquisition practices of first- and second-generation

immigrants consider price and types of foods; they span the metropolis. Those of natives consider types of foods; they center on their neighborhood of residence.

Chapter 3 finds that in *cités*, most residents toss stale bread in the garbage, others hang it in plastic bags on railings, and others litter it on the ground with any trash. In *villes*, all residents toss bread in the garbage. Residents of *cités* and *villes* have similar practices with fresh bread. However, residents hang or litter stale bread in *cités* and not in *villes* because of differences in urbanity. Specifically, three characteristics of *cités*' urbanity are: (1) unused spaces that I call edge spaces, (2) a collective sentiment that I call communal pessimism, and (3) a binary opposition of communality vs. estrangement in residents' perceptions of spaces, uses of spaces, and interactions. Ultimately, residents who hang perform communality, residents who litter reflect feelings of estrangement, and residents who toss voice estranging judgements toward those who hang or litter.

5. 4. Analytical Designs

For each chapter, I outline the analytical design: the sites and groups specified as cases of study, the spatial scales defined as levels of analysis, and the characteristics considered as varying or held constant.

Chapter 1 studies the case of first- and second-generation immigrants in Paris and Chicago. The analytical levels are the cities and countries wherein these first- and second-generation immigrants currently live. Held constant is that they share a personal and

familial history of immigration, and a situation of living in large and diverse cities and countries. Varying is whether they live in Paris (France) or in Chicago (United States).

Chapter 2 studies the case of residents of mixed neighborhoods in the Paris metropolis. The analytical levels are neighborhoods within the same city. Held constant is that these residents live in socially mixed environments. Varying is whether they are first- and second-generation immigrants or natives.

Chapter 3 studies the cases of *cités* and *villes*. The analytical levels are urban environments within the same national urban society. Held constant is that both urban environments are singular to the French urban society. Varying is their urbanity.

Chapter 1: Dietary Tastes and Culinary Practices of First- and Second-Generation Immigrants in Paris and Chicago

1. Introduction

How do first- and second-generation immigrants – as people with experience of various cultural contexts – create dietary tastes and culinary practices for themselves? This question has been documented by three sets of insights in research on food and immigration. First is epidemiological evidence of an “immigrant health paradox”. In countries of the Global North, immigrants fare better than natives in a variety of health outcomes (including dietary patterns and nutrition-related outcomes) despite facing numerous systemic barriers to social integration (Markides and Rote, 2015). I call that insight “the immigrant nutritional paradox”. Second is sociological and anthropological research inquiring into the conservation of traditional dietary tastes and culinary practices. Immigrants endow food with emotional connection to their heritage while managing the constraints and opportunities of everyday life in countries of destination. I call that insight “the reinvention of food traditions”. At the same time, scholars contest primordialist, passéist notions of food traditionalism, considering processes of nutrition transition and globalization of food systems in countries of emigration. I call that caveat “the deromanticization of culinary authenticity”.

1. 1. The Immigrant Nutritional Paradox

In France, nationally representative epidemiological surveys find that Maghrebi

immigrants have dietary practices consistent with the Mediterranean diet, which nutrition research has proven to be healthy (Darmon and Khat, 2001; Kamoun et al., 2013). They score higher than natives in indicators of dietary adequacy (i.e., sufficient intake of essential nutrients), variety, and moderation. Relatedly, they have lower mortality and morbidity rates for diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs): cardiovascular diseases, hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, overweight, and type-2 diabetes (Méjean et al., 2007). In a dietary survey among clients of an immigration agency, two out of three respondents consume fish products at least twice a week (Miszkwicz et al., 2017).

In the United States, a survey among low-income women in Iowa documents that compared to bicultural and non-Hispanic white women, less acculturated Latinas consume beans more often, prefer dry to canned, buy in bulk, value color and shape in produce selection, and hold less positive attitudes toward canned beans (Winham et al., 2019). Similarly, a survey on fruit and vegetable intake among participants of a food assistance program finds that Latinos consume cooked beans more often than non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic white Americans (DiNoia et al., 2016). In a survey among Mexican American women living in Texas *colonias*, U.S.-born women consume more fast food and soft drinks than their Mexican-born counterparts (Sharkey et al., 2011). Among Mexican American mother-child (aged 7 to 13) dyads in Southern California, having an assimilated versus a bicultural child is negatively associated with mothers' vegetable intake and positively associated with mothers' soft drink intake, energy obtained from fat, and frequency of eating out, regardless of mothers' acculturation (Soto et al., 2017). In a population-based study among Latinos, bicultural children (aged 8 to 16) score higher in indicators of whole-grain intake than assimilated

children (i.e., whose cultural orientation is mostly American) and lower in intake of sodium and empty calories (Arandia et al., 2018).

A nationally representative survey finds that Mexican immigrants who came to the United States in adulthood (ages 25 and older) have healthier diets than those who migrated in early and middle childhood (ages 2 to 11) (Van Hook et al., 2018). Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans consume less ready-to-eat, fast-food, frozen, and pizza meals than their English-speaking counterparts, and spend more time on food preparation (Langellier et al., 2015). Similarly, foreign-born Latinas spend more time on food preparation than their U.S.-born counterparts (Sliwa et al., 2015). Foreign-born Latinos obtain more energy from fruits, legumes, and low-fat, high-fiber breads than U.S.-born Latinos, and less energy from fast food, snacks, and desserts (Duffey et al., 2008). Lastly, Latinas fare better in birth outcomes than other ethnic and racial groups, all sociodemographic characteristics being equal (in particular, education and poverty). This is also the case of foreign-born Latinas compared to their U.S.-born counterparts. A qualitative study finds out two factors for that phenomenon: healthy, homemade diets using minimally processed foods, alongside continuous and comprehensive social support (Hopkins et al., 2018).

1. 2. The Reinvention of Food Traditions

Manuel Calvo (1997) identifies a tension between “active conservatism” and “creative innovation” in the culinary practices of sub-Saharan African immigrants in France. An example is the creation of “procedures of ingredient substitutions.” For the main dishes, they substitute traditional staple foods (like cassava, corn, *fonio*, millet, sorghum, taro,

and yam) and homemade processing practices (like doughs, flours, and sticks) by convenient foods like wheat semolina, potato flakes, and starch. For the sauces, they use leaf or frozen spinach as substitutes for leaves of African eggplants, African nightshades, amaranth, baobab, cassava, okra, sorrel, and sweet potatoes. Likewise, immigrants from northern Senegal in Mantes-la-Jolie (western suburbs of Paris) “reinvent their culinary art” around sharing meals and naming produce, tastes, and dishes. This set of practices helps them “renew their roots in a different cultural environment” (Sall, 2010). For teenage children of Turkish immigrants in Eastern France, food permits “constant experimentation”. These bicultural teenagers enjoy mixing dishes which they identify as French or Turkish (Soyturk, 2010). From school-based fieldwork, Christine Tichit (2012) reveals the emergence of class tastes in the dietary preferences of children of immigrants. The tastes that these schoolchildren express individually (in interview settings) and collectively (in classroom settings) reflect first and foremost their family's social class, hence forming a social rather than cultural distinction.

Luz Arenas Monreal and co-authors (2013) interview returnee women living in rural areas of Morelos (south-central Mexico). When in the United States, while continuing to cook traditional Mexican dishes, these immigrant women integrated American foods into their culinary repertoire, depending on structural factors like disposable income and food access. Likewise, a study among returnee rural women in the border city of Tijuana highlights changes in food acquisition and domestic food work (Bojorquez et al., 2018). In migrating from rural to urban areas, these women substitute self-produced foods for purchased options and occasionally consume new foods and dishes. In addition, labor force participation is associated with increased consumption of ready-to-eat foods.

Wesley Dean and co-authors (2010) identify a tension between “maintenance” and “reinvention of tradition” in the food practices of Mexican Americans in central Texas. Joining the labor force and experiencing a new food system provide “structural barriers and opportunities to the reformation of the cultural tools,” then enacted in food practices. In the face of gendered, economic, and racialized domination, isolation, and vulnerability, Mexican immigrant women in Texas *colonias* endow food preparation with personal empowerment and familial well-being (Sukovic et al., 2011). Latin American immigrants in San Francisco perform identity through the shared concept and practice of *comiendo bien* (“eating well”), fostering cultural uplift (Martínez, 2016). *Comiendo bien* is defined as a negotiation between discourses of nourishment (supplying the body with nutrients) and satisfaction (fulfilling symbolic, material, and embodied desires) (Martínez, 2015). Likewise, Mexican immigrant women in New York prioritize cooking homemade family meals, remembering features of their everyday life back in Mexico: experiences with food insecurity, agricultural knowledge, and traditional foods and flavors (McClain et al., 2019).

1. 3. The Deromanticization of Culinary Authenticity

Now, documenting practices that reinvent traditions does not entail the assumption that immigration would degrade authenticity in food practice. Consider the case of Mexico – officially, the United Mexican States, and actually, a pretty big country with rich and diverse regional cuisines. Historians reveal that since independence (in 1821), the very concept of Mexican cuisine has been politicized. National leaders have promoted regional

dishes like *mole poblano* (from the state of Puebla) as unifying national symbols (Juárez López, 2008; Pilcher, 1998; Wilk, 2019). In the United States, historians document instances of the American mainstream picking one aspect of immigrant cuisines and representing it as the epitome of that cuisine. A famous case is chop suey, touted as a token of Chinese cuisine in American popular culture but largely unheard of in China and even among Chinese Americans (Mendelson, 2016). Similarly, *burrito* is identified as Mexican in the United States but distinguished as *norteño* (from the northern state of Sonora) in Mexico. Numerous local varieties of *burrito* across the American Southwest (e.g., with French fries and cheddar) are unheard of in Mexico (Arellano, 2012).

Moreover, both Mexico and Latin America (Rivera et al., 2004) and Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa (Vorster et al., 2011) are undergoing a nutrition transition. Due to processes of globalization and development, dietary energy density generally increases (more fat, salt, and caloric sweeteners, less fiber), resulting in higher prevalence of NCDs, and even before the battle against undernutrition has been won. The nutrition transition thus places a double burden on the public health systems of the Global South: solving undernutrition and curbing overnutrition. The proportion of energy obtained from the consumption of meat and vegetable oils is increasing in Middle Eastern and North African countries (Golzarand et al., 2012); so is the available energy supply in most sub-Saharan African countries (Steyn and Mchiza, 2014). A comparative analysis of nationally representative nutrition surveys in Mexico and the United States finds that Americans continue to consume more saturated fat, sugar, sweet and salty snacks, pizza, and French fries than Mexicans (Batis et al., 2011). Still, from 1984 to 2014 in Mexico, there has been an increase in household expenditure on non-alcoholic beverages,

processed foods, and commercially prepared foods, and a decrease in expenditure on fruits and vegetables (García Montoya and Ramos Tovar, 2017). From 1990 to 2013, excess energy intake has been mostly obtained from the consumption of meat and sugar (Hernández Ramírez and Ortega Canto, 2016). In an interview-based study, Latin American immigrants who lived in urban areas back in their home countries and migrated to the United States after 2000 already had “unhealthy” dietary practices prior to migration, like eating out and consuming processed foods (Martínez, 2013).

1. 4. Centering on First- and Second-Generation Immigrants as Creative Agents

Considering those insights, how to investigate the link between food and immigration? Rather than focusing on immigrants' dietary “adaptation” to destination countries, Chantal Crenn and co-authors (2010) suggest looking into their practices when visiting family back home. In doing so, empirical studies can unravel processes of food enculturation between migrant and sedentary groups in countries of emigration – instead of trying to discern the authentic cuisines of the Global South. For instance, in Madagascar throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods, elites displayed a Francophile orientation and adopted food practices identified as French as means of distinction within the Madagascan society. In France, though, migrant members of that same elite value Madagascan cuisine as a marker of cultural identity (Crenn and Téhoueyres, 2010).

Relatedly, one could force the first two insights into hypothetical frameworks addressing acculturation and assimilation. Per the immigrant nutritional paradox, dietary patterns would reveal beneficial effects of lack of acculturation. Per the reinvention of food

traditions, food practices would facilitate cultural uplift and safety from externally enforced demands for assimilation. However, those frameworks could end up centering perspectives and concerns proper to destination societies, underlying insensitive questions like: How well could lack of acculturation work? How could lack of assimilation prove positive?

Rather, and reassured that the notion of authenticity in food practice is to be (con)tested rather than assumed, I suggest centering on first- and second-generation immigrants as creative agents endowed with personal experience of various cultural contexts. They can create dietary tastes and culinary practices for themselves by pondering commonalities and singularities between the food of their youth, the food of the various places they have lived in, the food of the people in their life, and the like.

The analysis finds a consistent similarity: first- and second-generation immigrants in Paris and in Chicago recraft their judgement of the good quotidian diet as simple cooking using fresh produce. I reach this theoretical insight via extensive description and interpretation. First, I describe a shared taste for freshness and naturalness. Second, I show how first- and second-generation immigrants craft quotidian culinary practices that they qualify as simple. Third, I document their perceptions of commonalities and singularities between the cuisines of the various countries they have lived in and the cuisines of fellow immigrant groups. I conclude by discussing the significance of these findings for emerging research on immigrants' environmental values, knowledge, and behavior. I also put the immigrant judgement of the good quotidian diet into perspective with French and American dietary guidelines.

2. Consuming Fresh Produce

In Paris and in Chicago, first- and second-generation immigrants share a taste for fresh produce, dialectically related to a distaste for canned, frozen, processed, and commercially prepared foods. They see four benefits of consuming fresh produce: flavor, health, strength, and discipline. They identify freshness and naturalness using visual and emotional skills, learned from tradition and life experience.

2. 1. Taste

2. 1. 1. Defining Fresh Produce

How do informants define fresh produce? The term produce features four food groups qualified as natural: fruits, vegetables, meat, and fish. Fresh means freshly acquired by consumers and freshly harvested, slaughtered, and captured by producers. In elaborating these definitions, informants draw from traditional agricultural knowledge. Those from rural areas, in particular, evoke vivid childhood memories. Souleymane Faye, a food preparation worker, was born and raised in rural Upper Casamance (southern Senegal). He remembers the food of his childhood: “All the food, it's fresh. No cans. Meat is fresh. Fish is fresh. We don't even know about frozen stuff. Always, what we eat, it's fresh. That's it.” Omar Amokrane, a street vendor, described the farm in Kabylie (northern Algeria) where he was born and raised: “My garden, there were potatoes, carrots, salads. All the vegetables. No chemicals! My mother used to cook everything, everything. For the milk, we had two cows. (pauses) Everything!” These immigrants from rural areas regret that

the fresh produce available in France is less “natural,” in containing more “chemicals”.

Consider the acquisition and consumption practices of meat and fish crafted by first- and second-generation immigrants from Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa in Paris. Concerning meat, Majid Benhenia, a butcher in Aulnay-Nord, reported that the meat he sells the most is chicken, because it is the cheapest. Customers of Maghrebi heritage prefer ground meat and lamb, whereas customers of sub-Saharan African heritage prefer sheep. I observed that informants use fresh cuts and offal (veal feet, oxtails, livers) rather than ground meat as dish ingredients, and frozen patties as ingredients of bases for dishes in sauce. Concerning fish, informants of sub-Saharan African heritage observe that in their home region, inhabitants of coastal countries consume fresh fish, whereas those of landlocked countries consume salted and dried fish. When in Paris, these first- and second-generation immigrants consume both imported and local fish species: African catfish, black carp, bream, John Dory, Nile perch, Senegalese bass, tilapia, and tuna as dish ingredients, and smoked Nile perch and ray wings as sauce ingredients. Concerning imported fish, informants do not acquire it fresh (which would be too expensive) but in big boxes of frozen produce. For example, the price-quantity combination most often sold by Auguste Le Bihan, who runs a store in the sub-Saharan African cluster of Château Rouge, is “four kilos of fish for 10 euros”.

In valuing fresh produce as direct products of nature and agriculture, informants have a fondness for straight-from-the-farm sales modes. Teresa Granados, a Mexican-born homemaker, likes a live poultry market in her home neighborhood of Pilsen: “There's Western Live Poultry that sells living chicken. They're fresh, you see. You choose your

chicken and they kill it there.” In Paris, informants make arrangements within groups of friends, neighbors, or relatives. Someone in the group travels to a farm or a slaughterhouse in the outer suburbs and acquires whole animals (beef, chicken, lamb, mutton), fresh eggs, and raw milk; then, everyone pays its share. Likewise, on weekends, residents of the *foyer de travailleurs migrants* (hereinafter referred to as *foyer*) in Aulnay-Nord organize deliveries of whole mutton from a farm. For context, in France, *foyers de travailleurs migrants* (FTM) are migrant worker hostels built by the government in the postwar period (APUR, 2011). Their original goals were twofold: providing housing for single male migrant workers in times of mass labor migration and housing shortage, and monitoring a population deemed suspect in times of struggle for decolonization (Sayad, 2006: 81-129).

2. 1. 2. *Emic Fresh Produce, Etic Organic Standards*

How does the emic concept of fresh produce compare to etic organic standards? For informants, fresh produce is by definition organic. I did mention the term “organic” in interviews, in hopes for eliciting information on their definitions of it. Their responses usually referred to those “natural,” “flavorful” foods, free from “chemicals,” and, in the French context, typically available at markets. Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, pondered that chemicals make “the plant grows,” but at the cost of its “flavor”. Diane Kanza, a Congolese-born janitor, gave the example of fish: “All the fishes, all of them, it's organic. There aren't acids, there aren't chemicals in there.” Olivier Maximin, a tile installer born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles), outlined why he likes the market of Aulnay-Nord: “Everything's cheap and everything's fresh! It's not organic, it's fresh.

Carrots, potatoes...” I probed: “It's not organic, it's fresh?” He specified: “Yes. It comes from the earth!”

Thus, most informants do not find meaning or interest in organic produce. Fresh produce is naturally organic: however labeled or commodified, it comes from nature – flora and fauna, land and sea – and nothing else matters. Jacques Okoundji, a Congolese-born production line worker, stated it simply: “It's the same tree that produces the different fruits.” Produce sold as organic and produce sold as conventional “are the same things,” as I repeatedly heard. Organic produce is more expensive to boot; thus, it is not worth it. Now, some informants did say that “organic” equates to “natural” and contradicts “mass-produced”. Still, they also mentioned that organic produce is too expensive; they would buy organic if they had more disposable income.

2. 2. Distastes

The taste for fresh produce is dialectically related to a distaste for canned, frozen, processed, and commercially prepared foods.

2. 2. 1. Canned and Frozen Foods

Informants have three problems with frozen foods. First, foods that have been frozen are, by definition, not fresh: they are further from harvest, slaughter, and capture, and further from acquisition. Rubén Aceves, a Mexican-born forklift operator, told of her wife, a Guatemalan-born homemaker: “My wife doesn't like to keep frozen meat for a long time.

She likes it fresh. So, for example, we go once a week or every other week for both turkey and ham to make sandwiches, depending on how much we use.”

Second, freezing makes it difficult to identify freshness and naturalness. Victor Fardin, a garbage collector born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles), commented: “I like to know what I bought. Because if it's not good shit, I don't take it. If you buy it frozen, you don't know what you're buying. Whereas at the fish shop you see the fish. You see if it's fresh or if it's not fresh.” Then, Mr. Fardin outlined his process of acquiring fish. At the fish shop, he chooses the produce, ascertaining whether it has been properly cleaned, boned, and prepared. At home, he cuts, puts in small packets, and stores in the freezer.

Third, consuming frozen food is antithetical to cooking. Géraldine Mbarga, a Cameroonian-born executive assistant, pits the “natural” foods she cooks against the “frozen” foods of “whites” who do not care.

GM: Buying meat at the supermarket, really, it's the whites who do that. You'll never see a Black woman, an African, do that. Perhaps the person didn't want a lot. She wanted two kilos or one kilo to make the food right here, not have to cook. She doesn't want to move, perhaps laziness... But what's at the supermarket, Dia, Monoprix, Leader, Franprix [supermarket chains], all of that: it's the whites who buy, you see. All of that, it's the whites who buy, and it's much more expensive.

CF: Because whites...

GM: Well, the way they like meat, they take it in small trays, there, the packaging. This, this is for you, this is not for us. For us it's in Château Rouge! (laughs)

CF: (laughs)

In addition, informants manifest a trenchant distaste for canned foods. Sara Hinojosa, a Mexican-born homemaker, complained of food pantries: “They give canned food and I don't like cans: I consume fresh produce.” First, informants are suspicious of safety. Fatiha El Filali, a Moroccan-born nursing assistant, alerts that cans can carry “illnesses”. Second, canned foods are unhealthy. Ignacio Figueroa, a Mexican-born food preparation worker, relies on pantries for some of his dietary needs – one in Pilsen where he lives and another one at Northeastern Illinois University where he studies. He has mixed feelings about it: “The pantry is a salvation. But you just can't live your entire life on it. It's unhealthy: it's pasta, canned food... I thank them with all of my heart, but...” Indeed, for example, the items supplied by a food pantry in Pilsen where I volunteered were: breakfast cereal, canned beans and chickpeas, canned pears and pineapple, enriched white pasta, fortified water, grape juice, peanut butter, raisins, and tomato sauce.

Instead of canned produce, informants acquire dry legumes (black beans, chickpeas, fava beans, kidney beans, lentils) and prepare them their own way, with their favorite spices. Wahiba Hammouche, an Algerian-born homemaker, walked me through the preparation of fava beans from the pod to the table: “I buy fresh beans. I cut, I boil, I cook with cumin. It's very good!” Among informants of Mexican heritage, the prime example is *frijoles* (refried beans): they reject canned black beans and prefer to prepare from fresh beans. At church in Pilsen, two Mexican-born women emphasized that *frijoles* can be well preserved without canning:

- A pot of *frijoles* does last long.
- You cook them with eggs.
- A lot of people now use cans.
- Oh no, cans, personally, I can't.
- Oh, and by our own people [of Mexican heritage]... I can't believe it.

In the end, informants pit fresh, home-prepared foods, against canned, ready-made foods. Below is the transcript of a conversation about beans between Kandia Dabo and Kadiatou Sidibé, while they were enjoying summertime on the *foyer* terrace in Aulnay-Nord. Both are students and born in France to Malian-born parents. They were visiting their cousin, Ganda Bathily, a Malian-born street vendor who lives in the *foyer*. Ms. Dabo, who had just left the parental home, was telling Ms. Sidibé about her new life as an independent person. They concurred on the rejection of cans and discussed on preparation techniques:

KD: My mom just gave me a bag of chicken. I like meat a lot. I bought vegetables, carrots... It's the end of the month; it's a bit difficult.

KS: Do you know [inaudible – name of a store]? It's cheap.

KD: Oh yes, it's cheap! I bought my cooking pot there. 12 euros the pot. I bought my frying pan there too. I will see if they have pressure cookers. Because pressure cookers, oh! How expensive they are!

KS: Ah, in ceramic, it's annoying. It takes a lot of time to heat.

KD: Oh no, I won't buy it in ceramic. I'll buy the old-style cookers, like those of grandmas. Because yesterday I made kidney beans, and it really is one hour of cooking when you have a pressure cooker. But in my cooking pot, it took two

hours and a half. Kidney beans, white beans... Either way, it's a matter of being patient. You put two packs of white beans and a liter and a half of water. Then when it turns into cream, it means that it's cooked. The day before, you soak them for 12 hours. This means, you soak them at midnight and if it's for noon it's good.

KS: But what if you buy the beans in cans?

KD: Oh, it's not the same, you know. One day [my boyfriend] bought a can of *chili con carne*. But that's for the end of the month! You know, you're keeping some cans just in case for the end of the month! (laughs) It's been two months, three months that I've been keeping cans. Canned kidney beans, it really is for the Romani. [Ms. Dabo mentions the Romani – an ethnic group disproportionately affected by extreme poverty – as a metonym to refer to people facing food insecurity.] We don't normally eat that.

2. 2. 2. *Processed Foods*

Informants' beef with processed foods is their “grease” (oils, fats) and “sugar” content. Those foods do not supply proper nourishment, whereas fresh produce is food that does feed. Sirimavo Lakshani, a Sri Lankan-born janitor, described the dishes she usually cooks from meat and vegetables, specifying for each: “not too much oil”. Therefore, processed foods make up a well-defined list with two controlled uses. First, informants enjoy disclosing favorite indulgences, like: “Bolognese chips,” “plaited brioche from Monoprix [supermarket chain],” “lemonade,” “Coca-Cola,” “Nutella,” “Choco Prince cookies [in France, popular brand of chocolate cream filled biscuits]”. Second, processed foods are special treats for special occasions, like giving pleasure to loved ones. I asked

Wassila Khezzar, a Moroccan-born server, what she would do if she had more money, and she contemplated: “If I had the means, I would give my neighbors bottles of lemonade, all kinds of cookies, dates...”

Either way – indulgence or special occasion – the acquisition and consumption of processed foods is dependent on the availability of disposable income. It is not at all a substitute for the quotidian diet. This form of economic rationality reminds the concepts of “multiple monies” by economic sociologist Viviana Zelizer (2005) [1994] and of “special purpose money” by anthropologist Paul Bohannan (1955). This means, people do not perceive money as neutral or uniform. Instead, they distinguish different forms of money, which they assign to different consumption items. Below are fieldnotes on a food pantry organized by a social center in Aulnay-Nord. For context, in France, social centers (*centres sociaux*) are neighborhood organizations providing social, cultural, and educational activities. Clients were buying fruits and vegetables without reservation or hesitation. But they were much more guarded about baked goods.

At the social center's sports hall, tables are placed in a U-shape with traffic barriers in the middle. On the right side, bottled water, fruits and vegetables, and yogurts. At the back, baked goods and grains. All items were donated by Carrefour, a local hypermarket. They are unsellable but suitable for consumption. On the left side, clothes and books donated by neighborhood residents, and the checkout. Items are sold at round prices from 50 cents to two euros (in all instances, much below market prices) and indicated by fluorescent labels. The takings fund the social center's activities.

The water bottles are deformed. The desserts (chocolate *mousse* and plain yogurt) are expiring today. The grains are in packages with holes in them (rice and sugar) or that have been opened (semolina, breakfast cookies, and pasta). The fruits and vegetables are very ripe (bananas, cucumbers, mushrooms, parsley, peaches, potatoes, radishes, strawberries, and zucchini). There are also bottles of fresh squeezed fruit juices and baskets of ready-to-cook stir-fry vegetables expiring today.

The baked goods are one day past the sell-by date. Bread: *baguettes*, country bread, seeded bread, sesame bread, and white bread. Pastries: apple turnovers, apricot *croissants*, chocolate *brioche*, chocolate chip cookies, chocolate choux buns, chocolate croissants, and raisin rolls. Savory snacks: olive pizza.

The table with fruits and vegetables clears out quickly. Clients help themselves unhesitatingly, without directing questions or concerns to Besma Cherki and Émilie Letexier, who monitor the table. By contrast, at the table with baked goods, which I am in charge, many clients ask that I confirm prices.

At the end, the only leftovers are three pizzas. Zoubida Ferradj suggests giving them away to the young men exercising at the gym next door: “Pizzas: these are for the young people!” She opens the door and says: “Eh, Nabil, do you want a pizza?” A young man in a blue tracksuit comes at her: “Oh, thanks Zoubida!”

2. 2. 3. *Commercially Prepared Foods*

Informants criticize dining establishments (restaurants and school cafeterias alike) for serving processed foods. Concerning school lunches, two Mexican-born women I meet at

church in Pilsen cite “pizzas, hamburgers, French fries... pure junk food”. As an alternative, they provide their children with healthy-while-convenient foods, like “granola bars and fruit snacks”. Relatedly, “greasiness” – or lack thereof – is the chief preference in eating out decisions. Thierry Jougon, a retail clerk born in Martinique (French Antilles), observed: “For fish, you can go to Quick or McDonald's and have a fish sandwich. But when cooked this way [fried and breaded], the fish loses lots of vitamins. It should be fresh.” A Mexican-born informant I met at a community organization in Pilsen voiced opposition to a plan for a Taco Bell establishment. For context, in the United States, Taco Bell is a Mexican-inspired fast-food restaurant chain. “Taco Bell is bad, it's very greasy. Their meat is so greasy. You put a towel and all the grease exudes.” I asked: “Are there any other places where the meat is good and not greasy?” He replied instantly: “At home! Because when you prepare chicken like homemade chicken, it doesn't get greasy, since it's homemade.” Likewise, below is a transcript of a conversation between two bus operators, commenting on the restaurants they were driving across:

September 22nd, 2015, 2 a.m. The night bus N140 (Charles de Gaulle airport to Gare de l'Est) is zooming around the cities of Aulnay-sous-Bois and Le Blanc-Mesnil at great speed. It is silent inside, since most passengers (young and middle-aged men) are dozing. By contrast, the two operators (one driver and one fare collector) are chatting enthusiastically, in French enriched with Arabic phrases. With *Eid al-Adha* starting tomorrow, the conversation focuses on food. Outside, all few establishments still open are *kebab* shops. The driver comments: “Ah, this Greek [alternative name for *kebab*] sandwich shop is really great, *mashallah*

[literally, “God has willed” – Islamic expression of appreciation for a happening or a person]! Not too greasy, really good, really great.”

Informants also voice a general distrust of restaurants. They suspect that restaurateurs do not use fresh produce, and from there, accuse them of caring about easy money more than work well done – hospitality, in the noble sense of the term. Safia Leroy, a Moroccan-born school aide, regrets not finding any good Maghrebi restaurants in Goutte d'Or, deeming that their food is flavorless. She suspects: “Really, in Maghrebi cuisine the spice is saffron, and saffron is very expensive. I think that they use colorants, because saffron should give taste.” She accuses: “Their goal is to sell and to gather up money.”

Furthermore, informants accuse restaurants of general carelessness regarding food quality and safety. Marta Cárdenas, a Mexican-born homemaker, exposed: “The food of your house isn't the same as the one of a restaurant, because the food of your house is healthier, cleaner.” In Paris, informants frequently describe *kebab* shops as “not very clean,” in an understatement. Immigrant women from Maghreb blame Maghrebi fast casual restaurants favored by (single) immigrant men for their lack of hygiene, sometimes resulting in pains and illnesses. Such has been the fate of Rachida Kateb's husband: “My husband was sick, you know, before knowing me. He had stomach surgery because he was eating crap! Because he was single, he was eating whatever. One day it was hurting a lot, he had emergency surgery, you see. Since he's with me, he's been fine, his stomach is doing well! (laughs)”

Informants thus patronize select restaurants, which succeeded in earning their trust. They

could see and evaluate that the cooking staff does a good job, concluding: “There, it’s clean.” Safia Leroy, a Moroccan-born school aide, told of her favorite *kebab* shop: “I can’t eat a *kebab* anywhere else, because him / it, we know him / it. [Ms. Leroy used the French pronoun *lui*, which, in this context, can refer equally to the shop (it), and to the manager (him).]” Fatiha El Filali, a Moroccan-born nursing assistant, praised the manager of her favorite *kebab* shop: “He respects young people. He prepares the meal deliciously. He welcomes us well, we trust each other.”

In this regard, a remarkable phenomenon are mellow men’s memories of eating out in Aulnay-Nord. These men in their thirties and forties remember that when they were young, they had access to “natural” options for eating out, like sandwiches with eggs, tuna, and vegetables. Indulgent options were only available in Paris, like hamburgers, *merguez* sandwiches, and *kebab* sandwiches. (*Merguez* are spicy lamb- or beef-based sausages, originally from Maghreb and popular in France as well.) In that context, eating out was quite the event: a true adventure, involving a journey back and forth from the nearby *RER* station (*Réseau Express Régional* [“Regional Express Network”] is the public transportation network connecting Paris and the suburbs) to either Châtelet – Les Halles (central transit node of the Paris metropolis) or Gare du Nord (major train station in the 18th *arrondissement*). That time was in the last century and is forever lost. Today, young men routinely eat *kebab* sandwiches in the neighborhood, from a variety of brick-and-mortar stores and food trucks. The first set of fieldnotes below is a snapshot of a buzzing food truck, giving the reader a glimpse into the eating out practices of young men of Aulnay-Nord in the 21st century. Next, I select three sets of fieldnotes evoking nostalgic, smitten memories of late adolescence and early adulthood in the 20th century.

Cramped in a sandwich truck decorated with logos of Paris Saint-Germain (soccer club), Nacer Mazari and Ahmed Baddou move back and forth grills, fryers, piles of buns, packs of meat, bags of frozen chips, fridges of soft drinks, and trays of tomatoes, lettuce, and onions. Every day from 8 p.m. to 3 a.m., Mr. Mazari and Mr. Baddou cater to a mostly young, male customer base, in a steady rhythm of order preparations, phone calls, handshakes, “*salam*,” (Arabic greeting – literally, “peace”) “hi,” “good evening,” laughs, and chatter. Customers weave in and out the high-rises, walking or driving. Few consume on site, but everyone takes the time to connect with each other and with Mr. Mazari and Mr. Baddou. It is almost 3 a.m.; Mr. Mazari’s oil-stained hoodie, sweating forehead and tired eyes indicate the end of the shift. He takes a break by my side, soon interrupted by a phone call. “Ahmed, a leg of lamb, please!” Then, he explains: “Customers call me on the phone. We prepare the order; they come and pick it up. You want to know what type of customers, you mean, what race, what age?” I say: “Yes, the people who come here.” “Well it’s mostly young men. There’re also girls, there’re also couples. Sometimes there’re older people too, they don’t want to cook, they order from us. Like, we have a grandpa, in the high-rise across the parking lot. He orders from us quite often.” Mr. Mazari attributes the success of his fast-food truck to its variety of meat options: “We have a lot of choice meat-wise: leg of lamb, chicken...” I asked which one he recommends, and he enthusiastically said: “The leg of lamb is the best!”

Karim Zem and Pascal Diatta chat in their shared office in the Department of Sanitation at the City of Aulnay-sous-Bois. Both men were born and raised in Aulnay-Nord to immigrant parents from Morocco and Senegal, respectively. Mr. Zem remembers: “When we wanted a hamburger, we had to go to McDonald's... in Paris!” Mr. Diatta adds: “Or, when we wanted to eat out, we used to go the Tunisian guy in the neighborhood. It was eggs and tuna; there were no deep-fried ingredients.” Those neighborhood establishments offered fast food options that were made on-site using fresh produce.

On a summer's evening on the central plaza, Jean Ndoulou, a Congolese-born street vendor, narrates: “We would go there [to Paris] for French fries with *merguez*. The fries, the guy would give you the entire tray from the fryer! And, those were homemade fries with real potatoes: you could see that he had them cut in a bucket of water. You would tell your order, bingo! He would take them from the bucket, fill up the tray, and bingo! He would take them out and give them to you with the *merguez*. Imagine, the entire tray, I mean! As if you were eating an entire pack of frozen fries! But in general, we would share them, and we wouldn't eat them on the spot. There was a huge line: that place was known across the suburbs. So, we would walk with our fries toward Châtelet. And even when reaching Châtelet, we had so many fries we hadn't finished the basket. They were Tunisian, the people who ran the place. By the way, I walked past it not too long ago. It's still a fast-food restaurant but not with the same quantities... and not with the same price.” Omar Niang, a restaurant manager born in France to Senegalese-born parents, specifies: “Oh yes, back in the days it was 10 francs, and 11 francs

with a drink.” Boun Yang, a Laotian-born shipping clerk, adds: “Well, the can wasn't real Coca-Cola... But imagine, what a price!”

Sitting on a bench in the park, Thierry Jougon, a retail clerk born in Martinique (French Antilles), remembers: “When I was young, eating *merguez* with French fries at Gare du Nord was (emphatic tone) the thing. Someone would tell you: ‘Where're you going out?’ ‘To Paris.’ ‘Doing what?’ ‘Buying a Greek sandwich!’ Once in Gare du Nord, you would get out the train and climb up the stairs. Once at the top there's a first exit, and in front of it, a Greek shop. 10 francs the Greek sandwich at the time. Two euros, I mean! We would take the train just to eat a Greek sandwich at Gare du Nord. It was a meal that was different; it wasn't like homemade meals. French fries with *merguez* or a Greek sandwich. So, taking the train, eating the Greek sandwich in the train... I swear, inside the *RER*, the last car smelled like sandwich!”

2. 3. Benefits

Why care about freshness and naturalness? Informants elaborate four frameworks for arguing why it is best: flavor, health, strength, and discipline.

2. 3. 1. Flavor

Freshness and naturalness, pitted against processing and preserving, offer “more flavor, more vitamins”. Informants find canned and frozen foods “flavorless,” making lapidary

comments like: “Frozen meat and fresh meat don't have the same flavor.” Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, said he likes green peas “fresh, green, very sweet,” instead of canned or frozen. Boutros Naguib, an Egyptian-born bus driver, used an image, and from there, evoked the past: “I prefer to eat an orange from the tree, directly, rather than processing it through a machine. In the past it used to be, like, from the tree to the kitchen. Today, it goes through canneries, fridges, warehouses... where the goods are stocked for four years or so. So, they don't have efficiency anymore, neither the flavor, nor the vitamins. It's all dead. Because it's been frozen, it loses all the vitamins.”

2. 3. 2. Health

Fresh produce is also “healthy”. Informants conceive axioms equating fresh with healthy, like: “When it's fresh, it's good. It's for the good health.” “When it's fresh, it's healthy.” Sabri Khider, an Algerian-born imam, enumerated: “One needs to eat meat, one needs to eat bananas, one needs to eat tomatoes, one needs to eat... all the basic ingredients that contribute to maintaining good health.”

Staff members of the WIC centers in Pilsen and Gage Park commented that the program reaches Hispanics more than other groups since they “ask for fresh produce.” For context, in the United States, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a federal program run by state agencies (USDA, 2015) providing food, nutrition education, health screenings, and referrals to other social services to eligible pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to five living at or below 185% of the federal poverty line and facing nutritional risk (USDA, 2018). Nutritional risk is

determined by a healthcare professional and is health- or diet-based; this evaluation is repeated every 6-12 months for participants to continue in the program. They receive a monthly package adapted to their particular needs in the form of a voucher redeemable for food at WIC centers and WIC-approved grocery stores. In reference to the total American population, WIC serves 53% of infants up to one year old and 25% of children aged one up to five (USDA, 2015). By race and ethnicity, enrollment rates are 63% of eligible Hispanics, 57% of eligible Black Americans, and 42% of eligible non-Hispanic whites (USDA, 2018). Overall, there is evidence of greater awareness, enrollment, and engagement among Latinos and Spanish speakers (Sheridan and Ferrant, unpublished).

WIC-eligible foods are beans, canned fish, cereal, dairy products (cheese, milk, yogurt), eggs, fruits and vegetables, infant formula and food (made from fruits, vegetables, and meat), juice, peanut butter, and whole grains. In conversations with clients, my prompt was made of three questions: “If you should leave the program, what would be the reason why?” “Is any relative, neighbor, or friend of yours eligible but not participating, and for what reason?” “Is there anything you would like to be added to the program?” Clients repeatedly qualified WIC foods as “good,” “healthy,” “nutritional,” and “whole”. Regarding what they would like to be added to the program, most clients asked for meat, especially chicken, arguing: “It's still healthy.”

Moreover, clients mentioned that in past years, there were not as many options. A client I met at the WIC Center in Pilsen remembered: “Before there wasn't that much diversity. Now it's more diversified, more complete. There were no fruits, there was no *tortilla*, there were fewer options.” Indeed, consider these current surveys of available fruits and

vegetables:

Available fruits and vegetables on 04/01/17, WIC Center in Pilsen:

Green apples, grapes, cucumbers, limes, corn, iceberg garden salad, red apples, *poblano* peppers, carrots, pineapple, Green & Crisp salad, rainbow peppers, spinach, oranges, cherry tomatoes, kiwi, *jalapeños*, strawberries, tomatoes, mushrooms, watermelon, mangoes, pears, grapefruit, *tomatillos*, avocados, cabbage, lettuce, lemons, bananas, sweet onions, onions, sweet potatoes, red onions, white potatoes

Available fruits and vegetables on 04/02/17, WIC Center in Gage Park:

Jalapeños, cantaloupe, carrots, grapefruit, watermelon, mushrooms, cucumbers, red apples, mangoes, celery, broccoli, lettuce, green apples, Green & Crisp salad, pears, *tomatillos*, plums, spinach, avocados, iceberg garden salad, corn, green peppers, tomatoes, grapes, pineapple, limes, Napa cabbage, blueberries, kiwi, *poblano* peppers, strawberries, lemons, oranges, onions, red onions, sweet onions, plantain, bananas, white potatoes, sweet potatoes

“Healthy” means supplying the body with vitamins. Fresh produce, as I repeatedly heard, provide “lots of vitamins, lots of calories”. Belkacem Guerroumi, an incinerator operator born in France to Algerian- and Moroccan-born parents, said that his favorite dish is *couscous* due to its variety of vegetables. He proceeded to compare the human body to a car, in needing not only gas and calories but also oil and the like: “All the vitamins: A, B, C, D, E.” Contrariwise, canned produce “loses its vitamins”. Thierry Jougon, a retail clerk

born in Martinique (French Antilles), exposed: “For the vegetables, either you go to the market and it's fresh, or you go to Carrefour [hypermarket chain] and there, the produce is canned so that it can be stored a little bit longer. But when in cans, it loses vitamins. It should be fresh.”

Relatedly, some produce are endowed with singular healing properties. Sirimavo Lakshani, a Sri Lankan-born janitor, indicated that garlic is good for the stomach. Jacques Okoundji, a Congolese-born production line worker, mentioned that ginger is good for “kidneys, blood, the pelvis”. Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, qualified olive oil as an “antibiotic” and a “real medicine for the body”.

Among middle-aged and older adults, judgements of health invoke representations of the past and observations of generation gaps. Joseph Solo, a palletizer operator born in France to French- and Ivorian-born parents, contemplated that in the past, food was “natural,” and people were not suffering from “diseases, cancers, all kinds of crap”. In this regard, immigrant parents do not, in fact, complain that their native-born children do not eat ethnic foods. Rather, they complain that they do not eat enough fresh produce, particularly, fish, fruits, and vegetables. Angayarkanni Jayasinghe, a Sri Lankan-born janitor, regrets that her children “don't eat a lot of vegetables,” preferring instead “pasta, ground beef patties, ham, cheese”. They are concerned about their children’s healthy development. I met Susana Ortega at church with her younger daughter Denisse. We talked about her three children, and I asked: “Do your children prefer Mexican or American food?” Ms. Ortega answered: “For her [my younger daughter], American food. But for my son and my older daughter, Mexican food. For her, pure junk food... But she

isn't fat!" At her side, Denisse – indeed, a slim teenager – made a playful smile. The native-born children of Safia Leroy, a Moroccan-born school aide, ask fast food or cookies, which she sometimes accepts as a special treat. Yet, she does not feel good about it: “What I try to explain is that when I was a child, I wasn't eating that. I was eating homemade things. My after-school snacks were never cookies like that, ready-made... A real snack prepared by my mother, all homemade.”

Informants do not display pride in consuming fresh produce, except in defense against ethnic stereotyping. Nicolás Santoyo, a Mexican-born construction worker, defended *frijoles*: “But that's good nutrition! *Gringos* [Latin American Spanish term for white Americans] say: 'Mexican, bean fiend [*frijolero*]!' But they don't know what eating *frijoles* mean, and the vitamins that *frijoles* bring.” For that matter, informants apply positive judgements to the cuisines of other ethnic groups more often than to their own. For instance, informants of Mexican heritage sometimes refer to the foods of non-Hispanic whites as “healthy,” like in the conversation below:

Elena López is a full-fledged Pilsenite: born and raised here by Mexican-born parents, now living and working here as a school bus driver. She observes that gentrification results in a diversified retail environment and interaction order: “Before, at El Güero [local grocery store], there were just Mexican people. Now you have more Black people, more *güeros* [Mexican Spanish term for whites]. And they ask us [people of Mexican heritage]: 'How do you cook that? This way?' We're nice, like: 'You can cook it with steak, some ham.' You see a lot now. But before, never, it would be rare. I see in my school bus little white people coming,

five-year-olds, and we're going to teach them our [Mexican] culture. I see a lot of that in the neighborhood. Also, more Chinese people – I had never seen some. Now I see them, that's not weird anymore. Before there were just little small businesses, like grocery stores with pure Mexican food. And now I see Chinese restaurants, white people's stores..." I probe: "White people's stores, like what?" Ms. López reflects: "I think white peoples' stores, there would be healthy food, like... something foods... Whole Foods. They haven't put that in there so far. So far, it's like little spots, like yogurt places, ice cream places, stuff like that."

In the United States, Whole Foods is a supermarket chain that exclusively supplies products conforming to self-created quality standards of "naturalness" – especially, no hydrogenated fats nor artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners, and preservatives. In American popular culture, Whole Foods is portrayed as pricing excessively high and appealing to upper-middle class non-Hispanic white consumers, earning the nickname "Whole Paycheck". That is, a load of groceries there equates to an entire working-class paycheck.

All in all, informants feel quiet contentment about their consumption of fresh produce. In stark contrast, they voice guilt about their intake of grease and sugar. At the lightest, they express self-deprecation in the form of jokes and teases. Informants of Mexican heritage qualify *carnitas* as "so good," but also "so greasy". Elena López, a bus driver born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, humorously feigned irritation at her mother: "Mom likes *carnitas*. But they are so greasy." Sassouma Koné, a nurse born in France to Malian-born parents, commented that people of African heritage have a fondness for "sugary drinks," sharing an anecdote: "The other day, we were watching a Coca-Cola ad, you know, the

one with the names. And there were only European names. I told my husband: 'But they don't need it!' (laughs)" Informants of Mexican heritage say that they are incorrigible drinkers of coffee with "too much cream, too much sugar." Informants of Maghrebi heritage also opine that they eat "too much" bread, like in the banter below.

Rachida Kateb, an Algerian-born childcare worker, her middle-aged son Nabil, and me are chatting on the living room's sofa.

RK: We [people of Maghrebi heritage] like to eat. What I don't understand, the French, they eat candies, cookies and everything, but they don't get fat. I don't get it! (laughs) As for me I don't eat sugar, but we [my family] mostly eat a lot of bread. We eat a lot bread, that's why. My son for example, he eats too much bread! He has a belly now! I tell him all the time, now I've gotten fat but I'm old! But you, you should pay attention, you eat too much bread. He eats too much bread! [To Nabil] Show her your belly! (laughs)

CF: No, really! (laughs)

RK: (laughs) I'm joking, no, my son is gorgeous!

CF: Yes, he is!

RK: My son is gorgeous; everyone tells me he's gorgeous! (laughs)

At the gravest, informants are concerned about diabetes. Elena López enjoys drinking *moscato* wine with her sister: "We like to drink, we drink together. She's my drinking partner." She worries about the sugar content, though: "It's so good... but the bad thing is that it has too much sugar. I'm scared that I'm going to get diabetes. My mom already has it, it's hereditary." I told Nadia Oropeza, a Chilean-born homemaker, that I was French,

and she commented that she recently bought red wine “to prevent diabetes, to clean the blood a little bit”.

Moreover, immigrant parents feel remorse for having given unhealthy snacks to their native-born children. Camila Espinosa, an Ecuadorian-born electrician, recounted that her husband and herself had stable jobs and their mortgage payments were not too high, hence decent disposable income: “So, we could give the children everything. I used to buy them cookies, Cheerios, chips, *tortillas*... But that's not our [Ecuadorian] food, eating *tortillas*.” At the time, she just wanted to raise happy kids. Now, she feels remorseful: “Now you don't see any of this here [at home]. You see? How much we can change in our lives. I wasn't as educated as today, as informed that those things are bad for the kids.”

All in all, informants know what is unhealthy – the greasy, the sugary. However, they do not feel a need to publicize their acquisition, consumption, and culinary practices with fresh produce. By all accounts, these practices are healthy and cost-effective as well. In the United States, this stands in ironic contrast to the tendency in consumer society to represent healthy foods as fancy and complicated. Below are fieldnotes on a Walgreens (pharmacy store chain) in Gage Park:

The Walgreens pharmacy on 55th and Kedzie showcases a long line of beer and soda cases. Miller Lite and Budweiser on one side; Modelo, Corona, and Dos Equis on another side. Pepsi and Coke, under a gaudy yellow sign: “Special offer of the month! 3 for 12 dollars!” A section labeled “*frescura y rapidez* – fresh and fast” displays large packs of Doritos and Flamin' Hot Cheetos. Another section,

“*el buen comer* – good eating,” is made of refrigerators of one-liter bottles of cider and beer. In the alley, a small canoe-shaped section, “*el comer sano* – healthy eating,” exhibits expensive, tiny-sized hummus cups, packaged ham sandwiches, and diced fruit bags.

For that matter, public health professionals confirm immigrants’ quiet nutritional awareness. Ana Ward, a public health officer born in the United States to Mexican- and U.S.-born parents, speaks from first-hand experience: “These [immigrant] women know that you shouldn't cook with too much fat.” She remembers a colleague at a community health center she used to work for: “They had a nutritionist on staff, a very sweet American girl who was trained in nutrition in the very traditional sense of the food pyramid: food balance, nutrients, A + B + C equals a healthy life. I really respected her and her education.”

2. 3. 3. *Strength*

Health is associated with strength: on top of being unhealthy, grease and sugar make one feel sluggish. At the market in Aulnay-Nord, packs of candy bars – Kinder Bueno, Mars, and Snickers – were displayed in boxes with orange stickers (“1 euro,” “2 euros”). A customer took five packs, one of each brand. The vendor offered a discount: “Alright, another one for 50 cents, it gives energy!” The customer chuckled and replied: “It gives kilos, above all!” Generally, all foods that are not fresh nor natural fail to energize. Jacques Okoundji, a Congolese-born production line worker, exposed: “Those things that are dry, that aren't fresh... They get on your nerves, they tire you.”

Indeed, the normative, legitimate end goal of eating is to obtain “strength” and “energy” so as to be “in good shape” – strong and fit for hard work. Moroccan-born Said Karroum is a plumber; this is his main activity. On days off, he sometimes works as a vendor at the Aulnay-Nord market for extra income (as the French saying goes, *pour mettre du beurre dans les épinards* – literally, “to put butter in the spinach”). Either way, Mr. Karroum observes a similar routine: coffee and *croissant* in the morning, a lunchbox at midday, and a salad in the evening. However, since vending is less energy-intensive than plumbing, Mr. Karroum puts less food in his midday lunchbox for his workdays at the market.

A recurring image is farm work, which informants associate with a diet based on fresh produce, within an ascetic and healthy lifestyle made of hard labor and simple pleasures, undisturbed by the frills of modern life. Belkacem Guerroumi, an incinerator operator born in France to Algerian- and Moroccan-born parents, pits her in-laws from Normandy (northwestern France), praising them as “peasants, solid people,” against Parisians, disparaging them as “lazy assholes who only think about money”. He described his late father in-law's morning routine: “At 4 a.m., before milking the cows, he drinks coffee with *calvados* [Norman apple or pear brandy], a slice of ham, butter on country bread and bingo, off to work. At 10 a.m., break from farm work: grilled pork ribs and a glass of wine.”

In this regard, feeding and energizing oneself well reflect work ethic as well as self-respect. In a conversation on the Aulnay-Nord marketplace with Souleymane Faye, a

Senegalese-born food preparation worker, and Joseph Solo, a palletizer operator born in France to French- and Ivorian-born parents. Mr. Solo narrated his morning routine, involving coffee and the like. He blames himself gently for “dawdling”:

JS: At 3 a.m., I must wake up. I take the bus here at 4:43 a.m.

CF: 4:43 a.m.!

SF: Yeah.

JS: 4:43 a.m.! In fact, I wake up earlier because I like to daydream, you see? Which means that I'm dawdling, dawdling, and dawdling... First thing is what? It's, tick-tock, the alarm clock rings at 3 a.m., and the shower! So, I'm awake straight away.

SF: For sure! (laughs)

CF: It awakens! The shower!

JS: Then, the coffee is running quietly. I turn on the TV, I watch the TV a little bit, and I have the impression that it's the TV that's watching me. You know what? Because I'm telling myself that the TV is trapping me. So, I turn off the TV. I go see the coffee. It ran, everything's peaceful, all good. I have a wash, all good. I start drinking a little bit of coffee. Tick-tock.

Like those of health, judgements of strength from middle-aged and older adults invoke generational divides. Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, stated: “Trust me, people who've worked, today they're 80, 86, they can still climb up four stairs with a basket.” Without “fertilizers” and “chemicals,” people used to be “strong”. Now, food – and, broadly, the world – has become less “natural,” to the point that “today, life is

decayed”. The words of Mohamed Neghiz, an Algerian-born construction worker, became a disenchanting chant: “Everyone's tired, everyone's sick, everyone's suffering.”

Theoretically, this framework of health and strength contributes to challenging Bourdieu's thesis of a working-class taste of necessity, driven by *amor fati* (literally, “love of fate”). The taste of necessity involves making virtue out of necessity. It goes like: “I don't have anything, but I choose to be content that I don't have anything.” That logic of self-exclusion comes with a distinct relationship with the body. In this regard, Bourdieu's *Distinction* (2010) [1979] describes working-class meals as characterized by abundance and featuring fat, heavy, salty, stodgy foods. That miserabilist notion of working-class tastes and practices, supposedly defined by exclusion and deprivation – in short, they do it this way because they cannot do it better – is probably the part of Bourdieu's works that has been most criticized (Grignon and Grignon, 1980; Grignon and Passeron, 1989). In contemporary scholarship, Faustine Régnier and Ana Masullo (2009) study class differences in the assimilation of dietary guidelines in France. Consider the higher prevalence of obesity among the working class in France. The two commonly held explanations for that are: financial constraints and lack of understanding of dietary guidelines. However, using interviewing data, Régnier and Masullo find a different explanation. Challenging the thesis of a working-class taste of necessity, they find that the working class has a “taste of freedom,” perceiving those guidelines as constraining their freedom of choice and pleasure. In ironic contrast, the middle class is the one to display a “taste of necessity,” in restricting their dietary tastes and practices as the guidelines dictate. That middle-class taste of necessity is thus tied to constraints that are moral rather than economic. Here, as it turns out, first- and second-generation immigrants

in Paris and Chicago do not refrain from greasy and sugary foods for fear of becoming fat (vs. thin), but rather, for fear of becoming weak (vs. strong), hence unfit for hard work. Those foods fail to provide an adequate supply of “energy,” in the form of “calories” and “vitamins”.

2. 3. 4. Discipline

Lastly, eating fresh produce is about discipline: focusing on foods that are essential to the quotidian diet and staying away from frivolous consumption. Kamel Souissi, a Tunisian-born fast-food worker, distinguishes “basic necessities,” like “vegetables, fish, meat,” from those foods “that we can do without” if low on income, like “cheese, yogurt”. Saliou Brites, an Angolan-born hairdresser, enumerated: “Potatoes, tomatoes, onions, garlic, paprika, chili peppers: all of that is part of the daily cooking.” Likewise, Jacques Okoundji, a Congolese-born production line worker, listed the foods “that one should always have at home,” including “tomatoes, onions, sardines”.

On top of harming health and strength, consuming grease and sugar – like “soft drinks,” “sugar,” “cookies,” and “sweets” – betrays lack of discipline and self-control. Loubna Ghoula, a warehouse clerk born in France to Algerian-born parents, consumes lots of fruits and vegetables and acquires them through crafty strategies, like monitoring special offers and traveling to the Aulnay-Nord market and to supermarkets and hypermarkets across the suburbs. She does not display any pride about it, though. Yet, Ms. Ghoula feels great guilt about her consumption of “candies,” hence her self-assessment of “not knowing how to do the groceries”. With self-deprecating humor, she told stories of going

to the hypermarket, filling the cart with “cookies, chocolate, chips, fruit drinks, carbonated drinks,” and earning the gentle teasing of her teenage son: “Mom, you really don't know how to do the groceries! (laughs)” Eating greasy and sugary foods is childlike – dare they say, childish – behavior, since real adults should be competent to control their fancies. Likewise, Madani Kessié, a house painter born in France to Ivorian-born parents, admitted her fondness for *baguette* with Nutella, assessing: “I'm really a child.”

For that matter, upon talking about greasy and sugary foods, many informants proceeded to evoke tender memories of childhood – a time when guilty pleasures used to be innocent. Jean Ndoulou, a Congolese-born street vendor, and Olivier Maximin, a tile installer born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles), remembered pilfering *croissants* at a nearby factory:

JN: When we were little ones, we wanted *croissants*, but we didn't have dough. We would go to Du Roy over there in Blanc-Mesnil [northeastern suburbs]. [To Mr. Maximin] Do you remember?

OM: It smelled good!

JN: Du Roy, that was a brand. The Du Roy breads, the Du Roy *croissants*, and the like.

OM: Even from the bus you would smell it.

JN: So, we would go there, we would jump the fence, we would take the *croissants* and bring them home. Because back in the days we didn't have enough money for everyone to have *croissants* in the morning. So, the eldest in the family would go to Du Roy. We would jump the fence, get inside the warehouse... But today, we've grown up and we have dough: we don't do that anymore!

OM: And now, there's no Du Roy anymore in Blanc-Mesnil. It's over.

JN: They closed.

OM: Next to the fire station, over there. Yes, Du Roy, that's over. The *croissants*...

JN: Because we robbed too many *croissants* from them (laughs)!

OM: Fuck... When you went past it by bus, you would smell it! (pretends to sniff)

It smelled good! You were hungry! From inside the bus! (pretends to sniff)

2. 4. Identification

How to identify fresh produce? Informants convey a need to learn and hone a skillset for that. These skills are, first, sensory: the ability to see freshness and naturalness. Relatedly, they are emotional: the experience of identifying fresh produce triggers positive emotions like gratitude, humility, and generosity. All are, collectively, passed on by tradition, and individually, honed by life experience – as an adult, as a family person, and as a worker.

2. 4. 1. Visual Skills

Identifying fresh produce requires deft eyesight – in informants' words, “having the eye”. Safia Leroy, a Moroccan-born school aide, thus describes produce acquisition as a “heavy task”: “It takes time. We reflect about what we take.” Below is a selection of informants' quotes describing that “eye” of theirs in action, walking me through their process of identification and acquisition:

“Sometimes I see black dots: (moves her finger) black, black, black... it's not good. If it's good, I pick. If it's not good, I don't take.”

“The watermelon, you can see if it's ripe inside. If you look at it, you can see it.”

“One can see meat's freshness with the eyes. You look; you know that the meat is fresh. You see it.”

“Open the head right where there's the fin. Open here, look inside... that's a fresh fish. When you open it, you see if it's not fresh.”

“A fish, for example, you need to look at, not the fins... how do you call it... not the bronchial tubes... you look at that. When it's all red, it means that the fish is fresh. But when it's blue, it means that the fish isn't fresh.”

“The fish, when you take it, you look right behind the head. If it's black you don't take it. If it's all red, it's all fresh, and you see it directly with your eyes.”

2. 4. 2. Emotional Skills

Identifying fresh produce involves various emotional skills. The first is gratitude: identification skills are to appreciate in oneself and in others. Interpersonally, some people are better than others for it, and collectively, it is a lore to be proud of. Men and children, in particular, voice admiration for their wives and mothers. Mohamed Neghiz, an Algerian-born construction worker, pitted “fresh spices,” “with the plants, the leaves, everything,” each being identifiable “by its distinctive smell,” against those spices “that have been put through a mill,” so that in the end, “the flavor's gone”. Mr. Neghiz admires his wife's ability to choose spices. Merchants could deceive him into buying a blend of spices instead of a straight product. His wife, however, “would tell [him], this is dried

chili, it's been milled". Fouad Brakni, an Algerian-born construction worker, has an absolute confidence in his wife's ability to choose fruits and vegetables: "My wife is a specialist in all of that. She takes the things, she looks, she touches. She knows, she checks." Elena López, a U.S.-born bus driver, feels firm respect for her Mexican-born mother: "Mom, she's picky about meat."

The second emotional skill is humility: people should acknowledge the limits of their skill set. Hicham Essabr, a Moroccan-born auto mechanic, reflects that at heart, food pertains to those things "of nature" that are largely unintelligible. He conceives them as "worlds": "the world of foods, the world of plants, the world of spices". He believes that humans cannot be omniscient; only God is. Part of the beauty "of life, of the earth" is that some people are more knowledgeable than others about foods, plants, and the like, and thus stay "strong" despite aging. For example, Mr. Essabr talked about "the world of plants," a world he finds intriguing though inaccessible: "You need to be a connoisseur of this world." This, for him, urges to intellectual humility. People cannot know everything about every single world, be it the one of foods, plants, spices, and all things natural. We need to accept their vastness, akin to that of the sky and the sea: "You cannot count all the stars in the sky." "You cannot know the entire sea."

Ultimately, identifying fresh produce arouses emotional generosity: putting one's heart and soul into it, for the sole sake of seeing and appreciating. Mr. Essabr compared it to love: "At the market, it's cheaper. Since vendors buy in bulk, they sell cheaper. But when you go to the farm [in the outer suburbs of Paris], you pick two, four kilos, and you pay more than at the market. It's more expensive. But it's charming. Because I used to work

in the fields, in agriculture, in Spain and in Morocco. Sometimes I want to remember those times. Picking by hand, spending time in greenhouses, in the fields... It's the eye that... How can I put it...? It's the eye that... It's like love. You love to see the beauty, you love to see it in nature, in the air, in the vegetables, in the fruits... You can sit down in front of the tree, during half an hour, an hour, looking at the tree, looking at the fruits from the tree. You don't like that fruit, but you do like the other, the other fruit that's beside. So, you pick that one, just like that. It's like, you've liked this one and you don't like that one.”

2. 4. 3. Tradition and Life Experience

Informants recount that they started learning how to identify fresh produce from tradition, from the milieu in which they were and born and raised. These skills get passed down through generations. Marta Cárdenas, a Mexican-born homemaker, has a taste for cooking fish with a variety of fruits and vegetables. She learned it from her mother long ago and far away in Mexico, and enacts it here and now in Chicago: “My mom is from the north, from the coast where there're lots of mangoes, watermelons... In central Mexico, there're lots of apples. So, the people, the places, depending on where one is, one gets used to it. You see, my mom used to give me a lot of shellfish, fish... and I got used to eating that. But not too much meat: one should mix. For instance, I buy very little meat, but I mix fruits, meat, and salad together.”

In this regard, immigrant parents are keen that their native-born children retain traditional identification skills. They craft educational practices to reach this goal. Émile and Irène

Sembolo, a drama teacher and a janitor born in the Congo, used to do the groceries with the assistance of their children. They would assign them a budget for each produce that the family needed, let them “give their opinion,” and even “choose” altogether when appropriate. Mr. Sembolo thinks of it as a form of “popular education,” one “that isn't done at school”.

This concern for their children’s dietary education can turn into fear of loss. Below are fieldnotes on a soup kitchen organized by a church in Pilsen, depicting an incident involving chili pepper. The church clerk, Mexican-born Encarnación Márquez, displayed a mix of amusement and regret at the lack of basic preparation skills evinced by student volunteers from the local high school.

Lunchtime. The high school students in community service help themselves to *tacos*. They grab a plastic plate, freshly heated corn *tortillas*, a lime, and some of the chicken and potato preparation. But they don't take green *chile* sauce. Ms. Márquez comments: “Have you noticed that they don't take chili pepper? That's because a lot of Hispanic kids here don't like chili pepper.” A fellow volunteer confirms: “Yes, that's true!” Ms. Márquez elaborates: “Among my kids... My older daughter likes it, my son as well... But my younger daughter doesn't like it, and she doesn't like meat either.”

Ms. Márquez instructs Laura, Elizabeth, and me: “You three will be preparing the chili peppers and the chickens.” She points at two big bags of dried chili peppers and three trays of whole raw chickens. Laura and Elizabeth look slightly disconcerted by Ms. Márquez's vague instruction – “preparing the chili peppers”.

Ms. Márquez opens up one bag and prepares one pepper, explaining in a sarcastic tone: “Well, you open them this way. You take the seeds out and you throw away those peppers that aren't beautiful.” We act: our work pace gets faster and faster. We are focused: we barely talk. The pungency attacks our throats and noses. We are sneezing. Ms. Márquez giggles and places a fan next to us: “That's the way you beat the flu!”

Once we have duly emptied the first bag, Laura inquires of Ms. Márquez about the second bag: “What about these peppers? Should we mix them with the others?” Ms. Márquez feigns puzzlement: “Well, do they look different to you?” Laura lowers her eyes: “Um, no, they're the same.”

While preparing the peppers and boning the chickens, we talk about the differences between American and Mexican food. Laura says: “My mother cooks Mexican: *tacos, enchiladas*... But my sisters and me like Mexican food as much as American food.”

Life experiences – aging, raising a family, working – hone these identification skills. Middle-aged informants feel a sense of calm competence – I call it calmpetence – in having come to “know” how to select fresh produce. This creates a generational gap: just because they lack life experience, younger adults are generally more incompetent. Diane Kanza, a Congolese-born janitor, has witnessed young people buying rotten produce at butcher shops and fish shops in Château Rouge, “because they don't look closely, whether it's not good, whether it's rotten”.

Of significant effect are family responsibilities. Parents pit the caring family person against the carefree – dare they say, careless – single person. Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, used an image: at the market, the family man cares to select “oranges, mandarins, for his children, for the house, that are very yellow, that don't smell like sugar. A dad who enters a market, he knows. He always looks for the cheapest produce, and for the produce that's good.” Contrariwise, the childless single man “isn't searching” and picks whatever: “If it's good, he eats. If it's not good, he doesn't care.”

Immigrant workers with experience in agriculture or food service could hone portable skills. Through first-hand, heads-on contact with fresh produce, farm workers developed both visual and emotional skills. Rafik Mansouri, a Moroccan-born line cook, used to be a seasonal farm worker in Brittany (northwestern France). Thanks to that experience, he feels more competent in identifying fresh vegetables. Before reuniting with her sister and children-in-law in Aulnay-Nord and finding work nearby as an auto mechanic, Moroccan-born Hicham Essabr was an itinerant farm worker across various regions of Spain (Aragón, Catalonia, Extremadura, Murcia, Navarre, and Valencia). He has sweet thoughts of a collective life wherein coworkers would slaughter the lamb together and the farmer would give everyone a share of fruits and vegetables. Informants working in food service could discover new foods. Lassana Seck, a Senegalese-born production line worker, used to be a food preparation worker at a restaurant in Paris and at an airline catering service near the Orly airport (southern suburbs). Through these gigs, Mr. Seck has learned to recognize and appreciate the many French cheeses. Food service workers could also realize how common it is for commercial establishments to use pre-prepared, pre-cooked foods. Raúl Paredes, a Peruvian-born food preparation worker, reports that although

bakeries usually bake dough on site, that dough is often acquired frozen instead of freshly prepared. I asked how he knows that, and he quipped: “I work in food service, I know!” These experiences make them better able to distinguish the fresh, the natural, and the homemade, from the frozen, the canned, and the mass-produced.

3. Cooking Simply

First- and second-generation immigrants craft quotidian culinary practices that they qualify as simple. The three main techniques in this regard are batch cooking, batch acquiring, and produce substitution. This general principle of simple cooking accepts accommodations, if facing significant time or space constraints. In any case, first- and second-generation immigrants find simple cooking meaningful as an enjoyable activity and a reflection of good character. Lastly, simple cooking is gendered in that men recognize themselves as less skillful than women, but still committed and competent.

3. 1. Culinary Techniques

3. 1. 1. Batch Cooking

Batch cooking means cooking produce in large quantities whenever time permits, so as to have a satisfying meal ready-to-eat whenever work and housework get in the way. As I repeatedly heard: “On weekends I prepare big dishes.” A Mexican-born informant I met at church in Pilsen delineated: “For example, the salmon, I buy it in packs, and I just prepare it and season it. Once I've seasoned a lot of produce, I put it in the freezer. So that

when I get back home: 'I'm going to eat the salmon.' I take it out of the aluminum. Because, well, you're working, and you don't get the chance to cook every single day.”

The quantity of the batch can depend on various temporalities. Some informants plan for a 24-hour period. Kouassi Doumbia, an Ivorian-born security guard, said that every evening, her wife cooks for everyone. The next day, all family members help themselves to a meal depending on their schedule. This daily batch is measured as a generous, collective ration, in contrast to a selfish, individual portion. Mr. Doumbia playfully teased European individualism, which conceives meals according to individual (individualistic) and calculated (calculating) logics. He explained, as we were sharing a *kedjenou* (in Ivorian cuisine, stew made with chicken, vegetables, and spices) in the living room: “We're not used to count quantities. Europeans put a scale and each individual eats. (laughs) We [sub-Saharan Africans] cook depending on how many people we are. It's like, right now we're eating together: we're not going to count how many times you're helping yourself. That problem doesn't arise. You put your hand in there [the pot] as many times as your stomach asks. Ah, yes. If you think that you're hungrier than others, well, you eat more than others.”

Some informants cook on weekends for the week ahead. Consuelo Wolff, a Mexican-born business assistant, enjoys batch cooking as a pleasurable and bonding activity, one that makes her family unite: “You know, I'm very busy in life, I work... sometimes I work 30 hours in two days. So, during the weekend I'm spending time with my kids cooking food. Oh, I love food.”

Lastly, some informants combine two temporalities: they batch cook a dish on weekends and prepare accompaniments prior to each meal. Angayarkanni Jayasinghe, a Sri Lankan-born janitor, cooks a chicken or fish curry on Sundays, which she complements with plain white rice on weekdays (bland, but cheaper) and with basmati rice on weekends (tastier, but more expensive). Every Sunday, Géraldine Mbarga, a Cameroonian-born executive assistant, makes sauce (with okra, peanuts, and tomato) for the week ahead: “Sometimes peanut sauce, sometimes tomato sauce, and all of that in a large quantity for one week.” Throughout the week, she prepares cereals as she goes: “I keep the sauce in the fridge. When I'm about to eat, I take a spoon and I take out the sauce. I prepare semolina or *fufu*.” (In West African cuisine, *fufu* is a paste usually made by boiling and grinding cassava and plantains.)

Within households, batch cooking is part of housework arrangements. U.S.-born Elena López, a bus driver, and her Mexican-born mother, a picker, work different shifts (day shifts for Elena, night shifts for her mother). Ms. López always makes sure to leave a cooked meal for her mother: “If I see that there’s no food, I’ll be like: ‘Uh, leave something cooked so she can come and eat.’ Cause I have time to cook, you know? What else can I do?” Camila Espinosa, an Ecuadorian-born electrician, recounted that her late husband and herself worked night shifts. In the short window of time they had between getting back home from work and going to bed, Mr. Espinosa would walk the children to school while Ms. Espinosa would cook food for the day. That was an optimal solution, but it came with an emotional cost: “It would give me anxiety, because during the night my kids were alone. That was my worry of the night: that they could wake up mid-sleep and hurt themselves.”

3. 1. 2. *Batch Acquiring*

Batch cooking requires batch acquiring: acquiring fresh produce in large quantities. Informants in Paris imagine as a foil the practice of “European” households to acquire and consume “ground beef patties” per unit. Louis Mansaly, a Senegalese-born store manager, put it humorously: “In European families, what do you have? In general, mom, dad, and one child or two. They're easy to feed. We say: 'Look, I'm giving you a 20-kilo sack of rice.' They say: 'That's going to last two years!' But at [my] home, a 20-kilo sack doesn't even last the month! I have big boys who eat rice; you can't feed them this way. How many ground beef patties are we buying? Not one patty: it's an entire chicken that they'll eat! (laughs)” Boun Yang, a Laotian-born shipping clerk, also told a tale of ground beef patties. Besides him – we were chatting on the marketplace in Aulnay-Nord – his friends Omar Niang, a restaurant manager born in France to Senegalese-born parents, and Jean Ndoulou, a Congolese-born street vendor, were nodding in agreement. “You see the ground beef patties? White people will tell themselves: 'We don't buy a lot, we buy four.' It costs them 10 euros, they'll eat them right away, and there'll be nothing left. Those of us who aren't white, we don't reason like that. We'll rather buy 10 frozen patties for 10 euros, for the entire week. For instance, my brother and me, we were two, it was like that: my parents didn't eat ground beef patties, so the 10 for 10 euros covered the entire week, for the two of us. Voila, we cook in quantities, and it's the same when you're cooking *maafe, yassa*. In the end it costs you three euros per dish and it's for four people. And then, there're leftovers, so you can give to your neighbors. Your neighbor sometimes rings at the door and says: ‘Look, I have *couscous* left, do you want some?’”

Natives typically acquire in tiny quantities, which costs a fortune. Fouad Brakni, an Algerian-born construction worker, portrays the “French” ways of buying produce at the market with farcical humor: “We [people of Maghrebi heritage] don’t buy like the French. I see French women, they buy, for example, 500 grams. Potatoes, they don’t even buy one kilo. Carrots, two, three carrots... We don’t do that! Carrots, two or three kilos. Five kilos of potatoes, five kilos of onions, two kilos of peppers.”

Batch acquiring is, indeed, cost-effective: acquiring in large quantities further means saving money. Pamela Bórquez, a Mexican-born church clerk, explained: “When it’s every day, I think that you spend a little bit more. When you buy everything in crates, I feel like you make the most of your money.” Victor Fardin, a garbage collector born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles) was thinking about everything he must pay “after the wages come through”. Since his wages are disbursed on the 27th, Mr. Fardin scheduled all fixed expenses on the 28th: “the credit, electricity, water, telephone, TV...” Consequently: “After the 28, I’m living my life! I’m free, I can spend as I want.” I asked whether food belongs to those things on which he can spend as he wants, and he responded: “No, food is a side issue: it’s not too expensive.” Indeed, Mr. Fardin acquires “in bulk”: “chicken, turkey, fish, large sacks of rice, oil tins, packs of water, sacks of potatoes, sacks of onions.” This helps save a lot, hence making food expenses “a side issue”: “If you buy per kilo... it’ll take forever! A little sack of potatoes is 2.50 already, and a big 10-kilo sack is four euros! Come on! (laughs) You know that kids like fries and the like.”

Informants especially use special offers. I asked Rubén Aceves, a Mexican-born forklift operator, where he does the groceries, and his answer was: “At Walmart [grocery store

chain] and at Hispanic stores, depending on special offers and wherever the products are cheaper.” Similarly, the immediate response of Inmaculada González, a Mexican-born homemaker, was: “We go to La Casa del Pueblo [grocery store] here [in her home neighborhood of Pilsen], to Aldi's [discount store chain]... and we're looking at special offers. Like, if the soft drinks are cheaper there, we go there. Or, if the soft drinks are cheaper at Costco, we go to Costco.” Special offers also allow to expedite food acquisition. Sebastián Pérez, a Mexican-born custodian, explained: “We mostly seek special offers. Not only because it's cheaper but also... that's what we consume. Like, fixing our routine.”

Importantly, batch acquiring requires a steady source of income. Géraldine Mbarga used to be an executive assistant in her native Cameroon. Today, she works off the books as a cook in Paris. Acquiring batches of meat at butcher shops in Château Rouge is out of her reach: “People who receive wages, or those who have money, they come here for a month and they take two kilos, three kilos. They take packs, like fifteen packs! I can't do that. I'm jobless right now. When I need pork, I take one kilo.” As an alternative, Ms. Mbarga's tactic to forewarn any future situation of insecurity is to acquire food as soon as money comes in, and to always keep rice and semolina just in case. She elaborated: “When I have money, I often buy two kilos of pork ribs, a thigh of one kilo, and I keep everything at home. I make a big sauce for one week or even two weeks. If I want to eat semolina, I eat semolina, or rice, in sauce. If I want to eat plantain and I have money, I put two euros, I get back home, I prepare, and I eat that in sauce as well.”

For that matter, employed or retired informants acquire batches of produce after their

wages or pensions are disbursed. Once receiving his pension, Emiliano García, a retired sheet metal worker born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, pays the bills first thing and acquires food second thing. In his words: “I pay my bills first thing, and with the rest of the money I go, I buy, and I bring food here.” Elena López, a bus driver born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, gets paid biweekly and lives with her mother. They also pay the rent first thing and acquire food second thing. Ms. López explained: “I get paid every week. So, we fix the rent first, and then mom does the groceries.” As we were having lunch, she mentioned: “We already paid the rent. I already gave mom her 50.” I probed: “Her 50?” She specified: “Every time I get paid, I give her 50 dollars so she can buy stuff in between the weeks.” Salif Dramé, a Malian-born garbage collector, explained: “I do the groceries once a month. It's more convenient. I'm not going to the store every day! (laughs) I prefer to do the groceries once and for all at the beginning of the month, when money comes through, on the 28. Or at the end of the month, because sometimes they make the deposit on the 20. Money comes in: I do the groceries! The last time I did the groceries, I bought three chickens, five packs of pasta, vegetables, onions, lemons. I buy the vegetables for the month as well, I put them in my freezer. Then I take them out in the evening, and in the morning they're defrosted.”

The goal is, as much as possible, to “stand up for the month”. A man I meet at a bus stop in Aulnay-Nord told me: “I always tend to buy for at least a month. I spend less this way. I buy in large quantities and I stock up, voila. For the most part, I buy at the beginning of the month, toward the 10. My wages come through, so voila, I do my groceries quietly. I have things to eat for a month.” Inmaculada González, a Mexican-born homemaker, delineated: “Sometimes we buy everything for four weeks. That's why, I'm telling you,

we go wherever there're special offers. So, we know more or less how much we're going to spend for four weeks. After three weeks, one week left, and we need something, we just go and buy it.” Mauricette Diop, an accountant born in France to Senegalese-born parents, has a humorous outlook on this practice: “We do the big groceries! We fill up the cart, you see! (laughs)” This includes foodstuffs and “household products, hygiene products as well”. Having acquired all these batches of stuff provides a sense of relief: “We'll say, it's good for the month. We're off for a month.”

Store managers confirm these practices. Auguste Le Bihan, store manager in Château Rouge, notes that most customers come at the beginning of the month once their wages are disbursed: “They [customers] buy a 20-kilo sack of rice at the beginning of the month, a 10-kilo crate of chicken thighs, three or four crates of fish, voila, you see. At the beginning of the month – it depends at which time of the month they receive their wages – you see, we feel the effects until the 10-12. Then it declines a little bit. At the end of the month, there's less.” Louis Mansaly, store manager in Château Rouge, observes that most customers set as a goal to “stand the month” in fish and rice, by acquiring in double-digit kilograms: “20 kilos of fish, two or three 20-kilo sacks of rice...”. Then, throughout the month, customers make “supplemental purchases” in single-digit kilograms: “one or two kilos of rice, a few vegetables”.

Theoretically, batch acquiring is akin to what Argentine sociologist Alexandre Roig (2015) calls “solidification”: solidifying in goods the money that has been freshly earned before it slips through. This tactic has also been reported in a couple of French ethnographic studies on working-class life (Laé and Murard, 1985: 83; Perrin-Heredia,

2010: 440-441). Kouassi Doumbia, an Ivorian-born security guard, indeed reflected: “As soon as we can, we [Mr. Doumbia and her wife] take a quantity that we need. Depending on the disposable money I've had, I've taken five kilos – of rice, of Mousline [brand of instant mashed potato flakes]. If it's the beginning of the month and I've received some money, well, I prefer to invest, to prevent, to keep, to stock up, than wait... the end of the month, when we'd lack money, and we'd lack food. That would be a problem.”

Batch acquiring, indeed, helps steer clear of situations of scarcity. Lassana Seck, a Senegalese-born production line worker, acquires packs of milk as soon as money comes through, in hopes for eliminating the specter of not affording everyday pleasures like coffee with milk. He imagined: “If tomorrow you don't have money, you have to drink your coffee without milk, you see. Yup.” He concluded: “If you have a little bit [of money], you buy a little bit [of produce]. If you have a lot, you buy a lot.” Badira Lamrani, a Moroccan-born janitor, sometimes freezes some of the produce she acquires in batch, like “chicken, bell peppers, carrots”. If she happens to be short of money, then, as she said in a humorous overstatement: “We put it all on the pan!” The family of Fouad Brakni, an Algerian-born construction worker, is facing hard times. Mr. Brakni is currently unemployed: only Ms. Brakni's wages (she is a janitor) cover everyone's living expenses – theirs and the ones of their two children aged 4 and 5. Mr. Brakni says that as soon as he finds work, he will buy crates of meat (“ground beef patties, *cordons bleus*”) first thing.

Informants express a special concern for their children: they want to ensure they will always be able to feed them. Victor Fardin, a garbage collector born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles), verbalized the sense of relief that batch acquiring provides: “At least

you know that your freezer is full, your cupboard is full, you're not scratching your head. Even if tomorrow I don't have money, well, my family's going to eat.” Several informants make metaphors about transportation, that is, transporting their family toward food security. Émile Sembolo, a Congolese-born drama teacher, conceives the metaphor of a sailing boat: “We're in a boat. When the boat leaves, you're not going to get back looking for salt, no! (laughs)” Lassana Seck, a Senegalese-born production like worker, compares batch acquiring to driving a car: “It's like a car. When you have money, you fill up. But when you run out of gas and you don't have money, it's not going to work! (laughs)”

Finally, while a fully thought-out tactic, batch acquiring provides material for light-hearted stories. Laura Ramírez, a student born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, gave a tender, humorous picture of her mother's travels at Sam's Club (membership-only warehouse club): “She always goes and buys like the whole store. (laughs) She buys a lot, she fills up the trunk, that's why. And, she lives on the 4th floor so it's always me who has to take all the bags up to the 4th floor. (laughs)” The material consequences of batch acquiring are, indeed, having a lot of stuff at home. Sebastián Pérez, a Mexican-born custodian, stated: “We buy in bulk, always.” Then, he quipped a euphemism: “It seems to me that we have a lot of things at home! (laughs) Juice, toilet paper, broth, toothpaste...”

3. 1. 3. Produce Substitution

Produce substitution means substituting traditional produce inaccessible here and now by alternatives akin in taste, flavor, and texture. This technique is notably used by immigrants from underrepresented countries and regions who can barely count on communitarian

stores. I use the term “communitarian” per the typology of immigrant-run stores formulated by Emmanuel Ma Mung and Gildas Simon (1990). “Communitarian” stores supply goods imported from the owner’s origin region or country to customers of the same origin. “Exotic” stores also supply goods from the owner’s origin region or country, but to native customers. “Common” stores supply goods without ethnic characteristics; their customer base is ethnically undifferentiated. On a routine basis, Raúl Paredes, a Peruvian-born food preparation worker, substitutes *rocoto* pepper by bell pepper to make an amended *rocoto relleno* (dish of Arequipa, southern Peru, made of stuffed peppers). For special occasions like birthday parties, he acquires *rocoto* peppers at a Peruvian store on boulevard Voltaire (11th *arrondissement* of Paris).

Produce substitution also provides alternatives for goods that are prohibited in destination countries. For instance, immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa substitute the bushmeat of their childhood (antelope, monkey, porcupine, pangolin) by “normal,” standard “butcher's meat”. This includes, as told by Kouassi Doumbia, an Ivorian-born security guard: “meat, poultry, and the like”.

On a deeper level, produce substitution addresses dilemmas of changing living conditions from the country of origin to the country of destination. A first area of change derives from smaller household sizes: fewer mouths to feed and fewer people available for housework. Immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa substitute millet or broken rice – which require long preparation and cooking time – by alternative cereals like pasta, more easily accessible and preparable in individual rather than collective rations. Senegalese-born Souleymane Faye, Ousmane Cissé, and me were chatting and drinking tea in Mr. Faye's

foyer room in Aulnay-Nord. Mr. Cissé explained: “We the Fula [ethnic group dispersed across the Sahel and West Africa] eat a lot of rice. In the past we used to eat a lot of millet. It's heavy food, for people who work. But nowadays, since it's raining less, people have started to grow more rice, with irrigation systems.” I asked if millet can be found in France. Mr. Cissé specified: “We can find it in the 18th [*arrondissement* of Paris]. In general [in Senegal], there're two meals. The midday meal is rice and the evening meal is millet. Here in France it changes. For instance, it's been two weeks that I haven't eaten rice. I eat a lot of pasta, green peas... it's varied. But it takes time to cook all of that. So, we make quick meals. Here we have small kitchens, whereas there [in Senegal] it's a dish for the entire family, 15 people.”

A second major change, especially for women, is labor market entry and the dwindling disposable time. Ernestine Nzonzi, a Congolese-born accountant, uses eggplants in lieu of African pears and frozen spinach in lieu of fresh sorrel: “I prefer to buy spinach. I defrost it, I cut condiments for the seasoning, and I eat it with plantain. It substitutes the vegetables of my country.” It is easily acquirable, “less of a hassle,” and it is still fresh vegetables. Otherwise, it is too much of a time-consuming chore for a working mother: “First you need to break... break... cut... cut... bit by bit, the water boils...”

Another technique akin to produce substitution is what I call the *madeleine de Proust* (“Proust’s *madeleine*”). In French linguistic culture, a *madeleine de Proust* refers to a passage in Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*. Herein, upon tasting a *madeleine*, the narrator remembers a childhood memory. For the reader’s enjoyment, I include the famous extract below.

Many years had elapsed during which nothing of Combray, except what lay in the theatre and the drama of my going to bed there, had any existence for me, when one day in winter, on my return home, my mother, seeing that I was cold, offered me some tea, a thing I did not ordinarily take. I declined at first, and then, for no particular reason, changed my mind. She sent for one of those squat, plump little cakes called "*petites madeleines*," which look as though they had been moulded in the fluted valve of a scallop shell. And soon, mechanically, dispirited after a dreary day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shiver ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory—this new sensation having had the effect, which love has, of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it was me. I had ceased now to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I sensed that it was connected with the taste of the tea and the cake, but that it infinitely transcended those savours, could not, indeed, be of the same nature. Where did it come from? What did it mean? How could I seize and apprehend it?

[...]

And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray (because on those mornings I

did not go out before mass), when I went to say good morning to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of tea or tisane. The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it; perhaps because I had so often seen such things in the meantime, without tasting them, on the trays in pastry-cooks' windows, that their image had dissociated itself from those Combray days to take its place among others more recent; perhaps because, of those memories so long abandoned and put out of mind, nothing now survived, everything was scattered; the shapes of things, including that of the little scallop-shell of pastry, so richly sensual under its severe, religious folds, were either obliterated or had been so long dormant as to have lost the power of expansion which would have allowed them to resume their place in my consciousness. But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, taste and smell alone, more fragile but more enduring, more immaterial, more persistent, more faithful, remain poised a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unflinchingly, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection.

And as soon as I had recognised the taste of the piece of madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-blossom which my aunt used to give me (although I did not yet know and must long postpone the discovery of why this memory made me so happy) immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like a stage set to attach itself to the little pavilion opening on to the garden which had been built out behind it for my parents (the isolated segment which until that moment had been all that I could see); and with the house the town, from

morning to night and in all weathers, the Square where I used to be sent before lunch, the streets along which I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine. And as in the game wherein the Japanese amuse themselves by filling a porcelain bowl with water and steeping in it little pieces of paper which until then are without character or form, but, the moment they become wet, stretch and twist and take on colour and distinctive shape, become flowers or houses or people, solid and recognisable, so in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann's park, and the waterlilies on the Vivonne and the good folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of Combray and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea.

Proust, Marcel. 1992 [1913]. *In Search of Lost Time. Volume I: Swann's Way*. New York, NY: Random House, pp. 60-65.

Then, to turn any mundane meal into a tender reminder of the food of their youth, informants add a sole ingredient – that is, the *madeleine de Proust* – accessible in communitarian stores. For instance, informants of Antillean heritage use ginger and rum. In a delighted understatement, Jules Biron, a bus driver born in Martinique (French Antilles), revealed that these two products can “give some taste” to any meal.

3. 2. Problem-Solving Accommodations

3. 2. 1. Time Constraints

In analyzing time constraints, I remembered the economic literature about the rising value of time. In contemporary consumer society, time has become “the rarest resource,” in the words of economist Staffan Linder in *The Harried Leisure Class* (1970), hence the stake of its optimization. In the 1970s, studies have investigated how time availability shapes consumer behavior, and how the fields of marketing and advertising cater to time-crunched customers (Bell, 2008 [1976]; Linder, 1982 [1970]; Voss and Blackwell, 1975; Zuzanek, 1974). In the United States, time has been said to be a markedly rare resource, to the point that many households suffer from “time poverty” (Hochschild, 1997; Kalenkoski et al., 2011; Schor, 1992).

In the face of significant time constraints, a first accommodation is resorting to cans while still consuming fruits and vegetables. Mauricette Diop, an accountant, and her husband, a youth worker (both born in France to Senegalese-born parents) are working full-time and care for three school-aged children. Ms. Diop has a long, one-hour commute from her workplace in Malakoff (southwest suburbs) to her apartment in the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris. As a solution, she acquires canned and frozen vegetables since “it's much quicker.” However, whenever she can, she acquires fresh vegetables and prepares them herself.

Second, informants further simplify the culinary process while still using fresh produce. Whenever he has time, Said Karroum, a Moroccan-born plumber, cooks a fish-and-vegetable stew. When in a hurry, he prepares a simple serving of semolina with vegetables and meat or fish. One roommate of Cheick Kouyaté, a Malian-born construction worker, is currently unemployed and has the time to cook dishes in sauce. Mr. Kouyaté, who is employed and “[doesn't] have that much time,” makes pasta with fried eggs. Informants who cannot go home for lunch “adapt” by preparing a homemade sandwich or a lunchbox in the morning. Jules Biron, a bus driver born in Martinique (French Antilles), explained that at midday, he eats something real quick. Then, in the evening, he “enjoys [himself]”: “I'm used to that at work: eating a sandwich quickly for lunch. Then, for dinner, clearly, I eat better, and I eat more! I prepare a good meal, like shrimps with tuna crumbs, rice, lentils... That's what I ate yesterday! (laughs)”

Third, informants count on family to enrich their gastronomic lives. Laura Ramírez, a student born in the United States to Mexican-born parents, indicated: “I work two jobs, I go to school, so I don't really have the time. But I can cook like chicken, rice, and nothing fancy.” Most of the time, her father does the cooking – Mexican dishes, for the most part. Rose Fotso, a Cameroonian-born business assistant, fears that her 11 grandchildren could potentially not consume fresh meat, particularly Nile perch, which is “delicious” but takes a lot of time to cook. Her retirement provides her with ample time to cook, contrary to her children who are juggling between employment, housework, and childcare. Thus, every Sunday, Ms. Fotso hosts a family meal featuring Nile perch. She finds comfort in imagining everyone's memories of those moments after her passing: “On Sundays, we used to eat at grandma's house.”

Fourth, informants use trusted resources. Single men who work long hours and have little disposable time – and actually some disposable income, for not bearing responsibility for feeding anyone else – resort to trusted commercial options: demonstrably clean restaurants, *kebab* shops, and street vendors. I was hanging out at Saliou Brites's hairdressing salon in Goutte d'Or. I asked one of his colleagues how he organizes for his lunch break. He said he used to rely on trusted hands, and now relies on a trusted restaurant: “I live in Sarcelles [northern suburbs]. It's true that before there were two Congolese ladies who used to bring Congolese specialties. They were coming from the suburbs to the neighborhood with the goods in the car, and they were touring the salons. But today they've found a training course, so they're only here on weekends. In general, they're here between 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Now, during the week, I go to the Congolese restaurants on the street. There're two, one a little bit down and one a little bit up, I don't remember the name. I don't go elsewhere, because... Well, I won't say that it's disgusting, but... it's dirty, I don't trust it. So, I only go to those two restaurants.”

These resources can be neighborhood-based. In Aulnay-Nord, one such resource is the *foyer's* collective kitchen, run by immigrant women from sub-Saharan Africa. When short on time, Salif Dramé, a Malian-born garbage collector, gets “African” meals from the *foyer's* kitchen. If he has enough time, he cooks simple dishes in his room, either “African” or “from here”: “*maafe* [West African sauce made with peanut and tomatoes and served with meat and cereals like rice or millet], or pasta, or foods from here [Paris]”. I asked Mr. Dramé how he cooks pasta and he walked me through that simple process of him: “First I put hot water. Then I put the pasta in. And sauce, onions, vegetables, meat.”

Ultimately, Mr. Dramé manages his disposable time while invariably consuming fresh produce: “When I'm on break I eat differently. When I'm working, I go to the *foyer's* kitchen more often. When I'm on break I buy, I go to my room, and I cook.” Another favorite resource is the butcher shop run by Jérôme Ribeiro. Informants speak highly of him. As I repeatedly heard: “He hired good family men from the neighborhood.” “He has a good reputation here.” “I've never been disappointed.” A beloved feature is what Mr. Ribeiro dubs a “hot spot,” that is, a stall of pre-prepared dishes: potatoes, mutton, kebab, *pot-au-feu* (beef stew), *tagines*, grilled meat cuts, chicken thighs, and beef shanks. Mr. Ribeiro explained: “People say: 'I don't have the time, but I'd like a typical dish from my homeland.’”

Lastly, a frequent regret among Mexican immigrants is the general lack of disposable time in American life. Ignacio Figueroa, a Mexican-born food preparation worker, expressed it as a rhyme: “People are busy, people don't have the time.” When they do feel that they do have time, it is something they treasure and feel fortunate for. Marta Cárdenas, a Mexican-born homemaker, feels grateful: “I spend a lot of time in the kitchen, like three hours a day! But I don't work so I have the time. Others don't have the time and go to McDonald's.” Indeed, something Mexican immigrants find especially shocking is eating fast food in the car. As I repeatedly heard: “Here in the United States a lot of people don't have time to cook. So, they eat in the car.” Incidentally, the available empirical evidence shows that time-poor families consume less fast food; nevertheless, they may also consume more ready-made foods available at convenience stores (Kalenkoski and Hamrick, 2013).

This regret can turn into social critique: overworking the so-called American dream into a nightmare. Armando Flores, a Mexican-born kitchen helper, exposed: “In this country it's more important to make money to pay bills than educate the kids and give them healthy food. To begin with, people are working twelve hours. What's going on with the other twelve hours? Well, sometimes they're working fourteen hours. If you're working far away, two hours of transportation. Fourteen, plus two round-trip, eighteen. Well, if you have a car, just one-hour round-trip, and you're eight hours at home. What's the point of it? Having a car, working hard to pay for it, and then only staying eight hours inside! A house just to sleep in it! (laughs) It's like a dream that's not worth living. It's the American nightmare! What's for many the American dream [*el sueño americano*], to me it's the American nightmare [*la pesadilla gringa*].”

3. 2. 2. *Space Constraints*

In analyzing space constraints, I remembered the literature investigating how access to home appliances affects meal practices. Jeffery Sobal and Brian Wansink (2007) suggest calling these domestic food environments “kitchenscapes,” “tablescapes,” and “platescapes”. For instance, Brian Wansink and Ellen Van Kleef (2014) find that having meals in the kitchen or in the living room is associated with lower body mass index (BMI) for adults and children alike, and that leaving the table before the end of the meal is associated with lower BMI for boys. Bradley Appelhans and co-authors (2014) find the availability of eating utensils to be positively associated with frequency of family meals and children’s consumption of homemade meals, over the effects of sociodemographic characteristics.

In the face of significant space constraints, informants strive to continue eating at home by further simplifying the culinary process or by using ready-to-eat, minimally processed foods. Jean-Michel Santos, an IT technician born in France to parents born in Brazil and Martinique (French Antilles), lives in a small *hôtel social* (in France, form of temporary social housing) room. He explained: “Marinating chicken... I can brown it a little bit, cook it more or less, halfway, you see.” Alternatively, informants count on cheap, favorite restaurants. Nasser Arezki, an Algerian-born retail clerk, lives in Saint-Denis (northern suburbs) and works in Goutte d'Or. He pointed out: “At home I can't really cook; it's small.” As a solution, Mr. Arezki eats out at “Arab restaurants” in Goutte d'Or and at “a Turkish place” in La Fourche (18th *arrondissement*). At home, he prepares ready-to-eat foods like “fruits, vegetables, ground meat, pizza”.

Still, housing-insecure informants do not feel fully satisfied with those accommodations. Nadia Oropeza, a Chilean-born homemaker, lives in Pilsen with her son. They face frequent electricity cuts and thus sometimes buy foods from street vendors, which Ms. Oropeza characterizes as “disordered”: “Lots of grease, lots of fried stuff... Oh, a mess!” Omar Amokrane, an Algerian-born street vendor, temporarily lived on a construction site in Goutte d'Or. He feels nostalgic about consuming fresh produce:

OA: When I'm home, in Algeria, I take a tomato, I put a little bit of vinegar, I eat it like a fruit.

CF: Can you do that now?

OA: Come on! (laughs) How could I do that? No, everything that's fruits, fresh, it's not possible.

3. 3. *The Meaningfulness of Simplicity*

3. 3. 1. *An Enjoyable Activity*

Informants find contentment in simple cooking. They enjoy describing favorite recipes off the top of their heads, in a matter of seconds. Below is a selection.

Stir fried noodles with shrimp and eggs, by Boun Yang, a Laotian-born shipping clerk:

“Take instant Asian noodles. Cook them with the small packet of sauce and two eggs. Take frozen Asian shrimp tails. Defrost them separately because, obviously, since it's frozen, it'll exude water! Stir fry the noodles and the shrimp and put onions, herbs, chives, and parsley.”

Yassa and *maafe*, by Omar Niang, a restaurant manager born in France to Senegalese-born parents:

Yassa: “Boil water, put oil, and add salt. Put the rice. Prepare a lot of onions, like, 10. Cook the chicken thighs with broth – Knorr for example, four or five cubes. Put mustard – whatever brand, Amora for example. Put lemon, or even better, lime. And, green olives – but take the pit out, otherwise it can be dangerous! (laughs)”

Maafe: “Put Dakatine, like, a huge pot of Dakatine! [brand of unsweetened peanut butter popular in Francophone Africa.] Then, concentrated tomato sauce. Palm oil. Broken rice. Bay leaves. Meat – it can be beef, chicken, even pork, whatever you

want. Onions, but much less than for *yassa*. You can also put an Antillean pepper, you know, those that look like a ball. Put it before the end of the cooking time and don't let it burst.”

Simple cooking, indeed, elevates fresh produce. Stéphane da Silva, an adult educator born in France to Brazilian- and French-born parents, used to live with an Algerian roommate and was friendly with a Cape Verdean man. Both men taught him recipes based on meat products that he would, separately, find unpalatable, but that he eventually came to enjoy as a cooked dish. For example, Mr. da Silva recounted his judgmental shock upon tasting (and ultimately appreciating) cow's trotters: “He taught me how to cook cow's trotters. You know, trotters are awful, disgusting... Well, it looks disgusting, but it's true that at one moment I was cooking that.”

Informants emphasize that simple cooking does not require too much effort. Among those foods that can certainly be made at home, informants repeatedly cite dairy products (like butter and curdled milk) and baked goods (especially, bread). As a general rule, Malika Zamir, a Comorian-born cosmetologist, does her best to “have everything homemade,” like bread. As strategies, she asks her children to help and takes advantage of holidays. Ms. Zamir insisted that, overall: “It's not that difficult.”

Indeed, simple cooking equates to simple dishes. Marta Cárdenas, a Mexican-born homemaker, outlined: “I cook simple things, like fish in aluminum and with all kinds of spices. Simple things, but with fresh produce, with fruits, vegetables, meat, fish. For instance, if I make *tostadas*, I buy chicken or beef or pork, anything, but I put little chunks.

Then a lot of lettuce, cucumber, cheese... You see? It's fresh, it's simple... and it's delicious.” In a conversation at a WIC Center, Emily Plasil, the director of nutrition services, and Małgorzata Koski, a nutritionist, concurred that people don't have to “cook a four-course meal” or “spend over an hour in the kitchen” to consume fresh produce. Ms. Koski, raised in a working-class Polish immigrant family, gave the example of her mother-in-law, admiring her as “the queen of 20-minute dinners”: “She gets home at like, 10, 10:30, has herself a cup of coffee to sit down and unwind and think about what just happened all day, and then, oh my god, 12 o'clock comes around, she has to whip up something really quick because she has to be out of the door by 1:20 to get to work at 3, you know? So, she's the queen of 20-minute dinners, but she'll give you – [whispers] oh my god her food is so good. She'll make red beans and rice and some beef, and she'll put it into one pot and cook it all in one pot. It'll be done 20 minutes and that's all it takes.”

3. 3. 2. A Reflection of Good Character

For all its simplicity, simple cooking is still some effort that should be done, hence reflecting positive character traits. Being serious about cooking, albeit simple, equates to being serious about life. Caring about being well-fed is akin to caring about work well-done and life well-lived. In informants' words, simple cooking is a topic within broader thoughts about the importance of “life hygiene,” “discipline,” “organization,” “combativeness,” and (practical) “intelligence” as character traits, and knowing how to “get by” and be “tenacious” as sets of know-how and know-how-to-be. As I repeatedly heard: “In life, you should be intelligent.” “In life, you should be combative.” “Life is a struggle.” “Life is difficult.” Sakina Elbadawi, a Comorian-born homemaker, put it as a

series of maxims: “Life is difficult. One must make efforts. You get nothing without efforts, without organization.” Belkacem Guerroumi, an incinerator operator born in France to Algerian- and Moroccan-born parents, conceives as foils those people who seek immediate pleasures, forgoing future consequences: “People only think about one thing: laughing, drinking, having fun. But that's not how life is.”

In this regard, some immigrant parents express vigilance toward their children, out of concern that acculturation could divert them from doing good, working hard, and cooking simple. Constancia Munévar, a Mexican-born homemaker, stated: “We Hispanics are hard-working. We're not takers. We fight to death. Young people, they don't want to study, they don't want to work, they don't want to cook, they don't support their kids... For us Mexican people, your kids who were born here [in the United States], if you don't prepare them with your mentality, of a Mexican, of a hard worker... they get (hushed tone) Americanized, and they get lazy.”

Caring about simple cooking also involves not needing to eat out. Informants normally prefer to rely on their skillset rather than go to the restaurant. Jules Biron, a bus driver born in Martinique (French Antilles), put it as a maxim: “If you would be well served, serve yourself.” That distrust toward restaurants thus derives from the trust in one's own culinary skills. Mauricette Diop, an accountant born in France to Senegalese-born parents, explained: “The *tiep*, for it to be well done, it's not at the restaurant, you know. It's at home. Well, perhaps a single man would have another point of view, a single man who doesn't know how to cook. In my opinion, that may be their customer base, essentially. Because one who knows how to cook...” Relatedly, informants gently tease themselves

for sometimes indulging in “a Greek sandwich” or a “MacDo” (McDonald's in French slang) when they “get lazy”.

Price, also, factors in the rejection of eating out. Wahiba Hammouche, an Algerian-born homemaker, compares the cost of a typical commercially prepared item (pizza, *kebab*) to the actual cost of a homemade meal, and concludes: “Our resources don't allow that [eating out].” In not being cost-effective, eating out also betrays lack of organization. Sakina Elbadawi, a Comorian-born homemaker, studied in Algeria, and remembers: “Over there in Algeria I was living all alone. I used to prepare *galettes* for lunch. Because when you're not organized, you buy sandwiches and it gets very expensive. Well, sometimes I bought juices on the street. But otherwise I used to prepare my own lunches.”

Therefore, informants organize for always having food at home and not ending up in situations where they eat out on a pinch. Pamela Bórquez, a Mexican-born church clerk, prioritizes longer-term expenses, like her children's college tuition: “I'm an enemy of spending like that, eating out: 'Yes, let's eat here!' No. And they say: 'You're stingy.' I'm not stingy; I have to take care of my budget because there're other costs as well. The payments for the universities – I'm helping my daughters a little bit. They're paying and I'm paying as well. So, I must give preference to the payments for them.”

3. 4. Men “*Can Cook Simple Things*”

A classical insight in the sociology of food is that meal-related housework is mostly performed by women, like meal planning (DeVault, 1991; Sluys et al., 1997), cooking

(Fürst, 1997; Harnack et al., 1998; Murcott, 1983, 2000), and broadly, spending time on all things meal (Hamrick et al., 2011; Herpin, 1980). Besides, cohabiting entails the adaptation of men's food practices to those of women (Kremmer et al., 1998; Marshall and Anderson, 2002; Schafer et al., 1999). In this regard, male informants recognize that they cannot cook awe-inspiring, sophisticated dishes like the women in their lives – wives, sisters, and neighbors. Chatting on the central plaza in Aulnay-Nord, Jean Ndoulou, a Congolese-born street vendor, and Olivier Maximin, a tile installer born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles), affirmed their respect for the “ladies in the neighborhood who cook complex dishes”. These dishes are difficult to verbalize and require “experience”. Omar Niang, a restaurant manager born in France to Senegalese-born parents, gave the example of *tiep*: “Ah, *tiep* is complicated. You need experience.”

At the same time, men insist that they can certainly cook simple and satisfying dishes, like, in the fieldnotes below, “pasta with tomato sauce and spices”.

At the market in Aulnay-Nord, Sarah Touati, a homemaker, sells *matlou* (Maghrebi bread made with semolina, yeast, and water), *mhadjeb* (Algerian *crêpe* stuffed with minced tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, garlic, and spices), and *msemen* (Maghrebi rich flatbread usually eaten at breakfast). Her neighbor Brahim Mellouli, an Algerian-born delivery driver, is helping. I ask Ms. Touati how she makes these baked goods. A recent immigrant from Algeria, she says that she does not think she can explain it well in French and proposes that Mr. Mellouli (who is fully bilingual) jots on my notepad. I apologize for not knowing Arabic and thank

them for this cordial offer. Ms. Touati whispers in Mr. Mellouli's ear – very softly, very quickly. Mr. Mellouli feigns overwhelm and says in a jovial tone:

BM: No, you should go to her place and she'll explain everything! (laughs) You'll do a practicum! (laughs) Because I just can't write everything down, it's impossible! There're a lot of things to say, it's not going to work! (laughs)

I laugh and ask Mr. Mellouli if he can make these foods.

BM: Oh no, that's women's work. I can cook things but not that. Arab women are used to that from an early age; their mothers show them. For you it'll be difficult, but just in the beginning, then it'll work fine! (laughs)

CF: And what about men?

BM: Uh, we work, and we eat. That's all. For me it's different, I live alone so I need to do all the cooking. I handle things alone, or I buy from Sarah! Always from Sarah! But (pointing to Ms. Touati's stall), do you want to try something?

CF: I already bought *matlou*. I too am a regular!

BM: Ah, that's good. Because when you eat that, it gives pleasure. It's better than white pasta, oh!

CF: (teasing) So you usually eat white pasta? (laughs)

BM: No, I don't eat white pasta! (laughs) I eat pasta with tomato sauce and everything, all the spices; it does give the flavor.

In “cooking simple things,” men who live alone maintain a sense of comfort and competence. On weekdays, Issouf Tigana, a French-born property manager, often makes savory *crêpes*. On weekends, her Malian-born mother cooks *maafe* for the extended family. Said Karroum, a Moroccan-born plumber, can cook fish-and-vegetable stews.

Stewing lasts up to one hour and a half; in the meantime, he watches TV. However, Mr. Karroum cannot cook *couscous* and *tagine* dishes like her mother: it is too difficult, too complex for him. (*Tagine* dishes are slow-cooked stews made with meat or fish, vegetables, and spices, and cooked in a *tagine*, which designates an earthenware pot.) Thierry Jougon, a retail clerk born in Martinique (French Antilles), qualified his cuisine as “decent, like, pasta with shallots.” Omar Amokrane, an Algerian-born street vendor, described his dinner: “I always make a salad at home: a tomato, vinegar, a small onion, green lettuce, voila!” Belkacem Guerroumi, an incinerator operator born in France to Algerian- and Moroccan-born parents, stressed the need to cook from a variety of fresh produce: “If you eat bifteck every day... Your meal should be based on chicken today, pasta tomorrow, fried onions the day after tomorrow.” Joseph Solo, a palletizer operator born in France to French- and Ivorian-born parents, said that his evening routine is getting home from work, eating “omelet with bread,” and going to bed. Emiliano García, a sheet metal worker born in the United States to Mexican-born parents, outlined: “I cook here [at home], but just for me, every day. I make eggs with *tortillas* or bread.”

In multi-person households, men can “help out” if women are unavailable. Madani Kessié, a house painter born in France to Ivorian-born parents, can cook “simply, rice with sauce and meat, when Madam [his partner] is tired”. (In French, used this way, “Madam” is a term of chivalry.) Jamal Embarek, a French-born restaurant manager, lives with her Algerian-born mother and 10 younger siblings. He prefers the food of his mother (*couscous*, *chorba*) but can cook where needed: “I cook quite well, but simple things,” like “chicken Milanese, that kind of things”. Rafik Mansouri, a line cook born in France to Moroccan-born parents, usually has her sister cook for the entire family (and she cooks

well). He can help by cooking “very simple things like *hachis parmentier*” (French dish made with baked ground meat and mashed potatoes) or “grilled things like *merguez*, ribs”.

All in all, men conceive simple cooking as an intricate set of skills, whose learning requires conscientious effort. They take pride in having learned how to cook, hence becoming autonomous for their gastronomic lives. Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, was describing dishes he likes. I asked if he knew how to cook them, and he paused and stated: “I’m always learning.” Madani Kessié, a house painter born in France to Ivorian-born parents, took a cooking class. He remembers: “I practiced making pasta, rice, knowing how to dose out, to put cumin, a little bit of salt... Cooking was something I had to learn.” Knowing how to cook is, for him, as “important” as other housework skills like cleaning and ironing. It is about being a good son: “My mother is happy that I know how to cook.” And, a good partner as well: “My girlfriend likes it, she finds that cool! She says: 'My boyfriend knows how to cook, knows how to clean!' She even tells that to her girlfriends!”

Doing simple cooking is, ultimately, part of being a happy man, free from “constraints” and “head scratching”. Jules Biron, a bus driver born in Martinique (French Antilles), feels poised: “I’m a good cook, you know. When people come to my house, they want more! (laughs) I’ve learnt. Life is like that; you should have drive. If you want to, no one will tell you: 'Ah, you don't know how to cook? No worries, I'll cook for you every day.' No one's will tell you that. Even your wife, you know! I've lived with a partner various times and I've always got used to be independent, to know how to do things – how to do everything. It even happened to me to live alone when my daughter's mother left, and

some women were telling me: 'You're alone? But how do you manage to stay alone?' Women, you see! 'Tomorrow, I'll help you, I wash the dishes.' 'But there're no dishes to wash!' 'And your laundry?' 'But I haven't asked you anything! Mind your business! (laughs) I'm doing well alone!' I can do the laundry at midnight, I can cook at whatever hour, voila! No one's scratching my head, and that's what I love.”

On a deeper level, men frame simple cooking within contemplation about the universal difficulties of human life. Thierry Jougon, a retail clerk born in Martinique (French Antilles), put it as a mantra: “In life, what you should do is: 'eat well, work well, reflect well'.” Belkacem Guerroumi, an incinerator operator born in France to Algerian- and Moroccan-born parents, developed a culinary metaphor, comparing living an organized life to preparing a good stew: “It's like cooking a stew. How do you cook a stew? First you put oil, then meat, then onions, then carrots, then beets. Because for the carrots, cooking takes one hour. Potatoes, it's 20 minutes. Carrots, one hour, potatoes, 20 minutes. You should calculate everything. You should calculate everything, everything, everything. If you don't calculate, you're cooked, you know. You're cooked right from the beginning.” (Mr. Guerroumi is playing on the two senses of the verb “cook” in French: literally, cooking, and figuratively, causing hurt or damage.)

4. Appreciating Culinary Commonalities and Singularities

How do first- and second-generation immigrants identify, here and there, foods and dietary practices? In this section, I document their perceptions of commonalities and singularities between the cuisines of the various countries they have lived in and the

cuisines of fellow immigrant groups. First- and second-generation immigrants deem French and American cuisines similar to the global mainstream. They regard the cuisine of their origin region and country as globalized back there and as universalized when traveling to France and the United States. They approach the cuisines of fellow immigrant groups through two frameworks: observation and appreciation. They observe a common taste for freshness, naturalness, and homemadedness, coexisting with singularities in culinary techniques. These commonalities open up opportunities for intercultural exchanges, materialized in acquisition, gift-giving, and eating out practices. Ultimately, first- and second-generation immigrants reject cultural nativism and exclusion, instead referring to universal principles of freshness, naturalness, and homemadedness.

4. 1. French and American Cuisines: Global Mainstream Food

What foods do first- and second-generation immigrants identify as characteristic of everyday life in France and the United States? When I invited informants in Paris to cite French foods, their responses included: “pasta,” “salad,” “pizzas,” “*ravioli*,” “tomato sauce,” “fish salad,” “mixed vegetables,” “sautéed potatoes,” “fried chicken,” “stir-fry,” “macaroni with beef,” and “ground beef patties with pasta”. Informants thus base their judgement on the observation of the actual, globalized dietary practices of the everyday French people. Thereby, they refrain from a traditionalist, even primordialist stance, whereby French cuisine would be, say, pork guts, blood sausage, and *tripes à la mode de Caen*. For the reader’s appetite, *tripes à la mode de Caen* is a traditional dish of Normandy (northwestern France) made with a beef’s (four-chambered!) stomach, hooves and bones,

herbs and vegetables, cider, and *calvados* (apple or pear brandy). It is delicious, although a bit heavy.

Moreover, informants characterize French culinary practices as quick and easy. Taieb Derraji, a Moroccan-born food packer, pitted “Eastern” cuisine, that is, *couscous* and *tagine* dishes, against French cuisine, that is, “things that are already prepared, that are prepared easily”. Jacques Okoundji, a Congolese-born production line worker, made a thought experiment: if his wife were European, he is afraid he would eat food that is all dry, light, and raw, and thus lack strength for working hard.

Additionally, French food lacks spiciness. Jules Biron, a bus driver born in Martinique (French Antilles), teased how “the French” only season with “salt and pepper, and, with a bit of luck, *mayonnaise!* (laughs)” At a neighborhood festival in Aulnay-Nord, Malika Zamir, a Comorian-born cosmetologist, and her cousin Sakina Elbadawi, a homemaker, were selling *samosas* filled with meat, eggs, and onions – three for one euro. I came to ask questions, and to eat as well. I commented that the *samosas* were markedly spicy, which I like. Ms. Zamir responded: “We [Comorians] eat spicy. Westerners and the like don't eat that spicy. Even Maghrebis, you know, when they ask us [*samosas*], sometimes they ask, 'not spicy'! (laughs) We Black people eat spicy. Well, I don't mean to brag, but our food is more flavorful.”

For informants in Chicago, American foods also correspond to the global mainstream, like “spaghetti,” “lasagna,” and “meat loaf”. Inmaculada González, a Mexican-born homemaker, identified “chili peppers, *tortillas* and meat” as Mexican. She acquires them

at the grocery stores in Pilsen (La Casa del Pueblo and Cermak Products) which supply “pure Mexican food”. At grocery stores where “there's everything,” she acquires “bread, hamburgers, and soft drinks”. Interestingly, some Mexican immigrants also identify those mainstream foods as “Italian”. I asked Susana Ortega, a Mexican-born homemaker: “What kind of food do you cook?” She replied: “Mexican and... Italian. Pasta, chicken, potatoes, pizzas...”

In comparative perspective, immigrants share a taste for fresh produce and strong flavors (hot, pungent, spicy, sour), whereas Americans prefer bland processed foods and have a sweet tooth. Elena López, a bus driver born in the U.S. to Mexican-born parents, comments that Mexicans prepare fresh salsas whereas Americans purchase processed versions: “I noticed American people eat a lot of prepared salsas, like Tampico or... We Mexicans make our own salsas.” María Hernández, a Mexican-born home health nurse, and me were about to spend the day together. While she was providing nursing care at patients' homes across the West Side and adjacent suburbs, I stayed in the car and worked on my computer. Ms. Hernández suggested: “For breakfast, we're going to have it the American way, and for lunch, like home [Mexico]!” Below are fieldnotes describing how that came to be:

We stop for breakfast at IHOP Pancakes in Cicero (western suburbs). Our server is a Latina in her late teens. María Hernández introduces her order with a bonding joke: “So we're going to order... Oh! I'm losing my English already! [*¡Ay, ya se me quita el inglés!*] (laughs)”

Ms. Hernández eats scrambled eggs, two pieces of bacon, hash browns, pancakes with maple syrup, and coffee with sugar. I eat scrambled eggs, two sausages, hash browns, pancakes with blueberry syrup, and black coffee. Ms. Hernández interprets: “Here it's an American place but they adapted to Mexicans' tastes. The scrambled eggs, they prepared them the Mexican way: it's real egg. In American places it's not real egg.”

On the side of the table is placed a set of three pancake syrups (blueberry, maple, peanut butter) and three sauces (ketchup, Tabasco, Cholula). Ms. Hernández comments: “They put blueberry because it makes it less sweet, more sour. And they put Mexican *salsas*. This one [Cholula] tastes a little bit like Valentina.”

For lunch, we stop at Tequila Cantina Grill, a family-style restaurant in Garfield Ridge (Southwest Side), and order *guisado de puerco* (pork stew) and coffee.

Fast food is also distinctively “American”. Armando Flores, a Mexican-born kitchen helper, stated: “When it comes to American food, you'll never find anything cheaper than McDonald's.” Accordingly, immigrant cuisines are defined as homemade dishes using fresh produce, whereas American cuisine features the processed foods of fast-food and fast-casual restaurants – even those run by immigrants. Emiliano García, born in the United States to Mexican-born parents, is a retired sheet metal worker and lives in Pilsen. He identifies the *tacos* from the local *taquerías* and the produce – “*carne asada*, ribs, barbecue, and the like” – from Cermak Produce (local grocery store) as “Mexican”. Whenever he wants to eat “something American,” Mr. García considers four options: McDonald's for “hamburgers, cheeseburgers,” a Polish diner “next to the Expressway and Roosevelt” for “Polish sausages, hot dogs, pork chops,” local greasy spoons serving

“hamburgers” (“There're a lot of places that sell hamburgers there at 21st and Union.”), and an Italian eatery for “pizza, Polish pork chops, steaks”.

“American” foods are typically available at “American” stores, and “Mexican” foods at “Mexican” stores. Cristina Muñoz, a legal assistant born in the U.S. to Cuban- and Mexican-born parents, explained: “I go to Aldi's (discount store) for American food, like chips, pasta, macaroni and cheese, that kind of stuff. There, it's much cheaper. I go to Mexican stores for *tortillas*, seasonings, chili peppers... Everything needed for Mexican cuisine.” Pamela Bórquez, a Mexican-born church clerk, acquires foods “in crates,” like milk and almonds, at Costco (membership-only warehouse club). Otherwise, she shops at “the stores here, in the neighborhood [Pilsen]”. She gave the reasons why: “because these stores are more economical, and they have a lot of Mexican things. For example, *tortillas*: there you find them all.”

Long-time immigrants also report a greater availability of “Mexican” foods in “American” stores in recent years. María Hernández, a Mexican-born nurse, said about Aldi's (discount store): “Before there were just American products and they were ugly. Now they have a great variety of produce, including organic produce and produce from everywhere.” This includes “Mexican produce” like *chorizo* and *queso fresco* (literally, “fresh cheese” – in Mexican cuisine, soft, mild cheese made from cow's milk or a combination of cow's and goat's milk).

For children of immigrants, French and American cuisine is the food from the school cafeteria, whereas their heritage cuisine is the food their parents make. Cambodian-born

Keo Vathanaka, a production line worker, told of his children (now young adults): “They’ve been eating at the canteen since kindergarten: that’s why they like French cuisine a lot.” U.S.-born Laura Ramírez, a college student who lives with her Mexican-born parents, thought out loud: “When I think about authentic Mexican food, I think about homemade food, stuff that I eat at home.”

The second-generation immigrant diet is indeed more mixed. Auguste Le Bihan, a store manager in Château Rouge, observes it with amusement: “They [children of immigrants] probably eat a lot of pasta and *cordons bleus* [breaded and pan-fried meat with cheese filling], but they also like *aloko* [fried plantain] and typically African dishes because they eat them every day, like *attiéké* [side dish made from fermented and granulated cassava].” Mr. Le Bihan recognizes these second-generation immigrants by their accent – not a sub-Saharan African accent, but a suburbanite, working-class accent: “Customers do come from Africa. Objectively, I realize it because sometimes I meet their children! They [the parents] have been there for twenty years, so they have children who are 15, 16, 18, 20 years. They [the children] come here sent on a mission by their mom, they come with a shopping cart. They don’t have an accent, or they have a suburban accent, a working-class Parisian accent. But not the African accent, in any case. So, they’re easy to identify.”

4. 2. The Cuisine of Origin Regions and Countries: Universalized Here, Globalized There

First- and second-generation immigrants call on natives to resist the urge to ethnicize their quotidian tastes and practices, in a slippery slope toward exoticization, otherization, and

exclusion. Upon introducing the research to fellow volunteers at a soup kitchen in Pilsen – “I’m interested in the food of Mexicans in Chicago,” a fellow volunteer replied: “Well, we don’t eat *tacos*! (laughs) Lots of people think that we Mexicans eat *tacos* and that’s all.” Ignacio Figueroa (a Mexican-born food preparation worker) satirized: “Yes, *güeros* be like: ‘Cool, folklore!’ ‘Oh, *tacos*, cool! Cool!’”

Informants emphasize that like it or not, here is not like home, and that they should find ways to recreate their craft. “Authenticity” is a quixotic quest; instead, informants find contentment in that their tastes and practices have “gotten universal”. Mexican-born Alejandro Becerril, a production line worker who left Mexico in his early twenties and has been living in Chicago (Pilsen and Gage Park) since then, reflected: “These are new foods; they’re not as authentic. Now they’re a little bit more mixed, more universal, not ‘authentic-authentic’ anymore.” Hugo Sánchez, an Ecuadorian-born community organizer, lives in Pilsen, a neighborhood home to a significant Mexican immigrant population. He feels that he has “adapted”: his quotidian diet has turned more “Mexican”. Whenever craving for a particular food from Ecuador, like red snapper, Mr. Sánchez can still travel to communitarian stores in the North Side. In his words: “I eat more Mexican food now. But when I try to eat Ecuadorian food, I go to the North Side. There’re some Ecuadorian places or Ecuadorian small stores, so I can buy something that I miss. I’ve adjusted quite a bit.”

Besides, informants distinguish those foods that can be found here in Paris and Chicago although under altered tastes and qualities, from those that are just too different here compared to there. Yet, it does not feel heartbreaking; rather, it provides opportunities to

find humor in everyday immigrant life. Jules Biron (born in Martinique, French Antilles, bus driver, resident of Aulnay-Nord) sometimes wants to buy coconut ice cream. Of course, those he finds in Paris are processed and not that tasty. But they still evoke pleasurable memories.

JB: Coconut is part of my life – it's so good. I was raised with three coconut trees at my parents' house. Every day we would wake up with coconuts. The cream... (pauses) Every morning, school or not. We would always wake up fifteen minutes earlier to pick the coconuts! (laughs) Eating the cream... So good. That was the way we were prepared to go to school! (laughs) Ah, these are pleasures that we can't have here [in Aulnay-Nord] within four walls.

CF: You mean that there's no coconut tree in your apartment?

JB: (laughs) Not yet, no! (laughs) Those pleasures...

Informants also comment on the effects of globalization back in their region and country of origin. They call on natives not to pit Western modernity against Global South traditionalism. Their observations, here and there, put that fiction to rest. Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, observed that modern-day Algerians do turn to “quick cooking,” like “fried eggs” and “French fries”. Imported foods are now widely available – for example, “cheese, Italian tomato” – and women “are well integrated into society; they work,” so that ultimately, “no one cooks like her mom anymore”. For that matter, France has gone through the same historical trajectory. Take *baguette*, for example: “In the 1940s, it was like, 'the oven and the mill',” whereas the modern-day French just go to the bakery.

Therefore, informants do not necessarily assign ethnic identifiers to their quotidian diet. Rather, they define it, first and foremost, as simple cooking using fresh produce. Mauricette Diop, an accountant born in France to Senegalese-born parents, cooks “African dishes” on two occasions: on Thursdays for her husband and children, and on Sundays for the extended family. These dishes include *tiep*, a Sahelian dish made with rice, fish or meat, tomato paste, and vegetables, and *yassa*, a Senegalese dish made with onions, lemons, and marinated chicken or fish. Other than that, her weekly planning is entirely based on fruits and vegetables, meat, and fish: “On Mondays, we generally eat vegetables. On Tuesdays, pasta. On Wednesdays, potatoes or beans, so, white or kidney beans or lentils. On Thursdays, I make a dish that's rather African, so, *tiep* or *yassa*, with rice. On Fridays, potatoes again, or salad. Well, that's my theory, sometimes in practice... (laughs) sometimes it's not like that. On Saturdays, if there're leftovers, it's good. On Sundays, we have a family *tiep*.” On Sundays, Angayarkanni Jayasinghe, a Sri Lankan-born janitor, cooks chicken or fish curry (which she identifies as “Sri Lankan”) and roast chicken with salt and chili pepper (to which she does not assign an ethnic identifier). Both dishes are cooked simply and made from fresh produce, which is what she mostly cares about.

Now, how is ethnic cuisine meaningful? First, immigrant parents regret that their native-born children abandon certain traditional dishes. Natalia Rodríguez, a seamstress born and raised in Puebla (central Mexico), goes to a church where most congregants are *poblano* as well. Church events usually feature *mole poblano*, a *mole* (sauce) from Puebla made with chocolate and *mulato* peppers and accompanying turkey. American

mainstream food is also provided for children who don't like *mole*: “That's why we give them hot dogs, or we have someone bring fried chicken from Popeyes [fast-food restaurant chain] or Kentucky [Fried Chicken]. And, we also make chicken with salad or spaghetti.” While regretting their U.S.-born children's dispreferences, these Mexican immigrant parents feel benevolent and willing to accommodate them “so that they're also included and eat and feel good too. It matters, it really does”.

Second, when it comes to the cuisine they do identify as from their origin region and country, informants think of it as reserved for special occasions, not for the quotidian diet. These dishes identified as “from the homeland” get qualified as complex. At a church event in Pilsen, the foods and drinks served were brown rice chili, *tostadas* (literally, “toasted” – deep-fried corn *tortillas*), *picadillo* (hash) made with ground beef, green peas and diced carrots, red *chile* pork *tamales* (corn dough steamed in a vegetable leaf like banana, bamboo or corn, and filled with any ingredient), and *agua de jamaica* (hibiscus iced tea). Two churchgoers commented: “That's the food of your grandma. This is what we eat on weekends or when we're with the grandma. Or it's restaurant food. It takes you three hours to cook.” Indeed, another churchgoer told me that a group of volunteers had spent the afternoon before cooking those dishes.

For first- and second-generation immigrants, ethnic cuisine is thus comfort food for remembering their roots, party food for giving pleasure to loved ones, and festival food for celebrating their cultural heritage collectively. In Chicago, several neighborhood festivals celebrate Mexican cuisine: *Mole de Mayo* (in May) and *Tacos y Tamales* Festival (in July) in Pilsen, and Taste of Mexico (in May) in Little Village (Mexican-majority

neighborhood adjacent to Pilsen). These festivals feature dishes supplying “T vitamin” (*vitamina T*). In Mexican Spanish, this phrase refers to a set of traditional comfort foods that all happen to start with the letter T, like *tacos*, *tamales*, *tlacoyos*, *tlayudas*, *tortas*, and *tostadas*. In detail:

Taco: corn or wheat *tortilla* topped with a filling

Tamale: corn dough steamed in a vegetable leaf like banana, bamboo, or corn, and filled with any ingredient

Tlacoyo: fried or toasted corn dough filled with any ingredient

Tlayuda: thin and crunchy *tortilla* covered with avocado, cheese, lettuce, meat, pork lard, refried beans, and salsa, from the southwestern state of Oaxaca

Torta: sandwich

Tostada: literally, “toasted” – deep-fried corn *tortilla*

Informants of Mexican heritage stress that *vitamina T* cannot anchor a quotidian diet. Ignacio Figueroa, a Mexican-born food preparation worker, critiques: “Eating *tortas*, *tamales*, *tortas*, *tacos*, *tortas*, *tamales*, *tlacoyos* all the time isn't healthy. Because we Mexicans overeat that. *Vitamina T!* That contributes to obesity. It's fattening.” Marta Cárdenas, a Mexican-born homemaker, put it simply: “*Vitamina T* is delicious but it's very greasy, it's super heavy. So, it's for parties.” Constanca Munévar, a Mexican-born homemaker, commented: “For a party, we make some *tamales* or a *pozole* [soup made with hominy, meat, vegetables, herbs, and spices]. But we don't (emphatic tone) 'eat' that, and lots of people think that we eat that every single day.” The quotidian cuisine involves simple ingredients and techniques, whereas making dishes for special occasions is

complex and time-consuming.

I make *tacos* with Elena López at her apartment in Pilsen. Ms. López, now in her early twenties, was born in the United States to Mexican-born parents. She works as a bus driver and has lunch at home between two shifts. She receives a text from her Mexican-born boyfriend, who works as a window washer in downtown Chicago: “My boyfriend started asking, that jerk. Cause he's like: 'Why are you teaching her *tacos*? You should teach her *mole* or something more badass.’” I wonder: “But why *tacos* aren't as badass as *mole*?” She replies: “Because *taquitos* are so easy. It takes less than 30 minutes, less than 15 minutes. What it takes to make the *salsa* is what it takes to cook altogether.” *Mole* – in Mexican cuisine, sauces made with chili pepper and served with meat – is more sophisticated: “First you need to roast the chicken, which takes most of the time. It takes, I think, like an hour to make all the juices come off.”

Similarly, in Paris, informants of Maghrebi heritage emphasize that Arabic desserts, which they qualify as “so good,” “so greasy,” and “so sweet,” are for special occasions like birthdays, weddings, and religious holidays. Throughout Ramadan, Maghrebi-owned stores in Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d’Or usually close during the day and open at sunset to sell imported soft drinks (e.g., Boga, Ifri, Mirinda, Selecto) and homemade desserts for *iftar* (literally, “break of a fast” – evening meal marking the end of the day’s fast). Picture 1.1 depicts one of such stores (in normal times, a sandwich shop) in Goutte d’Or. Below is a list of the desserts usually sold:

baklava: pastry made with layered filo, filled with nuts and seeds, and held together with honey or syrup

balah el sham: deep-fried batter soaked in syrup

gazelle ankles: crescent-shaped cookies filled with almond paste, from Morocco

griwech: pastry made with flour, fat, and orange blossom water, from Algeria

kalb el louz: literally, “almond heart” – pastry made with semolina and almonds and soaked in syrup, from Algeria

mchewek: literally, “thorny” – pastry made with almond flour, eggs, and sugar, from Algiers

zlabia: circle-shaped deep-fried batter soaked in syrup

Finally, informants like to tell their ways of accessing and acquiring rare traditional foodstuffs, which become objects of desire. Immigrants from Mexico cite fresh blue corn tortillas, *jumiles* (stink bugs), *flor de calabaza* (squash blossoms), *huitlacoche* (corn smut), pumpkin seeds, *mole*, *tamales*, and *queso fresco*. Those from sub-Saharan African countries cite fruits like mangoes and pineapples. Those from Maghrebi countries cite olive oil and *ras el hanout* (literally, “head of the store” – spice mix in Maghrebi cuisine). Those from the French Antilles cite sugarcane juice and rum. In Chicago, these rarities are available at flea markets in the neighborhoods of Little Village (known as La Villita in Spanish, on the West Side) and Back of the Yards (Southwest Side), and in Paris, in the ethnic store clusters. Nevertheless, for the sake of “quality,” informants prefer, as those of Maghrebi heritage say, to bring these rarities directly from the *bled* (from Algerian Arabic *bilād*, “hinterland” – in French, affectionate way to refer to one’s hometown). To do so, they make arrangements within groups of friends, neighbors, or relatives, by taking

advantage of everyone's periodic trips to the homeland. Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, tells these travels and exchanges with delight: "When I return to Algeria, I bring the quota with me! For me and for my friends."

4. 3. The Cuisines of Fellow Immigrant Groups: Observation and Appreciation

Regarding the cuisines of fellow immigrant groups with whom they live, informants observe a common taste for simple cooking using fresh produce, alongside singularities in culinary techniques. Their framework is to appreciate the diversity of one and all's craft. They feel confident in their own craft and find pleasure in every opportunity to enjoy the craft of others, through acquisition, gift-giving, and eating out practices.

4. 3. 1. Common Produce, Singular Culinary Techniques

Upon observing the cuisines of fellow immigrant groups, informants conclude that a lot of dishes are based on similar produce. For instance, in Paris, a common culinary pattern is cooking cereal – rice for informants of sub-Saharan African heritage, semolina for informants of Maghrebi heritage – with vegetables and meat or fish. Below is the transcript of a conversation in a park in Aulnay-Nord with Wassila Khezzar, a Moroccan-born server, and Aya Camara, a Senegalese-born sales manager. They realize that the cuisines from their regions and countries of origin have a lot in common.

WK: We're talking about how we make food, what dishes we prepare...

AC: Ah, the dishes are similar. For us [people of sub-Saharan African heritage, compared to people of Maghrebi heritage] it's not semolina but rice. Always, sauce, potatoes, tomatoes, meat, vegetables, celery, carrots... We make similar things, you see. Except that for us, it's not semolina but rice. In Senegal, we eat rice all the time! (laughs)

WK: Wait, we do eat rice too!

AC: Really?

WK: Yes, we eat rice, but we prepare it with chicken.

AC: Interesting. For us, it's rice only. Semolina, no.

WK: Whereas we prepare semolina with onions, garlic, parsley...

AC: Yes, Maghrebis and [sub-Saharan] Africans, it's the same basis. But not the French.

CF: Because the French...

AC: They take things in jars, frozen things... We don't eat that! I cook. Every weekend, I prepare, I make big pots. So, all things pre-cooked, frozen, defrosted: no! Or, all things sandwiches, Quick [chain of fast-food hamburger restaurants], McDonald's: no, I don't like that. That's why, even though I get meal vouchers at work, I give them to my daughter who works at the [Charles de Gaulle] airport; she's a receptionist. Greek sandwiches, oh, I can't eat that! The fries, they should be divided by four! Even though it's cheap, I can't finish it, because I don't eat those things. My daughter, she orders a Greek sandwich, she eats it all. And I say: "How can you do that? I can't."

Informants emphasize that fresh produce knows no ethnicity: freshness and naturalness

are universal principles. They conceive regional classifications, beyond ethnic or national ones. For instance, informants of Sri Lankan heritage point out that “Indian produce and Sri Lankan produce” are similar. Comparing fruits and vegetables from the French Antilles and from sub-Saharan Africa, Anatole Lissouba, a Congolese-born professor, stated: “All the chili peppers that you see in Château Rouge, it's what we grow in Africa. Or in the Antilles, the French Antilles grow that as well. But in Africa these are the same things, that's the same chili pepper.” Jules Biron, a bus driver born in Martinique (French Antilles), hypothesized that the only difference between cropping bananas in sub-Saharan Africa and in the French Antilles might be, perhaps, the intensity of the sun, without much effect in the end. If anything, informants find minor nuances in consumption. Ecuadorian-born Hugo Sánchez, who lives and works (as a community organizer) in Mexican-majority Pilsen, observed that Ecuadorian and Mexican cuisines broadly rely on similar produce, except that, comparatively, people of Ecuadorian heritage consume more rice and more pork.

On the other hand, besides the common practices of batch cooking, batch acquiring, and produce substitution, culinary techniques tend to be differentiated across immigrant groups. Géraldine Mbarga, a Cameroonian-born executive assistant, observed that the people of Maghrebi heritage she has known also use okra but cook it differently, putting it in sauces instead of grinding it. Below is the transcript of a conversation between Mexican-born sisters Consuelo Wolff (a business assistant) and Marta Cárdenas (a homemaker), while we were driving from church in Pilsen to Ms. Wolff's apartment in Irving Park (Northwest Side). Ms. Wolff sometimes acquires produce at Ecuadorian stores in her home neighborhood, and observed:

CW: Jamaicans cook chicken in ways that look like ours.

MC: And *carnitas* [literally, “little meats” – pork simmered in lard until tender and seasoned with herbs and spices].

CW: And *carnitas*! Jamaicans use hibiscus, bay leaves, cumin. They also use a lot of oregano. On Wednesday, I bought an Ecuadorian chicken, and they gave me plantains, fried plantains. But they don't crush them like we do, they cut them into pieces, and they fry them. They also gave me rice, but the rice, they cook it in the chicken broth, like soup. It's white rice but they cook it in the chicken broth. And black beans, and corn. But the black beans don't have any seasoning, they just take them out of the pot. So, I thought about it, these are a lot of similar things.

Informants comment that thanks to these interactions with people from diverse heritages, their dietary judgement has been gaining in complexity. Pamela Bórquez, a Mexican-born church clerk, remarked that in Mexico, all things Asian get grouped together as “Chinese,” whereas in Chicago, where immigration from Asia is higher in numbers and in diversity, the same foods get reidentified as “Hindu cuisine, Thai cuisine, Chinese cuisine, Japanese cuisine... Whereas in Mexico every food looks like Chinese to you. No, here [in Chicago] you also have, say, Cambodian, Japanese, Chinese... No, there [in Mexico] everything's Chinese! (laughs)” Immigrants from underrepresented countries get to familiarize themselves with the cuisines of immigrants from the most represented countries. Sirimavo Lakshani, a Sri Lankan-born janitor, mentioned that she likes “Algerian food”. She learned it from Algerian next-door neighbors and friends from a social center in her home neighborhood of Aulnay-Nord.

4. 3. 2. Acquisition Practices

Provided they are fresh and natural, informants are happy to integrate foreign foods into their culinary repertoire. Their preference is for freshness and naturalness, forgoing considerations of ethnicity or authenticity. Badira Lamrani, a Moroccan-born janitor, transforms “Moroccan recipes” by adding ingredients from foreign cuisines (sweet potatoes from sub-Saharan African cuisine, chard and Brussels sprout from French cuisine), all available at markets. She feels glad: “For example, the *couscous*, I put vegetables, I put sweet potatoes... all the [sub-Saharan] African potatoes that are available at the market. I put chard, Brussels sprout... I put everything! (laughs) Vegetables that I didn't know about over there in Morocco.”

Relatedly, informants make no fuss about acquiring produce from stores run by people of a different heritage. Susana Ortega, a Mexican-born homemaker, lives in Bridgeport (South Side), home to an important Chinese immigrant population. She feels content to access bamboo leaves for making *tamales* at Chinese stores. In Aulnay-Nord, informants of sub-Saharan African and Antillean heritage mention the convenience of finding produce close to home, either in the neighborhood or in the adjacent city of Sevrans, from a diversity of stores, identified as “Pakistani,” “Chinese,” and “Arab”. Gilbert Zubar, a railway worker born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles) feels appreciative: “Spices, yams, sweet potatoes: we find them at the Chinese stores. Limes and chili peppers: everywhere.”

Immigrants from underrepresented countries, who cannot count on communitarian stores for specialties, find alternatives at stores of fellow immigrant groups. Stéphane da Silva,

an adult educator born in France and raised in Brazil by Brazilian- and French-born parents, enjoys cooking *feijoadas* (in the Lusophone world, stew made with beans and pork or beef). He feels fortunate to access all the necessary ingredients in his home neighborhood of Goutte d'Or, “at the little [sub-Saharan African and Maghrebi] stores,” enumerating: “You can find black or kidney beans, you can find cassava flour, you can find chili pepper, coriander...”

Ultimately, freshness, naturalness, and price – over concepts of ethnicity or authenticity – are the chief preferences in acquisition practices. The neighborhood of La Chapelle in the 18th *arrondissement* of Paris features a cluster of Sri Lankan Tamil stores, known as “Little Jaffna” (Dequirez, 2010). Informants in Goutte d'Or, of various origins, comment that the white basmati rice at these Sri Lankan Tamil stores is better and cheaper than at supermarkets. Raúl Paredes, a Peruvian-born food preparation worker, acquires treated white basmati rice at Sri Lankan stores in La Chapelle: it tastes like the rice of his youth, and it is cheaper than at supermarkets. Mr. Paredes does not have recourse to the sub-Saharan African stores in Château Rouge, although closer to his home, because, as he said, their rice is “less treated”.

In this regard, non-Muslims' attitudes toward *halal* meat in Paris are quite remarkable. Non-Muslim residents of Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or, where significant numbers of residents are Muslim, mention that much of the neighborhood meat supply is labeled *halal*. However, they do not mind it, because they find no intrinsic differences of taste between *halal* and non-*halal* meat. *Halal* does not matter; freshness and naturalness do. Therefore, non-Muslim residents say they can certainly buy *halal* meat: that label, as such,

does not factor in their acquisition decisions. Sirimavo Lakshani, a Sri Lankan-born janitor, is a practicing Catholic. She said she acquires meat at a “Muslim butcher shop,” paused, and clarified that it was just a neutral descriptor: in her view, it does not matter whether the butcher is “Muslim”. She remarked, humorously: “But Carrefour [hypermarket chain] is neither Muslim, nor Christian!” What only matters for her is whether the produce is “good” and “clean”. Likewise, Gilbert Zubar – a railway worker born in Guadeloupe (French Antilles) and a practicing Catholic – commented: “I go to the *halal* butcher shop but [remember: but is a killer] its meat isn't bad [understand it as litotes: it is good] and the store is well-stocked.”

On these grounds, non-Muslim residents steer away from politics and affirm acceptance. Armando Lopes, a Portuguese-born taxi driver and a non-practicing Catholic, reframed the question: “*Halal*, what does that mean? I see *halal*, I'm thinking: 'Everyone can eat that.' This is what I think. Whether one is Christian, Buddhist...” Similarly, Lassana Seck, a Senegalese-born production line worker and a non-practicing Catholic, took an analytic, unprejudiced approach to the matter: “For me, there's no problem. There're butcher shops that aren't *halal* and others that are *halal*. I go, I take the freshest meat. There're butcher shops that aren't *halal* where the meat isn't as fresh as the one of other butcher shops that are *halal*. I just take the meats that I find fresh.” *Halal* only relates to the ritual at the time of slaughter. Originally, *halal* and non-*halal* meats come from the exact same animal: “It's slitting the throat, it's the ritual. That's all. It's the same cow, the same veal, the same chicken. There's no chicken that's been raised the *halal* way.”

If anything, the complaint is not about the very supply of *halal* meat. Instead, it is that it limits the variety of produce to choose from. As I repeatedly heard: “In the end we always eat the same meats.” Rose Fotso, a Cameroonian-born business assistant, is a practicing Catholic. She affirms universalism: “I have no problem with color or religion or whatever. As long as what I buy suits me.” Whenever she wants fresh pork cuts, Ms. Fotso goes to the market of Saint-Denis (northern suburbs), which is larger than the one of Aulnay-Nord. Alternatively, she sends one of her grandchildren buy ham and *saucisson* at a local supermarket. (In French cuisine, *saucissons* are dry-cured pork sausages.)

In any case, the *halal* question provides material for good-natured playfulness and funny stories. Manon Delhoste, a student born in France to French-born parents, is atheist. She commented that *halal* does not matter for veal and lamb, which she acquires at the closest – incidentally, *halal* – butcher shop in her home neighborhood of Goutte d'Or. She acquires pork at a local supermarket, admitting in jest: “I'm a great pig eater!” Marie-Claire Bertrand, an administrative assistant born in France to French parents, is a non-practicing Catholic. She ironized a complaint about the retail food environment of her home neighborhood of Aulnay-Nord: “You're forced to take the bus to be able to buy *saucisson* slices!” Note that in French public culture, *saucisson* symbolizes the French way of life – the stereotypical French picnic is made of *baguette*, *saucisson*, and red wine.

4. 3. 3. *Gift-Giving Practices*

Informants enjoy interacting with people of diverse heritages – be they friends, neighbors, coworkers – and discovering their craft. I talked about it with Ahmed Bennacer, an

Algerian-born construction worker, in a park in Goutte d'Or, while he was on break from playing chess with friends: “I make *tiep* my way – not the [sub-Saharan] African way, but that's fine. Because I know their ingredients. I make Chinese food because I live with Chinese people. Sometimes Arab food also.” Sebastián Pérez, a Mexican-born custodian, expressed his pleasure of working in a diverse environment: “I've tasted it all! Everything! At work sometimes we throw parties. Like last night, we had an Arab party, they offered their food. There're people from all over the world at work: Mexicans, Arabs, Chinese, Blacks... everyone. So, we throw parties. I'm not picky about food.”

On an imagined level, discovering foreign cuisines is an advantage of living in diverse neighborhoods, cities, and countries. Informants who live in Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or appreciate a neighborhood climate characterized by “conviviality,” “generosity,” and “solidarity,” in contrast to less diverse neighborhoods – informants especially cite the 16th *arrondissement* of Paris, commonly associated with wealth in the French public discourse. Rafik Mansouri, a line cook born in France to Moroccan-born parents, put it as a manifesto: “France is mix, France is diversity. You're Portuguese, you're bringing, whatever, cod. I'm Moroccan, I'm bringing *couscous*. It's mixed.” Since living in Paris, Safia Leroy, a Moroccan-born school aide, has been “impressed by the variety of everything that's about food, vegetables, fruits... from the entire world!” Although identifying as “North African,” she discovered “[sub-Saharan] African” cuisine up north, in Paris: “We're African, North African, and we don't really know... I learned about [sub-Saharan] African cuisine here in Paris, really. In fact, my country, Morocco, only looks toward Europe, not toward the South. Things are starting to change though, but we don't know much about what's going on elsewhere in Africa. Senegal, we know a little bit

because it's close and there're lot of Senegalese people living in Morocco. But we have much to learn... and in Paris, it's awesome, every time you enter a store, you're learning!”

These discoveries feature specialties. Zoubida Ferradj, an Algerian-born janitor who lives in Aulnay-Nord, likes *tiep*, a traditional Sahelian dish. She has a deal with a Senegalese-born neighbor: Ms. Ferradj buys the fish and her neighbor cooks it. Her Moroccan-born nurse (after suffering a stroke, Ms. Ferradj needs daily nursing care) sometimes gives her rabbit *tagine*, which she appreciates: “He's kind.” Informants also enjoy learning about intraregional variations in dishes, like those of *couscous* across Maghreb. Rachida Kateb, an Algerian-born childcare worker, told of fellow residents of Goutte d'Or: “There're Moroccan people, there're Tunisian people: 'What have you made?' 'Can you tell me the recipe?' 'I can cook that.' 'I'm going to try out your recipe.' What we add, what we include, what we don't include.” In the end, sharing specialties equates to sharing appreciation for good food. María Hernández, a Mexican-born nurse, contemplated: “It's an honor when someone teaches you a dish, and you say: 'Oh my! Your cuisine is as delicious as my mom's.' Cultures become unite through a similar means, and that similar means is generally food.”

Routine invitations from neighbors – at home or, in the Parisian context, at social centers – are the most frequent occasions to appreciate foreign cuisines. I was chatting with a woman in her fifties at a neighborhood festival in Aulnay-Nord, and she said: “I already knew how to cook back in my country. But I learned other things with my friends here, especially those at the social center.” Kheloudja Elfassi, a Moroccan-born homemaker, feels appreciative: “The people of Goutte d'Or, I ate at their home. Tunisians, Moroccans,

[sub-Saharan] Africans... everyone's generous. There're African dishes that I discovered here.” Stéphane da Silva, an adult educator born in France to Brazilian- and French-born parents, described a gift economy within his apartment building in Goutte d'Or. In his position, he exchanges help with paperwork for specialties: “There're Algerian, Moroccan, or Moroccan French people – you know, those who retained their heritage citizenship. There're Chechen, Senegalese, Malian, Ivorian families... people from everywhere. There're Sri Lankan people next door. The neighbor upstairs, who's Moroccan, sometimes asks me to write letters and the like. And as an acknowledgment, she gives me *couscous*. See, recently she made one, that was good! Otherwise there's the neighbor downstairs, who's from Algiers, who makes dishes from Algiers that are super nice. There's one that's called... I don't remember how it's called... it's very small pasta, really thin, really, really thin, with chickpea, turnip, and a little bit of cinnamon... That stuff is so good!”

Informants also mention invitations to weddings as rarer, but memorable occasions. Below are fieldnotes on a neighborhood festival in Aulnay-Nord. I was seated at a picnic table with Fatiha El Filali (a Moroccan-born nursing assistant) and her sister-in-law Bouchra Meziane (an administrative assistant born in France to Moroccan-born parents). We were chatting while their children were playing.

On the table, Ms. El Filali put her course materials (she is in training leave), a flask of Moroccan mint tea (in Morocco, green tea is usually prepared with spearmint leaves and sugar), plastic cups, Choco Prince cookies, multigrain bread

and *croissants* from Lidl (chain of discount supermarkets), Laughing Cow cheese, and almond-sesame cookies.

In front of us are seated an old couple and a woman in her twenties. On the table, they placed *matlou*, licorice candies, a can of Oasis (brand of fruit drinks popular in France), *merguez* sandwiches, and a plate of grilled sardines with lemons.

We chat and exchange foods: we give mint tea and they give sardines. Ms. Meziane mentions that it is common practice in the neighborhood to exchange foods during special occasions, like festivals or weddings (neighbors are usually invited). Ms. El Filali adds that this also happens on an everyday basis, for instance, between next-door neighbors.

FEF: From time to time, with my Turkish neighbor, we talk in front of the door: 'How's it going? How was your day? Have you made anything to eat?' I tell her: 'I have an idea, I'm going to cook for my children,' and she tells me what she's doing too. The Turks, they don't like all that's processed either... The Turks do prepare meals.

CF: What meals for example?

FEF: For the most part, meals with pepper... stuffed. Or, *crêpes*: they put ground meat inside with hot peppers that make your tongue tingle. That's great! Or else they prepare something like a pastry, large, thin, with a little bit of cheese, spinach, inside, like *croissants*. Super good.

In Paris, Ramadan is a period conducive to do generous deeds. Neighborhood organizations and individual residents alike offer meals. Stéphane da Silva, an adult educator born in France to Brazilian- and French-born parents, enjoys "the conviviality

during Ramadan,” whereby his Muslim neighbors extend invitations. His overall assessment is a delighted euphemism: “It’s quite nice, I like it.” Alain Eysseric, a neighborhood organizer, highlights a collective sentiment of “generosity,” grounded in Islamic values and universalist in its recipients. He recounted numerous first-hand experiences with such generosity. For instance: “Once during The Feast of Sheep [*Eid al-Adha*], I was in one of the Kabyle restaurants in the neighborhood. When I wanted to pay, I was told: ‘Oh no, not today, not at all, are you crazy!’ (laughs) In fact, it was free.”

Lastly, some informants refer to locally beloved restaurants and cafés as purveyors of special occasions. Amédée Décembre, a chef native of Aveyron (southern France) and a longtime resident of Goutte d’Or, evoked with great delight a café (now closed) where once a week, a patron would make a specialty for 30 people. Per the event rules, the cook for a day would not spend more than 60 euros in ingredients, and guests would give two euros back. One day, Mr. Décembre had his neighbors taste confit duck legs, a traditional delicacy of Aveyron: “I had the chance to taste Malian dishes, North African dishes, dishes from pretty much everywhere. I had the privilege – I consider it a privilege – to make confit duck legs that came from the [French] Southwest. Well, admittedly, that’s my job so I bought them in bulk. I asked my boss if I could cook them at the restaurant on Wagram Avenue. Then, I crossed Paris with a pot of 30 duck legs on my bike. I made sautéed potatoes for 30 people on my two baking trays. 30 servings of potatoes, I mean, it’s substantial... I brought them on Affre Street. I found a lady who could keep them warm in her own kitchen. And I sold them in five minutes! Because it was a strike day, initially we told ourselves: ‘We’re going to have leftovers because no one will come.’ But it turned out that after five minutes, they were all gone! Those were good times in the neighborhood

because it was all about making one's homeland known, and in a funny way. Another week it was a dish with sorrel that came from Mali, another week it was *couscous*...”

4. 3. 4. *Eating Out Practices*

Informants can also appreciate commonalities and singularities at trusted restaurants of fellow immigrant groups. Abdessalam Soukhane, a mechanic, is a practicing Muslim and a native of Annaba, an Algerian city close to the Tunisian border. He patronizes Tunisian Jewish restaurants in Belleville, a neighborhood in the 20th *arrondissement* of Paris hosting a significant Tunisian Jewish immigrant population (Balland, 1997). There, “the tastes,” “the sauces,” and “the preparation” smell and look like those he is used to. Safia Leroy, a school aide, is a non-practicing Muslim and a native of El Jadida, a city on Morocco's Atlantic coast. She also patronizes these Tunisian Jewish restaurants. This indicates that, in her view, Maghrebi cuisine is “a great wealth” that cannot be reduced to national or religious identities: “Oh, there's not a huge difference. Even us, in Morocco, we have Jewish cuisines. There're Jewish cultures. Morocco isn't just a Muslim culture: it's Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. So, we have this great mix.” Rachida Kateb, a childcare worker, is a non-practicing Muslim and a native of Algiers. She has observed familiar spices and ways of cooking *couscous* and ground meat among the Algerian Jews she has known: “We pretty much have the same food; a lot of things are similar.”

For foods that belong to the global mainstream, ethnic restaurants provide interesting alternatives to fast-food restaurant chains. Take the example of fried chicken and KFC. Encarnación Márquez, a Mexican-born church clerk, observes that Black Americans

appreciate the fried chicken of Mexican restaurants, which it is more flavorful than at KFC: “Over there, there's a Mexican restaurant that serves fried chicken, which is also Mexican food. Fried chicken with French fries and a soft drink, and it costs you 14 dollars. Lots of African Americans go there because I think it's better than at Kentucky [Fried Chicken].” Jacques Okoundji, a Congolese-born production line worker, commented that Pakistani restaurants care to season chicken wings with onions, which he likes, whereas KFC just fries it all.

At the same time, informants have confidence in their skills, learned from tradition and life experience. Thus, they do not normally eat out at restaurants of their own ethnic group. María Hernández, a Mexican-born nurse, asserted: “When it comes to Mexican food, my home! Well, we almost always cook Mexican food at home because we know more or less what we like, and we make it better at home.” Eating out is to discover foreign cuisines, not one's own. Natalia Rodríguez, a Mexican-born seamstress, enjoys eating out at the Chinese restaurants of her home neighborhood of Bridgeport, especially for “the fish that they cook with vegetables and the lobster with sauce that tastes like mustard”. She praised: “The Chinese cook well, they really do.”

All in all, the framework of first- and second-generation immigrants is a quiet recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity. They can patronize whatever establishment, wherever and run by whoever. Omar Amokrane, an Algerian-born street vendor, talked about his favorite café, and especially its manager: “He's a kind guy. He's Kabyle; her wife is Romanian. He's kind.” I asked – naively – how important it is that the manager is Kabyle. Mr. Amokrane responded that it is a mere descriptor, not a preference. He does

not seek bonding, and emphatically not on exclusive ethnic grounds, but “respect, distance”: “Personally, I don't use that [criterion]. I like the barman's kindness, his respect for customers. There's a distance.” Senegalese-born Mansour Thiaw manages a Senegalese restaurant in Goutte d'Or. He appreciates living and working in the 18th *arrondissement* of Paris and hosting many customers who enjoy *dibi* (in Senegalese cuisine, seasoned grilled meat served with onions): “Precisely, what I like in the 18th *arrondissement*, it's cultural exchange, diversity. It's something that I cultivate in myself: diverse relationships. That's what makes me travel. Otherwise I'm stuck at home and it makes me nervous, I don't like it! (laughs) Working in food service makes you discover the food of every ethnicity. And also, it helps me know what in my own cuisine pleases every ethnicity. It's that exchange, also, that makes societies unite. A favorite dish of everyone, of all the ethnicities that I know here [in the 18th *arrondissement*], it's *dibi*, you see. It really is a source of pride for me: having a national dish that pleases everyone in a particular way. I meet Senegalese, Guinean, Malian, Burkinabe, Somali, French, American people, who agree on this food, you see.” Mr. Thiaw categorizes this diversity as national, ethnic, and cultural, and emphatically not as racial, which is an ugly word to him: “Pardon the term, I don't care about Black or white, or the like. Here [at the restaurant] we find all colors, religions, ethnicities, without exception.”

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The research on food and immigration has reached three theoretical insights: the immigrant nutritional paradox, the reinvention of food traditions, and the deromanticization of culinary authenticity. In this concluding section, I articulate a fourth insight – which I reached via description and interpretation of the tastes, practices, and perceptions of first- and second-generation immigrants in Paris and Chicago. That is: the recraft of the judgement of the good quotidian diet as simple cooking using fresh produce. I outline its general sociological import and reflect on its external validity. I also discuss its significance for recent research on immigrants' environmental values, knowledge, and behavior. Finally, I put the immigrant judgement of the good quotidian diet into perspective with French and American dietary guidelines.

5. 1. The Recraft of the Judgement of the Good Quotidian Diet

In Paris and Chicago alike, first- and second-generation immigrants recraft their judgement of the good quotidian diet as simple cooking using fresh produce. Their approach is, essentially, a problem-solving one. They consider their constraints (time and income, for the most part) and gather what they won't compromise: the fresh, the natural, and the homemade. For this purpose, they craft a repertoire of problem-solving skills and techniques, featuring visual and emotional skills for identifying freshness and naturalness, batch cooking, batch acquiring, and produce substitution.

Theoretically, what type of agency does that problem-solving recraft reveal? First, it is

more complex than a concern for conservation and reproduction, whereby first- and second-generation immigrants would simply focus on conserving and reproducing the dietary tastes and culinary practices of their origin region or country. Second, it is, to a certain extent, a process of de-ethnicization and reinscription in a shared immigrantness. That is, first- and second-generation immigrants distinguish the foods suitable for their daily dietary needs and preferences by identifying freshness and naturalness, rather than by ascribing ethnic identifiers. They realize that the taste for fresh produce and homemade cooking is common to various culinary cultures, theirs and those of fellow immigrant groups alike, hence reinscribing it in a shared immigrant condition. Third, it is not a clear-cut process of acculturation and assimilation – if anything, it is into the large and diverse metropolis. First- and second-generation immigrants ask that natives refrain from ethnicizing, otherizing, and exoticizing their quotidian diet. They observe and appreciate the cuisines of other immigrant groups. And, they emphasize that the traditional dishes of their region and country of origin are mostly for special occasions.

All in all, I interpret that problem-solving recraft as revealing a creative and purposeful agency. First- and second-generation immigrants set a purpose: retaining these elements of their cultural heritage that they hold dear and can realistically achieve in their current life situations. In the case of food, they seek to retain a commitment to the fresh, the natural, and the homemade. For this purpose, they recreate their tastes and practices as simple cooking using fresh produce.

I was not expecting the analysis to reach a consistent similarity (instead of a scattering of differences), given the differences in culinary cultures and food systems, in origin and

destination countries alike, between groups of first- and second-generation immigrants in Paris and Chicago. This raises the question: How generalizable is this problem-solving recraft of dietary tastes and culinary practices by first- and second-generation immigrants? Can it be a valid framework for cases of South-South immigration? Imagine, to contemplate just a few potential cases: migrant domestic workers in Beirut (Lebanon), Africans in Guangzhou (China), Haitians in Santiago (Chile), Indians and Pakistanis in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), and Kyrgyz, Tajiks, and Uzbeks in Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan). Also, can it be a valid framework for cases of return migration? Consider indeed the evidence of circulatory patterns in Mexico-U.S. (Parrado and Ocampo, 2019) and Africa-France (Caron, 2020) migrations. Yet, in those sad and strange days of 2020, where no research travels can be envisioned whatsoever, I invite the reader to find comfort in these verses by French poet Charles Baudelaire in “The Projects” (1970) [1869]: “Why should I drive my body from place to place, when my soul travels so lightly? And why carry out one’s projects, since the project is sufficient pleasure in itself?”

5. 2. Immigrants’ Environmental Values, Knowledge, and Behavior

First- and second-generation immigrants express quiet contentment in consuming fresh produce and cooking simple homemade dishes, forgoing displays of pride. This reminds the concepts of “inadvertent environmentalism” (Hitchings et al., 2015) and “quiet sustainability” (Smith et al., 2015) in the sociology of environmental practices. This also speaks to the emerging research on how immigrant experiences shape environmental values, knowledge, and behavior (Head et al., 2019). For instance, a study on household sustainability practices among Somali immigrants in the United Kingdom highlights their

pro-environmental knowledge and practices, challenging post-colonialist assumptions about the supposed need to “educate” immigrants from the “underdeveloped” Global South (MacGregor et al., 2019).

The findings presented here suggest that studying topics of food could be a productive path for research on immigrants’ environmental values, knowledge, and behavior. Furthermore, this would integrate with two fundamental propositions of critical food studies. The first is the call to recognize and respect alternative sources of dietary knowledge, especially when hindered by structural difficulties. For instance, foreign-born Latinas in New York rarely discuss “healthy” food in terms of nutritional content. Instead, they define it through three frameworks: “freshness,” indicated by time since harvest or slaughter and thus local sourcing, “purity,” guaranteed by the absence of preserving and processing procedures, and “naturalness,” provided by chemical-free farming practices (Park et al., 2011). For immigrants from Oaxaca (southwestern Mexico) in New Jersey, economic constraints and lack of access to culturally appropriate foods are greater barriers to healthy eating than lack of nutrition knowledge (Guarnaccia et al., 2012). The second is, relatedly, the critique of food assistance programs. Interviewed immigrants in North Carolina voice a desire to conserve healthy dietary practices from their origin country, but say they lack guidance on navigating the American food system in order to do so. Accordingly, instead of focusing on foods' nutritional content, food assistance programs should approach dietary practices holistically (Mycek et al., 2020). In the face of food insecurity, Mexican farm workers in California craft coping strategies based on traditional agricultural and nutritional knowledge. Thus, in attributing clients' inability to access “healthy” food to lack of knowledge, food assistance programs reinforce the racialized

prejudice according to which immigrants and ethnic minorities would be ignorant of “good” food (Minkoff-Zern, 2014).

5. 3. French and American Dietary Guidelines

Per the French National Nutrition and Health Program (PNNS), since 2007, advertisements for processed foods must display one of the following messages: “for a healthy life, eat at least five fruits and vegetables per day,” “for a healthy life, practice regular physical activity,” “for a healthy life, avoid eating too much fat, too much sugar, too much salt,” and “for a healthy life, avoid snacking between meals” (Hercberg et al., 2008). In the United States, the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans take a holistic approach, encouraging healthy dietary patterns rather than singling out foods or nutrients (USDA, HHS, 2016). Former Acting Assistant Secretary for Health Karen DeSalvo explained: “People should aim to meet their nutrient needs through healthy eating patterns that include nutrient-dense foods, but without exceeding limits for such food components as saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium and limits on total calories. People have more than one way to achieve a healthy eating pattern, and any eating pattern can be tailored to the individual's cultural and personal preferences. All forms of nutrient-dense foods, including fresh, canned, dried, and frozen foods, can be included in healthy eating patterns.” (2016: 519)

The judgement of proper nutrition held by first- and second-generation immigrants rather emphasizes the concept of fresh produce, which includes fruit and vegetables, meat, and fish. From a public health perspective, these are all foods that piece together low price,

energy density, and nutritional quality (Dubois et al., 2017). This diet based on fresh produce is both accessible (on criteria of cost and location) and nutritionally optimized. For that matter, identifying foods that combine low price with adequate nutritional quality is the subject matter of action research in public health nutrition that looks for solutions to improve diet quality among low-income populations (Tharrey et al., 2019). Admittedly, the consumption of meat raises environmental concerns. However, nutritional epidemiologists find that nutrient bioavailability is higher when originating from animal-based rather than plant-based foods (Barré et al., 2018). Moreover, public health nutritionists stress that recommending realistic, culturally acceptable, and sustainable diets does not need excluding entire food groups like meat (Vieux et al., 2020). This suggests the ultimate assessment that in Paris and Chicago alike, immigrant tastes and practices actually abide by official dietary and environmental guidelines, albeit based on an alternative nutritional judgement and a quiet environmental consciousness.



Picture 1.1 – Store selling Arabic desserts during Ramadan, Goutte d’Or
Source: the author

Chapter 2: An Agentic Approach to Food Access and Acquisition: The Case of Mixed Neighborhoods in the Paris Metropolis

1. Introduction

How do urban residents access and acquire food? A now-conventional approach to this question, in research (in agricultural economics, human geography, public health nutrition, social epidemiology, and urban sociology) and policy alike, points to the existence of food deserts. Food deserts are disadvantaged neighborhoods wherein food access is limited to unhealthy options like convenience stores and fast-food restaurants. Against that backdrop, neighborhood characteristics are hypothesized to have negative effects – over the effects of individual characteristics – on residents' nutritional outcomes, like body mass index and fruit and vegetable intake. Quantitative studies in the United States find lack of neighborhood access to healthy food to be significantly associated with higher obesity rates (Hilmers et al., 2012; Larson et al., 2009; Walker et al., 2010). Contrariwise, most studies in the United Kingdom do not find this association to be significant (Beaulac et al., 2009; Cummins and McIntyre, 2002, 2005).

In other societies of the Global North and South, food deserts are a rarer line of research and the available evidence is incomplete. Consider the case of the Paris metropolis. On the one hand, residential environments (operationally, socioeconomic characteristics and retail food environments) show a significant association with obesity risk (Cadot et al., 2011). Residents who shop at discount stores have a higher body mass index (Chaix et al., 2012). Greater access to restaurants at the neighborhood level is significantly

associated with lower frequency of home cooking (Pinho et al., 2018). On the other hand, spatial distance to supermarkets is not significantly associated with obesity risk (Drewnowski et al., 2014). Retail food environments have no significant effects on fruit and vegetable intake (Caillavet et al., 2015). Spatial access to fast-food restaurants is not significantly associated with weight status (Mackenbach et al., 2019).

First, I highlight contributions, issues, and debates of the food desert scholarship. On these grounds, I propose an agentic framework that analyzes residents' perceptions of food environments, dispositions toward mobility and proximity, and acquisition practices. Using ethnographic data collected in two mixed neighborhoods in the Paris metropolis (Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or), I analyze how food access and acquisition differentiate first- and second-generation immigrants from natives. Finally, I discuss the significance of this research for the food desert scholarship and additional scholarly conversations.

1. 1. An Agentic Approach to Food Access and Acquisition

In identifying the effects of neighborhood-level access to healthy food on nutritional outcomes, quantitative research on food deserts raises two issues of validity. First, it effectively assumes that neighborhood food access, and access on the criterion of nutritional content, is a significant factor in dietary practices. Yet, studies in the United States find different factors, like the prices (Drewnowski, 2012; Drewnowski et al., 2012; Jiao et al., 2012; Weatherspoon et al., 2013, 2015) and cultural characteristics (Grigsby-Toussaint et al., 2010; Grigsby-Toussaint and Moise, 2013) of foods. Second, quantitative research constructs a direct link between food access and nutritional outcomes, without

unraveling, in between, dietary practices in their complexity (Caspi et al., 2012). Indeed, it relies on epidemiological or community health surveys with limited data on dietary practices: often fruit and vegetable intake only, measured by the number of servings or the observance of dietary guidelines. However, public health nutritionists hypothesize that neighborhood food access has distinct effects on nutritional outcomes depending on food groups (Giskes et al., 2011; Glanz et al., 2005).

Next, the measurement of food access entails three questions of validity. First, how to quantify access? We need measures that go beyond simple counts of neighborhood establishments. For instance, geographers coin the concept of *foodscape* (Mikkelsen, 2011; Roe et al., 2016), aimed to represent the environments wherein food meanings and practices take shape. This reminds the classical geographic concept of *landscape*, which represents the singular relations of people to places (Saint-Julien, 2003). Second, how to qualify access? The food desert scholarship usually assumes the supply of large stores to be healthy and the supply of convenience stores and fast-food restaurants to be unhealthy. Yet, research in public health nutrition finds inconclusive evidence for this assumption (Vernez Moudon et al., 2013). Moreover, qualitative research in the United States finds that immigrant-run stores play a significant role in supplying healthy foods to disadvantaged urban neighborhoods (Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2017; Khojasteh and Raja, 2017). Such qualifications are discounted in quantitative research, which usually relies on commercial business data limited to chain stores. Third, how to define contextual units? Quantitative research uses administrative spatial units rather than operationalizing lived experiences of environments (Riva et al., 2008; Vallée et al., 2015). Furthermore, these environments are not exclusively residential. Social epidemiologists warn against

the “local trap” (Cummins, 2007) and the “residential trap” (Chaix et al., 2009). Instead, we need measures of “spatial polygamy” (Chaix et al., 2013; Matthews, 2012; Matthews and Yang, 2013) and everyday mobility (Shannon, 2015) for comprehensive measurement of living environments, residential or not.

Critical geographers highlight two ethical issues in the food desert perspective. The first is blaming the victim. We blame disadvantaged neighborhoods – and, by association, their residents – as the causal loci of obesity (Colls and Evans, 2014; Shannon, 2014). The second is, reminding a common pitfall in urban sociology, the “spatialization” (Tissot and Poupeau, 2005), the “urbanization” (Préteceille, 2006b) of a social problem. We reduce the problem of nutritional inequality to its mere spatial manifestation, hence ignoring its generating structural mechanisms (Slocum, 2007).

To solve those issues, the food desert scholarship is moving away from applying neighborhood-centric, spatially deterministic frameworks, toward identifying the multiplicity of dimensions shaping food access and acquisition. Epidemiologists complexify the causal pathways linking individual and contextual characteristics to nutritional outcomes by conceptualizing four issues of identification: [1] neighborhood selection, [2] reverse causality, [3] confounding, and [4] omitted-variable bias. That is: [1] Individual and contextual characteristics that have effects on nutritional outcomes can also have effects on residential choices, like neighborhood preferences, dispositions toward proximity and mobility, and access to infrastructure (Frank et al., 2007; Jago et al., 2007). [2] Reversely, nutritional outcomes can have effects on individual and contextual characteristics. For instance, residents' food tastes and practices can factor in

the location choices of food establishments. [3] The effects of contextual characteristics on nutritional outcomes can be confounded by factors that have effects on both contextual characteristics and nutritional outcomes (Thornton et al., 2009, 2011). [4] Those confounders can be unobservable, like dietary tastes, distastes, and preferences (Subramanian et al., 2007). Economists design models that foreground supply-side rather than demand-side factors (Allcott et al., 2019; Peng and Kaza, 2019). Sociologists and geographers call for critical frameworks unraveling various spatial levels (neighborhoods, cities, urban and rural societies) (MacNell, 2016) and centering residents' coping strategies (Alkon et al., 2013; Tach and Amorim, 2015) and experiences of food environments (Chrobok, 2014).

Building on these recent multidimensional, agentic approaches, I propose an analytical framework made of two simple assumptions. First, urban residents create access for themselves, by enacting perceptions of food environments and dispositions to move or stay in place. Second, they craft acquisition practices that manage the constraints and opportunities of their living environments and daily routines. Accordingly, the framework analyzes perceptions of food environments, dispositions toward mobility and proximity, and acquisition practices. To test it, I propose as a research design an analysis of ethnographic data (instead of an analysis of spatial survey data) collected in an urban society outside the United States.

1. 2. An Ethnographic Study in Mixed Neighborhoods in the Paris Metropolis

How to explain the differences in the observed effects of neighborhood food

environments between the United States and elsewhere? Social epidemiologists Steven Cummins and Sally McIntyre hypothesize: “It is probably not that the food environment is important in the USA and Canada and unimportant elsewhere but rather that the environmental processes that explain geographic differences in obesity may be different.” (2005: 102). Specifically, it may be that the social and cultural dimensions of dietary practices, and urban structures and processes as well, differ across societies (Dupuy et al., 2011), and that those differences become significant for nutritional outcomes as neighborhood effects (Cummins and McIntyre, 2005). In urban sociology, I think of food deserts as an application to food of the U.S.-born perspective of neighborhood effects, mostly applied to crime and education (Sharkey and Faber, 2014). International urban research emphasizes that basic assumptions of the neighborhood effect approach – especially, high residential segregation – are exceptional to the American urban society (Maloutas and Fujita, 2012). Generalizing the food desert approach to an international scale thus requires attention to the singular characteristics of neighborhoods, cities, and urban societies. International scholars call for research on contexts outside the United States (Charreire and Oppert, 2012; Wagner et al., 2019) and characterized by adequate access to healthy food. Playing on the powerful simplicity of the food desert metaphor, they have called such contexts food oases (Bridle-Fitzpatrick, 2015; Walker et al., 2011).

In this research, the studied context is Paris, a metropolis characterized by comparatively low residential segregation. The highest dissimilarity index between natives (born in metropolitan France to parents also born in metropolitan France) and an immigrant group (the Turks) is 47, compared to a rough average of 80 between non-Hispanic whites and Black Americans in American metropolises. Most first- and second-generation

immigrants live in mixed neighborhoods. The upper class is the most segregated, whereas most working-class residents live in mixed neighborhoods (Préteceille, 2003, 2006a, 2009, 2012). The retail food environment is made of markets and brick-and-mortar stores (convenience stores, supermarkets, and hypermarkets). Lastly, the public transportation system is among the densest in the world by measures of spatial coverage, diversity of modes, and numbers of passengers (Haywood and Koning, 2013), and the most accessible by a measure of proximity to rapid transit (Marks, 2016).

The field research sites are the neighborhoods of Goutte d'Or in the 18th *arrondissement* of Paris and Aulnay-Nord in the suburban city of Aulnay-sous-Bois (Map 2.1). Both neighborhoods include census tracts categorized as “priority neighborhoods” by the national urban policy, that is, with a concentration of low-income residents. Both are immigrant, working-class neighborhoods, that is, with a history of receiving domestic and international labor migrants. They differ, though, on dimensions of urban structure and process. Goutte d'Or is an inner-city neighborhood undergoing a process of gentrification, whereas Aulnay-Nord is a suburban neighborhood made of blocks of high-rises (in French, *cités*) managed by social landlords. In Goutte d'Or, the retail food environment includes supermarkets, the Barbès market (among the cheapest in the metropolis), and clusters of Maghrebi and sub-Saharan African stores (Map 2.2). In Aulnay-Nord, it includes a market, supermarkets, and hypermarkets patronized by residents from the neighborhood and from other suburban neighborhoods (Map 2.3).

Most first- and second-generation immigrant informants recruited in Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or are manual or clerical workers; a minority have managerial positions. 47 are

social housing tenants, 11 are private housing tenants, five are homeless, and one owns her home. Most native informants recruited in Goutte d'Or are professionals in the public, scientific, media, and artistic fields. Nine own their home and three are private housing tenants. Thus, natives and first- and second-generation immigrants have differing class profiles. However, their employment rates are similar. 12 out of 19 natives and 42 out of 64 first- and second-generation immigrants were employed at the time of data collection. Likewise, seven out of 19 native households and 25 out of 64 immigrant households include at least one unemployed adult. By contrast, 14 immigrant households have more than two adults – compared to none of native households, and 28 immigrant households have employed adults working in desynchronized schedules – compared to one native household. This means that, individually, first- and second-generation immigrants are not less time-constrained than natives for acquiring food. Yet, collectively, they have greater opportunity to leverage different time schedules among household members.

In the following, I analyze perceptions of food environments, dispositions toward proximity and mobility, and acquisition practices as differentiating first- and second-generation immigrants recruited in Goutte d'Or and Aulnay-Nord from natives recruited in Goutte d'Or.

2. Perceptions of Food Environments

2. 1. First- and Second-Generation Immigrants

2. 1. 1. The Paris Metropolis

First- and second-generation immigrants perceive the Paris metropolis as a rich and diverse food environment, facilitating access to preferred fresh produce, storable goods, and ethnic foods. As I repeatedly heard: “I can find all I need,” “there's everything,” “we don't lack anything,” “we can find all the ingredients here”. Mourad Zaoui (born in Algeria, street vendor, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) put it simply: “Apart from your mom and your dad, here there's everything. In Paris you can find all the Algerian things.” This richness and diversity of the food environment distinguishes the Paris metropolis from other places first- and second-generation immigrants have lived in. Wahiba Hammouche (born in Algeria, homemaker, resident of Aulnay-Nord) can find all the spices she needs for cooking Algerian dishes, in contrast to Valencia (Spain) where she lived before. Kao Vathanaka (born in Cambodia, production line worker, resident of Aulnay-Nord) used to live in Vesoul (eastern France). At that time, he used to arrange a trip to Mulhouse (90 kilometers away) once or twice per month for acquiring Cambodian foodstuffs, like rice paper to make spring rolls. Mauricette Diop (born in France to Senegalese-born parents, accountant, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) looked back on life as a resident of Creil (northern France). There, the food environment was poorer, less diverse: “There [in Creil] you had to have everything at home. Whereas here [in the 19th *arrondissement*], if we don't have salt, we go downstairs, we take the salt and voila, round

trip in less than 10 minutes.” Admittedly, Ms. Diop could access some “African” foods: “There was still a store in Creil, there were certain products.” Yet, all in all, the Paris metropolis offers more convenience: “It's another way to live, it's another organization. Because in Paris, there's everything. There's everything.”

This whole-metropolis perception implies that the place of residence is not a prime determinant in acquisition practices. These practices take shape at the level of the metropolis, not that of the neighborhood. First- and second-generation immigrants who moved from one neighborhood to another within the metropolis provide quasi-experimental cases. As it turns out, they maintain similar acquisition practices. Angayarkanni Jayasinghe, a Sri Lankan-born janitor, moved from the 11th *arrondissement* to Goutte d'Or. The only change is that she now goes to the closest ED (discount store chain). Otherwise, Ms. Jayasinghe travels to the same hypermarkets, markets, and store cluster (La Chapelle). Mauricette Diop, an accountant born in France to Senegalese-born parents, moved from the 10th to the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris. The only change is that she now goes to the closest Franprix (supermarket chain). Otherwise, Ms. Diop travels to the same hypermarkets, markets, and store cluster (Château Rouge). I asked Kouassi Doumbia (born in Ivory Coast, security guard, resident of Goutte d'Or) to formulate a thought experiment: “If you moved elsewhere, would you still go to Château Rouge?” He replied forthright: “For African food, yes.”

2. 1. 2. *Goutte d'Or*

About Goutte d'Or specifically, Rachida Kateb (born in Algeria, childcare worker)

sketched out: “Store-wise, we have everything. We don't lack anything, you see. We don't lack anything at all. What's interesting in the neighborhood, it's that there're lots of stores.” Ms. Kateb cites, in particular, the market, the bakeries, and the butcher shops. This environment constitutes a true resource for her, especially in times of financial hardship – Ms. Kateb is unemployed and her husband, a construction worker, earns the minimum wage. This even factors in her residential choices: “Price-wise, I'm telling you, the market is very interesting. I even thought about moving, but then I'm afraid, if I can't find a market like that, how will I do? At the moment I'm jobless; we're in a difficult situation. With the market right here, with 20 euros, I can have fruits and vegetables for the week. Then I still need yogurt, cheeses, and the like. But at least, I'm resting assured concerning fruits and vegetables.”

For first- and second-generation immigrants, the store clusters of Goutte d'Or provide an abundance of options – options of stores, options of produce – all within walking distance. Géraldine Mbarga (born in Cameroon, executive assistant, resident of Nanterre) explained why she finds Château Rouge convenient: “We find [produce] elsewhere as well. But in Château Rouge, the African stores are grouped together.” Such a rich access to ethnic foods in such a narrow space is exceptional in the Paris metropolis. Martine Mwanza (born in DR Congo, personal care assistant, resident of Aulnay-Nord) explained that although she can certainly find imported foods from sub-Saharan Africa at Chinese stores in the nearby city of Sevran, there is more choice in Château Rouge: “Sometimes there're Chinese stores [in Sevran] that have everything, but otherwise, yes, you should go to Château Rouge. Plus, there [in Sevran] it's more expensive compared to Château Rouge. And, in Château Rouge there's more choice in terms of price and quality as well.

In Château Rouge it's generally fresh, it's been just delivered by air.” Store owners confirm that their customer base is metropolitan. Auguste Le Bihan, who runs a grocery store in Château Rouge, specified: “They [customers] mostly come from the inner suburbs, sometimes a bit farther. Paris and the inner suburbs.”

At the Maghrebi cluster, informants say they can access foods otherwise rarely accessible in France. For example, they report that the bakery *Délices du Palais* (pun based on the two meanings of *palais* in French – literally, “Delicacies of the Palace” or “Delicacies for the Palate”) is the only one in France that sells *calentica*, an Algerian flan made from chickpea flour.

All in all, residents of Goutte d'Or take pride in a food environment that caters to people of all cultural heritages. Raúl Paredes (born in Peru, food preparation worker) voiced appreciation: “The population and the stores here are so cosmopolitan; all of us [residents] benefit from it.” Rachida Kateb (born in Algerian, childcare worker) stated in an overstatement: “That's the neighborhood, that's how it is. There's everything: Chinese stores, stores for Africans, stores for Moroccans, stores... everything, everything, everything, everything.” Safia Leroy (born in Morocco, school aide) feels grateful: “It's true that we're lucky here, we're well-surrounded. We have the choice, you see. India, China, Asia [La Chapelle]... Maghreb [Goutte d'Or], [sub-Saharan] Africa [Château Rouge]...” Abdessalam Soukhane (born in Algeria, mechanic, resident of Clichy-sous-Bois) praises Goutte d'Or for its “multi-diversity,” thinking of it as “a neighborhood for diversity”. He explained why: “All the foreign produce land here, because here in Barbès is the greatest foreign community. Barbès, Château Rouge: here are the [sub-Saharan]

Africans, the Maghrebis!”

2. 1. 3. Aulnay-Nord

About Aulnay-Nord specifically, residents feel that their neighborhood is well equipped. As I repeatedly heard: “We have everything on hand.” Gilbert Zubar (born in Guadeloupe, French Antilles, railway worker, resident of Aulnay-Nord) put it plainly: “There's a lot of choice. We can choose.” Houcine Chahbari (born in France to Moroccan-born parents, fast-food worker, resident of Aulnay-Nord) thought out loud: “It's good, with the market, Carrefour [hypermarket chain], Lidl, Netto [discount stores]... Here we have everything. H-market [*halal* store]... Lots of stores.” Residents also report that they can easily travel around the suburbs. As I repeatedly heard: “We're well-served [by public transportation].” This contrasts with other identified deficiencies, like “places to meet for young people,” bars, and tobacco stores.

The market of Aulnay-Nord and the *halal* store H-market attract customers from outside the neighborhood. Nasreddine Rezgui, a social worker born in France to Algerian-born parents, resides in the outer suburbs and works at the City of Aulnay-sous-Bois, where his mother lives. He said that these are two types of retail supply that help him to save and that are not available where he lives. The market, in particular, is known across the suburbs for its large size and low prices, especially compared to Aulnay-Sud. This makes residents proud: their neighborhood has a marker of working-class suburban life. Mohamed Neghiz (born in Algeria, construction worker, resident of Aulnay-Nord) exposed: “I go wherever it's cheaper. Because at the market in Vieux Pays [name of the

Aulnay-Sud market], for one kilo of tomatoes, I'm going to pay four euros, four euros and a half, or even five euros. If I'm going to the 3,000 [colloquial name of the Aulnay-Nord market, per the name of the closest block of high-rises], one kilo of tomatoes is one euro. In Vieux Pays, for one euro you would have two tomatoes, two oranges and two endives! (laughs)”

2. 2. Natives

By contrast, natives perceive their neighborhood of residence as a food-deficient environment. They complain about the lack of what they call “proximity stores” (*“commerces de proximité”*), that is, specialized stores for French foods (e.g., pork butcher shops, cheese shops), and organic stores – all of which supplying “quality” products.

Older native residents regret those times in Goutte d'Or when there were types of specialized stores that are not represented anymore. They remember a caterer, a tripe shop, pork butcher shops, and seed stores. At a neighborhood council, an attendee cited: “There was a tripe shop, a pork butcher shop... A diversity. Which disappeared.” Conversely, they applaud the recent installation of a wine store and an organic bakery. The wine merchant (Paul Hesnault) estimates that “90%” of his customers “live here [understand: in Goutte d'Or], are people from the neighborhood”.

Native residents who consume organic foods complain that the local supply is close to inexistent. Laure Guellec (born in France to French-born parents, environmental engineer,

resident of Goutte d'Or) exposed: “75% of what we eat is organic, and in the neighborhood, there aren't organic things.” I asked Juliette Thoraval (born in France to French-born parents, political aide, resident of Goutte d'Or) whether she acquires fruits and vegetables in Château Rouge. She said no, for three reasons: for identifying as “an environmental activist bitch” who consumes organic foods only, “out of shyness,” and for not “know[ing] how to cook them”.

Furthermore, natives pit gentrifying Goutte d'Or as a food-deficient environment against nearby middle-class neighborhoods as adequate food environments. Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d'Or) observed: “Here there aren't many proximity stores. In the 17th [*arrondissement*] it's better, but here...” Amédée Décembre (born in France to French-born parents, chef, resident of Goutte d'Or) brought to my attention: “We're in a neighborhood where there's no proximity store. You have two cheese shops in the entire [18th] *arrondissement* – that's 200,000 inhabitants.”

Natives vehemently voice this grievance – both privately and publicly, in interview settings and in civic spaces alike. They put it short and sweet. At a neighborhood council, when the chair introduced the neighborhood food environment as a discussion topic, an attendee cried out: “There's nothing to eat in there!” Or, they express it in a sad litany. Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d'Or) exposed to me: “In the neighborhood, there's no cheese shop, there's no pork butcher shop anymore.” An attendee at a neighborhood council narrated: “We know that there's a retail specificity in the neighborhood. We know that for two years there's no pork butcher shop anymore, there's no cheese shop, there's no caterer, there's no newsstand in Goutte d'Or.”

Still, natives' framing is neighborly instead of revanchist. In their words, they do not want French stores to displace Maghrebi and sub-Saharan African stores. Laure Guellec (born in France to French-born parents, environmental engineer, resident of Goutte d'Or) reflects about the Château Rouge butcher shops: "Everyone should be happy. Keep the [*halal*] butcher shops, of course. The goal isn't to close everything down, obviously." Those who grew up in regions with famous cuisines like Brittany and Auvergne say that after all, if there was a Breton or Auvergnat store cluster in Paris, they would certainly shop there and not allow anyone to question that. Amédée Décembre is proud, as a member of the supplier selection committee at the Goutte d'Or food co-op, to have brought produce from rural Aveyron (southern France), where he was born and raised: "cream, butter, *fromage blanc* [literally, "white cheese" – creamy soft cheese], *faisselle* [soft raw milk cheese], some jams, lemon curd, and then *charcuterie*, *saucisson*, dry sausage."

Nevertheless, natives do want "stores for everyone". Amédée Décembre (born in France to French-born parents, chef, resident of Goutte d'Or) stated: "I don't have anything against them [Maghrebi and sub-Saharan African stores]. But I would try to make that they mix with others." Likewise, natives appreciate those establishments that make the "effort" to universalize their customer base. Robert Attal (born in France to French-born parents, professor, resident of Goutte d'Or) remembered how her wife and himself received "a very warm welcome" at a Senegalese restaurant, qualifying the owners as "extremely nice". In his words: "There was a very warm welcome from the manager, who was very keen to have a mixed customer base – not having a restaurant that is African and

for Africans only.”

Relatedly, natives admit that they do not speak for the neighborhood in its diversity. One of the most vocal resident organizations is humorously identified by member Françoise Lépiny (born in France to French-born parents, documentalist) as “Franco-*Camembert*”. *Camembert* is a moist, creamy cow's-milk cheese originally from the village of Camembert in Normandy (northwestern France). In French linguistic culture, cheeses (and wines as well) symbolize all things French. For the reader's appetite: *camembert* is delicious, although a bit stinky.

Moreover, some native residents think that the ethnic store clusters serve as a reminder that cultural differences exist and deserve appreciation. Virginie Monvoisin (born in France to French-born parents, journalist, resident of Goutte d'Or) criticizes the postulate, held by some acquaintances of her, that neighborhood residents should patronize every store: “I don't think it's bad that everyone doesn't go everywhere. I find it important that people see that other things exist. I'm not going to buy stuff at African stores – I don't know how to cook them. I don't feel sorry about it. Unlike others at the [Goutte d'Or] food co-op, I don't feel sorry that Africans don't come. It doesn't matter that much. What's good is that we get to see different things, to meet different people. That's how we live here [in Goutte d'Or], and I find that great.”

Ultimately, natives affirm empathy and acceptance of differences. As I repeatedly heard: “They [first- and second-generation immigrants] have the right to live.” Françoise Lépiny (born in France to French-born parents, documentalist, resident of Goutte d'Or)

thinks about what she would do if she were herself an immigrant: “They [immigrants] are doing like us if we [French natives] were living as expatriates. For sure, once in a while you’d go to a bar where there would be the French, the Europeans. I think everyone would do that. I went fifteen days to Bangladesh three times, and every time I was craving for chocolate. I was ready to traffic in chocolate, you see! (laughs)”

3. Dispositions Toward Proximity and Mobility

3. 1. First- and Second-Generation Immigrants

In perceiving the whole metropolis as a rich and diverse food environment, first- and second-generation immigrants have neutral to positive feelings about traveling – walking or using public transportation – for acquiring food. They endow mobility with self-efficacy, that is, generally, the belief in the ability to exert control over one’s own motivation, behavior, and environment (Bandura, 1997). Applied to the case of food access and acquisition, self-efficacy is, specifically, the belief in the capacity to manage one’s own living environments and daily routines. For first- and second-generation immigrants, admittedly, mobility can be a bummer, but they adapt. It does not affect their affect. Or, if it does, it is a positive affect – a cheerful, carefree attitude. Thereby, the quotidian experience of mobility is a way to assert self-efficacy, to practice positive character traits like adaptability, to deploy organizational skills, and to foster a spatial identity as a Parisian or a suburbanite (“*banlieusard*”).

When I asked whether traveling for acquiring food was any disturbance, informants replied: “there's no problem,” “we’re used to it,” “we adapt,” “we don't care,” “all is well,” “no fatigue,” “I move around easily.” Their approach is factual, unemotional: mobility is not a huge hassle since grocery shopping is no daily activity. Rachida Kateb (born in Algerian, childcare worker, resident of Goutte d’Or) conceives it as a truism: “Even if we move around a little bit to shop elsewhere, it doesn't matter for me. Because we don't buy all the time, just once a week.”

In their words, first- and second-generation immigrants “take advantage” of being at a place – for work, school, chores, leisure – to acquire food nearby. Boutros Naguib (born in Egypt, bus driver, resident of Aulnay-Nord) leverages his work schedules and patterns. He put it as a rhyme: “I always go driving, because I'm a bus driver for disabled children. So, I'm always driving and buying as I drive.” Rachida Kateb (born in Algeria, childcare worker, resident of Goutte d’Or) once did a training course in Montreuil (eastern suburbs). At the supermarket near the training center, the fish was particularly fresh and inexpensive; since then, Ms. Kateb often gets her fish there. Jamal Embarek (born in France to Algerian-born parents, restaurant manager, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) enjoys visiting friends and shopping at *halal* butcher shops all at the same time: “I buy meat in Goutte d'Or, but also in the 18th [*arrondissement*] and in the 9-3 [9-3 is slang for the Seine-Saint-Denis *département*, whose number is 93]. Stains, Saint-Denis [cities in Seine-Saint-Denis]... I have friends over there, so I take advantage of that.”

At best, mobility participates in identifying as a Parisian or as a suburbanite, and in enjoying social and spatial diversity. Belkacem Guerroumi, born in France to Algerian-

and Moroccan-born parents, is a retired incinerator operator and lives in Goutte d'Or. His morning routine is walking around the northern *arrondissements* of Paris and shopping at local markets: “Tuesday, Belleville: there’s a market. Place des Fêtes: there’s a market. Wednesday, Barbès. Thursday, Crimée. Friday, Belleville, Place des Fêtes. And Saturday, Barbès, Porte de Clignancourt, Saint-Ouen.” He concluded with contentment: “I know all of Paris!” Madani Kessié, born in France to Ivorian-born parents, is a house painter and lives in Montfermeil (eastern suburbs). He acquires food as he travels to construction sites across the suburbs. He stated with pride: “The suburbs, I know them!” Raúl Paredes (born in Peru, food preparation worker, resident of Goutte d’Or) acquires food in Goutte d’Or, Château Rouge, and La Chapelle, which include, respectively, a Maghrebi, sub-Saharan African, and Sri Lankan Tamil store cluster. All of these diverse neighborhoods are within walking distance, which he finds amusing: “If we want to travel, by foot, it's from one neighborhood to the other! (laughs) It's like vacationing!”

First- and second-generation immigrants also like to tell their crafty ways of finding foodstuffs that are hard to find. Jules Biron (born in Martinique, French Antilles, bus driver, resident of Aulnay-Nord) took great pleasure in remembering all those times he found ways to make favorite dishes by finding out ingredients in unexpected places. The story below, involving blood sausage, went until reporting on the reception by friends and family back in Martinique.

Mr. Biron remembered: “Last year we made blood sausage with a friend. Pork blood sausage. We went to the butcher, we bought pork blood sausage, and my friend prepared it all – he's a chef. He's been knowing how to do that for years;

he'd done that in Martinique. Initially we weren't believing that he could do that here [in Paris]. Eventually we made five kilos, it took us 24 hours! (laughs)”

I admitted: “I'm not very well-versed sausage-wise,” and asked Mr. Biron if he could walk me through the preparation process. He explained: “It's a whole preparation, with blood and the like. You shouldn't be allergic or feel nauseous – it's clearly not for the faint-hearted! (laughs) Blood, flesh, breadcrumbs, spices, then you open the bowels and put the preparation in there. Then you tie it, cut it, and cook it for a moment. Once it's cooked it takes time to dry and cool down, and then we can savor!”

Then, Mr. Biron ended the story: “We even met friends three weeks later. When we told them that we had made blood sausage, they told us: 'What! You made sausage? There's some at your place: let's take some.' And I said: 'No, there isn't any left.' 'What, you made sausage and you didn't tell me?' (laughs)”

I probed: “They were offended?” Mr. Biron nodded and laughed heartily: “He even told me: 'Tonight I'll call the homeland. I'll tell them that you made sausage, and you bastards didn't give us anything!' (laughs)”

At worst, traveling for acquiring food provides material for funny stories. Rachida Kateb (born in Algeria, childcare worker, resident of Goutte d'Or) relived some minor embarrassments: “The metro is a bit difficult, you know, when doing the groceries. There're too many stairs sometimes, and I can't ask people to help me. For a stroller and the like, you can ask. But for the groceries, I'm ashamed! (laughs)” Kouassi Doumbia (born in Ivory Coast, security guard, resident of Goutte d'Or) narrated his travels to a hypermarket in Bagnolet (eastern suburbs) with whimsical humor: “I don't have a car. So,

we take the metro. And the groceries, I charge them on the head! (laughs)”

This facility with mobility implies that first- and second-generation immigrants do not have fixed, strong preferences for particular stores. Whenever I ask whether they have any “favorite” store, they find that question odd and irrelevant. They simply go to the choicest and the cheapest, in the current circumstances. A man I met at the park in Goutte d'Or put it as a truism: “Wherever you find that the produce is good, suits you well, you take it, you see. That's how it is.” Kouassi Doumbia (born in Ivory Coast, security guard, resident of Goutte d'Or) put it pithily: “There's no store owner who pays me to go to his place. I go when I can, when I want. I don't have any preference.”

In this regard, first- and second-generation immigrants like markets and store clusters, since they can “choose” between lots of vendors and stores, all within talking distance. I asked Angayarkanni Jayasinghe (born in Sri Lanka, janitor, resident of Goutte d'Or) whether she is a regular of any particular store within the Sri Lankan Tamil store cluster of La Chapelle (18th *arrondissement*). She responded, as if the question did not make sense, that she just goes “anywhere,” since there are “plenty” of stores to choose from. I asked Émile Sembolo (born in the Congo, drama teacher, resident of Aulnay-Nord): “At the market, do you always go to the same vendor?” He replied outright: “No, no, at the market we negotiate with whoever is in front of us. Yes, and on whatever we want. For example, bananas: if I don't buy here because the good ones aren't here, then I'm going to negotiate where I see the good ones, that's all. So, I'm not the customer of anyone.” I asked Diane Kanza (born in DR Congo, janitor, resident of Goutte d'Or): “The meat in Château Rouge: in what store do you find it?” She answered, in disbelief: “Oh! All the

stores. All the stores. It depends. I see where the meat is good: when it's not good I buy it elsewhere.” Kouassi Doumbia (born in Ivory Coast, security guard, resident of Goutte d’Or) walked me through his process of acquiring meat in Château Rouge: “I walk around the butcher shops, I see whichever sells the freshest meat, and this is where I stop. Every day it's not the same shop that sells the freshest meat. So, we move, we change.”

Relatedly, first- and second-generation immigrants do not carry the notion that neighborhood stores are to be patronized by neighborhood residents. It is not at all a concern for them. I asked Kouassi Doumbia (born in Ivory Coast, security guard, resident of Goutte d’Or) if the café across his street was patronized by neighborhood residents, and he reacted as if the question was not making any sense. He rolled his eyes and ironized: “Honey, when I enter a café, I'm not going to ask everyone: 'Where do you live?' 'Are you neighbors' 'Are you things?' (laughs) I see the bartender, I order, and he gives me my coffee.” All in all, first- and second-generation immigrants conceive social proximity in terms of interpersonal respect and quiet kindness – not as neighborhood exclusivity and bombastic niceness. Below are fieldnotes on an interaction at a café in Goutte d'Or, with local resident Omar Amokrane, an Algerian born street vendor:

“Are you letting me invite you this time?” That's the fourth coffee taken in the company of Omar Amokrane at the Café Royal, and I've never been successful in paying. I insist: “Come on, let me invite you.” He accepts: “Hum, okay.” Behind the counter, a man in his forties is operating a coffee machine. Mr. Amokrane says: “Here's the kindest guy in Barbès!” The bartender replies in a playful tone: “Your friend is a liar!” “No, I believe him.” Mr. Amokrane bursts into laughter.

3. 2. *Natives*

By contrast, natives construct proximity as a moral value, defining it as in-or-out their neighborhood of residence and expecting from themselves to acquire food within. In Goutte d'Or, the borders most cited by informants are the Barbès Boulevard on the south and Clignancourt Street on the north. Relatedly, traveling for acquiring food is deemed an unacceptable chore. Natives are well aware of that construct of theirs, and with a sense of irony. Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d'Or) told an anecdote with delight: “An old gentleman once told me: 'The boulevard Barbès is the Rio Grande.' As soon as you cross the Rio Grande, you're in another country! (laughs)” Thierry Caillet (born in France to French-born parents, painter, resident of Goutte d'Or) mocked himself: “For me for a long time, beyond the [Barbès] Boulevard, it's been a foreign land! (laughs) I'm laughing, but it's ridiculous: I never go, even for having coffee. I really am a pure Goutte-d'Orian! (laughs)” Mr. Caillet is concerned about a relocation plan of the Goutte d'Or food co-op to a larger floor area on Stephenson Street, that is, 100 meters away from its current location. “Psychologically, it's the other sphere, it's not Goutte d'Or anymore. So, I'm like: 'Hmm, ah, indeed!’”

Natives realize that an alternative to their dichotomous, neighborhood-centric measure of proximity would be a simple metric measure. When imagining proximity as such, natives observe that, in fact, all the retail supply they want is close by foot – yet outside of their conceived neighborhood borders. Stéphane da Silva (born in France to Brazilian- and French-born parents, adult educator, resident of Goutte d'Or) expressed that paradox with a tongue-in-cheek hyperbole: “You just have to walk 10 meters, you see, you walk toward

the city hall [of the 18th *arrondissement*], and not even that! See Jules Joffrin [metro station]. You have thousands of butcher shops, pork butcher shops, cheese shops, anything you want.” Robert Attal (born in France to French-born parents, professor, resident of Goutte d'Or) realized it candidly: “You need to leave the neighborhood, you need to cross the [Barbès] Boulevard to find pork butcher shops, cheese shops, butcher shops that aren't *halal*... It's a bit weird, because crossing the boulevard, it's 100 meters; it takes three minutes. But you still need to leave the neighborhood, you see.” Incidentally, in studies of urban retail planning, the French national statistics bureau defines “proximity” as within a buffer of 300 meters around the place of residence (Solard, 2010).

Yet, natives stick to proximity defined as within Goutte d'Or because they feel it is part of something bigger: an informed choice to live in a mixed neighborhood and a willingness to partake in local life. Laure Guellec (born in France to French-born parents, environmental engineer, resident of Goutte d'Or) feels good about attending neighborhood councils and sending her children to the neighborhood public school, but feels bad about leaving for acquiring food: “Because generally, we do live here, we love Goutte d'Or. I participate in civic life, my kids go to school in Goutte d'Or, which is a lot... I do quite a lot of things in the neighborhood. But we don't go there to shop. We leave the neighborhood. Clearly.” Natives feel emotional about belonging to what they think the neighborhood has always been. Thus, whenever local stores do not cater to their tastes and practices, a deep sense of normative discomfort emerges.

All in all, native residents struggle to grapple with this paradox: abandoning the neighborhood, which is emotionally difficult, while, in fact, having all necessary

amenities pretty close. Véronique Chantôme, a radio director, and her husband Emmanuel were chatting in their living room. Mr. Chantôme reckoned that residents of Goutte d'Or are rather advantaged compared to other neighborhoods, if considering a metric measure. Yet, Ms. Chantôme made the emotional argument that they “turn their backs” on the neighborhood:

EC: To tell the truth, here it's not that different from other neighborhoods of Paris.

VC: But wait, of course it is!

EC: Food-wise, that's not true. We can move around.

VC: Well, yes. Still, we turn our backs on the neighborhood.

EC: 50 meters from here, there's Simplon, there's the market. There're people in the suburbs who must travel 10, 20 kilometers to find food. Here we're not disadvantaged, I mean.

Natives even hold the false belief that everyone normally acquires food in their neighborhood of residence, as demonstrated through various forms of ethnographic evidence. In an orientation meeting at the Goutte d'Or food co-op, the speaker said as a passing comment: “Unless we go to a particular place, we generally do the groceries at the closest store, within a radius of 10 minutes by foot – what we normally call the neighborhood.” Below are fieldnotes on an interaction at the Goutte d'Or food co-op. At first encounter, a prospective co-op member is being rhetorically asked whether she lives “in the neighborhood”.

8:15 p.m. While two co-op volunteers are balancing the cash drawer, a woman in

her fifties, pulling a cart, enters the store. She asks: “Is that the vegetable place?”.

One of the volunteers gets out of the checkout and approaches her: “Ah, uh, no...”

The prospective customer clarifies: “Ah, somebody told me there were vegetables.” “Ah yes! In fact, we're a cooperative. Do you live in the neighborhood?” “Oh no, I come from far away!”

While listening to the volunteer detailing the why and how of the co-op – “Here it's a cooperative: our goal is to find the taste of produce again.” – the woman looks out over the shelves. She stops in front of the eggs and in front of the cheese. “Is the cheese good?” The two volunteers answer together: “Ah yes, it's very good!” They let the customer leave with an egg carton, a cheese, and a co-op membership form. “Thanks, that was worth the visit!”

Relatedly, natives like when stores are small and “convivial,” create a special and intimate atmosphere, and offer a limited set of options. An attendee at a public meeting in Goutte d'Or commented: “The stores are quite identical, not very welcoming.” They dislike having “too many” things to choose from. Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d'Or) is puzzled about the local Carrefour Market (supermarket chain): “There're 100,000 yogurts. I don't understand why there're that many.”

In this regard, natives complain that the Barbès market is too crowded, resulting in an impersonality that bothers them. Juliette Thoraval (born in France to French-born parents, political aide, resident of Goutte d'Or) emphasized: “It's one of those things that are nice at the market: being able to take the time to chat with people.” Virginie Monvoisin (born

in France to French-born parents, journalist, resident of Goutte d'Or) put it forthright: "You have to fight because there're too many people, and it's a pain in the ass." By contrast, first- and second-generation immigrants do not complain. They think of it as an expected and accepted feature of living in a "mixed," "popular" neighborhood, that is, with lots of people around – residents or not.

Furthermore, natives wish to establish intimacy with store staff and expect their personal attention. Accordingly, they engage in conscientious work to earn such attention when it is not here in the beginning. Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d'Or) used a tried-and-tested tactic to capture the attention of a café manager: bringing young children. "The lady who owns the café, it took me some time to chat with her, it hasn't been... At the beginning, she was really like a prison door – she wasn't at all smiling. Once, I came with my nephew, it softened the atmosphere, and now, she's much chattier. Perhaps she went through difficult times, I don't know. But I've struggled with her! (laughs) Well, now, she knows me, she sees me, but I had the impression that she wasn't paying attention at the beginning, you see."

When mentioning a particular store, natives comment on whether the staff is "nice" before pondering whether the foods are any good. Françoise Lépinay (born in France to French-born parents, documentalist, resident of Goutte d'Or) told about a local bakery: "These people, I find them nice, and they're making good bread and good cookies." Juliette Thoraval (born in France to French-born parents, political aide, resident of Goutte d'Or) talked about how she found a local baker "adorable, really, a delight buying your bread from her," whereas others are "not nice". Virginie Monvoisin (born in France to French-

born parents, journalist, resident of Goutte d'Or) qualified the staff of a local restaurant as “adorable, amiable, warm, generous” About the local Leader Price (discount store chain), she claimed: “I love the cashiers.” Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d'Or) said that she likes when store staff is “nice”. I invited her to elaborate, and she outlined: “They recognize you. They say hello. They know you're from the neighborhood... They know you. So, you can chat with them.” Ms. Huet then commented on various store clerks she has known. She appreciates a fruit and vegetable store: “They're very nice, I like it.” She remembered a butcher shop (now closed): “They were nice.” And, a clerk (who has since changed jobs) at a bakery: “The gentleman was very nice, he was kind.”

By the same token, natives usually call store staff by their first name. Note that in the French-speaking world, the use of first names is relatively conservative – more than in the English-speaking world. For instance, native informants in Goutte d'Or refer to a local bakery by the names of their owners, “Khadija and Swann”. First- and second-generation immigrant informants rather refer to its location: “the bakery at the street corner”. In going on a first-name basis with store staff, natives tell with pride and enjoyment how close they are with them. Véronique Chantôme (born in France to French-born parents, radio director, resident of Goutte d'Or) gave the example of her personal fishmonger: “Michel, my fishmonger, during the herring season – my husband in from Boulogne-sur-Mer [coastal town in northern France] so he likes marinated herrings – so, I order and he lets me know, or he says: 'Hey, I have herrings, do you want some?'”

Ultimately, natives' dispositions toward proximity and mobility are embedded in a

normative concept of urban life as an ideally tight-knit, “village-like” (Fijalkow, 2006; Lehman-Frisch, 2002) neighborhood life. Herein, residents acquire food in their own neighborhood and, conversely, neighborhood stores serve neighborhood residents in their diversity. I asked one of the Goutte d'Or food-coop co-founders what she envisions as long-term goals. She said she wished it becomes “representative” of neighborhood residents: “It's part of the wishes, the will, of some: being grounded in the neighborhood of Goutte d'Or, because we live here.” Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d'Or) confided: “My regret about the neighborhood is that the stores aren't adapted to a neighborhood life. It's rather for people from the suburbs, or from Paris, who come here to shop. I don't have the impression that they're made for residents.”

4. Acquisition Practices

4. 1. Prices

4. 1. 1. First- and Second-Generation Immigrants

Price is the prime preference in the acquisition practices of first- and second-generation immigrants. Informants place it over any other consideration, especially, ethnic determinants and spatial access. They do neither care whether stores are run by owners of a shared regional or national origin (ethnic determinism), nor whether they are located in their home neighborhood (residential determinism). Rather, it is the price they mostly care about.

This prime preference for price is demonstrated through various interviewing techniques. Before describing the various places where she acquires food, Fatiha El Filali (born in Morocco, nursing assistant, resident of Aulnay-Nord) stated: “We always start from the economy.” Loubna Ghoula (born in France to Algerian-born parents, warehouse clerk, resident of Aulnay-Nord) put it as a truism: “When the price is there, when the quality is there, I buy there, that's all.” I met Martine Mwanza (born in DR Congo, personal care assistant, resident of Aulnay-Nord) at the market; she was about to buy meat and fish. I asked if she had any preferred stall, and she responded, not anticipating a question like that: “Oh no... One looks at the prices, you know. And, what interests me, I take it.” I asked Mauricette Diop (born in France to Senegalese-born parents, accountant, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) whether she would like anything to change in the neighborhood retail food environment, and she said, as if the answer was obvious: “Well, for me it's mostly about price, you know.” I asked Boris Nzinga (born in Cameroon, street vendor, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) whether he patronized sub-Saharan African or Maghrebi stores when in Château Rouge, and he replied instantly: “I go wherever it's cheapest. Wherever the price is acceptable for my means. Wherever it's cheapest, wherever I can find what I can eat.” Stéphane da Silva (born in France to Brazilian- and French-born parents, adult educator, resident of Goutte d'Or) buys storable goods in Château Rouge. He says he certainly likes discovering foreign foods. Nevertheless, price matters the most: “It's not so much the fact that it's African or whatnot, but there's one thing: it's that it's not too expensive.”

Price creates a cognitive load and occupies the head space. Informants mention a need for “reflection” in completing housework related to food. As I repeatedly heard: “*Moi, je réfléchis.*” (“I do reflect.”) and “*Moi, je calcule.*” (“I do calculate.”) Victor Fardin (born in Guadeloupe, French Antilles, garbage collector, resident of Aulnay-Nord) put it as a series of maxims: “Before I spend, I reflect.” “My little life is simple. But you should reflect.” “I reflect because I have lots of expenses.” He further explained: “I calculate everything because that's how life is. If you don't calculate, you don't stay within your budget.” On a deeper level, this implies thinking forward: not living in the present, but rather living in the future. Feeding the family requires competent planning, projected not toward the quotidian, the “day by day,” but “the future,” in the words of Loubna Ghoula (born in France to Algerian-born parents, warehouse clerk, resident of Aulnay-Nord).

This prime preference for price results in preferences for types of places. First- and second-generation immigrants especially like the markets. Majid Benhenia, a butcher whose shop is nearby the Aulnay-Nord market, confirmed this general preference for markets when it comes to fresh produce like meat. His lowest sales correspond to the days the Aulnay-Nord market operates. He concluded: “The market kills the little stores.” About the Barbès market, informants emphasize: “It's the cheapest [in the Paris metropolis].” Rachida Kateb (born in Algeria, childcare worker, resident of Goutte d'Or) often meets former neighbors there. She reflected: “It's convenient for the entire neighborhood, and there're people who come from far away. All the people who move from here, even if they move far away, they come back to go to the market. Why? Because it's cheaper, you see.” Ms. Kateb added that if her family had to move, she would continue to patronize the Barbès market for fresh produce, alongside the nearby Maghrebi stores

for “mint, semolina, tea, almonds, pistachios”. As a rule of thumb, Ms. Kateb can get one kilogram of produce for one euro. We reviewed her shopping cart of the day:

Bell peppers: two kilograms, 1.50 euro

Clementines: two kilograms, 2.50 euros. Ms. Kateb specified: “They're expensive because they're a little bit better. In relation to the market, they're expensive. But, since I found them tasty, I preferred to take these.”

Endives: one kilogram, 1.30 euro

Carrots: one kilogram, one euro

Oranges: one kilogram, one euro

Lemons: one kilogram, one euro

Beets: one kilogram, two euros

Apples: one kilogram, one euro

One bag of shallots, two bunches of parsley. Four bunches of mint. “The four for one euro: it's interesting!”

Pictures 2.1 and 2.2 are snapshots of stalls and sales at the Barbès market, giving the reader a glimpse into the market shopping experience. Markets feature chances for customers to bargain (even in quiet and understated ways), practices of vendors to offer price cuts to regular customers, special offers for foods close to the expiry date, and special offers for leftovers (often presented in playful ways) when it is nearly time for the market to close. Considering all these advantages, Nasreddine Rezgui, a social worker at the City of Aulnay-sous-Bois, indicated that his main recommendation to clients facing persistent financial difficulties is shopping at markets rather than brick-and-mortar stores.

Below is a selection of fieldnotes illustrating these opportunities, experiences, and encounters that markets offer.

At the Barbès market, a woman requests two kilograms of tomatoes. Straight away, the vendor pulls off a plastic bag and fills it with tomatoes. He places it on the scale: two kilograms, sharp. “Two euros, Madam!” The customer takes coins out of her pocket and puts them in his palm, counting: “1 euro 70, 1 euro 80... So, 1 euro 80?” The vendor makes a gently exasperated face: “It's two euros, Madam.” The woman freezes. Then, the vendor closes his hand, holds the tomato bag out to the customer, and, without a word, turns his head toward the next customer.

I met Wassila Khezzar (born in Morocco, server, resident of Aulnay-Nord) on her way home from the market. She was carrying a bag of egg cartons in her right hand and a bag of fresh mint leaves in her left hand. She said: “I’ve been going to their stall for a long time. They set special prices for me. Or, sometimes they tell me: ‘Take it, Madam, it's free.’”

At about 1 p.m. at the Barbès market, vendors assemble leftovers of fruits and vegetables in bags and shout: “One euro, one euro, we are packing up all!” “Two euros a bag, two euros a bag!”

The Aulnay-Nord market is ending. Fruit and vegetable vendors gather assorted leftovers in open bags, with labels: “500 grams” and “1 kilo”. A vendor tries to

sell off his guavas by slicing generous samples, while pretending to threaten a teenager passing by: “I’m gonna cut your head!”. Her mother (I guess) chuckles.

Market visits reflect a strict and understated routine, organized as household members' disposable time dictates. Verbalizing it in an interview situation sometimes generates light amusement, like in the conversation below with Irène and Émile Sembolo (born in the Congo, janitor and drama teacher, residents of Aulnay-Nord). For context, the Aulnay-Nord market operates on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays.

ES: It's every Sunday that she [Irène] goes to the market, and for me, every Tuesday.

IS: For me, it's on Sundays.

CF: So, that's how you divide up the work? You [Irène] on Sundays and you [Émile] on Tuesdays?

All: (laughs)

IS: It's because, since I'm working, I can't be there [at the market] on Tuesdays and Fridays, so I go on Sundays.

On this note, for first- and second-generation immigrants, acquiring cheap produce at the Barbès market also contributes to a larger urban lifestyle. In Goutte d'Or, the spatial order of collective spaces is homologous to the temporal order of residents' activities: acquiring produce at the market, meeting and eating at cafés and cheap restaurants, and resting at the park. These activities are the highlights of the rest days of residents of Maghrebi descent, especially working-class families and older adults.

Sassouma Koné and me have been chatting for about an hour at the park children's playground – empty on this cold Sunday – while her daughter is riding the rocking horse. Karim Mahrez and her daughter come. “Hi! We met each other a few months ago, right? Is the little girl going well?” He notices my notebook and recorder. “Are you a student, a journalist?” I introduce myself. Mr. Mahrez reacts: “We're lucky to have the market here. Me and my family are saving a lot. It's a market with fruit and vegetables, fish also, and dairy. When we come at the end – I come around 1 p.m. since I live across the street: I'm the building custodian. And then, you have two kilos of clementines for one euro! Yes, I mean, when it comes to food, here we're spoiled! (laughs)” Ms. Koné approves: “Yes, it's true that it's convenient.” Mr. Mahrez adds: “Restaurants, too, there're restaurants everywhere, super inexpensive. Canteens, a tray for five euros. When we don't want to cook, like on Saturdays after going to the market, we have that.”

Abdelilah Banouni and Mansour Kifani play checkers at the park's central path. They use Sprite green caps and Coke red caps as pawns. They tease each other. “It's over, I'm going to win!” “No, it's not over, you're not going to win!” “Now I'm going to win!” (laughs) Mr. Banouni tells me: “Then we go to the market and then we're going to have tea with friends.”

Likewise, older immigrants who used to live in Goutte d'Or and moved to the suburbs like to come back, for acquiring produce the Barbès market and for meeting acquaintances as well, in favorite neighborhood places like the park.

1:50 p.m. While observing the traffic on Chartres Street, I feel a fruit hitting my heel. I lower the head: phew, the peach is unharmed. When picking the peach (and myself) up, I almost bump into a woman in her sixties. We chuckle. Her eyes light up, and she murmurs: “Thanks!” At her side, a man in his sixties, pencil mustache and short gray hair, is eating a peach. The conversation starts.

“We come from Mantes-la-Jolie, in the 78 [*département* of Yvelines, in the western suburbs]. We always go to the [Barbès] market, every Wednesday and Saturday. We come here for the prices, of course. But also, because it's pleasant, it's relaxing, vendors are yelling, it's lively... Otherwise we wouldn't travel all the way from the 78! (laughs)”

An elderly man I met at the park told me: “I'm coming from Mantes-la-Jolie: 70 kilometers! I come for the market, to see people I've known, to chat and have tea. I do the groceries for two days. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday: market in Mantes. Wednesday and Saturday: in Barbès.”

In the store clusters, first- and second-generation immigrants can compare the prices of the various stores, all within walking distance. They tell anecdotes where they toured the entire cluster to find a product at a lower price than at the first store they entered. Géraldine Mbarga (born in Cameroon, executive assistant, resident of Nanterre) remembered an episode: “I know which stores sell cheaper in Château Rouge and which stores sell more expensive. One day I needed bouillon cubes from Cameroon. There's a store run by a Cameroonian woman; I'm used to shop there. I come to her; I tell her: 'How

much is the cube?' She says: 'It's five euros'. I was with my sister, I tell my sister: 'Wait, I'm going to check at that store run by the Chinese lady over there.' I went there and bought the same quantity for 3.90 euros! Then I told my sister: 'You see, the cube that she wanted to sell me for five euros? I just got it for 3.90 euros.'" Louis Mansaly, a store manager in Château Rouge, confirms that most of his interactions with customers do not involve advice on choosing produce – for that, they trust their own judgement. Rather, he assists customers who bring budgetary concerns: "We see women coming with five euros and wanting to buy for five children. It's complicated; the equation is difficult to solve. Because with five euros, you can't buy much. It's like, one kilo of rice, some vegetables, and perhaps not even fish."

At these clusters, first- and second-generation immigrants also appreciate accessing imported foods that are more expensive elsewhere in the suburbs. About the sub-Saharan African cluster (Château Rouge), Géraldine Mbarga (born in Cameroon, executive assistant, resident of Nanterre) forcefully explained: "That's how we Africans think, that's why you see that Château Rouge is crowded. It's not that there's nothing in other neighborhoods: there is. But the price! There're some African stores in the suburbs that even double the price. You take here [in Château Rouge]: two euros. You go outside the neighborhood: it's five euros." About the Maghrebi cluster (Goutte d'Or), Rachida Kateb (born in Algeria, childcare worker, resident of Goutte d'Or) appreciates: "The prices are very interesting. They do wholesale prices. Yeah, there's everything, we get spices there. They sell spices, they sell oil, they sell couscous, they sell canned tomatoes, they sell pistachios, almonds, peanuts, and the like. They sell all of that, and you can't find that elsewhere: you can only find it here."

First- and second-generation immigrants compare prices in supermarkets and hypermarkets across the suburbs. Residents of Goutte d'Or mostly travel to two hypermarkets in the nearby suburbs, in the cities of Aubervilliers and Bagnolet. Residents of Aulnay-Nord travel to the local hypermarket and to others across the northern suburbs. Mauricette Diop (born in France to Senegalese-born parents, accountant, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) quipped: “We shop around! We make competition work!” Informants find the observed price differences for an exact same product to be jarring. Géraldine Mbarga (born in Cameroon, executive assistant, resident of Nanterre) gave a couple of examples:

I noticed, at supermarkets in France, prices are... Like, I take plaited brioche at Leader Price [discount store chain], 1.38 euros – next to where I'm praying on Wednesdays, at Saint-Pierre du Gros Caillou [in the 15th *arrondissement*]. So, when I come by, I take advantage of that, I go to Leader Price. It's less expensive compared to all the other stores. I found the same plaited brioche at Monoprix [supermarket chain]: 2.17 euros! (laughs) It's crazy! It's unbelievable.

I like juice and lemon soda a lot. At Franprix [supermarket chain], I often buy it 77 cents, at Monoprix, 81, at another Franprix, 86. I'm going to Leader Price, it's 65 cents, 64. (laughs)

Comparing those prices, down to the cent and for every single foodstuff, requires a great deal of energy – in their words, of head-scratching (“*prise de tête*”), of headache (“*casse-tête*”). Boutros Naguib (born in Egypt, bus driver, resident of Aulnay-Nord) exposed:

“For instance, you want to buy a coconut. You must see how much they sell at Carrefour, how much they sell at Leclerc [hypermarket chains]... That's all. Sometimes the difference is 30 cents and still, you're scratching your head with that.”

Still, for first- and second-generation immigrants, hope prevails, solutions can be worked out, and tactics can be deployed. In particular, they use special offers learned from catalogs and conversations with neighbors, friends, and relatives. As I repeatedly heard: “When there're special offers at [one store], we go there. When there're special offers at [another store], we go there.” Kouassi Doumbia (born in Ivory Coast, security guard, resident of Goutte d'Or) outlined: “Whenever there're special offers, we go to Carrefour, we go to Auchan [hypermarket chains]. We find a pretty substantial quantity. So, we go with 100 euros, we do this type of groceries.”

To take full advantage of special offers, first- and second-generation immigrants buy in large quantities. Amélie Baranski, now a waste prevention officer at the City of Aulnay-sous-Bois, used to work as a cashier at a hypermarket in Aulnay-Nord when she was a college student, and confirmed the significance of special offers from her experience. Ms. Baranski observed two types of customers: those who do their grocery shopping “for whatever” and those who come “for special offers,” thus bringing carts full of “bottles of Coca-Cola, bottles of beer, baby diapers” to checkout. Loubna Ghoula (born in France to Algerian-born parents, warehouse clerk, resident of Aulnay-Nord) described with amusement storing at home “15 liters of oil” and “washing powder for one year”. When describing those purchases, first- and second-generation immigrants turn to conceive food as an expense, not as a cultural and social practice. Hence, they associate it with products

involving zero emotional engagement, like “washing powder, shampooing, cleaning products.” Belkacem Guerroumi (born in France to Algerian- and Moroccan-born parents, incinerator operator, resident of Goutte d’Or) surprised himself of such an incongruous association: “But washing powder, shampooing... We don't eat that! (laughs)”

Now, buying in large quantities is mostly suitable for large households. Informants who become single turn to day-to-day purchases at local stores. When Raúl Paredes (born in Peru, food preparation worker, resident of Goutte d’Or) cared for a family, he would acquire food at the Barbès market and at a number of hypermarkets: Auchan in Bagnolet, Carrefour in Montreuil (eastern suburbs), and Leclerc in Saint-Ouen (northern suburbs). Today, he is a divorcé, and the children have left home. He acquires foods in large quantities only when he has friends over. His words became a nostalgic, dissociative chant: “One buys a cheese, a piece of meat, pasta...”

First- and second-generation immigrants rarely use convenience stores, simply because their prices are notoriously high. In this regard, they accuse convenience store owners of being obsessed with “making money,” of not “fearing God”. In their words, they do not routinely “buy groceries” at convenience stores. If they do, it is under three circumstances. They unexpectedly run short of a necessary product like oil, pepper, or salt. They are friends or relatives with the owner. Or, they face unanticipated financial hardships and request an account, an arrangement that markets and other brick-and-mortar stores do not usually accept. Stéphane da Silva (born in France to Brazilian- and French-born parents, adult educator, resident of Goutte d’Or) remembers the owner of a convenience store in front of his apartment building, to whom he used to rent his parking

spot in exchange for an account: “Long story short, I was renting my parking permit to the [store] owner – which I’m not supposed to. So, I had an account, he could give me credits and the like. It wasn’t particularly more expensive, so I shopped there quite often. It was a little store, but you could find essential items.”

Either way, they criticize convenience store owners for taking undue advantage of a captive customer base. A man with whom I was chatting on the street in Goutte d’Or exposed the issue: “We don’t do the groceries in convenience stores; it’s too expensive. Coca-Cola, it’s 4.50 euros, whereas at Franprix [supermarket chain], it’s 1.50 euros. But, well, Franprix closes at 6 p.m. and convenience stores close at midnight. Sometimes you’re forced. For me, the convenience stores, it’s when I want to waste money. Like, I’m going there, I take shrimps and the like, 50 euros... But well, sometimes you’re forced. It’s like, you’re on holidays and for some reason you must get back to work, the one-way ticket is 1,000 euros... you’re forced. Here it’s the same.”

4. 1. 2. Natives

Natives are generally unconcerned about price. It is a nonexistent cognitive load to them. I asked Véronique Chantôme (born in France to French-born parents, radio director, resident of Goutte d’Or): “What is your budget?” Her immediate response was: “I don’t know, I can’t evaluate it.” Their food budgeting is not planned but situational. Stéphane da Silva (born in France to Brazilian- and French-born parents, adult educator, resident of Goutte d’Or) struggled to verbalize it: “No, I don’t have any budget, I don’t know. Honestly, I don’t know. If you will, I try, in normal times, not to spend more than five

euros per meal.” Once completed their “budget for living,” which includes food at home, low-income natives with no dependents do not count pleasure-driven expenditures, like eating out. Manon Delhoste (born in France to French-born parents, student, resident of Goutte d’Or) laughed about it: “I go to restaurants quite often, so there I’m probably blowing much more!”

High-income natives prefer “proximity stores” over supermarkets and hypermarkets: in their judgement, the “price” might be high, but the “quality” of the foods does make it worth it. Véronique Chantôme (born in France to French-born parents, radio director, resident of Goutte d’Or) commented: “There’s a very good cheese shop on Ramey Street. You need to rob a bank before going; it’s very expensive. So, I don’t take three tons. But it’s (emphatic tone) good.” Thierry Caillet (born in France to French-born parents, painter, resident of Goutte d’Or) put it bluntly: “I don’t even go to supermarkets anymore because it makes me nervous. I prefer the smaller ones where it’s a bit more expensive.” In this regard, store managers in the ethnic clusters argue that their goods offer the same quality as in local stores and supermarkets for much cheaper. Auguste Le Bihan voiced his puzzlement: “They [native residents] buy Thai rice at G20 [supermarket chain] at 1.80 euro the little sack of 500 grams. Whereas we sell at 1.90 euro... per kilo! It’s exactly the same quality, it’s the same produce, it’s the same rice.”

Natives also have a decided dislike for the Rungis wholesale market. The very term is an insult, a pejorative euphemism for low-quality foods. Véronique Chantôme (born in France to French-born parents, radio director, resident of Goutte d’Or) told about the butcher shops of Château Rouge: “Really, the bottom of the range from Rungis.” About

the produce sold at the Barbès market, natives chalk up their perceived poor quality to their traceability to Rungis. Françoise Lépinay (born in France to French-born parents, documentalist, resident of Goutte d'Or) commented: "It's very Rungis, in the bad sense of the term." Thierry Caillet (born in France to French-born parents, painter, resident of Goutte d'Or) ironized: "It's big fat stuff from Rungis."

Low-income natives acquire food at local supermarkets, the Barbès market, and "proximity stores," adjusting as their disposable income permits. Amédée Décembre (born in France to French-born parents, chef, resident of Goutte d'Or) prefers "proximity," "quality," and "taste," but deals with significant budget constraints. He commented on a local cheese shop: "There's a cheese shop that sells *cantal* [firm cow's-milk cheese from Cantal, central France], *emmental*, and *roquefort* [blue sheep's-milk cheese]. Choice is limited but the price is quite exceptional – exceptionally low." Similarly, he weighed the merits of a local pizzeria: "The produce is of good quality, the prices remain reasonable, and it's still in the neighborhood." Manon Delhoste (born in France to French-born parents, student, resident of Goutte d'Or) acquires most of her food at a discount store. However, "when [she has] a little bit of dough," she treats herself to meat from a pork butcher shop. Lisa Vincent (born in France to French-born parents, student, resident of Goutte d'Or) acquires food at Carrefour Market (supermarket chain) on the regular. As she said: "I do the groceries there." She also buys fruits and vegetables at the Barbès market "because it's cheap," defending: "The quality isn't great, but let's say that for students, it enables to eat lots of varied vegetables at inexpensive prices. Honestly, I think that quality-wise, it's similar to what you can find at Carrefour Market or Franprix [supermarket chains], except that it's three times less expensive."

4. 2. Types of Foods

First- and second-generation immigrants travel to types of places across the metropolis for acquiring types of foods. Jamal Embarek (born in France to Algerian-born parents, restaurant manager, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) reflected that while life can be difficult, his family is doing well. I probed: “What do you do in order to do well?” and he verbalized: “How do I do in order to do well... Well in fact we go to various places, depending on the foodstuffs.” I met a man at church in Aulnay-Nord, introduced my research, and he cited first thing the various hypermarkets he travels to: “I shop wherever it's cheaper. Leclerc in Blanc-Mesnil, Auchan in Sarcelles [suburban cities]...” Contrariwise, natives walk to types of stores, in Goutte d'Or or as close as possible.

4. 2. 1. Fresh Produce and Storable Goods

The first typology distinguishes fresh produce – fruits, vegetables, meat, and fish – from storable goods, like cereals and beans. First- and second-generation immigrants acquire fresh produce at markets and storable goods at supermarkets and hypermarkets – across the metropolis. In their words, the “fresh” is to be acquired at markets, and the “rest” at supermarkets and hypermarkets. I met a man at church in Aulnay-Nord, introduced my research, and he proceeded to explained: “I go to the market and to the stores. H-market [*halal* store], Carrefour [hypermarket chain]... The market for meat, vegetables, and the like. H-market for cookies, milk, semolina, yogurts, and the like.” I asked Jamal Embarek (born in France to Algerian-born parents, restaurant manager, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) where he does his grocery shopping, and he gave that succinct response:

“In Goutte d'Or, mostly, for everything that can be stored. For fresh stuff, it's at the market.” Belkacem Guerroumi (born in France to Algerian- and Moroccan-born parents, incinerator operator, resident of Goutte d'Or) said he acquires “pasta and rice” at a local Franprix (supermarket chain) and “fresh produce, fruits and vegetables” at markets.

A rarer but notable practice for acquiring fresh produce is travelling to farms in the outer suburbs and to the Rungis International Market (the largest wholesale food market in the world) in the southern suburbs. At farms, first- and second-generation immigrants acquire whole animals (beef, chicken, lamb, mutton), fresh eggs, and raw milk. To do so, they team up with friends, neighbors, or relatives. Salif Dramé (born in Mali, garbage collector, resident of Aulnay-Nord) walked me through the process: “We buy the sheep together, the farmer cuts it for us, and we share it.” Once at home, they take pleasure in making whole animal butchery, butter, and curdled milk.

Travelling to the Rungis wholesale market enables to acquire large quantities of fresh produce at a low price. It is thus a tactic mostly used by large households. Irène and Émile Sembolo (born in the Congo, janitor and drama teacher, residents of Aulnay-Nord) used to cross the metropolis in the wee hours of the morning: “At 5 a.m., we were there.” They remember the abundance of produce: “There were large crates, fish, charcuterie... everything, everything.” They would buy for “a month, a month and a half”. It was worth the hassle: they would rest assured that their children would always have something to eat. Mr. Sembolo evoked the soothing thought that those well-fed, well-behaved children “won't break everything outside”. Once at home, Mr. and Ms. Sembolo would prepare – “gut the fish, cut the chicken” – and store in the freezer. Now that their children have left

home, Ms. and Mr. Sembolo do not need that much food and that much budget control: they simply go to the neighborhood market once a week. It is a calmer routine: “We scratch our heads less.” Yet, they feel a bit nostalgic: “That was an era.”

For acquiring storable goods, some informants shop at the few wholesalers who also retail, for substantial savings. Informants cite, for example, “the bottle of Coke at 1.80 instead of 1.50 euros”. Note that online food acquisition is an epiphenomenon – much like observed in nationally representative survey data (Kranklader, 2014). In my dataset, it concerns only one informant. Rose Fotso (born in Cameroon, business assistant, resident of Aulnay-Nord) has difficulties walking. For storable goods, she uses a home delivery service. For fresh produce, she sends her grandchildren acquire large quantities at the local market, butcher shop, and fish shop (e.g., “platters of four, five kilos” of meat at the butcher shop), which she stores in the freezer.

Natives acquire fresh produce and storable goods at markets, “proximity stores,” and supermarkets – all within the neighborhood of residence, or, if unavailable there, as close as possible. Juliette Thoraval (born in France to French-born parents, political aide, resident of Goutte d’Or) combines two criteria: “organic” and “local”. Within the “organic,” she patronizes an organic market, the *Marché de l’Olive* (18th *arrondissement*). Within the “local,” she appreciates a local craft brewery (Brasserie de la Goutte d’Or), a tofu shop, and a pizzeria (although she regrets it is not organic). Besides, she walks to the local supermarkets: “Other than that, we go to Monoprix, Carrefour, and the like [supermarket chains].”

Oftentimes, natives describe their acquisition practices as a network of select proximity stores. Véronique Chantôme (born in France to French-born parents, radio director, resident of Goutte d'Or) never shops at markets, supermarkets, or hypermarkets. Instead, she patronizes various specialized stores corresponding to various foods, and all around the 18th *arrondissement*. Take oil, for example: “I buy once in a while good olive oil in a store that I know.” She concluded by summarizing her acquisition practices as “a great network, a bit everywhere around the 18th *arrondissement*.” Françoise Lépinay (born in France to French-born parents, documentalist, resident of Goutte d'Or) acquires “a certain number of products,” like pecans and apples, at one organic store where “they're delicious”. Generally, she patronizes a local discount store, because, as she stated: “I have a small budget”. “Once or twice per quarter,” she walks to a local supermarket, “because there're two, three things that I can only find there,” like Old El Paso guacamole spice mix. And, as a born and bred Parisian, once a quarter or so, she travels to singular stores she has known throughout her life, like an “Armenian store” that sells *taramasalata* per kilogram. She confided: “When I discovered that, I was your age – I was working as an usherette in Lafayette. And so, they sell dried fruits. They're Armenian. It's that kind of things, of stores, where you stop by once a quarter. It's nostalgia. (laughs)” Lastly, “when [she's] broke,” she buys cod at Picard, a frozen food store. She concluded: “I really am someone who does the groceries in a very scattered manner.”

4. 2. 2. *Ethnic and Global Foods*

The second typology distinguishes foods that are distinctive of immigrants' regions and countries of origin from foods that belong to the global mainstream. First- and second-

generation immigrants acquire ethnic foods in the ethnic store clusters – Goutte d’Or, Château Rouge, La Chapelle – and global foods at markets, supermarkets, and hypermarkets. Sirimavo Lakshani (born in Sri Lanka, janitor, resident of Aulnay-Nord) outlined that system: “I go to the market, then Carrefour [hypermarket chain], then Sri Lankan stores. For Sri Lankan food, I go to La Chapelle [18th *arrondissement* of Paris] – there're many Sri Lankan stores. I also get some vegetables – Sri Lankan vegetables – there.” I asked her to tell me more about these Sri Lankan vegetables, and she specified: “chili, rice, nuts, fish, coconut, small onions”. Diane Kanza (born in DR Congo, janitor, resident of Goutte d’Or) acquires “African” foods, like meat, fish, African pears, plantains, and rice at sub-Saharan African stores, and “things of the whole world,” like water, milk, yoghurt, and cookies, at supermarkets and hypermarkets. Mauricette Diop (born in France to Senegalese-born parents, accountant, resident of the 19th *arrondissement*) acquires “produce directly imported from Africa” in Château Rouge, that is, “for the most part, fish, vegetables, spices that cannot be found at the supermarket”. She acquires foods like “beverages, dairy, starch, pasta, mashed potatoes” at supermarkets and hypermarkets – “Franprix, ED, Monoprix, Carrefour”. Abdessalam Soukhane, an Algerian-born mechanic, resides in Clichy-sous-Bois (northern suburbs). He acquires “classic” foods in Clichy-sous-Bois for the most part. He travels to the Maghrebi store cluster of Goutte d’Or to acquire “specialized” foods like mint, so that his wife, an immigrant from Morocco, can prepare fresh mint tea the Moroccan way.

Informants sometimes ask their family members for help in order to travel to the ethnic store clusters. To acquire spices in Château Rouge, Rose Fotso (born in Cameroon, business assistant, resident of Aulnay-Nord) asks her daughter, who owns a car. As Ms.

Fotso says: “She picks me up and we go there the whole afternoon.” Irène and Émile Sembolo (born in the Congo, janitor and drama teacher, residents of Aulnay-Nord) rely on their daughter, who lives closer to Château Rouge (in Clichy, northwestern suburbs), to bring them what they need from there – specifically, African pears. We joked that they have an African pears home delivery service.

Older immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa have mixed and warm feelings about the store cluster of Château Rouge. On the one hand, they describe it as upsettingly bustling, hence regretting the “tranquility,” “security,” “consideration,” and “respect” characteristic of the markets in their origin region. On the other hand, they experience it as a space of encounters, comfort, and nostalgia, sometimes in humorous and playful ways. Rose Fotso (born in Cameroon, business assistant, resident of Aulnay-Nord) evoked with tenderness: “[In Château Rouge] you'll see all the caricatures of things from Africa. (laughs) Women with babies on their back...” Below is a transcript of a conversation at the store managed by Louis Mansaly. A regular aptly dubs Château Rouge (literally, “Red Castle” in French) as Château Noir (“Black Castle”).

Louis Mansaly introduces me to a regular of his store: “This is Moussa, he knows the neighborhood well.”

Moussa: Do you know how it's called here?

CF: Château Rouge?

M: No, *Château Noir*! (laughs)

LM: *Château Noir*! (laughs)

M: This is *Château Noir*. The *Rouge* has gone for a long time! If you want to see the *Rouge*, you need to go to Barbès: the *Rouge* is over there. Here it's the *Noir*, so, *Château Noir*. It's called *Château Rouge*, but the name should be changed, you see. No, no, no: it's *Château Noir*.

LM: We should talk about the neighborhood a little bit.

M: The neighborhood is good. It's calm. It's tranquil. It's a question of manners, conducts. Because here, there's no problem. Even the French who went to Africa a long time ago, they come here to take a walk, get some fresh air, get the African scent. French people who're used to the African scent, who want to communicate with Africans. The African scent, the dialogue. When we're here, we forget our problems and the like.

CF: Here, in *Château Noir*?

M: *Château Noir*, that's it.

LM: We're laughing...

M: We're laughing, we're talking!

Natives appreciate the foods from the store clusters of Goutte d'Or as "exotic," that is, appealingly strange (Régnier, 2004). In the words of Laure Guellec (born in France to French-born parents, environmental engineer, resident of Goutte d'Or): "It's so beautiful to have that; it's really great. Having produce that you can't find anywhere else." There, natives mostly get condiments, like fresh mint leaves and *tahini* at Maghrebi stores and ginger and peanut sauce at sub-Saharan African stores. Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d'Or) lists the foods that she acquires at Maghrebi stores: "*brik* pastry sheets, Tunisian or Moroccan olive oil, corn semolina,

dried fruits – figs, apricots, raisins”. Similarly, Amédée Décembre (born in France to French-born parents, chef, resident of Goutte d’Or) acquires certain foods at Maghrebi stores: sesame seeds, sesame oil, *harcha* (which he describes as “round breads with extra fine semolina – very, very good”), parsley, and coriander. Françoise Lépinay (born in France to French-born parents, documentalist, resident of Goutte d’Or) evoked her favorite stores in Château Rouge, where she gets personal attention: “I have my two, three stores where the ladies are nice, give me recipes, teach me things about their little eggplants and the like.” By “little eggplants,” Ms. Lépinay is referring to African pears.

Natives use these condiments as original additions to their favorite dishes. Or, they cook Maghrebi and sub-Saharan African dishes that they conceive as both “simple” and “typical,” like *couscous* and *maafe*. Either way, natives do not acquire the staples of their quotidian diet in the ethnic store clusters. Lisa Vincent (born in France to French-born parents, student, resident of Goutte d’Or) sometimes visits those “little exotic stores” in Château Rouge, out of curiosity: “Typically, what I find at these stores, it’s to try out new things. It’s not to make my everyday purchases. Once, I bought plantains to make plantain chips. Voila. Once, I also bought beer, because it was late, and everything was closed.”

Natives also enjoy eating out at “exotic” restaurants. Séverine Huet (born in France to French-born parents, archivist, resident of Goutte d’Or) evoked with delight: “Restaurant-wise, I’ve tried all the little restaurants – Indian [in La Chapelle], Senegalese [in Château Rouge], Maghrebi [in Goutte d’Or]...” College students Manon Delhoste and Lisa Vincent enjoy accessing a variety of fast food options, both “standard” like pizza and kebab, and “exotic,” like “a *couscous*” in Goutte d’Or and “rice with *maafe*” in Château Rouge.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

I summarize the findings and highlight their significance for the food desert scholarship. I also discuss how they offer insights for additional scholarly conversations: the thesis of the global city, social life in gentrifying neighborhoods, space and place in European urban societies, and the social and spatial stratification of everyday life in the Paris metropolis. Finally, I derive their policy and normative implications.

In summary, first- and second-generation immigrants perceive the whole Paris metropolis as a rich and diverse food environment, whereas natives perceive their neighborhood as a food-deficient environment. First- and second-generation immigrants endow mobility with self-efficacy, whereas natives construct proximity as a moral value. First- and second-generation immigrants craft acquisition practices considering price and a twofold typology of foods (fresh and storable, ethnic and global), and spanning the metropolis. Natives craft acquisition practices considering a typology of fresh produce and storable goods, and centering on their neighborhood of residence.

Concerning the food desert scholarship, these findings complicate neighborhood-centric, spatially deterministic approaches to food access and acquisition. They highlight how structural (access to transportation and disposable time and income) and cultural dimensions (judgements and practices) matter on top of spatial access to food. Theoretically, they suggest two distinct ways in which urban residents find meaning in performing mundane activities: believing in self-efficacy and constructing moral values.

These findings also contradict the famous thesis of the global city. In *The Global City – New York, London, Tokyo* (1991), Saskia Sassen relates processes of reconfiguration of the global economy – especially, its financialization and spatial concentration – to urban segregation. Only a few large metropolises – London, New York, Tokyo – can be qualified as global cities, for they concentrate global financial markets. In those global cities, a polarized social and spatial structure emerges. On one extreme, the upper class lives and works in central neighborhoods, and enjoys high incomes, lavish lifestyles, and unbridled mobility. On the other extreme, a class of low-paid, precarious workers provide the goods and services that cater to upper-class demands. Those workers face long daily commutes from the peripheral neighborhoods where they live to the central neighborhoods where they work. The thesis of the global city has been successful in urban studies, perhaps owing to its simplicity and sensationalistic appeal, in picturing a chasm between cliquish enclaves and crushed ghettos. Now, the findings presented here outline a more complex social and spatial stratification. In the case of food access and acquisition, mobility is about meaning and opportunities rather than privilege and exclusion. Moreover, travels are directed to multiple centers in Paris and across the suburbs, rather than bound to a center-periphery model.

Ethnographic studies of gentrifying neighborhoods generally focus on upper-status newcomers (often from a critical approach); few center the experiences of lower-status locals (Paton, 2014). Hopefully, upon documenting aspects of everyday lives and lived experiences of residents across the social spectrum in Goutte d'Or, this ethnographic study draws a nuanced, balanced portrait of social life in a gentrifying neighborhood, like others did before (Authier et al., 2018; Blokland, 2012; Brown-Saracino, 2009; Simon,

1997). In particular, they contribute to nuancing the fictions of the revanchist gentrifier and the crushed gentrified, which critical geographers might indulge in (Clerval, 2011, 2013). In Goutte d'Or, natives believe that their acquisition practices participate in showing attachment to the neighborhood as is, to the point that they feel bad about walking to nearby middle-class neighborhoods. In stark contrast, first- and second-generation immigrants do not think that acquiring food in the neighborhood could make them belong there or be any proof of attachment to it.

Studies on mobility in European urban societies generally report that the disadvantaged are stuck in place and value local attachment (Belton-Chevalier et al., 2019; Orfeuill and Ripoll, 2015). In a seminal work of French urban sociology, Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe (1952) studied social relations among working-class (*ouvriers*) and upper-class (*bourgeois*) kins in Paris. Relations in working-class kins are fewer in quantity but stronger in quality, and centered on the neighborhood of residence. Contrariwise, relations in upper-class kins are more numerous in quantity, but weaker in quality and spread across the metropolis. Moreover, working-class neighborhoods are organized on a notion of proximity, whereas upper-class neighborhoods prioritize social closure.

In two mixed neighborhoods in the Paris metropolis, proximity, in judgement and in practice, rather distinguishes the advantaged. Subjectively, natives value proximity, whereas first- and second-generation immigrants have neutral to positive feelings about mobility. Objectively, first- and second-generation immigrants are more mobile than natives, especially on measures of spatial distance. These findings thus complicate our understanding of the social differentiation of lived experiences of space and place.

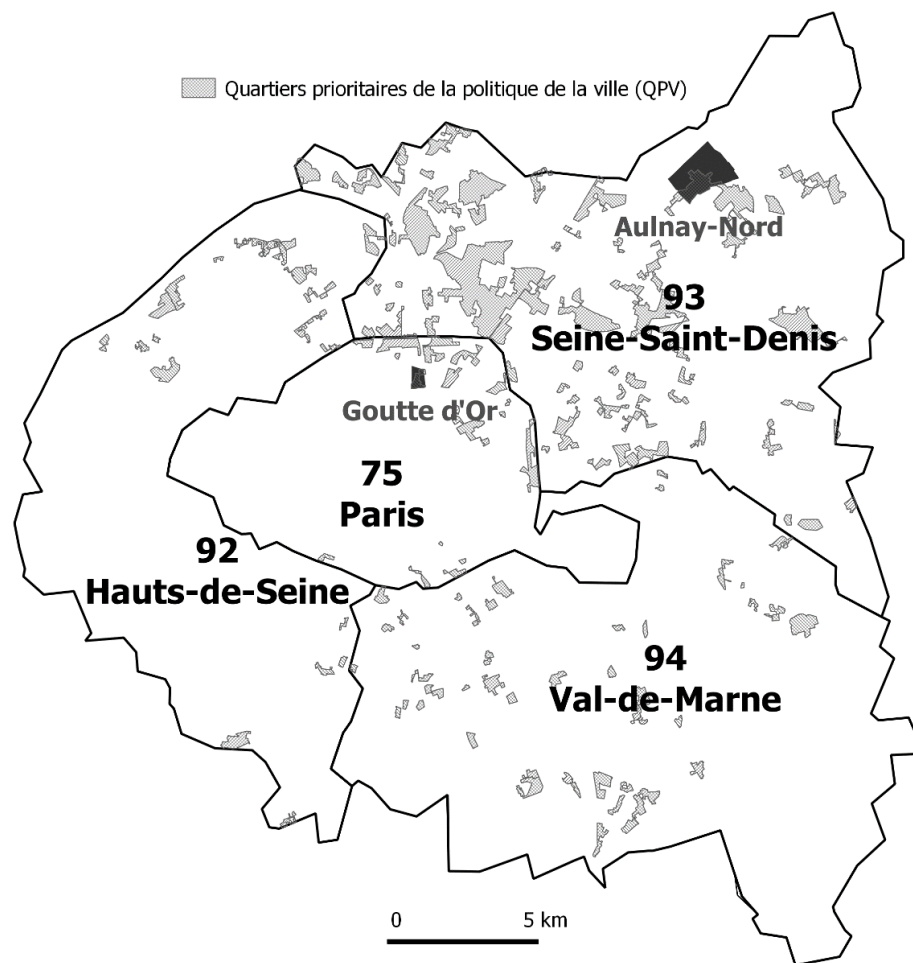
Nevertheless, they are consistent with recent empirical evidence about the European urban upper-middle class: although commonly portrayed as the vanguard of de-spatialized hyper-mobility, they combine a taste for modern global life with a keen attachment to place (Andreotti et al., 2015).

In the Paris metropolis, first- and second-generation immigrants not only live in neighborhoods with a rich and diverse food supply, but also craft large-scale mobility strategies to pick the cheapest, choicest foods. These findings about immigrant heritage and food acquisition can be added to those about social class and school choices. Upper- and middle-class residents not only live in neighborhoods with better schools, but also craft large-scale mobility strategies (Oberti, 2007; Oberti and Savina, 2019; Van Zanten, 2009). Besides food and education, future research can study culture, sport, and health – all realms of everyday life about which there is evidence about the distribution of infrastructure. The working-class suburbs are less equipped with cultural establishments than the city of Paris (Préteceille, 2000; Rueff, 2015), more with sports venues (Préteceille, 1998), and significantly less with healthcare facilities (Vigneron, 2011).

Concerning policy, these findings speak to current projects for improving the hub-and-spoke transit network of the Paris metropolis by developing cross-suburban connections. Those projects focus on connecting business hubs, for instance, La Défense business district (just west of Paris) and Charles de Gaulle Airport (northern suburbs). Instead, these ethnographic findings suggest a resident-, everyday life-centric approach: connecting environments of residence and of food access and acquisition. This approach, moreover, would be inclusive of first- and second-generation immigrants, making their

lives more “livable” (Back, 2015). Theoretically, it would remind critical arguments of Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre about everyday life and urban policy. In *Right to the City* (1996) [1968], Lefebvre defended an expanded concept of urban citizenship, including the access to all city resources like culture, consumption, education, and wealth.

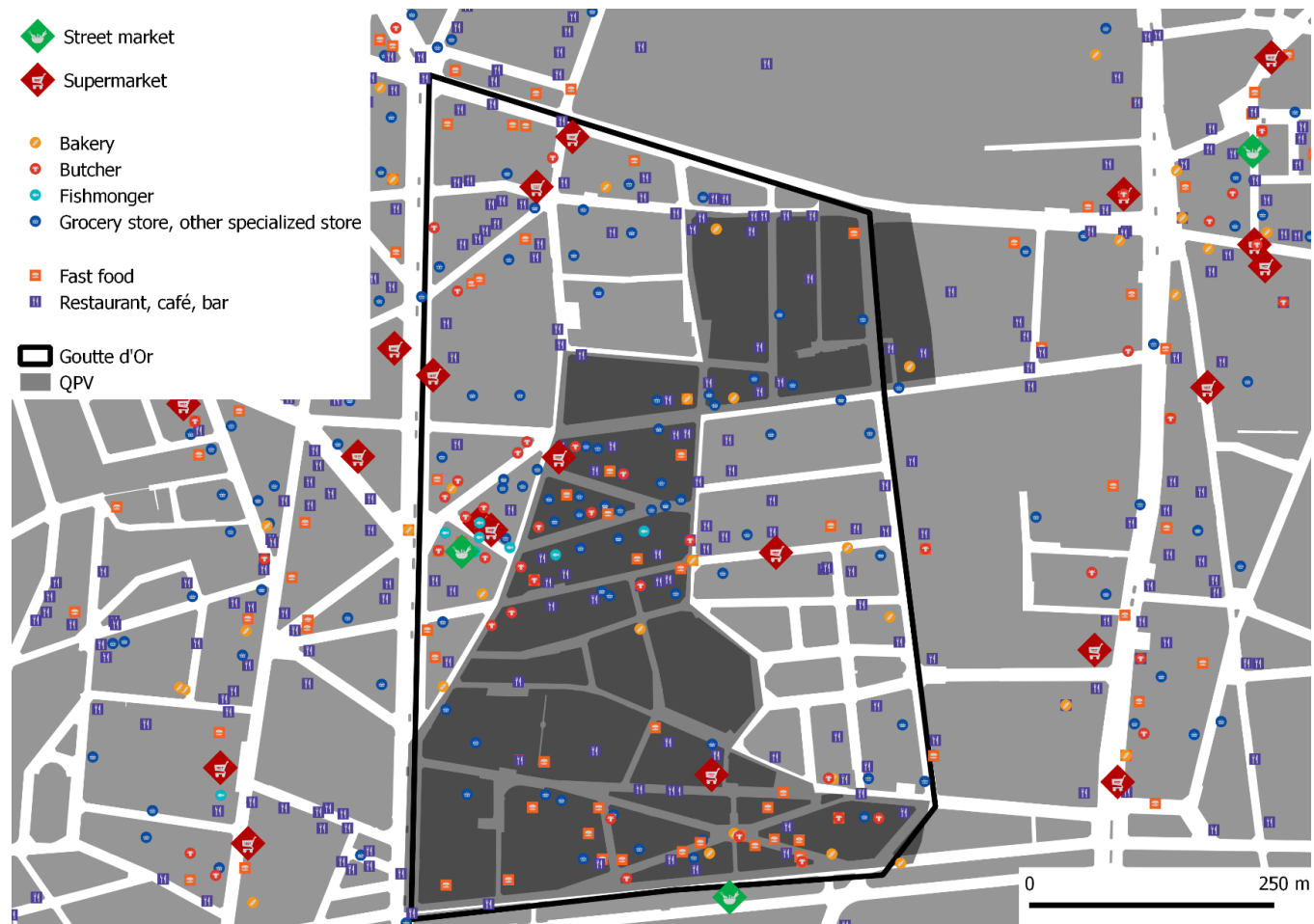
Hopefully, these findings add nuance to normative discussions about mobility in contemporary Western societies, wherein spatial and social mobility are commonly deemed good and desirable (Goldthorpe, 1976; Massa, 2008; Swift, 2004). Because their mobility practices are commonly regarded as less legitimate and valuable than those of the advantaged, the disadvantaged are portrayed as unable to take up the norm of mobility (Damon, 2004). In the case of food access and acquisition in mixed neighborhoods in the Paris metropolis, the mobile are first- and second-generation immigrants and the immobile are natives. But is it good and desirable that first- and second-generation immigrants can spend hours and kilometers in public transportation for acquiring their food, whereas natives just walk a little bit? Are they being resourceful and gritty, as a rational choice perspective would argue? Or, under a structuralist perspective, are they confronting social inequality down to the most ordinary aspects of their lives? Those questions are important but fall beyond the scope of empirical scholarship.



Map 2.1 – Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d’Or within the Paris metropolis

Sources: IGN – GEOFLA®, 2014 (ODbL) / Data Île-de-France – ZUS, ZRU et ZFU, 2014 (ODbL)

Cartography: the author, using QGIS (QGIS Development Team 2020)



Map 2.2 – Retail food environment of Goutte d’Or

Sources: APUR – ILOT PHYSIQUE, 2015 (ODbL) / CGET – QPV, 2018 (Open Licence) / Data Île-de-France – ZUS, ZRU et ZFU, 2014 (ODbL) / INSEE – SIRENE, 2015 (Open Licence), crosschecked with the author’s field data

Cartography: the author, using QGIS (QGIS Development Team 2020) / Pictograms: the author’s little sister



Map 2.3 – Retail food environment of Aulnay-Nord

Sources: APUR – ILOT PHYSIQUE, 2015 (ODbL) / CGET – QPV, 2018 (Open Licence) / Data Île-de-France – ZUS, ZRU et ZFU, 2014 (ODbL) / INSEE – SIRENE, 2015 (Open Licence), crosschecked with the author's field data

Cartography: the author, with QGIS (QGIS Development Team 2020) / Pictograms: the author's little sister



Pictures 2.1 and 2.2 – Stalls and sales at the Barbès market
Source: the author

Chapter 3: Urbanity in Practice: Disposing Stale Bread in French *Cités* and *Villes*

1. Introduction

In Aulnay-Nord, a neighborhood in the northern suburbs of Paris, some residents dispose stale bread in two ways that differ from tossing it in the garbage: either hanging it in plastic bags on railings, or littering it on the ground with any trash (used diapers and sanitary towels, obsolete appliances, empty bottles and cans, dish leftovers, freshly cooked oil, and the like). In France, bread has no preservatives: it gets stale in days, even hours. Stale bread in collective spaces is not particular to Aulnay-Nord but generalized to suburban neighborhoods across France built as blocks of high-rises (in French, *cités*). For *cités* residents, it is an environmental nuisance: it attracts rodents and is perceived as unpleasant. To address it, public services and neighborhood organizations in Aulnay-Nord implemented a comprehensive stale bread policy: installing containers for bread (beside regular garbage containers) so it is sent to a farm, convening cooking workshops, distributing educational board games, and hiring a full-time stale bread officer.

However, in Goutte d'Or, a neighborhood in Paris, residents do not hang or litter stale bread, even under similar individual characteristics. Everyone tosses it in the garbage. The same happens in all street-centric inner-city neighborhoods (in French, *villes*) across France: nowhere is stale bread in collective spaces observed. The locus of the problem thus appears to be contextual rather than individual. Furthermore, we can solve it by

comparing two contexts: one where residents toss, hang, or litter, and one where residents just toss. Herein, we can hold individual characteristics and the urban society constant.

First, I present the analytical design. Next, I introduce the concepts of urbanity and practice, and a framework for analyzing how they relate. On these grounds, I document how residents of Aulnay-Nord perceive tossing, hanging, and littering. I explain that residents of Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or have similar practices with fresh bread. However, residents hang or litter stale bread in Aulnay-Nord and not in Goutte d'Or because of differences in urbanity. Finally, I evaluate the generalizability of the findings and derive implications for ethnographic methodology and for policies addressing stale bread in French *cités*.

1. 1. Analytical Design

I conducted fieldwork in Aulnay-Nord in 2015-2016 and December 2017, and in Goutte d'Or in 2014-2015. Herein, stale bread emerged as a serendipitous discovery. Upon entering the field of Aulnay-Nord, I did not expect to find phenomena of stale bread, let alone in such a dramatic way. To inquire into that, I included stale bread as a topic to be investigated in Aulnay-Nord and analyzed anew the data collected in Goutte d'Or, especially those about fresh bread.

While evidently unique neighborhoods, Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or are suitable sites for an analysis of the stale bread problem that is generalizable to comparing the contexts of *cités* and *villes*. In both neighborhoods, I find that residents from all cultural and

sociodemographic backgrounds use fresh bread, with nuances in quantity across culinary cultures. Comparatively, residents of Asian heritage use the least bread and residents of Maghrebi heritage use the most bread. However, hanging and littering as opposed to tossing are distinctive of Aulnay-Nord and *cités* generally. I find no evidence of them in Goutte d'Or (neither today, nor before gentrification), nor in any other *ville*. Therefore, ways of disposing stale bread are neighborhood-specific rather than differentiated across categories of the French social stratification system. In particular, they are not characteristic of first- and second-generation immigrants. Anecdotal evidence (collected by asking relatives, friends, and colleagues) suggests that many French natives do not toss bread in the garbage, but feed animals (pigeons in urban areas, ducks and donkeys in rural areas), compost it, or cook it (e.g., *pain perdu* – literally, “lost bread,” known in the English-speaking world as French toast). As humorously noted by an Aulnay-Nord professional: “There’s a real psychological-cultural problem among people about not tossing bread in the garbage. They cannot do it. In a lot of cultures, one does not toss bread in the garbage. Your average Franco-French granny and grandpa don’t do that, Algerians don’t do that...”

While stale bread in collective spaces is generalized to *cités*, Aulnay-Nord is singular for its comprehensive neighborhood policy on stale bread. Now, it did not arise because hanging and littering would be especially significant in Aulnay-Nord. Rather, this policy originated from a remarkably strong coordination between public authorities and neighborhood organizations (social centers, social landlords, and the City of Aulnay-sous-Bois). It acted, broadly, on residents’ culture, by targeting household waste management (through the stale bread containers), culinary practices (through the cooking

workshops), and education (through the board games). It was discontinued (2009-2010, then 2013-2016) owing to funding constraints. The stale bread officer delineated:

[Stale bread in collective spaces] is not at all specific to the neighborhood here. I think I could even say that it's specific to *cités* in general. I've been participating in forums for three years, and a lot of *cités* face that problem of bread, of littering. I have [professionals from] Clichy-Montfermeil who came to see me, Bagnolet, Nanterre, Brétigny-sur-Orge [in the suburbs of Paris]... Recently, Lyon developed the same kind of project in Vénissieux [city in the suburbs of Lyon], of collecting bread also, with a theme on littering. I think that there're initiatives that were borne a bit everywhere. But the one that came to the fullest fruition, well, it's ours. I think about Vénissieux for example. I'm doing the collection every week, and there, it's carried out once a month by a private contractor. It costs money; there's not necessarily a mobilization around apart from signs. And so, the social landlord is lonely. No one else wants to participate. There's a context that produces... Whereas here, the existence of the collective [of public services and neighborhood organizations]... For me it's a crucial point to the extent that there're social landlords that are involved, and beside you have the City of Aulnay-sous-Bois that's involved, local organizations... Everybody's seated at the table. I think that the fact that all these partners can meet regularly and agree on the fact that there're a lot of things to be done for residents, for the living environment, for many things, then of course there're a lot of other things you know, culture, education... I think that the existence of the collective is important to have this kind of project emerge and so that means there's support behind.

Within the French urban society, Goutte d'Or has been historically perceived as an emblematic immigrant neighborhood – a welcoming environment for arriving, residing, working, socializing, accessing resources, and finding support (Toubon and Messamah, 1990a, 1990b). The street life is distinctively busy, because the store clusters and the Barbès market attract customers from the entire metropolis (Chabrol, 2011). Ethnologist Emmanuelle Lallement (2010) even argues that the street public space in these retail areas has a unique structure, in that the interaction order of market exchanges requires participants to mutually deny the existence of social inequality.

Ultimately, Aulnay-Nord is a suitable case for studying how residents' culture shapes behaviors with stale bread within a random *cit * context. Goutte d'Or is a suitable case for studying how *ville*-distinctive environmental, cultural, and interactional characteristics shape behaviors with stale bread, while holding individual characteristics constant relative to Aulnay-Nord. Against this backdrop, I analyze three stale bread disposal practices: tossing in the garbage, hanging in plastic bags on railings, and littering on the ground with any trash. Herein, the neighborhood contexts are varying and generalizable to *cit s* and *villes*, and the individual cultural and sociodemographic characteristics (regional and national origin, immigration status, and social class) are held constant.

1. 2. Urbanity in Practice

From a material culture perspective, practice is analyzing what people do with objects, and how these behaviors are grounded in living conditions (Schatzki, 1996). In the sociology of food waste, practice means denaturalizing “waste” and analyzing it as

produced within the social and material contexts of quotidian routines (Evans, 2012, 2014). Accordingly, a prerequisite for a practice analysis of the stale bread problem is to denaturalize informants' discourses. In Aulnay-Nord, residents who toss and neighborhood professionals refer to hanging and littering alike as "throwing" (*jeter*). Yet, when forced to justify their behavior, residents who hang say that they "leave" bread (*laisser*) – implicitly, to something or someone.

The genealogy of urbanity traces back to the classical frameworks of sociologists Georg Simmel (2002) [1903] and Robert E. Park (1971) [1926] on how the environment, culture, and interactions on the one hand, and collective character and behaviors on the other hand, shape each other in distinct urban contexts. In "Metropolis and Mental Life" (2002) [1903], Simmel noted singularities in the character and behaviors encountered in modern metropolises. Urban dwellers develop individualistic traits and depersonalized bonds, in contrast to the sensitivity and affect proper to interpersonal relationships in small towns. Yet, that newly acquired freedom comes with solitude and reserve. Those urban dwellers craft a blasé attitude for managing any dangerous situations that may arise from the exposure to others. Park (1971) [1926] proposed that the social order of cities requires behaviors to comply with rules that individuals are unaware of. Such social order is a somehow spontaneous outcome, one that is beyond conscious action and whose efficiency depends on what is unasked to individuals. Urban research can thus reveal the patterns by which a singular social order gets reproduced in a singular urban context.

In contemporary scholarship, the concept of urbanity has been introduced by geographer Jacques Lévy (Lévy, 2000; Lévy and Lussaud, 2003). Lévy is inspired by its lay meaning:

the character traits of being polite and civil, and the behaviors that make meeting with fellow urban citizens an agreeable experience. Theoretically, urbanity is distinctive of cities whose collective spaces are structured in ways that enable residents to thrive like at home, thus facilitating urbane interactions. Empirically, the street space of contemporary European inner cities represents the quintessence of urbanity. Amid rising global urbanization, the differences between rural and urban societies are weakening. What become significant are rather differences within urban societies, which Lévy calls gradients of urbanity. European suburban neighborhoods present a problematic urbanity in this regard, because of their greater divisions of spaces (retail, residential, industrial).

I suggest integrating urbanity into urban research unraveling contextual diversity. In comparative urban studies, this involves documenting the social, economic, political, and institutional characteristics of local contexts across urban societies of the Global North and South (Maloutas and Fujita, 2012). In American sociology, this involves examining how places shape character and behaviors, like identities (Brown-Saracino, 2018) and perceptions (Shedd, 2015). Expanding on these scholarships, I analyze urbanity as a set of characteristics that: (1) are distinctive of an urban context, (2) pertain to the environment, culture, and interactions, and (3) shape practice.

Accordingly, the questions that guide the analysis are: How do residents of Aulnay-Nord perceive the phenomenon of stale bread in collective spaces? In Aulnay-Nord and in Goutte d'Or, what are residents' practices with fresh bread and why do they waste it? Once bread turns stale, what contextual characteristics explain that residents only toss in Goutte d'Or, but toss, hang, or litter in Aulnay-Nord?

In the following, I document Aulnay-Nord residents' perceptions of tossing, hanging, and littering. I highlight similarities in practices with fresh bread. I explain that residents hang or litter stale bread in Aulnay-Nord and not in Goutte d'Or due to differences in urbanity. Specifically, I find out three characteristics of Aulnay-Nord: (1) unused spaces that I call edge spaces, (2) a collective sentiment that I call communal pessimism, and (3) a binary opposition of communality vs. estrangement in residents' perceptions and uses of spaces, and in their interactions. Finally, I reconstruct the solution to the stale bread problem.

How to – playfully – term this analytical roadmap? From the canon of ethnography, we might say following the bread – not in the spatial sense (Burawoy, 1998) but in the temporal sense (from fresh to stale). Nevertheless, from the method of process-tracing in the comparative-historical social sciences (Collier, 2011), perhaps tracing is more telling. Tossing, hanging, and littering are the outcomes. The analysis traces their origins down to residents' quotidian routines and finds out the critical juncture that explains bread's contrasting trajectories between Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or once stale. In the following, I explain that the critical juncture happens when residents judge bread to be no longer usable in their home and must find a way to discard it out. At that point, differences in urbanity explain distinct trajectories: tossing in the garbage only (Goutte d'Or), and tossing in the garbage, hanging on railings, or littering with any trash (Aulnay-Nord).

2. Tracing the Bread in Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or

2. 1. Perceptions of Tossing, Hanging, and Littering

The fact that only a minority of residents in Aulnay-Nord engage in hanging and littering does not mean that they are epiphenomena (the same goes for many deviant behaviors, for example: murder). Rather, hanging and littering are collectively meaningful because residents perceive them as a problem of the neighborhood and saturate them with framings (Cefaï, 1996; Gilbert and Henry, 2012; Gusfield, 1981; Neveu, 1999). Specifically, they elaborate theories to elucidate those abnormal behaviors (normality being tossing) and thoughts about what could be done to address the problem. I document these perceptions through a threefold typology: unintelligibility, culture, and incivility.

2. 1. 1. Unintelligibility

Unintelligibility means that hanging and littering are actions that cannot (and, for some neighborhood professionals, should not) be understood. A resident verbalized it candidly:

CF: Sometimes people hang bags of bread on railings.

Resident: Yes, some people do that. But I don't know why. There're also people who do that in front of the two mosques. They bring bread and they put it in a bag. But I don't understand why.

CF: So that people reclaim it?

Resident: Maybe... But I wouldn't take it. If you give it to me directly from hand to hand, yes. But this way... I don't trust that, you know.

In conceptualizing hanging and littering as actions, residents who toss and neighborhood professionals expect residents who hang or litter to have motives and to formulate justifications (Vaisey, 2009). Yet, those motives appear to be inaccessible. While residents who hang or litter are known within their high-rise, self-proclaimed hangers or litterers are unheard of. They do not conform small groups; they do not produce idiocultures based on shared meaning-making (Fine, 1979, 2012). Thus, out of frustration, residents who toss and neighborhood professionals force observed hangers and litterers to formulate justifications. Then, those who hang say that they give away to the poor, and those who litter say that they feed animals. Yet, those justifications appear to be false beliefs. No poor person reclaims stale bread; only rodents eat it.

For some neighborhood professionals, unintelligibility is also a motivated choice. Not only they cannot understand, but they also think that they should not even try to understand. They are especially astonished by hangers' justification that residents in need would reclaim hung bread. Yet, they stick to a professional ethic, unwilling to delve into residents' hypothetical motives, let alone judge them. A housing officer vigorously voiced that sense of respectfully detached puzzlement, upon reliving an interaction with a hanger:

I had a discussion on Friday [May 26th, 2016] with a lady in the neighborhood during Neighbors' Day, because I took advantage of it to try to talk about the end of the collection [in May 2016]. And I told her: "But what are you going to do

when there will be no collector anymore?” “Well, I’m going to do my bag and hang it on the railings in front of the door.” I told her: “But in your opinion, for whom, for what?” “Well for the poor!” I told her: “But no one wants your bread!” (laughs) Bread crusts, like this, even for a poor person, it’s degrading! Stale bread, even for a poor person, what do you want him to do with it, honestly! “Okay, then what should I do?” Well, waste less, make recipes, store your bread, try to revise your practices... But it’s hard to tell that to people, it’s hyper intimate in fact. As soon as you’re touching on food practices, it really is entering people’s intimacy. One ends up with discussions like: “But why can’t you do that?”

2. 1. 2. *Culture*

The cultural theory is trying to explain the unintelligible by seeking determinants pertaining to religion, cultural background, and socialization. Originally, Muslims would hang to perform *sadaqah* (charitable giving) and immigrants from rural areas would continue to dispose trash as litter. Next, those behaviors are imitated by residents who do not share those determinants and meanings. Lastly, they become normal: quirks of the neighborhood life, comical albeit “unfortunate.” A resident, born and raised in Aulnay-Nord, pondered:

The resident previously exposed that the bread from the neighborhood bakery was “crappy” (“*dégueulasse*”).

CF: As a thought experiment, bread through the windows: is it because the bakery makes crappy bread and so people throw even more?

Resident: Oh, people would throw anyways. But perhaps its bread gets hard a little faster than others, so people throw a little quicker. But people would throw anyways, you know. People throw everything through the windows, not only bread. Baby diapers... People throw everything through the windows. It's cultural, I think. People come from a village, the youngest do it because they saw their parents do it, and the parents, it's because that's how it was done back in the village. That's unfortunate. Back in the village you just throw things like that, they keep doing it here, and the children reproduce. Perhaps one day it'll stop. When we'll install bars on windows! (laughs) I think that's the reason why. Perhaps I'm mistaken, but in my opinion... I don't do it, but a lot of people do it, and when you're on the terrace, here you go, one sees stuff falling through the window. Stuff to eat, stuff to drink...

CF: It's cultural... Is it some cultures more than others?

Resident: It's everyone. Here, it's everyone. It's a habit of everyone. [Sub-Saharan] Africans, Maghrebis, Eastern Europeans... It's almost normal for people. Because everyone does it, one does it too. That's unfortunate. You're on the terrace and you see bread, diapers, pasta dishes...

This cultural theory reminds the concept of restored behaviors in performance studies (Greenblatt, 1988; Schechner, 1985). This means, once upon a time in Aulnay-Nord, residents started to hang and litter for reasons that have nowadays been forgotten. Since then, those behaviors have been restored independently of the reasons that initially brought them into existence. Elderly residents mention an enduring presence of stale bread in collective spaces. In the words of a longtime resident: "Oh, before there was a

lot... [of bread]. Now less... but it's true that when I came here [twenty years ago], there was a lot of bread on the ground... bread, but also everything, everything you can eat... You are on the balcony and you see stuff falling down! It's unfortunate but it's true. [The social landlord] put a message that this should not be done anymore. It's normal because it's been bringing animals that are not necessarily [good]..."

2. 1. 3. Incivility

Incivility (“*incivilité*”) involves, for residents who toss, disparaging littering and mocking the justification that hanging would be prosocial. The neighborhood organization *VoisinMalin* (literally, “SmartNeighbor”) canvassed the high-rises to sensitize residents to the environmental nuisances caused by stale bread. In doing so, *VoisinMalin* distributed a survey asking residents what they thought were “the reasons behind bread and trash throwing” (Table 3.1). Most responses (n = 647) referred to hangers and litterers’ negative motives and character traits, like “laziness” (16.7% of respondents), “lack of education” (10.2%), and “dirtiness” (13.4%). This contrasts with responses that referred to hangers and litterers’ good nature like “good intention” (0.2%), and to material factors like the “absence of garbage containers” (0.8%) and “bread’s biodegradability” (0.2%).

For neighborhood professionals, incivility means evaluating hanging and littering on the sole criterion of their collective consequences. In the end, however good or bad their inner motives might be, those behaviors damage the environment and harm residents. They require collective action. In the words of two neighborhood professionals:

Ah, here no one knows them [the reasons why residents hang or litter]. “To feed the poor and the animals,” these are the reasons that are invoked, but I don’t believe that. It’s incivility. I think every bread thrower has her reason.

For three years [2013-2016] we’ve been doing a joint project across the high-rises, with all the social landlords, around the question of bread. Because, concretely, we have an issue of bread in outside spaces. Well, people throw anything away, and not just in Aulnay by the way, in all [*cité*] neighborhoods. And it means a presence of bread, including bread that’s been very carefully dropped. But it brings rats and cockroaches and it’s disgusting. So, [name of a social landlord] had already done a pilot program a bit of time ago [2008-2009], of collecting the bread and bringing it to farms. It worked incredibly well. Tenants were delighted, they were happy, they had the impression of having done a good deed. And, most importantly, it considerably reduced and perhaps even eliminated the presence of bread in outside spaces. So, we told ourselves: “Very good, let’s do that again.”

For further demonstration, I construct the constellation of activities collectively labelled as uncivil and compare them with those activities that are illegal yet not labelled as uncivil. Most uncivil is drug exchange and use in public and semi-public spaces – on the porches of high-rises, in cafés, near unauthorized food trucks, and in the park. Drug exchange and use entail long periods of waiting (for clients, middlemen, and sellers) in which the people involved keep busy with eating, drinking, and chatting. Those activities, in turn, get labelled as uncivil loitering. Second is unauthorized vehicle repair (*mécanique sauvage*) carried out in the outside parking lots. Finally, incivility is recast from activities

onto people (Murphy, 2012). Residents label as uncivil the social group of those observed to engage in such activities: young men (“*les jeunes*”).

Note that in the French public discourse about *cités*, the term “*jeunes*,” alternatively “*jeunes des cités*” (literally, “young men from the *cités*”), carries special significance. It is used as a euphemism for male adolescents and young adults with an immigrant background who face difficulties in social integration. Hence, the term carries the assumption that *cit  neighborhoods would be direly excluded from the cultural mainstream, to the point of heading toward a sort of cultural autonomy. Two canonical works in French urban sociology have provided insights about “jeunes des cit s” as a social group. In *La gal re : jeunes en survie* (2008) [1987] (“The Struggle: Youths in Survival”), Fran ois Dubet sketched a complete sociological portrait, paying particular attention to their relations with institutions like the labor market, the school system, and the police. In *C ur de banlieue. Codes, rites et langages* (1997) (“Heart of Suburb: Codes, Rituals, and Languages”), David Lepoutre reported on participant observation among middle-school teenage boys in a *cit  of La Courneuve (northern suburbs), portrayed as high-spirited hell-raisers and mischief-makers.**

Activities that are illegal yet not labelled as uncivil include unauthorized sales of imported, untaxed tobacco (hookah and cigarette packs), and food and drinks, either bought in bulk and sold as units (soda cans, Capri-Sun foil pouches, Kinder Bueno bars) or homemade (coffee, traditional dishes, sorbets). Sales are carried out from stalls (on sidewalks as drive-in kinds of setups, on the marketplace on market days), from hand to

hand during neighborhood festivals (*fêtes de quartier*), through social media and texting, and from apartments' windows (when sellers live on the first floor).

Startlingly, stale bread in collective spaces holds a relatively minor location in the local constellation of incivility. Drug exchange and use and unauthorized vehicle repair are the most salient, triggering anger and estranging judgements toward young men. All other uncivil activities can be broached with laughter and do not entail targeting any particular group. In fact, the insight to keep in mind is that all activities labelled as uncivil happen to damage the environment. Unauthorized auto-repair leaks gas and oil on the sidewalks. Drug exchange and use and the associated loitering generate litter (weed roaches, cans and bottles, wrappings), soot (from the smoke of barbecues), and graffiti (drawn with paint sprays and, on wooden benches, burnt off with lighters). When transactions are happening, dealers sometimes bar access by putting carts and trash cans on porches. Contrariwise, activities that are illegal yet not labelled as uncivil do not have effects on the environment. Potato bags, sorbets, and homemade dishes neither leak toxic fluids, nor prevent anyone from getting home.

For the analysis, residents' theories enable documentation of the collective meaningfulness of stale bread as a social problem. However (ironically), those theories cannot explain. The problem is unintelligible: it would be good to obtain intelligibility. The problem is cultural: how come no one in Goutte d'Or hangs or litters, even under similar cultural characteristics? The problem is incivility: I rather approached incivility as a label (Becker, 1963) and located hanging and littering within the local constellation of incivilities. Note that those theories revolve around the "why": why do people do that?

This reminds Howard Becker's caveat concerning topics of deviance (1963), itself building on Charles Wright Mills's approach to motivation (1940). That is, "why" questions are not productive for a sociological analysis. If we ask "why?" to someone who engages in deviant behaviors, their response might entail post hoc, self-satisfying rationalization, rather than genuine personal meanings. Now, I turn to explanation, by highlighting similarities in practices with fresh bread, revealing differences in urbanity, and finally reconstructing the solution to the research problem of stale bread.

2. 2. Similarities in Practices with Fresh Bread

Residents of Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or use bread in such ways that any "proper meal" (Murcott, 1982, 1983) should include it. Along the three-meal pattern that continues to be generally observed in France (Lhuissier et al., 2012), they consume bread with spread (butter, jam, Nutella, and the like) at breakfast and grab a bite while eating the main dish at lunch and dinner. In residents' quotidian diet, bread is thus not a dish, nor even an ingredient. Rather, it is an accompaniment available at any meal. Once stale, it is no longer usable. The cooking workshops convened by the stale bread officer taught recipes based on stale bread, thus in hopes of having residents use bread as an ingredient once no longer able to use it as an accompaniment. Furthermore, residents express the need to always have food (and bread) set aside in case any neighbor, friend, or relative stops by. Below are fieldnotes describing two domestic settings at dinnertime. The first is Wassila Khezzar's, a Moroccan immigrant who is a retired server and lives alone, in Aulnay-Nord. The second is Angayarkanni Jayasinghe's, a Sri Lankan Tamil immigrant who works as a janitor and lives with her husband (a janitor as well) and two teenage children, in Goutte

d'Or. In both instances, note that bread is placed in such a way that is separated from other foods and that can be easily grabbed:

On the kitchen table, a basket of bread. On the burners, a large pot with leftovers of chicken with carrots (“this was yesterday’s meal”) and a small pot into which Ms. Khezzar pours semi-skimmed milk and dried *harira* (Moroccan soup made with meat, onions, tomatoes, and vegetables). Pinned on the fridge, calendars of Ramadan prayers. The fridge is densely stocked: dairy products on the shelves, fruit and vegetables in the drawers, and milk, soft drinks, and juices in the door. A white cupboard is full of dry goods and coffee packages. In the living room, a flat screen TV broadcasts *Al Maghribiya* (Moroccan channel) with the volume muted. On a table, two small plates of dates and dried apricots, each covered with a sheet of kitchen towel.

It’s dinnertime. Ms. Jayasinghe invites me to join her in the kitchen, a hallway-shaped room of ten-or-so square meters. Four burners, one oven, two large countertops, a large refrigerator-freezer, and a washing machine. On two of the four burners, two large pots of curry, one with chicken and one with fish. The first is about three-quarters empty and the second about one half. Ms. Jayasinghe gives me a spoon and invites me to help myself from the pot. I thank her and choose the fish curry. Her teenage daughter takes a pack of *cordons bleus* from the freezer and fries two pieces in a pan. On the countertops, a Nutella jar, two containers of cooked rice, a pack of surimi, a bottle of pepper sauce, and two five-kilo sacks of rice (long grain and basmati). Hanging near the door, a sack of bread.

At the same time, residents want bread to be very cheap and easily acquirable, in contrast to higher-status baked goods like *pita*, *matlou*, and *harcha*. In many households, among the chores that require leaving the home, acquiring bread is the only one assigned to children. This means that parents perceive the bakery to be close enough to home so that sending the children is safe. At bakeries, residents generally buy bread one by one, and, at stores, in bulk and on special offer. If one buys eleven *baguettes* sold for the price of ten, some end up stale, even in large households. Criteria of taste, quality, and preference are secondary. This explains why one bakery in Aulnay-Nord is still around even though many residents judge its bread “disgusting,” “crappy” (“*dégoûtant*,” “*dégueulasse*”).

On this note, professionals wonder if first, residents of Aulnay-Nord consume more bread compared to other neighborhoods, and second, if the poor quality of the bread locally available might be a cause of waste. Still, they do not blame the bakeries, making the humorous argument that it would amount to an infringement on commercial freedom. In the words of two professionals:

From time to time I try to broach the question of bread quality. Lidl [local supermarket], 35 cents the *baguette*, you should not expect quality bread. Inevitably, when you freeze it... [It will go bad.] Some tell me: “I buy it at 8 a.m., I have to eat it before midday because otherwise it gets hard.” Well, I don’t know, if you really appreciate that, put in a little bit more money... But, actually, I haven’t broached the question a lot because it’s a bit complex to come to a *cité* like that and say: “There it goes, if you buy your bread in a bakery and you don’t find it good...” Like, I’m going to say to the person: “Well, in that case you buy

it elsewhere.” If people indeed buy it elsewhere, I’m penalizing the bakery!

CF: Is the bakery involved in the stale bread policymaking?

Professional: Well, we found that difficult to come see him because his bread is crappy, and everyone says it. It turns stale after the end of the day... His bread is bad. It’s bad bread, so he’s partly to blame if we find it in such quantities! (laughs) So, it’s a bit complicated. We’d thought a little bit about that with the City: seeing how we could potentially involve the bakeries in that question. But well, we’re not going to teach him his trade, but his bread is disgusting.

Still, residents care deeply about not wasting. Most live on a tight budget and highly strategize their food expenses. They also express strong normative opposition to waste, justified by values pertaining to religion (especially, Islam), ethics (especially, references to global hunger), and the injunction to “know how to manage one’s house” (“*savoir gérer sa maison*”). As told by a resident: “I know how to manage my house. I don’t throw away, that’s wastefulness. Because you’re throwing bread, you’re throwing one euro, two euros... The rent, 700 euros, the internet... You should manage your economy. You should not throw away.”

This subsection has traced similar practices in both neighborhoods when bread is fresh. All in all, residents of Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d’Or waste bread because it is at the same time an accompaniment that one should always have at home, and something cheap and available close to home. In the following, I explain that due to differences in urbanity,

residents of Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or have differing disposal practices once bread is no longer usable in the home.

2. 3. Differences in Urbanity

In a seminal work of urban planning, Kevin Lynch (1960) identified five environmental units in large cities of the United States: nodes, districts, landmarks, paths, and edges. Nodes are where urban life happens; residents perceive them as the core of an urban unit. Districts are spaces with common identifying features that residents can enter and exit. Landmarks are where residents cannot enter; they use them as reference points. Paths are where residents can move from one space to another. Edges are boundaries between spaces, material or perceived. Pictures 3.1 and 3.2 are street views, and Maps 3.1 and 3.2 are aerial views, of the built environments in Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or, respectively. For the residents of Goutte d'Or, the street is both a node and a path, residential buildings and stores are districts, and walls are both landmarks and edges. In Aulnay-Nord, the node is much smaller: only the marketplace. High-rises and stores are districts, streets and parking lots are paths, and walls are landmarks. Lastly, the railings and grounds that separate one high-rise from the street space or two high-rises from one another are large spaces that residents neither access nor assign any use: I call them edge spaces. Littered stale bread and trash are concentrated there.

Now, it is not that residents of Aulnay-Nord do not care about their living environment. I find that residents feel attachment to it, in Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d'Or alike. They cite convenient facilities (market, stores, parks), access to public transportation, and a rich

collective life (concert venues, social centers, gyms). As evinced in this conversation between two residents of Aulnay-Nord:

Two elderly women are chatting on the porch. I saw them several times on market days; they seem to recognize me. I introduce myself: “I’m a student and I’m doing some research on food in the neighborhood.” Immediately, both women comment that they appreciate the neighborhood’s connection to public transportation. “For that [accessing and acquiring food], we’re very well served by public transportation!” Her friend adds: “Ah yes, and that’s well known across the suburbs, that here we’re well connected.”

At the same time, residents of both neighborhoods complain about incivility. In Aulnay-Nord, uncivil activities are those that damage the environment. Residents believe that they are committed by residents of the very neighborhood (especially, young men). In Goutte d’Or, uncivil activities are those that damage the public space. Residents believe that they are committed by people who do not belong to the neighborhood (especially, transients). As apparent in this conversation between two residents of Goutte d’Or:

I am chatting with Sassouma Koné and Karim Mahrez in the park while their children are playing.

KM: I must admit that concerning to food, here we’re lucky. (laughs) There’re no problems concerning food. It’s true that there’re no big malls, but now, it’s okay, they’ve built a Gibert Joseph. It’s a big bookstore, we’re lucky to have this for books, DVDs, and all that... We have a toy store... It’s okay, we’re well off. Then

it's true that concerning... there're homeless people, people who have nothing to do here. That's what's a bit annoying sometimes: we come to play with the children and the park is squatted by people who have nothing to do.

SK: That's why I haven't been to this park for a long time. A really long time! Now since it's cold out there, I told myself: "There's no one!" (laughs) But it's true, I agree with you.

KM: There, at the park down there, we were playing in the sandbox, and there were city workers around. They told me: "Beware, sometimes there're syringes." This... I told myself: "I'm not going there anymore."

SK: Oh yeah... That's why I haven't been there for a long time. The other day I was going there with my daughter and there was a guy smoking [weed]. We could smell the odor very well. So, I told myself: "We should turn around and go."

KM: The parks aren't guarded enough. We should have static guards to enforce discipline. This, this is a complaint that we can make, yes. But other than that, we're spoiled! There're a lot of day nurseries. Day nurseries everywhere.

SK: Yes, it's true that on this matter, we're well off. Two here, two over there...

Furthermore, the *cité* context does neither necessarily imply that the built environment is damaged, nor that the neighborhood has been abandoned by public authorities. The famous broken windows theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) is an unverified alternative explanation: in Aulnay-Nord, it is not the built environment per se that generates uncivil activities, but more broadly, the urbanity. Incidentally, a damaged built environment (especially, housing insalubrity) has been historically characteristic of Goutte d'Or (Bacqué and Fijalkow, 2006). In this regard, while validating residents' issues and

feelings, professionals urge not to indulge in cynicism and acknowledge that life in Aulnay-Nord is perhaps not that bad, both in absolute and in relation to other *cités*. A professional pondered:

Professional: Yeah, there's also the narrative that "the neighborhood is crap, anyway, crap for crap, look at the neighborhood we live in, this is crap. Our buildings are being renovated, this is crap because the inside spaces aren't renovated, just the facade." It's along the lines of: "We know we're the crap of Aulnay, the crap of Île-de-France [administrative unit corresponding to the Paris metropolis]." Since it's a common claim, there's truth to that. I personally think that in the [disadvantaged] suburbs, we've been putting on Band-Aid solutions, but we don't heal the wound. That's my personal opinion. But then I think it's convenient to say, the *cités*, the *cités*... No one wants us, blah-blah. Wait, a damn lot of things are going on, there's dough being poured in, particularly because of the national urban policy. Compared to other neighborhoods that aren't in priority zoning and that don't have anything, they can only dream of what we have! And rural areas, it's not even talked about. So, those are narratives that we should be cautious about. Then yes, of course, when one's young and born in a neighborhood like that, when we notice, as soon as you put 93 [Seine-Saint-Denis] on your resume, you won't be hired. If on top of that you put "place Jupiter," [block of high-rises in Aulnay-Nord infamous for its drug exchanges] it'll be even more difficult, so yes. Crap for crap, let's damage even more. But I... (pause)

CF: It's a bit easy...

Professional: It's a bit easy even more in a neighborhood that's been renovated, I mean. Renovated, it's not like Clichy-sous-Bois [city in the eastern suburbs], I mean. I have colleagues who work in Clichy-sous-Bois. There, it's a disaster. Compared to that, Aulnay is paradise.

Yet, in contrast to Goutte d'Or, residents of Aulnay-Nord feel that their neighborhood is abnormal, in relation to urban neighborhoods not built as *cités* (Aulnay-Sud being the closest) and to France as an imagined community (Anderson, 2006 [1983]). Collective expressions of this feeling involve a mix of anger and laughter, like in this exchange between residents and city councilors at a neighborhood council, and in this meme posted on the social media group *Seuls Les Aulnaysiens Peuvent Comprendre* ("Only Aulnaysians Can Understand") (Picture 3.3).

At one of these neighborhood councils regularly convened by the City of Aulnay-sous-Bois, incivility is the first discussion topic to emerge, specifically, unauthorized sales (food, tobacco, drugs) and vehicle repair (known as *mécanique sauvage* – literally, "wild mechanics"). Residents and city councilors argue whether the police are ticketing those who engage in those uncivil activities. Residents say no; city councilors say yes. A councilor contends in a calm tone: "There, the potato vendor: the police are ticketing him." A resident replies with bursts of laughter: "But they're not ticketing unauthorized vehicle repair! Don't mix up bags of potatoes with mechanics, that's not the same!" Resident attendees giggle in agreement.

All in all, residents of Aulnay-Nord share an ambivalent sentiment: our neighborhood is irremediably abnormal, a lot of wrong and weird things are happening, but we still feel unconditional attachment to it. Lawrence Vale (1997) finds a similar ambivalence of feelings in public housing projects of American inner cities, calling them empathological places. In French *cités*, I call it communal pessimism. The term pessimism reminds a group of writers – Albert Camus, Miguel de Unamuno, and Emil Cioran – which political theorist Joshua Foa Dienstag (2006) identifies as existential pessimists. While depicting the human condition as irremediably absurd, those writers manifested keen interest and engagement in politics. They conceived collective life as a shared fate of absurdity that should nevertheless be expressed, even embraced. Hence, in an existentialist sense, pessimism is neither misanthropic nor detached.

Communal pessimism shapes character and behaviors through binary oppositions in how residents perceive and use spaces and interact with one another. The term binary oppositions reminds classical approaches in structural anthropology (Lévi-Strauss, 1983 [1960]). This means, urban neighborhoods are complex systems with structural singularities, particularly, binary oppositions that originate from the relations between neighborhood characteristics (environmental, cultural, and interactional) and collective character and behaviors. Those binary oppositions do not have an objective existence. They can neither be found out by only interviewing individuals, nor they are consciously perceptible by them. Instead, they are to be conceptualized from contextualized ethnographic data.

Two sets of binary oppositions structure perceptions and uses of spaces in Aulnay-Nord. The first relate to perceived boundaries: individual vs. collective, private vs. public, and interior vs. exterior – all in all, home vs. *cit  *. The second relate to feelings: empowerment vs. disempowerment, safety vs. danger, and cleanliness vs. dirtiness – all in all, communality vs. estrangement. Spaces perceived as individual, private, and interior (the home) are collectively felt to be empowering, safe and clean: they facilitate communality. Spaces perceived as collective, public, and exterior (the *cit  *) are collectively felt to be disempowering, dangerous, and dirty: they trigger estrangement. The *cit  * violates the territories of the self (Goffman, 2010 [1971]), whereas the home protects them. In Goutte d’Or, only the first set of binary oppositions – home vs. *ville* – structures perceptions and uses of space. Residents perceive the home and the *ville* differently, but the related feelings are personal. They are neither collective, nor structured as binary oppositions.

In Aulnay-Nord, edge spaces – large and unused – turn estranged from residents. Conversely, groups of residents appropriate bounded spaces to which they assign an exclusive use. Adults meet around their own select benches and walls. Children play in playgrounds protected by fences. Contrariwise, residents of Goutte d’Or use the entire street – they do not estrange any space. Adults and children may have their favorite spot, but not in exclusive ways. On top of that, residents of Aulnay-Nord fiercely appropriate their homes. It is not that, trapped in a context of estrangement, they would become cynical about life and turn to self-destructive behaviors like the patients and inmates of Erving Goffman’s *Asylums* (1961). The observation that some *cit  * spaces are damaged does not mean that homes are as well. I find no differences in neatness and order between residents of Aulnay-Nord and Goutte d’Or. Neighborhood professionals even like to tell

that an uncivil litterer can hide a model homemaker. A housing officer relived an episode involving diapers: “There’s a lady like this, everyone knows her. Her home, one could eat on the floor. Really. In front of her door there’s a bag with dirty diapers. You ask her why, she says: “Well, because it stinks.” You don’t say! I think that your neighbor, and me as well, we’re very happy to smell the scent of your children’s diapers! And she throws everything through the window. Outside, it’s not my place anymore. As soon as it moves beyond the frontiers of the apartment, it’s not my home. And even if you kindly tell them, if you demonstrate to them that it’s an inconvenience, that it has consequences... (sighs). It’s like... water off a duck’s back. It doesn’t pose any problems to them. And I just don’t know how to explain it.”

Finally, interactions between residents reflect their perceptions and uses of spaces. Interactions of communality are prosocial: giving away food to young men who sleep in their car because their parents kicked them out, organizing *maraudes* (tours with meal distribution and wellness checks) for the homeless across the Paris metropolis, and helping residents in hardship (e.g., domestic fire, bereavement). These actions are carried out by residents out of personal initiative, through neighborhood branches of national poverty relief organizations (Secours Populaire Français – literally, French Popular Relief, and Secours Catholique, the French branch of Caritas Internationalis), and through organizations managed by groups of residents as illustrated in Picture 3.4.

Interactions of estrangement involve gossip and boundary-making. Residents call them “Radio Europe,” “Radio 3,000,” per the names of the blocks of high-rises. They include those about incivility documented above. They also contain normative injunctions, like

being a decent homemaker who does not waste her bread, her food, and her money. They have material effects: some residents in need shun public assistance because, as I repeatedly heard, “it’s the shame”. Remember from philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (2003) [1943] that shame only exists in interaction: one cannot feel shameful if alone. Some residents protect themselves by displaying a reserved attitude and by restricting interactions to relatives and close neighbors and travels to chores and children’s activities.

2. 4. The Solution to the Stale Bread Problem

Having broken down all parts of it, I can now reconstruct the solution to the stale bread problem. The minority of residents in Aulnay-Nord who bother to climb down the stairs or take the elevator and hang bags of stale bread on railings perform communality. They perceive full well that no one reclaims their bags. In having transitioned out of others’ homes to edge spaces, the bread becomes an estranged object in an estranging space. Note that the stale bread policy did not include any programs encouraging residents to reclaim those carefully hung bags of stale bread. Although imaginable to a reader from afar, it is unconceivable for Aulnay-Nord locals. The boundary between the edibility and inedibility of bread is, reminding a classical insight in sociocultural anthropology (Douglas, 2002 [1966]), a cultural construct rather than a material reality. Materially, stale bread is inedible if raw (it breaks your teeth), but edible if cooked. Culturally, stale bread becomes inedible once out of home.

The minority of residents who dispose their stale bread as litter out of their home and into edge spaces reflect feelings of estrangement. It is not that they are motivated to damage

the environment. Rather, they conceive that whatever object that is no longer usable at home can be naturally disposed into *cit * spaces that belong to no one and that serve no use.

When forced to justify themselves, residents who hang or litter say that they believe humans or animals reclaim their stale bread. Residents who toss and neighborhood professionals interpret those justifications as false beliefs. Hanging is a performance and littering is a reflecting behavior. They are not actions that can be motivated and justified (as residents who toss and neighborhood professionals conceive them). As such, reminding performativity in the philosophy of language (Austin, 1962), my analysis has not evaluated hanging and littering on criteria of truth and falsehood (as residents who toss and neighborhood professionals do), but explained them by their contextual appropriateness and effectiveness.

Lastly, the majority of residents who toss stale bread in the garbage voice judgements of estrangement. They mock litterers, and hangers even more, for doing odd, foolish actions and saying nonsensical, self-satisfying justifications. They lump hanging (and hangers), and littering (and litterers) even more, together with all the uncivil actions (and residents) that, as I repeatedly heard, “are ruining everyone’s lives” (“*pourrissent la vie des gens*”).

3. Discussion and Conclusion

This concluding section evaluates the generalizability of the introduced concepts, object, and framework, formulates thoughts about ethnographic methodology, and offers ideas for policies addressing the problem of stale bread in French *cités*.

3. 1. Evaluation of Generalizability

Evaluating the external validity of the framework of urbanity in practice invites ethnographic studies comparing neighborhoods characterized by varying gradients of urbanity, while holding constant individual characteristics (in relation to categories of social stratification systems) and the urban society (across the Global North and South). For instance, in European urban societies, a major distinction in urbanity concerns street-centric inner-city neighborhoods and suburban neighborhoods with greater divisions of spaces. The concepts of edge spaces, communal pessimism, and home vs. *cité* are generalizable from Aulnay-Nord to French *cités* because the research sites are suitable for comparing the *cité* and *ville* contexts.

Regarding practice, the object is merely bread in the French context. Plus, it is not a problem of fresh to stale bread per se. Elsewhere, the object could be tomatoes – ripe to rotten tomatoes. Tomatoes would have the same central position in the neighborhood retail environment (supplied by several growers and available in bulk and on special offer at hypermarkets and supermarkets) and in domestic settings (baskets on the kitchen table, sacks on the kitchen door, and the like). Most residents would toss rotten tomatoes in the

garbage, a minority would hang them in plastic bags on railings, and another minority would litter them on the ground with any trash. The cooking workshops convened by the rotten tomatoes officer would teach residents how to transform those tomatoes about to rot into pasta sauce. Perhaps we would even find complaints about the “crappy” tomatoes from one of the neighborhood growers, which turn rotten at the day’s end.

This means, in reference to analytical frameworks in cultural sociology (Griswold, 1987), that the object of the analysis is not “bread,” but “a low-status material object whose use is shared within a society, and that is very cheap and easily acquirable.” Ethnographers can thus study objects that are the most universal and quotidian within the material culture of a national society. In the United States, one such object is fast food (Sheumaker and Wajda, 2008). Then, ethnographic studies can analyze practices with fast food – from acquisition, preparation, consumption, to the management of waste – in American neighborhoods to find out how urbanity shapes practice in the United States.

3. 2. Thoughts about Ethnographic Methodology

Hanging and littering, as opposed to tossing, are phenomena that carry meanings. Admittedly, those meanings are not immediately expressed by the individuals who engage in those behaviors and are not shared in such ways as to form idiocultures or differentiate groups. At the same time, they are not idiosyncratic. They are collective, and I conceptualized them from an analysis of neighborhood-based ethnographic data. These meanings are interesting because they help understand the collective significance of stale bread in collective spaces. Yet, an analysis only aimed at documenting meanings,

perceptions, and discourses related to hanging and littering would be incomplete. As an empirical phenomenon, stale bread in collective spaces is individually and collectively meaningful but contextually explainable.

This reminds a canonical Durkheimian principle: to understand a social fact, do not try to get into individuals' heads, but do obtain hard, cold, and external data. To understand suicide (2007 [1897]), Durkheim relied on aggregate statistical data rather than, imagine, interviews with suicidees (well, their survivors). To understand religious life (2001 [1912]), he collected voluminous materials about faraway societies instead of, say, interviews with churchgoers or observations of religious services. Should Durkheim resurrect in a *cit *, perhaps he would warn: to understand your stale bread problem, do not interview bread hangers and litterers, and not even their neighbors. And, we would respond: dear  mile, we do use interviews with hangers and litterers, and with angry tossers and wary professionals as well, but just as one part of an ethnographic dataset, and finally we contextualize it all.

This also speaks to recent debates about interviewing in American cultural sociology. In "Talk Is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy," ethnographers Colin Jerolmack and Shamus Khan (2014) argue that interviewing operates a fallacious match between attitudes and actions. Mich le Lamont and Ann Swidler (2014) respond that the issue is rather to evaluate what method is best suited to address what research question. For instance, interviewing is best suited to the study of boundaries. In my analysis, interviewing data indeed enabled to document the estranging judgements of residents who toss and the forced justifications of residents who hang or litter. Still, I contextualized that

interviewing data to reveal the meanings of tossing, hanging, and littering, and eventually solve the problem. The insight to be derived from my analysis is thus, to echo Jerolmack and Khan's punchline, that the cheapness or expensiveness (expansiveness) of talk is an empirical and abductive issue, rather than one that can be settled at the stage of developing a research design. The ethnographer is advised to collect talk on the field whatever the research topic. Then, they can evaluate how cheap or expensive (expansive) it is as data collection and analysis move along.

3. 3. Ideas for Policy in French Cités

In Aulnay-Nord, the stale bread policy (2009-2010, then 2013-2016) addressed individual cultural characteristics and prioritized cultural sensitivity. The cooking workshops taught recipes from various culinary cultures. The stale bread containers were placed beside regular garbage containers (not next to them) and flyers communicated that the collected bread was sent to a farm. This means that the message sent to residents was: your stale bread is not waste but does feed animals. In this regard, the finding that the locus of the problem is urbanity rather than individual characteristics explains why that individual-centered policy could not curb the enduring restoration of hanging and littering.

Now, from a neighborhood-centric standpoint, the proposition that urbanity involves binary oppositions that originate from the relations between the characteristics of neighborhoods and that do not have an objective existence raises an issue for policy. It is not concrete and isolated characteristics that need to be addressed, but the abstract ways in which they shape one another. Where to start unraveling? I suggest returning to a core

principle of the French national urban policy: it is, in fact, neighborhood-centered. It selects “priority neighborhoods of the urban policy” (*quartiers prioritaires de la politique de la ville*) based on the criterion of tract-level income. Yet, policymaking that addresses inequality and discrimination by selecting publics can have unintended effects on the collective perceptions of these publics, both by themselves and by others. For instance, Marco Oberti and Clément Rivière (2014) find that the policy of granting school zoning exemptions to selected families has the unintended effect of fostering the perception of socio-spatial and ethnoracial inequality and discrimination in families whose application got rejected.

Expanding on this line of thought, these findings about stale bread suggest that the neighborhood-centrism of the national urban policy could have the unintended effect of fostering the collective perception of *cités* (and, by association, their residents) as problematic, as abnormal, as outsiders to France as an imagined community of territories. Reminding Jean Beaman’s (2017) concept of cultural citizenship and argument that the French of Maghrebi heritage are perceived as citizen outsiders, I call this set of collective perceptions cultural territoriality. For *cités* residents, cultural territoriality involves communal pessimism. For the French not residing in *cités*, it involves perceiving *cités* and their residents as territorial outsiders.

Then, under that framework, cultural territoriality could have material effects. Theoretically, communal pessimism involves environmental nuisances like stale bread in collective spaces. Hypothetically, the perception of *cités* and their residents as territorial outsiders could turn into a socio-psychological mechanism driving agents’ decisions

concerning work, education, housing, the police, and the criminal justice system – all institutions in which residents of *cités* face discrimination (ONPV, 2017).

All in all, policy in French *cités* could act on urbanity in the following ways. On the one hand, it can continue to foster residents' attachment to their neighborhood, engagement in collective life, and ability to find what they need therein. On the other hand, those efforts can be designed in such ways that avoid generating the collective perception of *cités* and their residents as territorial outsiders. That perception shapes phenomena that damage residents' living environments, and, hypothetically, feeds back into social and spatial inequality and institutional discrimination. That is, admittedly, easier said than done. Perhaps I can only suggest that besides localized interventions, a major part of the national urban policy goals can be achieved through increased efforts toward equality in national policies on work, education, housing, police, and the criminal justice system. This means, acting on social and spatial inequality and institutional discrimination at the national scale can contribute to addressing *cités*-specific problems. These problems do not wholly, exclusively, and necessarily require neighborhood-based action.

Yet, this does not mean that *villes* are ideal and should be made universal, whereas *cités* are undesirable and should be suppressed. Communal pessimism also shapes behaviors that might be deemed beneficial, like grassroots poverty relief organizing and prosocial actions toward the homeless and residents in distress. Rather, for now, my suggestion for policy is an experiment à la Moving to Opportunity (Sampson, 2008; Sanbonmatsu et al., 2011): move *cités* residents who hang or litter to *villes* and track whether they continue to do so. That experiment would also help estimate the causal effects of urbanity on

hanging and littering. On this note, I envision a breaching experiment reminding the ethnomethodological tradition (Garfinkel, 1967): in *villes*, hanging stale bread on porches and littering trash on the streets, and see what happens. However, ethical and legal issues are foreseeable.



Map 3.1 – Aerial view of Aulnay-Nord. Sources: CGET – QPV, 2018 (Open Licence) / Data Île-de-France – ZUS, ZRU et ZFU, 2014 (ODbL) / IGN – BD ORTHO® 50cm, 2018 (Licence Recherche et Enseignement Sciences Po). Cartography: the author, using QGIS (QGIS Development Team 2020)



Map 3.2 – Aerial view of Goutte d'Or. Sources: CGET – QPV, 2018 (Open Licence) / Data Île-de-France – ZUS, ZRU et ZFU, 2014 (ODbL) / IGN – BD ORTHO® HR, 2018 (Licence Recherche et Enseignement Sciences Po). Cartography: the author, using QGIS (QGIS Development Team 2020)

Table 3.1 – Excerpted page from the report “Sensitization to Bread and Trash Throwing” [“Sensibilisation aux jets de pain et de détritrus”] by the organization *VoisinMalin* (2016)

Les raisons de jets de pain et de détritrus The reasons behind bread and trash throwing

Raisons citées	Cited reasons	Fréquence
Fainéantise/ Facilité	Laziness / Easiness	16,7 %
Négligence	Negligence	3,7 %
		20,4 %
Habitude	Habit	1,7 %
Inconscience	Lack of consciousness	0,9 %
Ignorance des conséquences	Ignorance of consequences	0,3 %
Manque d'informations	Lack of information	0,6 %
Absence de sanction	Absence of sanction	0,3 %
		3,9 %
Bêtise	Stupidity	1,5 %
Méchanceté	Wickedness	0,8 %
Malveillance	Carelessness	0,2 %
		2,5 %
Saleté des poignées de poubelles ou	Absence de poubelles	
	Garbage containers are dirty	0,8 %
	No garbage containers	
Pain biodégradable	Bread is biodegradable	0,2 %
Gaspillage	Wastefulness	1,7 %
Gens qui n'ont pas connu la misère	People who have never experienced poverty	0,2 %
pas de gestion du budget	No budgeting	0,2 %
surconsommation	Overconsumption	0,2 %
		2,3 %
Bonne intention	Good intention	0,2 %
Pain aux pauvres	Bread to the poor	0,8 %
Nourrir les animaux	Feeding animals	7,1 %
Nourrir les oiseaux	Feeding birds	7,9 %
Nourrir les pigeons	Feeding pigeons	5,7 %
Convictions religieuses	Religious beliefs	1,4 %
		23,0 %
Décalage culturel	Cultural mismatch	0,3 %
Manque de civilisation	Lack of civilization	2,0 %
Sont de la campagne et pas de la ville	People from the countryside, not the city	0,2 %
		2,5 %
Mauvaise éducation	Bad education	2,5 %
Manque de valeurs	Lack of values	0,2 %
Manque de respect de soi	Lack of self-respect	0,2 %
Mépris du quartier	Contempt of the neighborhood	0,2 %
Indiscipline	Lack of discipline	1,2 %
Manque d'éducation	Lack of education	10,2 %
Manque de respect	Lack of respect	7,1 %
Manque de respect de l'environnement	Lack of respect for the environment	0,6 %
Manque de savoir vivre	Lack of manners	1,7 %
Manque de surveillance des enfants	Lack of monitoring of children	1,2 %
		25,0 %
Gens sales	Dirty people	13,4 %
Folie	Insanity	1,9 %
Ne sait pas	Respondent does not know	16,4 %
NRP	Respondent did not answer	9,7 %
<i>Mode de calcul : sur le total des questionnaires, le % de répétition du terme, une réponse pouvant comporter 2 termes, ex : « gens sales et gaspillage ». le total peut être >100%</i>		

“Calculation method: among the total of questionnaires, the % of repetition of the term, one response can include 2 terms, e.g.: ‘dirty people and wastefulness,’ the total can be >100%”



Pictures 3.1 and 3.2 – Street views of Aulnay-Nord (top) and Goutte d’Or (bottom)
Sources – Top: IODURE 2049 – Vue du toit au 6 Galerie Surcouf, 2010 (GNU Free Documentation License);
Bottom: the author – La Chapelle Boulevard and Chartres Street, 2014



Picture 3.3 – Meme in the Facebook group *Seuls Les Aulnaysiens Peuvent Comprendre* (“Only Aulnaysians Can Understand”) “Look Simba, all that is in the light, it’s France! It’s beautiful!” “Whaaa!” “But what is that thing in the shadow over there?” “Over there is Aulnay-sous-Bois, you should never go there!”



Picture 3.4 – Announcement in the Facebook group *Seuls Les Aulnaysiens Peuvent Comprendre* (“Only Aulnaysians Can Understand”) “This evening’s *maraude* Organized by the *Familles Solidaires* (“United Families”) and *Les Colis du Cœur d’Aulnay-sous-Bois* (“The Parcels of Love of Aulnay-sous-Bois”) If you wish to make a donation to contribute to an upcoming *maraude* contact me privately”

Conclusion

In this general conclusion, I highlight the dissertation's empirical findings, theoretical arguments, and contributions to scholarship. Next, I elevate this set of insights by deriving their ultimate, universal significance: foregrounding people's creativity, challenging determinism in sociological analysis, inviting to methodological egalitarianism, and suggesting topic-driven research approaches.

1. Highlights

Chapter 1 asked: How do first- and second-generation immigrants – as people with life experience of various cultural contexts – create dietary tastes and culinary practices for themselves? To address that question, I identified three theoretical insights in research on food and immigration: the immigrant nutritional paradox, the reinvention of food traditions, and the deromanticization of culinary authenticity. My analysis centered on first- and second-generation immigrants as creative agents endowed with personal experience of various cultural contexts. Via extensive description and interpretation, I reached the insight that in Paris and Chicago alike, first- and second-generation immigrants recraft their judgement of the good quotidian diet as simple cooking using fresh produce. Their approach is a problem-solving one, in considering constraints (time and income, mostly) and gathering uncompromisable notions: the fresh, the natural, and the homemade. Thereby, they craft a repertoire of problem-solving skills and techniques, notably, visual and emotional skills for identifying freshness and naturalness, batch cooking, batch acquiring, and produce substitution. Theoretically, this problem-solving

recraft reveals a creative and purposeful agency. First- and second-generation immigrants set a purpose – retaining dearly-held elements of their cultural heritage as their current life situations permit – and recreate their tastes and practices accordingly. These findings carry significance for researching immigrants' environmental values, knowledge, and behavior, and for designing culturally sensitive dietary guidelines in France and in the United States.

Chapter 2 asked: How do urban residents access and acquire food? Building on the food desert scholarship, I developed an agentic framework and analyzed field data in two mixed neighborhoods in the Paris metropolis (one gentrifying, one working-class suburban). First- and second-generation immigrants perceive the metropolis as a rich and diverse food environment, whereas natives perceive their neighborhood as a food-deficient environment. First- and second-generation immigrants regard mobility as an instrument of self-efficacy, whereas natives construct proximity as a moral value. The acquisition practices of first- and second-generation immigrants consider price and types of foods; they span the metropolis. Those of natives consider types of foods; they center on their neighborhood. These findings complicate neighborhood-centric, spatially deterministic approaches to food access and acquisition. They highlight how structural (access to transportation and disposable time and income) and cultural dimensions (judgements and practices) matter on top of spatial access to food. Theoretically, they suggest two distinct ways in which urban residents find meaning in performing mundane activities: believing in self-efficacy and constructing moral values. Additional implications regard the thesis of the global city, social life in gentrifying neighborhoods, space and place in European urban societies, and everyday life and public transportation

in the Paris metropolis.

Chapter 3 asked: How does urbanity – a set of environmental, cultural, and interactional characteristics of an urban context – shape practice, that is, behaviors with objects, grounded in living conditions? I provided an empirical application to the idiosyncratic case of disposing stale bread in two French urban contexts: *cités* (suburban neighborhoods built as blocks of high-rises) and *villes* (street-centric inner-city neighborhoods). In *cités*, most residents toss stale bread in the garbage, others hang it in plastic bags on railings, and others litter it on the ground with any trash. In *villes*, all residents toss bread in the garbage. I explain that residents of *cités* and *villes* have similar practices with fresh bread. However, residents hang or litter stale bread in *cités* and not in *villes* because of differences in urbanity. Specifically, three characteristics of *cités*' urbanity are: (1) unused spaces that I call edge spaces, (2) a collective set of feelings that I call communal pessimism, and (3) a binary opposition of communality vs. estrangement in residents' perceptions of spaces, uses of spaces, and interactions. Ultimately, residents who hang perform communality, residents who litter reflect estrangement, and residents who toss voice estranging judgements toward those who hang or litter.

2. Nuggets

The dissertation's introduction set up the research topic and the contextual approach; it was about enabling empirical inquiries, promising theoretical discoveries, and opening up opportunities for sociological contemplation. Accordingly, in this conclusion, the reader won't find any synthetical, meta-level theory – I won't be attempting any sort of

that. Total theorizing is antithetical to a contextual approach to sociological analysis: I have no pretension to have initiated a framework that I would now splendidly wrap up. Going full circle is circular logical: instead of reaching back, I reach out toward broader sociological concerns. Specifically, I suggest four nuggets: a focus on creativity, a challenge to determinism, an invitation to methodological egalitarianism, and a suggestion of topic-driven research approaches.

2. 1. Foregrounding Creativity

The dissertation's guiding question was: How do people create quotidian judgements and practices related to food, amid the enduring social and spatial stratification of everyday life. In the end, what creativity has our threefold set of ethnographic findings uncovered? Chapters 1 and 2 finds out two forms of individual creativity. A situation of living in large and diverse cities, together with, for first- and second-generation immigrants, a personal and familial history of immigration, open up opportunities for craftiness, playfulness, and resourcefulness. Chapter 1 establishes a problem-solving recraft of dietary tastes and culinary practices among first- and second-generation immigrants in Paris and Chicago, revealing a creative, purposeful agency. Chapter 2 highlights how residents of mixed neighborhoods in the Paris metropolis create access for themselves and craft acquisition practices. Herein, first- and second-generation immigrants believe in self-efficacy, whereas natives construct a moral value of proximity. Lastly, Chapter 3 finds out a form of collective creativity. It is not an individual one, since, as we have demonstrated, stale bread disposal practices in French *cités* and *villes* cannot be conceptualized as social action. Rather, that collective creativity arises from urbanity. In *cités*, residents share a

distinctive set of environmental, cultural, and interactional characteristics, shaping practice, down to those with an ever-present foodstuff in dietary routines – bread.

2. 2. Determinism, Essentialism, and Reductionism

Foregrounding creativity – in ethnographic writing, comes with challenging determinism – in sociological explanation. Chapter 1 explains that the dietary tastes and culinary practices of people with an immigrant background are not ethnically determined. Rather, they recraft their judgement of the good quotidian diet in reference to universal principles of freshness, naturalness, and homemadedness. Chapter 2 complicates neighborhood-centric, spatially deterministic approaches to food access and acquisition, by highlighting how structural (access to transportation and disposable time and income) and cultural dimensions (judgements and practices) matter on top of spatial access to food. Lastly, Chapter 3 departs from individually deterministic explanations of stale bread disposal practices by reaching a collective explanation: urbanity.

People are flexible, relaxed, and sophisticated. They invent as they go, making choices everyday day that are not reducible to ethnic and spatial determinants and essences. This reminds Bernard Lahire's call to eschew the “cultural caricature” of social groups (2008). Much like miserabilism and populism are the typical pitfalls of research about the working class (Grignon and Passeron, 1989), essentialism and reductionism arise as alluring distractions for research involving residents in contexts of social and spatial diversity – particularly, first- and second-generation immigrants. Essentialism and reductionism entail reducing any and all thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to an

essentialized culture. Everything and anything in the worlds and worldviews of people of a particular cultural heritage would essentially boil down to them being people of that particular heritage.

In contexts of social and spatial diversity, alongside cultural racism and ethnoracial discrimination and inequality, sociologists should still resist the temptation to assumedly ethnicize and racialize social groups in any aspect of their everyday lives. First, researchers should pay close attention to their current life situations, especially when investigating objects (like food) located at the intersection of meaning and materiality, of cultural identity and living conditions. Moreover, research designs should strive to approach first- and second-generation immigrants as multidimensional human beings with rich life histories that are not reducible to their ethnic, racial, and immigrant generational status in the destination country.

2. 3. Methodological Egalitarianism

Relatedly, sociologists should resist the urge to “select” particular social groups – along dimensions of class, race, ethnicity, immigrant generational status – as the only way to reach a “valid” analysis. That could be valid on the basis of pure categorical logic. But it might not be valid empirically. What is more, such selection-based research designs hold problematic assumptions about the drivers of motivation and behavior: determinism, essentialism, and reductionism. Differences, differentiation, and determinants should always result from empirical analyses; they should not anchor the formation of research designs. Here, concerning social class, my study population featured both working- and

middle-class informants. Concerning gender, I talked to men and women alike, hence refraining from associating all things food with femininity. Concerning immigrant generational status, I included first- and second-generation immigrants, and natives as well.

This reminds recent debates in American sociology about the politics of social knowledge. Specifically, how to – and should we, actually – investigate worldviews among members of the extreme strata of the social space? About the elite, Claudio Benzecry (2011) suggest taking what they love at face value, instead of readily labeling their tastes and practices as “elitist” – and even the most exclusive ones like opera attendance. About the poor, cultural and urban sociologists criticize the fixation on exploring their life-worlds, including in sensationalist and voyeuristic ways, instead of unraveling the structural conditions and constraints in their lives (Rodríguez-Muñíz, 2015; Small, 2015). Similarly, to understand poverty and inequality, comparative-historical sociologists recommend studying the (institutional) villains, not the (individual) victims (Prasad, 2018).

In this regard, I suggest three simple analytical tenets for highlighting people's complexities and depths and for eschewing caricaturing, shaming, and blaming. The first is to refrain from “selecting” groups of people – if anything is to be selected, it should be the contexts rather than the individuals within. Moreover, the principle of selection should be substantive (rather than categorical) – if you will, I selected contexts of social and spatial diversity. Again, any categorical differences should be the output of the analysis, not the selection principle in research design. The second is to take seriously what people

take seriously, while integrating context in the explanation. The third is to develop analyses using simple, humanist frames – even at the cost of being criticized as “descriptive” – and to apply them equally, regardless of social group. In the case of the quotidian judgements and practices related to food, the basic assumption that guided my data analysis was: informants are all individuals who are doing their best to feed themselves and their families, while dealing with their particular resources and constraints. For instance, in Chapter 2, I assumed that all informants – working- and middle-class alike, first- and second-generation immigrant and native alike – pay attention to price and proximity when crafting their acquisition practices, while leveraging their preferences, needs, and constraints. Ultimately, my analysis yielded differences between first- and second-generation immigrants and natives.

In sum, I invite to methodological egalitarianism, at every stage of the research process – from design to analysis.

2. 4. Topic-Driven Research Approaches

Finally, I suggest a topic-first approach to the research process. This involves, essentially, defining a general research topic, documenting the characteristics of the studied contexts, going on the field driven and well-equipped, generating specific questions as field discoveries arise, and applying a contextual approach to data analysis. This does not involve those considerations about research design that have no substantive consistency, like: “selecting” cases based on standardized “variables,” then magisterially concluding that the findings being obtained are indeed tied to those “variables”. I believe that such a-

contextual, design-first approaches lock researchers into a dead-ended path toward confirmation or refutation of a mere epistemological construct. “Comparisons” – *à la* econometrically-inspired American canonical social science – are especially jarring in this regard. They magically flatten contextual singularities and complexities into “comparable variables”. Consequently, any “similarities” or “differences” being found might well be fallacious – having face internal validity, but in truth, no empirical or external validity. Topic-driven and contextual approaches, I argue, allow to deal with comparison in more demanding and interesting ways. It is neither about retreating before contextual complexities, upon hearing intimidating comments along the lines of: “But [whatever category] in [whatever context] is so complex.” Nor is it about caricaturing social realities. It is about contemplating general research topics and calmly finding out about the singularities and complexities of the studied contexts. Substantively, this enables open-ended (open-minded) paths of discovery toward unexpected findings and scholarly engagements. Formally, in introducing the studied contexts, the aim is to provide any and all information that factor into the analyses and that the average sociologist reader (who might not be familiar with those contexts) needs to know. This does not involve those defensive and uninformative preliminaries that try hard to construct “comparable variables”.

Topic-driven approaches, at heart, enable pursuing basic sociological questions and gaining insight into them. That is: starting off with a general research topic, one that can spark continuous guidance, cultivation, contemplation, inspiration, and excitement while on the field. That is not: letting those anxieties and insecurities about fabricating a bullet-proof research design get in the way of possibilities for reaching original insights about

social life. Research designs can carry a sense of sociological wonder – not a sense of epistemological constraint.

In defining the quotidian judgements and practices related to food as a research topic, I contemplated: the creation of everyday life around an object that is both a basic need and a source of pleasure and desire, that entails judgements and practices, in situations of manageable constraints on disposable time and income, in life histories that include a personal and familial history of immigration, and in contexts of social and spatial diversity. If anything, I considered processes (dynamic and context-bound), not variables (static and universalized). Similarly, in identifying the enduring social and spatial stratification of everyday life as the theoretical background, I did not begin with crushing dichotomies (like: “global” vs. “local”) or archetypal architectures (say: “a three-scale design – country, metropolis, neighborhood”). I suspected that a more productive approach was to go on the field – that is, where everyday life happens – and investigate quotidian judgements and practices. Then, the relevant spatial scales emerged from empirical analysis. Namely, in Chapter 1, those scales are the cities and countries, and in Chapter 2 and 3, the neighborhoods – within the metropolis (Chapter 2) and within the national urban society (Chapter 3).

Ultimately, a topic-driven approach to the research process requires patience, contentment with unpredictability, and acceptance that it takes time to form up ethnographic findings. Three stages are involved: definition of a research topic, data collection, and data analysis. The research topic guides data collection, and next is analysis with the standards of internal and external validity. Among those three stages,

data collection arises as the most open-ended – or, put it critically, endless. You can always discover new things on the field. Actually, I spent as much time doing fieldwork as I practically could. I dealt with the issue of saturation once at the stage of data analysis. Accordingly, I probably gathered (collect) more data than I could cook (analyze). But everything I did cook, is, hopefully, well-cooked, which is what ultimately matters. I hope the reader enjoyed.

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Résumé : L'alimentation dans la vie quotidienne d'habitants de Paris et de Chicago

1. Sujet et approche de recherche

La thèse porte sur les jugements et les pratiques relatifs à l'alimentation, en considérant la stratification sociale et spatiale des contextes dans lesquels agissent les individus. Les terrains d'enquête sont deux grandes villes caractérisées par la diversité sociale, ethnique et urbaine : Paris (France) et Chicago (États-Unis). La méthode est ethnographique et contextuelle.

Dans l'introduction, nous présentons les singularités sociales et spatiales des pays, des villes et des quartiers étudiés, ainsi que les méthodes ethnographiques, les données et les relations avec les enquêtés. La thèse comprend trois chapitres : « Goûts alimentaires et pratiques culinaires des immigrés de première et de deuxième génération à Paris et à Chicago », « Une approche agentive de l'approvisionnement alimentaire : le cas de quartiers mixtes de la métropole parisienne » et « Urbanité et pratique : le jet de pain rassis dans les cités et les quartiers centraux en France ».

Dans le premier chapitre, nous analysons les goûts alimentaires et les pratiques culinaires des immigrés de première et de deuxième génération à Paris et à Chicago. Dans le deuxième chapitre, nous étudions l'accès à l'alimentation et les pratiques d'approvisionnement d'habitants de quartiers mixtes de la métropole parisienne. Enfin, dans le troisième et dernier chapitre, nous nous intéressons aux pratiques de jet de pain

rassis dans deux contextes urbains français : les quartiers de grands ensembles en banlieue (cités) et les quartiers centraux.

2. Questions sociologiques et ancrages théoriques

Chapitre 1. Comment les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération créent leurs goûts alimentaires et leurs pratiques culinaires ? Nous dégageons trois enseignements de la recherche sur l'alimentation et l'immigration : le paradoxe nutritionnel immigré, la réinvention des traditions alimentaires et la déromanticisation de l'authenticité culinaire. Notre analyse se centre sur les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération en tant qu'individus agissant dans des contextes culturels variés.

Chapitre 2. Comment les habitants des villes s'approvisionnent-ils en nourriture ? Nous adoptons une approche agentive, alternative aux notions de déserts et d'oasis alimentaires. Plutôt que de se focaliser sur les quartiers et leurs caractéristiques socioéconomiques et commerciales, cette approche se centre sur les habitants et leurs perceptions des environnements alimentaires, leurs dispositions relatives à la mobilité et à la proximité et leurs pratiques d'approvisionnement.

Chapitre 3. Le troisième chapitre examine les pratiques de jet de pain rassis. Dans les cités, la plupart des habitants le mettent à la poubelle ; sinon, d'autres le suspendent aux grilles (dans des sacs plastiques) et d'autres le jettent par terre. En revanche, dans les quartiers centraux, tous les habitants mettent leur pain rassis à la poubelle. Pour les habitants des cités, le jet de pain représente une nuisance environnementale. Comment

l'urbanité – c'est-à-dire un ensemble de caractéristiques environnementales, culturelles et interactionnelles spécifique d'un contexte urbain – influence de tels comportements ? Nous décrivons d'abord les perceptions associées aux trois différentes pratiques de jet de pain (le mettre à la poubelle, le suspendre aux grilles et le jeter par terre). Nous montrons que les habitants des cités et des quartiers centraux ont des pratiques similaires en ce qui concerne le pain frais. En revanche, leurs pratiques relatives au pain rassis se distinguent en raison des différences d'urbanité entre cités et quartiers centraux.

3. Résultats

3. 1. Goûts alimentaires et pratiques culinaires des immigrants de première et de deuxième génération à Paris et à Chicago

À Paris comme à Chicago, les immigrants de première et de deuxième génération redéfinissent « la bonne alimentation quotidienne » comme de la cuisine simple fondée sur des produits frais (fruits et légumes, viande, poisson). Ils partagent en effet un goût pour les produits frais, associé à un dégoût pour les aliments en conserve et surgelés et à quatre types de bienfaits : saveur, santé, force et discipline. La fraîcheur des produits est appréciée via des compétences visuelles et émotionnelles, acquises par tradition et par expérience.

Sur cette base, les immigrants de première et de deuxième génération créent des pratiques culinaires qu'ils qualifient de simples. Leurs deux techniques principales sont la cuisine en lots et la substitution de produits. Ce principe général de cuisiner simplement admet

des ajustements en cas de contraintes de temps et d'espace. Par ailleurs, la cuisine simple est genrée dans la mesure où les hommes se reconnaissent moins doués que les femmes, tout en se déclarant compétents.

De plus, les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération identifient des points communs et des singularités entre les cuisines des différents pays dans lesquels ils ont vécu et les cuisines des autres groupes d'immigrés. En ce qui concerne les cuisines française et étasunienne, ils les jugent semblables à la culture de masse. En ce qui concerne la cuisine de leurs origines, ils l'estiment mondialisée dans le pays d'origine et universalisée dans le pays de destination. En ce qui concerne la cuisine des autres groupes d'immigrés, leur approche est double : observation et appréciation. Ils observent un goût partagé pour le frais et le naturel d'une part, et d'autre part des techniques culinaires singulières. Ces points communs constituent autant d'opportunités d'échanges interculturels, qui se matérialisent dans des pratiques d'approvisionnement, de don et de restauration hors foyer.

Ainsi, les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération rejettent le nativisme et l'exclusion culturels, en se référant plutôt à des principes universels : le frais, le naturel et le fait-maison. Ils prennent en considération leurs contraintes (surtout relatives au temps et au revenu) et définissent ce qu'ils ne comptent pas abandonner : le frais, le naturel et le fait-maison. Ils créent ensuite un répertoire de compétences et de techniques culinaires adaptées. Théoriquement, quel type d'agentivité (*agency*) cela révèle-t-il ? Il ne s'agit pas d'un simple souci de conservation puis de reproduction des goûts alimentaires et des pratiques culinaires du pays d'origine, mais plutôt d'un processus de

dé-ethnisation puis de réinscription dans le pays de destination. Les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération distinguent les aliments qui conviennent à leurs besoins et à leurs préférences en appréciant leur caractère frais et naturel, plutôt qu'en leur assignant des identifiants ethniques. Ils se rendent compte que le goût des produits frais est commun à de nombreuses cultures culinaires, les leurs comme celles d'autres groupes d'immigrés : ils réinscrivent ainsi ce goût dans un destin partagé d'immigration. Par ailleurs, il ne s'agit pas d'un processus net d'acculturation et d'assimilation. Notamment, les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération demandent aux natifs de s'abstenir d'ethniser et d'exotiser leur alimentation quotidienne.

En fin de compte, cette agentivité peut s'interpréter comme créative et intentionnelle. Les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération se résolvent à maintenir les aspects de leur héritage culturel qui leur sont chers et qu'ils peuvent concrètement appliquer ici et maintenant. Dans le cas de l'alimentation, il s'agit de la préférence pour le frais, le naturel et le fait-maison. Ils réinventent alors leurs goûts et leurs pratiques selon un concept de cuisine simple fondée sur des produits frais – et n'en tirent aucune vanité. Ceci rappelle les concepts d'« environnementalisme involontaire » (Hitchings et al., 2015) et de « durabilité discrète » (Smith et al., 2015) en sociologie des pratiques environnementales. En outre, cela suggère que les goûts et les pratiques des immigrés de première et de deuxième génération se conforment de fait aux recommandations nutritionnelles et environnementales, quoique sur la base d'un jugement alimentaire alternatif et d'une conscience environnementale discrète.

3. 2. Une approche agentive de l'approvisionnement alimentaire : le cas de quartiers mixtes de la métropole parisienne

Pour ce qui est de l'approvisionnement alimentaire, les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération perçoivent la métropole parisienne dans sa globalité comme un environnement riche et varié, tandis que les natifs perçoivent leur quartier de résidence comme un environnement déficient. Les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération associent la mobilité à l'auto-efficacité, tandis que les natifs construisent la notion de proximité en valeur morale. Les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération prennent en considération les prix et deux typologies d'aliments (frais et non-périssable, ethnique et universel), tandis que les natifs distinguent simplement les produits frais des denrées non-périssables. Les pratiques d'approvisionnement des immigrés de première et de deuxième génération s'étendent sur toute la métropole, tandis que celles des natifs se centrent sur leur quartier de résidence.

Ces résultats remettent en question les approches de l'accès et de l'approvisionnement se focalisant sur le quartier et supposant un déterminisme spatial. Ils soulignent l'importance de dimensions structurelles (accès aux transports, temps et revenu disponible) et culturelles (jugements et pratiques), outre l'accès spatial à l'alimentation. Théoriquement, ils montrent deux manières différentes dont les habitants des villes donnent du sens aux activités de la vie quotidienne : croire en l'auto-efficacité et construire des valeurs morales.

Par rapport à la recherche sur la gentrification, ces résultats remettent en cause le cliché

du « gentrifieur » revanchard. À la Goutte d'Or, contrairement aux immigrés de première et de deuxième génération, les habitants natifs croient que leurs pratiques d'approvisionnement sont un moyen de démontrer leur attachement au quartier tel qu'il est. Ces résultats apportent également un éclairage sur la différenciation sociale du rapport à l'espace. En général, les études sur la mobilité dans les sociétés urbaines européennes concluent que les habitants défavorisés sont contraints à l'immobilité et valorisent l'ancrage local. Or, dans des quartiers mixtes de la métropole parisienne, la proximité, en tant que jugement et en tant que pratique, distingue plutôt les habitants favorisés. Subjectivement, les natifs valorisent la proximité tandis que les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération ont des opinions neutres voire positives quant à la mobilité. Objectivement, les immigrés de première et de deuxième génération sont plus mobiles que les natifs, surtout en termes de distance parcourue.

3. 3. Urbanité et pratique : le jet de pain rassis dans les cités et les quartiers centraux en France

Dans les cités, la plupart des habitants mettent le pain rassis à la poubelle, d'autres le suspendent aux grilles (dans des sacs plastiques) et d'autres le jettent par terre. Dans les quartiers centraux, tous les habitants mettent le pain à la poubelle. Ces différences de pratiques de jet s'expliquent par des différences d'urbanité. L'urbanité des cités présente trois spécificités : (1) des espaces inutilisés que nous appelons espaces limites, (2) un sentiment collectif que nous appelons pessimisme communal, (3) une opposition binaire entre communalité et aliénation dans les perceptions et les usages de l'espace ainsi que dans les interactions entre habitants.

Espaces limites. L'urbaniste Kevin Lynch identifie cinq unités environnementales dans les grandes villes étasuniennes : les nœuds, les secteurs en quartier, les points de repère, les parcours et les limites. Les nœuds renvoient aux unités où la vie urbaine prend corps ; les habitants les perçoivent comme cœur de l'unité urbaine. Les secteurs en quartier sont des espaces présentant des points communs ; les habitants peuvent y entrer et en sortir. Les points de repère correspondent aux unités où les habitants ne peuvent pas entrer (ils les perçoivent alors comme repères). Les parcours permettent aux habitants de passer d'un espace à un autre. Les limites sont des frontières entre espaces, matérielles ou perçues. Pour les habitants de la Goutte d'Or, la rue est un nœud et un parcours, les immeubles d'habitation et les commerces sont des secteurs en quartier et les façades sont des limites et des points de repère. À Aulnay-Nord, le nœud est significativement plus petit : uniquement la place du marché. Les barres d'immeubles et les commerces sont des secteurs en quartier, les rues et les parkings sont des parcours et les façades sont des points de repère. Enfin, les grilles et les plates-bandes qui séparent une barre d'immeubles de l'espace de la rue ou deux barres d'immeubles entre elles forment de larges espaces auxquels les habitants n'accèdent pas et n'assignent aucune utilité. Nous appelons espaces limites ces lieux où sont jetés le pain rassis, ainsi que toute sorte de déchets.

Pessimisme communal. Les habitants d'Aulnay-Nord partagent un sentiment ambivalent que nous qualifions de pessimisme communal : notre quartier est irrémédiablement anormal, beaucoup de choses étranges et répréhensibles s'y passent, mais nous y sommes tout de même profondément attachés. Le terme pessimisme s'inspire d'un groupe d'écrivains – Albert Camus, Miguel de Unamuno et Emil Cioran – que le politiste Joshua

Foa Dienstag qualifie de pessimistes existentiels. Bien que pensant la condition humaine comme absurde, ces écrivains portaient un vif intérêt pour la politique. Leur conception de la vie collective était celle d'un destin partagé d'absurdité, devant toutefois être exprimé et même célébré. Au sens existentialiste, le pessimisme n'est ainsi ni misanthropique ni détaché.

Communalité contre aliénation. Le pessimisme communal influence les caractères et les comportements via des oppositions binaires relatives aux perceptions de l'espace, aux usages de l'espace et aux interactions entre habitants. Le terme d'oppositions binaires s'inspire d'approches classiques en anthropologie structurale. Ces oppositions proviennent des relations entre les caractéristiques des quartiers (environnementales, culturelles et interactionnelles) d'une part, et des caractères et des comportements collectifs d'autre part. Elles n'ont pas d'existence objective : nous les conceptualisons à partir de données ethnographiques contextualisées.

Deux ensembles d'oppositions binaires structurent les perceptions et les usages des espaces à Aulnay-Nord. Les premières sont relatives aux frontières perçues : individuel contre collectif, privé contre public et intérieur contre extérieur – au final, maison contre cité. Les secondes sont relatives aux sentiments : émancipation contre assujettissement, sécurité contre danger et propreté contre saleté – en fait, communalité contre aliénation. Ainsi, les habitants ressentent les espaces individuels, privés et intérieurs (la maison) comme émancipateurs, sûrs et propres : ils facilitent la communalité. En revanche, ils ressentent les espaces collectifs, publics et extérieurs (la cité) comme assujettissants, sales et dangereux : ils suscitent l'aliénation. La cité viole les territoires du moi, alors que la

maison les protège. À la Goutte d'Or, seul le premier ensemble d'oppositions binaires – maison contre ville – structure les perceptions et les usages des espaces. Les habitants perçoivent la maison et la ville différemment, mais les sentiments associés sont personnels : ils ne sont ni collectifs ni structurés en oppositions binaires.

En fin de compte, les habitants qui suspendent leur pain aux grilles réalisent une performance de communalité. Ils perçoivent bien que personne ne le récupère : ce pain suspendu devient un objet aliéné dans un espace aliénant. Les habitants qui jettent leur pain par terre reflètent un sentiment d'aliénation. Leur motivation n'est pas de dégrader l'environnement. Ils conçoivent plutôt que tout objet dont ils n'ont plus l'usage chez eux peut être naturellement jeté dans des espaces collectifs qui n'appartiennent à personne et qui n'ont aucune utilité. Les habitants qui mettent leur pain à la poubelle se moquent de ceux qui le jettent par terre, et plus encore de ceux qui le suspendent aux grilles. Ils jugent leurs comportements étranges et stupides et leurs justifications absurdes. Ils assimilent le pain suspendu, et plus encore le jet, à de l'incivilité.

Les habitants qui mettent leur pain à la poubelle forcent ceux qui jettent ou qui suspendent à justifier leurs actions, lesquels affirment alors que des individus ou des animaux récupèrent effectivement leur pain. Les habitants qui mettent leur pain à la poubelle l'interprètent comme des croyances fausses. Or, suspendre est une performance et jeter est un comportement qui reflète un sentiment d'aliénation. Ce ne sont pas des actions pouvant être motivées et justifiées. De ce fait, notre analyse ne les aborde pas selon des critères de véracité ou de fausseté, mais s'intéresse plutôt à leur caractère approprié et efficace, dans leur contexte.

4. Conclusion

Finally, what creativity emerges from judgments and practices related to food among the inhabitants of Paris and Chicago? The first chapter shows evidence of a reinvention of food tastes and culinary practices among the immigrants of the first and second generation in Paris and Chicago. Their approach is problem-solving and their agency is creative and intentional. The second chapter shows that in the case of food practices in the Parisian metropolis, the immigrants of the first and second generation believe in self-efficacy while the natives construct the notion of proximity as a moral value. The third chapter evokes a form of collective creativity. In fact, this is not individual in the sense that practices of bread throwing would not be conceptualized as social actions. This collective creativity has its origin in urbanity. The inhabitants of the cities share a set of environmental, cultural and interactional characteristics that influence their practices, including those with an omnipresent object in their food routines: bread.

Putting value on creativity means questioning all deterministic explanations. In the first chapter, we show that food tastes and culinary practices of immigrants of the first and second generation do not obey ethnic determinism. On the contrary, they refer to universal principles: freshness, naturalness and home-made. In the second chapter, we criticize approaches to access and provisioning that focus on the neighborhood and suppose an

déterminisme spatial. Nous insistons plutôt sur des dimensions structurelles (accès aux transports, temps et revenu disponible) et culturelles (jugements et pratiques). Enfin, dans le troisième chapitre, nous mettons en évidence que les pratiques de jet de pain ne sont pas motivées par des déterminants individuels, mais qu'elles renvoient à une explication collective : l'urbanité.