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**SPICING THE CHINA DREAM:
SOUTH ASIANS, FOOD AND
BELONGING IN GUANGZHOU,
HONG KONG AND MACAU**

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Abstract

This thesis evaluates whether South Asians in the Pearl River Delta can belong to a multicultural China. As China ascends to the role of world's leading superpower in the 21st Century and comes to terms with its identity as an immigrant-receiving country, this thesis argues that South Asians in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau use food to belong to the ordinary community (Garner 2007) as a way to belong to the region. The strategies they pursue and the work that they do with food both marks and unmarks their racial identity. But strategies also highlight class, locality and religion, creating a South Asian culinary identity ambiguous enough to move them into a fragmented Cantonese mainstream. These strategies are viable in a delta region that is 96% Chinese, with enduring but also equivocal beliefs in racial hierarchies, and an oftentimes productive blind spot concerning South Asian identity. Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau also deploy a politicised ethnolinguistic cultural identity at different scales in order to secure better political outcomes from China's central government in Beijing. Whether ignored, embraced or rejected, South Asian cooks and food attend to these distinctions in highly networked spaces such as grocery stores and restaurants, to more civic spaces such as food festivals and heritage projects.

I identify with my three-city field site in the same way that my South Asian interlocutors do, as a multi-sited reality (Hage 2005). In this reality resources, such as historical claims, money, ingredients, cooks, and ideas of good taste and a good life in one site are called upon to aid or to hinder strategies in another. The thesis is based on twelve months of fieldwork, following this circulation of resources in archives, grocery backrooms, queues at the border, professional and home kitchens, festival stalls and government offices.

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Note on language

Inevitably with a research project undertaken among South Asian groups based in the contemporary Pearl River Delta, I came across a range of languages. Many of my interlocutors and companions spoke two or more of the languages that are referenced in this thesis, including Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Bengali, Mandarin, Cantonese, Macanese, Portuguese and English. Needless to say, it was only through their infinite kindness and patience that I was able to go beyond ascertaining the functional meanings of what were identified as crucial words and phrases, and to understand how these influenced culinary life in these cities.

Romanisation

I have used Pinyin Romanisation for Mandarin words and phrases and simplified characters as used in Guangzhou and mainland China. I have used Yale Romanisation for Cantonese, and have used traditional characters, if these phrases were used in Hong Kong or Macau. Finally I have used the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) in order to Romanise South Asian languages. Other translations include Portuguese which posed no problems, and Macanese, which did. For help with the latter I owe a debt to the younger generation of Goan-Macanese for whom this was the language of cultural and culinary expression.

Place names and proper nouns

Sensibilities regarding South Asian state projects of renaming cities were diverse. As such, my interlocutors frequently reverted back to older naming conventions for certain Indian cities. I have kept their naming conventions throughout this thesis – offering modern day equivalents in brackets. This also includes Portuguese and English versions of Macau/Macao and the festival

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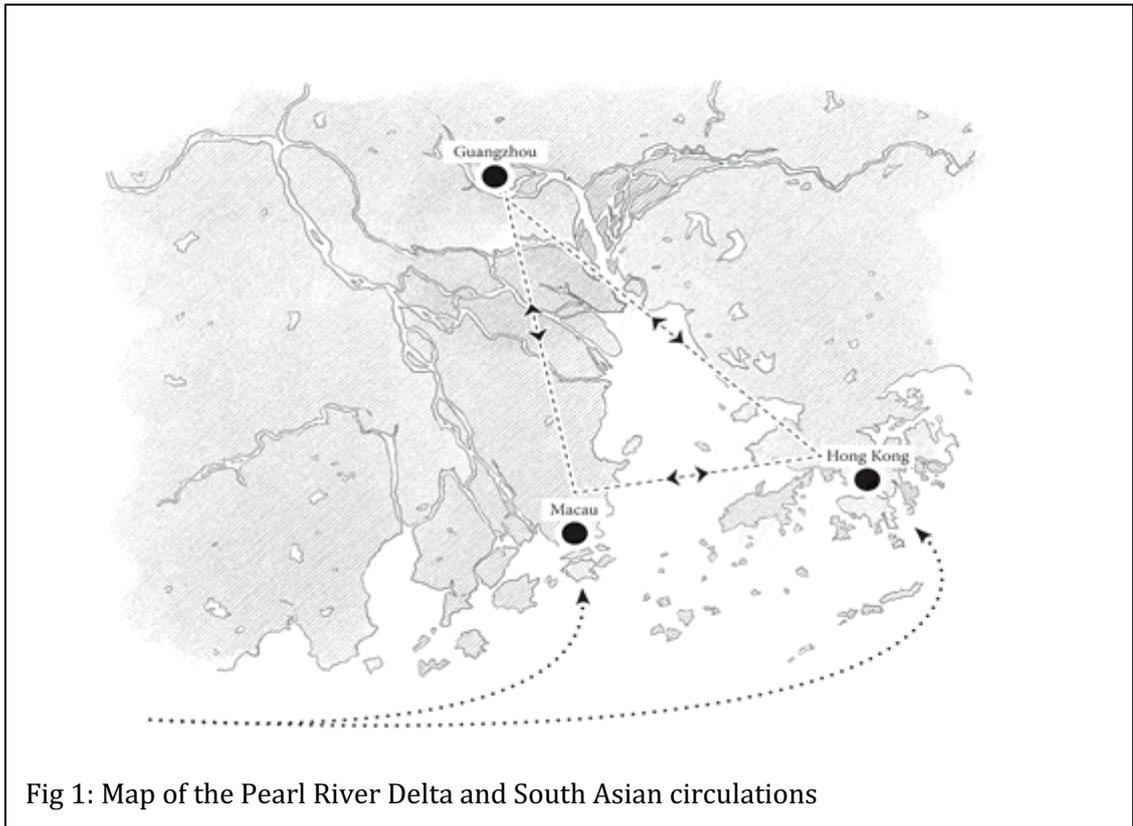
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Introduction: Flowing like a Delta - food, belonging and ordinariness

Over the course of 2015 and 2016, South Asian food makers in the Pearl River Delta had grown increasingly anxious at news that diplomacy was failing and that visa-on-arrival privileges that had been previously extended to Indian passport holders in Hong Kong would be withdrawn. This would have a serious impact on cooking and selling South Asian food, as it would limit the circulation of tourists and traders and therefore diners in restaurants across the Pearl River Delta. The 200 members of a *WeChat* group called ‘The United States of India’, the majority of whom were restaurateurs, private chefs, food entrepreneurs making festival snacks for Diwali, and grocers, were up in arms. Comments flew back and forth about why this had happened. Blame finally settled on groups of Indians and Pakistanis who were somehow gaming the visa-on-arrival system in Hong Kong, specifically those who were accused of arriving as tourists and staying on as economic migrants while claiming asylum. Although no one claimed to know anyone personally who had come to live in Hong Kong or in the Delta on this basis, talk turned to specific people who had been observed to be the cause of this shift in border policy – in particular men who loitered outside Chungking Mansions and harassed local residents. See fig 2. Unsurprisingly for a group dominated by restaurateurs, chefs and grocers, frustrations were expressed using metaphors involving food.

The Pearl River Delta is located in the south of Guangdong, a province in the south of China. It flows out into the South China Sea and has several port cities, with Guangzhou, Macau and Hong Kong being the oldest, and in the case of Guangzhou, the largest. These three cities form a triangle, with Hong Kong and Macau at the Delta’s eastern and western tips respectively and Guangzhou at its northern apex. See fig. 1. The cities of Macau and Hong Kong are ex-colonies of Portugal and the United Kingdom respectively and are now special administrative regions of China governed under a semi-autonomous executive and legal system. Both cities have long standing South Asian communities who have settled there for over two or several generations. Guangzhou now also has a vibrant second-generation South Asian community of teenagers and young adults starting food businesses of their own. At the same time, traders, students



and professionals criss-cross these cities, staying for a few months to a few years. Refugees and asylum claimants from South Asia are also a growing community.

A circulation of trading and ‘furniture’ tourism from South Asia had come to connect the three cities and secure their interdependence. This circulation included Hong Kong Disneyland, the Macau Venetian hotel and casino complex and giant furniture warehouses of Foshan and Shunde, near Guangzhou. In Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou, 75-80 restaurants, tens of grocers and importers, and more than a hundred private chefs and informal cooks made a living because of this circulation, and beyond them, broader populations of importers and traders, and institutions such as chambers of commerce, political appointees and bureaucrats in consulates. When the news was confirmed that Indian passport holders would only need to complete a pre-registration form, (but could still enter Macau without one) members of the group were already sharing the form and suggesting answers, normalising what was in effect a historic change.

“[...] absolutely shocking if this happens for Indians [...] Last month even my friend was not allow to enter HK, even though he was having hotel bookings [...] We can't enter Macau also? [...] During my last trip in Hong Kong I saw something strange in Chungking & Mongkok areas, if you walk with friend or girl during night time these guys stand on roadside and keep using bad words [...] That's so bad impression for us Indians [...] Few spoilt eggs ruin the entire basket. Shame on them [...] This was bound to happen. People were using HK and Macau for visa on arrival. Many Indians are living inside HK as a refugee. Of course the government will take actions. And it doesn't mean that some eggs will spoil entire basket of eggs. If you have proper reasons to visit HK then why they make any questions”.

Fig 2: WeChat group conversation, February 2016

‘The United States of India’ *WeChat* group is heavily policed and curated, and people are frequently and collectively chided for being anti-Indian, and anti-Pakistani, for sharing racist jokes or for selling their goods and services too often. In one case a member of the group was chided for not paying his shipping bill for over a year to a Chinese agent, a representative from which was also in the group. The group is a fast-moving English language space where people comment on how to think about South Asia, as well as the ‘markets and mobilities [that] are key to the formation of liberatory “postnational” identities’ (Ong 2006: 230).

While the Indian passport was never entirely associated with positive freedoms and the re-spatialising of rights and entitlements, fettered access to Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta drove home the fact that certain people were restricted. It placed Indian passport holders together with other South Asians – Nepalis, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans - and not with Europeans, citizens of North America, Central and South America, the Middle East and North Africa who were free to come and go as they pleased. In one of the most liberal entry regimes in the world, South Asians now belonged to a group of problematic states including Uruguay, Yemen and in countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Access to and connections between Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau and the circulation of South Asians and their appetites is not just a livelihood issue for the restaurateurs, chefs and informal cooks. It also fosters notions of normalcy. With a routine substance such as food, the work of importing, cooking, selling, buying and eating South Asian food in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau provides a culinary layer to Ong's liberatory markets and mobilities. It is in the combination of the three cities that South Asians appear to collect resources so that their 'experiences and needs [are] catered for as normal' (Garner 2007: 36). By literally feeding this liberatory sense of normalcy, South Asian food in the Pearl River Delta forms a subtle aperture in ideas of belonging. What was the nature of this belonging? Clearly the status quo was insufficient. Could South Asians press for greater claims to belong to this region in South China, despite much of its troubling history with colonialism and race relations? Could South Asians be considered Chinese in the same way that South Asian communities elsewhere can call themselves American or British? Is that what they wanted? Or could they push in to the centre of a bandwidth of ordinariness in the Pearl River Delta?

According to available statistics, 96% of people living in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau self-identify as ethnically Chinese, with non-Chinese termed as 'aliens', 'foreigners' 'refugees', 'asylum seekers' 'ethnic minorities' or 'expatriates'. Yet despite the homogeneity, censuses are flawed instruments and in between statistical surveys, being Chinese and being non-Chinese is something of a moving target. Under what terms could South Asians be called Chinese?

This thesis contends with projects of food and belonging among groups of South Asians in the Pearl River Delta. While South Asians are well positioned to exploit contemporary China and its bustling economy, they are also attuned to its problems with race, identity and food. Considering these and the contested but very real majoritarian dominance over competition around urban space and its resources, what strategies are best deployed? The study follows the contours of this by examining and looking out from groups of South Asians – specifically

grocers, cooks, restaurateurs and community organisers of South Asian food - who have made their homes in Macau, Hong Kong and Guangzhou.

A single yet discontinuous site?

How can one run an Indian restaurant, which is not vegetarian or an exclusively South Indian or Gujarati joint unless one serves Mughal and Punjabi food? (Nandy 2004: 14)

I arrived in Guangzhou in the summer of 2015 with a set of research questions about belonging and food that was grounded in the anthropology of hospitality. I was keen to find out if particular shifting and ambiguous moral and practical notions of guesting and hosting were helping a fairly newly established group of 14 restaurateurs navigate identity and cooking in the city. I started my research by conceiving of my field site as restaurant spaces in Guangzhou and to work within a methodological bandwidth established by ethnographies of restaurants. Reflecting on the sense that India and China were finding themselves to be both competitors and collaborators in the wider Asia region, I was particularly struck by the way that contributors to Beriss and Sutton's (2007) anthology of restaurant ethnographies, in particular Hernandez, Yano, Lem and Mars (all 2007) had explored the symbolic power of restaurants in the diaspora. Also, reflecting on Guangzhou's ambitions to rival Hong Kong for world city status, I was keen to see how the dynamics of these restaurants compared to other contexts of urban renewal and increasing migration and racial diversity (Buettner 2008; Panayi 2008; Ray 2004).

From the beginning my interlocutors explained that my questions about hospitality were naive. As Ashish Nandy (2004) highlights in the quote at the start of this section, restaurateurs and chefs were candid about the fact that they all produced a standard menu of Mughlai-Punjabi food, often with clever shortcuts, for visiting traders, tourists and students who lived in and circulated the delta. My interlocutors insisted that they were trader-restaurateurs and that they, including chefs, were likely to dabble in small trades of textiles including ladies' dresses. Social media offers, bilingual illustrated onomatopoeic menus and sharing portions on modern white porcelain, and in the kitchen, factory-

formulated ground spices (and sometimes spice mixes) from companies in Pakistan or India were the tools used to build these extensive menus and cater for off-menu requests. The real genius lay in how they could do this and maintain their position among South Asian and Chinese elites in the world's costliest region while serving food that people generally wanted to eat. It was a social accomplishment in a manner similar to that producing 'authenticity' in a cost-effective practical way in Chinese restaurants in the American south (Lu & Fine 1995). In other words, I would be better served attending to the in-between spaces and the connections. Not for the first time, restaurateurs and chefs evoked Braudelian notions that their lives could be better defined by 'movements at [the] centre' (Simpson & Kresse 2008: 10). The introduction starts with an example of the movement of South Asian tour groups, but there are others, including the movement of South Asian ingredients and of restaurateurs and chefs between restaurants and cities.

Guangzhou is 120 kilometres from Hong Kong and 145 kilometres from Macau. Macau and Hong Kong are separated by the mouth of the Pearl River Delta at a point which is 61 kilometres wide. Travel between the three cities by rail or high speed ferry takes an hour, and those that have the requisite residency and access permits often choose to live in one city and commute to another. There are six South Asian restaurants in Macau, 14 in Guangzhou and over 50 in Hong Kong. There are also tens of private chefs, and caterers, as well as food entrepreneurs, and home cooks making small batches of snacks, sweets and festival foods for special occasions. As of Hong Kong's 2016 by-census, at least 80,028 people identify as ethnically South Asian which includes Indian, Nepalis and Pakistanis representing around 1% of the population, a group which has grown by over 40% since the last by-census in 2006. In addition, 2016 recorded 19,589 'other' Asians, which likely includes Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans. By-census ethnicity data from Macau is more imprecise. While the data breaks down the local population by discrete components such as professional certification and educational achievement, there is scarce data for ethnicity, where non-Chinese and non-Portuguese, and other variations of the two, are only 'Others'. Owing to receiving Portuguese passports during handover, it is

likely that long-standing groups from Goa, Daman and Diu are represented in a variety of Portuguese categories. In a territory with a population of 650,834, ten times smaller than Hong Kong, 14,373 'Other Asians' make up a far greater proportion of residents and are highly visible, even if South Asians remain largely invisible among them. The interconnection of three cities represents the most racially diverse places in China. These racial groupings and differences between cities and the diaspora communities that had built up in each place became part of broader questions about the delta. Where was life best lived? Where was food tastiest? Who was ruining it for the others?

Restaurateurs themselves constantly asked and answered these questions when they discussed why they relocated their families, how they chose the sites for their restaurant, how they recruited chefs and how they sourced ingredients from abroad and around the delta. This was their multi-sited reality (Hage 2005). The initial migration and movement between and to these cities itself was not the defining act. Instead it was the act of finding a place where it was possible to, as Ghassan Hage states; 'never really thinking of myself as having migrated' (2005: 468). Waiting for the development of places to become integrated into the global economy and then arriving and starting a restaurant business was an act that was relatively ordinary for Nepali, Sindhi and Tamil trader-restaurateurs. Travelling between three cities despite the spectre of paperwork, on highspeed trains that took less than an hour to arrive, rendered this field site into a quotidian 'walking one' (Falzon 2016: 6).

Around these restaurateurs South Asian food had organised itself in ways that helped normalise these life choices – including grocery shops, other restaurants, food sold in region's ubiquitous food festivals, temples and mosques, and in the buildings in the delta in which South Asian life collected, and were where the best artisanal small batch made samosas could be found. Notably absent in this list were the heritage projects that the Macanese and Hong Kong governments were engaged in, an omission I will discuss in chapter four.

Clearly the dynamics of South Asian food in the Pearl River Delta enabled a great deal of flexibility in gender, regional, religious and ethno-linguistic

cooperation. This flexibility manifested in the selling of a wide range of groceries that could be bought and consumed by Jains, Hindus, Muslims alike. It also manifested in the production of a standard Mughlai-Punjabi menu, or in constructions of butter chicken as a national dish. These were performances in flexibility and the unmarking of identity. An example is the Sindhi community partaking in Sikh festivals that take place in Indian restaurants, serving a sanskritised menu and using halal meat. Broadly, it was a refusal of a person to stay in one place (Falzon 2016). It was also a collective project to interrupt simplistic connections of tacit knowledge and dislocation and to present flexibility and unmarking as ordinary. In making sense of this demanding production of the ordinary Veena Das (2007) posits that we as scholars have simply misunderstood ordinariness in that we have assumed that human agency is directed towards escape from the ordinary rather than an attempt to deepen our engagement with it, to be normative and normal.

My interlocutors knew and wanted ordinary. This not only required a considered approach to engagement with Cantonese and Chinese community norms, but also an engagement with South Asian identity, and to treat the idea of community as new and renewing, rather than as a given. While the connections they maintained with other cities, in the circulation of chefs and ingredients, and in the borrowing of ideas, were suggestive of migrant lives lived on multiple scales, the work they did was largely aimed at activities that helped them continue to feel settled and part of mainstream life. However, as my field site adjusted to my interlocutors' social realities, I came to understand just how much work was dedicated to living an ordinary existence. Returning to Veena Das contention that ordinary a destination that requires work to arrive there, this was far from an easy circulation of bodies, identities and food.

Although all three cities share some commonalities in terms of their majoritarian Cantonese ethno-linguistic identity, the three cities are also divided in terms of how they view this identity, reflecting a variegated colonial past, and variegated post-colonial sensibilities. There are questions concerning whether Hong Kong is unique from Macau, whether Hong Kong and Macau are

different from Guangzhou, and whether Guangzhou and the Pearl River Delta represents a challenge to the Chinese national politics

The historical dimensions of South Asian minority identity in Cantonese majoritarian histories are clear for present-day residents. The Tamil Association in Guangzhou, headed up by Tamil restaurateurs, organise tours to local temples and ancestral halls and mosques. These tours take in the statue of a Buddhist priest-trader, which is included the pantheon of a polytheist temple in heart of Guangzhou, or the Tamil inscriptions in Quanzhou. Glass beads and other Tamil-traded items in excavated tombs are now part of broader museum collections in the delta.

However, visits to mosques, temples and museums highlight these are minority negotiations that take place alongside the absorption of a variety of other minority migrations and local identity making. Temples that Tamils visit also arrange dragon boat festivals that celebrate the local delta origins of dragon boats. Teams from Guangzhou, Foshan and Hong Kong and Taiwan compete demonstrating the broader popularity of the sport, but also gestures at competing claims for the true location of the foreshore culture that surrounds the sport.

The Dragon boat festivals and other local projects such as the annual Guangzhou Flower Fair, or even the creation of the local Michelin Guide for Hong Kong and Macau, complicate notions of Chinese or Cantonese majoritarianism in the Pearl River Delta. Siu and Liu (2015) demonstrate that with multiple constructions of the Delta's Cantonese ethnolinguistic identity had to do a lot of work to claim, and reclaim, its dominant position. Cantonese-ness in Guangzhou and Hong Kong and Macanese identity in Macau is both a given but is continually asserted, developed and refined, fought over and localised. The fight was and continues to be between competing civilising missions. This includes forms of central control that dynastic sought to assert over the delta through the recognition of land rights, as Siu and Liu attest (2015), to the new forms of social organisation that Britain and Portugal attempted in Hong Kong, Macau and other colonial towns (Home 2013). This

also includes Guangzhou's role as a centre for revolution, and as a disembarkation point of the delta for those fleeing imperial, nationalist and communist regimes in China and leaving for Macau, Hong Kong, further afield to Australia, Canada and North America. This includes Parsi families disgorging from Shanghai to Guangzhou, and eventually to Hong Kong and Macau in the 1930s, Pakistanis to Macau and Hong Kong in the 1950s, as well as people from Nepal and from Goa, Daman and Diu in the 1960s. It also includes Tamils from Burma (now Myanmar) in the 1970s, and South Asians from Mozambique over several decades, as well as Vietnamese in the 1970s, Indonesian and Filipinos in the 1970s and 1980s.

This civilising project has continued to the present day, embedded in socio-economic reform, but complicated by political difference. Since 1983 when the provincial government in Guangzhou fully embraced Beijing's central policy to introduce market-led reforms, Chinese and overseas investment in all three cities has increased, with road, rail, houses, tower blocks and casinos (in Macau) impacting on densely populated cities. These socio-economic changes has increased competition between Guangzhou, Macau and Hong Kong to establish world city status, drawing on Cantonese-ness as a transnational cultural and economic powerbase.

However, both Hong Kong and Macau are relatively young post-colonial entities and are within a transition period before full integration with China, and more specifically Guangdong province, in 2047 and 2049. In the meantime, everyday life is framed by interim arrangements that continue certain rhythms and fabrics of life from the colonial era. In both Hong Kong and Macau, these are juridical frameworks called the Basic Law. Run-of-the-mill conversations in Hong Kong and Macau frequently turn to the Basic Law and how its application has been uneven as the clock ticks down to 2047 and 2049, and what this means for remaining a Guangzhouan, Hongkonger or a Macanese person. Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Macau continue to pursue fraught yet mutually dependent relations with each other and with central authorities in Beijing, although levels of antagonism and friendship are ever-shifting. While Occupy Central activism and the wider Umbrella movement remains active in Hong

Kong, there were smaller sister protests in Macau. Likewise, earlier in 2010, when residents of Guangzhou marched against language policies that aimed to promote Mandarin over Cantonese, there were also smaller sister protests in Hong Kong. International Women's Day and women's rallies continue to be a problem across China, but street level activism mainly takes place in Hong Kong and Macau.

Of course, South Asians are as anxious as any other community about the present and the future of Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau. South Asian cooks and others involved in food, remain uncertain as to how these aims apply as they inhabit visibly foreign bodies and may need to deploy strategies other than those that overly highlight their difference. As has become clear since 2016, two years marked by Britain's referendum to leave the European Union and by the US retreating from its traditional multilateral geopolitical role, is that integration and forms of multiculturalism are uneasy companions. Complicating matters further is access to residency and citizenship. As China comes to terms with its status as an immigrant receiving country (Pieke 2012) and Hong Kong comes to terms with its withdrawal of refugee resettlement rights (Loper 2010) and all of the nativist dynamics this creates, what is the space for South Asian culinary belonging? This thesis looks at whether that South Asian food purveyors, cooks and organisers strategically avoid marking themselves by linking culinary and racial identity.

The following are the research questions that drive this thesis

Is unmarking and marking and the creation of racially ambiguous identities used by South Asians as a strategy to belong to an ordinary community in the Pearl River Delta?

What role does South Asian foods play in these strategies?

This thesis focuses on why and how South Asians employ a series of marking and unmarking strategies, and whether this builds other types of identity? It examines whether these strategies help South Asian food makers and purveyors achieve a level of racial ambiguity that makes belonging to the Chinese and Cantonese community more fulsome.

South Asian food: power and non-identity

The relationship between food and territorial identity is subtle and complex. This complexity has been echoed by food scholars examining the link between South Asian food and South Asian identity (Ray & Srinivas 2012; Mannur 2010; Roy 2002). In examining the dynamics of marking and unmarking, I do not read this extant literature against the grain. Rather I pay close attention to the contextual and changeable nature of the link between South Asian food and South Asian identity carefully observed and described by these studies.

I use the term 'South Asian' in this study reflexively. This was not a term my interlocutors used to identify themselves or the food that they cooked, which showed me how embedded the term is in projects of western liberal multiculturalism (Parekh 2002; Baumann 2002). Often they alighted on the term Indian to describe their food. This proved to be an equally problematic metonym given the equal number of times when my companions expressed national or regional, religious or ethno-linguistic identities for themselves and for their cooking. The times they described themselves or their food as Nepali, Sindhi or Goan were productive to my understanding of what food and identity was being constructed at given points. My use of the term 'South Asian', gives my companions as wide a canvas of food and identity as possible to draw from, both spatially and temporally. But the term 'South Asian', is of course very situated. As Anita Mannur and Pia Sahni identify, the term manufactures convergences that ultimately place India at the centre (2011). The issues this raises remain unresolved in my fieldwork because this lack of resolution is something that my interlocutors lived with, and adjusted to and strategised with. This is evident in the way they stacked their shelves in their 'Indo-Pak' grocery stores, in the broad menus of the 'Indian' restaurants they managed or cooked in, in the way they represented their cooking in food festivals, in their interpretations of state projects of food heritage and finally in how they organised themselves and their ambitions in cities. Flexibility, fluidity and ambiguity enabled the circulation of mainstream identities, ingredients and a corpus of skills and dishes in the Pearl River Delta.

South Asian food scholars have attempted to map dishes, techniques and ingredients to a territorial identity. Much of the food work involved in identity making is imprecise. Even Historian K T Achaya's *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food* (1998) and *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* (1994) – considered a definitive account of the historical dynamics of South Asian food – reflexively conflates South Asia and India. Achaya uses broad terms to stand in for territorial references including 'the south' or the 'north', meaning anything from northern Pakistan to southern Sri Lanka. The books remain the source texts on which contemporary South Asian food writers rely, including Chitrita Banerji (2007). As a result, there are similarly imprecise identities prescribed to ingredients, dishes and techniques. Each chapter in Banerji's book is a region and chapter headings describe regional culinary tropes; fish curries in Bengal as well as Indo-Portuguese cheese and desserts, Indo-Portuguese curries and breads in Goa, peppery preparations in Kerala, a south Indian *thali* in Karnataka. In reality, the chapters offer a description of foods eaten in each province that show more continuity between regions, rather than sharp divisions. In each chapter Banerji writes that she returns to her home in Calcutta to ruminate on the differences between regional cuisine and that of her hometown, making the book more of a dialogue between Bengali food and other regional Indian food.

Examining the pre-eminence of regional food culture, Arjun Appadurai (1988a) questions why, despite standardised national dance and musical styles, a unified national culinary culture has not emerged in India. In his overview of English language Indian cookery writing, he posits that respect for regional variations in custom was a useful political tool when oral traditions kept regional boundaries secure. In post-colonial India, and much like the way Mughlai Islamic court cuisines found their way into homes through administrative manuals, regional foods have found a new public platform through the proliferation of English language media. But this vista of national cuisine is not available to everyone. Instead it is produced by centralist metropolitan cultures and circulated via cookbooks and other English language media to a small but growing group of middle-class women living in and moving

between towns and cities. These publications articulate with and co-produce stereotypes of regional foods, for example, that creamier milder food is enjoyed in the north, that larger plainer *naan* breads are made in Pakistan, and spicier pungent foods are preferred in the south. Meals become progressively more rice- and spice-based as one gets to Sri Lanka. A handful of anthropologists have examined regional foods in India, among them Caroline Osella and Filippo Osella (2008) in Kerala, Pat Caplan (2008) in Tamil Nadu and Henrike Donner (2008) and Manpreet Janeja (2010) in Bengal. Attempts to make definitive statements about the structure of regional foods, about who eats these and how this articulates with class and caste structures are complicated and do not respond well to abstraction. Osella and Osella only very reluctantly concede to Caplan's theory that food in Tamil Nadu is normatively vegetarian compared to food in Kerala which is normatively meat-eating.

As Indian liberalisation has deepened and a consumer middle class has emerged, it is hard to escape from middle-class perspectives on culinary boundaries. Donner (2008) and Janeja's (2010) study of households in Kolkata and Dhaka are one of several studies that look out from the middle classes to acts of consumption. This turn towards class does not preclude regional identity, but none-the-less serves as a corrective for studies that have overstated and also undermined regional differences. Among others are Anita Mannur, Krishnendu Ray and Tulsi Sriniva (2012), all of whom have also written about middle classes and elite acts of consumption and production. In these studies, both the identity of 'middle class' and 'South Asian food' is highly contextual and situated, but in each situation, the boundaries of acceptable normal middle-class food is extended, making it difficult to define precisely what South Asian cuisine is.

Ray and Srinivas' (2012) edited collection is typical of this approach, tending to focus on the historical dynamics that have allowed for the flourishing of some dishes and cuisines over others in various eras of globalisation, political change, migration, economic restriction and liberalisation. The sum result of this is an emerging secularity among middle-class eating practices. These practices are grounded in historical precedents, for example in the case of vegetarian Udupi

hotels and eateries. Here activists and restaurateurs defeated the old orthodoxies of caste seclusion in the 1930s by employing Brahmin chefs in the kitchen so that all castes could eat together in the dining hall. This secularity extends from these less luxurious places to exclusive ultra-rich clubs in Mumbai, where guests have privacy to eat what they like. This is a privacy that mirrors the history of dining at the colonial club by elite British administrators.

Stig Toft Madsen and Geoffrey Gardella (2012) positions Chinese food as a vehicle to underscore the secularity of middle-class public eating. In reinvented Persian and Muslim Irani restaurants, Chinese food is offered as standard, alongside various vegetarian and meat-based dishes. Such is the contaminating force of this secularity that the space is managed very strictly. Diners enjoy meat, Chinese food and air conditioning at the back, while the cashier sits at the front in the heat of the day, surrounded by statues of deities. This reinforces popular perceptions that the middle classes and elites have a near omnivorous and undifferentiated consumption culture, while lower classes overly marked by their culinary purity (Shaffer 2012).

As South Asia's restaurant sector grows and becomes more complicated, Ashish Nandy (2004) identifies how middle classes employ an evolving stratarchy as a tool to help them through acts of consumption and identity formation. South Asian food is by no means at the top of any hierarchies. Rather, globalisation has created a strata of society where, in the family, all must be concerned with the work of cultivating taste. This includes family members who may otherwise have conservative food habits. In this stratarchy, Nandy suggests that public eating in India has been largely hijacked by a combination of Mughal and Punjabi cuisines because these articulate with festive and everyday foods in homes and in celebrations. However, it is the restaurants that serve a combination of Mughal-Punjabi, 'Chinese' and South Indian food that are considered low brow and for first-generation urbanites, who are willingly fooled by Tibetan and North East Indians who cook and serve such foods. Nandy is aware of various tensions in his overview. On the one hand Chinese and Indian hybridised cuisines are not as valued as they are in Malaysia or Singapore. This is because food served in India's hybrid places, such as

Kolkata's Chinatown, Tangra, is considered more suited to the palates of Europeans, North Americans and Anglo-Indians. On the other hand, specialist Hunanese and Sichuanese restaurants have attracted large numbers of elite diners precisely because of their popularity in western countries.

Stratarchies and their reliance on ethnic cuisines as representations of alien culture are some of the tools with which 'minoritarian cosmopolitanism of refugees, migrants and exiles, critique nationally constituted nativist modern spaces' (Ray & Srinivas 2012: 10). Mannur (2010) relies on the vast array of representations of food in food literature and film. This can lead to some definite blurred boundaries, for example Mannur's reading of a particular scene in the film *Harold and Kumar Go To White Castle* indicates that hamburgers have become iconically American only very lately, and yet, by some deft and emotive dialogue, hamburgers are made into a true food of the aspiring Asian-American protagonists in the film.

When it comes to majoritarian political identities, for Mannur (2010) other kinds of tensions are present. Quoting Robin Cook, British Foreign Secretary from 1997 to 2001, and his speech that outlined the then Labour government's stance on race in Britain as reducible to acts of eating *chicken tikka masala*, Mannur moves beyond issues with the authenticity of the dish, to the race and class power structures under which it was created. The dish has been imposed from outside in a complex rubric of multiculturalism with all its rhetoric of inclusion of ethnic food, as well as its exclusions of bodies that are implicated in the political economy of its production. In her criticisms, Mannur joins other scholars in identifying and critiquing the boundaries established between South Asian food and belonging in western societies (Ray 2016; 2011; 2004; Buettner 2008; Panayi 2008).

Mannur asserts that the prolonged visibility on the nature of South Asian food and the kinds of meanings, social dynamics and moralities it organises, has interrupted the work to normalise South Asian identity. Fictional accounts of South Asian food in literature and film by Asian American film makers and writers reject the essentialisms of South Asian food, and heed its elusiveness in

terms of class, caste, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. At the same time, some works tend to reinforce orientalist views of South Asian food and cooks, and remain within the confines of heteronormativity. These cultural producers 'work within the rules of the system of food writing' (2010: 85) demonstrating that middle class South Asian elites are writing for middle class white elites elsewhere. This is a critique also echoed by Parama Roy. In its present form, food media cannot engage in projects of equality and social justice because these sensibilities articulate too closely with US inequalities. South Asians' expressions of unhappiness with a multicultural social order is unpalatable, and inimical to the happiness that eating ethnic cuisine is meant to convey.

In Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau, minority identity, nativism and modernity has developed along their own particular historical trajectories, which is discussed in chapter one. Jakob Klein (2007) suggests that Cantonese food and Cantonese identity in Guangzhou, particularly after the city's reform-era revival in the 1980s and 1990s, is also processual and incomplete. In order to properly identify itself, Cantonese food remains in a paradoxical conversation with other cuisines; Hunanese and Sichuanese restaurants, western restaurants and Hong Kong-style Cantonese food. This conversation is played out in public among newspapers, articles and other forms of newly emergent media with the express purpose of helping Guangzhou diners to anticipate, identify and enjoy the differences in these cuisines.

It is in comparative work with Hong Kong-style Cantonese cuisine that stratarchies become more hierarchical. But these hierarchies are only partially formed and are relatively flexible. Guangzhou is said to be at the centre of Cantonese cuisine, while at the same time Hong Kong is said to be ahead in that it is adaptable to foreign and international standards of taste. The last two-to-three decades have seen the emergence of Cantonese 'nouvelle cuisine' in Hong Kong. It combines cheap and expensive ingredients and foreign cooking methods. Klein notes that dishes produced under its rubric such as 'country-style dace stuffed with minced pork' (Klein 2007: 530) embody the paradoxes and pragmatism of Cantonese food. It does not represent the essence of Cantonese food which is described as natural and seeking of original flavours,

but neither does it deny global and transregional forces in its production and consumption. Originally a term used by chefs in Guangzhou to describe Hong Kong food, Cantonese nouvelle cuisine is now a sign of more complicated times. It has become unmoored from Hong Kong and is now produced by chefs across the delta.

The emergence of Cantonese nouvelle cuisine continues to displace and marginalise Hakka cuisines in the territory. Associated, paradoxically, with both rurality and the food of early industrialisation in the region, Hakka food remains at Hong Kong's periphery even as other Guangdong regional cuisines such as Chaozhou and Cantonese food have emerged as *haute* categories. For Siumi Maria Tam (1997) the cooking and dining custom surrounding *dim sum* carries the requisite metropolitaneity, a term that captures a successful integration of what Tam terms 'East and West'. This metropolitaneity slips the bounds of both Chinese dynastic traditions and British colonial rule, an important consideration in transition-era Hong Kong. She goes on to state that Hong Kong identity is reflected in the sheer variety of *dim sum* because it refuses to be fixed. It is '[a] sense of local identity though they are never quite able to define such an identity' (1997: 303). Furthering this argument, Sydney Cheung (2002b) identifies the emergence of a Hong Kong-style Cantonese food category reflects Hong Kong's economic activism, socio-economic growth and relative stability vis-à-vis China. The emergence of this category of food in the 1970s with its expensive ingredients and elite aesthetics became a metonym for freedom of choice. Discussing Macanese cuisine, Augustin-Jean (2002) states that it is precisely 'the important uncertainties on the margins' (2002: 121) and the irreducibility of certain cuisines that make them perfect identity markers. It is a highly productive way of dealing with the anxieties that Macanese, Hong Kong and Guangzhou identity could be absorbed into mainland and northern-oriented Chinese culture in the future.

Ever present are two kinds of tension pulling in opposite directions. While food can create insider and outsider identities, studies in hospitality and food, consubstantiation and relatedness present powerful ways that substances such as food can effect what are often cast as traditional modes of social organisation

(Janowski and Kerlogue 2007; Paulson 2006; Carsten 2000; Stafford 2000; Stafford 1992). As if mindful of their absence in the East meets West rhetoric around dim sum advanced by Tam, my South Asian interlocutors were keen to insert South Asian food back into the picture, but in ways that stressed commonality. 'But basically Indian food and Chinese food is the same' was a usual, casual, and self-evident response I frequently received when we sat down to discuss power dynamics, identity, race and religion. My interlocutors offered up a range of substances such as rice, which tie South Asia to particular regions in southern China. They pointed to cooking practices such as steaming which tie regions in southern India to China. They identified the aesthetics of and taste for using whole chillies quick-fried in oil to release subtle flavours indicating Chinese people liked spice. Here the humoral Chinese and South Asian systems categorising and managing humidity with heating and cooling foods have coalesced (McGilvray 1998; Anderson 1984).

In a relatively rare study that frames kinship organisations as dynamic, Charles Stafford (2000) follows in the lines of James Watson (1987). Stafford critiques the use of male-led lineage systems to define studies of social organisation in non-western societies. Instead, from formal kinship to modes of friendship, food is shown to be part of creative processual endeavours in the production of relatedness. These tasks are performed by women who take on traditional gender roles related to food preparation in Stafford's rural settings, exposing the inherent conservatism of lineage relations. However, as China becomes increasingly attuned to its status as a largely urbanised country, Stafford suggests that studies of gender, ethnicity, class and migration can properly situate a flexible lineage as one of many forms of relatedness on offer.

This articulates well with Lambert's study of relationships that cross caste in Hindu Rajasthan, through acts of feeding, nurturing and forms of commensality, which create affective and powerful values (2000). Even Appadurai's (1981) study of gastro politics in Hindu Tamil households show that the strictness of observances in the household and at larger celebrations such as weddings, dangerous lines can be crossed, blurring the borders in social organisation. As well as fix boundaries, South Asian food has the ability to blur those boundaries,

creative flexible kinship move otherwise peripheral groups into mainstream South Asian life. Can South Asian food do so across racial lines and move into the middle of Cantonese or Chinese mainstream life?

Belonging, food and the ordinary community

Can South Asians and their food belong to the ordinary community in China? Considering the flexibility in the attachment between South Asian food and South Asian identity explored above and its highly contextual nature in South Asia and in the diaspora, how does food intersect with belonging?

How can an ordinary mainstream community in China be defined? Historical forces have shaped the connection between Chinese identity and Han culture. Dikötter asserts that Han Chinese-ness – and particularly its immutability and normativity - has been historically constructed as a majoritarian identity in China and has powered past and contemporary forms of nationalism in China (2015; 1996). Racial hierarchies were extant in the Song Dynasty when Buddhism, a still foreign religion at the time, merged with Confucianism and Daoism. Its Sinification involved the transformation of the bodhisattva image from a half-naked Indian man, to a 'decently clad divinity with a properly light complexion'. Hierarchies that equated the Chinese as a race that was equivalent to white Europeans were formalised in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when unequal power relations between China and Europe became clear. But for Dikötter 'yellow' as a European racial descriptor for the Chinese was both negotiated as a position, and imposed on Chinese populations under an evolving and hardening European expansionist schema. Yet under this scheme in both European and Chinese political thought, white and yellow races were still in the ascendant. Races that were deemed to be non-white or non-yellow, namely those who were 'black', 'brown' and 'red' were simply written out of the future (2015: 55).

Dikötter asserts that the communist revolution in China in 1949 was a disjuncture, putting paid to racial theories that insulted 'national minorities' (2015: 123) and other nations. Mao's nationalist policies and his foreign relations, particularly in relations with South East Asian and African states

emphasised shared socio-economic concerns and sought to stifle racial difference. Yet China's geopolitics was suffused with the continuation of earlier racialised philosophies. Development teleologies and other paradigms not only continue to dog worldviews related to China's ethnic and religious minorities, but also in its conceptualisation of Asian and African countries. Ong (1999) acknowledges that this continues with China's increasing integration into the world economy through globalisation. Under the various notions that are collected into or rejected from the cultural paradigm 'Greater China' in the late 20th and 21st century are colonial hierarchies repurposed as a diffusion of appropriate Confucian values. Therefore, hard work, frugality and virility of Singaporean ideals can be equated with Western values of individualism and merit while at the same time contrasted with a softer Malaysian society (1999: 69).

Meanwhile, within the borders of China, statist and community approaches to multiculturalism have been caught in the tensions and contradictions of what it means to be Chinese. On the one hand, Sterckx submits that geographic expansion in early Imperial China was driven by flexibility in ethnic and racial boundaries, most clearly expressed in the culinary sphere. He states that 'Succumbing to the temptations of cooked rice, roast meat, the *geng* stew or wine was tantamount to submitting to "Chinese" rule' (2011: 21). On the other hand, historical forces have shaped both ideas of ethnicity and China and Chinese relations to ethnic others (He 2005). These shifting historical contexts include further conquests at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty that brought north western provinces into the Chinese empire. This included mass internal and international immigration from the end of the dynasty, Mao-era Chinese identity construction, and integration of China's northern and western provinces in reform era dynamics. Within these contexts, China's ethnic and religious minorities have been negotiated, recognised, categorised, legally defined by a set of minority rights, and moved into the periphery of a Han-dominated cultural centre. This is also true for the Fujianese communities and Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese, Hokkien, and Teochiu speaking groups in South

East Asia, who have become steadily more Han (Vasantkumar 2012; Avieli 2005).

However, scholars of food and identity have increasingly noted the blurring and reinforcing of boundaries that acts of cooking and eating offer to Han communities and their ethnic and religious other. Cristina Cesaro (2000) and Maris Boyd Gillette (2000a; 2000b) both identify the ways that Uyghur and Hui Muslim minorities pay attention to ingredients, snacks, dishes and ways of eating that are particular Han. The centrality of vegetables, the use of standing water to wash foods, the eating of pork are signs of Han impurity that borders on an uncouth quality or backwardness. Yet, the boundaries between Han bodies and foods, and the purity of Muslim or *qingzhen* foods were very slippery, often articulated through the marking of hierarchies between Hui and Uyghur communities. As noted in studies of commensality and hospitality, consubstantiation and relatedness explore these powers (Carsten 2000; Lambert 2000; Stafford 2000). In such studies, the boundaries between social groups, between family and kin are very porous. Cesaro notes that a rumour that Han people often work in Uyghur restaurants in Xinjiang is enough of a reason for Hui people to avoid Uyghur-run *qingzhen* restaurants. At the same time young Uyghurs frequent Han-run backpacker cafes serving pork and western foods such as spaghetti bolognese. They eat there to experience and to perform a cosmopolitan identity, and in doing so, unmarking themselves as particularly Muslim or Uyghur, and mark themselves as the kind of modern elite consumers that claim a place within Han majoritarianism.

Yet Franck Billé (2009) demonstrates that Han identity is similarly fragmented. In Inner Mongolia, similar to Xinjiang, dietary frontiers are marked but porous. Han food in Inner Mongolia and elsewhere is a broad menu, a cannon in which Mongolian hotpot takes its place. In reality, vegetables, milk, mutton were ingredients that made Mongolian and Han food possible in Höhhot and other places, centralising far-flung Chinese minority areas. Even in studies by Vasantkumar and Avieli cited above, Han identity construction is only partial, and contingent on, among other things, how the Chinese nation state conducts itself.

These studies are based in places where internal migration and immigration has brought together Han and non-Han populations. This migratory context sits within an emphasis on nomadology in food and belonging projects that make fluid notions of ethnicity (Ong 1999). Migration, diaspora and food show that feelings of belonging are contested as well as reinforced in writing about acts of cooking, and sharing food by politically marginal groups. These include different cooks and contexts such as Francophone Caribbean and North African women in France (Mehta 2009), or among Indian migrant households in the Netherlands (Bailey 2017), or cooks in sending countries (Abbots 2016; Wilk 1999).

How far can these Chinese notions of multiculturalism and Han identity construction embrace South Asians and other foreigners? In Singapore, where multiculturalism is the defining identity of the nation state, Jean Duruz (2002) suggests that cooking and eating show disjunctures in political projects of equality and parity. Even as Chinese, Malay and Indian identity are firmly placed in the bandwidth of ordinary Singaporean citizens, creating a mainstream, ordinary food culture that represents this multiracial setting is still an ongoing process (Duruz 2016; 2011; 2010; Duruz, Luckman, and Bishop 2011). Personal and political projects that attempt to move Indian and Malay cooks into the middle of this ordinary food are not always successful. Increasingly mainstream discourses of culinary belonging have become more oriented to marking the outmigration and erasure of mixed race communities more so than marking in migration and cooking among – most frequently – darker skinned South East and South Asian Singaporean communities. Duruz examines these dynamics by highlighting the elevation of the spiced noodle soup, *laksa*, in Singapore. It serves as a metaphor for a culinary multiracialism but is fundamentally a dish associated with a disappearing and near invisibility of Peranakan or Eurasian taste in the city. These dishes that are cast as representations of a more hybrid and borderless past, move beyond the nation state and its projects of multicultural belonging.

Reflecting on this while returning to our Chinese context, there is nothing particularly Mongolian about Mongolian hot pot, a dish consumed in other parts

of China as part of a corpus of national dishes that have regional ties. Likewise, liquid milk, biscuits and spaghetti bolognese are used to mark Hui, Uyghur and Mongolian communities as modern, enterprising and post-national, rather than underscore their religious and regional identities.

At the same time, these foods are eaten with dietary, ethnic or racially bounded cultures in mind. Culinary belonging to a multicultural place can be multifaceted and hierarchical. Anita Mannur's (2010) analysis of the heralding of chicken tikka masala as Britain's national dish in the early 2000s shows the kind of work, the under spicing, over sweetening of Bangladeshi food, that goes into making Indian culinary belonging palatable to majoritarian white communities. There is anxiety in this securing of palatability. Bangladeshi cooks are not able to rest solely on their citizenship, nor their contribution to the restaurant industry. Palatability here creates a knowing, flexible food identity that reaches towards an emotional or cultural belonging that scholars have noted is beyond the legalisms that secure a place within and right of access to a nation's borders (Antonsich 2010; Maira 2004; Ong et al. 1996; Rosaldo 1994). Yet these scholars have struggled to pin what this cultural or emotional belonging is. Reaching for a digestive metaphor Rosaldo puts forward for consideration the notion that cultural citizenship is a feeling of citizenship fullness (1994).

Responding to criticisms that this notion remains vague and ill-defined, both Ong and Maira have tried to highlight contexts that give contour to this feeling. For example, both focus on the broader racialising discourses in the United States that prompt calls for cultural citizenship in the first place. In Maira's (2004) study of Muslim youth culture following the 9 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York the attacks cement an understanding that emotional and legal belonging is necessary. Education and employment opportunities have always been meagre before and after the attacks, and migrated or second generation South Asian youths express a desire to move South Asian identity to the middle of American culture, taking its place next to northern and western European culture. In Ong et al's (1996) study of the expanding category of Asian American throughout the late 20th Century, migrants are involved in web of power relations to assert their belonging. In the

1950s and 1960s the category of Asian American broadly represented Chinese, Japanese and Koreans. From the 1970s onwards Southeast Asians migrants also embraced and extended the category of Asian American. They did this as a means to express both a desire for greater racial status as well as to acknowledge their place within a racial statist hierarchy whereby mainstream American identity remains white.

That locations can give rise to such contingent and contradictory belonging reinforce Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson's (1992) argument that external borders create internal borders because they harbour simplistic notions of their 'primeval state of autonomy' (1992: 8). Under such logic, colonialism or in Ong et al's case, American post-war expansionism, is cast as the most significant displacement of other peoples. As a result multiculturalism in state projects is cast as late, and is enfeebled, while post-colonialism or post-expansionism and its 'simulcra' dilutes notions of contemporary interconnection and hybridity. In a Han-dominated bounded geography (Leibold 2010) interactions between Han and Cantonese majoritarianism and post-colonial racial minorities in Hong Kong and Macau vis-à-vis an increasingly multiracial Guangzhou are in dialogue with multiculturalisms and their racial hierarchies in other western states and nations. Models of multiculturalism are critiqued and evaluated everywhere, including in what are considered monocultures in East Asia, informing state and individual practice thinking on how strangers are identified (Ahmed 2013).

My interlocutors were keen to reassure me that local (meaning Chinese and Cantonese) people did eat Indian restaurant food, or that neighbours were fine with cooking smells and even thought them delicious, and overall, Chinese people were comfortable with cooking with and eating spices. On the other hand, and paradoxically, I was frequently told that being in China was a 'torture posting'. Just as frequently I was also told that South Asian people could live and eat comfortably here. While the discourses were suggestive of evolving ideas of South Asian and Chinese cultural identity as being tolerant of the other on culinary terms, the overall affect was to reinforce racial boundaries. These were common rhetorical strategies. Those involved with the circulation of food in the delta, namely grocers, restaurateurs, chefs and community organisers, were

much more likely to turn discussions back to India, expressing a dissatisfaction with restrictive Hindu normativity; the spice mixes that they could stock, the menus that they could design, the discourses that they were confronted with when among other foreigners and Chinese friends. In a rare discussion of race in contemporary India as opposed to within its colonial history, Zaheer Baber (2004) proposes that the communal violence between Hindus and Muslims be reconfigured as a racial as opposed to a religious issue. Like Baber, those involved in food were persuaded that constructing a Hindu self, as synonym for South Asia, through a mixture of stereotype, myth-making and invented histories was a project in the use of common tools but productive of erroneous results.

Guangzhou, and to a lesser extent, Macau, is an emerging cradle of theory for the study of black West and Lusophone Africans in the Chinese context (Bodomo 2016; Castillo 2016; Bodomo and Ma 2012a; Bodomo and Teixeira-E-Silva 2012) These place Guangzhou on a par with Hong Kong-based studies of South Asian communities (O'Connor 2012; Plüss 2005; White 1994; Vaid 1972). These are studies about minority belonging in ways that underscore a monolithic Chinese cultural and ethnic identity.

This is not to say that a stronger powerful China is the new arbiter of success in the twenty-first century. In Patricia Leonard's study of white British women in post-colonial Hong Kong, she suggest that in '[a] city of migrants, most white people are also (first generation) migrants' (Leonard 2008: 46), both the terms for success and how this is judged is murkier. White British women perform Britishness as expatriation in complicated ways now that localisation policies in the state sector have lessened employment opportunities for non-Cantonese speakers, and has also depressed wages. This is at the same time that multinational companies are increasingly moving to Hong Kong. White British women both create and are anxious over the production of norms that signal they are part of an internationalised elite that is ambivalent of, but very much attuned to racial difference. Racial hierarchies had become even more complicated during my fieldwork in the region. Slimmer expatriation packages and the shift to hiring South Asian and Taiwanese middle managers had seen an

influx of non-whites into special clubs and women's associations. One women's club on another part of the delta had succumbed to what they described as 'external pressures' to check all passports of these who applied for membership to check they were suitably foreign in addition to being able to pay the steep toll. These necessary bureaucratic measures illustrate the deepening of the logics of clubbability (Leonard 2008) outside of Hong Kong. Throughout the delta they concretise 'the very fine line between those having a problem to solve and becoming a problem' (Moreton-Robinson 2004: 110).

Examining normativity in Hong Kong and Macau demands an engagement with European and white identity as well South Asian-ness and Cantonese and Han majoritarianism. For Alistair Bonnett (1998) European expansion into Asia did not herald the arrival of the non-negotiated normative, with which Chinese, Indian and other racial identities had to negotiate. Historical whiteness is far from an intrinsic category. During European expansion, apart from escaping its classed orientations, whiteness itself evolved in comparative exercises. As a result, in deepening encounters with their colonies, Europeans erased whiteness. This legacy of erasure is also present in scholarship of race in China

Whiteness studies also offer a complement to studies in the performances of Han majoritarianism - particularly how norms are purposefully constructed through pursuing an unmarking. Non-normative, overly racialised subjects always appear to define themselves specifically, through performances of racial identity. Rachel Slocum (2007) identifies how food problematizes non-normative bodies. In food justice programmes and food distribution networks, and through ideologically grounded science, it is the silent normative healthy body that sets the standard for success. Raced norms are embedded in structures of production and consumption and impossible to shift without drawing attention to their power (Slocum and Saldanha 2013). This then shapes a differentiated yet powerful whiteness or Han-ness in a centre that is non-dynamic, the normative, the 'ordinary community', a normative position from these performances are viewed with pleasure or suspicion, and sometimes both (Garner 2007). Steve Garner states that an ordinary community is one where:

[...] whose hospitality is taken advantage of, whose culture is disrespected and whose entitlements are being withdrawn by the elite for redistribution to underserving minorities (2016: 139)

At the heart of the ways that ordinary communities perform ordinariness is a set of key relationships with the state and other actors in which obscuring and ambiguity is advanced (Garner 2007). This is a Han-ness, Cantonese-ness and, in certain cases, a whiteness, that is 'unmarked' (2007: 34) and unremarked upon.

What of brownness? Maira takes up this issue (2008). Her study of South Asian teenagers in New York highlights how limited their sense of American citizenship has become following the terror attacks on 9 September 2001 as a result of inhabiting brown bodies. Passing for an American by using ethnicity, like passing for higher caste membership in India (Osella and Osella 2000), is no longer possible, if it ever was. Maira situates participants' political calls for a broader cultural citizenship as a critique of extant multicultural policies. These policies have failed in enabling South Asians to claim a space in middle, ordinary identities. South Asians are far too marked for cultural citizenship to be stumbled upon through minimum state intervention rather than actively lived and campaigned for.

While whiteness studies complement studies on Han majoritarianism in their clearer explanations of how ordinary norms are created and performed whiteness studies also have their limitations. They are, unsurprisingly, overly concerned with racial identity. Han studies take into account the intersection between race, religion and orthopraxy, language, socio-economic strata, political orientation and other modes of identity because constructions of Han majoritarianism have historically contended with a regionally disparate multi-ethnic China and unevenness of social and economic life and norms. Han identity is overtly and intricately marked, including by the Cantonese. Identifying Guangdong as an 'integral periphery' (2012: 28), Carrico submits that the Cantonese maintain a corpus of 'primordial characteristics and unique

modern experiences' (2012: 37). They do this to counter marginalisation at the same time that they recognise their central place within the category of Han.

Reflecting these complex intersections in the construction of majoritarian identity in the Pearl River Delta, South Asian and Chinese communities likewise are not using marking and unmarking racial identity as a blunt instrument. My interlocutors understand that they are marked by race. What this marking means is under contention in the Pearl River Delta. The unmarking strategies pursued by South Asian food makers, importers and organisers complicate South Asian racial identity and push them into the middle of a Han majoritarianism defined by facets other than race. For non-white, non-Han groups, to belong to this ordinary community is to commit to a process of strategic marking and unmarking, to create an ambiguous racial identity while at the same time marking themselves as modern, professional, elite, and using history and the future to reinforce their centrist position.

This study is then focused the quest for ordinariness and for belonging to an ordinary community. Studies in ordinariness are often developed from a position that the ordinary is negatively shaped by poor health (Kralik 2002), disability (Titchkosky 2003; Das and Addlakha 2001) and trauma (Liebling and Stanko 2001). Experiences of violence, and living with ill health and disability, separate the extraordinary from the normal, reinforcing the boundary between event and life. Instead, Veena Das (2007) develops an ethnographic approach in studying the quest for ordinariness as the lived norm. For Das this quest is a descent, evoking the sense of an incline, both physical and metaphysical. The descent into ordinary life is such that lest Das pursue those whose traumas are still very plain, her work is really addressing wounds that are invisible, though never healed – according to Das, there is no transcendence. This naturalised and ultimately invisible process needs to be carefully rendered, which Das does through various case studies addressing violence in India's near past and looking out from everyday lives that are silent on the issue. There are two things that I take from this approach. The first is that ordinary identities are processual. The second is the utility in approaching the agency of this descent into ordinariness as case studies linked by a common theme, whereby

ordinariness as a process is examined through several journeys and midpoints. Building on this notion of processual descent from Das, this thesis and its structure explores the ways that South Asians in the Pearl River Delta use food to move towards the normative and ordinary (Das 2007).

Structure of the study

In order to capture the complicated nature of the goal of belonging to an ordinary community, this thesis is presented in a series of thematic chapters that examine how far racial and ethnic identity is marked by South Asian food practices and how far these identities are obscured, to elevate other identities. All these chapters are linked through the work that grocers, cooks, and community organisers do. Namely this work maintains a certain level of racial ambiguity through acts of partial unmarking. At the same time, the work also involves marking other facets of identity – locality, professional skill, social strata, entrepreneurship to realise projects of belonging to an ordinary community. These chapters move from networked yet local and intimate spaces in grocery stores, to public areas such as professional kitchens and restaurants and then towards civic spaces such as food festivals and food heritage projects in order to illustrate and examine strategies. At the same time, the chapters move from a reflective history of South Asian foods heritage making in the present day and to the aspirations for the future.

The Chinese and Cantonese normative community is presented from these various South Asian thematic vantage points. It is fragmented and processual rather than a fixed point. Each chapter considers the perspectives of South Asian interlocutors who use acts of food shopping, cooking, maintaining a food businesses and organising food projects to judge their position vis-à-vis this ordinary community.

Considering the historical dimensions in constructions of majoritarian Chinese identity and food norms, chapter one examines asks if South Asian food played a role in its construction in the Pearl River Delta. The historical record of the South Asian food in China is sparse and must be read against the grain. Here I rely on the intuitions of my interlocutors. Focused on food, and in particular the

interconnections between South Asian food and Southern Chinese food, my interlocutors intuit that South Asian food is quite normal to the delta because of the might of South Indian shipping from the late Tang Dynasty to the early Ming. They also intuit that South Asian food found its proper home in the region through the structures and flows of colonialism. Thus, South Asian food is contiguous across the delta, but also attends closely to its borders. This intuition is a Braudelian notion, as well as a reflexive historical method applied to pre-European histories of long distance trade by historians such as Chaudhuri (1985). Intuition and palatal taste also continue to guide the exercise of creating shared food histories around the coast of the Indian Ocean (Ray 2015; Duruz 2016).

Guided then, by the periodisation identified by my interlocutors, chapter one examines these two times in more detail; pre-modern China, and in particular the Song and Yuan Dynasties, and; late colonialism in the Pearl River Delta, and specifically the 20th Century. As an intuitive history, based on patchy source material including newly gathered primary sources, I frame this chapter as a hidden transcript (Scott 1990). While James Scott's notion would ordinarily be explored within unequal power situations, a context that does in fact apply to the history of the delta, South Asians are cognizant of its power. They use it to build better stories about their being in the delta, something that I move on to cover in chapters five and six.

In the face of official gaps in the historical record, these hidden transcripts advanced by my interlocutors demonstrate how ambiguity works; particularly in how the racial identities of techniques, ingredients and cooks are partially unmarked in Cantonese and South Asian culinary history. The history of South Asian food in the delta is visible and valued only in as much as it influences Cantonese food.

In chapter two I bring the thesis up to the present day and tackle this ambiguity with a focus on South Asian grocery stores. Grocery stores are a contradiction. The stores are a crucial entry point for a range of ingredients, including spice mixes for regional South Asian dishes. These ingredients make possible the food

in restaurants and festivals, which I explore later in the thesis. However, in this chapter, I examine how grocery store owners, workers and customers strategically unmark racial and ethnic identity and mark facets of their food retailing identity that are convenient and local.

I focus on the work of two grocery stores, located in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Hong Kong is the start of a network of grocery distribution, some of which is semi-legal. This chain links cities on China's eastern seaboard, including Shanghai and Beijing, with Guangzhou being a major hub, being the city with the largest number of South Asian families residing in mainland China. There are differences in the way that majoritarian Chinese-ness is constructed, marked by border between Hong Kong and Guangzhou (Smart & Smart 2008). I explore how interlocutors in grocery stores attend to these differences in the way that they stock the shelves and select items from the shelves, creating backspaces and front spaces. Spices ranges, lentils, oil rice and other items, all products of a Nehruvian pluralistic ideal vision of India with which any South Asian food can be made, remain in the background. Meanwhile in the foreground are specialist items such as halal certified confectionary, soft drinks, jams, breakfast cereals, ladies' hair regrowth packs, and cinema tickets – items essential for urban living. The front of the stores are racially ambiguous and the products in the back do not clearly assemble a South Asian space.

To explicate this I draw on and extend Mankekar's notion that these spaces and products have a range of voices and question how far the shelves of these stores build a South Asian space. This chapter argues grocery stores are not sites for India Shopping (Mankekar 2002) but deeply reflect local realities and obscure South Asia. They also articulate closely with vernacular ideas about hierarchies of cities and the danger of free markets.

South Asian Groceries shipped into Hong Kong end up being used in Indian restaurants in Hong Kong, Macau, and Guangzhou and in other parts of China. Having addressed the ambiguous nature of South Asian ingredients and grocery retailing in the previous chapter, I turn to the ambiguous identities afforded by cooking with these and other ingredients. The third chapter asks whether more

recently arrived professional South Asian cooks mark the presence of diaspora communities and their food practices, or obscure or mute them.

Fine (2009) argues that the restaurant is an everyday workplace, embedded in the rhythms of the city in which it is located. Therefore a range of other facets to a chef's identity can be constructed and negotiated, taking into account the demands of the profession, the organisation of restaurant work spaces and the social worlds in which restaurateurs and chefs are engaged in. These are exactly the concerns of professional qualified South Asian chefs and franchisee owners in the Pearl River Delta. Learning a curriculum or from life experiences that are less about South Asian food than one expects, they are encouraged to establish new norms in this sphere. Using interviews and observation with two chefs and a restaurateur in Macau, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong respectively, I read closely the kinds of cooking and feeding they are doing, identifying the everyday working practices and identities that evoke a racial ambiguity.

How far is 'Indian chef' or 'Indian fast food' franchisee an occupation or an identity? In this chapter, reflecting my interlocutors everyday practices of living and working in the Pearl River Delta I argue that they mark themselves with a professional rather than an ethnic identity. Through the enactment of this professional identity, they pay attention to their dynamic environment enables them to take on board ordinary, normal, majoritarian ingredients and aesthetics in these Cantonese cities and unmark themselves as entirely Indian chefs and restaurateurs. The *balichao* or fish pickle crafted by a Keralan chef in Macau, the *idli* batter cooked up in the Taram Cuvai restaurant in Hong Kong; and the *momo* wrapped and stuffed by a Nepali chef in Guangzhou show how my interlocutors work through micro-dimensions of knowledge sharing (Baldassar and Pyke 2014) in order to produce this ordinary food.

If South Asian ingredients and restaurant work is ambiguous as argued in the previous two chapters, chapter four looks at the work of cooks and food purveyors in a community setting. Does cooking and feeding become more racially marked as soon as wider diaspora culinary projects are pursued? In chapter four, I consider the kinds of food are made in food festivals in the Pearl

River Delta and the pressures that are brought to bear on cooks to produce the right kinds of foods. This chapter examines two community food festivals, one in Guangzhou and in one in Macau and the saleability of dishes.

Festivals are temporary. The community of traders, the largest group of which live in Guangzhou relied upon to fund festivals in Guangzhou, are also considered to be transitory. Moreover, the Macanese state is governed by a post-colonial transition government. Reflecting the pressures of these transitional dynamics in these community festivals money matters a great deal. In this chapter, there are two scales of money making to which the cooking and selling of food at a food festival relates. The first is the money that is exchanged in order to pay for a snack or dish at the *Great Indian Mela* (hereafter *mela*) in Guangzhou. The second is the value of a food stall to a broader project to generate wealth for the Macanese state, which then directly translates to cash handouts for citizens under Macau's annual wealth redistribution scheme. Monetary arrangements at both scales signal the moral and social place in society of a person involved in such transactions (Zelizer 2000). Using this notion of money and social place, I explore the hierarchies which are inherent in the fact that the *mela* takes place in an international American school where status conscious Chinese and South Asian eaters converge. I also explore *Lusofonia*, which is funded by a transition government still populated by Portuguese political elites. I contrast the ways that butter chicken at the *mela* and *pao com chouriço* and *bebinca* at *Lusofonia* are used to mark aspects of identity other than South Asian-ness. Cooking to maintain links to elites and their appetites help cooks reinforce or perform their own elite identities for other South Asians, or Portuguese speakers.

Chapter two, three and four present public performances of South Asian food, where they have embraced ambiguity. Chapters five and six add a temporal dimension by examining reconstructions of the past, and contested constructions of the future.

Chapter five looks out from two long-term heritage projects that are running concurrently in Macau and Hong Kong. Recognition in culinary heritage

schemes is often thought to reflect ambitions of the present and of the future rather than truly reflect cooking done in the past. A nationalism has emerged in both Macau and Hong Kong in light of the impending full legal and political integration with China in 2049. This Cantonese and Macanese nationalism deliberately uses racial diversity to mark differences with mainland China in light of this impending integration. What happens when this nationalism meets the strategies and practices of South Asians and their own history of cooking in these cities? The chapter explores how the state has understood the gaps in its culinary history left by disengaged Goanese Damanese and Diuese (hereafter GDD), and Parsi communities. Being identified as an Indian or South Asian minority is problematic. South Asian culinary blankness in the heritage record forms a critique of Hong Kong and Macau's multiculturalism policies.

The feasting practice of *cha gordo* and the industrial foods and agricultural products listed in Hong Kong's intangible cultural heritage inventory aim to recognise diversity in the contributions to city cultures. But this recognition is limited because it does not secure property rights, rights associated with elites in these cities. South Asian silences mean that the identity of foods and culinary histories remain unfinished, creating a tangibility in that 'non-things, negative spaces, lost or forsaken objects, voids or gaps – absences, in other words [...] stand before us as entity-like presences' (Fowles 2010: 25). In this context, unmarking of racial identity of food and cooks creates an ambiguous surface on to which other things can be projected, such as legitimate claims to urban space. Community meals mark the central position that GDD, and Parsi communities maintain vis-à-vis political power, even though they are constructed problematically.

The final chapter is an examination of this future work particularly the race and space in South Asian culinary aspiration. The chapter considers the connection between race, aspiration, and city space in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. These are two cities that are in both cooperation and competition with the other, particularly in terms of which city offers the best model for and of the future.

South Asian aspiration has been shaped and etched into the city in the form of two mixed use buildings, comprising Chunking Mansions in Hong Kong, and in Guangzhou, a Chungking Mansions-style building called Kingly Plaza. My interlocutors question how much these buildings have been South Asian in the past. At the same time, the buildings themselves are rejected by a future-looking generation of food purveyors and eaters who deliberately embrace racially ambiguous neighbourhoods and entrepreneurial identities. Developing further Berlant's linking of space, race and aspiration (2011), the chapter explores the generational conflicts that emerge.

Marking and unmarking: food and multi-sited ethnographic method

This study is built on one year of fieldwork, during which time I interviewed 50 cooks, chefs and restaurateurs, met and talked to 30 people from heritage tourism state departments, and community organisations. I also spent significant amounts of time in the kitchens and at the 'manager's table' of 20 restaurants. The rest of my time was spent working in a grocery store, and two or three weekends a month, I also attended Catholic Sikh and Hindu and Bengali services and festivals in churches, community halls and temples, and Sikh and Tamil Catholic ceremonies in restaurants. I observed food distribution at a number of mosques. During my year I also organised a food festival and spent time to conducted archival research in two institutions, and visited an Indian spice farm and factory in Zhongshan. I crossed the borders between Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou several times, mimicking the routes of ingredients, cooks, chefs, restaurateurs and food festival organisers. ,

In order to 'allow a sense of system to emerge ethnographically and speculatively' (Marcus 2012:107), I engaged as a volunteer in some places, or a frequent visitor in others. My entry into these sites, based on a snowballing method, reinforced the notion I was simply appearing in the places that South Asians, worked, shopped, ate or relaxed in. My research strategy relied on the on understanding and living this a multi-sited setting conceptually and practically. The cities of Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau are fuzzy social worlds rather than static settings (Nadai and Maeder 2009). To approach this

multi-sited reality, I had to pay more attention to the boundaries of these social worlds rather than geographic locations. This necessitated that I manage my time and my relationships.

When I arrived in Guangzhou and settled into life at Sun Yat-Sen University – an institution which had sponsored my postgraduate research visa - I sought out the South Asian student population of medical students. These 25 students were in their fourth or fifth year, were friends with tens of other South Asian medical students in other universities and were integrated into the wider South Asian community. As a group they were relied upon to turn up en-mass to festivals and special events, or organise food festivals at their university. Through my friendship with this group, I was invited to a consulate event marking Indian Independence Day. This took place in the grounds of the Consul General's house. Here I met Nepalis and Sri Lankans, as well as South Asian Diaspora groups from Taipei, Jakarta and Fiji, as well as Sindhis, Muslim Tamils and Gujarati Jains. Among them were executive members of ethno-linguistic community associations that were based in Guangzhou, but had links to community associations in Hong Kong and Macau. Board members of these community associations were also grocers and restaurateurs who took turns catering the free vegetarian, and Jain-appropriate buffet breakfasts at these events. Marking Indian political life seemed to be at the heart of the consensus in the social worlds of the Pearl River Delta's culinary elite.

However, marking this political event was done with a minimum of effort with a range of incomplete and uncomfortable performances by me and others. This involved arriving a little too late to witness the early morning flag raising ceremony, mouthing along incorrectly with everyone else to the Indian national anthem, and fidgeting through long speeches. Along with Sindhis from east and Southeast Asia, Nepalis and Sri Lankans, and Tamils uncomfortable with any hint of northern orientation to proceedings, I was only ever a 'partial insider' (Narayan 1993: 676), where I could share in these mixed, muddled performances along with everyone else. As a British born Indian raised in London and visiting West Bengal and Assam occasionally, I continued to be confused about this issue. I had assumed that visiting, interviewing and

informally talking to owners, buying and occasionally helping to sell goods in these stores would help me orient myself to this 'national' space. Instead, this amount of time spent in the store brought me into contact with housewives, private and restaurant chefs, who appeared to be as confused as I was about India shopping. This forms the basis of the material in chapter two.

And yet consulate staff, association heads, restaurateurs and grocers that I met there rapidly introduced me to their fuzzy social worlds, made up of collaborators and competitors in Hong Kong and Macau. It was here, at this political event, that the Pearl River Delta was mapped out for me in terms of the circulation of tourist diners, ingredients, poached chefs, food festival ideas and plans for the future, as well as its contradictory hierarchies. For example, grocery-traders and restaurateur-traders maintained head offices in Hong Kong and managed a representative office in Guangzhou. The location of their headquarters was to ensure their trading could be protected under the full weight of international law in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, their representative office in Guangzhou gave them the right to remain in a city that many considered the future of business in the delta.

As a result of this event, I was put in touch with community association counterparts in Hong Kong and in Macau. This included restaurateurs, community organisers and grocers. My practical approach to multi-sited fieldwork consisted of living with my attempts to be at the right place at the right time. Not being able to be in two places at once was an almost paradigmatic test for those who were engaged in South Asian food. Frequent travel in between Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau and the freedom associated with an unbounded yet local subjectivity. While there were obvious tensions with the sacrifices I made with the depth of engagement with places, I was able to increase my engagement with the reality of this multisite, including the people who frequently travelled, relocated and commuted between these cities.

These tensions were most obvious in my methodologies regarding festivals and celebrations. Which city and which temple, mosque or restaurant would I go to

celebrate Chinese New Year, Holi, Eid, the Sikh New Year or Chinese Valentine's Day, or which particular holy communions would I attend? I chose Macau's beaches to celebrate Holi, visiting a Guangzhou Indian restaurant to see in the Sikh New Year, and queueing for *haleem* during Ramadan in Hong Kong. Through making these choices, I followed one set of interlocutors, while leaving behind another. This helped me better understand the tensions of the multi-sited realities of my informants, particularly in the ways that travel and access signalled the right kind of class and consumption, but also the anxiety to maintain this normality.

All three cities play host to numerous food festivals throughout the year, and the South Asian communities would also mark Cantonese, Hindu and Muslim religious holidays with some form of food redistribution – stretching my interlocutors' ability to choose to be in the right place at the right time. The number of festivals also demonstrated to restaurateurs, students and community cooks how easy it was simply stay put and organise a festival wherever they were. I agreed to organise the Great Indian Mela following an interview with one of the Consuls at the offices of the Consul General of India in Guangzhou who asked me to make my research more useful for South Asians living in the city. This was not an unusual request to make of ethnic South Asians who were based in local universities – I attended three student food festivals in universities in Guangzhou which were often organised by my South Asian student friends, in which one or more stalls would be selling food cooking in dormitory rooms, on a hotplate.

This methodological approach forms the basis of the material in chapter four. In Guangzhou, I became heavily implicated and spent a great deal of my time over three months making sure that the festival took place, and as David Mosse would suggest, blurred the lines between 'social investigation and lived experience' (2005; ix). The Consulate, which provided a base of operations, had an approach to these festivals – by reaching out to restaurateurs and heads of community associations to organise and pay the costs of the festival – albeit previous festivals had been multicultural and not all restaurateurs had been involved in any one instance. The *mela* would be different, bringing everyone

together for the first time in a new spirit of cooperation, offering a different regional dish and present a culinary map of South Asia, basing this culinary mapping on the standard non-vegetarian menu offered in South Asian restaurants in the Pearl River Delta, where diners could order Lucknowi biryani, or Amritsari fish or Tamil chicken.

As news of the Great Indian Mela filtered through to the Goan, Daman and Diuese community in Macau, I was invited to other festivals in the delta, by community organisers and cooks who have become the bedrock of the city's *Lusofonia* festival. These were also people who had jobs in Macau's civil service and I was able to gain access to state festival organisers and their work. Here, the contrast between culinary mapping projects that the *mela* and *Lusofonia* were premised on became clear. Mapping, mosaics and their rejections exposed our subject position as organisers, an 'upper level', which was a position that post-colonial theorist, for Chris Bongie, reflected the 'pre-scripted sites [...] of the colonial surveyor' (2008: ix). This chapter goes on to elucidate that the culinary map was never a realistic goal. Festival cooks in Guangzhou and Macau were quick to circumvent such maps and realise their own strategies of social location. I examine how cooks managed the resulting tensions in chapter four.

The state in Hong Kong and Macau became progressively more accessible to me as my food festival work and community engagement methodology matured. Towards the middle and the end of my fieldwork, meetings and informal discussions with community associations and state employed food festival organisers gave me access to state-employed heritage managers in Macau, colleagues within the encompassing tourism directorate. As a result of their professional networks I was able to hear of the progress of Hong Kong's heritage work and later to meet with counterparts in Hong Kong. From discussions with both sets of civil servants, it was clear that certain South Asian group – namely the GDD community in Macau and the Parsis community in Hong Kong - remained invisible in the historical record. At the same time these same state officials and South Asian community groups maintained good relations through the hosting of community meals in which the heritage of such gatherings were highlighted and played up for a range of strategic purposes. In

some cases, and as noted earlier, members of community groups were part of the civil service in Macau where such projects were incubated and realised, or were also research subjects for other kinds of heritage projects in Hong Kong. Now part of this complex social world, I was specifically invited to see how the GDD and Parsi community negotiated their privileged position vis-à-vis the state and forms the basis of the material presented in chapter five.

Working in the intersection between state history making and community and professional South Asian cooks helped me to develop the material in chapter one. The civil servants in Hong Kong and Macau helped me gain access to formal archives and libraries where primary materials such as oral histories, memoirs and recipes were kept. This collection lists some 800 Macanese recipes of the Serrano family collected in a set of 13 handwritten notebooks. Along with a memoir written by de Martini's memoir, these primary sources were 'alternative archives and histories' (Mannur 2015: 394). As the source from a single, though large family, with indeterminate racial identity, I treated the language used – a mixture of Portuguese and English and English transliterated Cantonese words – and the structure of recipes as both an important though limited historical source but also as a tool for my own cooking and hosting, and engaging in close textual analysis with Macanese interlocutors.

Meanwhile, community and professional cooks and restaurateurs furnished me with a vernacular history of the transfer of food between South Asia and South China. When my interlocutors talked history, they talked of the 20th century and British and Portuguese colonialism in ways that reinforced the logics of archives in Hong Kong and Macau. But they also talked of maritime links maintained in pre-modern times by South Indian princely states. I was not able to gain admission into the Guangzhou municipal archives to search imperial records of South Asian food making. My decision to deepen my historical research came late in my fieldwork and was at odds with the kinds of access Sun Yat-Sen anthropology department could support. This reflected a new atmosphere of restricted academic freedoms that I started to notice at the end of my fieldwork. However, I found ample secondary sources. These comprised translations of Imperial era gazetteers describing the city of Guangzhou and its

foreign inhabitants, as well as treatise on agriculture, ingredients and dishes. I reviewed these texts for references to South Asian ingredients, cooking methods and cooks, recognising that these were also shifting categories in South Asian food (Breckenridge 2014). This analysis is also featured in chapter one.

While my food festival work deepened my access to the state, including heritage projects and certain archives, it also helped generate the insights into chapter three. I treated the organising of the food festival as a pathway to gain greater access to professional kitchens. Which particular restaurants would I engage with and how?

It was through my interactions with their social worlds that chefs were selected and self-selected to work with me. As noted earlier, chefs provided the labour for various projects of belonging to the Pearl River Delta organised by community associations or consular staff. Models for strong, effective partnerships between community associations, consular staff and chefs in one city, provided the template for partnership work in another city. Therefore Guangzhou, Macau and Hong Kong had a hierarchy of 'go-to' chefs. Having proved myself useful for community organisations in Guangzhou, I became part of the system of reciprocity and competition between sister community associations in Hong Kong and Macau and gained access to well-connected chefs. At the Venetian, I had to also take an extra step and go through the casino hotel public relations department and found myself having to navigate formal arrangements. But the public relations team were disinterested in my research and did not follow up requests to review my material.

Mostly, these chefs were very curious about everything, and formal interviews quickly dissolved into informal talk and eventually access to their workspaces to talk more and observe them cooking. The more I was able to gain access to other kitchens in the delta, the deeper I became embedded in social worlds that included the city and other kitchens. I did not become invisible, an impossibility that Gary Fine notes (2009), but part of a 'web of interactions' (2009: 71) that was part of the occupational day-to-day of kitchen work. Using talking, skills

and ingredients to explore, highlight and negate connections between Cantonese and South Asian food cultures created within a different bandwidth of ordinary. This forms the basis of material organised in chapter three.

Feminist engagement of critiques of the notion of insiderhood identity show that race and ethnicity is only one aspect of an intersection of competing and othering facets to an identity (Narayan 2013). The sanskritised racial insiderhood only got me so far. My racial identity was often superseded by limitations imposed by my gender, my socio-economic status, my nationality and my life experience. South Asian restaurants in the Pearl River Delta were very male worlds, mirroring professional kitchens the United States (Sachs et al. 2014; Julier and Lindenfeld 2005). As my field site expanded to encompass a larger context and their in-between spaces, this stayed the same but in subtler ways. In the domestic sphere women did cook regularly. However, as Julier and Lindenfeld note, rather than finding professional and home kitchens clearly delineated along gender lines, particularly in households where cooking and food shopping was considered a leisure pursuit, there was also often much more blurring in food work in my sites. Men owned and worked in grocery stores or did so in partnership with their wives. Amateur male cooks cooked for Lusofonia and other food festivals. Men mostly also cooked and served temple foods. Women in the family took part in public life also. At the restaurants they weighed in on strategic decisions, kept an eye on takings, managed refurbishments, negotiated licenses, ate at restaurants, held birthday parties in private rooms in restaurants and hotels, joined and organised associations, worked in a variety of jobs in the civil service or in schools, and partly took on the organisation of the festivals. I was let in to my above sites as much as these women were, but no further. Because of this blurring of private and public roles, and my position in it, it was difficult to ascertain whether new ideas of masculinities were forming.

Overall, my racial identity proved to be a resource and a problem for my interlocutors in ways that mirrored their own identity constructions. For them, my Bengali identity was a bicultural identity (Narayan 1993) and enabled me to fit into an emerging and fluctuating schema, in which I could eat meat and fish

as well as converse in Mandarin (though much less so in Hong Kong), English and some Hindi, in this fuzzy social world. Yet my racial identity was often not ambiguous enough, in this context, to present me as, local, professional or elite. While issues of caste were not at the forefront of my dialogues about food, and on the whole, cooks and eaters were already clear that food for others were prepared within acceptable norms given the variety of religious and ethnic food and identities at play in any given setting, class appeared more tangible. My being problematically marked, including the high street clothes I dressed in, what kinds of voluntary service I was prepared to undertake enabled me to produce the material in chapter six.

I engaged as a guest, a diner, a frequent visitor to a temple and an NGO centre where I took part or observed in charitable acts of food distribution. I also conversed informally with grocers and shoppers, and restaurant owners, NGO staff, other temple attendants and their visitors. An ordinary amount of aspiration in the Pearl River Delta - a place associated with the capacity to make millionaires of restaurateurs and the ethnographic material and analysis of which forms the basis of chapter six -- created barriers for me in terms of access. The wealth already generated by these restaurateurs meant that they maintained a level of privacy that removed themselves from lower social stratas in these cities - as issue that Osburg notes as he seeks to gain access to Chengdu's entrepreneurial class (2013). Although I shopped in two grocery stores, I was only able to meet with and become friends with one set of owners. The other grocery store was owned by Mimi, one of the subjects of chapter six and reputed to be a multimillionaire, who was always absent. During my fieldwork, I would never meet her and her staff did not have the opportunity to ask for permission from her to speak to me.

As an unemployed outsider, I found myself adapting to the rhythms, and privy to the reflections of under-employed staff, managers, and residents. As Kiran Narayan notes, people have multiple strands to their identity (1993), yet I had reached the upper limits of mine in terms of my class. While I could afford to spend a few nights at a guest house in Chungking Mansions to work with Harsha, I could not afford to live at Kingly Plaza, and nor was I allowed to work

in Guangzhou and I was underqualified to work in hospitality in Lan Kwai Fong. As a participant observer researching up, I found myself with little access to truly successful people. Hughes and Cormode (1998) suggest, these people had the power and privilege to deny their elite identity, instead making themselves unavailable and invisible. Restaurateurs would often grant me access to chefs and restaurant kitchens in absentia. Inevitably this raised questions about definitions and how far this reflected on my own notions of wealth. With few sources on researching up in the Indian context, I found myself turning to studies in the Chinese context to understand my position. Mirroring John Osburg in his study of the newly rich in Chengdu, I found myself relying on 'unstable categories of [...] practices and performances' (Osburg 2013:12). These performances often involved discussions about life in the UK compared to living in China or India. I engaged in 'the multiple planes of identification that are most painful [for] anthropologists who have identities spanning racial or cultural groups' (Narayan 1993: 674). Partly then, this is a chapter co-produced by my coming to terms with my own irreducible brownness in these social situations.

My brownness was also brought into these projects of contrast and comparison. I was highly visible as a brown, working class, second-generation, United Kingdom born researcher. Based on all these facets, I represented an alternative quest for ordinariness back in the United Kingdom, and here in the Pearl River Delta based on what kinds of ordinariness I could pursue. Handling food with bare hands sat in this intersection of ordinariness and brownness. Eating with one's hand was widely understood to be something that South Asians did (Mann et al. 2011; Cornelius 2009) generating both interest and disgust. There were also times when expectations around food handling were unclear, emergent and ongoing. Mr Parul, a long established restaurateur told me early on that 'the Chinese are learning to eat with their hands, because of KFC and McDonalds'.

This was an often-repeated sentiment among South Asian restaurateurs in the Pearl River Delta. Although notions of the ordinary community are central to this study, brownness continued to orient my methodology and their lives,

highlighting the liminality and differentiation in the lived experience of brownness. There are two instances that stand out. Once the *Great Indian Mela* had concluded successfully in Guangzhou, and news about it had spread to other cities in the delta, I and my fellow organisers were asked to help organise a similar South Asian festival in Hong Kong, not other kinds of festivals. I was also asked by staff in the Hong Kong government to intervene on issues of heritage, to represent their interests to increase the accuracy of South Asian influence in their cities.

To escape from the impending solipsism of living both liminally and differentiated, I used handcooking and eating practices to orient myself to the link between ‘corporeal sensations and social identity’ (Paulson 2016:104). In reality Mr Parul’s statement, though problematic, became a useful tool to understand the shifting bandwidth of ordinary food consumption among my interlocutors, including Chinese state and municipality and the Indian state abroad. When meeting with a group of staff at Macau’s cultural office, I would be served and Chinese tea in a porcelain *goiwun* [goi³ wun² 蓋碗], a serving set comprising a small saucer, tea bowl and lid. Small almond cookies were also served to me on a porcelain side plate that I was to pick up by hand. Yet, when invited home for dinner by one of their number, a young Goan Hindu, I ate fish curry, fried prawns, samosas and rice by hand, wiping my hand on a folded paper towel between courses. Likewise when I accompanied her to culinary celebrations of a Catholic feast day, organised by a community association in the vestry of a church, I was expected to eat, like everyone else, with a knife and fork and to pick up boned meat neatly with my hands, using a paper napkin to wipe off excess curry gravy from my fingers. In some cases, my dexterity reassured state officials of my liminal state (Muñoz 2007) and I was asked to intervene on their behalf with South Asian communities. In some cases I judged there to be no harm in passing on a message. Often responses yielded significant amounts of data, much of which shaped chapter four. I refused to respond to state requests for information about my interlocutors.

Like my interlocutors, my brownness also limited my interaction with Chinese and Cantonese majoritarian social dynamics. I joined social media networks

such as WhatsApp, WeChat, and Facebook in a combi-methodology that appears to have become standard in urban food ethnography (Caldwell 2018). I did this in order to meet potential informants and stay up to date with news such as restaurant openings, chef vacancies, special offers on groceries and invitations to parties and events. Distinctions emerged straight away between platforms. In Guangzhou, during the time of my fieldwork it was not possible to access Facebook without a virtual private network (VPN). Effective VPNs were increasingly harder to come by as the central Chinese authorities cracked down on services and providers. Those on Facebook in Guangzhou inevitably marked themselves as being able to access high priced VPNs and undifferentiated from Facebook users in Hong Kong and Macau. WeChat was a popular method of communication, which could operate equally well in each of the cities. The widespread use of absurd ethnocentric graphics interchange format (GIF) animations and other forms of play signalled vibrant communities and cultural production (Yang 2011). Nonetheless, access and updates on Facebook in the delta has come to stand in for a mainstream worldliness. South Asians in Guangzhou spent a great deal of time, money and effort to maintain their Facebook profiles.

Racial representations on Facebook and WeChat are problematic. While it is easy to gain friends and build a network on WeChat since all accounts are attached to phone numbers and phone numbers are given out freely, privacy features heavily. This means that while friends on WeChat may have a large community of friends, if you are not connected to all of them, you are not privy to any comments, posts or conversations shared by this wider circle. The net effect is a ghettoization (Boyd 2013), where only local Chinese residents who are already hyper-connected to foreigners, including South Asians, form connections. This was the sum total of my reach on social media and I had better luck making connections with Cantonese interlocutors face to face. James Leibold (2010) suggests that the Chinese internet is highly racialised and in recent years the growth of Han supremacism creates a discourse that Han ethnicity is the normative online position against which all other claims to Chinese-ness are judged wanting.

I end with a short word on ethical considerations. I was doing research on strategies of unmarking as well as marking among South Asian grocers, restaurateurs, cooks and organisers of food projects and the nature of ambiguity of racial identity. I am very mindful of the fact privacy was considered not only a right but also a finely calibrated strategy in this context. I respect and understand this strategy. As a result, although I received consent for interviews at the time, and gained approval via email for notes that I made during informal chats, I have changed the names in this thesis in all cases and anonymised details where this was possible. In the one case this has not been possible I have sought further consent.

Chapter one: Cooking up the past - textual silences and South Asian culinary history in the Pearl River Delta

The very rich array of recipes passed through the years, from generation to generation, a mixture of local Asian, African and European cuisines inherited from many travels of the navigators who through the years colonized the island, made the tables of these native households of the richest in variety and taste. [From] fish, chicken, and beef to vegetables, all with exotic and most unusual names[...] sweets were served but also turkeys, roasted chickens, meatballs and pies [...] accompanied by hot soups and special spiced teas from the Indies, jasmine tea from China, and for the more conservative new comers' taste, English tea. (de Martini 1993:14)

So writes Edith Jorge de Martini in a memoir of her childhood describing the eve of the arrival of the Second World War in Macau. De Martini is one of several Macanese diarists who published memoirs in the 1980s and 1990s through Vantage Press in New York. The memoir recalls her time in 1941, living with her father's family in a multi-generational elite household on the Macau peninsula. Food plays a small role in her memoir, but in the instances that it appears, the text is an embedded discourse, a term used by Susan Leonardi to describes how texts such as recipes or descriptions of meals are not only embedded in a literary convention, but also in a socio-political frame (1989). The buffet of different and exotic foods and teas described in the passage above is now commonly called a *cha gordo* or fat tea. It acquired this name at the culmination of 'transition-era' (Clayton 2009: 2) politics, a period starting in the 1970s and continues beyond the handover of Macau by Portugal to China in 1999. It is now an expression of Macau's historical cultural and culinary mix, promoted by the government and by prominent institutions as a fusion of East and West.¹

Macau's past is, of course, far more complicated than a fusion these two hemispheres. Since 1557, Macau was an essential hub in the Pearl River Delta

¹ Several government websites promote Macanese food in this way. For example <http://www.gastronomy.gov.mo/#home>

for successive waves of Catholic missions, military expeditions and slave trading which circulated South Asians, South East Asians and Southern Africans along with food, cooking skills and hierarchies of Portuguese-ness and belonging linked to race and wealth (Boileau 2010). Clayton (2009) states that 'transition era' work such as memoirs and other social histories published or created from the 1980s onwards – the first of their kind and therefore an important historical and literary source - have self-consciously attempted to contend with this past through a project of Macanese identity-making. This transition era encapsulates several decades of monumental state spending on the restoration of buildings, on their collective inscription to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) world heritage list. These are all part of a larger project advanced by the government to 'convince the population, 95% of whom identifie[d] as Chinese, that they possessed a unique cultural identity' (Clayton 2009: 2).

In de Martini's memoir, identity takes on a studied vagueness from which hardly any conclusions can be drawn about foods that are adopted and made into local foods, nor anything of her own ethnic mix. She notes that her maternal grandfather 'came from so far, from another civilisation' (1993: 26). He had contemplated marrying his daughter – de Martini's mother - to a Goan optometrist, who, like him, on arriving in Macau had visited the orphanages looking for a wife. The marriage never took place - de Martini's mother eloped with a local Macanese man a few weeks later. Her paternal family 'belonged to one of the founder families of the island' (ibid: 16) although whether this founding family was Portuguese, Goan, Tanka or other Chinese minority ethnic group is not clear.

De Martini's memoir prompts more questions about South Asians than it answers. Was de Martini's father also Goan? Why is there no mention of other South Asians in her book? Is this because South Asians are as local as the Asian cuisines and spiced teas she mentions in the passage above? This chapter explores racial ambiguity – the core concept of this thesis - in historical terms. In the first section I look at how this ambiguity is framed in the historical record and analyse the gaps in the body of work that has attempted to identify a

history of South Asians in the Delta. Next, I examine how culinary historians have attempted address these gaps and how they frame port cities of the inter-Asian trade as racially eclectic. There are problems with this approach. Hinterlands and majoritarian communities that live in and around these port cities have interacted with South Asian communities and have framed foreign food in complex ways. I explore this complexity in two historical periods that my interlocutors themselves identify as being marked by the presence of South Asian migrants and of South Asian food in the delta. In the face of official gaps in the historical record, these hidden transcripts advanced by my interlocutors demonstrate how ambiguity works; particularly in how the racial identities of techniques, ingredients and cooks are partially unmarked in Cantonese culinary history. South Asian food is only visible as much as it influenced Cantonese food.

Where are the South Asians?

Ong (2011) suggests that Hong Kong, Macau, Guangzhou, and Shanghai are a new urban ideal, in the form of direct challenges from Asian cities to the western global norm, often become embroiled by or consciously use an East meets West rhetoric. These cities are not alone. Singapore has also seized on the term 'East meets West' to convert a population with a mixed Eurasian racial identity into a resource, namely as a metonym for an imprecise yet inclusive and open palette (Duruz 2016). Political scientists Stokhof, van de Velde and Hwe have been wary about the silences that are shaped by use of such terms. 'East meets West' surgically removes the historical baggage of Chinese imperialism, European colonialism and Japanese invasion (2004). As a result of this discursive geopolitical surgery, both India and other crucial countries such as Russia are left out of much contemporary inter-regional political and cultural work and remain marginal in historical accounts.

However, as de Martini's memoir has signalled, social histories of Macau are mostly silent on the explicit presence of South Asians, a silence also replicated to a greater and lesser extent in histories of both Hong Kong and Guangzhou. As a response to such silences, Madhavi Thampi's (2005a; 2005b; 1999) studies of the history of Indians in China rely on colonial records to build a picture of

Indian presence in China, and in the delta. Thampi's use of the term Indian is self-conscious and evokes the single entity under colonial rule. In her writings 'Indian' comprises multiple national and ethnic identities including Nepalis, Pakistanis, Sikhs, and the Tamils in Sri Lanka. The nature of these scant colonial records means that her writings often conflate Indians and their presence in the delta with their ethnicity, masculinity, religion and occupations, such as Parsi, Sindhi, and Tamil traders, Sikh, Punjabi and Nepali military and police and Muslim seamen. These confluences are not new, and are reflected in earlier attempts by Wang (1958) who can do little with the Imperial and naval records to flesh out the social lives of the traders and tributaries that made their way from Ceylon and South India to Guangzhou in the pre-modern period.

Recent decades have seen the publication of more complex socio-economic histories of the delta, including those that examine Macau's place in the Portuguese empire during the late colonial period of the mid-1800s to the 1970s (Clarence-Smith 1985) or what historian Zhidong Hao calls the 'true colonial period' (2011:40). The histories of Hong Kong (Carroll and Carroll 2009; Munn 2005; 2003) and Guangzhou (Farris 2016; Paulès 2009) explicate the histories of everyday lives, glimpsed through Portuguese balance of trade statistics, British colonial census data, government reports, descriptions in legal cases, postcards and ecclesiastical sojourners' letters home. These new speculative and interpretive histories are often more concerned with the dynamics of shifting local identities among the Cantonese, Macanese, Portuguese and British, a fragmented and fearful Anglo-Asian empire or, in the case of Thampi's work, the distance and disharmony between the independence movements in India and China.

This chapter is not an attempt to sketch a culinary history of Guangzhou, Macau and Hong Kong that comprehensively fleshes out these histories with cultural and culinary accounts. While a small repository of histories about the food eaten in South China is available and is cited here, an attempt at definitively writing South Asians into this extant culinary history would be pointless.

Instead, this chapter treats South Asian culinary history as a hidden transcript, a term James Scott has used to look at power presence and voice (1990). For Scott people with little power engage in producing hidden transcripts in their relationships with dominant groups who wield potent ways of organising bodies, thought and possibilities. Partly this strategy is shaped by the way that silence has been purposefully manufactured in Chinese historiography dealing with everyday encounters with the other (Duara 1995). For example, in the pre-modern era where vessels would have carried people, material and ideas to various trading hubs around the Indian Ocean and into the South China Sea, unequal power relations between China and its tributary and trading partners would have defined what relevant contact was. These unequal power relationships also constructed contact as interactions with an 'other' and placed these interactions in an evolving social and political hierarchy. In general this hierarchy would have placed Chinese elites at the top and darker skinned tributaries below (Bonnett 1998).

The silence about this 'other' that Duara discusses was manufactured in order to deal with the lack of fit between what were considered Chinese cultural universals and the world views produced by trade and tribute. There is also a lack of South Asian sources that could challenge this purposeful silence (Achaya 1994; R. S. Khare 1976). In constructing transcripts in a dialectic relationship to power, Scott shows that seemingly hegemonic discourses are vulnerable to challenge. This chapter engages with hidden transcripts as a way of demonstrating that silences and ambiguities are produced by active participants.

In comparative histories of South Asian and Chinese trade (Park 2012; Bose 2009; Duara 1995; Chaudhuri 1985) extended silences have encouraged historians to use a variety of tools. Chaudhuri (1985) gives credit to intuition. Intuition was the guiding force behind Braudel's history of the Mediterranean in the 16th Century, the inspiration for Chaudhuri's own oceanic study. Braudel (1992) intuited a cultural unity of the Mediterranean, a history of which, until that point, had been explained by isolated studies of disparate and competing polities. For Braudel merchants and traders, cultural standards and

expectations that worked beyond the region's physical or political contours, fostered this unity because Braudel intuited that this would be the case.

Intuition works on multiple levels and can be evidenced in the past. The 'backstage talk' (Scott 1990: 23) by 'individuals from Persia to Indonesia' (Bonnett 1998: 1033) would have motivated them to travel and live in China even if rejected by Chinese elites when they settled. As Chaudhuri suggests, pioneering dark skinned traders would have generated an 'intuition, an understanding of the complex interpolate of events and impersonal forces' (Chaudhuri 1985:2) of which they were a part. The intuition that people are part of larger events than the written record can acknowledge or capture, is carried forward to the present and exercised by historians and also by my interlocutors.

In several discussions about South Asia and China I had with my restaurateur interlocutors, they showed a similar intuition. In such discussions, mutual culinary understandings between South Asia and China were fostered in pre-modern time and were thickened during European expansion into Asia, particularly in the mature stages. I have let my conversations with them, and their Braudelian instincts guide my chapter. I examine two periods in the history of South Asian influence or presence in China as points where South Asian and Chinese food were said – by my interlocutors - to intersect. I take each of these points chronologically – firstly the pre-modern or the middle period of Chinese history and 'medieval' Indian history (Kulke and Rothermund 2016: xvii), and secondly late colonialism and treaty port years, nationalism and decolonisation in the middle to late 20th century.

The geographic and the political meanings of the term 'India' 'South Asia' and 'China' has shifted over time. In the first period, during India's late middle kingdom, India was a landmass of regional power centres with overlapping boundaries, including a rising Islamic power centre to the north around Delhi. During this time the territory under Song Dynasty China expanded greatly as the Central Asian-oriented Yuan dynasty took power, moving further into the west and inland. The Yuan Dynasty was relatively short-lived and the Ming

Dynasty that followed it consolidated power once more around coastal China. In the latter period, India refers to the territory that came under British rule, which included Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal (until Nepal's independence in 1922). At this point, China had (and still has) sovereignty over the land claimed during the expansion of the Qing Dynasty and in the latter part of the 20th century, the treaty ports and leased territories governed by European and Japanese powers. This also includes Hong Kong and Macau.

Competing historical perspectives on local and foreign food?

The delta was, and remains to this day, a wellspring for overseas Chinese capital and culture (Anderson and Anderson 1977; Ong 1999; Smart 2017).

Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau were, and remain, driving forces for transnational food and business. As a Chinese cultural centre, it is markedly different from the Yangtze River Delta and its principal city Shanghai, which, by the late colonial period, was defined by the success of its international settlement. At the same time, despite the strength of local capital and culture, claims that the delta has always been Chinese are wrapped up in notions that Cantonese food was exotic, foreign and even Western.

Coastal cities have their hinterlands. For Chaudhuri (1985) the richness of the environment and cultures of the hinterland built coastal cities. In other words, Ceylon stayed Ceylonese in its culinary orientation, and Guangzhou stayed Chinese. Gipouloux (2011) agrees. In his analysis of the South China Sea trade in the 1500s he argues that the port cities that developed as a result of long distance trade between Europe and Asia were mostly warehouse settlements. These settlements only briefly turned to emporia trade during the annual monsoons that would have interrupted wind-based shipping. These emporia were local and temporary innovations that steamships and other technologies were soon to make obsolete, rather than places where luxurious ingredients were continually traded and used. In other words, temporary emporium cities floundered under the onslaught of large European companies.

And yet a growing body of work by food scholars offers a competing perspective. For Leong-Salobir et al. (2016), Duruz (2016) and others port

cities, such as Singapore, which became increasingly important in the era of steamships, were built on international, mixed communities. These cities were ethnically diverse, culturally eclectic and open in their tastes. The approach of using palatal taste as documentary evidence is grounded in recipes and informal family histories and captured in cookbooks. Using this approach Ray suggests that the creation of congruent national cuisines in the 20th century represents this historical ethnic diversity and cultural eclecticism (2015). By casting the similarities of ingredients, recipes and cuisines across various places in inter-Asian trade as flows, this nascent body of work has ambitions to question the power of European expansion by looking at the work done in home kitchens. This reveals the spaces where European power was minimally exercised, including in their shaping of post-colonial national borders in South East Asia.

These are not competing perspectives but demonstrate that hinterlands and seaward sensibilities existed side-by-side and were carefully constructed in tandem. The inter-Asian trade created mixed communities in the delta, but it also created an idea of foreignness. The picture that emerges is one where Cantonese and Southern food became instruments of Chinese identity. At the same time, and relatedly, Cantonese food remained uncertain, under-theorised and anomalous to what were emerging - and popular - organising concepts of Chinese regional food systems. Sources in the 20th century develop a picture of food produced in the delta as exotic and 'foreign', reflecting political tumult, nationalist sentiments, revolution and decolonisation. Such forces shaped locality and gave rise to the idea of Cantonese food as metropolitan and a source of cultural power.

Pre-modern culinary flows: Sinification and its limitations

[...] We had many [...] interactions with the Far East. That is the beauty actually. Because we had places where [other] kings came and built [in] Nagapattinam, and we had our kings ruling Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. And also we had settlements from them coming here [South China]. We had Portuguese ruling Sri Lanka and Coastal TN (Tamil Nadu)

and Indonesia [..]. Or Malaysia at the same time. So we always had an exchange of ideas, exchange of people, exchange of food. So it is basically that the steamed food is coming from this [...] (interview, 2016)

Mr Nabeel is a Hong Kong-based Tamil Muslim gem trader and a franchisee of the South Indian restaurant chain Taram Cuvai². He had expressed these sentiments as we discussed why he had decided to launch an outlet of Taram Cuvai in Hong Kong recently. His answer above evoked the Chola Dynasty, a ruling class of kings and traders who claimed regional power over South East and coastal Asia, as well as Gulf and South Indian mercantilism, reaching back to the pre-modern era. According to Mr Nabeel, representatives of South India's powerful navy, the traders of the Chola dynasty, absorbed influences from Song, Yuan and Ming China and Southeast Asia in what was a two-way transmission of ideas of good food and cooking technology. This type of conversation was repeated often with Tamil restaurateurs and cooks in the Pearl River Delta, whether they be Muslim, Christian or Hindu. These conversations suggest that South India was a culinary powerhouse that was equivalent to the regional cuisines of China.

Was Cantonese food late in forming? Could this have allowed for the arrival of food cultures from elsewhere, in the form of ingredients, techniques and dishes that subverted or displaced local practices? Alternatively, did 'foreign' foods go through a series of adaptations to Cantonese ideas?

There are complications regarding how 'local' food was codified, cooked and eaten in the Pearl River Delta. Food historians and anthropologists have identified the classifying food as local, or 'Cantonese' was a project of much later times. Simoons (1991), Anderson (1988) and Klein (Klein 2009a) all suggest that a regional 'Cantonese' food culture was late to emerge as a coherent concept - fed largely by late Qing and Republican-era modernising projects. This is not to say that before then Cantonese food was simply thought of as eclectic in culinary terms and lacking in national borders. Historians point to the emergence of a sense of Chinese nationhood at the time of the Han Dynasty

² For more information about Mr Nabeel and Taram Cuvai in Hong Kong, please see chapter three.

(206 BCE–220 CE), a self-consciousness which continually bumped up against and adapted for external contact (Duara 1995). For Simoons (1991) as early as the Song dynasty, Chinese writers were adapting earlier simplistic regional food classifications such as Northern and Southern, to describe richer more local varieties of Chinese cuisine. However, common notions of Northern and Southern food were to remain popular while what they represented remained in flux for several centuries.

Far from absorbing foreignness only through an asymmetric tributary system, China had a broad range of flexible foreign relations (Gipouloux 2011). Foreign religions made an impact on Chinese food cultures throughout this period. Earlier, by the time of the Tang Dynasty, China had become a regional economic power and had secured overseas land and maritime trade routes. It was a time of culinary transformation, particularly in central China where Buddhism had entered China through the Silk Road, a system of land routes connecting western China to Central Asia. The arrival of Buddhism in south China, and in Guangzhou, is more in dispute. In Zürcher's (2007) study of the rise of Buddhism in China, northern land routes were more plausible than southern sea routes, though by the time of the Tang there was a sizeable Buddhist presence in Panyu, just south of Guangzhou.

For Kieschnick (2005) vegetarianism that emerged as a result of this Buddhist expansion was not an Indian vegetarianism but a Chinese version. Buddhism was already Sinicised, a heavily loaded and imprecise term that none-the-less describes a localising and transformation of international norms (Eber 1993). Chinese Buddhist monks had selected the few Indian texts and philosophies that would resonate with Chinese socio-political systems with the emphasis on periodic rather than permanent food prohibitions. This process popularised vegetarianism, introduced a beef taboo – and even dog meat was said to have fallen out of favour by this time (Huang 2000). Historian Sterckx (2005) suggests Buddhism had its most significant impact in popularising tea over wine. It was also during the Tang Dynasty that tea became an agribusiness (Anderson 1988), and, like salt and wine, was taxed. It employed thousands of women in picking systems, created subsidiary industries for transportation and

packaging such as tea chests. It also was assigned a dedicated character in the Chinese writing system (Chow and Kramer 1990). Cultivated in the south and southwest, the demand for tea started to impoverish northern Chinese households. It was during this period, approximately 760-762, that Lu Yu published his *Classic of Tea* [chá jīng, 茶經].

Sun Simiao's [Sūn Sīmiǎo, 孫思邈] *Recipes for Emergency Use Worth a Thousand in Gold* [Bèi jí qiānjīn yào fāng, 備急千金要方] captures some of the culinary enterprise in this period. Although his dietary medical work, published circa 660, is based on earlier Chinese texts, he was said to have also incorporated a great deal of contemporaneous Buddhist and Daoist thought on food prohibition.

Buddhist monks and their temples were thought to be centres of tofu and wheat gluten (or seitan) technology and was marketed commercially by the Tang Dynasty and when processed together with starch and root vegetables was promoted in some places as a lamb substitute or mock lamb, indicating that it cost less than mutton (Shurtleff, Huang, and Aoyagi 2014). Granulated sugar was first produced in China at this time (cooks had, for centuries, been using maltose syrup and honey), after extensive contact with India, allowing cakes and pastries and dumplings to become highly elaborate. Pastries now incorporated butter and were called Brahmin pastries, acknowledging the South Asian origin of the dairy ingredient. Glutinous rice dumplings took on different colours through dyes, and sweet pastry puffs began to take on new, fashionable shapes such as oil lamps and bells. One chestnut-shaped pastry had a topping of fish roe, while peppermint, distilled from the herb by steam, was used to flavour jade cakes (Huang 2000; Lin 2015).

Temples and other religious buildings were major centres for food, drawing in food businesses, producing food and distributing food. Overseas foreigners played their part in the social and culinary life of temples. They were part of a long-standing community in the Pearl River Delta, where the categories of trade and tribute were carefully blurred. Historians such as Wang (1958), Chaudhuri (1985) and Park (2012) argue that evidence exists for fulsome economic and

artistic relationships and of a continual presence of Muslim communities in Guangzhou during the Tang (618 - 907) and Song (960-1279) Dynasties. Foreignness played a role in the social hierarchies of Guangzhou and the neighbouring towns of Foshan and Panyu. Siu and Liu (2015) posit that over the course of this period, their use of foreign silver dollars, and not Chinese taels, in acts of philanthropy such as temple renovations, illustrated the translocal links of these prosperous communities. Temples dedicated to the *nanhai* trade of the South Seas featured South Asian and also Arabic influence. In one temple founded in 594 in Guangzhou, a deity statue was erected depicting a South Asian figure in Chinese literati robes, said to be among traders 'that carried on a thriving trade along the Southeast coast... leading to significant cultural fusion between them and the local society' (Siu & Liu 2015: 80). Even in Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty (and in modern-day Xi'an), there were mosques and temples in the west of the city, where 'Chinese people enjoyed easy access [...] and went there for wine and foreign foods and to enjoy the music and dancing of foreign ladies' (Park 2012: 69).

The construction of an Indian deity in the temple in Guangzhou signals the power of South Indian merchants and merchant guilds in the city at the time. Temples and temple donations were crucial vehicles with which to resource endowments such as life insurance and loans, and the deity would have signalled the centrality of the temple to such flows (Mukund 1999).

While temple rituals would have been mediated through food, it is not clear what kind of culinary practices may have travelled with these merchant guilds. Appadurai (1988a) and Khare (1976) both identify a lack of recipes in Indian historical sources. This demonstrates that the most pressing concern was how to eat according to Brahmanical norms, and not what to eat. In Breckenridge's (2014) study of food distribution in pre-modern Hindu South Indian temples, ritual donations by wealthy local donors, pilgrims and devotees moved from the donation and circulation of lamps to the cooking and distribution of food, a move that precipitated the increasing acknowledgement of the skills of the temple cooks. Meals became more elaborate with an emphasis on variety, including different curries, lentils, sweets and curds with rice. A complicated

ritual calendar governed what meals were appropriate when, but the richness of ritual meals relied on the generosity of the donor, leading to the setup of a whole bureaucracy to record meals and donations, connecting the ritual and political economies.

Jumping ahead, Sen (2015) uses the *Manasolassa*, a Hindu source text written during the reign of King Somesvara of the South-central Chalukya Kingdom in the 1100s, to describe what she calls Southern Indian food. In the text there are forerunners to South Indian foods such as *papdi* discs of deep-fried spiced chickpea flour and *dosas* or pancakes made a batter of soaked ground with lentils and spices. The *Manasolassa* lists a few meat dishes, among which are lamb and goat kebabs. Sen herself states these were local rather than Muslim innovations in cooking. There are also dishes with fish, dishes with leafy vegetables and a focus on rice, aping common foods of the Song Dynasty. However, there are important differences in seasonings, particularly in the use of yoghurt and black mustard seeds in South Asia. This has caused some consternation among food historians. In his compendium of Indian foods and their origins, Indian food historian K T Achaya (1994) also suggests that Tamil food can only be regarded as foreign, that *idli* came from Indonesia and had a lot in common with Chinese rice balls. Sen disagrees, arguing that South India had an existing and thriving practice of fermentation and rice processing.

At the time of the publication of the *Manasolassa* South Asian traders were established and regular visitors to Guangzhou. Drawing heavily on a late Song dynasty twelfth-century text, *Pingzhouketan* [Píng zhōu kě tán 萍洲可談] written by Zhu Yu [Zhū yù 朱彧], Ma (1996) submits that Arab and other traders settled in large numbers in an area called the Foreign Quarter [Fānfāng 番坊], north of the river and south of the walled city of Guangzhou. From the Tang Dynasty Muslim communities built mosques, developed institutions such as schools and trading associations, and supported a vast network of butchers. They also supported a catering trade supplying correctly-slaughtered beef, as well as operating halal tea and eating houses. Park (2012) advances a more complex reality. Even with land and sea routes supposedly well established between the Arab and the Chinese world by the middle of the Tang, the rate and

style of political upheaval in West and Central Asia as a result of the growth of these empires meant that overall trade and contact declined. Park suggests that it was South and South East Asian middlemen that conducted trade between the Arab and Chinese worlds on the maritime route. This created a role for Muslim Tamil Chulia traders and more broadly, fostered direct connections between China and South Indian merchant guilds which included Muslims, but also Christian and Jewish traders (Kulke, Kesavapany, and Sakhuja 2009).

By the time of Zhu Yu's account of the Foreign Quarter, interest in the Islamic world would have become far more direct, peaking with the Mongolian incursions in the North and the eventual establishment of the short-lived Yuan Dynasty [1279–1368]. Arab and Persian and other Muslim traders now lived permanently in Guangzhou, and the community grew so large that by the Song Dynasty, traders were recruited to government posts relating to international trade (Park 2012).

It was during the last years of the Song, considered an ethnically Han dynasty, and the ascendancy of the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty that a northern power centre was created. From here notions of foreign and local, northern and southern foods became richly elaborated. As the Song Dynasty ended, Northern cuisine came under a new Central Asian influence, epitomised by Hu Sihui, a dietary physician for the Khans of the Mongol Court and his culinary treatise *The Correct Principles of Eating and Drinking* [Yínshàn Zhèngyào, 飲膳正要], and published in 1330. In it, he reflected the flavours of medieval Eurasia, with the sheep as paramount (Huang 2000). Recipes reflected the internationalism of the Mongol Court where Turks, Chinese, Koreans, Russians, and other ethnic groups made up the middle and lower rank officials in the court. Turkic noodle dishes, Chinese fish and chicken and Tibetan *tsampa* were part of a collective culinary heritage, and feasts had to cross cultures to cement alliances, celebrate significant events, reward friends, overawe enemies and lubricate politics in general (Hu, Buell, Anderson & Perry et al. 2010). This interchange was huge - rivalling the Columbian exchange more than 200 years later. But, while pork remained absent in much of the recipes, so too were dairy products, typically associated with herdsmen of Central Asia. The absences may mean that Chinese

foods and dairy products were such everyday foods they simply weren't worth mentioning.

The decline of the Song and ascendancy of the Yuan was a period of disunity in Chinese cuisine, reflected in cooking and eating cultures in Song cities. Encapsulating this disunity was the publication of Ni Zan's recipe compendium *Cloud Forest Hall's Collection of Rules for Drinking and Eating*. Hu, Buell, Anderson and Perry (2010) assert that Ni Zan's compendium should be read as a companion piece to Hu Sihui's work. Although published several decades later in 1360, Ni Zan selects his recipes on the basis that they celebrate a typical southern food culture. Only by reading these works in tandem is it possible to see how Southern Chinese cooking was remade to reflect the foreignness of the north. Ni Zan's cooking ingredients were far more luxurious in comparison to Hu Sihui's recipes. Ni Zan proposed making noodles with 'meat stock rather than water or eggs' (Lin 2015:223), an expensive and time-consuming technique.

Within emerging Southern culinary identities, a Cantonese culinary system was nascent. Its very uncertainty fuelled Chinese productions of treatises that sought to clarify what was Southern and what was not. At the same time, cooking and eating practices in the Song capital of Kaifeng (in present-day Henan) did not attend so strictly to North and South divisions. Alongside daily staples of rice, soybean sauce, salt and oil, vinegar and tea, fish and leafy vegetables, Michael Freeman notes that lamb, kid and mutton was widely consumed, as was the fermented mare's milk drink *kumiss* (1977). All were materials usually associated with Central Asia, but there was no indication that this was a reviled connection, despite the contemporaneous stereotypes that existed about the north and south. Southerners were particularly derogated as 'frog eaters'.

As ideas of southern cuisine developed and often co-constituted ideas of the foreign and inedible, so too did several pre-conditions for regional Cantonese cuisine. Simoon lists various seasonings such as black beans, garlic and a soy sauce-ginger root-rice wine complex, coupled with an almost endless variety of

ingredients grown and harvested in the tropics and the subtropics. Simoon also asserts that Southern cooks developed expertise in flavouring stocks and soups, sauces, medicinal extracts and other embellishments. A new literati class in the Song Dynasty celebrated such ingredients and skills, producing treatises such as Madame Wu's Recipe Book [Wú shì zhōng kuì lù, 吴氏中饋錄], published sometime during the Southern Song (1127-1279). In such cookbooks, there are references to new ingredients such as soy sauce and new methods such as stir-frying (Lin 2015). Cookbooks also included recipes for spiced citrus meat sauce dips, pastries and pork jerky flavoured with spices such as sugar, Sichuan pepper, cardamom, and pickles. Such a rich list of ingredients highlighted the vast number of materials that were considered spices, or flavourings which added heat, pungency or sharpness. The list also highlighted that southern dishes were more highly seasoned than in the north (Freeman 1977).

Mercantile contact, which appeared to deepen until the end of the Song, appeared to be deep-rooted and meaningful. So long-standing was this contact that the Canton system which was established several centuries after, was built on the principles of tight control of foreign trade within China developed during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) (Van Dyke 2011). In the 1400s, Ming admiral Zheng He, himself a Muslim, started a series of ocean voyages between the South East coast of China to the East coast of Africa. These voyages aimed to consolidate and bring order to the system of tributes and trade that had been developed and otherwise controlled by Arab, Indian Muslim and South East Asian and unlicensed Chinese traders from Quanzhou, Guangzhou and other southern port cities. The ultimate goal for Zheng He was the de-Islamification of these southern cities (Chaudhuri 1985) as well as an attempt to control and eventually limit foreign shipping and private trade carried out by Chinese traders.

For Siu and Liu (2015) what was considered foreign in the Pearl River Delta was not so simple to assess. The Delta has endured as a gateway to foreign goods and markets. Even early fishing communities, such as the Chaolian, only formed and evolved in the heart of the Delta in the Yuan (1279-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing dynasties (1644-1911). Lineage histories compiled by a Qing-

era historian named Lu established that at the very start, migrants from the central plains, the political and cultural heartland of Han China, claimed settlement rights in the Delta. While looking to the centre for legitimacy, it was the ocean that provided an expanding horizon of what was possible. For the vast majority of the coastal communities in the Inter-Asian trade, fishing and seafood processing was likely the primary food source and livelihood (Ray 2003). This trade was vast and diverse and by the 1800s even fresh-food markets in the Delta, particularly those fed by local fishing, would meet end up meeting demand in Hong Kong, Macau and as far away as Singapore. By the time of the Ming, the trade was already very lucrative, and farmers, soldiers, fishing communities and traders vied for control of the Delta's land. The funding of public works in the Delta, such as dykes, temples, and community schools by merchants and lineage associations became an arena in which claims of being sufficiently local were fought. Emerging from this development agenda, the Delta, including Hong Kong and Macau, was entangled in a relatively unbroken folk culture of temple festivals and operas among the coastal villages and towns (Liu 2003). Mote asserts that a revitalised Neo-Confucianism, which had been evident in political discourses during the Song, deepened into private eating practices during the Ming (1977).

Coastal cities in pre-modern China were not closely connected to their hinterlands nor their long-distance maritime forelands. The Pearl River Delta was located in a continuum of hinterland-port and foreland concerning its culinary identity and had to work hard to maintain sufficient cultural links to China's political centre which was always to the North. The emergence and ongoing practice of halal butchery and the temporary vegetarianism and sobriety of Buddhist practices were unproblematic for much of the late Song and Yuan dynasties; ongoing practices reflecting the extent of Sinicisation that these observances had undergone. This also suggests an informal inter-Asian understanding of social and legal conventions that meant that foreign merchant communities could exist in such cities with a degree of 'felicity' (Chaudhuri 1985: 20) The conventions ended with the Ming policy of excluding foreigners from Chinese overseas trade.

Political tumult, nationalism and decolonisation in the 20th century

[...] Joseph is an 81 year old Goan. He is famous for making chicken carril in in the GDD community in Macau. He was born in Macau, into a poor family and his parents went on to have eight other children. But he still attended seminary where he was taught in Latin. He remembers when the Shanghai Portuguese arrived in Macau because of the war. It was a terrifying and exciting time. He learned to dance the rhumba and samba from an older Shanghai Portuguese lady and her granddaughter. He'd ask girls out to the dances, but they preferred Macau boys like him over the Shanghai boys who were rougher [...]

The above is an excerpt from my field notes and contains details of an interview I conducted with Joseph who lives in Macau. His strongest memories are those surrounding Japan's invasion of China and the Second World War, in particular the impact of Shanghai refugees on the lives of Hong Kong and Macanese communities. Portugal had declared independence and Macau was neutral territory, nicknamed the Casablanca of the east. He never reveals the ingredients or the techniques of his *carril*, preferring to talk through the principles of samba. When I attempt to swing back to his adeptness at cooking, he advises me 'don't be the first son in a poor family'. His recollections and silences underpin the dynamics regarding political tumult, identity and food that this section explores.

Hong Kong Parsi Ruby Masters' recollection of the war mirrors that of Joseph's account. Her words, quoted below, come from her life story recorded in 2010 by the Hong Kong Heritage Project, an archive built out of the business history of the Kadoories, a Baghdadi Jewish merchant and industrialist family from India. The archive is maintained through a family endowment.

The big factory owners that come from Shanghai... Hong Kong was a really a quiet backwater. It was the Shanghainese who knew how to ... they brought in their wealth, they started these big industries and they knew how to enjoy themselves, they called Shanghai the Paris of the East and they... they brought that atmosphere into Hong Kong, that they said

oh, you Hong Kong people were dull. But I tell you the Cantonese people were like the Hindus of India, they made a lot of money but they were very frugal, they lived simply and they didn't spend a lot of money, but the Shanghainese were like the Europeans they made money and sometimes they spent more than they could afford. That brought a lot of entertainment and wealth into Hong Kong as well so it was a totally different lifestyle after '51 when they came down. (Masters, 2009)

Born in the British territory in 1926, Ruby Masters' parents were Bombay Parsis who came to Hong Kong in the early 1900s as importer-exporters, shipping firecrackers and cinnamon to India and exporting cotton yarn from India to Hong Kong. Masters' oral history gives a limited but provocative insight into colonial Hong Kong in the early 20th Century. According to Masters, public life only started in Hong Kong with the migration of the international community in Shanghai. I found this sentiment also expressed by interlocutors living in Macau.

In this section, like Masters, I suggest that political upheaval, nationalism and decolonisation in the 20th century complicate the notion of the hinterland and its relationship to port cities, and that South Asians, and food materials and flavours were very much implicated. The premium nature of Cantonese and Macanese cuisine was partly (not fully) premised on the ability of local cooks to incorporate foreign foods and flavours into local culinary schema. These skills articulated with and heightened nationalist projects around the delta. Through this I agree with Anderson that Cantonese chefs were exceptional in that 'no other cooks can be so eclectic while maintaining the spirit of their tradition' (1988: 209).

The Canton system that was well-established by the 1750s in the Pearl River Delta was a set of special privileges awarded to a narrow set of Guangzhou-based Chinese merchants to supply tea, porcelain and silk to foreign traders between the summer and winter monsoons. While the system favoured monopolistic European enterprises and large firms, well-resourced Dutch-affiliated Parsis and other South Asian traders flying under the Portuguese flag

were also present and residing in Guangzhou. They maintained a distance from British monopolistic firms in Calcutta and Bombay (present-day Mumbai) and retained connections in Guangzhou to maintain their capacity to trade (Carroll and Carroll 2009; Clarence-Smith 1985).

The Opium Wars, China's defeat and the concession of Hong Kong to the British marked a shift in the South Asian populations in the delta. These events were devastating for Parsi business interests and that of other Indian traders. These firms, which had once outnumbered those run by the British (Thampi 2005b), left the region and turned to cotton production to meet demand in the United States. A steady stream of mainland Chinese people filtered in and took on work such as fishing and stone quarrying, but also as butchers, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, servants, labourers for roads and buildings. Incoming Indian migrants filled positions as soldiers, police officers and guards, while Marwari and Sindhi businesspeople, took over trade or became small-time shopkeepers and retail merchants (Thampi 2005c). The 1911 census recorded more than 3,000 living in Hong Kong; a quarter considered permanent residents. The instrument also recorded the phenomenon of Hong Kong-born Indian, comprising 264 males and 279 females.

Reflecting this tumultuous change, the start of the 20th century heralded a new emphasis on the identity of cooks and a new role for industrial foods, both of which also intersected with more virulent forms of nationalism. Some Parsis become industrialists, such as the Ruttonjee family who were briefly involved in brewing and won lucrative contracts to supply British troops with locally produced beer following the scaling back of European imports by the colonial authorities (Cornell 2012). The brewery was sold several times and eventually became the multinational brand San Miguel. The Parsis contributed to the creation of Hong Kong's clubs and associations (Hinnells 2005) including the Kowloon Cricket Club in Jordan (incorporated in 1905). British households often cooked club fare in the home. Munn notes '[c]ulturally, servants made few compromises. They cooked and served food in the English or Anglo-Indian style, but their dress and manners remained Chinese.' (Munn 2005: 376).

Not only were these clubs positioned in opposition to home foods, but they were also seen as a response to livelier neighbourhood and street life. Much like in colonial India, these clubs drew sharp social and racial distinctions and only provided sustenance to those it deemed clubbable (Leonard 2008). Of the extensive range of eclectic foods available to others outside the European, American and Parsi elite, Cheng explains that it was Macanese cooks who dominated this trade (2002). Migrants from Macau mainly lived in Kowloon and opened 'bars, inns as well as brothels' on Hong Kong Island to service sailors and non-White traders in a city that was, from its early days, highly stratified along ethnic and class lines. Anita Weiss notes that Muslim seaman lived on Lascar Row with other Indians and Malays. There is evidence to suggest that one of the earliest Muslim restaurants was established in the 1840s by an ex-seaman, who married a local woman and together they catered for these communities (Weiss 1991; Vaid 1972).

Macanese cooks were well placed to take part in Hong Kong's burgeoning services sector. Cooks had learned to cater to European tastes as a result of a long-standing settlement of Europeans in Macau over several centuries. Monsoons grounded shops and created trading off-seasons in Macau in the 19th Century, requiring extended layovers, and, eventually, a permanent presence of traders in Macau. In extending Portugal's trading empire, local marriages, child rearing and domestic family units played their part, reinforced by class and status. Officials and military officers with administrative posts were likely to be born in Portugal while soldiers and others were more likely to be natives from Goa and other places or of mixed race. Boileau states that '[a]fter several generations, Luso-Asian households in Macau were so racially mixed that skin colour and ethnicity no longer served as a reliable indication of social status' (2010: 125).

Cooking spiced European food proved to be a significant vehicle for social mobility. But cooking was also at a problematic nexus of class, race and national identity. Despite the official abolition of the slave trade and the censure of what was termed coolie labour, slavery and slave trading continued in Macau until the last decade of the nineteenth century. It was black and more impoverished

local Chinese who would cook in such households. To be Portuguese was a constant task of negotiating occupation, religion, family, and country of birth, choices of dress, household furniture, table linens, tableware, meats and wines with skin colour. Combining these in certain ways constituted a person's 'degree of Portugueseness' (2010: 283).

Discursively, Macau is seen as a singular case because of its position within a Portuguese empire that was defined by the openness of the authorities compared to Anglo or Dutch colonialism. For Bastos this was a popular vernacular myth, duplicated by Portuguese anthropologist Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s and made an official position by a Portuguese nationalist state. In these discourses, notions of Christian fraternity replaced an earlier Portuguese flair for 'inter-racial eroticism, resulting in a 'multi-racial and pluri-continental' nation' (2005: 24). The opposite was true. Racial hierarchy over hybridity was preferred not only in Lisbon but also in other Portuguese overseas states. But though white groups were placed at the top of these hierarchies, there were also flexible notions of whiteness. By the time Goa was a centre for western medicine, which sent graduates to parts of Africa and the Americas, Indo-Portuguese doctors were considered, and considered themselves white. They explicitly endorsed the 'ideals of white supremacy' (Bastos 2005: 25) and were involved in and developed racialised bio discourses of Portugal's overseas African territories.

Some of this hierarchical work can be seen in the recipes deposited in the Macau Historical Archives, by Ms. d^a Cíntia Conceição Serro, whose grandmother, d^a Candida dos Remédios, and aunt, d^a Albertina Martins de Carvalho Borges, had written recipes in a set of notebooks in ink and pencil between 1932 and 1943. It is the only collection related to food in the archive. Some of the recipes have been published in an English language cookbook, *Traditional Macanese Recipes From My Auntie Albertina*, written by Serro and published in 2012.

The recipes are all written in a single format with the title of the dish at the top, followed by a list of ingredients and their measurements, and then detailed

cooking instructions in sequential order. One may surmise that both Candida and Albertina were familiar with the circulation of Portuguese or European printed cookbooks, or magazines and journals, and had repeated the recipe format precisely. There is no indication of different courses, giving the impression that these foods could be served à la française or in a *cha gordo* buffet recalled by de Martini in her memoir, with which this chapter opened.

Among the 800-900 recipes, a significant portion of them could claim a South Indian and South East Asian origin. *Carril* or curry appears in various forms across all notebooks. There are curries of chicken, shrimp, egg, beef, and also several curry powders and paste recipes, for example, a recipe of onions (fresh and dried), chopped garlic and ginger, chillies, black pepper and coconut, finely chopped and rubbed into a paste. There is a recipe for *ladu*, which appears to be the Macanese version of an Indian sweet. The Macanese version is made with jaggery, shredded dried coconut and ground almonds, but uses pine nuts (instead of larger roasted nuts and raisins), as well as yellow bean powder and short-grain rice flour rather than chickpea flour and is flavoured instead with cinnamon tea powder. There are also recipes for turnip *bebinca*. As Chitrita Banerji notes, *bebinca* is also made in Goa and Kolkata in India although it is considered a dessert (personal correspondence) rather than a steamed loaf which is then sliced and pan-fried and served as *dim sum*. Also, there are numerous versions of the shrimp paste *balchão de camarão* made with pepper, bay leaf and grain wine, emphasising its delicate savouriness, rather than the pungent aromatic Malaysian pastes that Duruz describes (2016).

The recipes reveal a great deal about the position of the power to differentiate. Almeida asserts that 'ethnicities must co-exist in order for there to be an ethnicity [and yet] dominant groups are never ethnicities' (2004:13). While written in Portuguese, the recipes in the notebooks also use some English names, such as 'cheese toast'. There are also Latin transliterations of some Cantonese ingredients, such as '*lap cheung*' - air dried Chinese pork sausage - or the use of the term 'sutrata' to mean soy sauce. In some instances, this reflected the reality that on the whole locals could only speak and not write Chinese

characters. However, the language used also naturalised a Portuguese viewpoint, and exoticised increasingly common Cantonese ingredients.

The circulation of these cooks to Guangzhou and Hong Kong with the power to differentiate, combine and create tasty foods was recognised as a Cantonese speciality in other parts of China. Swislocki (2008) argues in his culinary history of Shanghai foreign concessions that for Chinese settled in Shanghai, Guangzhou and its cooks represented the Cantonese culinary centre, and were famously a source for western food expertise. The further enrichment of a Hong Kong Chinese middle class through merchant networks such as the Nam Pak Hong created the means with which processed foods would leave the Delta for South East Asia, while spices and other medicinal and culinary luxuries would enter and be sold on to Northern China. It was their further enrichment that laid the foundations of Hong Kong's dim sum culture which was reliant on an import of capital, people and skills from Guangzhou. This was the kind of capital that only the Nam Pak Hong merchants and their class could organise.

Guangzhou was both a treaty port and increasingly a centre for nationalist politics, a fact which both Farris (2016) and Paulès (2009) posit means that Cantonese life in the city changed little, in comparison life experienced by foreigners. At the time Shamian Island, a concession granted to Britain and France after the Opium Wars, was designed as, and had settled into an 'orderly European village' (Farris 2016: 82). A canal and outer ring road created a physical barrier between Chinese and foreign residents, between vernacular scenes of housing and public life and the Victorian architecture and ambulatory spaces of the island.

The remainder of the city including Honam, where Parsis, other South Asians, and American traders and firms were located, was a stronghold of nationalist politics at the collapse of the Qing Empire and dynastic China in 1911, and during the Republican era (1912-1949). Urban renewal on the north bank of the city would be a manifestation of this, challenging the foreign modernity of Shamian Island with wide roads, electricity, new public parks, museums, tramways, western-style department stores, opera houses and brothels. It was

during this time too that Guangzhou developed a lively competitive restaurant and teahouse scene, one that cemented Guangzhou's position as representing Cantonese food in national rhetorics (Klein 2009a). In addition to Western-style restaurants there were snack bars, street carts and teahouses serving dim sum. Even in Honam, an undistinguished urban landscape outside the old city walls, there were numerous luxurious, brightly lit multi-storey opium houses and other entertainments (Paulès 2009). The taxes on legally operated opium dens had become a vital source of revenue for Guangzhou until the 1940s when the city reconnected to global trade as a manufacturing hub (Xu and Ng 1998).

As Shamian Island continued to represent conservative European life, as well as shape Chinese-Western spatial and cultural relations, Honam came to represent Xin Guangzhou, a new kind of city with warehouses, offices, schools and universities set up and managed by a mercantile class. Here it was possible to dine finely on the occasional 'chopstick dinner' hosted by Cantonese business partners.

Gidumal Mohan, a Guangzhou-born Indian recalls these elaborate banquets that seemed very much to be part of family life.

[...] Primarily we ate Indian food [...] In fact, when I came to Hong Kong in the early days of '47/'48 on visits, a lot of our community looked down on Chinese food because they were never educated to eat it, but during the war we learned to eat Chinese food. Before the war, we were taken to a Chinese banquet by our parents once a week, one of these elaborate banquets so all we know were the luxurious Chinese dishes, we didn't know the basic Chinese food, we learned that during the war because we had no money to talk about [...] and you learned how to eat the Chinese food from the [...] street people [...] (Mohan, 2009)

Gidumal Mohan's life story, also archived at the Hong Kong Heritage Project, demonstrates that Indian food was a very flexible category. Mohan was born and raised in Guangzhou in the 1920s after his father moved from India to the region in 1913 to trade in Japanese silk. The family then moved to Shanghai in the late 1930s and then to Hong Kong by the late 1940s.

Like Ruby Masters, his life story has been recorded and archived by the Hong Kong Heritage Project. On the recording, the interviewer, surprised at how prevalent Indian food was in China, presses Mohan to describe his meals at home. Mohan describes the ease with which local vegetables and meat could be made Indian through an unspecified act of cooking.

[...] No we didn't buy Indian food [...] we went and bought vegetables... we bought raw meat and she [my mother] cooked it so during the war she did the actual cooking, we had no servants [...]

By 1931, over 3,000 Indians were living in Hong Kong, but by 1941, that number had doubled, as Indians fled mainland China for foreign ports ahead of advancing Japanese forces (Thampi 1999). Hong Kong became home to more South Asians, just as Hong Kong and Macau became industrial economies. It is unclear how much of the economic boom attributed to Chinese capital and the flight of southern Chinese, is also the result of investment by Parsi and other South Asian merchant-industrialists and traders.

The Communist Revolution in China set the three cities on to different socio-economic paths as Chinese and foreign industrialists relocated to Hong Kong (and to Macau, when trading in Hong Kong-made goods was periodically restricted). Rapid industrialisation prompted the growth of local labour movements in Hong Kong and Macau, and Guangzhou became something of a problematic exemplar of workers' and Chinese power. On the one hand, there was a re-orientation of Hong Kong and Macau to the Chinese mainland and the ideological turn to communism by anti-colonial movements. At the same time, Guangzhou was becoming visibly impoverished under a communist regime (Turley and Womack 1998). Local talented Cantonese chefs relocated or escaped to Hong Kong despite state-led projects in Guangzhou to nationalise Cantonese culinary prowess and to continue to offer patronage and support to the city restaurants (Klein 2009a). The total effect of this is to sharpen the distinction between socio-economic betterment under colonial and neoliberal regimes, and economic and cultural impoverishment under communist regimes.

Reflecting a kind of Cantonese exceptionalism, Guangzhou continued to be an outlier in the Chinese communist system. Remittances from overseas Chinese, and the launch of the biannual Canton Fair in 1957 was a valuable step in reclaiming a political space for the city's modernist global ambitions (Tretiak 1973). Likewise, Klein notes that Guangzhou's culinary scene could not easily hold to categories such as 'pre socialist, revolutionary and reform era China' (Klein 2009a: 45). Instead, it continued on a historical trajectory from which present-day interlocutors can declare high socialism to have revitalised the cuisine. Attesting to its continued eclecticism and openness to foreign cooking and tastes, one of my interlocutors recalls his first visit to the Canton Fair in 1983. A spice trader for over 50 years, he was one of the first South Asians to start trading directly with Chinese spice farms. Dinner was problematic in Guangzhou in 1983, although one could find Chinese restaurants serving mild curry and samosas. 'We could equate onion pancakes - *cong you bing*- with pooris' (a deep fried puffed Indian bread) and 'sour milk - *suan nai* - with yoghurt'.

The post-war era and in particular the 1970s saw an incredible boom in Hong Kong-style restaurants, fast food outlets and a variety of foreign cuisines. Hakka restaurants and tea cafés that sprung up in the 1950s and 1960s during Hong Kong's post-war industrial boom emerged as a working-class oriented food culture, and both served as a hybrid culinary point, one that mixed British colonial life and local culinary schemas (Lo 2008; Wu and Cheung 2002). That the latter replaced the former by the 1970s, signalled that along with growing income was a growing ease among local diners with eating through various culinary assemblages. Extensive tea restaurant menus drew upon 'Hong Kong Style dishes' of instant doll noodle soups, or Western-Style menu items of 'grill', 'soup', 'salad' and 'spaghetti', or 'rice plates' of Hainan chicken rice, or fried and curry rice. They demonstrated diners' comfort with the intensity of such contrasting norms (Mintz and Du Bois 2002). Items may have arrived at the same time, like traditional Chinese service or service *à la française*, though dishes were not necessarily to be shared. Meanwhile, the curried gravies in noodle soups signalled at broader, deeper histories that circumnavigated

British colonial influence, for example, the Cantonese controlled Nam Pak Hong which supplied the inter-Asian trade with ingredients and other commodities (Wa 2012).

Sydney Cheung has suggested that 'Hong Kong Style' - a set of post-war cosmopolitan social mores around which shaped how food was cooked, presented and eaten - emerged in the 1970s (2002c). Pairing exotic and expensive ingredients with western cooking styles, '*nouvelle* Cantonese cuisine was a taste deliberately created for, and pursued by, the 'new rich' (2002c: 136) - namely local and foreign middle classes. Hong Kong style food was an elite culinary category. Willa Zhen (2010) posits that versions of this category as it appears in Hong Kong's working class cafes maintain their links to an in-depth and elite history. At the same time, Mathews reminds us that for a long time, and perhaps until the 1990s, the city was a place of poverty for a large number of residents (2011:2). The experience of eating 'Hong Kong-style' food remains temporally muddled and shaped by money and access.

The link between the emergence of Hong Kong style food and *cha gordo* in the 1970s and an increasing cosmopolitanism and social mobility is unclear. Construction of these Hong Kong and Macanese culinary identities may also be linked to a new nationalism, fuelled by anti-colonial sentiment, but also by mass migration and refugee intake. 200,000 Vietnamese refugees arrived in Hong Kong over the latter half of the decade.

South Asian restaurateurs from the 1970s represented a new wave of immigration, from Uganda, Mozambique, Burma (now Myanmar) Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, from both colonial and independent states and countries. This immigration made the opening of the Indian Recreation Club in Happy Valley in 1970 possible. This was followed by the launch of Gaylords restaurant in Tsim Sha Tsui in 1972, India Kitchen opened by Munuswamy in Macau in 1985, and the Jewel of India opened in Guangzhou in 2000. These eateries are unique in that they are widely held to be the first South Asian restaurants in the city. This is a messy claim as demonstrated the clip from a newspaper article

about the start of Munuswamy's Indian Kitchen empire in Macau in 1985, reflecting the ethnic imprecision of Luso-Asian food in the city.

[...] for a boy raised surrounded by the heady scents of cardamom and pepper, the absence of Indian food in Macao needed urgent remedy. The first Indian Kitchen was a success [and] within a year Munuswamy had opened two more [...] The only other Indian restaurant on the island, run by a Portuguese, was unable to stand the competition and quietly shut its doors. (Financial Express, 2005)

The Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 which concretised the 'One Country, two systems' principle for Hong Kong (a route that Macau was to follow) also created a diaspora category with the establishment of the British National Overseas passport. These passports were only available to those with a connection to Hong Kong. However, it gave no right of abode in the UK. Newspaper articles from the time illustrate the deeply held fears among South Asians in Hong Kong of being left stateless by Britain. However, communities from Goa, Daman and Diu (and increasingly, Pakistan) in Macau did not share these fears. Portugal had granted Macau's residents full Portuguese citizenship and, as the 1990s wore on, access and residency rights in Portugal and the European Union. In the 1990s, 50,000 Hong Kong Chinese citizens were granted full rights to resettle in Britain. South Asians living in Hong Kong were only able to claim the status of British National Overseas (BNO), granting access to consular support, but not the right of permanent residence in Britain. Things have equalised between South Asians in Hong Kong and Macau, owing to the UK's Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act of 2009 that gives the option for full British citizenship for all BNO passport holders with no other citizenship. Almost all of my South Asian interlocutors still living in Hong Kong who have been issued BNO passports in the past have chosen not to become full British citizens.

Ruby Masters' family continued to import Hong Kong-made goods throughout the 1950s. In the 1960s, the dual impacts of labour unrest and import restrictions on textiles - a key trading commodity for foreign importer-

exporters - encouraged some factories, including firework manufacturers which supplied the bulk of India's Diwali illuminations, to relocate to Macau. She remains in Hong Kong despite several options being open to her.

[...] We prospered here, we loved Hong Kong, and this was our only home, and we didn't know what was... what was in store for us once the Chinese took over and never in our wildest dreams did we think that the takeover would be so smooth it really was. Poor Tung Chee-Hwa got a lot of brickbats but I think he did a good job, he was a good man. He was no politician he was forced into this job but I think he did a good job [...]

Like Ruby, few interviewees noted there had been a significant difference coming up to the handover and after, and generally thought of the transition in favourable terms. South Asians are one of the groups chosen to be a barometer for the extent of post-colonial localisation, and its contradictions. This is very much the case in the ethnographic material produced over the last several decades (Erni and Leung 2014; O'Connor 2012; Knowles and Harper 2009; Lock and Detaramani 2006; Kwok and Narain 2003; White 1994; Weiss 1991; Vaid 1972). In sum, these studies are agreed that South Asians in Hong Kong are local in that they are oriented to life in the delta more so than life abroad. Yet, where they differ is when this localisation occurred and how deep it is. Anita Weiss (1991) historicises this process of localisation among South Asian Muslims declaring that these processes have been ongoing since just after Hong Kong was settled in 1840. Weiss's analysis is emblematic of these ethnographies that have examined the paradoxes of increased localisation. Paul O'Connor (2012) discusses the extent that South Asian Muslims opt for Chinese naturalisation in order to secure a lifelong right of abode in Hong Kong. In tandem and since the handover, localisation laws have proved discriminatory for South Asian Muslims in particular. Their low participation in formal employment is thought to be behind Hong Kong's first law against racism in 2008.

At the start and throughout the 20th century, public life, including places to shop for and eat ready-made food was complicated by racial and socio-

economic identity. Public life was no escape from questionable colonial practices in the home, including the retention of slave labour or a servant class for cooking, and the racial identities of foods. Attention was paid to fresh ingredients whereby locally grown and bought vegetables could be made sufficiently Indian through cooking. As the Cantonese population grew richer, public food began to celebrate Chinese aesthetics, even as dishes incorporated foreign ingredients and cooking styles. At the same time, South Asians and South Asian migrants from the 1970s started up new restaurants offering a corpus of Anglo-Mughlai and Punjabi food.

Conclusion: Hidden transcripts of South Asian food in Cantonese cities

Scott depicts the momentary breaching of walls between public and hidden transcripts as 'political breakthroughs' (1990:203). There were plenty of political breakthroughs throughout the two periods covered in this chapter; from religious change and dynastic upheaval to revolution, decolonisation and reintegration into the Chinese mainland. The scant material on what could be considered 'foreign' food in pre-modern China and South Asian food in the 20th Century reflects these upheavals. But South Asian cooks and food remain peripheral to the story. South Asian food remained largely hidden because it emerged into public life at the precise points that Cantonese food and identity were strengthened and were rejecting the other.

In middle to late Imperial China, Northern and Southern culinary identities were surprisingly flexible, allowing for a circulation of Buddhist culinary practice and a wide range of foreign ingredients and techniques. The very uncertainty of this divide fuelled Chinese productions of treatises that sought to clarify what was Southern cuisine and what was not. While northern China became increasingly oriented to Persian and then Islamic influence in Central Asia, Guangzhou became increasingly marked by its foreignness in general and Islam in particular.

At the start of the 20th Century, Guangzhou was not considered problematically Islamic. The city maintained its peripheral position to the central imperial state and became a stronghold for the nationalist movement, and yet much of

dynastic public life, eclectic and illegal, continued. It was still a major culinary and cultural centre in the delta throughout the century, even during the era of high socialism. The Portuguese, Dutch, and British trading empires established themselves as part of the Canton system, contouring significant types of hybrid cuisines in South East Asia. Their political and cultural influence deepened in the 20th Century at a time of increasing calls for Hong Kong and Macau to be decolonised. The circulated ingredients, flavours and techniques in the three cities continued the trajectory of Cantonese food as exotic and foreign facing.

This chapter is a speculative culinary history. It is reflective of South Asia as a blind spot in historical accounts of Cantonese food, and partly of strategies among South Asians who want to retain the power to remain intuitive about history. The next chapter focuses on modern grocery stores in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. It explores a supply chain that links these grocery stores, but also shelving and spatial arrangements that make these stores into local rather than national spaces.

Chapter two: Polyvocal South Asian grocers in Hong Kong and Guangzhou

Before my first visit to Naadha's grocery store in Guangzhou, I had trouble locating places where South Asian families would shop for ingredients to cook South Asian foods. Despite its numerous forums and networks, Guangzhou's online community of settled expatriates was of no help. Conversations about South Asian grocery stores were already several years old, their local Guangdong mobile numbers were no longer operational and the addresses outdated. Online, grocery stores had become less visible.

However, I quickly came to realise that South Asian groceries are everywhere; and finding grocery stores to visit is one task about which South Asians were least worried. When, on the streets of Shenzhen and Guangzhou, I asked for directions from other South Asians, they would wonder why I was bothered to find that particular store, explaining that these stores were all the same. All sell MTR spice blends, vermicelli, Shan instant noodles, *gulab jamon* ready mixes, Everest noodle sauce and dipping sauce for *momos* and other modern convenience foods. This is what they sell because these were the only products that arrived from Hong Kong. This was conveyed with a mixture of exasperation and pride – exasperation that Hong Kong South Asians were profiteering from a bottle neck, but pride that what emerged from that bottleneck was a series of modern South Asian food formulations that turned grocery stores into the equivalent of South China's ubiquitous modern convenience store sector, each shop a carbon copy of the other.

My friend Beena, who has lived in Guangzhou for 19 years, adds me to groups on WhatsApp, and on WeChat accounts run by South Asian grocers in cities around the Pearl River Delta. I am suddenly inundated with price lists and special Diwali offers on sweets, snacks, drinks and other items forcing me, an incompetent shopper and smart phone user - to meditate on the negative connections between choice, markets, wellbeing and identity (Jackson 2015; Iyengar and Lepper 1999). When she notices my larders remain empty of instant coffee and spiced snacks – the currency of hosting at home among South Asians in Guangzhou - Beena takes me to her local grocery store run by husband

and wife team Sahat and Naadha. I came to understand this is as an act of great forbearance. Visiting the grocery store was for Beena, and her group of middle-class trader wives, a tedious quotidian act, best suited as an errand for the maid, or the children.

Sahat and Naadha's grocery store is in the heart of Guangzhou's historic Islamic quarter [Fānfāng 番坊], and remains a neighbourhood of small lanes and small stores in contrast to the multi-lane high streets housing large supermarkets and malls elsewhere in the city. Two smaller stores had been knocked through to make up the grocery store, but there was still a palpable sense that store was two separate spaces; a front room, into which you entered from the street and were greeted warmly by Naadha or Sahat at the till, and a back room on the side.

In the front room, there were packs of breakfast cereals, jams, peanut butter, chocolates, dried pasta, sauces, olive and other seed and nut oils, balsamic and other kinds of vinegar, instant coffees and tea bags. These items were produced and branded by regional or global food manufacturers, but were made or packaged in the Middle East, affirmed by the dual English and Arabic stickers and labels. The fridge in the front room was full of carbonated drinks, bottled teas and drinking yoghurts, flavoured and plain waters. There was also a chest freezer filled with ice cream, frozen treats, spring roll wrappers, ready-made pizzas and white sliced bread, stuffed bread and flatbreads. Beena browses this section, pointing out how she defrosts in a microwave, bakes in an oven, fries in a wok and otherwise assembles these myriad items into dishes that conveniently combines Western, Chinese, Cantonese and Asian vegetarian cooking. In doing so, she is reflective of broader grocery-led consumption patterns in urban China, but with a repertoire of soy-based vegetarianism and Singaporean brands of durian-stuffed paratha or vegetarian curry fish balls made by manufacturers in Malaysia. Naadha tells me that a network of friends, who work in the Middle East, secured and transported some of these items via suitcases, or they were obtained directly through exporters in Malaysia.

The back room is darker, and less inviting. There were hefty bags of long grain and basmati rice, various lentils, chickpeas, flours milled from wheat and chickpeas, whole spices in large plastic wraps. There were spice mix boxes, incense sticks, religious decorations, hair dyes, rose-perfumed soaps in soft cardboard boxes as well as mustard oil and antiperspirants. These brands were Pakistani and Indian. There was also a glass-fronted fridge which was largely empty, displaying a few packs of butter and a tub of Naadha's tart homemade yoghurt. With its mix of whole foods, battered boxes and smells of spices and incense, the space felt different. Naadha tells me that this back area was stocked with goods from warehouses in from the Dongguan-Shenzhen area that are rumoured to supply an entire network of grocery stores and restaurants on China's eastern seaboard almost all the way to Beijing. The produce was directly imported into Dongguan-Shenzhen on the border between China and Hong Kong or more typically transhipped from importers in Hong Kong. In a few instances, goods arrived through a network of anonymous grocery 'mules' who travel between Dongguan-Shenzhen and grocers in Kowloon district several times a week. The separate back and front spaces helps me recall Sara Ahmed's (2007) notion, borrowed from Husserl, that we must pay attention to orientation and starting points. Naadha tells me that the front space deliberately looks like any other convenience store in Guangzhou, adding another starting point of orientation to goods from the Middle East, Malaysia and South Asia.

My relationship with the store deepened the more I visited, and often I would combine shopping and visiting with volunteering to help out an afternoon every week and do a run once a month to Hong Kong. A run would involve picking up some fresh mint or coriander leaves for the store the next time I was in Hong Kong, where I would frequently go in order to shop for food and cook together with other interlocutors living in this neighbouring city. I visited the grocery stores in the Kowloon district in Hong Kong - ground zero for this elaborate trade - expecting to see something of hypermarket proportions. Instead the stores are small and, I noticed, had a front and back space also. The front spaces comprised fresh vegetables, salads, herbs and deities. In the back, spices and

other distinctly South Asian food preparation sundries would end up, waiting to be distributed to restaurants and grocery stores all along China's eastern seaboard. Under Sahat and Naadha's supervision, I placed these items on their respective shelves. Aside from shelving, my volunteering at the store brought me into contact with housewives, private and restaurant chefs, who appeared to be as confused as I was about the sheer range industrially processed foods that were in the back. Sometimes they would stand in the front and ask for items to be brought to them. Other times, they would ask relatives in India to send photos of particular lentils or spices to them via WhatsApp. Alone or consulting with me, they would attempt to locate these items on the shelves, never solely relying on the English labels, or Hindi names that I, Naadha or Sahat would volunteer. The varieties of lentils and flours, long grain rice and spices mixes used as a short cut to make a variety of dishes, seasonings and other sundries caused more confusion than nostalgia. Sometimes this was simply a matter of not recognising a brand name, other times it was the discombobulating effect of browsing on shelves where *rajma* mixes were placed next to *momo* seasonings, and chilli garlic sauce

I came to intimately understand that the spatial dynamics between Hong Kong and Guangzhou, were represented by the between the division of front and back in grocery stores. Moreover South Asian grocery stores do not act as 'national spaces' (Roy 2002: 483), but play a concrete role in discourses in the region about the hierarchy of Hong Kong and Guangzhou in terms of food safety and choice, and hierarchies between foreigner and Han Chinese-ness. Does this make stores local? And what is the nature of the localness they produce?

This chapter examines the racially ambiguous nature of South Asian food, ingredients, and the act of retailing these. In the first section I look at Purnima Mankekar's foundational work on South Asian grocery stores in the diaspora. I take a close reading of how a mixture of observable acts on the part of grocer and consumer and their manipulation of products, and assumptions on the part of Mankekar mark these spaces as South Asian. Despite this, as Mankekar herself concludes 'India' and the nostalgia for it is not clearly produced in the stores. In the next two sections, I examine the work of shelving and choosing

products in Hong Kong - where South Asian groceries enter the delta – and Guangzhou – their first major stop. Grocers and customers in this context, do not do much work to mark South Asian ingredients in the back of the stores. The shelving and retailing work at the front of the stores co-constitute the back as ambiguous. The fresh and industrial products at the front mark the grocery stores as modern in a way that is mindful of local discourses. This partially marks South Asian grocers, groceries and consumers as cosmopolitan within this deliberately ambiguous space.

Grocery stores and national space

Purnima Mankekar's (2002) seminal ethnographic study of an Indian grocery store in the Bay Area of San Francisco argues that the work that these stores perform is to discursively and optically reproduce an India which is bought and sold. In these acts of 'India Shopping' (2002:80) the India that is encountered excites feelings of pleasure, ambivalence and discomfort. That food produces complex feelings of nostalgia has been explored in previous anthropological studies (Wank 2010; Klein 2009a; Swislocki 2008; Caldwell 2006). However, for Mankekar, while movie posters, aromatic fruits and spices, and branded foods and toiletries and the practices of buying and selling carry a range of voices or a 'polyvocality' (Mankekar 2002). Shopping experiences are not the same according to race and gender. She states, 'if to other communities, these stores represent sites of (olfactory) alterity, to many Indians who go to these stores, they represented spaces of familiarity' (2002: 89–90). Moreover, although men feel a sense of nostalgia for a geographic location left behind, for women, the grocery store and its contents inhabit a specific chronotype, and they are more attentive to its effect as 'a time warp' (2002: 86).

Mankekar's grocery stores contain Nestle's Maggi Noodles, Hamam soap, Brahmi Amla hair oil, Britannia glucose biscuits, and Amul Butter. By identifying the buying and selling of these products as 'India shopping', Mankekar's list of products have lost their regional and ethno-religious origins, from the Kolkata-based Britannia biscuit factory to the Gujarati based Amul dairy holdings. Instead the products that fill these stores are a broad range that reflect a

industrially led, post-independence, Nehruvian pluralism that Parama Roy identifies as loosely congruent with a modern 'national space' (2002: 483). Parama Roy suggests this vision of multi-religious, multicultural India, born out of Nehru's political philosophy straight after Indian independence to contain the sectarian bloodshed, remains the loudest voice in the South Asian diaspora. This Nehruvian pluralism of a specific moment in Indian history, continues to be reflected in the way that the content of cookbooks are curated by diaspora food and cookery writers such as Madhur Jaffrey with recipes of territorial and ethno-religious communities, but also in the way that the carefully curated products and commensal arrangements can obscure uneven ethnic and religious tolerances.

As Appadurai reminds us this 'national space' is not widely held in the public imagination, but is a circulation of ideas of region and ethnicity among a very distinct group of town dwelling middle classes (1988a). Products too have circulated away from their regions making regional cooking possible and in some cases, such as in Mankekar's list, making eating national possible also. At the same time, this circulation also ensures that cooking is conscious of the 'ethnic partitioned Indian-ness of Indian cooking' (Roy 2002: 484). This 'national space' is then available to those who circulate and have access to things that are circulated also.

Naadha and Sahat, and later on in this chapter, Aabir and Bahul working at the grocery store in Hong Kong should be at the centre of this circulation with an unparalleled view of this 'national space'. Instead, their everyday work does not involve constructions of this national space but rather reflect their locality. This played out in the ways that Naadha and Sahat guided me to work in the store, as well as my own experiences as a shopper in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. As a British born Indian raised in London and visiting parts of India occasionally, I continued to be confused by grocery selling and shopping in South Asian stores in the delta. I had assumed that visiting, interviewing and informally talking to owners, buying and occasionally helping to sell goods in these stores would help me orient myself to this 'national' space. Yet these back spaces caused confusion and some discomfort for myself and frequent shoppers. Having

considered myself deficient in understanding the totality of South Asian cuisine and therefore taking time to learn, the fact that my learning curve was shared by others living in Hong Kong and Guangzhou proved revelatory.

In Hong Kong and Guangzhou, South Asians have settled over decades, and have also developed nostalgic feelings about their food. These are diaspora communities where food is distributed and sold by Muslims to other Muslims – both Chinese and South Asian, as well as Parsis and others. Islam is a minority religion in India as it is in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, and the power that Muslims wield in these grocery stores reveal a complicated relationship with shoppers and shopping. Lentils, rice, flours, processed noodles, oils, spice mixes and condiments that are sold represents a Nehruvian pluralism (Roy 2002). These industrial products that supply a vast chain of grocery stores, private chefs and restaurants can be used to make a wide range of home and public, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jain and other types of South Asian foods (Baviskar 2018). This unbounded use unmarks them as ‘national products’.

While Hong Kong remains a crucial importer of a range of products in Guangzhou, these cities have evolved Cantonese and Chinese identities that separate them culturally from one another and from central Chinese authorities. These discrete identities are often articulated and understood in hierarchical ways. Smart and Smart (2008) note that the anti-migrant discourse aimed at mainland Chinese people after the handover in 1997, namely a dialogue about ‘the wrong kinds of people’ (Ibid: 185) has articulated with dialogues about the wrong kind of food and livestock from China after outbreaks of Avian Bird Flu and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in the early 2000s. At the same time, mainland Chinese consumers see markets such as Hong Kong as a problem. Jackson's (2015) study of anxiety following milk powder scandals in China show that mothers continue to view free markets with suspicion, even when shopping for western brands in Hong Kong.

That the grocers in this chapter pay attention and work within these majoritarian discourses locates them in a more conventional framing of grocery stores in the academic literature, particularly in the United States is that grocery

stores are intermediate spaces where the larger political context is experienced. Grocery store owners – often Asian – are middlemen in neighbourhoods where they are a racial minority and are caught up in binary ideas of race. In these studies, from Bonacich (Mohl et al. 2016; Valliantos and Raine 2008; Choy Wong 1977; Bonacich 1973), Asian grocers including Indian, Chinese, and Korean own stores in black and mixed neighbourhoods in Los Angeles, Alabama and New York. To make a living they have to contend with African-American ideas of food and the rhythms of food shopping in these neighbourhoods. In a later study by Sullivan and Shaw (2011) where gentrification is critiqued, these local grocery stores come to be valorised for better understanding the social, economic, culinary and dietary world of their locality. They are no longer caught up in mediating between racial identities but are deeply embedded in the locality, even if vulnerable to socio-economic changes in the neighbourhood.

In the following two sections I examine this shelving work in more detail. I start with Hong Kong where the majority of South Asian food enters the country and then move on to Guangzhou– the first major stop in the distribution of South Asian food. The construction of spaces in a South Asian grocery store in Guangzhou is the focus of the second section. In both sections I pay close attention to the work of placing food on shelves, browsing shelves and selling and buying food in grocery stores.

Hong Kong grocery stores: South Asian women and ordinary fresh food

Naadha and Sahat are unclear which of the grocery stores in Hong Kong I should go in order to find the mint leaves needed for fresh mint tea that they will serve to visiting Muslim traders during the biannual Canton Fair in Guangzhou. Instead I look online. Judging by Hong Kong's Royal Stores Facebook page alone, I would assume that Royal Stores mainly sold tickets to screenings of Indian films and was not a grocery store at all. Updates on other items sometimes appear, such as hair products and herbs, but not as frequently as cinema tickets. There is a very local feel to the Facebook page, with personalised comments left for one of either of Royal Stores' two managers, and a frequently updated mobile number to call to arrange to-the-hour deliveries. In contrast to its

Facebook page, the shop itself is not a simple place to find, located in a dilapidated mansion, or what urban planners now call composite buildings. These are sprawling structures built in the 1950s in Hong Kong at a time when developers were unbothered by slowly evolving building codes and regulations. Buildings were tall and broad often taking up a significant share of the block. On several of the lower floors, homes, businesses and shops co-exist.

There is already a smell of spices and incense which becomes intense as I enter the small door to the store. The store itself the size of a 1960's Hong Kong apartment, about 700 square metres, a size that would be considered generous now. The internal walls have been knocked through and the narrow entryway, which was partially blocked by a cage filled with boxes, opened out to a spacious store. On the left, right by the door is a desk area, which serves as office space and checkout. As well as a cash register, there are stacks of ledgers, piles of papers and calculators of various sizes and on the wall are calendars and small statuettes. On the right is a row of neatly stacked fresh vegetables in green supermarket baskets. There are bitter gourds, okra, dwarf varieties of aubergines and varieties of tomatoes, such as cream sausage and brandywine. The rest of the room are filled with shelves that reach almost to the ceiling, yet because the shelves were blocked by cages full of boxes their contents are hard to retrieve. There are rows of open multi-shelf chillers, where fresh or readymade foods, including pizza, pasta, sauces, processed cheese, and milk, are stacked. The shelves are filled with boxes, packets, jars and bottles, filled with noodles, rice and lentils, cooking sauces and condiments and ready-made convenience items. It is a crowded place, more storage facility than grocery store.

Luckily I arrive with Manizeh. Manizeh, a long-term resident, who co-manages a thriving trading and logistics company with her husband, still personally visits South Asian grocery stores in Kowloon with her daughter. This is in spite of having a maid who, in other Hong Kong households, may be expected to do some of the daily grocery shopping. She also personally shops at the wet market for fish because the fishmongers know that she likes the roe kept in the fish that she buys so that she can make pickle. Manizeh can easily spend HK\$800 (£80)

on imported fish, pomegranates and other essential Parsi ingredients at the organic stores, but her weekly visits to the South Asian grocery store for specific local tomato and cucumber varieties for Parsi salads and sundries offer her something more. These visits distance her from what she thinks are the cruder attitudes and behaviours of other South Asian women, local Cantonese and white Europeans or Americans, who may avoid pungent shopping areas such as Kowloon or the colloquially named Dried Seafood Street. 'Asian shops make London too, don't they' Manizeh explains, telling me how bland, quiet and unwelcoming local neighbourhoods were before the arrival of the open-all-hours South Asian run grocers.

In a city where fruits, vegetables, meat and fish transported from China makes up 30% in value of all food imported into Hong Kong vegetable sellers tend to deploy dirt or damage in order to draw down discourses of food safety, organic farming and trust (Klein 2013; 2009b) the soft, slightly overripe aubergines, gourds and tomatoes, or as soft string beans speak of such things as well as long-distance travel. For Manizeh they are also tools in which women can perform shopping as an act of managing dirt, through dressing down, and stony facial expressions, reinforcing the 'notion of women as demanding, assertive and political was forged' (Deutsch 2010: 23).

Ultimately, these stores have to conform to local standards of clean and safe food shopping, outlined in Hong Kong's Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, and there are frequent checks by authorities. However, there is still an air of law evasion (Mathews 2011) and this manifests as a troubling physical impurity. Manizeh tells me to manage this 'we should wear something that we don't mind getting even dirtier' and 'we don't buy dairy there because they don't keep the fridge power low, you can smell it. I buy my milk and cheese from some other place'.

Bahul and Aabir, owner and manager of the store, and Tamil Hindu and Tamil Muslim, respectively overhear Manizeh's loud whisper. In my discussions with Aabir after, when I come by for more fresh foods for Sahat and Naadha's store, he explains that they do many things to help Manizeh and other South Asian

women to manage shopping. Aabir, who is here every day, is in charge of the arrangement of the store. He ensures that moringa leaves, alphonso mangoes, and Kaytra Hair packs and tickets to comedy show and screenings that feature on updates on their Facebook page are stacked by the doorway. On the opposite side of these prized vegetables and sundries is where the primary business of the store is conducted. Here, Aabir and Bahul sit in front of a cash register and a computer. Around them, above the ring binders stacked on top of rickety shelves, is a pantheon of Hindu deities' statues and calendars showing Hindu gods and goddesses. Aabir explains that this is where shopkeepers always place their deities. In telling me so, he is himself recalling the separation between religious and secular spaces in modern institutions in India, such as Udupi hotels, where alcohol, meat and air-conditioning are served up inside the restaurant, separated from the hot, marginal religious space of the cashier (Madsen and Gardella 2012).

Behind the cash register hair packs are kept. The frequent Facebook updates on the arrival of a new batch of Kaytra hair packs reaches hundreds of Cantonese customers. As Zelizer suggests commercial non-white beauty culture has become an economic and aesthetic form that can speak to broader collective aspirations (Zelizer 2011: 415) much like the anxiety over premature greying and extensive hair loss that are frequently covered in Hong Kong English and Cantonese magazines and YouTube shows. Thick black hair is an ideal shared by South Asian and Cantonese of a certain age. Also at the cash register Aabir dispenses cinema tickets. This is a more Sanskritised space of family and femininity, safe from the pluralistic spaces where the actual commerce of the grocery store takes place - the sundry items that are transported to mainland China.

Among the shelves, a lone worker fills and seals boxes. This back space is one that Manizeh does not enter. She tells Aabir what she is planning to cook – a fish roe pickle that demands Parsi brown sugarcane vinegar. Aabir suggests an Indian brand of apple cider vinegar – explaining that this is a popular brand in India, as Manizeh looks on sceptically. Aabir calls out to the shelf stacker for the bottle, and the shelf stacker brings it to Aabir who hands it to Manizeh for

inspection. In the end she decides not to buy it and later we head to Wellcome supermarket where she buys an American brand. This ambivalence about groceries in these backspaces, mirrors an ambivalence towards shopping and cooking north of Hong Kong. For grocers in the area, orders came in via telephone or WhatsApp, from households, private chefs, restaurants and other sources. People then turn up with suitcases. It is hard to identify who among them are transshipping to Guangzhou and other parts of mainland China. In part, they are convinced that people involved in the supply chain of South Asian foods north of Hong Kong are shady characters. Even Aabir does not enter the back space of the store. He knows what is there because of the data stored on his computer. Likewise, he has never been to mainland China and has no desire to see Guangzhou and other places.

And yet Hong Kong remains the key port of entry for imported goods of all kinds, including food. But other delta ports are catching up. Hong Kong ports handled 20,770,000 containers in 2017, almost the same amount as Guangzhou (20,356,000) four and a half million less than Shenzhen (25,209,000)³. Although there are frequent complaints by importers that that mainland port authorities bureaucratic procedures lead to spoiled foods in containers in docks, in general, increased demand has been met by importing directly to Guangzhou and Shenzhen and the increase in food transshipping in Hong Kong has remained modest. The significant difference remains in air freight. Hong Kong handles 4,521,000 tonnes via air cargo, and Guangzhou approximately 1,470,000 tonnes, leaving room for discourses about fresh food imports to reinforce narratives of difference in the two cities.

It is easy for this informal and formal transshipping of South Asian groceries to mainland China to blend into other substantial flows of trade. Hong Kong is a city of barrowmen and boxes, and there is much money to be made supplying the mainland Chinese market⁴. The trade in dried seafood, itself another source of pungent aroma in the city, has historical precedents. In the 19th and 20th Century formalised guilds of Nam Pak Hong merchants who would supply dried

³ This is according to the Marine Department of the Government of Hong Kong.

⁴. According to the census and statistics department in the Government of Hong Kong

and processed seafood to the north of China as well as organise it as a maritime export commodity. This trade has continued and consolidated in the Sai Ying Pun neighbourhood on Hong Kong Island enriching local business owners. Conservation watchers say that bulk of the material is re-exported to China and Vietnam (To and Shea 2012). Hong Kong represents a modern-day emporium of the kind that produced an enlivened historical phenotype of an Asian city with only a small share of what was otherwise a long-distance trade in the pre-modern era (Gipouloux 2011). The neighbourhood is busy with cheap cafes, betting shops, Indonesian, Malay and Filipino grocers, and increasingly western-style coffee shops and wine bars but it also carries the strong odours of dried abalone, sea cucumbers, shark fin and fish maw, selling for an average of HK\$10,000 (£1,000) per kilogram. These are then transported to mainland China, rehydrated and eaten in soups. At the same time, in newspapers and on local television, the dried seafood merchants maintain a discourse that generations of Hong Kong residents, particularly mothers and grandmothers, have kept this historic trading neighbourhood alive.

If media interest in the continuing local taste for dried seafood and knowledge of its health-giving properties highlight the role of women buyers, this reflects wider practices of shopping and its intersection with gender in Hong Kong. In her ethnography of wet markets and supermarkets in Hong Kong, Liu (2008) notes that food shopping remains women's work in Hong Kong. The practices of these female shoppers pick up the nuances of the way food is shaped by Hong Kong shoppers' view of origin, taste and desirability. For Liu and her informants, wet markets symbolise locally farmed foods including from China, which can sometimes be unsafe. Supermarkets represent imported foods. Hong Kong women tend to buy weekly items with their families in the supermarkets and buy fresh foods every day alone at the wet markets. For Liu's informants, food safety discourses shape what is bought in each place. The category of high-risk foods, eggs, tofu and other items are explicitly marketed in supermarkets as imported from a place other than China, such as New Zealand, United States and Malaysia. For other items, including herbal tea or fish that are likely to be

sourced from China and local waters, it is the intimate knowledge of the wet market seller that is most prized.

Hong Kong's role as a warehouse for China extends to South Asian foods so too do certain discourses. Even though almost all of their wealth is generated from re-exporting and transshipping, mainly to China, Hong Kong grocers and purveyors of specialist foods maintain the discourse of the savvy female Hong Kong shopper. This female shopper maintains family traditions and shops accordingly, creating a demand for these luxury food and health items. In reality, sales to locals account for only a small portion of revenue. Still, women's purchasing of dried seafood – whether real or imagined - frame ideas about Hong Kong identity that Hong Kong grocers can construct. South Asian grocers also maintain this discourse, using social media and interspatial voice, separating a Sanskritised spaces to offer air-freighted fresh food, while maintaining a zone of secular pluralism from where the anonymous business of supplying Hong Kong homes and businesses and mainland China can be conducted. Some aspects of this performance are now part of broader Hong Kong feminine practice, such as the use of hair packs from India to negate the vagaries of the Hong Kong climate on hair loss and premature greying.

In her history of Indians in China, Thampi identifies the influx of wives in the Pearl River Delta and Shanghai as the turning point for notions of belonging in China (2005c). The introduction of family life and children being born in Hong Kong is framed as a watershed moment in the 1920s, but the maintenance and development of women's roles have been unsteady. In-family migrations had already brought a lot of wives and daughters to Hong Kong by the 1950s, and the Hong Kong Indian Women's Club and Association was formed. Like the Cantonese women in Lee's study (1999), South Asian women face structural barriers when they choose to work outside of family or family-run firms. There are of course intersectional barriers felt by South Asian women depending on their level of education (Ku et al. 2005), and higher barriers experienced by Pakistani women compared to Indian women (Bun 2006). Moreover, localisation policies, pursued by Hong Kong's large state sector, and by multinational companies, put these women at a more significant disadvantage.

For South Asian women implicated by the work of grocery stores, it was expatriation with limited means that defined their subject positions in Hong Kong. While they share features in common with white working women and wealthier stay at home wives, their essential non-whiteness proves a barrier to join this newer transnational class (Leonard 2008).

Aabir's own family dynamics reveal that even leading up to handover, South Asian women played a loose rather than fundamental role in trading lives in Hong Kong. He came out of retirement and now works for Bahul a Hindu Tamil, whose uncle owns the store. Together they are an unlikely South Indian duo with an age difference of nearly 40 years. Aabir had arrived in Hong Kong in 1965 as a 27-year-old from a large farming family in Tanjore (also known as Thanjavur), to join his uncle's gem-trading business. He was a gem trader until 1971 after which his uncle returned to India. Left with limited options, Aabir became a private tutor instead, until 1998. He made enough money to rent rooms with his cousin and pay a cook to prepare all of their meals, a man that Aabir had met on the ship between Colombo and Hong Kong back in the late 1960's. He did not bring his wife and children to Hong Kong until the mid-1980s. This is was a financial burden he took on because his citizenship was called into question by evolving talks between Britain and China regarding the future handover of Hong Kong. Aabir decided that his family would face statelessness together. His wife did not come to Hong Kong to help him build a home life, nor to heighten his sense of belonging.

Discussions with Manizeh about appropriate work and behaviour in Hong Kong, reveal the tensions about how to perform her role effectively in the public sphere. Manizeh manages a household and calls herself a *taitai* with a great deal of irony, an irony she tells is due to the fact that she cannot be a proper expatriate wife as her family incomes swing and she has greater or lesser resources throughout the year. In her recollection, by the 1960s trader wives were already expert at managing with the fluctuating wealth of their families, and through the Hong Kong Indian Women's Club and Association, an already active group experimented with and reinforced certain norms where Hong Kong South Asian men were married and well fed. Such performances – creating

the demand for and patronising grocery stores, cooking South Asian food to mark life events and festivals - became more meaningful at the advent of large-scale female inter-Asian migration in the 1970s and 1980s from what were considered soft Asian societies such as the Philippines and Indonesia (Ong 1999). From these countries, women would travel to take up work as domestic servants, service workers in Hong Kong's burgeoning fast-food sector, and as factory workers (Castles, Haas & Miller 2014). South Asian women would also travel, often taking up work as domestic servants but more often as freelance cooks, supplementing the ritual work of the household.

As trader wives were joined by the wives of professionals, these various norms have become complicated. South Asian women with a reasonable standard of English compete for low paid English teaching jobs with other white women who occupy the lower socio-economic rungs of expatriate life (Leonard 2008). South Asian and white women both find purpose in seasonal English language teaching, the South Asian women perhaps because their children attend these schools. Popular perceptions about these schools are that the standards of English have dipped and it is in their interests to ensure that English-medium education is of a good standard for their children's sake. For both sets of women taking these roles reveal some sort of sacrifice. For white women, their low wages make club membership impossible and as a result they are excluded from performances of white Britishness around food that remain exclusive to club spaces in the city (Leonard 2010).

For the lucky few South Asian women who secure work in this manner, wages are also low. Their income remains supplemental and South Asian middle-class families rent older apartments, where kitchens are not for show and dining tables are more often for storage and for study rather than for eating and hosting. South Asian kitchens in particular are often depicted as conservative (Janeja 2010; Ray 2004) and are platforms for the performances of new kinds of middle-class femininity (Donner 2008). The kitchen is a space of personal power, a space to exert control and to define the terms of engagement. (Longhurst, Ho, and Johnston 2009). Cheung suggests that despite the prevalence of foreign domestic workers, their female Cantonese employers

enjoy daily foods of soup, steamed fish and vegetables, bean curd and rice. This conservatism in the home, supported by Cantonese cookbooks written in Tagalog and Indonesian is contrasted with a cosmopolitanism palate when eating outside (2002c). The only performative space available to South Asian women is the grocery store, and its fresh foods.

At the same time and in general, female participation in the labour force remains high, even if structural issues mean that jobs are low status, poorly remunerated, or are temporary or seasonal service sector roles (Lee 1999). With marriageability still the goal – even in marriage – the working, poorly paid ‘female body becomes an unfinishable personal project’ (1999: 59), in which both fat and modernist fatigue, sometimes induced by loneliness, need to be managed. In such a project, symbolic foods become essential and provide an opportunity to nibble a nutrient-rich diet, and perform a family and social life.

These tensions reveal themselves around grocery shopping. In such an environment, the role of the grocery stores is not necessarily one of disciplining South Asian female identity (Mankekar 2002). It is a co-production of a South Asian femininity that embraces the contradictions of living in Hong Kong – fat and fatigue, and cooking using fresh foods. While the pluralistic anonymous products in the back of the store vocalise their ambiguous position in Hong Kong, the fresh foods including herbs, salad fruits and vegetables – as well as cinema tickets and hair products – at the front of the store position them as essential to ordinary South Asian life in Hong Kong.

The Islamic dialogical landscape: eating and shopping in Guangzhou

When I return to Guangzhou with huge bunches of mint leaves in my luggage for Sahat and Naadha, I cross the border between Hong Kong and Guangzhou by subway and on foot, which is the cheapest way to move between the two cities. Doing so, it is hard to ignore the sheer scale of the informal transshipping economy between Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Every hour, hundreds of elderly women cross the border each day, wheeling packed suitcases and trolleys pressing their e-channel identity cards onto the screens on barely supervised electronic gates. Some are commuting to and for work or take care of

grandchildren. Some use the opportunity to buy cheaper or organic food for their households. Among them are groups of older women who transport large boxes of goods for any number of warehouses of electronics and baby products across the border. The elderly women who ferry boxes of spices, lentils and Indian whiskey, are paid up to HK\$1,000 per round trip. They are then met on the other side and relieved of their goods which then travel to warehouse grocery stores the Shenzhen-Dongguan area. The ladies are free to return with phone accessories and other electronics. Some make the trip once a month or every fortnight.

I am not the only one to arrive that day to supply items for Sahat and Naadha's shelves. A few times a week, Chinese bike couriers with helmets or van drivers with jackets emblazoned with their express delivery [快递, Kuàidì] company logos, travelling between Dongguan-Shenzhen, also disappear into fleets of bike couriers and vans making similar journeys. The arrival of goods from Hong Kong via the warehouses of the Shenzhen Dongguan importers triggers a great deal of activity in the store. Sahat stores items such as oils, mixed whole spices, spice packs, rice, flour and lentils in his storage facility and the measures and packages them in smaller quantities for the store. These go onto the shelf in the back, though there is still plenty of shelf space left over when this job is done. Unlike in the front where cereal boxes, jam jars, sauce bottles and packets of tea are carefully packed with little room in between, there is little chance of these sundry items falling and knocking over their neighbours.

Over the two years that they have operated this store, Sahat and Naadha have steadily earmarked the goods delivered within a supply chain that starts in Hong Kong, for the back space of the store. Even the bundles of fresh mint that I have brought with me end up in the fridge in the back, filled with packs of Amul butter and Naadha's home made yoghurt, and not the front, which is filled with drinking yoghurts, juice and soft drinks. Naadha explains again that it was important that the front fridge is kept tidy signalling at a more complex culinary hierarchy that places multinational modern packaged fresh foods at the top. The desire and significance of such foods cannot be overstated in this context. While Simpson and Kresse suggest that Islamic food and conviviality have always

invoked a transnationalism, comprising 'visions of the umma, the global community of believers' (Simpson and Kresse 2008: 26), working day to day in a grocery store and acting within its supply networks, shows how far ethnicity and religious identity are unmarked, unremarked and under-marketed.

Kresse and Simpson are cautious in the use of the term 'Islamic cosmopolitanism' (2008: 3). While they acknowledge that normative modes of thinking exist within Islamic communities in coastal towns and cities throughout the Indian Ocean region, it is not these local versions that they are concerned about. It is with a certain conglomeration, including various lives pasts lived and various mapped futures that reveal salient ideas about how to live with social diversity. This includes the social diversities within Islamic communities, revealing a highly specific, historically situated idea of insiders, outsiders and the work that goes in to 'being part of a larger Muslim world' (Osella and Osella 2007: 337). I explore the notions that this wider Muslim world in Guangzhou encompasses South Asian Hindus and Jains, local Cantonese neighbours and the political dynamics of the neighbourhood itself.

It is the goods transported out of Hong Kong, and the conditions of their transport and creates the possibility of their non-spatiality. The two Muslim importers in charge of the supply chain once it leaves Hong Kong are rumoured to be millionaires. A restaurateur tells me that when he started ten years ago, there used to be as many as 15 or 20 wholesaling shops, but after several years of consolidation, restaurateurs and grocers complain that the two wholesalers are acting like the mafia, masking their identity, setting prices and undercutting businesses by delivering directly to homes. It is the WhatsApp and WeChat groups for Saaj and Khuj that Beena adds me to. Within two hours of ordering on WhatsApp or WeChat, sundries can be delivered to homes and snacks and luxury items can be delivered to offices. Payment is taken by the delivery driver who charges RMB 10-20 (£1-£2) per delivery, depending on distance, weight and speed. Like the 14 restaurateurs and hundreds among the 5,000 families living in Guangzhou, Naadha and Sahat rely on Saaj and Khuj for their stock of sundries. They even consult price lists of Saaj and Khuj at the till, so they can charge for Saaj and Khuj's goods at cost among South Asian families who

regularly order enough to be aware of prices. The sole exception is the flavoured chewing tobacco. Sahat has to wait until the evening before he posts pictures of this on the shop's WeChat account so Naadha is not inundated during the day.

Sahat and Naadha understand their local community of South Asians because they are traders who have moved from the Middle East. Unlike in Hong Kong, families have tended to move from Hong Kong, Taipei, Jakarta and Dubai and from South Asian together in units. Whole families, engaged in trading, often have to manage or at least be seen to be managing what they regard as polluting aspects of Guangzhou's food scene. I am frequently told of stories from the early days in the late 1990s when business dinners were fraught with the threat of pork contamination, particularly among my Sindhi informants. Husbands tend to socialise more with Chinese logistical partners, which often means eating dinner together. Now there are more South Asian restaurants, Chinese partners will take great care in choosing a South Asian or a South East Asian place to eat, where the food is halal or vegetarian. None the less, Sahat and Naadha's sundries are still treated like a bezoar, but one that relies on maids to shop, wash, and prepare fresh foods like a sous chef, and sometimes to finish off with the aid of spice mixes and other shortcuts.

Since they moved to Guangzhou from the early 2000s, Sahat and Naadha and their South Asian customers have stood out in that they often had more than one child. However, in other ways, they reflect the local middle-class and elite life. Elderly parents visit to receive medical treatment and convalesce and so for much of the year apartments maintain three generations of family like their local neighbours. Like Chinese families, South Asians also leave Guangzhou over spring and mid-autumn festival and during the hot summer months. So South Asians who live in Guangzhou mirror the shopping habits of their local neighbours. If their school-age children prefer to be schooled in India, then the situation is reversed. Representative offices are kept open throughout the year with a skeleton staff, and the principal trader will make Guangzhou their home for a few months during the biannual Canton Fairs.

Timings are never precise, but generally, Naadha was busiest in spring when families would return and the shop's WeChat and WhatsApp groups would chime with orders for the month ahead – spices mixes, lentils, rice, flour, mustard oil, noodles, chilli sauce, vegetarian frozen pizzas and ice-cream, and carbonated drinks. Drivers or maids in households belonging to restaurateurs or traders would come down to the neighbourhood's modest shopping precinct to pick these items up. Naadha and I would busy herself filling an order while the family driver or maid stands chatting, eyeing the mounting pile of groceries. South Asian women rarely visit and when they do there is a sense of discomfort. I visit with a friend from Tamil Nadu who wants to cook us a traditional *rasam* lunch. She is confused by the array of sundries and cannot tell the split lentils apart. Rather than ask Naadha for help, she consults with her sister in Chennai on *WhatsApp*. Together they pour over photos of Naadha's shelves trying to find the right kind of lentils.

This leaves the back space and its pluralistic products empty for most of the day. The backspace has no ventilation and becomes aromatic and pungent smelling, the air filled with the smell of whole spices, mustard oils and rose oil incense. Like neighbouring workers and shopkeepers, Naadha and Sahat eat lunch in their shop and they choose to do it in this back space. Naadha and Sahat have a young son and have lived in Guangzhou for over ten years. They are both Muslim and come from a town just outside Mangalore in the southern Indian state of Karnataka. Sahat initially started out as a trader, selling Guangdong-made goods and textiles to importers in the Middle East. Trading is still the family's primary source of income although these days he acts as a host and intermediary to Dubai based importers when they visit Guangzhou and its satellite towns and factories. Sahat and Naadha opened the store two years ago noticing the increasing diversity of South Asian, Arabic and African importers travelling to Guangzhou.

The first time I take lunch with Naadha and Sahat Naadha has prepared into a Mangalorean mutton curry. It is shortly after *Eid Al Adha* where it is traditional to sacrifice a goat and eat goat meat. Each year Sahat and group of Muslim friends, and sometimes clients, travel to the north of Guangzhou near Baiyun

airport where livestock is kept. Here they buy a goat and contract a skilled butcher to expertly slaughter and divide the meat into equal shares. This has become a ritual for Muslims in the city, who arrive in large groups to negotiate with farmers and watch butchers, crowding into the small concrete pens to observe, chat and smoke together.

Lunch is always at four pm so that Sahat can finish his trading work and collect their son from the school bus stop. As soon as they arrived, they quickly set up foldaway chairs and a table in the back room of the store. Naadha pulled aside a curtain to reveal a shelving unit cum makeshift-kitchen with electric hotplate and microwave, seasonings in bottles and jars, a pot and a pan, cooking and eating utensils, cups and plates. This was a relatively elaborate set up and compared well with other store owners and their range of kettles, teapots and rice cookers. She quickly made several *appam* (fermented rice flour pancakes) in the frying pan, after which she heated the mutton curry in the microwave. To wash the food down, Sahat made sweet South Indian filter coffee from beans from his home that his mother has roasted, packed and sent to him in a friend's suitcase, another delivery in time for Eid al-Adha. We ate in the middle of the back section with our elbows resting on our knees.

We were interrupted once by Lin, a frequent customer, neighbouring business owner and friend, who was press-ganged into having some mutton. Lin runs a nearby nail salon, and she frequently stopped by during the day to gossip while waiting for her C100 to come up to room temperature. Lin knew that she would relish the mutton; autumn was coming, and the spiced meat would satisfy her health requirements for the season. However, Lin loudly complained that she knew that she would not be able to give anything in return. This negotiation ended with Lin taking the Tupperware home and returning the next day to declare the mutton as tasty.

The frequency and style of this negotiation shows that Naadha and Sahat's store is at the centre of Chinese Islamic hospitality, speaking to Islamic norms and practices in China among Muslim ethnic minorities. It is as Gillette describes in her study of Hui food practices in Xi'an in north-central China (2000a; 2000b).

The pork taboo remains the hard boundary between Hui and Han people in the city, extending so far into identities, that even industrially made vegetarian snacks that looked too Chinese, such as mooncakes, would be considered polluting. Naadha and Sahat's grocery store represents the unidirectional hospitality that dictated Hui and Han relations. Like the Han who 'accepted Hui food and drink, freely consuming Hui foods and using Hui crockery' (Gillette 2000b: 122) in Hui restaurants, local Chinese customers could browse, spend their leisure time in the shop, purchase and eat Islamic food with no recourse for reciprocity.

In the elevation of snack foods to the front of the store, the grocery store also mirrors the way that Chinese Muslims practice *qingzhen* [Qīng zhèn 清镇]. This is a mandarin term used frequently by the Hui and Uyghur groups in China to mean Islamic, and is now officially used by the Chinese state to designate halal factories and restaurants. In Gillette's interpretation of granny Aifeng's buying of industrially produced western-style biscuits sweets for her granddaughter, she sees broader Hui attempts at consuming a modernity that is *qingzhen* even if the biscuits and sweets themselves are not certified, are not given to imams and the devout, and are not delicious to parents and grandparents (Gillette 2000b). The biscuits sweets are *qingzhen* because they are factory-made by people who have learned from the west, while Chinese snacks that are made in similar factories are not. The presence of Singaporean and Malaysian factory-made foods, and industrially produced Indian spice mixes – none of which are certified halal - in Naadha and Sahat's store cross what Cesaro describes as the 'soft boundary' (2000: 234) or the category that Gillette describes as 'neutral' (Gillette 2000b: 85).

There are other ways that Sahat and Naadha respond to Chinese Islamic norms. Fresh foods are only sold to South Asian customers. In studies about food and Uyghur and Hui identity, fresh food reveals the problematic intersectionality of nationality, generation, race, and class. For both Hui and Uyghurs (Cesaro 2000; Gillette 2000a) too, these foods are also imbued with a Chinese identity. Among the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, Cesaro (2000) notes that the structure of meals is different from those of Han households. In Han households, rice plays a central

role around which a range of vegetable and vegetable with meat dishes are placed. Among Uyghurs, meat and rice or noodles are the main dish. Vegetables are considered Chinese, as reflected in their names, and are used minimally in meals.

At the same time, there are no *qingzhen* certified foods that are sold in the store, nor any Chinese made western-style biscuits and sweets. Naadha and Sahat prefer halal-certified western foods, which are certified in Dubai, Pakistani ingredients, which are certified in Pakistan, and other South Asian and South East Asian foods, which are not certified at all. This wholesaling strategy, while risky, places Naadha and Sahat's store on a par with Hong Kong, Japanese and American supermarkets that have permeated the Guangzhou's urban environment over the last two decades. According to the US Department of Agriculture, in these large cities, food shopping is dominated by stores such as Dairy Farm International Holding's Wellcome supermarkets, 7-Eleven convenience stores and A. S. Watson's ParknShop chain. There are also other convenience store chains such as Circle-K and C-Store, and now a rash of automated stores such as BingoBox. At the same time, there are wet markets selling fruits, vegetables, meat and fish, and vegetable box scheme vans and couriers crisscrossing Hong Kong and Guangzhou to deliver speciality food from online delivery stores such as Taobao. This proliferation reflects state-led initiatives of food safety that emphasise individual accountability and choice, leaving many to mediate the market through relationships of trust, ties of family and an emphasis on cooking locally (Klein 2013).

It is clear, though, that the Chinese state is largely absent from the products in Naadha's and Sahat's store, with their lack of certification and their distributed wholesaling channels. There is also a sense that the Chinese state is only lightly felt in the neighbourhood. Older neighbourhoods like the one in which Beena lives and Naadha and Sahat manage their store, have 2,000 years of small-scale urban development carved into the stubborn remains of reasonably self-sufficient neighbourhoods (Yu and Ng 2007). This stubbornness is in response to the grand plans of Guangzhou municipal authority to make the city into a world-class metropolis with a generic central business district and high rises.

Uneven housing reforms while overdeveloping some areas, has left the Fānfāng to its own devices to transform from low rise, small-scale, spacious and well-made workplace-based residential compounds to a high priced low density neighbourhood. This is a prestigious and enviable community because it maintains a favourable 'human environment' (Tang, Tomba, and Breitung 2011: 41). The curated front room of Naadha and Sahat's shop, with its well-ordered shelves of western goods that are halal certified or halal friendly contributes to this.

At the same time, the state plays a large role in refashioning the area as an Islamic neighbourhood and consequently enabling Sahat and Naadha to respond in scale in terms of their hospitality. Since the market-oriented reforms of the late 1970s, the economy of the Pearl River Delta has mostly swung back to its historical role as a trader city. Trading has come to shape certain cities in ways that are sensorial and visceral, and traders supplying the Middle East form the third largest delegation at the Canton Fair. The biannual Canton Fair is the trader event around which much of the city is organised, from the more prestigious programming at the Guangzhou Opera House, to the increase in bars, clubs and hotel discos.

Canton Fair organisers are now actively courting buyers from the Middle East more overtly, with offers of discounted airfares and hotel stays. Traders stay at a hotel nearby where, in the lobby, they are also able to register for the fair. It is during these evenings that the grocery store and main thoroughfares and coffee shops reflect the Islamic sphere of the area, with Middle Eastern or West African men relaxing alfresco. It is an area that some of my South Asian informants, particularly younger professional women who have live on their own in Guangzhou, will avoid, citing the shady 'darker' types that occupy public space. Beena, Naadha and my other companions living in the area take a great deal of offence at this, and can't imagine any area of Guangzhou that is unsafe.

The store is a space to emerge a 'hospitality *qua* tradition' (Candea & Da Col 2012: S35). Matei Candei uses this phrase to describe the ways that traditions of hospitality shifted among a group of Corsicans when they sheltered a wanted

criminal. Traditional clichés became extremely useful as the associated political crisis deepened. Corsican hospitality took on a nationalist cause rather than an open invitation to host criminals in general. If Guangzhou needs the Canton Fair and its Arabic buyers, and resorts to clichés in lieu of a warm welcome, it is Naadha and Sahat who handle the specifics of hospitality. In the evenings Naadha would go home and Sahat would sit outside at a table by the front door, ready to intercept and welcome intermediaries who arrived from Mangalore or other South Indian port cities or importers from Dubai. Together, they would drink coffee that Sahat prepared from granules and a hot water dispenser that he kept in the shop, especially for these night drinks. On some Fridays, Sahat and his friends visit the local mosque. They would be joined by others in the neighbourhood, stopping for more coffee at Starbucks or elsewhere on the return journey. This circulation of coffee drinking sober Muslims, was in stark contrast to the other kinds of foreigners who descended on Guangzhou during the Canton Fair and circulated the bars and clubs.

It is clear that Naadha and Sahat's Store in Guangzhou is not engaged in the production of 'India shopping'. There are premium western brands, produced and packaged in the middle east, alongside South Asian sundries and Chinese drinks, the sum total of which depicts a 'consumer world-mindedness' a term used by Nijssen and Douglas (2008) in their study of the way that retailers align their optics with the kind of selves that their shoppers choose as identities.

The Nehruvian pluralism represented by sundries that arrive from Hong Kong via Shenzhen and Dongguan maintain their anonymity as they travel between these two cities and also when they arrive. On shelves at the back of the store, they blur the boundaries between home and restaurant, between cooking from scratch and assembling South Asian food. By doing so, they create a confusing non-space which is infrequently visited, where Naadha and Sahat can have their lunch, and do what shopkeepers do in their neighbourhood. The front of the store is maintained for stricter observances, where hosting of others can take place amongst products that are certified Halal or are Halal friendly. This tames the market in the way of majoritarian *qingzhen*-based orthopraxies.

Conclusion: Polyvocality and code-switching - Hong Kong and Guangzhou grocers

For Mankekar's (2002) the nostalgia that grocers, food and sundries evoke is complicated and tinged with displays of gendered and class-based power. It is a problematic nostalgia, which interacts with the social space of the store and the social space in which the store is set. Here food is codified, producing differentiated nostalgic effects - positive, negative, or ambivalent - for older diaspora groups, newer arrived workers and women. However, Manenkar also suggests that groceries can have a range of voices opening up more possibilities than merely their collective construction of a 'national space'.

I contend that in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, a 'national space' does not emerge and that people do not perform 'India Shopping'. Instead, they perform locality, partially unmarking race and nationality, by using their front and back spaces in ways that reflect vernacular mainstream attitudes. In Hong Kong the front space is packed with fresh foods in the form of fruits, vegetables and herbs, deities and premium goods such as hair packs. Here South Asian feminine ideals reflect the gender and racial realities of the city and its socio-economic consequences on single income South Asian households. What emerges is a particular kind of femininity that is performed in Hong Kong that relies far more on the fresh foods at the front than the pluralistic Indian products at the back. At the same time, by attending to these divisions, both South Asian grocers and shoppers also attend to existing hierarchies of food quality in wider discourses in Hong Kong.

The goods that make it through to Naadha and Sahat in Guangzhou link the backroom of their store in Guangzhou, and Hong Kong's South Asian grocery stores are part of a secular, pluralistic continuum. In both stores, these are spaces that seem apart from the rest of the store. In Hong Kong, the font space contains the fresh foods and high priced convenience goods destined for Hong Kong kitchens and sold to Hong Kong women under a pantheon of Hindu deities. In Guangzhou, the front space is filled with global brands and premium processed foods. Everyone who can afford it can buy and consume the global

brands and processed foods that Naadha and Sahat at the front of the store, which is precisely the point of introducing halal versions as ordinary foods.

Chapter three: Older Diasporas and newly arrived cooks - *Balichao, idlis, and momos* in Macau, Hong Kong and Guangzhou

The kitchen is a hot and noisy place - the burners emit a constant hum of highly powered lit gas, and keep the temperature of the kitchen high, that the equally loud and whirring ventilators are doing their best to offset. It is a living allegory for pressure. Freshly mopped floors glisten, and the detergent that is applied continually smears the steel worktops. Behind me, I hear the rhythmic beat of naan dough slapping the inside of the radiating tandoor ovens, after having first been stretched over dusted convex cloth cushions - freshly cooked bread destined for the lunch buffet table in the restaurant. These sounds - the shouted instructions and affirmations, fridge doors opening and closing, hot fat splashing into large kadai pans, metal spoons clattering metal pans - are accompanied by increasingly acrid smells of toasting mixes of spice seeds and barks, burning curry leaves, mustard oils and clarified butter. Briefly, my throat chokes and eyes moisten as they hit the pan and unite with the savoury aroma of spiced marinated potatoes.

The scene above describes a hot spring afternoon at the pass of the Golden Peacock, a relatively new, Michelin-starred restaurant in Macau's casino and hotel complex, the Venetian. I am watching, waiting for Chef Justin Paul to remove himself from this kitchen and sit down and talk with me in an interview arranged by the Venetian's public relations team. It is a formal arrangement that will deepen into an ongoing and informal research relationship away from the PR team who maintains the spectacle of Justin's professional life.

This is certainly the spectacle that I encountered on this first meeting. With the sensory and aesthetic qualities of the space and its tools - 'the equipment of a profession' (Fine 2009: 68) - this could be the scene from an expensive professional kitchen anywhere in the world, and this is manifestly the point. The large window into the kitchen from the dining area reinforces this, illustrating the translatability of Indian professional cooking into French kitchen management structures, and into stainless steel workstations. Modern institutions concerned with food safety practices governed by time,

temperature, measurement and provenance, now shape South Asian food into modern places of consumption such as luxury casinos, international hotels and malls. The Golden Peacock, with its Anglophone name, size, and interior design hints at a vast array of resources, including the intellectual and financial capital of India's liberalised institutions and the turn towards international hospitality for serious investment returns. Although more studies are needed on a quarter century of economic liberalisation in India and the effects of this on its culinary sector, it is clear that the Pearl River Delta is an important place. Another new Indian restaurant, Bindaas, has opened first in Hong Kong, not India, with a menu of Hong Kong inspired Indian tapas such as the pizza and naan breads fusion *naanza*, served on small plates. In my conversation with its shipping magnate owner, Sanat Patel, he tells me that very soon, Indians will realise Hong Kong will be the place from which to launch global hospitality brands.

Justin agrees with the sentiment. Over the course of conversations and time spent in his home and work kitchen, I come to understand that the 100-pickle station – one of the key foods that won Justin his Michelin star – was created as a reflection of his ambitions to be a haute chef, his Keralan roots, and the widespread use of spices and fermentation in Macau's Catholic culinary culture. However as Justin reminds me when we sit down to talk, Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou also has the longest standing South Asian diaspora communities in East Asia. Justin has to pay mind to this and the Golden Peacock's standard menu is one that is similar to the 70 other Indian restaurants across the Pearl River Delta ensuring the circulation of tourists and traders on which this community relies. If social worlds are constructed by people with a shared ongoing concern, then it is clear that mid-priced South Asian restaurants that open seven days in dense and expensive cities as Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau do so to procure customers every day, with presentations of South Asian food that appear ordinary in these multiracial cities. Professional chefs, who had graduated with wide-ranging culinary diplomas, in Indian, French, Italian, Thai and Japanese cuisine, yet ordinarily avoid cooking with beef or pork.

How does this link between the influx of chefs and restaurateurs and prior flows of cooks, culinary ideas and ingredients in the delta, play out in the

everyday work that chefs and restaurateurs perform? How do they process this history? Chefs and restaurateurs have personal histories, including professional training and experience; similarly, South Asian food has multiple histories of taste; and finally, there are histories of food in the Delta with which to contend which are linked but also discrete. There are tensions within and between these histories. This chapter looks at the work that chefs and restaurateurs perform in Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou, the ingredients that they use and the dishes that they prepare, and the narrative in which they place this work in order to examine these tensions. This is everyday work, and according to Fine (2009), the interplay between the work of the body and the work of the imagination is precisely how chefs explain themselves to each other, in opposition to usual acts of cooking and the lowly status of cooks.

Diaspora communities and the utilisation of their knowledge in host communities has been a focus of several studies (Vallianatos and Raine 2008; Ray 2004; Bradby 1997). However, Xiang advances the notion that successive waves of migrants have taken a more fine grained approach to the notion of knowledge transfer (2006). What precisely is transferred? How is this knowledge understood and applied? Diaspora groups are not homogenous and collective identities require construction, often around substances such as food (Bodomo and Ma 2012; Duruz 2010; Wilk 2006). Nonetheless, the literature demonstrates that newer arrived migrant groups are interacting with substantial reservoirs of experience, practice and abstracted knowledge that constitute diasporas and reflect and refract these in their everyday discourse on identity. Baldassar and Pyke (2014) assert that greater attention must be paid to the micro-dimensions of what they call knowledge transfer between old and new diaspora. Structures have been productive in understanding differences between diasporas by national and ethnic identity (Xiang 2006) and also religious differences (Griffith and Savage 2006). But a micro approach can upend traditional assumptions that older diasporas soften the landing of newer migrants, or even the existence of strong ties between them.

Having addressed the ambiguous nature of South Asian ingredients and grocery retailing in the previous chapter, this chapter asks whether more recently

arrived professional South Asian cooks mark the presence of diaspora communities and their food practices, or obscure or mute them. In the first section, I examine how the everyday working practices and identities of South Asian chefs in the Pearl River Delta evoke the racial ambiguity that is either deliberately assumed or under-explored in the extant literature on restaurant work and identity. I then split the chapter, each led by three vignettes the work of chefs and a restaurateur, located in Macau, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. The split demonstrates that South Asians' notions that their ordinariness is catered for by their untrammelled access to all of the delta, is in fact built on fragmented ground. On this fragmented ground the true nature of the social worlds that make the delta a multi-sited reality is exposed – underpinned by chefs and restaurateur and the micro-dimensions of everyday restaurant work. The micro-dimensions of food, knowledge and professionalisation, show that these interlocutors understand how diaspora has been shaped by the delta's majoritarian culinary culture.

Cooking up identities in the Pearl River Delta

Since the start of the millennium in Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou, diasporas have intercepted and absorbed a newer professional class of chefs, who are trained to cook in a variety of styles and cuisines. These chefs have arrived to find a plurality of practices represented in hybrid cafes, fast-food outlets and restaurants. At the same time, they are all connected within a circulation of Indian furniture tourism around the delta and are working in Indian restaurants. Reflecting on this irreducibility of identity, work, and knowledge, is the moniker 'Indian chef' an occupation or an identity?

Sean Tierney (2006) posits that in popular genres such as martial arts films, skills and knowledge sharing is unidirectional and the white body is the blank canvas on top of which recognisably ethnic skills are projected. The reverse, of a recognisably ethnic body acquiring skills in order to be a blank canvas, is not depicted. In his sociological study of restaurants in the US, Fine (2009) makes a point of saying that his chosen restaurant field sites are steakhouses, haute cuisine and hotel restaurants, not 'ethnic' restaurants (2009: 243). He goes on

to place ethnic in a broader category of what his field sites are not, namely; as family restaurants, fast-food restaurants and neighbourhood restaurants.

The implication here is that professional chefs in the restaurants Fine himself has negotiated access to, are normal, ordinary, majoritarian culinary professional identities. He points out that there is nothing self-evident about cooking professionally and assuming the identity of a professional cook. While framed by standard management structures, kitchens and restaurant service, there are few practice-based norms. Instead work and identity become fused – as Fine notes - because so much of a cook's emotional life and time is tied to the kitchen as a result of long hours, and how and where they choose to socialise or rest. Although Fine notes that one of his interviewees is an Indian, there are no further discussions about this.

Krishnendu Ray's (2016) work on ethnic restaurateurs looks out from one of these types of restaurant - neighbourhood restaurants run by South Asians in the US. By implication, these chefs are not part of the majoritarian, ordinary world. These neighbourhood restaurants rely on a diverse diaspora, including a pool of immigrant kitchen workers, as well as South Asian diners, living and working in the neighbourhood. None-the-less, Ray takes to task the term 'ethnic', and like Fine, argues that there is nothing self-evidently ethnic about South Asian immigrants working in the restaurant. Rather the term 'ethnic' is a term used by an American middle. The process to become a professional American chef is not available to ethnic chefs, and professionalism is often placed in opposition to notions of the ethnic chef and the female household cook. This is specifically problematic in the American context in that it is used to produce rather than mark cultural difference, one that is cultural, but not high culture, white 'but not superordinate' (2016: 10,11). From the American middle, ethnicity and certain types of expertise are opposed. They are in fact 'two separate worlds' (2016: 183). If, according to this schema, ethnic people are born into this category and professions are made, Ray does not address how these categories, with their inherent contradictions, come to be worked through in the kitchens of restaurants of experts or of ethnics.

When I come to interview him, Justin has trouble identifying himself within these broadly-drawn frames of occupation or ethnicity, eventually rejecting them completely. Over the course of several months, and meetings in his professional and home kitchen, and also in discussions over his new website, Justin reveals the complex interplay of identities. This includes his Christian Keralan roots, his Indian chef professional moniker, his love of Macanese food for its Indian-like qualities, his training in Western and haute techniques and his open-ended pursuit of technologies and techniques among his Michelin starred peers. He is not alone. The chefs whose work lives are explored in this chapter have all graduated after learning a curriculum of South Asian, as well as Chinese, Spanish, Italian, French, Thai and other cuisines. From the very beginning, culinary training in India selects those that have certain liberal sensibilities. Similar to the non-kitchen training that Ray (2016) describes at the Culinary Institute of America, there is a stress on the right kind of worldliness. This has become increasingly important as a selection criteria. So while Indian legislation extends education to protected groups such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, disabled and low income families, the questions on the entrance exam betray a preference for middle class applicants. The questions test for high fluency in the English language, and but test for attitude. Sample questions in the National Council of Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHM) entrance exam include 'when you see a cluster of slums in your neighbourhood, what comes to your mind?' (NCHM 2016: 19). Liberal sensibilities, as important to culinary education in India as it is in the US (Ray 2016), gives priority to the social worlds that chefs inevitably operate it.

This culinary qualification increasingly separates those with a right to work in the Pearl River Delta, from an older diaspora. In Guangzhou and increasingly for Macau there is a requirement that chefs have a professional qualification in order to qualify for a work visa. In Hong Kong, the rules are more relaxed, although from my discussions with restaurateurs and hotel managers, few would employ anyone other than a culinary school graduate. However, despite their broad culinary and soft skills training, ethnicity is problematic. The South Asian chefs that I spoke to floundered in a niche of cooking South Asian food, or

coking as South Asians. Despite the job security afforded to them by working as an 'Indian chef' in small restaurants or in larger hotel teams, no one could escape this niche and move into upper management.

The frustrations of their stalled careers and the relief in the face of continued demand for South Asian food from traders and tourists played out in how they organised their social world. I became part of a web of interactions. (Fine 2009) and observed that this world was constraining but also had a great deal of latitude. My interlocutors were very curious about everything, and formal interviews quickly dissolved into informal talk while I watched them work. This curiosity and my position as outside observer of their work encouraged chefs to explicate how they related to the community of South Asians in the city, including food makers and purveyors, as well as to Cantonese and Chinese colleagues, diners and friends. The more I was able to gain access to other kitchens in the delta, the deeper I became embedded in both kitchens and cities.

Using talking, skills and ingredients to explore, highlight and negate connections between Cantonese and South Asian food cultures was a fount of creativity. These edited searches for inspiration were different in process but similar in scope to the work of professional cooks in Kolkata and Dhaka to create normal food (Janeja 2010) or home foods in London (Pottier 2014). Their work appeared to expand the categories of normal and home foods, by embracing touches of the Cantonese majoritarian culinary cultures. But they did so in ways that reflected more honestly the link between diaspora and Cantonese cooking, ways that were invisible to the diaspora itself. This was evident in my relationships with my interlocutors. As I moved between my roles of interviewer and dinner guest to observer and informal student in the kitchens, I did not move into cosier, familial relationships available to ethnographers such as Janeja and Pottier in Kolkata and London. Instead, relationships became provoking and provocative, invoking Wacquant's reflection that people and their bodies are 'fount[s] of asymmetrical power relations' (2011: 82). As a person in the wider diaspora, and therefore an amateur cook, I would be expected to know as little as the rest of the diaspora. Those that invited me into their kitchens to taste, observe or learn how to make

dishes of their choosing - a fish pickle, idli and momos for example – did so to provoke, to stretch my capacity to understand their view. The dishes also helped them escape the confines of narrative and culinary work that ghettoised their knowledge, skills and creativity.

Christian, Keralan, Goan and Indian – making fish pickle in Macau

We hunch over a set of open jars in the home of Chef Justin in Macau. Justin is introducing me to several fish pickles that he has transported from his family's smallholding in Kerala. The smell from these containers is a fishy, peppery sour combination whose various aromatics and vinegars evoke the coast, sun and surf. The pickles use whole pieces of marine fish or prawn, which are usually either smoked or dried before being immersed in oils and vinegar and sometimes spices and chillies.) Justin ignores Madhur Jaffrey's assertion that pickles have a periphery status: '[...] no Indian meal is complete without a proper pickle to offer its unique brand of piquancy' (2007:117). Rather, he is keen to give me a Keralan pickle education rather than a balanced meal, so we try six different pickles accompanied by several small plates of deep-fried chicken, fish and beef *pakor*s. These pickles are different from chutneys which are looser, more syrupy and whose major flavouring and textural components, such as tomato or pineapple, are softened through heat or fermentation, semi-disappearing into the liquids that encase them. Justin's fish pickles are thick and firm. There are only two ways to eat them: sucking the pickling condiments from the fish piece and then diluting the fiery taste by biting into the fish; or using fingers to squash, spread or crumb the seafood into the pickle emulsion and eat together with the *pakor*s. This latter technique is particularly dangerous when handling the prawn pickle, packed full of green chillies cooked lightly to retain their pungency.

Justin Paul launched the Golden Peacock Indian restaurant at the Venetian Casino and hotel complex in Taipa with an inaugural menu called 'A Journey Through God's Own Country'. The highlight of the menu was the station featuring 100 fruit, vegetable and fish pickles from Kerala. The menu led to the restaurant achieving a Michelin star in 2013 within its first year, and it has

maintained that star ever since. The choice of the menu title was deliberate, and evoked the powerful and avant-garde advertising of Kerala's state tourism board in the late 1980's. The tagline 'Kerala - God's Own Country', coined by Indian advertising giant, Mudra, for a campaign which changed the face of state tourism in India, still resonates, recalling the state's numerous Hindu temples, mosques and churches. However, its Christian connotations are apparent with the phrase itself borrowed from poet Edward du Bois who used it to revive an old English Christian myth which told of a young Jesus of Nazareth who visited the British Isles with his father. "This menu is from the heart", the Macau Daily Times quotes Paul as saying. Examining the original state tourism motto, Dempsey (2001) states that such a term

[...] raises more questions than answers: Whose God? Which God? And because many of the Christian figures appear to hail from foreign shores, one might even ask, which country? (2001:3)

In this section, I examine the contradictions inherent in Justin's sense of place in Macau and among its elite Portuguese speaking Catholic communities, his career as a senior Indian chef and his orbit of the delta's South Asian buyers and importers. First, I will explore the transformation of Catholic food in Macau, highlighting how it is changing in some places and becoming more conservative and inward-looking in others, revealing to Justin a very Indian city. Next, I will examine Justin's cognitive working space and how the serving Mughlai-Punjabi food, present boundaries imposed on him by curriculum and market expectations.

Noticing and interacting with Macau's Catholicism is a commonplace practice among its visitors, where tourists use locally distributed maps that help them visit Macau's churches and chapels. The Ruins of St Paul's Cathedral, which has become the emblem for Macau's official tourism literature. The act of noticing and interacting with Macau's Catholicism is also shot through with privilege, culinary subjectivities and ethnicity. Justin is a practicing Catholic from Kerala, where Syro-Malabar Catholicism - a denomination attached to the migration of the Eastern Orthodox Church and different Latin Catholic denominations in

Kerala that grew out of Portuguese contact and conversion on the Malabar coast - have created their own interactive space and trajectory for food and festivities along with Hindu majorities (Dempsey 2001). As a result of this openness, Justin and his family have found a space in Macau's Latin Catholic community. Justin and his wife spend their leisure time volunteering at the local care home which is run by the Catholic charity Caritas, where Justin cooks Sunday lunch. In autumn he puts chicken drumsticks out to dry on his home's balcony in preparation. The Church manages the majority of schools in the territory. Like other elites in the territory such as the Goan, Daman and Diu community, Justin and his wife are aware of the difference between educational standards for rich and poor students, and they send their daughters to the better Catholic schools.

For Justin, eating out with his family is a luxury afforded him because his position and the remuneration at the Venetian means that he can support their dependent visa status. Lunches together at cheap, local Macanese cafes are somewhat a guilty pleasure, particularly dishes of beef curry noodle and curry *chamuças* (pastries that are filled with spiced vegetables and meat and bear a resemblance to samosas). 'Actually, I think Macanese food is very Indian,' Justin tells me. Cafes display large photos of their dishes on their front windows. These pictures are mainly of various curry and rice dishes like turmeric-yellow baked rice, spiced fried mince and potatoes, as well as other wrapped pastries, curry soup noodle dishes and steamed greens. Their names are in traditional Chinese characters, Portuguese and English, evoking a culinary nexus of religion, Lusophone colonialism and irony with names such as *diabo*, often translated as devil's curry.

Justin bases his notion that this nexus can be considered to be Indian much like Boileau does, on the historical dynamics of conversion and acculturation in South India. For Boileau, in Goa, even at the height of violent Portuguese colonial catholic conversion in the early 1500s, local dynamics were more important in culinary and religious acculturation projects. Koli fisherman retained much of their traditional culture and although Catholic, did not eat pork or beef' (2010: 339). Dempsey's (2001) study of contemporary Kerala converges with Boileau. Both agree that Catholic foods practices were flexible

and adapted to local norms. Catholic feast days in Kerala enhance traditional patterns of cooking and eating; including among followers of the extant Eastern Orthodox Church on the Malabar coast. These have created powerful ambiguities that complicate native-coloniser dichotomies (Appadurai 1988b).

Catholic food itself is a transforming category in Macau. Political and personal projects question whether Macanese food, constructed as a hybrid of various Lusophone influences is synonymous with Portuguese religious, cultural and culinary dominance. On the one hand, there are state heritage projects that are carefully separating Macanese food from its Catholic associations to demonstrate a more complicated history. In media coverage accompanying the application to inscribe Macanese food to Macau and China's intangible cultural heritage list, local spokespersons unequivocally state that 'Macanese food is multicultural and secular' (Macau Daily Times 2014). At the same time, Catholic food practices, even denuded of their ritualistic impetus, remain a marker for the socially mobile.

The cheap, local Macanese cafes that Justin and his family frequent reflect a historical nexus of Portuguese cooking and poverty in Macau. Boileau (2010) posits that to be Catholic, and to eat like a Catholic, ties a large number of disparate people together. Historically these disparate people included priests, soldiers and traders. Wealthier households could perform their Portuguese identity with often-imported meat, bread, wine, condiments and flavourings from a wide range of vertically aligned port cities, and less so by cooking hybrid foods themselves. As a crucial point, during the slave trade until the late 1800s, as both wealthy and poorer households absorbed slaves and dark-skinned domestic servants, it was a social risk to be seen to be cooking. Within such hierarchies of race, class, religion and role, it was still possible to feel part of Macau's Portuguese identity. '[in] humbler households, Portuguese culinary influence might amount to no more than a piece of bread to dip into a bowl of curry' (2010: 286).

Macau hosts nearly one thousand cafes serving a menu which features Macanese foods (Yuen, et al 2017). They comprise nearly half of all restaurants

in Macau, which generate receipts totalling MOP 10.04bn (£1bn) every year. Hardly any of the Portuguese-speaking elites in Macau own any of these cheap cafes, although some own high-end eateries and restaurants. Rather than reflect the transformation of home cooking in Catholic households in Macau into a commodity in the public sphere, these cheaper cafes are metonyms for Macau's growing social ills. These social ills include gambling driven prostitution and drug and alcohol use. Macau's new casino-based wealth is largely due to the influx of Chinese gamblers and since the Portuguese handover of Macau to China in 1999, these cafes are seen as becoming Sinicised (Boileau 2010). Because of the ambiguous culinary identity of these cafés, Chinese visitors from the mainland are often ignorant of the existence of Macanese foods (Augustin-Jean 2002).

When I ask friends in the Goan, Daman and Diuese (GDD) community why there are no GDD cafes in Macau, they tell me that professional cooking is not a high-status occupation, reflecting a general conservatism among Portuguese speaking elites in Macau when it comes to food and cooking. This is partly supported by colonial legacies. For example, the Cultural Association of Goa, Daman and Diu, privately cooked food by amateur yet passionate cooks are at the heart of public celebrations. Feast days are still part of a public celebration in Macau, and there are large street processions. One of the biggest celebrations is the 'Feast and Novena of Our Lady of Fatima', marking apparitions of Lady of Fatima in Portugal in 1917, itself a product of Portuguese colonial politics in the 1930s. During this decade the Portuguese government shifted from anti-clerical republican government to authoritarian rule under Salazar, promoting Our Lady of Fatima as a religio-cultural yardstick with which to judge loyalty and exert social discipline in Portugal and its colonies. The Our Lady of Fatima procession and its associated feast remains a preeminent highlight of Portuguese speaking elites at the Cultural Association of Goa, Daman and Diu in Macau. Though a Catholic feast day, the association itself promotes local ties and Hindu Goans, Damanese and Diuese also attend. The feast has mostly taken place in church vestries, and such an arrangement relies on the community

maintaining good relations with the Diocesan clergy, and good relations are by no means a given.

The feast itself is only partly home-cooked with over half the items bought from Macanese cafés (see chapter five). While their presence on the table indicates that they pass for foods appropriate for a Catholic celebration, the Goan, Damanese and Diuese community association would dispute these foods as being Indian. It recalls a place that those in the Goan, Damanese and Diuese community left after the conflict of 1962 in territories which saw Portuguese colonial authority end and a central, Nehruvian Hindu authority take over.

For Baldassar and Pyke such sustained connections with the homeland interrupt cognitive relationships within the diaspora (2014). Among the Australian-Italian groups they study the tensions related to home emerge in a competition to claim an Italian identity while abroad. In Macau the challenge is to transcend Indian identity and India as a place which is highly contingent, its current form based on political upheaval and unpredictable developments (Markovits 2008).

In reality, Indian tour groups do not think of Macau as very Indian as there are only five Indian restaurants in the city, compared to Hong Kong where there are more than 50. Mostly the five restaurants offer a standard menu of Mughlai-Punjabi dishes and a few dishes from other regions to attract these tourists, and Chef Justin Paul's Golden Peacock is among them. Gambling and gaming revenues have fallen since Chinese Premier Xi Jinping took leadership of the Communist Party on an anti-corruption manifesto. Conspicuous consumption, such as indulging in a visible gambling habit, was fuelled by the introduction of the Individual Visa Scheme after the SARS crisis, which released mainland tourists from the burden of visiting Macau and Hong Kong only in tour groups. Now, conspicuous consumption was considered a risky activity considering the greater scrutiny under which the political classes and private entrepreneurs found themselves. Thus the numerous Indian tour groups have become unlikely saviours of South Asian fare in Macau, including at Golden Peacock and the Venetian, packing the hotel during Indian school holidays. Justin recounts how

large numbers of guests ask to sit in the same seats as Indian film actors Shah Rukh Khan or Priyanka Chopra since the Venetian hosted the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards in 2009 and 2013.

Justin, having comprehended the size of furniture tourism from his trader friends in Macau and Guangzhou, was at the Venetian for five years as a general sous chef before the senior management team agreed to his proposal to launch the Golden Peacock. In doing so, he returned to the status of Indian chef, a status that in other parts of the delta would be regarded as a secure, if marginalised and sub-optimal position. A few years ago he would have also agreed. Leaving international hotel work as a European chef in Goa for work as a head chef in South Asian restaurants in Hong Kong mid-career was a shock. As if quoting directly from Fine (2009), Justin describes the long hours and the monotony of only cooking Indian food.

Although Justin still cooks as a senior chef, the Golden Peacock also needs his cognitive work, placing him in the middle of competing Hindu, Muslim and Catholic appetites. The associated tension is taken up by Dempsey who examines the Kerala tourist board phrase 'Kerala - God's Own Country' in light of the state's bounty of religion and produce. This bounty also reveals the problematic ways that religions are both interdependent and at odds. This is a theme taken up somewhat by Osella and Osella (2008) who cast Kerala as an exceptional state in South India in that the base diet appears to be non-vegetarian. This base diet connects Christians, Muslims and Hindus through rice, fish and beef, while at the same time enabling a violent pursuit of the beef taboo in the state. Vegetarianism, hospitality and other practices, expose religious difference, although Osella and Osella are careful not to position Christian food practices as some form of mediating force in a widening split between Hindu and Muslim Keralan food. Looking out from the Hindu majoritarian orthopraxy in the hinterland of Travancore that they describe, Christians are considered reliably centrist compared to Muslim eaters who 'eat anything, they're all mixed up' (2008: 178). Christians partake in *sambar*, a rich, spiced vegetable stew which, despite being a hot food according to orthodox Hindu food systems and therefore problematic, is iconic and everyday. It is a

dish often eaten with fermented preparations, such as steamed rice and fermented rice and lentil cakes called *idli*. Such fermentation processes are far too close to alcohol production for Muslims to partake in the public practice of eating *idli-sambar* for breakfast. In coastal Khozicode (formerly Calicut), it is the Hindu orthodoxies that remain private, while in the public domain Muslim modes of sociality are embraced more, based on an Arab maritime culture. In their few references to Christian practices, Osella and Osella (2008) highlight how in Christian hotels one can eat the dish beef dry fry, and drink brandy in Christian homes. Despite their interdependence in local food products and despite the ways that coconut, black pepper and curry leaves are materials that link several different food cultures in South Asia and elsewhere, it is rhetoric about food that sharpens division.

As if contending directly with Osella and Osella's (2008) thesis that in the vastness of the Keralan diet Christian food is not the golden rule, Justin introduces his pickles both at the restaurant and at home as Keralan, rather than Christian. It is a geographic rather than a religious distinction, an approach that defines other aspects of Justin's life in Macau. He picks his team of chefs at the Venetian by carving India into 13 culinary zones for 17 chefs, based on their birth state, to represent each zone in their cooking, adhering to the culinary stereotypes attributed to the cooks and the eaters in these states. 'We have chefs from all the different regions in India, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari' - a phrase he repeats a lot, with an explanation of precisely where Kanyakumari is - for the Macanese media that assemble to mark every seasonal menu change. His biryani expert is from Hyderabad, a region famous for biryani, and his dessert chef is a young Muslim Bengali raised just outside Kolkata, again a region that takes pride in sweets and desserts. He encourages them to rethink home cooking, and borrow ideas from other Michelin-starred chefs. The chaat on the menu is called 'chickpea caviar', the chickpeas are placed deliberately among purple and yellow edible flowers and pink pomegranate seeds with a tweezer. For this kind of intensive work to take place, there are also six chefs from China, from Qingdao, Chongqing, Guilin and two from Guangdong, including Guangzhou and Zhuhai. He is candid about the crucial supporting work they do

which includes plating the food at the pass and working in commis positions peeling and cutting vegetables and boiling stocks and syrups.

Justin's authority, however, comes from being an Indian chef. He makes it clear when we discuss how I can help him write his biography for a personal website he is building in order to leverage the Golden Peacock's Michelin star. I never quite finish this task; my first few attempts at Justin's biography were not right. I had focused too much on Justin's Michelin star - an award he feels has little value in India. He tells me 'I am an Indian chef' when he reads the introductory paragraph, disagreeing with my focus on Kerala as a basis for his pickle celebrations.

As if to underline this transmutation, Justin's celebrated 100-pickle station is gone, and a more modest version is in the kitchen to add as condiments to other dishes. Despite his Keralan roots and his careful ethno-regional divide in the kitchen, Justin is the one to cook the specialities from Goa, and some of these dishes use his prawn pickle. For his employers, the distinction is of no consequence, and, to some extent, reflects the vision of culinary training and the 'interethnic dining' sphere (Appadurai 1988a: 7) of the culinary lexicon of India's Hindu and Muslim middle classes. These middle classes are offered a reasonably recognisable Indian restaurant menu because it bases itself on a Hindu food hierarchy that privileges vegetarianism and absents beef, pork, and buffalo (Chigateri 2008) by only offering halal chicken, lamb and fish on the standard menu. Under such a restricted schema the Cultural Association of Goa, Daman and Diu, Macau, known for their big culinary blowouts and large-scale hospitality, rarely host their regular community dinners at his restaurant.

Although it is through a Christian lens that Justin inaugurates his food, his own Christian identity has always been highly adaptable, reflecting the Catholicism of Macau. Catholic food is transforming in a city where colonial, religious, cultural and culinary identities are shifting and a Macanese café culture is booming. And yet there is a sensory and somatic truth to Macau, revealed in the way that café foods are spiced. This Indian-ness transforms Macau into something of a pork and beef playground, but the manifestation of this social

world within the role of an Indian chef is complicated. In Macau, Indian food is a small but booming sector, and there are expectations to reach - and to flout. Its sanskritised hierarchies are too narrow for a chef with Justin's wide ranging culinary practice.

Tamil-Chinese Fast food – idlis in Hong Kong

In this section, I focus on the experience of a Tamil vegetarian fast food restaurant franchisee. He is not a chef, and the nature of the franchise model limits his ability to adapt the menu and how he serves it. The only aspect he can control is the location and decor. He has chosen an area of Hong Kong that is both a long standing South Asian neighbourhood, as well as a hub for South Asian tourists on their way to Macau or Guangzhou.

Nandy posits that 'the Indian fast food industry is not new' (2004: 12), suggesting street food vending in colonial presidency towns qualify. At the same time, independence and partitioning in the North have enlarged the influence of South India as the increasingly national standard of fast food, encapsulated by the fermented rice and lentil cakes *idl*, which are prepared slowly and but cooked swiftly and to order in a steamer. There are frequent comparisons in South Asian media drawn between South Indian fast food chain Taram Cuvai (hereafter Tarams) and western chains such as KFC and Pizza Hut.

That Tarams (as the chain is known) and McDonald's would meet each other in a bustling borough was preordained. The first is a home-grown chain with 19 outlets across three Indian cities, a presence in Dubai, Singapore, Ontario and Mountain View in California, estimated revenues of Rs 300 crore, and global aspirations. The other is a \$15.5 billion (Rs 71,300 crore) multinational corporation with 30,000 outlets in 119 countries (Vivek 2003)

Mr Nabeel is both Tamil and Muslim and has lived in Hong Kong since the late 1980's, one of the few remaining Tamil families whose primary business is still gemstone trading. Gem trading has been lucrative to South Asian Tamils in Hong Kong and has helped support the transition of whole families to Hong Kong in ways that other types of commodity trading and work has not. He has

permanent residency in Hong Kong and holds an Indian passport, which is something of an anomaly since his friends have applied and were granted British National Overseas status prior to the handover. He is a nationalist but believes in a Nehruvian pluralist India, which makes him different from supporters of Hindu nationalism at home and abroad.

However, the franchise's very presence reflects his long-standing yet fluctuating identity as a diaspora subject himself. At the same time, the opening of a Tarams in Hong Kong marks a shift in the dynamics of South Asian diaspora in Hong Kong and Hong Kong's place for reckoning with South Asia. Mr Nabeel is clear that there is no economic imperative to move from a two-decade long career as a gem trader in Hong Kong to becoming a franchisee of South Indian vegetarian restaurant chain. Instead, he considers this a paean to Tamil identity east of South Asia, a challenge to northern Indian vegetarian orthodoxy, and a fine-grained celebration of the role of western fast food for Muslims in Hong Kong. It is far less about the food, and more about practices and purity. As such, his work presents a vehicle for knowledge transmission between diaspora and food and its micro dimensions (Baldassar and Pyke 2014).

The franchisee, Mr Nabeel, explains that 'Our culture is 'looking east', reaffirming the centrality of Chennai and the eastern littoral to the long term and centuries old business of building links with China. According to Mr Nabeel, under the patronage of powerful Chola kings, Tamil merchants - many of them Muslim - took a controlling stake of the intra-Asian trade in cotton, sugar, ivory and black pepper in the Middle Ages. A network that included Tamil and Chinese traders linked Guangzhou and Quanzhou with Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu and ripened Indochina as a platform for culinary exchange even during European colonialism. In particular this network resulted in an 'exchange of ideas, exchange of people, exchange of food. So it is basically that the steamed food is coming from this'.

Mr Nabeel is not alone in signalling Tamil food as an outlier even among India's diverse regional cuisines. S. Meenakshi Ammal published the first Tamil cookbook in 1951 and subtitled it the 'classic guide to Tamil cuisine'. The book,

a seminal collection of 100 Tamil recipes for steamed rice cakes, rice porridge and stews, starts with absolutely no preamble, refusing a centre-periphery orientation of later cookbooks (Appadurai 1988a). In his compendium of Indian foods and their origins, Indian food historian K T Achaya (1994) suggests that Tamil food can only be regarded as foreign, that idli probably came from Indonesia and has a lot in common with Chinese rice balls. Cultural scholar Nandy notes that, for these thoughts, Achaya faced criticism by Hindu nationalists (2004: 11). Nationalist discourses have deepened in recent times now that India is making a case for UNESCO and newspaper articles proclaim that South Indian food, such as *idlis*, is fundamentally Indian, more so than other contenders such as khichdi. 'Khichdi is not an Indian or even a subcontinental dish. It came to India 2200-2500 years ago from China' (The Hindu, 2017).

There are no other tangible gestures to this shared food culture at Taram Cuvai in Hong Kong. Items such as kozhukatta resemble *zhima tangyuan* (芝麻湯圓, Zhīma tāngyuán), or steamed Cantonese sesame seed-filled and sweetened rice balls, and are missing from the standard international menu. Moreover, even *idli* is ambiguous. On the one hand, it fits the category of a 'tiffin' or snack food associated with foreign fast foods in Hong Kong. Devasahayem (2003) confirms that Tamil Hindus' households in Malaysia consider *idlis* and other soft, moist foods as proper foods, fit for the dining table, while crispy food, their exact opposite, and are considered snacks or periphery items. Mr Nabeel could not change formulations or cooking techniques to highlight the similarities. Kitchen equipment such as steamers are also supplied, made to the specifications as demanded by the formulations. Chefs are also flown in from Chennai, where they are trained for two years to cook using formulations and equipment.

The launch of the franchise marks a shift in what it means for South Asians to culturally belong to Hong Kong, interacting with a public taste in a way that interrupts racial hierarchies. Much like his passport, Mr Nabeel's choice to launch a Taram Cuvai brand in Hong Kong is not disinterested. He shares with me his concerns, as a Tamil Muslim, about the rise of the Bharata Janata Party (BJP). This rise means that the Nehruvian pluralism of post-Independence India is being rolled back. A new nationalist India, and a northern-style sanskritised

monolithic culture is being promoted at the expense of Tamil and South Indian, and Indian Muslim identity.

Mr Nabeel's launch of Tarams is a coded pushback using cultural and culinary strength of Tamil South India, but it also symbolises a paradox. While helping to dismantle well-established Brahmanical caste taboos related to cooking and eating in South India, Tarams does so by cooking and serving a strictly vegetarian menu, and therefore continuing the beef and pork taboos that are deeply embedded in the BJP's culinary philosophies. Udupi hotels had proved popular because they had ritualised the Hindu-Brahmin purity complex as a part of restaurant dining. Their main innovation was in the attention given to caste, with the highest ranking jobs in the kitchen given to Brahmins. At the same time orthodoxies relating to segregated dining proved unpopular in Madras (now Chennai), and Dravidian political activism, secularisation and the dearth of Brahmin cooks and what they call 'ethnic succession' has transformed Udupi hotels, particularly in cities outside of Karnataka (Madsen & Gardella 2012). In Bombay (now Mumbai), middle caste Karnataka Bunt families and Goan women acquired such places, transforming Udupi restaurants with the introduction of alcohol (illicitly), Chinese noodles and western pizza. Despite the changes, the Udupi restaurants continued to promote traditional Hindu orthodox atmospherics.

Tarams sits within a diasporic space defined by its adherence to vegetarianism. Vegetarianism is becoming normalised in parts of China. Jakob Klein (2017) notes that there has been a growth in vegetarian restaurants in major Chinese cities. In mainland China, the restaurants that define themselves as Buddhist articulate with a search for traditional forms of moral guidance in the face of food scandals. In Hong Kong, while the vernacular press has focused on the growth in veganism and vegetarianism (Moon 2017). In reality, Eleanor Holroyd suggests that the elderly mostly pursues vegetarianism (2002). This is as a result of the long-term stress placed on Confucian family practices of looking after older relatives in the home, which subsequently kept the colonial welfare bill relatively small. Mr Nabeel estimates that there are always quite a few local Cantonese diners at lunch and, together with European diners,

comprise 30-40% of restaurant customers. At the same time the restaurant is on valuable land in Tsim Sha Tsui: 'We needed to be near the Golden Mile'. There are now two kinds of Golden Mile, one comprising dilapidated mansions built during the 1960s under British rule, among which is Chungking Mansions, where Muslim Tamils cook *haleem* wheat and lamb porridge for Muslim West African and Southeast Asian traders during Ramadan. The other Golden Mile comprises museums and shopping malls built since the handover. Tarams is in the middle geographically but also in culinary terms. Woodlands and Branto are restaurants cut for the cloth of the colonial club. Tarams seeks to displace older styles of Tamil dining in Hong Kong. The restaurants Woodlands which opened in 1981, and Branto which opened in 1991, epitomise this older style by rejecting the bazaar style socio-economies defined life South Asian vegetarian and non-pork eating life in Hong Kong.

Mr Nabeel takes me around the restaurant space – a space that he had complete control over; the paint on the walls, the lighting fixtures, the style and colour of the banquets and even the height of the tables. The restaurant looks like a casual dining space: brightly lit, lightly coloured, with stylish chairs and tables and booths, and from the tables to the tiled floor, it is scrupulously clean. Neither smoking nor drinking alcohol is allowed. It is he tells me, an upscale McDonalds. This description signals that Mr Nabeel is aware of the dynamic status of McDonalds transnationally and in Hong Kong, suggesting that Tarams is no simple copy of the concept. It reflects Mr Nabeel and his family's position among the 200 Tamil families in Hong Kong and within an even smaller group of Tamil Muslims, but a larger and growing number of South Asian, Filipino, Indonesian and Chinese Muslims comprising the 300,000 Muslims in Hong Kong. He tells me they share the same concerns with finding trustworthy halal meat and prepared food. As a result, they often choose to eat vegetarian food when eating out (O'Connor 2012).

Yet it is Taram's embrace of fast food is more in keeping with new generations of Tamil Muslims in Hong Kong, who look for vegetarian-enough establishments that allow them to conspicuously partake in public taste. For Paul O'Connor (2012) examining how South Asian Muslim's attempt to belong in Hong Kong,

the long queues of Muslim teenagers in McDonald's central Hong Kong are a sign that young Muslims are willing to live with uncertainty and ambivalence. If there is anxiety about eating food in Hong Kong, these anxieties are not offset by greater ability to speak Cantonese and interact in public taste but are actually heightened by confusions among Muslims about Cantonese food, particularly around the purity and acceptability of fish dim sum and fish ball snacks. State level approval for halal certification, the credentials displayed by restaurants and cafes in Chungking Mansions, among which are Tamil Muslim chains from Singapore, is not always trusted. There are some ironies in the juxtaposition of Tarams with McDonald's in Hong Kong. For Muslims, McDonald's in the city has been a contested site. Associations have long called for local branches to offer an entirely halal meat menu after successfully advocating for the chain to switch to deep-frying with vegetable oil rather than lard, a decision that McDonald's has made in both Singapore and Malaysia.

Much like the branches of McDonalds discussed by Watson (1997) and Yan (1997), Mr Nabeel's Tarams reflects an efficiency and straightforwardness of fast food in Hong Kong. The restaurant offers a relatively conservative menu compared to those offered in Chennai or Singapore. In the latter cities, menus typically feature close to two hundred items. The branches operate on a high volume, low margin basis which demands that the customers know what they want and order and eat quickly. Each branch is supplied with standard formulations and recipes, tested and set in the central kitchens in Chennai. The overall experience is one of efficiency, or as Yan describes, employees worked an ethic that was easily understood and appropriated as local in Beijing considering the continued somatic impact of the work unit canteen. These items have since become standard dishes across Hong Kong's South Asian restaurant sector including *idli-sambar*, filled and plain flatbreads, a variety of *dosas* and vegetarian curries such as *palak paneer*. The kitchen is partially visible from the pass, but the glimpses of cooks operating machinery that this affords serves to reflect Debouzy's summation of McDonald's that kitchen layouts and tasks, knowledge hierarchies, and social organisation are secrets (2006).

It differs from McDonald's in Hong Kong, where restaurants are typically located at street level; Taram Cuvai is on the fourth floor of an office building. The eatery is not alone in taking advantage of cheap rents associated with the unluckiest number in Hong Kong's vertically oriented restaurant sector. There are other differences with a typical western fast-food restaurant. Staff show diners to their table, take their order and refill their water glasses; the food is not cooked particularly quickly, and it is brought to the diner's table. Their trays are cleared away at the end of the meal by waiting staff, and they pay for their food when they leave.

However, there are ways in which Taram Cuvai takes a more typically fast-food approach to dining than McDonald's in Hong Kong. Mr Nabeel sits with me during lunch service and points these differences out, indicating where modern Chennai-style eating coalesces with in eating out in Hong Kong as well as in Europe, North America and Singapore where other branches of the chain are based. Over the hour, he points out the table service, the use of western style cutlery, the choice of bread with accompaniments that signals snack food or tiffin, or rice with accompaniments that signal a full meal for both Chennai and Hong Kong-oriented diners - make it particularly suited to the Hong Kong's environment. Like Watson, Mr Nabeel declares, in Hong Kong fast food restaurants, people like to sit first and order later. Here also grandparents maintain their role as primary caregivers to their grandchildren but also maintain distinctive rice based-utensil cultures (1997). The low-status role of clearing up after oneself, performed by Cantonese staff or by South Asian women, the manipulation with food with bare hands, the idea of bread as a main meal, and the generational conflict that arises when older people express these normativities to their younger dining companions - are all then avoided. Eating at Taram Cuvai is very much a local fast food experience.

Nepali Wontons? Making momos in Guangzhou.

Chef Shakya further complicates notions of work identity, diaspora and micro-dimensions of knowledge in that he is an ethnic minority within an ethnic minority. Shakya is from Kathmandu, Nepal, one of only 50 families of Nepalis

living in Guangzhou. He has only recently graduated from culinary school with a one-year diploma in culinary arts and arrived in Guangzhou in the vanguard – other Nepalis have settled here after him. His culinary education mirrors Justin Paul, in that he knows how to make European, Chinese and other Asian food. Also, like Justin, he cooks Indian food in what is, for the most part, an Indian restaurant in Guangzhou in order to feed those in furniture tourism circulation.

Shakya is an Indian chef by occupation, in that he is working in an Indian restaurant, but is a Hindu Nepali. He has much in common with powerful, Hindu Sindhi communities in Guangzhou, but, as a foreign worker in a small enterprise, he works every day from mid-morning until late at night. What he sees of Guangzhou he sees mostly from the pass. The menu at the restaurant features standard Mughlai-Punjabi items but with a few additions that highlight his and the owner Nepali nationality. One of the most contentious is the *momo*.

The restaurant owner, Mr Pillai, is Nepali and purposefully sought a Nepali chef although there are few additions to the menu that reflect this in a standard Mughlai-Punjabi menu. These ambitions reveal the restaurant and Shakya's role in building a future Nepali diaspora rather than a past or present community. However, when Shakya invites me to 'hang out' in the kitchen with him after lunch service, he decides to show me how to make *momos*. *Momos* is on the restaurant's bilingual Chinese and English menu, but reflecting something of its complicated biography it is translated into Chinese 云吞 (*yún tūn*) or in its more popular Cantonese pronunciation, wonton. These indicate that *momos* have a Chinese equivalent, but that language and etymology remain different. Little Papa as Little India discarded other options such as 摸摸 (*mō mō*) which is both homophonic and carries a meaning (to gently touch) that is suitably disassociated from anything Chinese and food-based. As Watson states, transliteration into meaningless homophonic characters is a delicate process, one which demands that 'any speaker of Chinese will instantly recognize [...] as the transliteration of a foreign name' (1997: 83). And yet, to include chicken *momos*/*yún tūn* made with halal meat in the otherwise standard Indian menu of a Nepali-owned restaurant employing a Nepali chef makes a space for *momos* among numerous styles of dumplings that have become a Guangzhou speciality.

Restaurants are social spaces, but they are also spaces where different kinds of boundaries can be erected. Shakya and his manager are aware that *momos* are seldom ordered by the Sindhis in Guangzhou – by far the largest group in the South Asian population of the city. This mobilisation of specific dishes to signal other kinds of identity is reflective of the present-day work that Bangladeshi restaurateurs are doing in London (Pottier 2014).

Shakya's neighbours and his social world continue to be his Cantonese co-workers and their friends. Shakya's work life leaves no time for leisure. What he learns about Guangzhou and its Sindhi population who have been in the city for almost two decades, he learns during his breaks when he gossips with the restaurant owner and colleagues. Stories about Sindhi traders border on the fanciful. He lives in a shared apartment a few minutes away from Little Papa as Little India (hereafter Little Papa), the restaurant where he is the chef. He shares the apartment with the restaurant manager Sushil and another Nepali chef, and the rent comes directly out of his artificially inflated wages. The apartment is in one of the most expensive places in Guangzhou, right in the heart of the city's new business and entertainment district. Shakya's apartment, along with his Chinese work and residency permit, is renewable every year and is attached to his employment in Little Papa. He works every day, being only one of two chefs that are employed in the kitchen, each taking turns in running the lunch or dinner service. He is at the restaurant almost sixteen hours a day and he assumes more of an occupational identity than Fine's interlocutors (2009). In Guangzhou, the number of foreign work permits allowed per business is attached to its reported turnover. Typically, South Asian restaurants in Guangzhou report a turnover that furnishes them with two or three foreign work permits. With so few chefs in Guangzhou, including those who have some experience in training Chinese speaking kitchen staff, restaurateurs are always worried that their chefs will leave or a competitor will poach them. In response, restaurateurs tell me they are making 'gold from lead' by relying on slim human resources.

Although Little Papa is keen to promote itself as a standard Indian restaurant, there is much political work that its menu does. Eventually however, Little Papa

hopes to remove 'as a Little India'. Despite the lack of Nepalis living in Guangzhou - Shakya knows of only a dozen, including those that work at Little Papa - Nepal has opened their second Chinese consulate in the city, after the consulate in Lhasa. *Momos* have a complicated biography, but few would describe *momos* as Indian food. Popular discourses give *momos* several points of origin, including in Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan, a broad and approximate regional and ethnic identity the scope of which is shared with other stuffed and filled foods, such as pork dumplings, *pelmeni* and *pirozhki* that have been called on to do imprecise national work (Avieli 2005; Caldwell 2002). Buffalo is used as *momo* fillings in some regions, and there are different shapes and flours. Those that are larger and made with coarser flours are said to be 'rustic' and Himalayan, signalling at a variety of ethnic and class boundaries. Its biography has become increasingly politicised in regions in northern India that are already troubled by violent conflict. In efforts to rid the streets of Jammu and Kashmir of *momo* sellers, which plays into wider discourses of public meat consumption, the *Hindu Times* reports that a local politician of the BJP includes *momos* in a category he calls 'monosodium glutamate-filled cancer-causing Chinese cuisine' (Khajuria 2017).

When I ask Shakya if his method is similar to those he has observed in Guangzhou, he tells me that he has learned his technique from his mother. *Momo*-making was not taught within the curriculum of his culinary certificate, although Chinese dumplings were. He tells me that there are lots of similarities in the technique of wrapping, but Nepalis are much better at making the filling tasty. With this, Shakya offers a complicated biography of filled dumplings both in Nepal and in Guangzhou that nonetheless signal at a shared culinary sphere of the menu's playful etymology.

Shakya has been working in Little Papa in Guangzhou for almost a year by the time he agrees to give me my first lesson in *momo*-making. First, Shakya assembles the ingredients. From the store, he brings out a packaged *momo* spice blend produced by Mumbai-based Everest Spice. It is a shortcut in the style of restaurants everywhere (Fine 2009), but also a necessity. Although there are several recipes and types of filling for *momo*, which underscores their disputed

origins, Shakya prefers the recipes that use fresh coriander. As discussed in Chapter Two, fresh foods rarely make it across the border. In other cases, industrial processed ingredients are crucial. In her study of laksa in Hong Kong, Wa (2012) notes that ready-made sauces and curry powders are essential in the act of localising Malaysian food into tea café culture, but also in acts of orchestration across the menu. Left-over marinated vegetables from one dish is used in another to add flavour and quicken cooking time. As Fine notes '[a] key skill is knowing those techniques that transform a difficult, time-consuming task into one that is easier without loss of quality' (2009:30). Likewise, to help these region-specific chefs deliver a 'national' menu, and to make them more efficient, some restaurant kitchens in Guangzhou rely on pre-prepared spice mixes. This is a rather elegant solution in a context where Indian and Pakistani spice mixes are already distributed so that South Asian families in Guangzhou can prepare 'restaurant and public standard' food dishes at home.

On the stainless steel countertop, Shakya mixes *maida*, or wheat flour, with a little salt, making a well in the flour mix and adding oil. Then he slowly adds warm water and works the mixture until he forms a ball. He covers the dough and places it in the cold store for 15 minutes. Next, he starts mincing the chicken thighs. He does this with two knives, turning the thighs one way and the rotating them again, cutting ever-finer criss-cross patterns into the meat. He gradually incorporates onions, garlic, ginger and chillies, and after placing these ingredients in a bowl, adds the Everest spice mix. When the dough has increased in size, he works it, stretching and flinging it hard against the stainless steel worktop that grips and lengthens the dough. Once stuffed, the dumplings are sealed with a twist and pinched together at the top, in a satchel pleated style that is a replica of small round *xiao long bao* or soup dumplings. These are then steamed in multi-layered stainless steel steaming baskets for ten minutes. From start to finish Shakya can serve a plate of *momos* to order in about 25 minutes - by far the longest waiting time for any dish on Little Papa's extensive menu, which only has five other Nepali items, such as *sel* bread. Of the South Asian restaurants in Guangzhou, all offering a standard *qingzhen*-certified

Punjabi-Mughlai fare, only the six-restaurant chain of Little Papa differs in offering *momos*.

Numerous times I ask Shakya to come with me and my university friends to dumpling restaurants in Guangzhou so that Shakya can offer us his analysis of the difference between *momos* and dumplings in a more convivial atmosphere. Each time he declines telling me that he finds Chinese dumplings are not good to eat. For others, filled dumplings are a cause for concern. In recent times, the already troubled relationship between China and Japan worsened when it emerged that a disgruntled factory worker had poisoned a shipment headed for Japan and people fell sick (Smith 2015). Commentators have argued that Fruit Chan's 2004 horror film *Dumplings* - in which the protagonist harvests aborted foetuses in China to cook into her health-giving, rejuvenating dumplings to give to a coterie of vain older customers in Hong Kong - allegorises China's possible cannibalising of essential aspects of Hong Kong identity. Nonetheless, filled dumplings, as part of a corpus of dim sum items, continue to be a signature food of Guangzhou (Klein 2007). This is a signature food of the public sphere usually made by professionals, although Klein notes that the boundaries between the two are often blurred, with people buying dumplings to eat at home alongside other home-cooked foods. With the rise in the number and influence of supermarkets, there are also now a large number of factories producing fresh, frozen dumpling skins for home cooks. These dumpling skins are used in other Nepali restaurants, for example at Momo Café in Yuen Long, Hong Kong.

However, as Klein (2006) notes, filled dumplings, and their embedding within dim sum and teahouse culture, represents a temporality in Guangzhou, specifically an index as to its socio-economic vulnerabilities. While regional flavours such as Chaozhou cuisine are positioned as refined and are found at the higher end of the socio-economic spectrum of consumption, filled dumplings and other dim sum items continue to offer a reasonably-priced meal. "Hong Kong-style", a term that prefixed the dim sum items, such as filled dumplings, in the past, was dropped in the 1990s. This is an era food journalists argued when Guangzhou had emerged in its own right as a dim sum centre despite the slowing economy.

If the goal for restaurants is to find the best outcome at the lowest price (Fine 1992) then *momos* continue to be problematic. For all of this, the menu on offer at the restaurant out-prices the average Guangzhou resident. Rents have increased, wages are high as they also incorporate living costs in some of the most expensive areas in Guangzhou. For these reasons, as well as the reliance on expensive spice runners from Chungking Mansions to Guangzhou and beyond, food prices are high, resulting in the price of RMB\$50 for eight filled dumplings. *Momos* play at being an ordinary food, but represent hopes for a future affluent Nepali diaspora

Conclusion – Indian chef as identity, ambition as ordinary

Is there a link between professional chefs and other flows of cooks, culinary ideas and ingredients in the Pearl River Delta? How do these chefs process history and work through the extant diaspora of the cities in which they work? In order to tackle these questions, this chapter has engaged with arguments put forward by Fine (2009) and Ray (2016) and Baldassar and Pyke (2014) where contexts and work define chef and restaurateur practices and their identities.

The dishes that the subjects of this chapter chose, and their settings, were deliberately provocative. These choices comprise dishes that fall outside of the traditional Mughlai-Punjabi corpus. Prawn pickle, filled dumplings, fermented and steamed rice and lentil cakes are discursively and materially produced as foods that escape the strict boundaries of Indian cuisine. Justin, Mr Nabeel and Shakya are all aware of the contradictions that emerge. Yet these three interlocutors are a picture of ‘moral perfectionism as striving’ (Das 2010: 378). Justin recreates Macanese food as ‘Indian’. At the same time, his menu, and the way that he manages his kitchen staff as representations of regional culinary stereotypes underlines his dependence on standard culinary skills, including among his Chinese sous chefs. Mr Nabeel has a franchisee’s meticulous pre-occupation with his restaurant’s origin stories. While his origin stories use Tamil food as evidence of South India’s powerful naval history and a shared sea-borne culture with China, his choice of menu, location and decor reflect a recent past of Hong Kong and the emergence and evolution of its fast-food culture.

Shakya's use of *Everest momo* spice mix is a shortcut that links his professional kitchen to home kitchens, including in Nepal. Yet his dough, prepared from scratch in a city with myriad dim sum related shortcuts, link Nepal and Guangzhou through everyday skills, and create a vision of the Nepali diaspora of the future.

Ray (2016) contends that if culinary education were purely technical, students would probably refuse to come to class and apprentice themselves in restaurants. In classes they learn to interpret their social worlds so that working in restaurants provides an ongoing and uninterrupted education, even when chefs move positions and restaurants. Context matters. Chefs have to adapt, and implicit in this notion is learning as an on-going process from context to context. In this chapter, I have posited that it is within micro dimensions that the link between professional kitchens and home kitchens in the South Asian diaspora in the Pearl River Delta is fashioned, and links to majoritarian yet multifaceted Cantonese culinary culture is deepened.

In the following chapter, I look at this notion of diaspora knowledge, cooking and the public realm from the other side - that of the community organisations and their community cooks. I also consider their links with professional cooks in organising and making South Asian food for food festivals in Guangzhou and Macau. The field sites increase in civic scale, in that the Indian state abroad and the Macanese government are both directly and explicitly involved in such festivals.

Chapter four: Cooking food for money and for belonging: South Asian food in festivals in Guangzhou and Macau

This thesis moves now out of the relatively tight spaces of the grocery store and restaurants and their social worlds, and into public spaces and their intimate dynamics. This chapter examines how South Asian communities who want to move their culinary culture towards a Cantonese and Chinese majoritarian middle, deal with food festivals which highlight diversity and difference and more problematically, intransience and hierarchy. These food festivals are produced in partnership with diaspora cooks, either professional South Asian cooks in Guangzhou, or Goan, Damanese and Diuese community cooks in Macau. Compared to grocery and restaurant spaces, food festivals allow for a greater number of people, who visit or co-organise festivals to witness the social position of South Asians and South Asian food in the delta.

For this social position, time is an important consideration. The Consul for Information and Culture in Guangzhou told me that Guangzhou's South Asian community is transitory and would remain in Guangzhou until a better situation comes along. In reality, the consulate in Guangzhou counts its South Asian population in units of family, signalling at multigenerational households as well as multigenerational commitments to the region. In Macau, the Goan Daman and Diu community association is one of several Portuguese-speaking community groups that have stayed in the territory after the handover by Portuguese colonial authorities of Macau to mainland China in 1999. The handover marks a transition period until 2049 when Macau becomes fully integrated into China's legal and political systems. It is not clear if Portuguese-speaking communities will remain after this time. By continuing the status quo for 50 years between 1999 and 2049, the transition itself has become a valuable space in which to consider post-colonialism both temporally and conceptually. It is especially apparent when, in food festivals particularly, Portuguese-speaking communities are expected to perform and make money for their associations and to contribute to Macau's strategy to directly facilitate relationships with developed and emerging Lusophone economies such as Brazil and Mozambique.

Early on in my fieldwork, I agreed to organise the *Great Indian Mela* following an interview with one of the Consuls at the offices of the Consul General of India in Guangzhou who asked me to make my research more useful for South Asians living in the city. I was given mobile numbers of nine restaurateurs and Mr Hothi, an influential Sindhi trader and became embroiled in longstanding friendships and enmities that were heightened by the organising of a solely South Asian festival. These tensions manifested not only in the way elite families who were in charge of the cultural programme performed on stage at the festival, kept themselves separate from the grubby business of cooking and selling festival foods. Tensions also and more concretely manifested themselves in the way that restaurateurs negotiated to mostly sell butter chicken – a dish considered the only truly saleable food. When I interviewed observed and helped out at the Goa Daman and Diu (GDD) stall at the *Lusofonia* festival in Macau, some of these same social dynamics and tensions about saleability were apparent. Among the dozen community stalls selling food attached to various ex-colonies in the Portuguese empire, it was the GDD which had secured the right to sell the popular item of spiced sausage in Portuguese bread roll.

The choice of festival food – butter chicken and *pão com chouriço* – is aimed at a majoritarian culinary elite, whether that be an emerging group of South Asian and Chinese diners embracing a Euro-American experience of eating curry, or a politically tenacious class of Macanese elites. Far from being disinterested transitory groups festival cooks are dedicated to the long-term cross-cultural work this demands. How, though, does one best understand if and whether imprecise aims about intercultural work are being realised? While acknowledging that festivals are spaces for the practice and performance of rites, symbolism and community (Gennep 2006; Turner 1983) I take up Getz's (2010) notion that food festivals' economic benefit are misunderstood because they are not studied. Getz posits that to fully understand the nature of festivals, 'determining the value of worth of festivals from a multi-stakeholder perspective should be a priority' (2010: 21). Working through the idea that food festivals need to make money for the organisers and for the cooks, directly and indirectly, I examine the relationship between money belonging and immigrant

communities in the Pearl River Delta. I explore both the saleability of particular South Asian foods in Pearl River Delta food festivals, and those foods rejected as not saleable.

Having explored the ambiguous nature of South Asian ingredients and restaurant work in the previous two chapters, this chapter looks at the work of cooks and food purveyors in a community setting. I examine how these cooks deliberately exploit the inconsistencies and tensions in the racial aspects of festival logics and plans, to sell elite foods to Cantonese, European and other elites. Further, using money as a lens, chefs, cooks and restaurateurs can critique the wider post-colonial projects and abstractions of multiculturalism as a value (Parekh 2002). For example, is the decision to cook either Christian, European, whitish littoral foods or darker Konkani, Gujarati or interior foods a subtle mocking of European identity as perceived from the Pearl River Delta, especially when contextualised as a decision based on the profitability of that food? In the next section, I do this by exploring the power of a dish called butter chicken in Guangzhou's South Asian food and cultural festival, the *Great Indian Mela*, and the role that butter chicken plays in pushing out other dishes that may not be as recognisable to European senses and sensibilities to the periphery. In the final section, in order to demonstrate how diffuse and pervasive the concept of European senses and sensibilities are in the Pearl River Delta, I also explore the power of Goan Christian food in Macau's *Lusofonia* food festival.

In this chapter, there are two scales of money making that the cooking and selling of food at a food festival relates. The first is the exchange of money in order to pay for a snack or dish, and the second is the value of a food stall to the broader project of generating wealth for the state. The centrality of money in this chapter reflects the social dynamics of festival sites in both Guangzhou and Macau. The first is the prominent role played by restaurateurs in the *Great Indian Mela*. Although eager to participate for a host of reasons to do with their social positioning – a theme explored later on in the chapter – restaurateurs judged the success of their personal positioning and the growing appetite for South Asian food, on monetary terms. If they made an acceptable loss in

comparison to an average Sunday lunch service at the restaurant, or made the same amount or even a profit, then the larger, more amorphous cross cultural work they were often engaged in could be better understood in terms of its progress. In Macau, the money given to community cooks by the Macanese government, as individual citizens and for being part of *Lusofonia* has become tied to the idea of belonging and citizenship to the territory, and its inherent hierarchies. Those that can better represent the Lusophone culinary sphere by choosing the right kinds of foods to sell, were those that contributed more to state ambitions and were more Portuguese and elite as a result.

Monetary arrangements at both scales signal the moral, religious and social place of a person in that society involved in such transactions, but it can also signal normativity – or the rational choice (Hart and Ortiz 2014). Such an approach is different from engaging in ways that food becomes commoditised (Appadurai 1986). While acknowledging that these dishes have a broader social life beyond their construction for and sale at a festival, and the commodity phase has a wide social impact, this chapter is more concerned with the social impact of the transaction itself. For Zelizer (2005) people work very hard and expend much effort in striking the right balance between intimate ties and economic relations. They are not mutually exclusive. To belong intimately somewhere and measure that belonging in financial terms is a reality of even the most intimate family connections.

“You can’t trust restaurateurs to run a food festival.” Making money from butter chicken in Guangzhou

The *Great Indian Mela* cost RMB14,000 (£1,400) to organise, a cost split between 13 stall holders, of which nine were restaurants, and how money played a very social role in defining subjectivities positioning and visibilities. RMB14,000 is a relatively inconsequential sum when compared with the cost of organising Diwali Balls and *dhandiya* parties in international hotel ballrooms, which can cost RMB100,000 (£10,000) to organise and where guests are routinely charged RMB800 (£80) for entry, food and drink. However, for the first time, the cost of the event was borne by restaurateurs, rather than

generated by ticket sales. Each restaurateur estimated that participation in the *mela* had cost them between RMB2,500 (£250) and RMB3,500 (£350), including the food, labour costs and rental of the stall which came with free water and electricity - a sum that they had been keen to recoup on the day. In this relatively low-cost event, the food court and performance stage were purposefully separated, delineating a site for - what are deemed as - higher forms of cultural production of India by enthusiastic amateur dancers and singers and a food court that was not. I examine the dynamics of ring-fencing butter chicken to make and sell at the *mela* to show the high emotional content that money engages with, that escapes 'liberal or statist theories' (Hart and Ortiz 2014: 471).

Food festivals are very much a standard practice of India's overseas cultural strategies in China. Officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Delhi have created a package for consulates that includes musical folk dance performances, film festivals, art exhibitions, and a food festival. Performers, fine artists and films are hand-selected by officials in Delhi, and chefs too can also be sent from India, but even in second-tier cities near Guangzhou or Shanghai, there is an expectation that in international hotels at least, there are skilled cooks and ingredients nearby to make food festivals happen. Both the Guangzhou cultural consul and his counterpart in the Shanghai Consulate talk of the fact that the package is never fully financed, and that in practice it relies on Chinese institutions giving venues and other resources away for free, and on overseas Indians residing in these cities to meet the remaining costs. This reliance on the Indian community underpins extant discourses that separate trading populations from professional expatriates. The Shanghai consulates that support a greater number of professional managers and their families are said to have a good relationship with Indian associations. In Guangzhou, the consulate is often seen as a disciplining force, withholding the disbursement of money for local associations unless these associations engage with the cross-cultural work with Chinese populations

Discussions about butter chicken first took place a few weeks before the *mela* at a planning meeting with restaurateurs at the Indian Consulate, chaired by the

Consul General for Culture and Information. In the consulate conference room nine of Guangzhou's restaurateurs gathered – comprising the go to list for Consulate cultural work of all kinds and I met several of them for the first time, though we had all been aware of each other in the manner that 'people with food businesses' in Guangzhou generally were – through news shared by wives, older children and other food makers. At the start of the meeting, the Consul reiterated the cross-cultural identity of the festival, and stated that 'this could be the first of a thousand *dosas* that a Chinese person has in his life!'. The Consul gave the floor to me and I stuck to an agreed upon script that the festival should be a cross cultural celebration of South Asia's regional cuisine – a script agreed a few weeks back when the Consul had pointedly asked me to organise a food festival as a means of making my research more useful during my fieldwork.

After politely listening to my idea that the restaurateurs each cook from recipes from a specific region of South Asia, the restaurateurs quickly agreed. Their experience of cooking for food festivals hosted by international schools (which make sure that there are a variety of restaurants or national cuisines represented and then leave market logic to do the rest) had shaped the sense that cooking a diversity of food offers everyone a chance to make money. A.J. quickly agreed to cook Bombay snacks of *vada* (deep fried spiced potato) or *bhajia* in a *pao* or bread roll. Mr Pillai agreed to make *momos* (meat dumplings) and *sel* bread. Everyone murmurs approvingly. And then Mr Parul asked, not so innocently, who will be cooking the butter chicken, a dish made with chicken pieces, butter, cream and spices. Several restaurateurs made their case, prompting a tumult that took an hour to subside. Mr Philip forcefully declared that he has been serving butter chicken to the Canadian and American teachers of the Canadian International School of Guangzhou at his restaurant for five years. He was not the only one to say he has offered the dish as a permanent coupon on *Dianping*, *Baidu* and *Meituan* - the most prominent Chinese restaurant and lifestyle online applications and platforms - indicating that the popularity of butter chicken has deepened locally.

Once it was clear that no one is backing down, and that all restaurateurs would make butter chicken save A.J., and Mr Pillai, the restaurateurs threw other ideas

into the ring. Mr Manish suggested that no two butter chickens are the same, nor should they cost the same. Although this prompted a further argument about what stalls would be charging, it was clear that no one would offer butter chicken for less than RMB50 (£5), more than double the price of *dosas* and *momos* at the *mela* and five times what A.J. would charge for any of his Bombay snacks. Perhaps, suggested Mr Mahesh, those who will serve butter chicken should pay more for their stalls. This profit-based approach quickly lost steam, especially once the discussion turned to percentages, as it became clear that this strategy pitted the restaurateurs against each other, rather than working collegiately. Mr Pillai asked if we should invite Thai and Indonesian restaurateurs to have stalls to solve this problem of culinary diversity. Talk briefly turned to the *mela* becoming a festival about Asian culture - precisely the kind of curated geographic work that the international schools do for their events. This convenient frame would then obfuscate the fact that butter chicken is the main dish that almost all the South Asians will be serving.

Abbots (2017) notes that food festivals can valorise specific dishes and ingredients in cultural performances that help to define foods 'as particularly salient to the locale' (2017: 82). This is a profoundly political act, which intersects with various agendas, dominant ideologies and power structures. As a result, the choices of foods and dishes are never neutral. However, the interlocutors who are key actors in this chapter understand that ordinary and local foods are different. They are aware that South Asian food is foreign in Guangzhou and Macau despite claims of a deep-seated and long standing multiculturalism. Local foods can be ordinary, but ordinary foods do not have to be local. Moreover local foods can be vulnerable to historical change, while ordinary foods are a dynamic and processual category.

This is the processual work that restaurateurs did in order to be able to serve mostly butter chicken at the *mela*. With its rich sweet and buttery sauce, the dish seems to have transcended national popularity and come to symbolise much more. Its origin story hints at Hindu entrepreneurialism. According to the popular press, including the Hindustan Times (Sanghvi 2018) and the Economic Times of India (Vishal 2018), the dish is said to be attached to Kundan Lal Gujral

a Punjabi Hindu who fled to Delhi from Peshawar during Partition to restart his family's restaurant business, Moti Mahal. Home-grown northern Indian tastes and aesthetics do not need British colonial flows to popularise the dish, although Moti Mahal's butter chicken-driven international franchises are still very much overshadowed by southern powerhouses such as Taram Cuvai. That it is a source of pride articulates with the fact that it makes good economic sense to be the one food stall among seven to serve this iconic dish, rather than collaborate to present a mosaic of South Asian regional cuisine.

Butter chicken articulates with the aims of showing a culinary India, but also demonstrate the centrality of making money, social position and the kind of extraterritoriality involved in festival making within international schools in Guangzhou. The restaurateurs reminded the meeting that butter chicken is a dish which will be very popular for a *mela* taking place in an American school and in the elite local constellation within which it sits. Discussion about the popularity of butter chicken coupons and discounts on *Dianping*, and other social networks suggest that restaurateurs stand to make real financial gain. Making money, in this context, and out of a dish of butter chicken, which, in the vernacular, a dish tied to a bloody independence and communal rifts and identity making, highlights the making of some kind of national space, even if it is not a culinary diversified one. In a follow up meeting, the Consul called up Mr Hothi, Guangzhou's most powerful and influential Sindhi trader. It was Mr Hothi who would eventually bring these restaurateurs into some sort of accord, through a mixture shouting and charm. In awe of his ability, each day leading up to the *mela* I updated a spreadsheet with the list of the regional dishes that the restaurateurs had agreed to cook. At the end, when a culinary map of sorts emerged, Mr Hothi tells me 'you can't trust restaurateurs to run a food festival' He told me he should have been brought in from the beginning.

Through this and other aphorisms, Mr Hothi let it be known that there are two worlds when it comes to food festival making, the salubrious world of food preparation, and the elevated world of cross-cultural production. Nowhere was this most manifest than the physical and social dimensions of the day of the *mela* itself.

It was overcast that day, a Sunday in mid-January 2016 on Ersha Island in the middle of Guangzhou. I was in a *salwar kameez*, standing on a temporary stage holding a microphone, addressing an unexpectedly large crowd assembled on the playing field of the American School in Guangzhou (AISG). The crowd in front of me comprised hundreds of Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalis and Sri Lankans, but there are also large groups of Chinese people and others, including companions that I recognised from my membership of the Guangzhou Women's International Club. Behind me, also on stage, were the Consul General of India in Guangzhou, other senior consulate staff, their wives and the ever-present Mr Hothi, one of Guangzhou's most successful and prominent overseas Sindhi traders.

On the adjacent basketball court, a festival food court had been set up, with nine food stalls lining all four sides of the court, in the centre of which is a central dining area with picnic tables, chairs and parasols. The bustle of activity as festival-goers and stall staff crisscrossed the court appeared to be the direct opposite of the tidy, formal, on-stage pomp. In full view from the 22-metre by 10-metre basketball court were power cables and mains extension cords snaking out of the school windows, powering the electric steamers, chafing dishes and planchette grills. Outdoor sinks and taps provided a ready supply of water. There was a space between the food stalls where the Indian vintner would have been, had he not cancelled his stall after learning that he could not give out samples on school property. In accordance with the school's dry policy, the restaurateurs sold soft drinks, water and spiced tea. Plumes of smoke and steam had risen as the nine restaurant stalls' restaurateurs and chefs fried *dosas*, heated richly-spiced *bhajia* (a tomato and mixed mashed vegetable gravy) to stuff into white rolls, steamed batches of chicken *momos* in squat steel steamers and stacked piles of decorative *sel* bread on the counters. For the first time in the memory of those assembled, nine South Asian restaurateurs were trading in the same space, and this performance of culinary diversity hid in plain sight the fact that all but two stalls were mainly serving butter chicken.

I turned around to the dignitaries on stage, asking them to take part in the *aarti* ceremony. They stepped forward as a group, the Consul General, his wife, Mr

Hothi, other consuls and their wives, alongside Jane, the school events coordinator, who was ambushed minutes earlier and press-ganged into being part of the ceremony by Mr Hothi. She pulled at her parker uncomfortably and then took her turn to light several candlewicks on the *aarti* - an elaborate, shoulder-high, brass ornament. The *aarti* now lit, the dignitaries stepped back in line to loud cheers, and I announced, in English, the official inauguration of Guangzhou's first *Great Indian Mela*. The following two hours of performances were presented mainly by the community associations, temple organisations and informal schools that have been set up in previous years by the influential Sindhi diaspora. They included both modern and classical dance, classical singing, speeches, and short dramatised skits exploring and resolving moral dilemmas. At the end was a short Bollywood dance performance by a Macau-based Goan casino entertainer. Although this was a very rousing end, the crowd had already become boisterous earlier, cheering on a group of very young dancers as they danced to a song produced in 1997 to commemorate 50 years of Indian independence - a performance of nationalism by both the dancers and the crowd. This was the only time that the food court seemed empty relative to the audience on the sports field.

Mostly, the cooks and eaters seemed oblivious to the cultural performance on stage. The tumult of the *mela* food court - the smell of cooked meat, and the range of foods available - is at a disjuncture from the representations of India, and the Vedic-initiated 'cultural programme'. The Sindhi, Tamil and Nepali trader-restaurateurs were busy running their stalls with their chefs, while their wives and children enjoyed the performance, or in some cases, had performed on stage. The volume of the crowds had caught these restaurateurs by surprise and soon what was feared as being a loss had become an obvious opportunity to make some serious money. This was especially true in the butter chicken sphere. Mr Parul charged RMB60 for his butter chicken; Mr Minal only charged RMB40 for his non-veg set (chicken); while Mr Gopal charged RMB50 for his 'creamy chicken masala'. The food court was packed with queues of ten or more lined up at each stall to order their food, regardless of prices. People and their food trays occupied every table, and the bins overflowed with empty containers.

Hundreds more diners were seated at every available concrete surface around the stalls or were picnicking on the grass in the playing field, which afforded a good view of the stage and of the games stalls, where children of all ages competed for prizes in the various games on offer.

The number of eaters presented the restaurateurs with a decision: to order more restaurant supplies and cooked food during the afternoon to keep up with demand or close up shop. All decided on the former. Suddenly, in these close quarters, butter chicken became the centre of a growing tensions. Some stalls stopped serving food as they waited for supplies to replenish their stock of butter chicken. Tensions roiled as queues shift in response. When chefs and trolleys arrived back at the school, and great containers were unloaded to restock the stalls, I was struck that this too was performative. Were these movements of lifting and pouring the butter chicken gravy exaggerated? Was the loud clanging of utensils on the sides of chafing dishes to level off the curries strictly necessary? It certainly sent a strong and dramatic signal to diners that the stall had reopened, but it also seemed to send two strong additional signals to the other restaurateurs: we're so busy we've gone back for more; we haven't diluted our food to make it last longer. Conducting a quick research post-*mela* project to help with organising future *melas*, Mr Hothi goes back and asks restaurants for their total profits of the day. Ever the diplomat, he gives a total figure to the consulate and not the profit per stall. Shortly after the *mela*, as Mr Hothi and I meet to reflect on our hard work, he tells me of rumours that Mr Minal walked away with RMB20000 profit, double that of anyone else. People had complained about Mr Minal, Mr Hothi noted. 'They said he hardly gave any pieces of chicken in the butter gravy'.

So who or what were the performances at the food court directed toward? Which chefs were, in fact, watering down their butter chicken? Food stalls with the longest queues were always under suspicion because they appeared out of sync and more noticeable for the number of white and Chinese bodies queuing, which appears less a racial whitening, but rather an elite food placed in the service of an 'indigenous episteme' (Barton 2017:454).

That Jane was part of the *aarti* ceremony is, only in part, happenstance. She was there on the day and was senior enough to represent the school and did not protest her participation vehemently enough. It collapses the distinction between unplanned hospitality and the habitually reconfigured guest-host relations, forcing a more naturalised connection (Bell 2016). That the restaurateurs and performers came from Nepal as well as India, despite the festival moniker. The *aarti* ceremony took place in public in a country that does not sanction Hinduism as an official religion. Considering the context *aarti* seemed both risky and expected, creating a syncretic space in which Jane becomes a co-producer. While Indians abroad are unlikely to side with the Hindu right, diaspora groups are just as likely to conflate Hinduism with Indian-ness and celebrate a raft of domestic rituals in temples and public spaces (Ganapathy-Coleman 2014). In this instance, while the ritual has opened the *mela*, it has additionally privileged the stage as the moral centre of the *mela*, one that is made ready for a display of ‘modest young girls, soft-spoken children, caring parents, and thrifty living. All these become emblems of the purity of “Indian” tradition’ (2014: 134), marking the distinction between the stage and the food court, elevating artists over cooks in the fight to establish the trading population as equally generative of a pure cultural production. These are sentiments that articulate with the moral dynamics of festival-making in the Euro-American tradition.

International schools create a particular kind of community festival. Foreign embassies and consulates in China lease the grounds from the municipality, build classrooms and other structures such as sports fields. Like all private schools in China, they are gated areas free to govern themselves within certain perimeters (Kwong 1997). For international schools, a fundamental policy imposed by the Chinese state is to prohibit the enrolling of Chinese students. By adhering to this policy and by employing local Chinese support staff, Assa-Inbar (2018) argues that these schools become cosmopolitan spaces by creating and articulating the local. In reality, the localness that these schools constitute is a great deal broader and encompasses Chinese communities as well as other non-

white communities. As a result, their cosmopolitanism reflects a neo-colonial approach to the food and festivals they host.

In Guangzhou, the American, British or Canadian consulates all run schools. An Indian International School existed for two years, nominally endorsed by the Indian consulate but financed by money from the Indian community in Hong Kong. However, it could not sustain itself and closed. The British and North American schools have been more adept at sustaining themselves, using regular events schedules to celebrate Chinese New Year, the final days of the summer term, and Christmas. These are all sources of income for the schools and events are organised with little interference from the municipal authorities. South Asian restaurateurs have a relaxed and intimate familiarity with Guangzhou's 18 international schools. The nine restaurateurs who hosted food stalls at the *mela* had already received dozens of invitations to sell foods from stalls at previous international school festivals. The restaurateurs were confident that South Asian parents would come to partake in the display of social status and wealth that familiarity with international schools signifies. 'You'll get about five hundred people for something like this.' I am assured separately by restaurateurs and Jane. According to estimates on the day, however, almost two thousand people show up.

In Adam Yuet Chau's study (2008a) of the re-emergence of popular religion in rural China, crowds generate a requisite socio-thermic sensorial experience. This *hónguǒ* [红火] or red hot sociality needs a convergence of people to watch, and by dint of enlarging the crowd, partake in this sociality and thereby 'do' popular religion and 'do' festivals. Red hot sociality confers status and prestige on hosts, while it's opposite attributes shame and disgrace. In urban Guangzhou, popular religious expression is mixed in with state sponsored and officially recognised regional practice though the relationship is messy. During my time in Guangzhou, my Cantonese companions frequently told me what such-and-such place was famous for, and what psycho-social benefits would accrue were I to travel here or there, or eat certain foods, or buy certain commodities. Often such things would bring me luck, wealth or good health

along with thousands of other people who would inevitably be travelling with me.

On the Gregorian New Year's Eve, I wandered down the main riverside thoroughfare that was pedestrianised to host Guangzhou's annual flower market – a market which doubles as a New Year's Eve celebration. There were sedate crowds who came early to buy their peonies, peach blossoms and lucky sticky cakes. By the time midnight struck, the market had already emptied with few to mark the official countdown. Around Chinese New Year, I was encouraged to travel with them to local temples to pray to ancestors, commission couplets and eat foods that would have a prophylactic effect on both my wealth and health in the coming year. While families did travel to the City God Temple in Yuexiu, or travel to Foshan to invoke, petition and pay respects to ancestors or deities, there were no huge crowds - an exceptional experience in itself in the Delta. Families commission calligraphers on Foshan's Kuaizi Road (Kuàizi lù - 筷子路) to paint the couplets in black and gold ink on red paper banners with which to decorate the front doorframes of their homes and businesses. In reality, the businesses on Kuaizi Lu, including a number of Daoist soothsayers, are better known for giving intimate marital advice and for selling preparations which are said to boost fertility between married couples. Reflecting these less official purposes, the road is often thought of as Kuàizi lù - 快子路 or 'quick [to have] a baby' road. The pronunciation is the same even if the meanings are totally different. Lunch at a popular roadside restaurant - crowded and harried affair – was the emblematic dish of pork knuckle, boiled eggs and ginger pickled in a mahogany-hued black vinegar sauce – a festival dish, but also one that is known to be good for expectant mothers.

Official and unofficial festival practices that have re-emerged in recent decades have created a fractured yet keen sense of Cantonese culture. Assemblies of people, particularly those that highlight Cantonese cultural exceptionalism, are problematic in Guangzhou. China enshrines the right for a group to assemble in a public place in its constitution, but in reality, assembling people is problematic. A legal, political protest is only possible by application to authorities - a request often denied. In the lead up to the 2010 Asian Games,

hosted in Guangzhou, a thousand residents staged a demonstration through central Guangzhou, arriving at People's Park. They were there to protest the decision by local authorities to change the broadcast language on TV from the locally spoken Cantonese dialect, to Mandarin, the country's official lingua franca to help domestic tourists and athletes to navigate Guangzhou. Organising and marching relatively peacefully under rhetorics of culture have left police authorities and festival makers without a sharp definition between assemblies, which are political and cultural occasions that are rowdy.

This self-awareness of the role of individuals and groups in generating feverish sociality, the sensorial production of which can be self-disciplined, is moralised among my interlocutors. With the advent of each public festival, I frequently hear that Indians cannot be mobilised and controlled in such ways. It is articulated as a serious problem but also cherished as a marker of difference. As if conjuring up Amartya Sen's thesis that voice and heterodoxy fill public space in India, one informant tells me that it is in the Indian nature to be argumentative, to not take no for an answer. At the same time, these public spaces and the performance of heterodox sociality generated – dancing, singing, hugging - was often said to be fuelled by alcohol. This link was implicit in the way that the Indian state imposed 'dry days' when alcohol could not be bought during major religious festivals. One female companion explained that it was good that the *mela* in Guangzhou was falling between religious holidays and could avoid the taint of alcoholism. For Susan Bayly when South Indian temple festivals are seen from the gaze of European colonial administrators keen to categorise and catalogue (1989), it was spectacle enough. It was the temple festivals which are neither Sufi nor Sunni, Hindu nor Muslim, with their combination of supernatural forces, animal sacrifice and physical ordeals which attracted vast mixed crowds; a phenomena that 'European observers were quick to sensationalise' (1989: 141).

This separation of eating from drinking by hosting a dry event, and the purposeful separation of cooking food from the performance of dance, drama and song elevates the artists as the moral centre of the *mela*, away from the scrum of food stalls in the basketball court. What is now a standard format has

inculcated a particular faith in 'American institutions and social organization' (Rydell 2013: 3). This faith falls into an episteme within which fairs of and for others is shaped by what Rydell calls a 'larger constellation of ideas about race, nationality and progress' (2013: 2) in the United States. Stoler identifies racial hierarchies that have developed in the short age of American imperialism, and the longer age of informal empire, comparable with the contexts and spaces of European colonialism (2001). The *mela* is just one site of micro-governance that reveal these convergences.

These convergences are revealed in the absorption of certain attitudes towards categorisation and intimate acts that cut across colonial histories and post-colonial studies. These include attitudes towards the production and consumption of food and the troubling identity of people who would cook and eat. 'People won't just come for the food', Mr Hothi tells me, evoking the lessons of Greenhalgh's history of Worlds' Fairs (2000). According to Greenhalgh, modern fairs only resolved the problematic social issue of incorporating food into fairs slowly and unsteadily. For example, it was the French who, during the Paris World's fair in 1889, pioneered the co-option of artists, players and food vendors creating a multifaceted entity, in which food vendors inside the festival grounds were considered criminals. By 1884, at the International Health Exhibition that London fairs were incorporating foreign, non-white cooks. The reproduction of Chinese shops offered diners dishes such as bird's nest, shark fin, edible fungi and salted cucumbers, cooked by Chinese chefs and served by Chinese waiting staff (Thorpe 2016). Such foods were cooked in reproduction restaurants by Hong Kong cooks who had experience of cooking for British palates and working under managers drafted from London members' clubs.

This demonstrated technologies of control over exoticism, and allowed for the troubling matter of cooking and presenting food in highly conceptualised spaces. Rydell posits, that the United States were as implicated in colonial fairs as other European powers, learned from this and modelled their approach to American exhibits of European fairs. This direct link suggested that Americans 'were anything but newcomers to the Imperial arena.' (2013: 112). Ray suggests that cooking, racial politics, machismo and class reflects an America through its

food media that continues these tropes as a form of an American terroir (Ray 2007). Met by the disciplined cultural sociality of Guangzhou, the American school festival production is an opportunity to re-engage the faith that American institutions can mobilise and control brown bodies.

In reality, the American School in Guangzhou and the wider South Asian community and the trader-restaurateurs themselves are involved in mobilising and control because there is only so much planning and control that other people wish to do. Nir Avieli contends that this is because the culinary sphere 'is hardly monitored' (2005: 291). Avieli's study of the Phuoc Kien and Hai Nam festivals of the Chinese Vietnamese communities in Hoi An, presents festival goers and festival going as a variety of 'touchy subjects' (2005: 292). These touchy subjects include the rise of China, Vietnam's neighbour to the east, and the local strategies of *doi moi* or rejuvenation of the Chinese communities in Vietnam. In Chinese community festivals, ideas and their connection to a greater and ascendant China are scripted in a 'culinary sphere' (2005: 281). The foods evoke a greater China - Northern Chinese pork dumplings, southeast coastal crab and bamboo shoot soup, and a Central, national dish of roasted pig - yet the cooks are mainly from Fujian, who are marking identities which are both local and national in orientation. In Avieli's study, all sides can be placated in the culinary sphere of imprecise regional dishes. As a result this sphere can evoke both strategies: that of a resurgent China, and that of further political integration of Chinese communities in Vietnam, which is made possible through marketing difference.

Surveying the food court, it would be easy to be mesmerised by the variety of food into thinking that the restaurateurs had made as good a job as possible to represent a national map. Seven of the restaurateurs decide to cook butter chicken but hide it under other names such as the 'non-veg set lunch (chicken)' or 'creamy chicken masala'. Then there is a list of foods that deliberately position themselves as peripheral, even coastal, from Nepali *momos* and *sel* bread to *dosas*. Following Avieli it is possible to evoke the national through select regional dishes. The *momos* that Shakya was steaming and *bhajia* that A. J.

was mixing in his kadai work even harder to represent a borderless India, demonstrating how slippery butter chicken had become.

Making money, making social position in Macau

Lusofonia, a weekend festival of food, dance and music is staged on the grounds of a brightly painted colonial estate built in 1921 in Macau. The setting is beautiful, with an amphitheatre overlooking a rare stretch of wetlands, which, because this is Macau, is fenced by distant but brightly illuminated giant casino complexes. I observed this festival on the invitation of João, Macau's hardworking food festival organiser at the Cultural Affairs Bureau and we walked the festival together. *Lusofonia's* younger, brasher sister festival, the commonly named 'cultural week', sponsored by the Beijing Central Government was already over and *Lusofonia*, in full swing, would come to an end that night. João, who sensed his hectic week was nearly over, started to relax as we chatted in a queue for Goan food.

Of the ten other community associations, the Goan stall had secured an enviable location nearest to the amphitheatre. Their counter was set out with various pots and Tupperware that corresponded to the bilingual illustrated menu card inserted into the slanted acrylic sign holder resting to one side: "Samosa 咖哩角 [Gālí jiǎo] - 2 pc - \$20, Bebinca 千層糕 [Qiān Céng gāo] - \$20, Pao com sorportel 豬雜包 [Zhū zá bāo] - \$20, Pao com Chouriço 西洋腊肠包 [Xīyáng Làcháng bāo] - \$20".

All items at the stall were MOP\$20. Although the acrylic sign holder and its paper insert gives the impression that this menu changes regularly, this has become something of a standard menu and the standard price. Evora, one of the organisers in the Goan Association, told me these are 'hot' items and have been hot items for a while and not just in the context of *Lusofonia*. When her and her friends are invited to a Macanese or Portuguese potluck, she told me people expect her to make items these 'ordinarily'. But the menu itself reflects years of attempts of cooking other dishes for the festival, including Goan Hindu foods such as *bhajia* a spiced vegetable dish and *puri*, an unleavened deep-fried bread, but Evora told me that these Goan Hindu foods were not 'hot enough'. It seems

that unlike at the *mela* the descent into ordinary (Das 2007) for these foods had happened several years ago. Yes, Evora concedes, it has taken a while to decide on the 'right kinds of foods'.

Evora's evaluation and the list of four items as both 'ordinary items' and the right kinds of foods' has curious implications. In post-colonial, transition-era Macau, 20 years after the Portuguese handover of the territory back to mainland China, and 30 years before full integration with China, colonial dynamics of race, religion and aesthetic and sensory taste appear to be salient. Making enough money becomes a way for the Macanese state and Beijing Central Government to frame food festivals like *Lusofonia* and the sticky Luso-Asian colonialism which it celebrates (Boileau 2010). Making enough money from the festival for both the cooks and for Macau is a crucial way with which Goan cooks can interpret and assert their social position. Even if the result is hierarchy and status affirmation, the method with which to get there is the creation of a mosaic of dishes that show a sticky, flattened colonialism in culinary terms. By attending to the way that cooks create this mosaic and themselves, there is a certain 'presence and effect' (Bille, Hastrup, and Soerensen 2010: 9) of selling Christian foods at *Lusofonia*.

Each year, the Macanese state spends approximately MOP\$3 million (£300,000) to host *Lusofonia*. Some of this money goes to official Portuguese speaking community associations that spend this money on stall decorations and ingredients and spending the rest on entertainment and sports equipment. The budget and modest visitor numbers of 17,000 each year betrays its humble community roots, reinforced by the fact that Beijing sets aside five times that amount to elongate the festival with the addition of *Semana Cultural da China e dos Países de Língua Portuguesa* (Cultural Week of China and Portuguese Speaking Countries, hereafter 'cultural week'). For the last seven years, Beijing has asked the Macanese state to fly in chefs and entertainers from ex-Portuguese colonies and to host a food festival and performances in other parts of the city. Some of the cultural week performers stay on to perform at *Lusofonia*, although the chefs do not. *Lusofonia* has become an adjunct that can only take place at the same scale if there is also funding for the cultural week.

Almost all of Macau's residents know that Macau makes a great deal of money from casino taxes, and estimates vary as to how long Macau could operate without collecting another Pataca of tax. 'At least ten years' says one of my companions. 'I've heard it's more like a hundred' says another. Revenue made by the administration is a frequent topic of conversation since the government started a yearly wealth redistribution scheme since 2012 that gives each official resident, both permanent and temporary, a cash lump sum. In 2017 88% of the population received either MOP9000 (£900) for permanent residents or MOP5400 (£540) for temporary residents, in line with previous years. 'I usually spend it on photographic equipment' my companion continues. Considering personal rewards like these, there is a great deal of interest in seeing Macau root out corruption, handle its financial affairs correctly and make more money.

These concerns about what the government invests in longstanding. The Portuguese government has suffered from a crisis of legitimacy for decades, starting with anti-government riots in 1966 (Yee 2001) to the slowness of the Macanese administration with their localisation policies and targets, such as recruiting Chinese personnel into key posts after 1999. As a result, the perception remains that the same Portuguese-speaking elites have retained their positions of wealth and power.

Food festivals sponsored by Macau celebrate seek to harness Macau's position in the diverse post-colonial legacy of Portugal in various states in Africa, Asia and the Americas and make a virtue of these tenacious elites. In reality, Spooner (2016) notes, there is significantly more interaction and trade between Beijing and Brazil - than Macau and Brazil, signalling how little colonial legacies with Portugal have impacted on economic ties, in comparison to China's ascension to the World Trade Organisation. Yet media reports indicate that the number of Chinese students studying Portuguese in the territory has increased in recent years in anticipation of greater ties and as the idea of Macau as a cultural marketplace has strengthened.

For Zelizer (2000) transfers of money between people do not negate the intimacy of relations. Instead, the circulation of money reveals differentiated

ties. It is 'not the money involved that determined the relationship's quality, but the relationship that defined the appropriateness of one sort of payment or another' (2000:818). Even small amounts of money can make a great deal of difference to ideas of social positioning. *Lusofonia's* community cooks have to make enough for 120 portions of any dish they make and tend to charge between MOP\$15 (£1.50) and MOP\$25 (£2.50). If the GDD community stall sells out, it makes a maximum of MOP\$9,600 (£960) over three days. Selling out at the right time is important. This is the outcome with which GDD community negotiates their social position vis-a-vis other Goans, other Portuguese-speaking elites including the Macanese, and the full Chinese state.

With its focus on long-standing Portuguese-speaking communities, but its small budget, *Lusofonia* already creates disjunctures between Portuguese-speaking communities and their present-day co-nationals. According to the last census in 2011, Macau is almost 93% ethnically Chinese, yet the 7% Portuguese, Macanese, Filipino and ethnic others do much of the work in feasting and festival contexts. In Macau, there are fewer than 100 families in the Goan Association, and they count among the 7% ethnic other in these new post-1999 census categories. The remainder has arrived more recently from places including India, Mozambique and Brazil to take up work in Macau's lucrative casino industry. While welcome, they are not part of the culinary fabric of community festival hosting. Evora tells me that *Lusofonia* is the only time that people in Macau can buy and eat Goan food, a truth in as much as there are no Goan restaurants in Macau and none of the Goans in Macau are professional caterers. But there are plenty of Indian cooks who have been taught to cook Goan food in their culinary diploma such as Keralan chef Justin Paul at the Golden Peacock (see chapter three).

Cooking the right kinds of foods for this annual festival in Macau isn't just a challenge for the Goans. The Macanese, Angolans, the Mozambicans, the community cooks from Timor-Lest; their stalls side-by-side, and using the same Portuguese nomenclature, have all faced similar problems. Historian Cusack (2000) notes that the emergence of certain types of national cuisine in post-colonial Africa is a continuation of political ties between Catholicism and food in

the colonial era. Converting to Catholicism gave some African populations access to European ingredients and foods. The recipes that printed in cookbooks are built upon this premise, and national festival foods across these territories often fall within a Lusophone-Catholic oeuvre of meat (usually pork), a smattering of spices, deep frying and baking.

Cusack's reading resonates with the Macanese government who work from this premise and fear it. For Macau to re-insert itself into new relationships with Brazil and Mozambique, it needs to revisit and revise this story so that the Lusophone colonial state had a generous palate and supported local culinary agency and exchange. However it is more complicated than that. As Adams Bodomo and Roberval Teixeira-E-Silva (2012) reveal, local acts of representing countries are difficult. Language may be a shared colonial legacy, but it is also a critical point of national disjuncture. Portuguese speaking African communities in Macau enjoy a better social position than non-Portuguese speaking African communities. Nigerians and those from Guinea Conakry have to learn Portuguese in order to be accepted into communities and have access to their resources.

On the other hand the social positioning of *Lusofonia* betrays the extent that linguistic connections and colonial legacy informs culinary festival life, and its limitations. There are careful negotiations among the community associations themselves that illustrate the strength of such ties. The *Nucleo De Animacao Cultural De Goa, Damao E Diu* (NACGDD) comprises 80 families. Like other Portuguese-speaking elites, the Goan, Damanese and Diuese community in Macau has an advantage regarding claiming and retaining lucrative government jobs, in social and cultural affairs and transport, as well as in a legal profession, which is still modelled on continental European systems. Some families also maintain trading businesses. The powerful Coutinho family has links to both the state and the private sectors and the politician, José Maria Pereira Coutinho has stood on a populist anti-casino agenda since his election to Macau's Legislative Assembly in 2005. Such a dispersal of power and status is not unusual among established Portuguese-speaking non-whites. Bodomo and Teixeira-E-Silva (2012) estimate that there are over 500 Portuguese-speaking Africans, the

majority of who are represented by five influential place-based community associations representing Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé. The authors do not address conflicts among these Portuguese-speaking communities, but there are some apparent tensions, exacerbated by the legacy of the handover and the steady departure of white Portuguese speakers from elite jobs, affecting the racial balance in public and commercial work. Discussions about talent, race, the association of blackness with scholarships and other types of financial aid in tertiary education, provide other substantial critiques of the Macanese government's ability to implement ambitious state projects.

Over 20 years, much like the fixed menu on Evora's stall, cooks at *Lusofonia* have settled on the right foods. For representations of their port cities, community cooks have turned to the coast to tell this more generous culinary narrative, using fish preparations such as Guinea-Bissau grilled sardines, or fish *calulu*, an Angolan fish stew. The key 'crossover' item is a version of a small, wrapped savoury pastry, sold in groups of two or three. Meanwhile, the Goan stall and community cooks have held onto their pork and bread and in doing so, have negotiated their way to selling distinctly ordinary foods. The bread, *pao seco*, is a powerful symbol of Macanese food. It has a distinctive elongated shape, crispy exterior and now iconic score down the middle. It is now ubiquitous as the bread component to the Macanese pork chop bun, a major tourist treat.

Yet the rejection of what Evora calls Goan Hindu food of *bhajia* and *puri*, and its lack of 'hotness' on financial terms moves beyond the dynamics of linguistic connection and colonial legacy. *Bhajia* is a very imprecise term. Not to be confused with *bhajiis* or *pakorras*, *bhajias* none the less come in many forms including a dish of dry-fried diced potatoes sautéed in spices with which *puri* bread is used to scoop the softened mixture. It can also be cooked as a spiced potato curry where *puri* is used to soak up the tangy gravy. There are versions of this dish in places such as Trinidad as Jha (1973) notes in his history of Indian heritage in the Caribbean. For Goans in Macau, the all-powerful Culinary Club in Goa formed in 2011 and its seminal cookbook, *The Culinary Heritage of*

Goa written by Odette Mascarenhas, published in 2014, is the last word on the matter - and several Goans in Macau own a copy. In its various tables and charts, the club and the book have noted that Goan *bhajia* is mainly Saraswat-style. The term 'Saraswat' in the cookbook indicates that *bhajia* is, in fact, Hindu food, but by calling it a Saraswat dish, it forms part of a Goan Hinduism which allows for the eating of fish. There is no fish ingredient in the Saraswat style *bhajias* in the Culinary Club cookbook, but this firmly locates it within a Goan littoral cuisine.

Bhajia is also served in a soft white bread roll, a practice popular in Mumbai and is the format of the dish that A.J. sells in the *mela*. However, Hindu food is, in general, problematic, as Marta Vilar Rosales notes in her studies of Goans in Mozambique (2012; 2009). After the Portuguese left Goa in 1962, Hindu food in Mozambique came to represent a lower caste, dangerous anticolonial Indian hinterland. The fact that in experiments with *bhajia* at *Lusofonia* the spiced sauce was combined with *puri* rather than Mumbaikar-style white bread rolls illustrates how carefully the boundaries of colonial legacies are policed.

The NACGDD had used the money given to each community association to decorate their stall to depict this hinterland. The stall was beautiful and would them yet another prize for best decorated stall. It was designed to look like the front entrance of a rustic taverna, but the perspective was that of standing at the entrance and looking out. The scene of the outside of the tavern, painted as a backdrop, was of a rural idyll of sweeping farmlands, and in the foreground, a pair of exuberant men drink and lounge on an abandoned cart. The scene was bucolic, simple, agricultural, ironically rendered and at odds with the vista of casino complexes that surrounded the festival. It was also problematic. This Indian Goa is a biogeophysical space, a term used by Karen Barad (2007) that seems to resonate with my Goan informants who continue to think of India as mismanaged and food-impooverished. The flow of continued remittances from Macau to these territories contributes to a feeling within the GDD community that such territories are in decline. The lack of infrastructure development particularly in Daman and Diu and a legacy of uneven colonial spending

recreates these places as more reflective of the hinterland, less Christian, and more beset by alcoholism and other social ills of post-colonial littoral societies.

At the same time that the NACGDD diaspora confront Goa in self-knowing self-referential terms, they also acknowledge it as a culinary centre. In 2015, João asked the GDD community association to identify a Goan to cook at the cultural week's World of Flavours festival the week preceding *Lusofonia*. Although Goan chefs work in expensive restaurants in major capital cities, it was to the Culinary Club in Goa that the association turned. Cooking has always been a psycho-socially problematic profession, and so too in the Lusophone context. Studies by Pamila Gupta and Rosales (2016; 2012; 2009), which recount the presence of Goan industrial bakers in Mozambique agree that this was a niche job sector. A recommendation from the Culinary Club in Goa is an additional guarantee that the chef chosen is experienced in responding to political strategies and to tailoring their dishes accordingly

The juxtaposition of World of Flavours week as a necessary yet ill-fitting forerunner to *Lusofonia* underscores the separation of community cooks and professional chefs that arrive to cook at the Trombija restaurant, which hosts the World of Flavours week. In particular it reinforces the way that *Lusofonia* and its strategic mosaic has had a disciplining effect on the community associations. The work of training attending chefs in building a culinary mosaic reinforces the distinctions between the intimacies of low-cost community work where the mosaic is built from the ground up, and high cost, high profile festival work, where time and resources are spent on going back and forth between chefs to minimise crossovers. João showed me the list that Inacio, the chef from Goa, eventually settled on. 12 dishes including a fish soup, *urrak* pork and rolled coconut milk pancakes. João knows his work in the lead up to World of Flavours is successful when the final list of ingredients includes some items that can only be supplied by the chef. Included in Inacio's list are Goan *chorise*, *urrak* liquor, and Inacio's own masala pastes. João liked the fact he needs to arrange for Inacio to send these specific items from Goa.

The elevation to World of Flavours indicates that this change in social positioning is problematic in professional kitchen. Dimas is an ex-construction worker, local chef and cafe owner chosen by João in 2015 to represent Macau at the World of Flavours. He was not alone among Macanese café owners in feeling that his culinary credentials were a little informal. Although other Macanese café owners had long and extensive careers cooking in Macau's casinos, like Dimas, they did not cook Macanese food professionally until the late 1970s and 1980s. Macanese food started to emerge when Portugal discussed the handover of Macau with Beijing in the 1970s.

Drinking a beer on the grass near the Goan stall with Joao and me, Dimas recalled working with Inacio under the glare of elitism of the World of Flavours festival: the sit-down buffet, the fresh bread rolls, filtered water, linen napkins, and formal European style table settings. The kitchen was a grand room - decked out in stainless steel and elegant blue and white Portuguese-styled tiles. Mostly, Dimas admitted that under the gaze of the organisers and the kitchen sous chefs, he, Inacio and four other chefs from Mozambique, Portugal, Cape Verde, and Guinea-Bissau were not at all confident cooking their selective dishes.

[So] we all cooked together in the tower - teaching each other about knives and fire - for 18 days. We had to make several dishes, 50 portions, about 1,000 portions a day. We had to teach each other (interview, 2016).

Working on each other's menus helped Dimas recalled how his own culinary experiences were cut short by post-colonial dynamics. For his part, when he was younger it never occurred to Dimas and his family to categorise and therefore cook Macanese food - there was Portuguese food, and then there was Cantonese food of rice and steamed fish and vegetables. Goan food was part of a range of spicier Portuguese cuisines that seem to have been written out of a raft of Portuguese cookbooks published in Macau since the 1980s. He recalled that 1960s were a tumultuous time in Macau and that during the deadly 1-2-3 riots, so called because they occurred on 3 December 1966, Goans and other Indians

and Pakistanis were interned in detention camps, accused by the Government of fomenting anti-colonial revolution in Macau after the decolonisation of Goa in 1961. During this time, his Goan friends departed from Macau to Portugal and other places. Many Portuguese dishes slowly disappeared from public view.

Lusofonia and the World of Flavours food festival during cultural week are strategic investments. There is little hope of direct short-term profit for the states involved, nor for the stall holders themselves. This contrast with the *mela* in Guangzhou where, under the right circumstances, butter chicken can create substantial revenue. I have come to *Lusofonia* with my Chinese friend Shu from Guangzhou and her friends who now live in Macau and work for a local design and publishing company, joining some 17,000 local and mainland Chinese visitors. They, like others interviewed by local journalists, find the food here expensive, exotic and, unhealthy. There is a deeply felt socio-economic and political divide between the Chinese population and Portuguese-speaking minorities. Portuguese speakers still tend to occupy high-status professions in public administration while the Chinese majority work in lower paid jobs. I recalled that João joked that the Goan *bebinca* is 'why we hold the festival at all'. João would stay at the Goan stall most of the evening, along with other government administrators and some Chinese students studying Portuguese at the University of Macau. After them, the queue tapered off. It appeared that the Portuguese-speaking minority were best able to read the festival's culinary sphere and its littoral edges, and to afford to consume it. To local populations, the performances of community may as well be invisible.

Conclusion: Food festivals, money and visibility

When Zelizer (2011) briefly contends with race and money, she demonstrates that in multicultural societies, commodification and transactions create common ties yet do not flatten the racial differences in rights and entitlements. The implication is that temporary spaces such as food festivals have transformative effect on social relations and by extension social position. People can move up a hierarchy, not get rid of it altogether even in transitory times and among transitory groups.

In Guangzhou and Macau, the culinary map of South Asia does not emerge, despite organisers' - including my - plans. The multiple instances of butter chicken and the absence of *bhajia* highlight how money and social position interfere with simplistic festival curatorial ideals. In Guangzhou, butter chicken is part of a narrative of a strong post-independence culinary India. Yet the social position among the wider diaspora community of restaurateur-traders who make this butter chicken is a diminished one when set against the *mela's* more sanskritised cultural centre – the stage. On the other hand restaurateurs have paid for the festival and work hard to sell butter chicken at a profit in order to show what such sanskritised performances rely on. Performances of the selling of butter chicken show the contradictions involved in the link between money and social position, particularly when visibly making a lot of money is at odds with maintaining or improving social position. In Macau, representations of Goa are problematic within the Luso-culinary sphere. It is precisely the nature of the festival and its circulation of money that supports NACGDD identity making and reasserts their social position, bringing Goa into the culinary centre in Macau.

This has implications for the way that hierarchies of space and place (Gupta and Ferguson 1992) are produced in more concrete and longstanding contexts. In the next chapter I examine the dynamics of state marking and community unmarking among Goans, Damanese and Diuese in Macau. The context is Macau's political project to secure UNESCO world heritage status for Macanese food, a cuisine that is said to include South Asian flavours and materials. Further, this project is juxtaposed with a concurrently managed state project in Hong Kong, where there is also a tangible South Asian presence. Parsis also experiment with facets of racial unmarking from and racial ambiguity in the local historical record.

Chapter five: Of Ruins and Repasts - East, West and heritage food in Hong Kong and Macau

'Having considered the vast amount of source material covered in this study, the origins of what we now call Macanese cuisine owe much to the flavours and materials of the Indian subcontinent'. The statement above comes from the conclusion of a draft report of a research project into inscribing Macanese gastronomy within UNESCO's world heritage list in 2015. The statement was read out to me by a Macanese civil servant involved in the project, but the draft report has yet to be published for several reasons. One of the reasons is explored in this chapter.

Luis Machado, the current president of the professional culinary club *Confraria da Gastronomia Macaense* (hereafter CGM) one of a team of influential people in charge of the inscription work explained the research project in a newspaper interview. The research would eventually prove that 'Macanese food is multicultural and secular'. He stated that '[t]he challenge we are facing is to prove that Macanese gastronomy has existed since the XVI century' (Macau Daily Times 2014).

Doing so would establish Macanese gastronomy, symbolised by the feasting tradition of *cha gordo*, being recognised as the first fusion cuisine in the world. *Cha gordo* is a Macanese and Portuguese term frequently translated into English as 'fat tea' and 'native tea' [Tǔshēng chá 土生茶] in Mandarin and Cantonese. It is a buffet of savoury and sweet dishes presented together as a service *à la française*. The dishes, their method of cooking and how to consume them, with chopsticks and spoon, knife and fork or hand, represent the hybridity at the centre of Macanese cooking, using European, South Asian, South East Asian, and East Asian influences. To some extent, *cha gordo* is similar to Southern Chinese style buffets and Peranakan long tables in Singapore and *Tok Panjang* in Malaysia. These elaborate buffets in Macau, Singapore and Malaysia are products of long-distance migration for trade or religious purposes.

The Macanese food represented in the research report has a physical counterpart in the Museum of Macau. Behind glass in a recreation of a Macanese

dining room, with walls decorated with Christian iconography and sideboards adorned with lace doilies, the museum has reproduced a representation of *cha gordo* as a buffet of dishes on a large dining table. The curator tells me this is the most popular display in the museum. The Museum created this display in the 1980s, using furniture rescued from house clearances, skips and municipal dumps (Clayton 2009). The dishes themselves are moulded in coloured plastic in the *sampuru* style of Japanese food models. Among the decorated cakes of various sizes and the steamed fish and vegetables are tureens of curried stews, fried samosa-style pastries and teapots of different styles. Under the bright lights, colours have faded, but the European aesthetic is unmistakable, from the self-conscious *chinoiserie* wallpaper, to the heavy mahogany furniture and white figure of Jesus on hanging crucifixes.

Producing the research around *cha gordo* has proved difficult and its conclusions – including the one quoted above – are hesitant. The idea that a significant component of Macanese food was and is 'Indian' would be a surprise to many, including the Goan, Damanese and Diuese communities who have settled in Macau and the Pearl River Delta over the centuries, and particularly in the decades since Portugal ceded these three territories to India in 1961. In my conversations with older Goans, Damanese and Diuese living in this region, the conflict that precipitated the cessation of Portuguese rule in India continues to negatively influence their relationship to India and their perception of Indian-ness. The draft of the research report remains unpublished as if anticipating the controversies in Hong Kong, provoked by the inclusion of South Asian religious festivals and observances in the list of intangible cultural heritage in Hong Kong.

In the previous chapters of this thesis, I have explored how South Asians move between acts of marking and unmarking to create ambiguous identities to support their claims to cultural belonging in the Pearl River Delta. Having examined food festivals in the previous chapter and how South Asians pursue visible ways to mark their social status rather than their racial identity, I turn now to heritage projects in Hong Kong and Macau. Here they are at odds with state heritage projects which seek to overtly racially mark them in the historical record.

Port cities, such as Hong Kong and Macau, have often been cast as racially diverse, eclectic and vibrant sites where the flow of foods and culinary ideas escaped the temporal and geographic bounds of European expansion (Leong-Salobir, Ray, and Rohel 2016; Duruz and Khoo 2014; Duruz 2011). As the clock ticks down to full Chinese integration in 2047 and 2049 respectively the task is then to identify what Macau and Hong Kong are, culturally speaking. Macau and Hong Kong are concurrently managing large-scale intangible heritage projects that seek to answer this question, and in doing so are reinforcing differences between each other and with mainland Cantonese culture. While certain cultural forms are acknowledged as shared – including herbal tea and Cantonese Opera – food provides the right kind of disjuncture. Because of the ways it connects to religion, it is also problematic and productive of difference, particularly in Hong Kong. In this context, state anxieties about the present and the future have driven a need to categorise cooks, dishes, and ingredients in ways that continue colonial practices. In so doing, the multiple ethnicities in Macau and Hong Kong can be used as a resource, to differentiate Chinese Cantonese food from Hong Kong and Macanese food

In the first section I look at contradictions in heritage projects pursued under the wider policies of multiculturalism in Hong Kong and Macau. In the next section I examine the non-statist views towards heritage, including the ways that built and intangible heritage, while deliberately kept separate by the state, are understood to be on a continuum by South Asians. Being identified as an Indian or South Asian minority is problematic. South Asian culinary blankness in the heritage record forms a critique of Hong Kong and Macau's multiculturalism policies. In the latter half of the chapter, I explore how the Goan, Daman and Diu community in Macau and the Parsi community in Hong Kong both act in *prima facie* counter-intuitive ways. Firstly they absent themselves from high profile projects and in doing so create an entity-like blankness. It is as if these groups are working in accordance with Douglass Bailey's identification of the power of representational absence (2007). Secondly, they pursue community meals as alternative ways of showing a vibrant culinary community leading up to the present, but also with a claim to a

culinary space in the future in these cities. These community meals are constructed in ways that are counter to the community cooking and memory work that is done in these communities.

Palatal taste as a document source of culinary heterogeneity

The multiculturalism of colonial port cities, such as Macau and Hong Kong is difficult to unearth in ways that palatable to modern day sensibilities over race and class. Relying on present day memory work including oral histories, interviews and community nomination can often reproduce the same kinds of racial and socio-economic hierarchies of the pasts that heritage projects seek to represent. As a result, the gathering of culinary heritage has mirrored the approaches identified by Ray (2015) and Duruz (2016). Both scholars have asserted that, in place of written sources, historical culinary connections in Asia can be mapped using tastes captured in present day cooking and in living memory and using such material to think past national borders. Hong Kong and Macau have followed closely by looking towards present day recipes and practices and offered speculative rather than conclusive taste histories. This approach to the history of palatal taste has its advantages. Ray considers the Indian Ocean space as one of sensorial production, and as a partially unified palatal community that traverses borders, both historical and contemporary, reflecting recent trends in the history of food, and food commodities in particular. These approaches to palatal taste consider multiple origin points for varied recipes, including a long-standing maritime trade, and the circulation of slaves and indentured labourers, as well as the development of complementary agricultural practices.

But the politics of fixing this history of palatal taste can also produce hierarchies, including a racialised ranking of cooking skills and their aesthetics. Tarulevicz (2013) follows the everyday Singaporean discourses that surround the salad *dish rojak*, including when it is used as a metaphor for the city state's multiracial identity – 'All the pieces are in the same bowl but separate' (2013: 33). A mixed, chopped salad of fruit and vegetables in equal proportion, *rojak* has become a metonym for an idealised multicultural past and is maintained as

an ideal in the nation-state. It is often said to be a leveller, in that Tamil Muslim food is served in cheaper food courts where heartlanders, or those with nationalist sentiments - can partake of it (Tarulevicz 2013). At the same time, in Singapore and Malaysia, dishes such as *mee goreng* or *roti prata* maintain distinct ethnicities reinforced by, in these examples, the Tamil Muslim identity of their cook or street vendor and are privy to racialised discourses of hygiene and food safety (Duruz and Khoo 2014). *Rojak*-ness tracks back to early British colonial policies of racial categorisation over plurality and material dimensions over the psychosocial. This reinforces the thin multiculturalism of *rojak* politics and multiculturalism elsewhere (Mannur 2010). Acts of multiracial commensality described by Duruz and Khoo in Singapore and Malaysia (2014) are acts that recall a nostalgic past when race was not so present. In such discourses, the shrinking space for commensality reflects latter day government race policies as well as a growing Islamification in Malaysia. Acts of commensality that take place against this backdrop have a range of political agendas in line with this, which are not solely in the hands of community or religious groups. 'Observation' (2014: 111) of acts in hawker centres are then used in political discourses to celebrate eating across borders, when in reality, boundaries are already entrenched. Recognition, misrecognition and surveillance appear to share the same logic in such examples, removing certain bodies and foods from ordinary spheres. These culinary politics mask deep-seated anxieties about Singapore and its economic prowess in light of the growth of China (Ong 1999). The embrace of Confucian ideals to promote a hard-nosed, democratic technocracy, rather than a soft, South East Asian pluralist messiness, exposes the hierarchies of race and taste that shape Singaporean society.

In their study of formal and informal projects of heritage-making, Brulotte and Di Giovine (2016) identify two grounding notions that are useful for the exploration of food heritage in Hong Kong and Macau in this chapter. Firstly, that of food heritage as part of a continuum between projects that list buildings and those that list intangibles because of their links at an international level by the politics in and around UNESCO. Food and other intangible heritage items are

actualised precisely because built heritage has mostly protected European buildings and aesthetic. Secondly, all food heritage claims are suspect, particularly when European colonial expansion or more recent manifestations of globalisation are ignored in narratives of autochthonous dishes and modes of eating.

For Waterton and Smith (2009) nations use heritage discourses to create both a sense of place and to negotiate places in relation to each other. Portugal has used the work with UNESCO to situate its culinary heritage within an application to recognise and safeguard the Mediterranean diet, along with Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Morocco, and Croatia. This littoral fixes Portuguese cuisine in a southern European sphere. In contrast, Britain has no plans to ratify the UNESCO convention governing intangible cultural heritage, which Waterton and Smith attribute to the nation's discomfort with intangible history and its preference for the material over the social (2009). While this effectively cuts out both Macau and Hong Kong from the culinary histories of Portugal and Britain, it leaves incredible latitude for Macau and Hong Kong to shape their culinary histories in light of their colonial past and their future aspirations.

The current political climate in Hong Kong and Macau also articulates with anxieties about an expansionist China. Both cities are in the middle of a fifty-year transition period between independence from Britain and Portugal and full integration with China in 2047 and 2049 respectively. This liminality has come to define approaches to heritage. In both cities the political agenda has prioritised the shaping of an immutable cultural heritage that cannot be subsumed into Chinese regional culinary systems such as Cantonese, nor can they be subsumed into each other. Only forty kilometres apart, their histories are intimately connected as noted in chapter one; indeed the decline of Macau as a port city was triggered by the European settlement and development of Hong Kong. Each has extant, long-standing South Asian communities who stayed after Britain and Portugal handed the territories back to mainland China. Both have examples of European architecture listed under other heritage schemes, and which continue to define their contemporary urban space and their sense of what is intangibly local.

The state in Hong Kong and Macau became progressively more accessible to me as my research strategy matured with a deeper engagement with community groups. However, my relationship with the state deepened in precisely the places where the South Asian culinary community had absented themselves – in heritage making. In meetings and informal discussions with heritage managers, I was told repeatedly of this absence – of South Asian cooks, ingredients and techniques from the Hong Kong and Macanese historical record. This is a record that seeks to use multiracialism as a resource in marking the difference between these special semi-autonomous regions and mainland China (including Guangzhou).

There are ways that minority cuisine can be represented; as part of a fusion dish, like *rojak*, disassociated from any substantive identity and readymade to serve political ends. Alternatively it can be represented as particular dishes attached to cooks and communities who in the present day continue to cook such dishes, often as a livelihood. Food makers and Cooks who prepare these ingredients and dishes occupy rungs of low social status. While Hong Kong pursues a latter approach, Macau has a troubling legacy related to the former.

The legacy has proved controversial and represented most problematically by a dish called African Chicken. African chicken is blackened marinated chicken covered in peanut sauce, and its origin is attributed to a professional chef working in a hotel in the 1940s, a story as disputed as often as it is retold and the dish recooked in *cha gordo* buffets. In his prose about African Chicken and disinheritance, Australian novelist Brian Castro (1998) writes;

[...] The dish African Chicken is a marker of the strange and the different. It claims no real inheritance. In Macau, every restaurant serves it differently, some in a perceptibly 'fake' way with roasted cashews thrown in. Sometimes it is recognisably Chinese Chicken. How did African Chicken get to Macau? Portugal, of course [...] After the meal you are inspired to speak the worlds of disinheritance and autobiography as though a symphony had been embedded deep in your bones [...]

The approach of both cities has been to pay greater attention to the idea of such flows and their inculcation of local bodies and local innovations with food materials. This approach has immense racial implications. African chicken and a host of other dishes claimed as Macanese heritage demonstrate that national identities of food can obscure and evoke problematic racial identities of food. Considering these implications, would it be better to stay silent and unmarked?

These long standing heritage projects, with their early attempts at community engagement have long since faded from the memory of community groups. These projects are 'non-things, negative spaces, lost or forsaken objects, voids or gaps – absences, in other words [...] stand before us as entity-like presences' (Fowles 2010:25). At the same time these same state officials and South Asian community groups maintained good relations through the hosting of community meals in which the heritage of such gatherings were highlighted and played up for a range of strategic purposes. In some cases, members of community groups were part of the civil service where such projects were incubated and realised. Community meals were a space in Macau and Hong Kong that confronted these contradictions.

Tangible intangibles - food heritage and the built environment

'This cricket club was built in 1901! 1901 only! However, here this is ancient history. Hong Kong is such a young place compared to India or China' (Interview with Manizeh, May 2016).

In Hong Kong and Macau tangible and intangible heritage is not easily separated. South Asians engage in all sorts of work to press their claims to built and physical space. As I frequently hear in Macau and Hong Kong, any fight is a fight about space and land. South Asian community associations are also hungry for permanent office, performance, religious and feasting space. These claims force South Asian groups to interact with buildings and spaces that are European or defined by late colonial European aesthetics, and reinforces the perception of Hong Kong and Macau as too young to make an impact on South Asian cooking.

8,800 buildings such as temples in Hong Kong are listed as architecturally significant, and over one thousand have been given a graded listing - although only 117 such as government buildings of those have formal protection from demolition. There are 128 buildings, monuments, complexes and sites in Macau, twenty of which are now UNESCO world heritage sites, including churches, seminaries and examples of Portuguese Baroque architecture. However, reclamation projects which have extended land in Macau have been given over to casino developments. In state hands, Euro-American aesthetics are protected, maintained and reflected in new developments.

Instead, private ownership has filled the gap in terms of representing multiculturalism more tangibly. The Hindu Temple in Hong Kong's Happy Valley, constructed in 1953, is privately owned and is a Grade II listed building. Four mosques in Hong Kong, built in the first half of the 20th century have been listed - three of which are privately owned. The largest, in Kowloon and built on a site which has had several mosques, is also privately owned and remains unlisted. The discourse of unconstrained growth has become more critical among the Muslim community who feel that the Hong Kong Government has been unwilling to approve new mosques since the attacks on New York's World Trade Centre in September 2001. Macau's mosque, built in the 1980s and recently extended, has to accommodate the rise in Muslims across the Delta. The Parsi community also recently extended their prayer hall. The original low-rise Edwardian Zoroastrian Building, built in 1931 and owned by the Delta's Parsi association, was knocked down and replaced by a modern 22-storey office tower in 1993. It now houses the temple, kitchen and community dining hall as well as offices for rent. It generates a profit which is distributed in Hong Kong and India as charitable donations to support a range of causes.

Following this, The *Nucleo De Animacao Cultural De Goa, Damao E Diu* (NACGDD) have applied for a permanent building for their association in Macau. The Tamil Cultural Association has weighed up several strategies for their likely efficacy in convincing the Hong Kong government to set aside real estate for cultural heritage purposes. One strategy under discussion is to press the government to invest in a silk museum, which would also celebrate Hong Kong's

centrality to the production, the skills and craft of silk weaving and the ingenuity of Tamil silk traders.

The managers of the first Intangible Cultural Heritage list in Hong Kong, have embraced this heritage work as an unfinished process, and there is still energy and political will to revisit and refine the list. Siu's generation of missionary school-educated, cosmopolitan Hong Kong students of the post-war era would rise up and assume political leadership in the newly formed legislative council in the 1980s to rethink and renegotiate China-led projects of convergence. A new generation of *bashi hou* [bāshí hòu, 八十後] (those born after the 1980s) are now managing complex heritage projects that derive Hong Kong identity. This generation has grown up with a new set of school textbooks that teach a version of Chinese history quickly side steps the variegated histories of the Pearl River Delta region. As a result, they are committed and deeply invested in acts and projects of collective remembering of counter-memories (Chin 2014).

In this context, 'Hong Kong-style' and Macanese food and feasting have emerged as the products of new types of nationalism in Hong Kong and Macau. This signals that there are no easy separations in Hong Kong and Macau between the listing of buildings and the listing of intangible elements such as food practices, nor between the colonial and the post-colonial moment. So is the claim made by Brulotte and Di Giovine (2016), that food is the material *par excellence* in terms of heritage work and self-identification, still true in this context?

Manufactured silences: Goan food in cha gordo.

In the next two sections, I examine how multiculturalism is understood through the research-led heritage work in Macau and community-led work in Hong Kong. In this first section, I look at two performances of *cha gordo* in Macau, though neither of them is explicitly so. The first is a Macanese performance that has adapted to its political context. The second is an attempt to make Goan, Daman and Diu long tables and their stories briefly visible to highlight their history in order to make property claims.

This context reflects historical forces where ingredients and dishes which were identified by their ethnicity are now largely silent on the matter or consider nomenclature to reflect other dynamics. At the same time, cooks attend to the identity of foods because *cha gordo* is a flexible platform, claiming them as Macanese. As noted earlier, some voices have been raised from within Macau's African population to claim that such acts lead to a disinheritance, though this is not a view shared by the Goan, Daman and Diuese (hereafter GDD) community. In their not-a-*cha gordo*, the GDD community considers food in the past to have problematic links to poverty and decline. Conversely, performances of long tables in the present speak of possibility and so the less said about borrowings, the better.

With its sudden elevation, there is a proliferation of places that claim to serve *cha gordo*, including the St. Regis Hotel, which offers it in a European restaurant on Saturday afternoons. I tour these various sites with Agnes, a Macanese cook of mixed Portuguese and Cantonese heritage. She is considered an expert on Macanese cooking, and as we eat together at these *cha gordos*, she makes it clear that even disassociated from the church, and no longer associated with repasts after mass among the Macanese, there is still something sacrilegious in claiming *cha gordo* for secular or touristic purposes.

Yet those like Agnes who are closest to the CGM, which organises an annual *cha gordo* as a potlatch of dishes cooked by home and professional cooks, are the most reluctant to claim the moniker for the buffets and long tables they produce. The training kitchens of the state-supported *Instituto de Formação Turística*, or the Institute of Tourism Studies (hereafter IFT), are the business end of the state's culinary heritage project and are tasked with disseminating the skills needed for cooking dishes for a *cha gordo*. In addition to running community and professional Macanese catering courses, often taught or written by Agnes, as well as the local and international Macanese cooking competitions, the IFT restaurant hosts a Macanese buffet every Friday night. The buffet, comprising some 30 items (ten starters and ten main dishes, two soups, and eight desserts) is selected from a database of over one hundred dishes. Even these recipes have changed, most recently when kitchen managers have asked

chefs to cut coconut milk and butter from some recipes in order to cut costs. Here too, the senior managers of the IFT declare the buffet is not a *cha gordo*, even though the addition of the live band replicates closely the atmosphere of the past *cha gordo* style buffets at the Macau Club.

Even when I am invited to dinners at the homes of Macau's television cooks and prominent culinary ambassadors such as Agnes, in which a range of Macanese savoury and sweet dishes are served with wines, brandies, and teas, I am told these dinners are not *cha gordo* either. My feeling is that hidden rules of hosting and etiquette prohibit Agnes from claiming that they can produce a *cha gordo* alone. It is about a collective endeavour, rather than the amount and range of dishes that one person can cook.

Agnes and other Macanese cooks have been part of various Macanese identity projects since the 1980s. Agnes remarks on her family's inclusion in *Familias Macaenses*, a multi-volume listing of Macanese family genealogies from 1704-1996 compiled by Macanese historian Jorge P. Forjaz, a painstaking piece of work completed by reference to parish records, legal documents and oral histories. Eventually published in 1996, it is hard to overestimate the social impact of the volumes. They embrace a narrative of a cumulative ethnic layering in Macau. Much like Burke's *Peerage* in the UK, which details the social class of the gentry, the volumes are considered by the Macanese state, community groups and wider diaspora to be a comprehensive and definitive guide to who is Macanese. Inclusion in the book is the basis for a legitimate claim of Macanese identity, but it does not outright reject those that arrived in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, reflecting Foucault's position on genealogy as grounded in disparity, not inviolability, at the 'beginnings of things' (1980: 142). Those seeking refuge from violent transfers of power in the Afro- and Indo-Lusophone worlds, as well as those arriving from Pakistan in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, do not feature, although there are notable exceptions. A Macanese friend who is now living in Hong Kong tells me, 'I didn't even think I was Macanese until I saw that my family was in that book'. His mother, a Karen from Karen State, Myanmar, fled to Macau in the 1960s when she was young and met and married his father who had left his native Portugal for Hong Kong but had later relocated to Macau for

unfettered access to good Portuguese wines. However, despite these surprising additions to the collective genealogy, the picture is bleak with fewer than 8,000 Macanese living in Macau.

Despite the pressure on those who remain to identify and produce Macanese cuisine, oral traditions and intimate family networks have shaped the way that recipes develop their origin stories and evolve. Together, Agnes and I look over her library of recently published Macanese cookbooks, with Agnes performing a close textual analysis of the recipes contained within. Of particular interest is the cookbook published by Cintia Serrano (2013) who collated recipes handwritten by her aunt and grandmother during the 1930s and 1940s, discussed in chapter one. The Macau Historical Archives now houses the 13 original notebooks of her aunt and grandmother. In them, the format of the recipes reveals the familiarity that both women had with what would have been a near-global circulation of cookbooks and cookery journals at the time. Each of the 800 recipes, written in Portuguese and English and with Cantonese ingredients informally transliterated, comprise an ingredient list followed by a detailed set of sequential instructions. The lists of ingredients pay particular attention to the ethnicity thereof, for example using the Cantonese transliterated name for Cantonese air-dried sausage. There is also a differentiation between 'Indian' onions and Chinese scallions and *arroz pilau* (translated as Moorish rice, which uses long-grain varieties) and *arroz gordo* (fat rice using short grain glutinous varieties). Such meticulous differentiation reveals a careful treatment of the ethnicity of ingredients and a careful management of dishes.

Agnes explains that such descriptions have disappeared from Macanese recipes published since the 1980s, a period that kick-started an earnest engagement with the category of Macanese foods (Augustin-Jean 2002). This is true for Cintia's cookbook. It is also true of the informal collection collated by the International Ladies Club of Macau and distributed in 1989, followed by a cookbook by chef Graça Pacheco Jorge (1992), by historian Cecilia Jorge (2004), and chef Carlos Cabral (2013). The Fat Rice cookbook, written and published by the owners of the eponymous restaurant in Chicago in the United States (2016)

is the outlier in this corpus. In what Agnes generally considers a diasporic recipe collection *par excellence*. The collection that contains recipes donated by Agnes' family and other prominent cooks and chefs in Macau and the chef owners make references to Macau's multicultural past in both the introduction and in the preamble to most recipes. Surprisingly the recipes are heavily spiced and the spice mixes – named after the people who donated the broader recipes - contain 10-12 different spices. The number of spices and the variety used is a concrete way of demonstrating the fact that every family has their own version of canonical recipes. Agnes tells me that the owners were very happy with these heavily spiced recipes, which would suit the palate of their American customers. But Agnes points out that there is continuity between these heavily spiced recipes and with those printed in the domestic cookbooks. Flicking through these books, she points out there is little dispute that *carril* recipes contain turmeric, it is the amounts that differ, as well as if there is cumin, or other spices that are mixed in with the turmeric.

Thinking about Macanese food involves pointing out differences. Agnes and others involved in Macanese culinary work, informally and professionally, are in a contiguous world of parallel long tables including Peranakan long tables, Tok Panjang in Malaysia, or even Chinese style buffets, a position evident from how carefully Agnes points out all the differences in Macanese cooking of common buffet dishes. At our dinner, she points to the *tacho*, a clear meat soup containing leafy vegetables, tender pork hock, and pale slices of pork rind - a combination of the Portuguese love of pork and Chinese soup culture. In another dish, a large loin of pork relaxes in a russet-coloured curry sauce. Sauces are different from Goan versions she tells me - the Macanese versions are lengthened with a lot of Portuguese brandy. There is also a dish of pork in a shrimp and tamarind sauce, the back-story of which she illustrates further by taking a jar of fermented shrimp paste from her cupboard. The family that produces the paste in the back of a shop is the same family and same shop with which her grandmother transacted. It is not like *belacan* paste in Malaysia: this old Macanese family prepares it with Chinese rice wine and real Portuguese *aguardiente*. Agnes is in seeming agreement with Rachel Slocum who asserts

that ingredients have cultural identities - 'the idea [...] that the 'ethnicity of plants and animals enlivens our dishes'(2011:318). Yet this enlivenment is a product of a certain social position. For Williams-Forsion certain raced foods are 'highly regulated, carefully watched and minimally dispersed' (2014: 95).

The introduction of the research report that will eventually accompany the UNESCO application to inscribe Macanese food offers redress in that it offers an opportunity for Indian flavours and materials to be an ordinary part of Macanese food. This is problematic. What precisely are Indian ingredients and flavours? By attributing an Indian identity to both flavours and materials in Macanese food, there is some attempt to acknowledge both origins and influence, and avoid the controversies of African chicken.

The GDD community has a contested relationship with India. A period of political unrest in the 1960s in Macau saw dissident groups and people of South Asian descent who, accused of fomenting revolution in Macau following the Portuguese loss of Goa, Daman and Diu, were interned. Many in the GDD community left for other colonies. But a diverse number of people, migrating from South Asia and the Eastern coast of Africa, have come to Macau, including Goans Damanese and Diuese in the 1970s and 1980s. They came as migrant workers in the new casino economies, or as civil servants, professionals and traders – many fleeing independent post-colonial states in the Lusophone empire. By returning to Macau, they made a conscious decision to return to Portuguese colonial rule, as did South Asians immigrating to Hong Kong from India, and African states in the same period. Those who stayed on could eventually consider themselves Portuguese again. Along with tens of thousands of Macanese, they took advantage of Portugal's offer to grant anyone born in Macau before 1981 or born to Portuguese parents, full Portuguese citizenship. This is the same policy adopted by the Portuguese in Goa, Daman and Diu before the handover to India in 1961. At the same time, India is also a resource in order to negate the threat of disinheritance. The Portuguese-established *estado* in Goa supplied the later Luso-Asian and Luso-African empires with food and cooks, thereby creating this amaranthine culinary heritage.

Edging towards thinness over piquancy, Portuguese, South Asians and professional cooks question whether *cha gordo* buffets are tasty. The members of the GDD host their own non *cha gordo* to mark a major Catholic feast day. As Filipe explains to me, this constitutes the largest gathering of Goans, Damanese and Diuese in Macau where the community can play host. But they do so quietly. Like other Portuguese speaking communities, the GDD community is considered a black box in Macau. An ethnic minority within a religious minority amongst both Christians and Hindus, their interior lives are the subject of all sorts of gossip and fantasies, including among newer arrived South Asians. Shafique, the Pakistani manager of the recently opened Indian Provisions Store, tells me that he never sees anyone from the GDD community in his shop because they eat anything. It is a morally laden sentiment that echoes in the complaints of GDD elders, that the younger generation's consumption habits are indistinguishable from Chinese and Macanese youth. Once a year this potluck is held at a church for a Catholic celebration promoted by the Portuguese colonial state as a way of marking loyalty among colonial subjects. In doing so the GDD community offer a parallel *cha gordo*, as a set of ordinary dishes, that directly engages with its future compared to Macanese heritage projects.

In recent years, the vestry of São Lourenço church in the old district in Macau Peninsula, hosts the Feast for Our Lady of Fatima organised by the community from Goa, Daman and Diu. A few years earlier, the feast had relocated from the larger space in the Chapel of St Francis Xavier on Coloane, some five miles south. It is raining heavily on this May night, and despite the more central location, a smaller group than usual have assembled in the church to hold mass and feast.

Despite the small number of people, social obligation has meant the cooks have come to deposit their food and partake of others, and this includes cooks who are Hindu as well as Christian. The table represents the foods that have become festival favourites in Macau over the last few years, including those sold for *Lusofonia*, examined in chapter four. The cooks place their contributions to the buffet on a long table that runs down the centre of the vestry, joining silver foil trays of professionally catered food and white bread rolls bought from the

bakery. A hot-mauve *feijoada* or pork and bean stew, a meaty, fragrant biryani, a dish of fried rice with Goan *chourico*, a light creamy chicken curry, sandwiches and rolls, sweet vermicelli and a thick, stiff chocolate mousse cake, wait patiently too, condensation gently collecting under their plastic and glass lids. Hindus, who have skipped Mass and come only for the feast, now start to arrive, the cooks among them adding other foods to the table: crispy spiced chicken samosas; a cooling mango custard salad. The priest, Father Jojo Peter, says a quick blessing over the food and people begin to remove the lids and fill plates. Talk is about food and Macanese politics and of the progress on securing a building for the NACGDD. Food is washed down with fruity red wines from Portugal and lots of Jack Daniels whiskey mixed with cola.

The table at the vestry represents one part of a continuum of good community membership. Several times a year, the same cooks will produce similar dishes for *Lusofonia*, a festival in which Macau represent itself as essential part of China's foreign policy – a topic explored in greater depth in chapter four. The table in the vestry represents another, more intimate side of festival-making. Sometimes officials and local academics are invited to the vestry to feast at this buffet. It is proof of a dynamic internal life of the community – one that is bursting at the seams with activity, and overflowing with cooks and foods, all of which require a permanent home. Filipe who is one of several Goan men who are part of an informal organising committee for GDD feast days, tells me others only describe themselves as home cooks. Yet, in these public gatherings, the curation of food and identity is careful and deliberate. Like other national groups in Macau, the GDD use community cooking as part of a strategy to press their claims for an official building within the state-held property for the NACGDD. Buying or leasing private property is impossible now that casino wealth has skewed commercial and domestic property prices. There are rumours of a letter guaranteeing such a space, but this letter has not yet manifested.

When the table is complete, it bears more than a passing resemblance to *cha gordo*, 'It is not a *cha gordo* - it is just that there should be no duplication.' Weeks before, Filipe rings around to invite people to come, suggesting 'if you

want to donate a little something or bring a little something that would be great'. It has to be a potluck because no one believes their neighbours' version is better than theirs. The Macanese cafe food is a strategy to dilute and vary the table, which is often laden with the same kinds of home cooked foods. The white rice delivered with it is so pedestrian that no one can be bothered to cook it, and yet is a soothing, legitimate addition to the table while being unattached to any specific cook. Filipe disagrees with my suggestion that there is a continuum between *cha gordo*, *tok panjang* and other long tables. This is neither Portuguese nor Macanese heritage. If anything most food found in the Luso-Asian post-colonial sphere is informed by foods and flavours from Goa, Daman and Diu only.

This is somewhat reinforced by the fact that the bought-in food is not from any of Macau's Indian restaurants which have appeared since the late 1980s. Therefore there are no *puris* or Indian flatbreads, fish curries nor coconut *barfis* (or fudge), that traditionally bridges the divide between Christian hosts and Hindu guests in Goa at Christian festivals such as Christmas (Gonsalves 2007). The bought food from the local Macanese cafe forms the majority of the feasting food. The trays of crispy pork chop, sweet and sloppy tomato spaghetti, sticky white rice, steamed pak choi and salads bulk out the table and add several more vegetarian options because there are more savoury dishes bought in than those cooked by the GDD community. These are commonplace and beloved Macanese café foods, without which people could go hungry.

On the face of it, Filipe's denials about the *cha gordo* quality of this table represents a challenge to Macau's long-standing multiculturalism. What Felipe and others in the GDD community appear to acknowledge is that a national food heritage project based on documentation, analysis and the generational flow and archiving of recipes dulls the visceral qualities of chance, skill, poverty and death that underpin their cooking. The documenting of recipes and cooking techniques 'lose the sense of life as a precarious, somewhat unstable process' (Davis 2012: 506).

This becomes clearer the more time I spend with Felipe and his insistence on documenting his and other's culinary work through a life story approach. Filipe is a passionate amateur cook who performs this identity by exploring and experimenting. Yet he is well known for his *feijoada*, a spiced pork and bean stew, a skill that he has only exploited since moving to Macau and led through a series of chances to his finding all the spices he needs. His arrival precipitated a fascination with cookery which challenged Goan and Macanese notions of good ingredients. I also spend time with Joseph, a second generation Goan-Macanese. He strongly associates cooking with financial and emotional impoverishment, learning to cook chicken *carril* when Portuguese influence in Macau was on the wane making Goan cooking and the rise of local Macanese identity appear synonymous.

Filipe comes from Goa and married a local woman in the 1990s. She is also from Goa, having arrived in Macau in the 1980s with her sisters and her father. Her father had tossed a coin for his family's future: the choice was between Dubai and Macau. Living here, he now understands that life in Macau can be a coin flip kind of life and a culinary shift that needs a lifetime to come to terms with.

[...] I came to work here [in Macao] but it was difficult to find a job at first. I was an accounts clerk [back in Goa]]. Anyway, I had art in me so I restored old paintings in the churches of Macao.... [I] restored paintings and repainted statues for more than 18 months. When I first came, we did bring some spices from home. But then, I discovered in Macau all the spices are available. Macao is a place where everything is found. In the Chinese pharmacies they use these [spices] for what I don't know what, but now you have all the spices in Macao. All of it [...] I learned to cook a lot of dishes after I arrived here. I learnt to cook by tasting the food I would eat at a restaurant or from outside. (Interview, 2016)

In his interview, Filipe tells me that it is because he is a keen amateur cook that he knows to go to traditional Chinese pharmacies that sell very clean whole spices. He tells me he is in a rare club in exploiting this delicious supply. His stance is in spite of the continuity between the cooked and bought spiced foods

on the table. Although there is an established suitcase-trade in foods from Goa in particular and more publicly cooked Macanese foods available, the table at the vestry does not represent all attempts at cooking this variety. Filipe tells me of his favourite dish to recreate from taste – tinned fish. These are small tins of sardines in various oils and flavoured sauces, in tins which are decorated in illustrations and typography that have now become part of Chinese gift-giving cultures. This is an elite food that asserts his status, displays his skills, but reinforces his passionate amateur persona through a scatological approach of cooking for leisure. At the church, Filipe's version of the tinned sardines has not yet made it onto the table.

Joseph is a man in his 80s. Others gathered tonight have introduced him as the man who cooks the best chicken *carril* within this small community. He is ambivalent about this honour and hasn't cooked this chicken *carril* in almost 10 years. He made his career with the prestigious *Banco Nacional Ultramarino* in Macau and then moved to Hong Kong in this twenties, having spent eighteen months in night school learning English, to work for richer banks. He now lives on a comfortable pension and has just returned from extended periods in Portugal and Goa. He lives alone, is estranged from his wife and children, as well as his sister, but cooks his chicken *carril* in memory of his parents - although it gives him no joy. His parents moved to Macau shortly before he was born and was helped, like other Goan migrants, in the early twentieth century by the powerful Countinho family, who have a family member in Macau's legislative Council and another who heads the NACGDD. Theirs was a life of struggle, and he was expected to do his fair share. 'Never be the first son in a poor family' he advises.

The poverty of the family meant little when even elite families found it hard to make ends meet once Hong Kong displaced Macau as the major port in the delta. Things changed when Portuguese refugees escaped to Macau from Shanghai and invested in the territory. Joseph's happiest memories were during his teenage years when the number of war refugees from Shanghai swelled the ranks of the residents of Macau. Like Ruby, whose oral history presented in Chapter one attested to how the Shanghainese made Hong Kong into a more

global city, Joseph attributes these Shanghai refugees with injecting the impoverished religious city with a European nightlife. He recalls that he and his friends would rush from their Latin classes at St Joseph's Seminary, to the house of a sprightly young grandmother from Shanghai who would teach them all the rhumba while they took turns dancing with her daughter and granddaughter. They would then visit the club and steal the pretty women from under the noses of 'Shanghai boys'.

When he recalls the genealogy of his *carril*, it is to link it to Macau's recurrent decline. By the 1960s, prospects had turned negative once more for the Portuguese in Macau, and local tensions that had been about labour laws had spilt into racial identity as labour unions called for independence from Portuguese rule. His mother fell ill. His father, who only survived his mother by two years, taught Joseph how to cook the family *carril*. His father set him to work at the grinding stone with coconut and then with fresh chillies until his fingers were sore. He made the pain worse by rubbing his sore fingers with alcohol wipes and had to spend two days with his hands in cold water until the pain started to subside. When contrasted with Joseph's youth and his days spent dancing, the recipe for *carril* is a painful memory. Joseph dismisses food heritage projects that rely on such memories where the act of remembering is believed to be a positive psychosocial experience. Some *cha gordo* dishes and their cooks are best forgotten.

In this section, I have examined two performances of *cha gordo* in Macau - neither of them explicitly so. The Macanese project of establishing its cuisines as fusion food has aped all the problematic aspects of multiculturalism. This includes the acknowledgement of difference, yet the flattening of it and the disinheritance of particular cooks. Yet *cha gordo* itself is never quite present. By its very transience, it can also perform other work, such as establishing the culinary history of a community in need of recognition on their terms. Such dynamics are also mirrored among the Parsis in Hong Kong.

Black boxes: Temple food in Hong Kong

In this final section, I examine the ties of religion, heritage and property in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, buildings can never have enough protection as listed thought abandoned lineage halls are razed and replaced by new developments. There are multiple appearances of food as part of religious or cultural-religious practices in Hong Kong's heritage list. As evidenced by the GDD community in Macau, feasting practices among Parsis reinforce the marking of particular buildings as historically significant, while unmarking South Asian cooking within major heritage discourses.

If religion plays a crucial role in Hong Kong heritage and identity, this does not mark it as different from mainland Chinese practices per se. Despite the prohibition of what Chinese authorities call superstitious practices related to ancestor worship or folk religions and practices, Palmer (2009) indicates that under the Chinese heritage schema, even religious rituals and practices that worship popular deities such as the sea-goddess Mazu, have been re-inscribed under a new secular canon. Tensions remain. Religious authorities are reluctant to change China's stance on recognising specific types of religious practice, despite the legitimacy to some practices that heritage work can bring.

While herbal tea and Hong Kong style milk tea are items on Hong Kong's first draft list that are now part of the official representative list – official inventories that all provinces of China have produced – so too is the basin meal or *sik puhn*. The description of *sik puhn* included in the official list highlights its ritual function, for example as part of festivals such as Hung Shing. However, anthropologists have noted how much the practice of the feast has changed over several decades in their village contexts to mark life events and make tasty city banquets (Chan 2010; Cheung 2005; Watson 1987). Its inclusion and description reveal how far the interconnection between culture, religion, folk practices and food can mark distinctions between Hong Kong and mainland China.

Infamously, Hong Kong's first inventory, published in 2015, was seven years in the making. In my discussions with the small, yet hard working, Intangible

Cultural Heritage Office (ICHO), there is a sense of pride in the considered approach to community engagement and research, and the fact that Hong Kong has beaten Singapore by developing its list earlier. There are 480 items, which includes 292 social practices and 127 items of traditional craftsmanship, culinary heritage is represented mainly by seventy-eight items of agricultural, industrial and the professional made food - including food making, food equipment making, farming and fishing and a Catholic feast day. Cooking food and making beverages fall under the category of 'traditional craftsmanship'. Listed in this category are Hong Kong-style Milk Tea, the hot drink Yuan Yang (which combines tea and coffee), wheat flour-based egg tarts, and pineapple buns. Such foods tacitly acknowledge a colonial and historical foodway - pineapple buns gain their name from their crosshatched sweet crust, which resembles the outside of a pineapple, which other media notes as being representative of an 'East-meets-West fusion' (South China Morning Post, 2017).

The list has reinforced contradictory yet productive notions that, in Hong Kong, food tastes most like itself and is natural, but is also modern and industrious and not afraid to draw down cosmopolitan values of virtue, 'irony' and 'worldliness' (Smith 2007: 42). As discussed in the introduction, anthropologists in Hong Kong, including Tam (1997), Cheng (1997) and Cheung (2002), identify a certain 'metropolitaneity' (Tam 1997: 291) of the city's dishes. These dishes include dim sum, herbal tea and *puhn choi* which appear on the intangible cultural heritage list in Hong Kong. Hannerz (1987) argues that metropolitanism, which is a process whereby cities, in particular, thicken culturally speaking, away from their hinterlands, is often conflated with cosmopolitanism that celebrates cultural flows from more affluent countries in the global north. It appears that certain ingredients, fillings and components of dishes have a racial identity. This is also true within the Pearl River Delta, evidenced by differences in the lists submitted by Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong province. This includes the highly localised use of buffalo milk, or the differences in egg and rice noodle making technique. It also contains

similarities, for example herbal tea which is part of a tripartite heritage nomination to Beijing's national list.

The resulting seven South Asian items included in Hong Kong's Intangible Cultural Heritage list has generated local and international recognition for Hong Kong. The listing of the Hindu festivals of *Diwali* and *Holi*, the Nepalese festival of *Teej* and the Pakistani festival of Poem Reciting places Hong Kong in a small yet global club that recognises non-majoritarian cultures as heritage. On this short list, France has itemised the music and dance forms of the Maloya of Réunion Island (in 2009), and of Gwoka from Guadeloupe (in 2014). Portugal has itemised Afro-Brazilian Fado urban songs (in 2011). India has itemised Novruz, the Persian New Year, one of seven countries to do so, acknowledging the sweep of the Persian diaspora over Central and South Asia. The research and administration staff at the ICHO tell me that, more importantly, it places Hong Kong on a par with Singapore in its acknowledgement that aspects of South Asian life are firmly rooted in Hong Kong.

Locally, while expressing surprise at the lack of a significant British legacy, the South China Morning Post noted that 'With the inclusion of such diverse entries as egg tarts, the annual Hindi Diwali festival and Bangladesh's International Mother Language Day, the inventory celebrates an array of Hong Kong's communities' (South China Morning Post, 2014). It is an explicit signal that an Islamic, Nepali Hindu South Asian religio-cultural life is embedded in the local context, making sense of the existence of the Hindu Temple and crematorium the mosque and its circulations of brown bodies and other materials in the city.

That said, it is also a cause for concern. That this has been a political exercise rather than a historically accurate survey is not a shock. The means and methods of community consultation and nomination meant that it was up to community groups and associations and various districts to interpret the 'generation to generation' stipulation. In the original language of the Convention this phrase was translated as an item passed down through at least two to three generations or 70 to 80 years. And yet the list contains 'Bangladesh's International Mother Language Day' a celebration that could only really be

possible after the creation of Bangladesh as a country in 1971. When the draft made its rounds to community associations in Hong Kong before publication, there was disquiet about these seven items, concerns not of longevity, but whether they truly reflected Hong Kong identity. At the same time, the staff at the ICHO has expressed concern about gaps. To illustrate the gaps they mention the total absence of items related to Parsi culture. But there are also few Islamic practices listed though this is unremarked upon. The politics of community consultation has meant that disputes are not acted upon - people cannot nominate to remove things from the list. Instead the ongoing and open nomination process enables people to add more items if they are inclined to do so, meaning the list should only get longer.

If ritualistic food is important in Hong Kong's cultural work, then it is interesting that none of the major South Asian religions have nominated their free community meals as items on the list. On the website of the Sikh Gurdwara, there are descriptions of a community meal or '*langar*', being served over the last 120 years, for communities of Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike. Serving a *langar* is still a daily practice, something that several refugees and asylum claimants rely on. The Hindu Temple now also serves a community meal every Sunday in what Markovitz describes as a crossover of practices between the Sikh and Sindhi communities in Hong Kong and the diaspora. The Discover Hong Kong website describes the service on Sunday as a community meal. Technically, anyone can come and receive food, although in my many Sunday visits to the temple and Gurdwara, it was clear that mainly South Asians come to eat.

Tamil Hindus who struggle to use the temple kitchens for their small gatherings show that community meals have a northern orientation. These northern South Asian community meals serve devotees as well as an invisible and excluded groups that highlight the significant disparities of wealth and the persistence of general poverty into the new millennium (Mathews 2011). Community meals are a more reflective of the majority of those living in Hong Kong. For Grasseni et al. (2014) heritage projects demand the work of organising around terms such as 'local' and 'traditional'. Local and traditional food is not familiar food to all. Instead these term gives 'new form and significance to food substances, senses,

and practices that may seem reflexively familiar to some, while curiously exotic to others' (2014: 1).

My interlocutor, Manizeh, is sympathetic to the plight of the Tamils in Hong Kong, who struggle to mark their religious occasions with temple cooked Tamil food. But as a Parsi she has, since she moved here in the 1980s, a community space in which she can feast with others on religious or other occasions. At the Hong Kong Zoroastrian Prayer Hall and Building, Parsi meals have been private and exclusive affairs, as per the dictats of senior and more conservative voices in the Parsi religious community. Despite the long-standing presence of hosting exclusive community meals in Hong Kong – at the very least since the late 1800s – Manizeh does not consider the Parsi food part of Hong Kong heritage. She looks quizzical at the suggestion, 'Hong Kong is such a young place compared to India or China. How can there be Hong Kong-style Parsi food? This attitude to Hong Kong history is mirrored in the way that the Parsis have owned and maintained communal property. The Zoroastrian Building, now a tall structure of 28 floors, replaced the squat two storey Edwardian building which previously housed the prayer hall in 1991, blending even more in to Hong Kong's surroundings. Manizeh tells me that there was no question about knocking the old building to make way for more floor space.

Things have started to change recently in the Parsi community. Manizeh and others have recently started to organise community meals at the Zoroastrian Building for a non-parsi guests. At these invite only meals, guests are required to dress formally. It is a sit-down meal usually split into three courses comprising snacks served with cocktails and then a range of *entrees* and desserts. The tables are round, each with a rotating glass tray in the middle that reflects a common Chinese banquet arrangement. After cocktails, the entrees come at once and are placed on the rotating tray. The entrée dishes come together, a range of pickles, salads and fried rice and stews. After the entrees are dispensed, a much smaller selection of desserts follow, ending with hot drinks. The names of the dishes and their descriptions reference either a Parsi or a Persian identity. Sometimes this is an ingredient such as 'mashed potato balls stuffed with Parsi coconut chutney'. In other instances it is an aesthetic,

such as the Persian berry pulao, described as ‘a classy and classic combination of delicate special blends of spicy sweet and tangy Persian flavours’. Finally, Parsi identity also appears in the descriptions to situate the dishes in Parsi food culture, such as ‘Sev-dahi – a Parsi celebratory dish’.

The invitation-only access, the elaborate settings, and table linen, the printed menus in English with evocative descriptions, are all elements that highlight the contrast with community meals served in Hong Kong’s South Asian temples and mosques. The menu in particular serves as a tool to attribute identity to ingredients and dishes. It is beautifully designed and therefore designed to be kept, to evoke the memory of a special, and in some cases unique, experience. More than this, the menu hints at a rich culinary and social life. In addition to the descriptions above are references to ‘Parsi wedding stew’ and ‘wedding custard’. This collapses the boundaries between ‘festival’ and ‘community’ food, and ‘special’ and ‘ordinary’.

Appadurai (1988a) notes that while there is a tendency for all cultures to create a ‘high’ and a ‘low’ cuisine, the processes in each case are very different. These are the two sets of dynamics that frame the historical connection between Persian and Parsi food identities in the meal. On the one hand, as John Hinnells (2005) notes, across the diaspora there is a general reach back to a time before disjuncture to a unified Zoroastrian space. This is a courtly space, evoking a time before a powerful Islamic empire came to control vast tracts of land including Northern India. Yet the appearance of Parsi items on the menu, which are largely fish dishes, and pickles, indicate the ordinary foods of a hastily departed diaspora.

Does this suggest a sharp if complicated divide between the Northern orientation of community meals in other South Asian contexts, and therefore a deeper separation in identity? Waves of settlement make it difficult to talk of the Parsi community in Hong Kong in monolithic terms or even to look at the split between Indian and non-Indian Parsi groups. Having arrived in Hong Kong in the early 1980s after her marriage, Manizeh is a more recent migrant to Hong Kong compared to her husband's family who moved to Hong Kong from

Shanghai shortly after the Second World War. Some Parsis have lived in China or Hong Kong for several generations; others like Manizeh are more newly arrived and retain their Indian passports.

The extended sense of community, as manifested by the community meal, has done two things. Firstly, hosting community meals inside the temple has converted Parsi cuisine into a diplomatic tool to reach out and make the state more accountable. The Hong Kong government appears to be more opaque not less. Various crises including the spread of the deathly SARS virus as well as the Umbrella Movement and its Occupy Central demonstrations, are used as examples where government action has been unclear or unpopular. In the face of a confusing array of parties, policies and platforms, Parsis invite politicians and officials to community meals to present their plans and maintain convivial relations. These relations are very much on Parsi terms and overtures are made only to major decision makers. This parallelism in relation to the government – extending an invitation to one sector while maintaining ignorance of high profile heritage work – broadens out to the work that the food does, where it does that work and how it extends notions of partaking in an ordinary meal. On the one hand, by hosting such meals in the Zoroastrian Building, the menus of food demonstrate a parallel culinary history in Hong Kong. On the other hand, it creates a notion of a parallel Parsi family dinner that remains intimate and closed to guests.

Attendance at the community meal is by invitation only, but it represents a considerable step in extending philosophies about what a community means for Parsis in Hong Kong. However, Manizeh does not acknowledge the impact of Sikh-Sindhi community meals. She tells me that no one who knows of the *Qissa-i-Sanjan* (or the Story of Sanjan) should be surprised that these group of highly private individuals have reached out through the medium of food. She recounts the story briefly. After the fall of Sassanid Empire, Zoroastrian exiles arrived in Gujarat in successive waves and requested asylum from the local king, Jadi Rana. He showed them a vessel full of milk to signify that his kingdom was full. In response, one of the Zoroastrian priests dissolved a handful of sugar into the

milk to show that the vessel would not overflow and that the milk would taste sweeter.

Parsi diaspora groups have utilised this origin story in myriad ways in the present, but all make a virtue of unmarking themselves within the majoritarian community. For Manizeh and others, community meals have become a symbol of the liberalism within the Parsi community in Hong Kong, placing them among the more marked of diaspora groups. The Hong Kong temple is one of the few in the diaspora to allow non-Parsis to enter. While non-Parsis, such as spouses or children of mixed marriages, cannot partake in religious meals, community meals are a way for commensal relations to be established. It is, for one of a better phrase, a Sunday meal, reflecting its break from usual practice but also its ordinary place in a calendar of commensal events (Barbosa 2010).

In this section, I have examined the work that religion and religious food does in Hong Kong's heritage list. The gathering of material at community level has left gaps in this schema, and heritage staff is fearful that Parsis will remain a black box, despite the extended presence of their building in Hong Kong. Most recently the Parsi community have created a system of community meals to manage parallel historical and contemporary convivial relations with itself and with key members of the wider Hong Kong community.

Conclusion - a tangible unmarking?

Built heritage and intangible cultural heritage form a problematic continuum, in that built heritage comes to define intangible forms both politically and materially. Private ownership is a means with which Hong Kong and Macau express multiculturalism both tangibly and intangibly, and community meals cooked and performed outside intangible heritage projects, reinforces this.

The unmarking of South Asian cooks and ingredients heritage projects that call for overtly racial performances of the past in the present. Ingredients that are implicitly and explicitly thought of as South Asian, such as spices and roasted black tea, are subsumed by local cooks whose Macanese and Hong Kong identity, although forged in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, links them back to a past when cooking could subvert racial hierarchies, even when ingredients,

tastes and aromas could reinforce them. While South Asian absences appear strange in projects of heritage-making that are unreflective of both Hong Kong and Macau's pasts, at the same time, 'Hong Kong-style' and Macanese food and feasting emerged as the products of new types of nationalism in Hong Kong and Macau. The flexibility of recipes and the naming convention of dishes do less to highlight the origin of certain dishes and ingredients and do more to flatten the culinary layering of non-Chinese and non-white migration (Slocum 2011).

South Asian communities use community meals to further their work, and only maintain enough marked racial identity to hint at a longer culinary past in the region. This partial marking is problematic, but it is also productive. In Bailey's (2007) reading of blank faced Neolithic and pre-Neolithic European figurines, absences set out future labour. Deliberate voids demand new and innovative constructions. What is the nature of this future work? The next and final chapter explores the marking of spaces for South Asian aspiration and the tensions these produce.

Chapter six: Comestable aspiration - the future in Hong Kong and Guangzhou

[...] Put your finger anywhere in the Chinese map, either my products or my associates will be there," he says. Munuswamy is gung ho about Indians doing well in China, and he aims to raise the bar a notch higher. "I'm creating a new model in China and then, I will take it global. Why can't Indian entrepreneurs go global sitting in China?" he wonders (Mahanta, 2006).

Among my interlocutors, Pearl River Delta based Tamil food entrepreneur Antony Munuswamy is rumoured to be a multimillionaire. Despite his claims in the above quote, taken from a 2006 Economic Times of India article, of having penetrated the entirety of China, his restaurants and spice mixes are largely found in the Pearl River Delta's second-tier cities and in Shanghai only. Yet, the main thrust of Munuswamy's message, that the global aspirations of South Asians can be reached in and from China, seems germane in the present day. Being 'gung ho' (sic) as the journalist describes Munuswamy's attitude, in other words ardent, about a Chinese-based future is shared by South Asian restaurateurs in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau. They see China as a rival to America and set to overtake it as the premier economic power. South Asian ambition has resulted in high levels of immigration in both Hong Kong and Guangzhou since the handover in 1997 (Pieke 2013; 2012; Plüss 2005). For my interlocutors the Pearl River Delta has always been a place of aspiration as discussed in chapter one. It has fostered various kinds of social mobility, from trader to philanthropist and food entrepreneur, migrant to citizen to politician. Perhaps similar to the Middle East the delta is 'some place that has produced better types of people' (Simpson 2003:87).

This view has been underpinned by recent political discourse of the 'Chinese dream', a term first evoked by Xi Jinping as he ascended to China's presidency in 2012. The discourse is now the foundation stone of China's current 13th Five Year Plan, a set of policies and strategies that defines a near future of moderate prosperity for all. This plan brings Guangzhou and Hong Kong ever closer with

high-speed commuter trains and a blurring of the border to remake the delta as a hub for the maritime silk road- discussed in chapter one. The discourse, being reframed by observers inside and outside China as “Xi Jinping Thought”, seeks to smooth out uneven growth, and has two aims. The first is to negate the socio-economic effects of Deng Xiaoping's earlier two-pronged economic doctrine of early prosperity for some and a later trickling down of prosperity for the rest. The second is a critique aimed at capitalist systems which concentrate wealth at the top. It is a rejection of the principles of US neoliberalism while at the same time calling for ‘mass entrepreneurialism’ [of a] ‘Chinese economic style’ (Keane and Chen 2017:2). Like its American counterpart, the Chinese dream is a mass of contradictions through which a South Asian aspirant navigates.

Several Indian informants say that they are convinced by the speech made by Prime Minister Modi when he visited Hong Kong in 2015. Modi asked traders to come home to sell new high-tech Indian made goods, a reality he would make possible through a rollback of environmental regulation and laws protecting civil society protest. However, only a handful of Shenzhen-based traders have made the move back. This is mainly because Chinese factory wages have increased, pushing up manufacturing prices, and squeezing smaller and less established intermediaries. Modi's promises have not been an enticement. The population in Guangzhou, Macau and Hong Kong has remained steady, according to anecdotal consular information in Guangzhou and by-census data in Hong Kong and Macau.

I was frequently asked about my future plans by my interlocutors and in my immediate plans to return to the United Kingdom, I represented an alternative picture of aspiration. People who come to cook, ship, or run food businesses in and around the Delta are already people of means in terms of financial or other resources. South Asian restaurant owners, sought-after chefs and home-based caterers used local Cantonese or Filipino maids to do much of the food shopping washing, peeling and slicing, leaving - in the main - wives and mothers to create South Asian dishes and snacks. Employing maids was a sign of wealth that elites in these cities recognised, and domestic service was also avenue in which South Asian women with fewer means could make a living. There is a Tamil chef in

Hong Kong who has created a very profitable business lending herself to wives and mothers who need to prepare special foods for occasion such as Diwali, and for a whole host of special religious and life events. There is also a Sindhi who started a supper club in the living room of the small flat she shares with her mother in Mid-Levels, and sells lunch boxes to commuters near the financial district.

So what did they want next? Locating my future plans elsewhere also highlighted racial as well as spatial arrangement of ambitions, vis-à-vis restaurateurs and food makers who had set up in Hong Kong as opposed to Guangzhou and vice-versa. When I asked my informants what their future plans were, their responses and their everyday practices indicated how deeply socialised their aspirations were. In particular they highlighted the precarity of others vis-à-vis their race and their place in Cantonese society. These others included the newly arrived or South Asian who had found themselves on the wrong side of the Guangzhou-Hong Kong border as the time frame for the Basic Law wound down.

By the mid to late 20th Century the American dream, confronted by post-Fordist realities of globalised manufacturing, markets and services, and black and women's movements had found created a negative space for black aspiration (Berlant 2011, Baumann 2002). As opposed to a white suburban space of uncontested ownership, distant neighbours, filled with sounds of suburban pleasure, leisure and unproductivity, black aspiration was found in neighbourhoods and in places in the city filled 'collective kinetic life' (Berlant 2011: 72). To find these zero points, black aspirants were intuitionists, who read a city like New York, and found places for anonymous ambition such as busy sidewalks and packed lifts. It is in the city where African American southerners came to be anonymous, to free themselves from the intimacy of racist violence or trade it in for a pacing of it that they could control. Others have taken issue with the continued black and white dichotomies between city and suburb. Yet their studies of black identities in suburban America and routes to belonging through middle-class performances merely highlight the urban-non-white space of cities (Alba et al. 1999; Twine 1996).

As cities, Guangzhou and Hong Kong continue to be central to China's dream – although their place in these discourses are inferred only. The China dream, or 'Xi Jinping Thought' has been articulated into a 'Made in China 2025' for second-tier cities, developing them into scapes such as Hong Kong with the services needed for neighbouring high tech production economies in 'digital, engineering, genetic, aerospace, cyberspace, and smart technologies' (Son, 2017).

Munuswamy's trajectory and place in the Pearl River Delta shows the vulnerability of South Asian food entrepreneurship. It is in Zhongshan, a second tier city, where Munuswamy has set up his only spice factory. He also maintains a small organic farm to grow drumsticks, otherwise known as moringa, to supply his restaurants and franchisees – and is experimenting with other spices that can be grown and processed in China – and therefore part of the Make in China initiative. In comparison to cities, Zhongshan is almost bucolic. Even several years since the launch of China's urban development plans, several interlocutors who work in Macau live in Zhongshan or its smaller neighbour to the south Zhuhai. Both are second tier cities, and Macanese South Asians consider these places a suburb to Macau where they have more space to live and park their car.

There are other contradictions in China's dream that are already apparent for South Asians living in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau. Beijing's current 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) envisions Guangzhou at the heart of a newly revived Maritime Silk Road. There are plans for a new port and high-speed rail networks to connect national members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Yet on a daily basis, Naadha and Sahat, and others in the extended supply chains of grocery stores, Mr Parul and other restaurateurs and semi- and professional cooks such Mr Hothi or Shakya find themselves flummoxed by the policies and practices of harbour administrations. Non-certificated, mislabelled or unsanitary grains, lentils and spices are sometimes sent back or destroyed. Or food is held in warehouses until the right documents are processed, meaning that, as Mr Hothi and others (above) frequently tell me, South Asian food that enters China is out of date or significantly degraded.

And yet projects under this strategy such as the redeveloped West Kowloon high-speed train terminal that connects Hong Kong and Guangzhou in under an hour, cause even more anxiety about food, and particularly the semi-legal distribution of groceries between Hong Kong and Guangzhou. The terminus houses Chinese police and visa authorities on the Hong Kong side of the border. Such projects, and the political tensions they cause, also drive an everyday majoritarian discourse about the future in Hong Kong (Bell 2016; He 2005). This includes fears for a future after the revocation of the Basic Law in 2047 - a 50-year constitution under which transition is defined, namely as a continuation of a set of legal rights and executive functions established in the last decade of British rule. These rights also includes the relatively free movement of chefs and ingredients from South Asia.

Food is used more broadly to highlight the contrasts between the two cities as physical differences become more uncertain. This is exemplified by a recent exhibition of art and graphic design by Local Studio Hong Kong that I am taken to by Mr Parul's daughter, Sunita. Among a set of illustrations grouped under a category in the exhibit called 'Hong Kong is not China' is a juxtaposition between the food system in China and the food system in Hong Kong. The illustration is in the form of two food nutritional pyramids drawn side-by-side and is similar to those developed by a raft of governments in order to illustrate the concept of a healthy balanced meal with meat and vegetables served in the right proportions. In these particular food pyramids, there are four levels. Sunita points to China's version with a laugh. Here, all four levels contain a skull and crossbones hazard symbol and thinks that this might be the attitude of Indians to their country's food system also. In Hong Kong's food pyramid, each level has a variety of fresh vegetables, salads, bread and fish, with the top of the triangle dedicated to fast and convenience foods signalling the diversity of foods available in Hong Kong but also its Euro-American orientation. This Euro-American orientation is what Gordon Mathews identifies as Hong Kong + (2011).

This omission is part of racialised discourses on the future of Hong Kong and focus on the practices of non-Chinese communities in and around the harbour

areas and a dilapidated inner city mall in the centre of the city. This area, like Chungking Mansions in Hong Kong, is not an ordinary space (Bodomo and Teixeira-E-Silva 2012). From the very beginning, this mixed-used building was a home for South Asian businesses in Hong Kong. In the migration literature, these zero-points are often framed as ethnic enclaves, where particular socio-economic structures and poorly paid work can be offset by the residual benefits of being supported by similar others (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). In the optimism literature, these spaces are where race and aspiration are highly social, mobile and transmittable phenomena, ready to be intuited (Berlant 2011). In the US, black people found possibility in the heat of the pavement, in the press of bodies, and the electricity of elevators. In Hong Kong Chungking Mansions continues to transmit aspiration, but for an increasingly racially diverse group of people. They are not ethnic enclaves but multiracial spaces.

At the same time Chungking Mansions has reproduced itself in Guangzhou. Kingly Plaza comprises mixed-use buildings that house multiple co-dependent South Asian businesses. Almost all of these were started by Sindhis or are still Sindhi-run including food businesses, temples, schools and other charitable works. While South Asians manage these businesses, the buildings are sites for more than South Asian aspiration, also supporting a wide range of people in generating opportunity and wealth. Are Kingly Plaza in Guangzhou and Chungking Mansions in Hong Kong both 'zero points' and if so what are these like inside? If Chungking Mansions is a model of mixed-use buildings in China, and if Kingly Plaza and Chungking Mansions co-constitute themselves, they also co-constitute their alternative. Both cities have South Asian food entrepreneurs who have rejected the Chungking Mansions model, opting for mixed racial, but mainly Euro-American oriented food and drink neighbourhoods, such as Lan Kwai Fong in Hong Kong and Jianshe Lu Ma Lu Guangzhou. These places reveal the anxieties about the future that both cities have as well as their position in this future vis-à-vis the other.

Like Macau, Hong Kong is also expected to be fully integrated with China by the mid-century, and this is both a frame in which the future is considered, but also a source of anxiety. 2047 and integration with mainland China is weighed up

against present identity issues and fears of a near future when Guangzhou will take over from Hong Kong as capital of the Delta. Since the mid-1970s, the urban fabric of Guangzhou has changed as manufacturing has moved out into Guangzhou's satellite towns and cities and service and creative industries have moved into Guangzhou's repurposed factory parks. In the lead up to the 2010 hosting of the Asian Games, Guangzhou municipal authorities and their private partners built stadiums and metro systems, razing ageing low-rise work-unit housing and replacing these with gleaming office towers, apartment blocks and new forms of public architecture and garden, blurring the boundaries between suburban living and urban space. Grounding these discourses is the foundational belief that temporally, socially, culturally, Hong Kong is still somehow ahead of Guangzhou in all the essential aspects of good living. In these same discourses the future seems very short, and Hong Kong must do all it can to 'develop' China in the right direction, politically and culturally. In reality a third of Hong Kong-owned factories in Guangzhou have already closed or have moved to Vietnam to stay competitive (Magnier 2016).

This chapter transposes such consideration to Chinese cities and examines the connections between race, aspiration and city space. What are the ambitions for South Asian food and what practical forms of aspiration are pursued in modern Chinese cities? As a South Asian how do you make yourself out to be successful as a South Asian working in food in Hong Kong and Guangzhou? How do these interact with optimism and anxieties in Hong Kong and Guangzhou and between these cities?

In the following two sections, I examine the way that South Asian aspiration has been shaped and etched into the city in the form of two mixed-use buildings firstly in Hong Kong and then in Guangzhou. Even as my interlocutors question how much these buildings have been South Asian in the past, the buildings themselves are rejected by a future-looking generation of food purveyors and eaters who deliberately embrace racially ambiguous neighbourhoods. These racially ambiguous drinking and dining neighbourhoods are models for the future that Chinese cities such as Hong Kong. But South Asians in Hong Kong and Guangzhou are in fact championing this model. In doing so they are taking

on the work often associated with Huaqiao, or overseas Chinese. As the final thematic chapter in this thesis these sections examine the tensions that this raced and spaced work creates.

Being Huaqiao, cooking and ghettos

Harsha is a chef and programme manager at a non-governmental organisation (NGO) supporting asylum claimants in Chungking Mansions. Harsha came to Hong Kong as a single mother 15 years earlier after running a café with her now ex-husband in Nepal. Initially, like other Nepali women, she worked in western fast food places such as Pizza Hut, or in various Indian and Chinese restaurants - signalling the flexibility of ethnicity, gender norms and culinary skills that she describes as the strength of Nepali women in Hong Kong. However, she is now a permanent resident and this has brought other opportunities her way, such as her NGO work. NGO work is a marker of high status here in Hong Kong and Nepal and is paid well.

At the same time, Harsha is not a university graduate and has no time to study the theory of asylum law. Her co-workers in the office tend to stay for a year at the NGO and then leave for better jobs in other NGOs or at UN agencies. Being a chef she does not have the same employment mobility. Few of these other larger organisations offer a hot meal service to asylum claimants. Visitors to the centre are stuck also, and can often wait up to five or ten years before their asylum claim is properly assessed. Once this assessment is complete, they will need to leave Hong Kong, whose authorities only vet claims and relocate successful claimants to other countries, mainly to China. For those in this long-term limbo Harsha is a reliable presence and a bridge to the sometimes opaque practices of the centre.

Harsha works at the centre between the hours of nine in the morning and five in the afternoon. If she's not cooking and helping to serve lunch, she is rearranging the store cupboard and keeping it clear of pests. She is stuck in other ways. She is now used to cooking 40-50 visitors, or 'clients', at the centre. With her weekends free, she would like to volunteer as a cook at the Hindu Temple in Happy Valley on Sundays where she can use her cooking skills to cook and serve

the community meal, described in chapter five. But she cannot scale up the cooking to feed 1,000 people unless her Nepali chef friends can come with her - but because they work irregular shifts in fast food and other restaurants, they seldom can. This is a thick and enduring immobility and loneliness.

Harsha argues that her work, the role of the NGO, and attempts to modernise the interior of the building, makes Chungking Mansion unrecognisable. It is not a raced building, but has become unmarked through the coming and going of lawyers, United Nations staff, asylum claimants, and the mixing with traders, South Asian cooks and groceries. She is not alone in thinking this. Gordon Mathews (2011) ethnography of Chungking Mansions celebrates the building's ability to function as a saturation point for a global community of traders. It is a marker *par excellence* of globalisation on a truly international scale, and one that crosses numerous socio-economic boundaries.

The title of his ethnography belies this celebratory point. Using the name 'ghetto', Mathews seeks to re-examine majoritarian Cantonese views that the building is terrifying by looking out from the perspectives of the traders and visitors who stay and work there. While Mathew's use of the term 'ghetto' problematises the spatial aspects of its dictionary definition – a part of a city where poorer minorities may live – the term itself is not used by his informants. The term is only implied in discussions about race that Mathews conducts among Cantonese and non-Cantonese groups outside and inside the building. Instead, the aptness of the term is something noted by numerous media outlets and has seeped into public consciousness, so much so that my interlocutors in Guangzhou use the term 'ghetto' to describe Kingly Plaza, a building in Guangzhou that has followed Chungking Mansions as a blue print. Kingly Plaza and Chungking Mansions are zero-points for food and aspiration. However, South Asian cooks there pay close attention to the sensory work that South Asian food does, and the bridges they build. These places are multicultural but also problematic, filled with the wrong kinds of bodies – a problem that has introduced the thesis. For Bhikhu Parekh (2002) models of multiculturalism are anaemic and do little to hide a society's fascist tendencies. These models, whether emerging from social practices or imposed from above by state

policies, are rife with racialized hierarchies. Even for South Asian groups who are touted for their multicultural worldly perspectives, such as Nepalis (Pradhan 2007; Lawoti 2005) or Sindhis (Markovits 2008; Falzon 2004), among them their marriage and kinship practices and business networks are used to crystalise Nepalis and Sindhis at the top of hierarchies of cosmopolitanism.

Ong's thesis on flexible citizenship and transnationalism is also a meditation on the practices and limits of multiculturalism. The 'Asian Century' has been utilised by states such as Singapore and by communities of transnational Chinese elites or *Huaqiao* [huáqiáo 華僑], to locate a racial and cultural ideal - hard over soft societies, obligations and duties over rights and freedoms. These discourses serve to continue aspects of colonialist themes, whilst indicating that western concepts of individual striving and meritocracy find better homes in certain multicultural Asian societies - like Singapore - instead of others - like the Philippines. Chinese-ness and its transnational *Huaqiao*-ness co-constitutes the other and decentres softer, poorer-performing societies that inhabit lower rungs in evaluative racial categories. This is a hardening of Chinese cultural attitudes that celebrate the heterogeneity of itself but cannot yet process the heterogeneity of other Asian societies. At the same time, there is an imprecision built into the very identity of *Huaqiao*. The term emerged in the early 1900s along with a modern Chinese nationalist movement (Wang 1981). Its political contingency makes the term useful as a type of non-identity, a process of becoming or unbecoming Chinese. Ong states that *Huaqiao* are represented as saviours in the Chinese press, 'invok[ing] kinship...' and have helped facilitate the channelling of funds, favours and people across national borders' (1999: 44). At the same time, in day-to-day relationships, local Chinese employees and local contractors are ambivalent or feel negatively towards those that 'bring over the worst of the world' (1999: 47). Smart and Lin (2007) state in their study of Hong Kong investment in Chinese factories that there are contexts in which identities, for example of Hong Kong investors and Chinese manufacturers, are placed in parallel with one another, rather than in competition. The picture that emerges is an interdependence, expressed in both political and economic terms. As they scale up to reach markets outside of

China, their cultural homogeneity is both performed and is part of the discourses about their success that they co-constitute. *Huaqiao* and Chinese manufacturers are mutually responsible for their success.

Is Harsha a *huaqiao*? She concedes that she has the same rights but, more importantly, a greater sense of responsibility than the NGO staff who disappear as quickly as they can to Geneva. She certainly has more rights and more resources than the asylum claimants who come for a free lunch every day. Her work and her permanent residency gives her options for the future, including the possibility of applying for a Chinese passport. Like her, the centre has become a locus for South Asian and West African refugees who are anxious about starting a new life in China, even while suffering everyday uncertainties and indignities of life in Hong Kong. But even as she performs her responsibilities by staying at the centre, her everyday work reinforces the differences between her and others. Every day she is discomfited by the men and their young children who come to have lunch at the centre. Mostly the children are quiet and haunted, and their fathers or uncles are nervous and fraught, finding a moment in between appointments with state officials, legal advisors or informal employment to fill up on the only meal they may have that day. She has not known their pain and their continual discomfort.

Harsha has added purpose now that South Asian food has come to represent ordinary food at the centre and she encourages me to use the large soup pots that she stirs throughout lunch as an analogy when we agree that experiencing lunch is like experiencing 'a melting pot'. Hong Kong is not a signatory to the international refugee convention, but under other instruments, it receives a wide variety of asylum claimants from South Asia and a number of African states. The territory has an obligation of non-refoulement - it cannot return those that seek asylum if there is a threat to them of torture or death. The territory screens refugee claims but successful applicants are then moved on to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for resettlement. No one stays in Hong Kong, yet 11,000 people are waiting for claims to be processed or to be resettled, including South Asians and West Africans. People can wait years for their claims to be heard, and so are de facto long-term

sojourners. Government assistance amounts to HK\$3,000 a month (£300) and is paid out in supermarket vouchers and rents to landlords. Unable to work, they leverage their daily allowance HK\$40 (£4) of supermarket food vouchers by eating free South Asian food from this NGO centre and from temples.

Initially there was much tension among the clients about lunch. Lunch is not free in a definite sense. With limited government assistance and no official recourse to working for wages, Harsha's lunch programme, partly funded by Sindhi community and church donations, sits within a system in which a free lunch is a necessary solution. In the beginning, the centre offered Chinese food, but people were scared that dishes would be contaminated with pork and furthermore they found the taste too sweet – a health risk considering how much they relied on cheaper processed food from the supermarket, which was also clearly laden with sugar. There were brief experiments with Nigerian and Ghanaian food. But these experiments heightened tensions among the various ethnic and national groups. Eventually, everyone settled on South Asian curries as a comfortable middle ground. For diners, Harsha's South Asian curries tend to do just enough to evoke Senegalese fish and rice dishes, Sierra Leonean groundnut soups, or Ethiopian *berbere* dishes.

When she invites me for lunch at the centre, we eat together separately in a small store room that she uses to take breaks and read. The centre workers tend to eat lunch with the clients. We drink cartons of Hi C Lemon tea, have a bread roll, some rice, and then two curries that Harsha has made. One has chickpeas and lentils, and the other has thick cut vegetables. We also ate battered aubergines, fried *puri* bread, grilled chicken leg and some salad. Dessert was a brownie, donated by a local business and there is unlimited filtered water, tea and coffee. The size of the meal means clients can skip dinner and spend their ParknShop supermarket food vouchers on phone and internet cards.

Harsha's masalas are there to fix, marshal and lengthen and demonstrate a hospitality that she, rather than the Hong Kong government can provide or evoke a particular place, or ethnic identity. She marshals three things:

donations from businesses such as several of the Indian restaurants on the lower floors and grocery stores nearby; volunteer time and cooking experience, and; the small centre budget with which she has to stock up on essentials. When clients volunteer to cook that they realise how much marshalling goes into making an approximation of South Asian curry, cooked in large soup pots. Things that cannot go together like chickpeas and sweet corn go together in a curry base. While the volunteers add indeterminate amounts of ground cumin, turmeric and cinnamon to the water in the pot, in what Harsha calls a 'western technique', only gentle simmering will make this okay. This is Harsha's job, which she does with a practised eye that can judge the liquid needed for 50 generous lunch portions looks like. In the meantime, Harsha congratulates volunteers for making their own 'masala'.

The soup pot is supposed to signal a melting pot of abundance and generosity, but instead, it signals things that others can do without, that are just in date, a watered down hospitality, and a kind of flexible South Asian taste. As Matei Candea and Giovanni Da Col state, 'Objects transacted in hospitality are always 'objectiles', object-events which threaten to collapse into their opposites' (2012: S11). This creates a shifting sense of South Asian food - which is not entirely Nepali, Indic, northern, domestic or ethnic, but relates as much to its context, which is shaped by history and mobility.

Even when it was first erected in 1961, 20% of homes and businesses in Chungking Mansions were South Asian (Dewolf 2017) including Sindhi-run small manufacturers and logistics companies. Now businesses have shifted and so too have identities, through the building remains foreign and worldly (Mathews 2011). Gordon Mathews states that the imaginations of Chungking Mansions have gone through a shift in recent years. Younger 'Hong Kong people... [who view it as] more or less a friendly place... a reasonable place to take one's family' (2011: 197) have felt this shift most strongly. Chungking Mansions' pungent smells make sense and become reasonable in light of context and origin (Miller 1997) and yet the suitcase and shipping trade form ever-changing notions of fresh and unique foods depending on its relation to other parts of Hong Kong life. Manizeh tells me that when Kai Tak inner-city airport

was still open, they could ship tinned fish, winter melon, pak choi and chocolates, and receive things like wedding pickles, salmon roe and dried Bombay duck. Kai Tak offered early check-in and bag drop, so it was possible to make two trips to the airport, the first to check in with hold luggage, the second to return and board the plane with frozen or perishable foods including cooked and frozen prawns and pomfret just bought from Chungking Mansions and stuffed into hand luggage. This is not possible with the newer Chek Lap Kok airport on Lantau Island.

Now Chungking Mansions is heavily monitored by CCTV, to abolish the 'grey goods' that come with a container port as busy as Hong Kong. Police and media also monitor the area, which until this decade had resisted gentrification. It is also surrounded by malls that have been built in the last five years. Like in other public spaces in Hong Kong, from subway stations to the lifts in high-rise apartments, in these malls surrounding Chungking Mansions, armies of cleaners wipe down handrails on stairs and escalators and lift buttons with disinfectant every hour. This is a public health policy enacted - albeit unevenly - since the deadly SARs outbreak of 2002-3. Despite the strong smell of disinfectant, people rarely touch these areas in malls with bare hands, invoking Daniel Miller's notion that good smells - like lemony disinfectant - can act as a mask to hide rather than deal with problems and can themselves be suspicious (1997). In post-SARS Hong Kong the gleaming alternatives to Chungking Mansions are just as problematic as the dilapidated building, and yet the future of the building is uncertain. Exporters have vacated as a result of Hong Kong's tightening visa-on-arrival restrictions for African countries - due partly to the discourse around fake asylum claims (Singh 2016). The management committee is left using the remaining South Asian businesses as a resource including in video editorials produced by newspapers such as South China Morning Post.

There are buildings that appear to be hybrid but are actually spaces where hierarchies are manifested (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). These hierarchies interrupt any pretensions towards an equality of smell and taste because there is a normative position around which cooking, foods and tastes, are arranged. Ordinary food marshalls itself and exoticises other foods.

Their work permeates the halls and lifts of Kingly Plaza. The olfactory materials of South Asian groceries, spice pastes and mustard oil accompany the sights and sounds of grandmothers and children travelling between floors to go to schools, lunch dates and prayer classes inside the building, all of which is made possible by this food. With apartment doors left open, these smells and sounds permeate life in the lobby, even seeming to colour the ageing wooden panelling inside the lifts yellow with years of encounters with tobacco and turmeric.

When I ask my companions -restaurateurs, traders, and professional and home cooks- about the most aspirational and successful people in food in Guangzhou, my interlocutors tell me about Mimi. Mimi is Chinese and runs an informal grocery store from what appears to be a dark, dingy storeroom on the ground floor of Kingly Plaza. She is said to have made a fortune selling groceries imported from Hong Kong to the South Asians in Guangzhou. As if to reinforce the depth of her success, the strong smell of spices penetrates the building and all of its floors.

I never get to meet Mimi - just like my interlocutors (bar one) who tell me about her. Hardly any were present at the beginning of the story back in 2000 when Mimi first met Mr Parul, the prominent Sindhi trader and one of Guangzhou's first Indian restaurateurs, who has played the most significant role in her success. I finally heard Mimi's story from Mr Parul himself.

In the 1980s, the area in which Kingly Plaza now stands was a low-rise peri-urban suburb, surrounded by rice paddy-fields. The municipality identified the area as a pilot in urban renewal in the late 1990s with a plan to accommodate up to 30,000 middle-class residents and the municipality's administrative functions. The area was built in three years, including the construction of the Guangzhou sports stadium and several upscale *xiaoqu*; so quick that it would take several more years for wet markets and supermarkets to follow⁵. Kingly Plaza was one of these upmarket developments to be sold to Guangzhou's

⁵ Zhang and Pan (2013) note that in major cities, such as Shanghai, the opening up of wet markets have lagged behind the growth of new neighbourhoods. The state has stopped building marketing infrastructure and has left such developments to the private sector who control the urban real estate market. Some new housing developments have also demolished existing wet markets.

emerging middle classes and overseas Chinese. Like Chungking Mansions it has a podium at the bottom and apartment towers at the top. Rather than a mall, the podium has a lobby, clubhouse, and a fountain. In reality, as John Osburg notes (2013), all sorts of newly cash-rich people including farmers who were compensated for state-appropriated farmland, invested in real estate. Moreover, examining cross-border investment (Smart and Smart 1998), it was the Hong Kong residents who had far fewer resources who moved to China compared to those that moved to the United States or Canada. As a result, those who live in Kingly Plaza, including South Asians, are convinced that lower status people predominantly live or rent out these apartments. *Xiaoqu* housing is a particular cause for concern as it may not always be possible to judge one's own consumption and status by comparing this to one's neighbours (Zhang and Ong 2008).

Mr Parul waited for the *xiaoqu* to be built before he, his wife and children relocated - his Sindhi friends from Taipei moving simultaneously. Sindhis from further afield, notably Jakarta, also moved in and soon there was a sizeable community of expat Sindhis at Kingly Plaza - though this flow is modest in comparison to the flow-rate of overseas Chinese people from these same cities (Ong, 1999: 58). Each day, Mimi would transport her heavy cart of vegetables by bicycle and park outside Kingly Plaza's front gates, and each afternoon she would cycle an empty cart home, though the threat that Guangzhou's municipality would finally authorise the building of a local wet market sat heavy on her shoulders. It didn't take long for Mr Parul and others in his cohort of expat Sindhis from Taipei, to propose to Mimi that she replaces fresh vegetables with South Asian groceries. This would save South Asian families from taking turns to travel to Hong Kong's Chungking Mansions or other grocers in Tsim Sha Tsui, and return with boxes of sundry for family, friends and neighbours. Direct access to Chungking Mansions has never been evenly distributed among South Asians in Guangzhou. Only those who have permanent residency in Hong Kong, or who have Indian passports have relatively unfettered access - Nepali, Pakistani and Sri Lankan passport holders are required to apply to enter on a visa-on-arrival basis. Now, even Indians have restrictions placed on their travel

into Hong Kong. In the discussions on WeChat or WhatsApp groups that accompany this news, blame is apportioned to groups of Indians that my companions are convinced have somehow scammed visa and asylum systems. These supposed 'scammers' spend their days standing around Chungking Mansions in 'gangs', staring down locals and ogling girls.

Proving the power in being an importer, Mimi made connections with grocers in Chungking Mansions and other places, and secured a supply of lentils, Indian rice, Indian whisky, spice mixes and snacks for her modest storeroom-cum-grocery store. She became a millionaire in the process. At this point in Mimi's story, Mr Parul pauses to light a cigarette, relishing the silence before the hook in this rags-to-riches tale. 'She used to ride a bicycle and cart, and now she has a Mercedes and a driver'.

Mimi is also a landlord and owns several apartments in this block. The relish in Mr Parul's voice is equally matched by others who tell this story, as if aware of Ong's arguments that there is always some dissonance when race is mainly used to claim or explain away the accumulation of cultural capital. This is a rags-to-riches story where the hero is Chinese, but she is changed by an encounter with South Asians and South Asian food.

Mr Parul and Mimi's success creates an ordinary space for South Asians as multiple local South Asian food businesses and institutions have sprung into existence. One apartment has been converted into a large 'community centre'. This 'community centre' is a moniker for the religious and racial imprecision deeply rooted in Sindhi diaspora communities, as well as a much-needed foil in light of China's own strict stance on religious freedoms and its inconsistency in policing unsanctioned religious practice by Chinese and foreigners. Despite the moniker 'community centre' it is clear that this space is managed under dominant Northern Indian Hindu norms of community assemblies and vegetarianism. My companions, a Sikh, a Nepali, a Tamil Catholic and South Indian Muslim restaurateur, often host religious gatherings in their restaurants instead, where they can cook halal meats or enjoy communion wine. These restaurants are owned jointly with 'silent' Chinese partners, who feel free to

interpret central policy - the 1982 Document 19 policy, which lists Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, Chinese Protestantism, and Catholicism as state-sanctioned religions – with a degree of flexibility. Sindhi traders often visit, pay respects and worship across religious communities, but the powerful centre remains Kingly Plaza. For Markowitz among Sindhis in the diaspora, this coherence is never taken for granted and is often rejected by the demands of other imperatives. Sindhi traders practice a kind of imprecision that enable them to live with a plurality of moral codes and ways of living based on community practices in India and the Sindh, and also in multi-ethnic communities in Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan and other places

Apartments have also been converted into restaurants. Residents work as informal cooks preparing and selling *namkeen* gifts (deep fried snacks of chickpea flour) to mark Hindu festivals. There is also a company that is supplying private South Asian chefs-for-hire, mainly targeting a new community of South Asian salarymen working in international banks and managing international factories. There are also catering businesses that supply food to sustain various temples within the apartment complex. These are small intimate spaces that come to life for specific prayer meetings, festivals or events, at a scale similar to China's protestant apartment churches (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 2009). Mr Parul and Mimi appear very much aware of Zukin's full scope of the role of restaurateur as cultural strategist, the 'cultural synthesis of the artist, the entrepreneur and the social organiser' (1996: 156). Despite the physical reality of Kingly Plaza as a complex of high towers, it is not just a simple enclave of vertically ordered relationships of people and resources, but also an articulation of horizontal relationships with other spaces, places and communities in the city (Zukin 1996). Huge cans of cooking oil and other basic cooking ingredients, as well as books, clothes and toys, bought from donations at Kingly Plaza, are collected. They are then transported by community centre volunteers once a month to Huiling Home for disabled children, headed up by one of South China's well-known philanthropists, Meng Weina.

This horizontal sociality and its smell-scape is at odds with the apartments' construction as anonymous vertical living and reinserts the race-cultural capital dissonance that Mimi's story is put to work to interrupt. Expected smells in this premium building, particularly in the public areas, and the smells from cooking are what Cohen (1988) indicates is an olfactory dualism between ecological and cultural factors. Within this cultural aspect of smell, judgements and evaluations are made of both the self and the other. Low (2005) suggests that in Singapore such judgements function as, and create or reinforce racial stereotypes. Pungent smells generate a general identity and a generalised dislike of these identities. This dissonance has a real financial impact. A long-term South Asian resident, one of the few in Mimi's inner circle, tells me that apartment owners are very savvy about this. When they rent apartments to South Asians, the price is very high. However, when these homes are rented to local Chinese families, they are offered at a substantial discount, implying that they need significant incentive to live there.

A long-term resident in Kingly Plaza, Mr Hothi concedes that this monetised distinction between aspiration and dissatisfaction, between South Asians and Chinese residents makes business sense, but is increasingly 'tone deaf'. He baulks at the fact that some people have moved out calling Kingly Plaza a 'ghetto'. 'This is not Chungking Mansions, and we know how to behave'. One of my companions, who lives in another apartment complex in another part of Guangzhou, tells me, 'the Kingly Plaza group are ruthless with competitors who want to sell groceries'. When I run this past Mr Hothi he laughs, telling me that Mimi has a son who is a policeman who is sometimes called upon to have a friendly chat with ladies who try and 'break the rules'.

However, not everyone buys from Mimi because her grocery store does not reflect the everyday foods that are cooked in Kingly Plaza. When I visit my companions in their houses for lunch or for meditation, lunches become a chance to eat snacks of grilled spiced vegetable Bombay sandwiches sprinkled with sliced lettuce, *batata vada* [deep-fried potato balls] with green chilli or coriander chutneys, and *bhel poori* [a mixed dish of puffed spiced rice, deep-fried chickpea discs and tiny noodle shapes, spiced potatoes and chutneys]. But

ordinarily these are exam foods, meaning that they are cooked rarely and only given to children who are working late into the night revising. Mostly maids go to the nearest Pagoda store, or families go to the local Wellcome or ParknShop supermarket for Garden brand white bread, processed cheese, long grain rice, instant noodles, frozen pizzas, spring roll wrappers, cooking sauces, madras spice mixes, and spaghetti. This new tyranny of supermarket 'fresh foods' - or rather its position as the opposite of South Asian food - has taken a very strong hold among South Asian and Chinese families in Kingly Plaza. Mr Hothi is now considering hosting an Indian food festival inside the grounds to enliven people's appetites and remind them of what they should be eating.

New zero-points: family, entertainment districts, aspiration

The multiculturalism and the emergent and flexible hierarchies of ordinary foods that it presents has been fashioned into something of a problem at Chungking Mansions, raising new anxieties. Economic liberalisation and freedoms often form the context in which people's ideas of themselves, ideas of social order and access to better futures and anxieties arise. Jocelyn Lim Chua's discussion of anxiety (2014) in Kerala is framed by Indian liberalisation, just as China's market reforms frame Osburg's encounter of anxiety among wealthy entrepreneurs, senior managers and businesspeople seeking wealth in Chengdu at the turn of the decade (2013).

At the heart of anxieties about Chungking Mansions and Kingly Plaza is a generational conflict relating to identity and aspiration, in which food plays a defining role. Generational conflicts are rife in India's liberalising economy. For Chua (2014) parents are often the arbiters of what forms of good aspiration and tolerable risks are. For some parents, migration and success are things that cannot be achieved by their offspring because some amount of mental strength is lacking, evidenced in daily rhythms of the household, where the newly returned or the never-to-go withdraw from family life. Parents can diagnose misplaced ambition. Like Munuswamy, Sandeep Sekhri is another model for South Asian food aspirations in the Pearl River Delta. And for parents in Guangzhou and Hong Kong he is both a success story and a cautionary tale.

Arriving in the late 1990s having earned a culinary certificate in India, Sekhri worked in Gaylords Restaurant in Kowloon, in Hong Kong for several years before deciding to start his own business. Rather than starting in Kowloon and near Chungking Mansions, he decided to open his first and very high-end Indian restaurant in Lan Kwai Fong, prompted in part by an offer of help from the Sindhi Harilela family. The Harilelas are another model of South Asian aspiration, having converted their trading wealth into property, a desire which is shared among South Asian groups as discussed in chapter five. The Harilelas gave Sekhri his first location, on the fourth floor of a building in Lan Kwai Fong, having been unable to rent it out to Chinese businesses who continue to consider the number four unlucky, as discussed in chapter three. A year later, SARS struck, but with minimal overheads Sekhri sat out the economic slump. As local residents and restaurateurs left Hong Kong selling their properties in a panic, Sekhri expanded.

Bombay Dreams still operates but is now part of a bustling entertainment district on Hong Kong Island, comprising hotel bars, late-night cafes, restaurants, pubs, bars and nightclubs. The neighbourhood represents the antithesis of Chungking Mansions. The winding expat-dominated streets hosts Sandeep Sekhri's multi-restaurant portfolio, Dining Concepts, comprising Indian restaurants, American steakhouses and European bakeries. Sekhri now owns 26 restaurants in and around the area and has attracted much attention when an initial public offering on his portfolio raised HK\$90million (£9million). However, the business press states that Sekhri has been wrong-footed, that this is a considerable undervaluation, and that investors will make many times more than this, demonstrating Sekhri's relatively low status among financiers and other restaurant and bar portfolios. As Mr Parul tells it, he listened to the wrong people.

In recent years, the landlord Lan Kwai Fong Holdings, which has taken credit for the area's rejuvenation, has developed a similar entertainment assemblage in Shanghai and is now planning on similar ventures in nearby Wuxi and also in Chengdu. However, in Guangzhou, Lan Kwai Fong Holdings has gone in a different direction. Unable to anticipate a desire for a neighbourhood of bars

and restaurants in the city, the company built a family-friendly underground 'Mall of the World' in Tianhe in 2011. Sekhri is not a part of any of these expansion plans.

Sekhri's experience, from his rejection of Chungking Mansions to his limited yet still substantial success explains many of the complex dynamics around Kingly Plaza for multiculturalism and food entrepreneurship in Guangzhou. There is very little tolerance for failure or embarrassment. Food entrepreneurship appears to be a conservative force and yet sits at the heart of a generational conflict. Mr Parul's daughter Sunita serves as my guide to these conflicts. Each story is an introduction to another thwarted young entrepreneur among Guangzhou's second generation South Asian community. With these stories Sunita evokes what Berlant calls a landfill of ordinary and overwhelming crises. These produce 'a set of dissolving assurances' about the nature of meritocracy and liberal-capitalist society, but also 'relations of reciprocity that seem fair' (Berlant 2011: 3).

Mr Parul's daughter, Sunita, has grown up in Guangzhou among South Asian and Cantonese elites in relative luxury; 'If they cook, they cook with bottled sauces, not dusty powders'. Her phone is full of group 'selfies' in elite spaces. These elite spaces comprise well-resourced classrooms in international schools, expensively-decorated deluxe apartments, bowling alleys, parties on 'junks' in Hong Kong and drinking in bars overlooking cityscapes from Taipei to Dubai. Her parents also take pictures and update their WeChat moments with photos of birthday parties, and opulent prayer meets, high teas, luxury excursions, and lately, weekend trips on 5-star Chinese cruise ships that travel up and down the Pearl River Delta. These visible displays of wealth do all sorts of work, but as a friend - the wife of a senior manager in Nike's China's production offices - tells me, mostly this work communicates how many members of the trading community can live on a par with members of South Asian white-collar professional classes. These white-collar workers have pushed up rents in the *xiaoqu* and pushed up the fees to attend international schools with their bloated relocation packages. She tells me that successful trading families are leaving

Kingly Plaza to live in serviced hotel apartments and suburban villas, just like professional families.

The 'us' and 'them' of professional and trading families shape a set of risks and aspirations for the future, particularly among the younger generation. Sunita and others tell me that it is mostly the boys feel trapped. The hierarchies in Kingly Court, with South Asians paying a higher rent, and local families pay a far lower price for the inconvenience of living in the building, sits badly with their experience of non-racial meritocracy, developed during their time in Guangzhou's international schools and colleges. One of her friends wanted to move into contract manufacturing and trade in premium t-shirts to Dubai. This was resisted in his own family who would rather he kept to general 'ladies fashions and textiles'. They are not convinced that the all-powerful network of importers in India and the Middle East will give this ambitious son a chance. Moving into a food business is seen as less risky. Restaurateurs can become importers; a sector dominated mainly by Cantonese family networks across Asia. At the same time, restaurants are framed as passion projects for these trader-fathers and various other interlocutors, an acceptable new career after they have made their fortune.

Sunita does not represent 'a vision of capitalist autonomy' (Ong 1999: 155). Despite her Canadian residency permit and well-paying financial job in Toronto, her father would like her to stay in Guangzhou to manage his restaurant. She cites a long list of business reasons why this would be the case. This includes her ease with Chinese language and China's food regulations, her calmer management of the chefs and waiters who work for her father, and her eye on the latest trends. She has asked her father to introduce more snack and sandwich foods such as *frankies* [naan bread in an egg coating, stuffed with mutton or chicken, rolled up and sprinkled with spices].

The fact that opening a South Asian restaurant seems less risky than extending a ladies fashion supply line with t-shirts, or returning to secure employment in Canada, demonstrates that entrepreneurship is predicated on certain logics

about the ordinary. One such logic is that the Pearl River Delta is an ordinary place in which launch a South Asian food business.

Mr Kumar, the son of a Hong Kong Sindhi trader, believes he can succeed where Lan Kwai Fong Holdings has failed, with its dismissal of Guangzhou as not being ready for Hong Kong style entertainment neighbourhoods. Mr Kumar left Hong Kong for Britain shortly after the handover, in order to complete his undergraduate studies, but returned to the region to expand his father's trading operations with a restaurant business. Divorcing his first wife from a prominent Sindhi family, he moved to Guangzhou after his marriage to his second, Cantonese, wife. He heard from the rumour mill that South Asian restaurants near Kingly Plaza fail, and instead opened up his restaurant in the historic Islamic quarter [Fānfāng 番坊] in Guangzhou introduced in chapter two. His bar serves Indian food as an adjunct to the wide range of cocktails, wines and spirits served. He also hosts live singers and bands every weekend.

Mirroring the traditional hierarchy between Guangzhou and Hong Kong discussed in chapter two, Mr Kumar is ready for 'our version of Lan Kwai Fong'. Evoking the arguments presented in the case studies collected by Duruz, Luckman, and Bishop (2011) particularly that places are constructed in order to present hybridity for tasting, Mr Kumar has plans to create a mixed neighbourhood where people can find different kinds of meals and drinks. In partnership with the bars and restaurants in the area, Mr Kumar has printed a leaflet introducing the area and mapping it out as an entertainment district with bars, restaurants and cafes. The map is distributed to people staying in the business hotels that pepper the area, including the one above his restaurant.

Certain signs are needed across the neighbourhood that hint at the international standards that reassure Chinese (Osburg 2013) and other customers alike - the most important being English language door stickers, comprising TripAdvisor ratings, and payment card options. One of the most prominent is Halal Dreams, illustrated with an archetypal chef's hat - which could be interpreted as a European *toque blanche* - above a crossed a spoon and fork and the words 'Bon Appetit'. This is very different from the municipality's

qingzhen stickers which are also in green but are smaller, less graphic and written in Arabic and Chinese. Halal Dreams is a distribution company run by Zakari who owns a halal meat supply company in Guangzhou. Zakari arrived in Guangzhou several years ago by way of Niger and Zhejiang University where he graduated in Chinese language and literature. The halal meat supply is the latest (and possibly last) in a string of food business ideas that he has been trying out - including exporting Korean snacks made in China and importing chicken stock cubes. It took a while to think of and to develop this business. His relationships with farms in Hubei province in the northern parts of grassland China have been slow to mature, and he has had to work out the logistics of transporting Hubei meats to Guangzhou. It is a risky venture, not least because he is challenging the monopoly of Xinjiang farmers and meat producers in Guangzhou who are prevalent in neighbouring Xiaobei - dubbed 'Chocolate City' because of the number of black Muslims and African traders who live, work and eat there - and who also supply halal meat to the South Asian restaurants in Hong Kong.

His defiance of the Xinjiang monopoly, and his partnerships with restaurants in Guangzhou's Jianshe Lu Malu neighbourhood, demonstrates that race and religion are not always an integral part of identity in these newer culinary contexts. And yet race is simultaneously the cause of, but also the remedy for, food anxieties that keep futures of Guangzhou and Hong Kong culturally separated for newer and older generations of diaspora.

Conclusion: the future and generational conflict

How do you make yourself out to be successful as a South Asian working with food in Hong Kong and Guangzhou? How do these interact with the anxieties and tensions in Hong Kong and Guangzhou about the future and their place within it in relations to themselves?

Success as explored in this chapter has been predicated on the notion that cooks and food entrepreneurs pay attention to city spaces and buildings as processes. As a new generation of South Asian children look out from places that their parents or generations of entrepreneurs before them have made successful,

they look towards new horizons. As a mixed-use building of residencies, hotels, restaurants, charitable associations, Asian food entrepreneurs, grocers, cooks and people needing help, Chungking Mansions has been both a blight and a blueprint for South Asians in China. Powerful food importers remain inside or in its vicinity. There are cafes and restaurants, but there is also Harsha who utilises South Asian food to ease the tensions among the refugees and seekers of asylum that eat their lunches at the centre. South Asian food remains at the centre of Chungking Mansions while other importer-exporters depart as a result of Hong Kong's crackdown on visas, indicating the tensions between maintain a hub for low-end globalisation and the identification of problem countries. This food is not entirely South Asian, but it is ordinary.

Standing at only 60 metres, Chungking Mansions in Hong Kong remains an indisputably 'big story' (Jacobs 2006: 13) not only in Hong Kong but also in Guangzhou. It is a model for food, multiculturalism, troubling bodies and affects. It has been replicated but it has also been critiqued and has spurred South Asians on to develop its opposite. Buildings like Chungking Mansions and Kingly Plaza allow for certain goods, people and experiences of life to travel through, collect and saturate at certain points. This saturation had gotten people this far, but now these interlocutors will need to figure out how to get from here until the end (Berlant 2011).

Conclusion: Markedly ordinary: South Asians and food in the Pearl River Delta

This thesis has examined whether and how South Asians can belong in the Pearl River Delta. As a place that is 96% ethnically Chinese and increasingly a country of in-migration, this is a timely question. Meta-discourses that focus on the robustness or fragility of the Chinese economy, or its contention with the United States for geopolitical power, serve to obscure legacies of colonialism and historical migration. They also camouflage the vast disparities of wealth, despite the plans and the strategies of China to restrain the winners and lift up the losers of previous economic policies.

The Pearl River Delta is the crucial place to address these issues of identity and belonging. Historically the delta has been both a focal point of Chinese and Cantonese power as well as a region that has absorbed influences such as religion and food as a result of overland migrations and maritime connections. In the past, negotiations of racial and ethnic identity in the major cities of Guangzhou, Macau, and Hong Kong intensified under the pressures of European expansion into the delta and the assertion of territorial rights. The legacies of this and of the handover arrangements on everyday post-colonial life in the delta continue to exert influence on ways that identities are shaped and performed. Add to this Guangzhou's plans for greater integration into the world economy through deeper links to Hong Kong and Macau, and this multi-sited reality is a place where Cantonese and Chinese identities are not a given. Given that post-colonialism is experienced both temporally but also as a state of being, the delta continues to experiment in norms that relegate racial others to a periphery while still maintaining racial diversity as a resource.

Over several centuries, South Asians sought to establish themselves in the delta, as periodic traders, as priests, colonial soldiers, police and civil servants, bankers, managers, domestic and service workers. They have left South Asia, or Taipei, Jakarta or Cote D'Ivoire as refugees, often with means. They are entrepreneurs and expatriates, with close or distant connections to India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal. They are shaped as much by the delta as by the

memories, the residency permits and the passports they maintain. They circulated within the delta at the same time that the cities grew increasingly separated by colonial policies, Pacific Wars, the Chinese Communist Revolution and the Cultural Revolution, and post-colonial handovers of Hong Kong and Macau, in quick succession. As Asian compatriots, colonial subjects and elites in various hierarchies, their lives are glimpsed at briefly in histories of colonial-era Hong Kong and in treaty port China. Increasingly the Delta has become a cradle for studies of economic relations and racial and ethnic minorities. Caught between these narrative structures, previous attempts to heighten South Asian senses of belonging appear anaemic.

South Asians are engaged in processes of belonging to the 'ordinary community' (Garner 2007: 139) using food as a tool to mark and unmark their racial identity. In contexts where South Asian food is bought and sold, cooked, and eaten in restaurants and festivals, marked in the historical record, or integrated into future plans, South Asians are trying to move themselves into the Cantonese and Chinese mainstream. Using a fragment-driven ethnographic approach I have examined these various contexts for precisely how South Asians have racially marked and unmarked their food so that it becomes ordinary in these contexts.

This thesis has started and ended with concerns about the circulation around the Pearl River Delta of South Asian food and the ventures that it supports. This circulation demonstrates that for South Asians engaged in food projects that are personal, entrepreneurial and political, the delta's disjunctures produce a multi-sited reality.

Food and belonging to an ordinary community

As China becomes increasingly attuned to its status as a primarily urbanised and immigrant-receiving country, the question remains how China deals with racial diversity and whether its current approaches to multiculturalism are fit for purpose. An equally urgent question is how racially diverse communities, such as South Asians, are making themselves belong in the Pearl River Delta, China's most racially diverse region. Is this a culinary belonging that extends

sufficiently beyond the bounds of legalistic belonging to connect with the delta on emotional and cultural terms?

Food is a fundamental lens through which to investigate its dynamics. Studies in migration and diaspora have highlighted how central food is to identity formation including that of nationality, transnationality, ethnicity and gender. In such studies, the feelings of belonging are examined, contested and reinforced through cooking, eating and sharing food. Food practices disrupt dichotomies of being at home and being away. As well as reinforcing boundaries between and within diaspora communities and their hosts, food has been examined for its power to cross and blur boundaries.

So far so blurred. Yet in contexts where race is marked, hierarchies appear unscalable, framing food and bodies in problematic ways. Stark binaries of black and white are commanding tropes with which to organise and identify asymmetries of power. From such a perspective, boundaries are rarely breached and food remains a problematic substance because it is overly racially marked. Williams-Forsion (2008; 2014) uses quotidian meats such as chicken, focusing on their different meanings to show various levels of marginalisation that place black women at the bottom of various hierarchies of power. In Singapore, hawker centres are populated by Singaporean cooks, who are also South Asian and Muslim. They are not part of a Singaporean culinary centre that elevates Peranakan classics (Duruz 2011). For Mannur (2010), diasporic projects on writing and cooking food has failed at deepening multiculturalism so that it is a value rather than merely a policy. Brownness remains a suspect liminal state (Mannur and Sahni 2011; Maira 2008).

These issues are extant in the acts of cooking and eating that are used to define Han communities and their ethnic and religious other. These are fragmented and partial identities and food substances are rallied to mark the boundaries between majoritarian and ethnic and racial minorities. These identities also seek to mark who and what can be conceived as ordinary as China re-integrates into the world economy. The ways that Uyghur and Hui communities navigate processed foods such as biscuits, as well as the category of *qingzhen* show them

simultaneously marking and unmarking their racial and religious identities. This is as true for the young Uyghurs who frequent Han-run backpacker cafes serving pork and western foods such as spaghetti Bolognese as it is for the Han diners who eat Mongolian hotpot in Höhhot and other cities, wishing to taste a multi-racial national cuisine.

For Garner (2016; 2007) the non-dynamic, the normative, the 'ordinary community', has to be actively produced because access to it is unevenly distributed. How have South Asians in the Pearl River Delta actively producing this ordinariness? Is marking and unmarking, and ambiguity at the heart of South Asian strategies for belonging to the ordinary community in the Pearl River Delta? How is South Asian food used in these strategies?

Chapter one approached Guangzhou, Macau and Hong Kong as highly connected and yet discontinuous sites, with the late colonial period and the lead up to the handover of Hong Kong and Macau a period in which mass South Asian immigration marked the increasing difference between these three cities.

Inspired by Chaudhuri's valorisation of historical intuition, I was guided by the intuitions of several of my interlocutors. Their choices were not disinterested. For example, my Tamil Muslim companions strongly supported the pre-modern period during the ascendancy of Southern Indian naval prowess as a time when China and India exerted mutual culinary influence on the other. Informal comments from Macanese interlocutors the oral histories of Sindhis and Parsis collected by the Hong Kong Heritage project were keen to stress late colonialism in the 20th century as a time for culinary influence. This was a time when these groups would have converted significant trading wealth into philanthropy and other public sphere property and other businesses.

While the flexibility in the notions of southern Chinese food, and the absorption of foreignness preoccupied local cooks and central authorities for several centuries and united these three cities, the actual influence of South Asian food is not obvious. This suggests that South Asian food is only visible in as much as it influenced Cantonese food. This influence is variegated, supporting Eber's (1993) argument that Sinification was not a blunt instrument. There are fine-

grained differences between Sinification, assimilation or Confucianisation, the difference in the adaptation of Indian vegetarianism and the incorporation of halal butchery being a case in point. European expansion and retreat led to the arrival of South Asian administrators, traders and decolonised groups from elsewhere in the Portuguese and British empires who adapted to culinary and racial hierarchies. It is hard to know what the contemporary approach to food history of palatal taste would add here, apart from the reaffirmation of the pivotal role played by the Malacca Straits in shaping an Indian Ocean littoral cuisine and acting as a border for the South China Sea. By the time South Indian restaurants emerged in the 1970s, Cantonese and Macanese restaurants had also proliferated, marking stark differences in the cuisines rather than signalling mutual influence. The total of its influence; scant few primary sources; few glimpses in the imperial record, newly recorded oral histories, and minor references to South Asians in histories and ethnographies reproduce South Asians as silent partners to Cantonese multiculturalism.

South Asian food and its impact remain a hidden transcript and, as Scott asserts, the dynamics of what it reveals and how it can manifest is a 'political breakthrough' (1990: 203). With the scarcity of such breakthroughs, history can be maintained as a partial ongoing and incomplete project. Despite Chinese and European racial hierarchical work and narrow colonial statistics, invisibility makes historical instinct necessary.

Studies of grocery stores in the United States have examined the public voice of grocery stores in studies that since the 1970s have primarily highlighted their ethnicity. Conversely, chapter two examined the way that grocery stores were not able to produce 'India shopping' found in Indian grocery stores in the United States (Mankekar 2002). The chapter serves as a reminder of the Husserlian notion that we must pay attention to the orientation and starting points of things (Ahmed 2007).

The grocery stores in Hong Kong and Guangzhou sell a variety of South Asian ingredients that can be cooked into a range of Islamic, Hindu, Jain and other regional foods. This regional pluralist culinary map may represent a Nehruvian

post-independence culinary multiculturalism, but this would be visible to a very few South Asians as Appadurai notes (1988a). These products support a supply chain of professional cooks and restaurants. As a frequent shopper and occasional unpaid assistant in grocery stores, I shared my companions' opinion that grocery stores were generally unfamiliar. These products are discombobulating and created grocery stores that look the same in their broad anonymity. Squeezed between wet markets, supermarkets and hypermarkets, South Asian grocery stores do not resemble the small-scale *kirana* stores back in India, nor do they resemble the locally run mini markets in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei and other towns from which local families have more recently relocated.

Grocery stores perform local work by reinforcing vernacular ideas about Guangzhou and Hong Kong using a supply chain that retains Hong Kong's broad warehouse role. At the same time, it confounds others, such as a clear national space within which to shelve these ingredients. Rather the goods that bypass this supply chain, and help families to assemble foods, or snack luxury goods, reinforces spaces, differences and hierarchies. In Hong Kong, fresh foods in grocery stores reflect the city's comparatively higher social and culinary status back to their customers. In doing so these shelves give South Asian wives and mothers tools to perform their social position vis-à-vis other women and wives in Hong Kong and trader families in Guangzhou. In Guangzhou, the grocery store curates displays of Islamic cosmopolitanism via halal certified or halal friendly global brands and western processed luxury foods. If the aim of grocery shopping is to cook South Asian food, then this was actually a difficult thing to achieve.

The food sold in these grocery stores to private chefs, restaurants, and home cooks are cooked in households and professional spheres, but how do these worlds intersect and influence the other? Chapter three was an exploration of the irreducibility of diaspora food practices and knowledge as well as the identity of the Indian chef culinary education, ethnicity, and work or of the subjectivity produced in interactions with an existing diaspora. Chefs are professionals who are networked into a complicated social world in which they

navigate the pressures of producing everyday food. They constructed themselves as persons who could understand deeper truths about South Asian food in the Pearl River Delta. The dishes chosen by the subjects of this chapter, and their settings, were in a sense deliberately provocative. In their preparation and presentation, these dishes revealed the complicated micro dimensions in the ways that chefs interpret and reflect back diaspora communities, and majoritarian lives.

The contradictions become productive. All these chefs and dishes rely chiefly on a circulation of buyers from South Asia, the Middle East and from the US and Europe, and to a lesser extent on the settled community of the same and Cantonese and Chinese residents in Macau, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. The circulation of brown bodies is crucial to the small trades on which the economies of the Pearl River Delta still partly relies. South Asian intermediaries, including restaurateurs and chefs, are then considered part of the solution as Muñoz contends (2007). Cooks and restaurateurs are not model minorities in the way that Muñoz identifies as he looks out of the US context to compare the brownness of Indians with that of Central and Southern Americans. These chefs create and negotiate and nudge wider the bandwidth of ordinary sanskritised yet pluralistic restaurant eating. This is what they are trained to do. Chefs

[position] Indian commodities as a source of palatable difference, easily malleable to the conventions and needs of a consumerist economy that thrives on the production and reproduction of banal markers of difference [...] (Mannur and Sahni 2011:182)

Chapter four examined whether temporary presence reinforces permanent sentiments. Transitory groups, such as traders, and transition arrangements such as those governing Macau's transformation from a Portuguese colony to full integration with China, and their liminal work with food and money complicate liminality and belonging.

At stake are ideal maps of South Asia, represented in Guangzhou by stereotypical regional dishes that are not dissimilar to the arrangements in Justin's kitchen, and represented in Macau by the placing of Goa, Daman and Diu

into a post-colonial Lusophone culinary map. As the chapter demonstrated, this kind of strategic mosaic making fits poorly with the reality of making money from the foods cooks have chosen to sell. From my position as a co-organiser of the mela in Guangzhou, I had to learn certain kinds of pragmatism that cooks were already very skilled at, to do justice to the ideal culinary maps of South Asia in conversations, descriptions and fudging while ensuring that seven restaurateurs could serve butter chicken. Reflecting on my own naivety helped me have better conversations about such work in Macau. Which dishes make money in these contexts reveal not just the efficacy of intercultural work to which food festivals are made to do but also cooks' and communities' social location in racialising discourses.

The food festivals in Guangzhou and Macau occupy a space that produces troublesome colonial sensibilities and logic. The separation of the food court from the performance area is a feature in this and other world's fairs and state festivals throughout history. However in Guangzhou and Macau, what was on display was a reassertion of the Euro-American format for assemblies in cities where Chinese power and aesthetics were a literal and symbolic challenge. Cooks located themselves socially among their own communities of South Asians, or Portuguese speaking elites, as people who can make these projects work.

Chapter five was an exploration of the reasons for South Asians to maintain certain kinds of silences in the face of state in Hong Kong and Macau to research and inscribe culinary heritage. Culinary heritage has been used for political ends in a number of settings, including in Singapore to deepen a rhetoric of multiculturalism (Huat 2003). Ingredients have an ethnicity (Slocum 2011). Their manipulations into non-Peranakan dishes by the cooks in hawker centres in Singapore and or in markets in Malaysia are contexts where identities are essentialised and cooks conflated with the food that they cook. This displacement of brown bodies from certain types of labour and the imagination of this labour signal at an ideological topography that is reflective of 'globalization, post-colonialism, and modernity' (Mannur and Sahni 2011:178).

As Garner points out, the work of invisibility undertaken by ordinary communities is the work to remain unmarked by drawing the boundaries of acceptability 'at *themselves*' (2007: 39 emphasis in original).

Certain constructed absences create disenfranchisement, an argument evidenced by the absence of African cooks claiming and cooking African Chicken in Macau. Yet deliberate absences from this topography appear strange to heritage making project managers; the resulting gaps appear to make the whole effort unreflective of Hong Kong and Macau's past.

This is where absences are also at their most productive, particularly in a context where the presence of brown bodies is a resource in emerging nationalism in Hong Kong and, to a lesser extent, Macau. Silence can negate a problematic contemporary presence by absenting these brown bodies from an anaemic history of the past. Maintaining silence is a powerful tool in this context. Absences set out future labour. Blank faces require viewers to do the work of imagining, creating and projecting. Deliberate voids demand construction, but not along lines already cast.

This includes blurring the lines between legitimate histories and unofficial accounts, and built and intangible histories. The separation of built heritage from culture as an intangible good is an assumption that is critiqued, not only by South Asians by dint of their absence but also by the way Hong Kong Cantonese groups who are attempting to save newer mock Edwardian structures from demolition. The political work South Asian ingredients and food was made to do in community meals was to build a history of South Asian food in the built environment.

This future labour was discussed in chapter six, which contended with aspiration, food, race and space. Cooks and food entrepreneurs were reflexive of their foreignness and paid attention to city spaces and buildings as processes. Places such as Chungking Mansions and those that are partly modelled on it, such as Kingly Plaza in Guangzhou, are very slippery and as aspiration and generational norms have shifted, these spaces have been continually tested for their ability to secure a better future for South Asians.

These models or zero points are familiar and familial spaces. Ahmed states that 'we inherit proximities (and hence orientations), as our point of entry into a familial space, as 'a part' of a new generation' (2007: 155). Chungking Mansions and Kingly Plaza represent a conflict of the familial and the generational, a conflict that is couched in terms of tradition and risk. There are compromises reached at traditional zero points; that South Asian grocery business is controlled by one person; or that local Chinese families are charged less for living with the smells, stains, sounds and delays that neighbouring a horizontal South Asian life of schools and temples may require. Or, indeed, that buildings such as Chungking Mansions come to represent a reductive, racialised South Asian identity.

The idea that an older generation of traders and food entrepreneurs are blind to the effects of these compromises is reinforced by the discourses of a younger generation, who see themselves as taking more significant risks. Parents judge these risks as misplaced aspiration. To trade in unisex t-shirts rather than female clothes for markets in India and the Middle East is not the same as owning a bar which serves South Asian food in a nightlife district, yet they are on a par. Both are attempts to unmark race and ethnicity from South Asian food spaces. South Asian parents are sensitive to the difficulties of how one can judge parity and fairness in the mainstream, and even entrepreneurs such as Sandeep Sekhri are only partially successful models for this future.

Further questions

These conclusions raise further questions about the work of marking and unmarking demanded by belonging to the ordinary community. Has the contours of this processual, highly contingent ordinary community emerged from the perspective of it that has been developed over the six chapters? Will Chinese and Cantonese communities engaged South Asians with sufficient ambiguity so as to bring them into a new and flexible mainstream? What will shape the future for South Asian food makers in the Pearl River Delta as the Basic Laws in Hong Kong and Macau run down their respective clocks?

In this study, emphasis has been given to empirical accounts and thick ethnography to show these gaps and their potential, following what Garner calls a 'dot-connecting process [that] constantly confronts the researcher with his/her location in the murky water' (2016: 180). It is not clear if Garner envisions a white or a brown researcher when he advocates for more empirical research on the ordinary. Certainly reflecting on my own complex social location as a researcher enabled me to escape a dangerous level of solipsism in studying brownness, and reflected on many occasions on the fate of the research and the field had I been white British or Chinese. What kind of quest for ordinariness would I have presented (Henderson 2009)? Would this have been different from my identity as a researcher attached to a university in the United Kingdom? Would I have encountered as much or less racism? Did I agree with Armando Garcia's (2015) interlocutors that we are living in an increasingly anti-brown world?

But what of the future? Living in delta regions is a commonplace reality for many. 87% of the land surface on the Earth is connected through ocean fed rivers (Bianchi and Allison, 2009) and deltas are the zones where sediment-heavy, slow-moving rivers meet the sea at the coastline, the silt settling in thick, fertile formations, inlets and natural harbours. Large and dynamic populations have feasted on a highly fertile ocean-fed agricultural complex, enriching themselves through migration and trade. The Pearl River Delta seems to have thickened more than any other with human intervention.

The delta's future integration is a tangible presence. Is Guangzhou the future for Macau and Hong Kong in the ways that ideas of good food are shaped by citizenship rights and port authorities? Or are Hong Kong and Macau likely to extend the models of personal and political autonomy in China in ways that were not entirely envisioned by pro-reform Deng Xiaoping on his Southern Tour back in 1984? The countdown to full integration with China for Hong Kong in 2047 and for Macau in 2049 highlights the tensions and anxieties about the loss of identity in any integration project. These tensions can be found in the European Union, the Russian Federation's Eurasian Economic Union as well as the lynchpin of China's geopolitics, the One Belt One Road initiative.

Conclusion

An ever-deeper engagement with food may provide tools to think through these implications. Rather than solely mark ethnicity and race, food is an everyday substance that also exposes the ordinary community and its strategies to maintain itself and its values while surrounded by racialised discourses of belonging. This study has been an attempt to render and explicate these strategies in a country renewing its engagement with racial diversity.

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