Exploring epistemologies of ignorance through the lens of black women's food-related discussions.

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Abstract

Food-related discussions have grown exponentially within and outside of academia in the last few decades. These discussions, like other knowledge claims, *tend to* reflect the perspectives and interests of systemically privileged communities. This interdisciplinary project 'starts off thought' from the perspective of the subjugated, and specifically from the food-related perspectives of black women. Relatively unstructured, food-infused, feminist-informed methods were deployed to bring the relatively marginalized perspectives in (feminist) food studies to the forefront. Whilst the project's initial intention was to challenge ignorance by learning about food from black women's perspectives, the discussions with 12 other black women in Sheffield (UK) evolved the project into using food-related discussions as a vehicle for exploring epistemologies of ignorance. Overall the thesis argues that, whilst academic and other knowledges produced by black women continue to be vulnerable to the systemic and systematic forms of erasure that maintain epistemologies of ignorance and the epistemic injustices that follow, alternative spaces of knowledge production are also providing black women some opportunities to redress hermeneutical injustices. The empirical findings demonstrate the vulnerability of black women's knowledges to systemic erasure in ways that actively produce various epistemologies of ignorance, through insufficient consideration of the situatedness of knowers; and through various experiences of epistemic injustice including testimonial injustice and testimonial smothering. These discussions also speak to the often-ignored racialized nature of food politics. Finally, the findings also point to the resourcefulness of hermeneutically marginalized communities, who are reclaiming kitchens as alternative spaces for the production of knowledges that redress hermeneutical injustice.

Key words:

Epistemologies of ignorance| Black feminisms| Feminist food studies| Epistemic injustice

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Chapter 1: Introduction- whose knowledges are we talking about?

1.1   Problem statement

The last two decades have seen tremendous growth in food-related discussions within academia, the media and popular accounts, and within domestic spaces and everyday life. Specifically with reference to academic food-related discussions, food scholarship has made significant progress from the days when scholars felt, taken less seriously by their academic peers (Belasco, 1999:27), isolated and defensive (Heldke, 2006:202) because of studying food-related topics. Writing in 2008, Warren Belasco observed that, "there is no question that more people are studying food [now] than ever before" (Belasco, 2008:5). More than a decade later, this observation of the unprecedented growth in food-related thought within and outside of academia is even more of a reality, to the point of being axiomatic as different scholars have also noted (e.g. see Cook et al., 2013; Avakian and Haber, 2005). Indeed, within academia, there has been an unprecedented proliferation of academic journals, articles, conferences, conference streams, academic email list-serves and academic departments, all dedicated to the sole task of discussing food-related topics. Additionally, outside of academia, "food books are bestsellers, cooking shows are ubiquitous, and the public is more informed about food safety and food politics" (Kaplan, 2012) than ever before.

This rise and rise of food-related discussions speaks to the fact that food matters to everyone, if for no other reason than the 'brute fact' that one must eat in order to stay alive (Pence, 2002: vii). However, beyond 'brute' questions of nourishment and biology, food is also understood to offer "rich, tangible entryways into almost any issue in which [one] might be interested" (Cook et al., 2013: 1), including issues related to "both daily life and world-view" (Avakian and Haber, 2005: 1). In other words, food allows scholars to think about issues that go 'from palate to planet' (Belasco, 2007). The body of interdisciplinary academic thought devoted to food has grown so significantly, that there are now recognizable sub-fields. For example, in 2005, Avakian and Haber (2005) made a call for food-related research that was characterised by (even more) explicit feminist commitments. Additionally, the call challenged feminist food-related work to shift away from focussing *solely or predominantly* on questions related to women's food pathologies (Avakian and Haber, 2005: 2) as had been the case at the time, recognising that women's relationship with food was more nuanced than simply being problematic/pathological. Since then, there has been the growth of the inter-disciplinary field known as feminist food studies, looking at various food-related questions from a range of feminist schools of thought.

However, despite the widely acknowledged tremendous growth of academic food-related discussions, feminist or otherwise, there has been a relative neglect of feminist work that

centres black women's food-related experiences and perspectives (see also Williams-Forson, 2011). This is note-worthy, considering that it is now generally taken as axiomatic that there has been an "explosion on …research on food" (Cook et al., 2013:1) as highlighted. Whilst there may be a variety of explanations for this erasure, in one sense it was frustrating to me as a black woman, yet not 'surprising' especially considering that black women's lives, experiences and perspectives in their diversity, tend to be vulnerable to systemic erasure (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 1991; Lorde, 1984; Cooper, 2015; Dotson, 2016). Even so, this relative neglect becomes the _backdrop_ from which this project arises; the hunger that attracted me to ongoing discussions in critical race and feminist philosophy debates that broadly cluster around why we do not know, what we do not know (Tuana,2004:194-195).

The _primary_ aim of this project is not to discuss or explain this 'accidental-on-purpose' exclusion (Dotson, 2016) of black women's perspectives in the (sub)field of (feminist) food studies generally or specifically in the discipline of Geography (see Kobayashi and Peake, 2006 for useful starting point with regards to Geography see also, Wilson, 2017). Rather this frustration _evolved_ into a backdrop which encouraged me to think about the forms of ignorance that are at the heart of multiple forms of racialized, gendered, classed amongst other oppressions in society (Mills, 1997, 2007; Harding, 1991; Code, 1993; Sullivan and Tuana, 2007) through the lens of black women's food-related perspectives. This ignorance matters because oppressions cannot be dismantled, without paying attention to ignorance itself as a substantive epistemic practice.

Therefore, this thesis is conceptually grounded in the anti-racist and feminist Philosophical frameworks on epistemologies of ignorance, which examine and analyse how ignorance shapes the production of (academic) knowledge and social injustices, and affirms that "injustices have prominent epistemic dimensions." (Bailey, 2018:94). As will be discussed in this chapter and in chapter 2 of this thesis, these discussions on epistemologies of ignorance are concerned not with conceptualisations of ignorance as absence of knowledge, but with the forms of ignorance that, "given the way things are set up [in society], could not _not_ exist" (Dotson, 2016: 46 original emphasis). In other words, an ignorance that is actively produced, _in order to_ enable society to function as it currently does and has done historically. Overall the thesis argues that, whilst academic and other knowledges produced by black women continue to be vulnerable to the systemic and systematic forms of erasure that maintain epistemologies of ignorance and the epistemic injustices that follow, alternative spaces of knowledge production are also providing black women some opportunities to redress hermeneutical injustices.

This project, like many other feminist-informed qualitative projects, has gone through several, sometimes 'messy' iterations. The 'initial' intention of the project had been to respond to the

relative paucity of black women's food-related thought in food geographies specifically and (feminist) food studies more generally, by creating a relatively unstructured, food-infused, feminist project that allowed self-identifying black women to say what they wanted to say about food. At the beginning of the project, I would not have identified as a black-feminist, although I was one in practice. By this I mean that, like Kristie Dotson, "I learned how to be a black-feminist at my mama and grand-mama's knees" (Kristie Dotson cited in Lewis, 2015), I just did not know that black-feminism was what this way of thinking and being was called in academic terms.

My previous academic training had been in Law, in a Western institution, where we were taught to think with/like the "objective reasonable man [sic] on the Clapham omnibus", yet never once was the concept of objectivity problematized, nor were we encouraged to explore who this man was, where he was coming from and going to, and why *he* was the standard of rational (legal) thought, or to even problematize the need for 'rationality'. Moreover, we talked about prisons, without once mentioning race or the logics of anti-blackness that shape prisons (Gilmore, 2007). Most obviously my legal training had taught me to not speak in first person, or 'betray my biases' in my writing such as identifying with communities I may be talking about, as I do in this research through usage of, for example, 'their/our' when talking about black women (see also Noxolo, 1999; Noxolo, 2009; Johnson, 2018). And so on. It was in the context of working in legal aid as a researcher with various Indigenous communities in the Global South who were facing mass displacements, that I realized that, whilst I had fond memories of my time at university for many other reasons, the formal legal education I had received had been 'anaemic' from day one to deal with the on-the-ground racialized, gendered and classed realities particularly in the Global South. Thus, when the opportunity to further my education came up, I, perhaps ironically, sought 'refuge' in Geography (Esson et al., 2017; Peake and Kobayashi, 2002) which I understood at the time, and indeed has proved to be, a discipline that was porous enough to allow for interdisciplinary thinking. An interdisciplinary, emancipatory, anti-racist feminist project was always going to be how my academic commitments moved forward, after six years stuck in in various community movements working for survival.

Unfortunately, the original project that I brought to the academy became unfeasible within the first three months of officially beginning my PhD. Without going into great detail (for reasons of confidentiality that will hopefully become obvious), this was because the context in which the problem was set became more hostile and volatile to dissent, in ways that made me fear for the safety of those I was going to work with, and the general ethics of moving forward. After another few months of discussions with various stakeholders, within and outside of the university and the community concerned, that I felt it my ethical duty to not proceed with that

project. The 'silver lining' was that I still had the opportunity to carry on with doctoral research and I decided to start 'afresh'. It was at this point that I began scoping feminist, food-related literatures, to try and understand what debates black women were having, and where I could situate my work amongst them. My efforts at this point included 'traditional' methods of conducting literature reviews, as well as inviting reading suggestions from academic feminists some of which were compiled into bibliographies (e.g. see Kamunge, 2016).

There were some notable exceptions to the neglect of black women's food-related perspectives that I noted. Here I will briefly mention the themes of these oft-cited literatures, with a more detailed review of these works in Chapter 3 (section 3.3). The oft-cited book on 'black women and food' by Psyche Williams-Forson (2006) considers of the diverse ways in which African-American women have historically and in contemporary times used (or consciously avoided) chicken as part of their construction of their racialized, gendered and classed identities. Prior to that Marvalene Hughes (1997) had written on the central role of African-American women in the (oral) transmission of African-American history and culture, particularly in the practices associated with the preparation and sharing of 'soul food'. Wade-Gayle's (2005) creative contribution to the feminist anthology by Avakian (2005), focusses on the meanings that African-American women gave to their kitchens, and the ways in which they tended to serve as spaces of respite for African-American women, especially from racial oppression (cf. hooks, 1990), in contrast to many white women's experiences. Rafia Zafar (2002) on other hand explores the subversive uses of food writing by three African-American women, namely, Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor, and Carole and Norma Jean Darden, in resistance to white supremacy. Doris Witt's book (2004) considers the role that racialized and gendered stereotypes such as the 'Aunt Jemima' stereotype have had on the development of American culture and politics, particularly at the height of the emergence of 'soul food' in America. More recently, the article by Cheryl Thompson (2015) explores the classed politics of the media representation of black women's weight, with specific reference to two relatively well-known African-American women namely Oprah Winfrey and Gabourey Sidibe.

Hence, to summarise the trends, the bulk of the work on 'black women and food' tends to focus on the African-American female experience. Whilst this is insightful, it is important to remember that black women are not a monolithic group but have experiences shaped at the intersections of different social locations (Collective 1986/2014; Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 1991/2002). My initial project therefore, was to design a relatively unstructured project, that allowed self-identifying black women to talk about food from whichever angle they chose. This was because, at the time it seemed 'arbitrary' to me to select a theme from a body of thought in which our voices were largely absent for whatever reason, and then build upon it. I wanted to

design a project that centred black women's food-related thought, including by allowing them to shape which aspects of food-related thought to consider.

It is perhaps for this reason that some well-meaning academics in some forums have mis-described my work as *Participatory* Action Research (PAR), a description that I do not share, as discussed in Chapter 4. This is because my understanding of PAR, which of course is on a spectrum, is the key element of working *with c*ommunities to *define* and explore a problem (McIntyre, 2002; Freire, 1970). Whilst this research has emancipatory intentions, and involved interactive creative methods, it did not involve participants at the point of problem setting. Rather it invited participants to explore with me a problem I identified (erasure) within particular boundaries (food). It was during the fieldwork that food evolved, through the dialogues with participants, from the object of study into a 'lens'. As I note in a field diary as I reflected towards the end of the fieldwork, "participants didn't seem to have much to say about food but kept talk about something else". This 'something else' was ignorance.

In order to make sense of the emerging theme of ignorance in participant's discussions, I looked to the conceptual framework on epistemologies of ignorance. By epistemologies of ignorance, I am referring to the Philosophical framework that explores how ignorance shapes, not only knowledge production practices, but also the construction and maintenance of various racialized (Mills, 1997, 2007) and gendered (Harding, 1991; Code, 1993) amongst other oppressions in society. I chose this framework because it assumes that in order to know why we know particular things, we must also consider why do not/no longer know other things, as Nancy Tuana (2004:194-195) states:

> "If we are to fully understand the complex practices of knowledge production and the variety of features that account for why something is known, we must also understand the practices that account for not knowing, that is, for our lack of knowledge about a phenomena or, in some cases, an account of the practices that resulted in a group unlearning what was once a realm of knowledge. In other words, those who would strive to understand how we know must also develop epistemologies of ignorance."

Therefore, in this thesis ignorance is not treated as a mere accidental omission or oversight, but "as a as a practice with supporting social causes as complex as those involved in knowledge practices" (Tuana, 2004:195). As such, the relative neglect of black female food-related perspectives becomes an opportunity for this project to consider how ignorance is actively produced within food-related discussions and society more generally.

Scholars have noted that there are different ways of brining food into research: either through "food- focussed discussions" (Heldke, 2006: 205) or by "examining...meals" (Heldke, 2006: 205).

I use the term 'food-related discussions' to mean *discussions* that are taking place in a number of sites including academia, media and domestic spaces. Moreover, these discussions are '*food-related'* in that they use food as a lens for exploration of different issues, rather than discussions that are only about food *per se* (Belasco, 2007). An oft-cited reason for relying on food-as-a-lens is its ubiquitous nature that has a potentially, albeit temporary, equalizing effect within research between researchers and participants. Heldke (2006) notes that, "food- a subject with immediate appeal, a subject with which *everyone has some degree of familiarity*, and a subject that carries its meanings on multiple levels- matters to people" (Heldke, 2006:204 emphasis added). The most obvious reason as to how and why food matters to people has to do with the fact that of its fundamental importance to literal life and death questions.

Using food as a lens in research about philosophical questions has the benefit of concretising research, by making philosophical issues more grounded/less abstract, and by extension, make those philosophical questions more relevant to the a wider audience, whilst bringing fresh insights to old problems (Heldke, 2006). In other words, "[food] can form or reform connections to everyday life and the body, reclaiming its importance to a public that has grown wary and uninterested in its esoteric, abstract offerings, and bringing new perspectives to bear on familiar problems" (Heldke, 2006: 205). Moreover, our knowledge about food also benefits from philosophical questions. Philosophy will not necessarily be successful in "resolving whatever indigestible problems have emerged as food studies has come into its own" (Heldke, 2006:205). It may in fact "raise new problems and further complicate existing ones" (Heldke, 2006:205).

Food, by nature, calls for inter-disciplinary approaches. Heldke (2006) notes that Interdisciplinary projects such as these come with the danger of "playing fast and loose with others' disciplinary parameters. (Such is the perennial challenge of cross- and inter-disciplinary work—the "they call that scholarship??" problem.)" (Heldke, 2006: 205 original emphasis). Thus, it is important to recognize what each Discipline can bring. Feminist philosophy for example, because of its philosophical inclination towards theorization and abstraction "can make important contributions to the study of food, by revealing patterns and connections obscured by meticulous attention to particulars." (Heldke, 2006:206). Other Disciplines can encourage empirical work that as discussed, keep theories 'more grounded'.

To what extent did food shape the understanding of ignorance? Whilst the initial intent of the fieldwork was to create contexts where food was 'taken seriously' in the research (e.g. see Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008; Mann et al., 2011; Longhurst and Johnston, 2009) in the end, food in its materiality was only a prompt for other discussions. In other words, I went into the fieldwork with the understanding that food is "not just metaphorical. It involves mouths, chewing, throats, smells, tastes, textures, stomachs, feeling hungry and feeling full" (Longhurst

et. al, 2009: 335). Thus, the fieldwork was designed to invite the perspectives of black women about food, but in ways that involved tasting, touching, smelling, and seeing food, feeling hungry and feeling full. Whilst the fieldwork was very 'food infused' and delightfully serendipitous, it was not necessarily the *materiality* of food that led to insightful discussions. Or perhaps more accurately, in dialogues with participants, food ended up being 'only' a launching pad for discussions that were not about food. Thus, jollof rice prompted discussions on credibility deficit; muddy vegetables prompted discussions on local food politics; compliments about kitchen spaces prompted conversations about redressing hermeneutical injustice and so on. Through inclusion of notes from fieldwork diaries and discussions from interview transcripts, the links between food and other discussions is explicitly highlighted in the empirical chapters, but in the end food was 'only' an object that prompted participant's memories of various anecdotes. I will conclude this section by (re)stating the thesis argument, aims, objectives and questions, before proceeding to section 1.2 which will provide a fuller definition of some of the terms and concepts that have so far been already referred to in this thesis.

Research Aim:

To contribute to anti-racist feminist understandings of ignorance, through the lens of food-related discussions with self-identifying black women.

Research objectives:

1) To theoretically bring food literatures into dialogue with literatures on epistemologies of ignorance.

2) To dialogue with self-identified black female participants, in food-infused contexts.

Research question:

How can black women's food-related perspectives inform feminist understandings of ignorance?

1.2 Introduction and definition of key terms and concepts

As previously mentioned, this thesis uses dialogues on food-related matters with 12 self-identifying black women, as a lens to explore the epistemologies of ignorance in (feminist) food politics. This section will define three key terms and concepts namely: how I am using the term 'black' in this thesis, which will lead to an introduction to the Racial Contract- a theory developed by Charles W. Mills (1997, 2007). Charles W. Mills work is also understood as the foundation of work on epistemologies of ignorance. I will therefore define epistemologies of ignorance, whilst heavily relying on his ideas. The works of those who have then gone on to

build on his ideas (including but not limited to the works of Jose Medina, Linda Martin Alcoff, Elizabeth Spelman, Shannon Sullivan, Nancy Tuana) and others will be described more fully in Chapter 2, whose main purpose is to review Epistemologies of ignorance literatures.

1.2.1   The Racial contract

The meanings of the term 'black'/ 'Black' are highly contested over, including within the UK. This is because race is a social construction, rather than a biologically meaningful category. In other words, critical race scholars widely agree that there is no genetic/biological basis for the different racial hierarchies that exist in society. As a result, who is defined as b/Black, or indeed as white, is constantly evolving rather than being a static fixed category. The capitalised term 'Black' has sometimes been used in the UK as a common label for all people from various ethnic groups who have been constructed as deviating from the white norm (Mirza, 1997:3). This use of the capitalised term Black to refer to all ethnic groups that face racism- a strategy often referred to as political Blackness- is supposed to stress the shared experiences of being treated as deviant from the white norm, and as a source of political solidarity (Aspinall, 2002:805). However, this political usage of the term Black has also been criticised as sometimes inadvertently excluding the issues of other People of Colour, who do not feel as they though are being addressed when 'Black communities' are referred to (e.g. see Modood et al., 1997; Parekh, 2000). It has also been argued to obscure the differences in experiences of racialized oppressions, and assume that solidarity must only be from the point of sameness rather than a connection of struggles across difference (Lorde, 1984: 44). This all speaks to the fact that race is a social construct rather than a biologically meaningful category- that is, there is no genetic basis for racial hierarchies (Yudell, Roberts, DeSalle and Tishkoff, 2016). Thus who is constructed as B/black or indeed white changes over time (e.g. the status of Irish and Eastern Europeans white people whose whiteness has in historical times comes under xenophobic contestation- Mills, 1997:80). This project does not attempt to speak for all People of Colour. I therefore use the lower-case term black to refer specifically to people of African or Caribbean descent.

Race is a social contract that is constructed by the Racial Contract, as Charles W. Mills argues (Mills, 1997:63). In other words, race does not precede the Racial Contract but comes into being because of it. What is the Racial Contract? The Racial Contract "is that set of formal or informal agreements or meta-agreements…between [the] subset of humans… [Who are constructed as] full persons… [and therefore have the power] to categorise the remaining subset of human as 'non-white' and of a different and inferior moral status [as] sub-persons. (Mills, 1997:11) In other words, the Racial Contract is both a theory, and a set of (informal) agreements that help to explain how society is created, transformed and reconstituted (Mills, 1997:10). Traditional

social contracts also explain how societies are created, in terms of the origin of governments, moral codes, and political obligations. Social contracts describe how people go from natural man/residents of the state, and are transformed into citizens of the state. The Racial Contract on the other hand, describes the metamorphosis "of human populations into 'white' and 'nonwhite' men [sic]." (Mills, 1997:13). This means that the Racial Contract, unlike traditional social contracts, puts questions of race" where it belongs- at the centre stage" (Mills, 1997:57) of theorizing how societies are constituted.

There is not a specific act by which the Racial Contract comes into being. Rather Charles Mills notes it is through a series of acts that the Racial Contract comes into being. These acts include:

> "papal bulls and other theological pronouncements; European discussions about colonialism; 'discovery' and international law; pacts, treaties and legal decisions; academic and popular debates about the humanity of non-whites; the establishment of formalized legal structures of differential treatment; and the routinization of informal illegal or quasi-legal practices effectively sanctioned by the complicity of silence and government failure to intervene and punish perpetrators- which collectively can be seen, not just metaphorically but close to literally, as it conceptual, juridical and normative equivalent." (Mills, 1997:20-21)

Initially, religion was the key marker of who was constructed as a full and rational human, and who was constructed as an irrational humanoid/savage/barbarian. In fact, these distinctions were still racialized, along the lines of Christian European and 'heathen' non-Europeans. Thus, the Racial Contract was amongst Christians/Europeans, about the political, moral, economic and epistemological codes that would govern conduct with other *humans*. One of the key points in the Racial Contract as theory, is that the signatories of the contract are those to whom the phrase "we the people" would apply. Historically and arguably in contemporary times, not everyone has been constructed as a person or as fully human (e.g. legally how black people were understood as being 3/5th human). Those who are human, then have a contract that governs how they treat other humans. By extension, those who are constructed as humanoids/savages/barbarians are not signatories of the contract, and are therefore constructed as not deserving the same moral, economic or political considerations. For example, the land of those constructed as savages or barbarians, is constructed as 'idle land', which is open to conquest by humans:

> "In the white settler states, space will sometimes be represented as literally empty and unoccupied, void, wasteland, 'virgin territory'. There is just no one there. Or even if it is conceded that humanoids entities are present, it is denied that any real appropriation,

any human shaping of the world is taking place. So there is still no one there- the land is *terra nullius, vacuum domicilium*, again 'virgin' (Mills, 1997:49)

Thus wiping out through genocides of Indigenous communities and/or the stealing of land during colonialism is not constructed as unethical because ethics govern the treatment amongst *humans* and the people on those lands are not seen as human, therefore 'discovering' their land or colonising them is not seen as unethical. As mentioned previously, this norming of people and space historically had religious overtones. Hence, Christians were human, and 'heathens' were not human as evidence by their 'irrationality' in not accepting the Christian message (Mills, 1997:22). Moreover, the spaces in which Christians lived at the time (Europe) were constructed as tame and tranquil, whereas 'heathen' spaces were wild, dark (e.g. Africa as the 'dark continent), dangerous and so on (Mills, 1997:46; Mudimbe, 1988). This norming of people and space is directly co-related; "You are what you are in part because you originate from a certain kind of space, and that space has those properties in part because it is inhabited by creatures like yourself." (Mills, 1997:42) Hence, even if people moved one place to another, they were constructed as carrying the characteristics of where they were coming from, to their new location. For example, if you were constructed as savage, wild and dangerous, then the space that you occupy becomes savage, wild and dangerous, regardless of where you are. Contemporary examples are given that pay attention to the metaphors and language used in discussions in North America when talking about spaces that are predominantly made up of People of Colour, and how this language and metaphors switch in contrast to spaces predominantly made up of white communities (see also Fanon, 1961:38-40).

The loophole behind having religion as the key determiner of personhood is that, hypothetically, 'heathens' could have converted to Christianity, in which case they would technically be full humans and therefore deserving of ethical treatment for themselves and their lands. This is what led to the growth of race as a marker of personhood as Charles Mills notes:

> "As earlier mentioned, the older distinction between Europeans and non-Europeans is essentially a theological one, developed in large part through the wars in the East and South against Islam, (black) paynim both anti-Christ and anti-Europe...People can always convert, and if the schedule of rights is religiously based, it then becomes at least a prima facie problem (though not an insuperable one) to treat fellow Christians the way one can treat heathens... The new secular category of *race,* by contrast, which gradually crystallized over a century or so, had the virtue of permanency over any given individual's lifetime. Drawing on the medieval legacy of the Wild Man, and giving this a colour, the Racial Contract establishes a particular somatotype as the norm, deviations

from which *unfits* one for full personhood and full membership in the polity." (Mills, 1997:54 original emphasis)

Thus, those who were constructed as full humans, white people acquired unearned privileges by virtue of their race, which were withheld from those not counted as fully human. In other words, the purpose of the Racial Contract is to "maintain and reproduce this racial order [where the status of whites and People of Colour is clearly demarcated], securing the privileges and advantages of the full white citizens and maintaining the subordination of non-whites." (Mills, 1997:14). The term "white privilege" is often used to describe the state of affairs whereby white people on the basis of their race receive unearned *systemic* privileges that are systemically withheld from People of Colour. The emphasis is on systems rather than individuals. That is, there are of course working class, poor white people and individual wealthy People of Colour. Hence the focus is on systems. However, I also quickly add that privilege is not primarily about economic and class privileges (rich or poor), but about ways of being. Hence white people will systemically have the privilege of being able to "'take back the centre' often without realising it;... [to] speak, imagine and think as if whiteness described the world;... [to] think and act as if all spaces are or should be at their disposal, as they desire." (Applebaum, 2010:30).

Critical race and feminist scholars note the distinction between being white (phenotype) and whiteness (set of oppressive power relations). With this distinction in mind, it is widely accepted that there are multiple ways to be white, because white people's race also interacts with their gender, class, sexuality, dis/ability and so on, which means that being white is not monolithic (Frankenberg, 1993; Keating, 1995). However, whiteness as a system confers unearned privileges to those who are constructed as white. I use the turn of phrase 'constructed as white' because ideas of race are not based on biology but on social constructions- hence for example there are communities whose whiteness has been in dispute by other white people for example Irish communities or Eastern Europeans (Mills, 2007:20). These unearned privileges range from material privileges such as not being (as) vulnerable to premature, state-sanctioned death (Gilmore, 2007) to other privileges including: the privilege of being able to not know, the privilege of not needing to know, and the privilege of being assumed to know (Wylie, 2003). The next part of the discussion will continue the discussion of white privilege but from the perspective of the epistemological aspect of the Racial Contract.

1.2.2 Introduction to epistemologies of ignorance

The Racial Contract does not just have economic, political and moral dimensions as discussed above, but also has an epistemological aspect. The epistemological aspect of the Racial Contract is one that Charles Mills talked about at length, leading to his theorization of the epistemologies

of ignorance. What was guiding Charles Mills work was question, "How were white people able to consistently do the wrong thing while thinking they are doing the right thing?" (Mills, 1997:94). As already discussed, he theorized that a Racial Contract underwrites traditional social contracts, with the purpose of the Racial Contract being to secure privileges for those constructed as fully human and therefore white. One of these privileges is the privilege to be ignorant of systemic injustices and of one's complicity to those injustices. Hence the epistemological aspect of the Racial Contract is the agreement to be/remain ignorant, but with the assurance that this ignorance will be fully sanctioned by 'we the people'. Hence, in his oft-cited statement, Charles Mills argues that:

> "So here it could be said, one has an agreement to *mis*-interpret the world. One has to learn to see the world wrongly, but the assurance that this set of mistaken perceptions will be validated by white epistemic authority, whether religious or secular. Thus in effect, on matters related to race, the Racial Contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance... producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made... To a significant extent, then, white signatories will live in an invented delusional world, a racial fantasyland, a 'consensual hallucination'...One could say then, as a general rule that *white misunderstanding, misrepresentation, evasion and self-deception on matters related to race* are... in no way *accidental*, but *prescribed* by the terms of the Racial Contract, which requires a certain schedule of structured blindness and opacities in order to establish and maintain the white polity." (Mills, 1997:18-19 original emphasis)

It is here that the term 'white ignorance' emerges to describe this inverted epistemology that involves being ignorant but with the full assurance from epistemic authorities that this ignorance will be validated. The ignorance that Charles Mills and other theorists in this area are talking about when talking of 'white ignorance' is not any and all ignorance that white people may have- rather it refers to ignorance in which race has a determining role (Mills, 2007). That is, white ignorance is a "not knowing/ not needing to know" that is closely tied to one's positionality. This is because, "...one's social positionality influences the questions one believes are important to ask and the problems one believes are valuable to pursue. White ignorance involves not asking (having the privilege not to need to ask) certain questions and it generates specific types of delusions — wrong ways of perceiving the world that are socially validated by dominant norms." (Applebaum, 2008:296).

Ignorance is not inherently blame-worthy. Indeed, ignorance is often the beginning of knowledge or is not culpable. For example, Kristie Dotson (2011) gives the example a 3-year old

child being ignorant of voting patterns in Michigan- no one could reasonably argue that a 3-year old *should* know about the American electoral system. There is therefore the debate of what makes up culpable ignorance. In a 'seminal' paper, Holly Smith (1983) set out the parameters for culpable ignorance. She argued that if a person (X) commits a 'benighting act' due to their ignorance, which leads to an 'unwittingly wrongful act', then that person is culpable. A benighting act is a choice that affects other actions. Smith (ibid) gives the example of a doctor who fails to read a medical journal that she should have read (the benighting act) leading to an unintentional fatal mis-diagnosis of a child (the unwittingly wrongful act). Take note that that in this model of culpability, the initial ignorance, or indeed the harmful act, do not have to be based on malicious intent (hence it is an <u>unwittingly</u> wrongful act). Or, as Holly Smith (2011) summarises in a later paper, "an agent is only blameworthy for an action or its consequences when either she was consciously aware at the time she acted that the action would be wrong, or was consciously aware that in acting she unjustifiably risked doing something wrong." (Smith, 2011:5). In the example given, the failure of the doctor to read a relevant medical journal is an unjustifiable risk, which makes their ignorance culpable, a culpability that transfers to the unwittingly wrongful act. Discussions of white ignorance do not fit into this traditional model, as I will explain next.

Unlike the above account of culpability, discussions of white ignorance are focussed on systemic forms of ignorance, rather than the actions of individuals. As such, the focus is not on establishing a causality between an unwittingly harmful act and harm. Indeed, with systemic white ignorance, there may not be a "single act [that] literally corresponds to the drawing up and singing of a contract...there is a series of acts...which collectively can be seen...as its conceptual, juridical and moral equivalent" (Mills, 1997:20-21). Moreover, in traditional accounts of culpability based on individual actions, ignorance mitigates a person's culpability for the harm caused. For example, Jessica Flanigan (2014) gives the example of a person baking a cake with peanuts, and serving it to a person with severe nut allergies- the baker's ignorance of potential peanut allergies, Flanigan (ibid) argues, mitigates their culpability of harm caused to the person with peanut allergies. (As an aside: Perhaps it could be alternatively argued that the baker had a duty of care to those eating the baker's cakes, and it would be reasonable to expect a baker to perform due diligence checks with regards to allergies). Nevertheless, with white ignorance, the ignorance is itself culpable, because it involves people being:

> "ignorant about wrong practices from which they benefit [which indicates that] it is likely that they are *choosing to remain ignorant*...because, it involves a choice to now something that is morally important and that would be *easy to know but for that choice*...

> [It] involves *a choice to remain ignorant* because of the benefits that ignorance protects."
> (Applebaum, 2010: 136 original emphasis)

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that white ignorance is not simply an omission, or a mere passive absence of knowledge that results from poor epistemic practice (Sedgwick, 1980:225; Mayo, 2002:85). Rather the ignorance is itself a substantive epistemic practice (Alcoff, 2007:39) that protects racialized injustices from being challenged, whilst protecting some people's racially begot privileges at the expense of other people's racialized oppressions. These practices of ignorance further entrench ignorance about systemic oppressions leading to frequent expressions of surprise amongst dominant communities about the reality of injustice. For example, Foreman and Lewis (2006) talk about the surprise that many white people felt after the devastation from, and response to, Hurricane Katrina in the United States of America revealed systemic racial disparities in the country, including in New Orleans. The only explanation for this surprise amongst white people about deeply rooted racial inequalities was a 'racial apathy' based on colour-blind ideologies that will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2. Thus, epistemologies of ignorance can be understood as a philosophical field that is interested in the "study [of] the conditions that promote and sustain ignorance, [which is] conceived not as the mere absence of knowledge, or as a void but as a force which all on its own often blocks knowledge, stands in its place and tacitly or more explicitly affirms a need or a commitment not to know." (Code, 2014:154)

Not only are the traditional accounts of culpability individualistic, but also they depend on an individual committing a wrongful action (albeit unwittingly). As Barbara Applebaum notes, this aspect of culpability fails to translate onto discussions of white ignorance, because the action in question may be one that society considers A Good Thing; that is, "the philosophical scholarship on culpable ignorance... is focussed exclusively on acts of blatant wrongfulness. White complicity, in contrast, involves those practices that white people enact but are not perceived as morally wrong because they conform to societal norms and values." (Applebaum, 2010:135). This goes back to the earlier discussion about the inverted epistemologies based on the Racial Contract, which redefines moral codes. Thus (and as will be fleshed out further in Chapter 2) it is possible for 'well meaning' white people to be trying to do A Good Thing and yet still perpetuate oppressive systems by that very process. An oft-cited academic example is with the debates on white academics studying whiteness in order to make it more visible as a system of power, but in the process re-centring (Frankenberg, 1997:1) reinscribing whiteness (e.g. see argument by Fiona Probyn that a white academic studying whiteness without re-centring whiteness is a paradox, Probyn, 2004;). The point of my argument here is not to go into the ins

and outs of whether white academics should study whiteness, though I do echo Sara Ahmed's sentiments that there needs to be even more discussions about "the intimacy between privilege and the work we do, even in the work we do on privilege." (Ahmed, 2004). The point is that this field moves discussions away from the notion that racism and other oppressive practices are *solely* done by 'Bad White People Who Do Bad Things' (e.g. self-declared white supremacists such as the Klu Klax Klan), to paying equal attention to the practices of 'well meaning' people who benefit from oppressive systems, and whose well-intended actions unintentionally end up contributing to oppressive systems. Elizabeth Spelman (2007) in talking about the amount of labour it takes to produce and manage ignorance, discusses this more thoroughly following James Baldwin (1993). James Baldwin writing in The Fire Next Time asserted:

> "This is the crime of which I accuse my country and my countrymen, and for which neither I nor time nor history will ever forgive them, that they have destroyed and are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives and do not know it and do not want to know it…But it is not permissible that the authors of devastation should also be innocent. It is the innocence which constitutes the crime." (Baldwin, 1993:5-6)

Spelman (2007) notes that Baldwin is accusing white Americans (that she denotes as 'W') of ignorance and specifically of being unwilling to believe that "black America's grievances are real" (Spelman, 2007:120). Spelman (ibid) summarises the claim that 'black America's grievances are real' as 'g'. Hence, she argues that what is happening is that, W does not believe that g is true, and does not want to believe that g is true. Equally, W does not believe that g is false, but wants to believe that g is false (Spelman, 2007:120). How is it possible to not believe that something is true, but also not believe that it is false? Spelman discusses that if someone genuinely believes a claim to be false, then they will not work hard to shield themselves from contrary evidence that may reveal that the claim could potentially be true:

> "If [W] really did believe that g was false, he wouldn't have to be so vigilant about immunizing himself, about trying to ensure that he won't have to countenance evidence that might point to g's being true. W's ignorance involves not a simple lack of knowledge of g nor the embrace of a false belief about g (the false belief that g is false). W ignores g, avoids as much as he can thinking about g. He wants g to be false, but if he treats g as something that could be false, then he would also have to regard it as something that could be true. Better to ignore g altogether, given the fearful consequence of its being true…. Ignoring g, not thinking about it, allows W to stand by g's being false, to be committed to g's being false, without believing g is false." (Spelman, 2007:120-121)

This begins to show the amount of labour it takes to produce and manage ignorance (hence why ignorance is an 'achievement'). It is not that people want to believe that certain claims are false, because that would mean the claims could also be potentially true; but this would mean having to think about ugly truths about oneself and one's country; therefore people then shield themselves from evidence and choose to ignore the issue.

What is also interesting to note is whom Baldwin was addressing. It would be easy to scapegoat certain sections of white communities as particularly ignorant for example, white working class communities- considering how common it is for middle-class liberals to denigrate working class communities as generally ignorant. It would also be easy to assume Baldwin's charge is to white people who are explicitly racist- to use contemporary examples, to assume he is addressing the hundreds of white people who marched in Charlottesville in August 2017, carrying torches, some wearing KKK outfits and chanting racist slogans (Wilson, 12th August 2017) amongst many other examples of explicit racism ever since Donald Trump was elected as president of the USA (Johnson et. al, 2018). However, Spelman (2007) argues that this is not the category Baldwin is addressing. Baldwin is talking about white Americans who are participating in the destruction of Other people's lives, but do not know it and do not want to know it. Spelman argues, that this cannot be explicit racists or white supremacists, because not only do they know that they are destroying Other(ed) people, but also, they want to know because for them it is a moral victory and something to celebrate (Spelman, 2007:124). Thus Spelman argues, it is as though Baldwin is pre-empting 'well meaning' white liberals from thinking white ignorance only applies to 'iconic bigots', and instead turns the tables back to them:

> "But it would have been simplistic to focus his charges on those people his readers, especially his white readers would recognise as explicitly declared white supremacists groups or iconic bigots. That might do something to turn the racial tables, but it would let W off the hook, allow W to think that Baldwin is talking about people W already thinks are ignorant, whose fierce bigotry W may safely regard as paradigmatic of such ignorance- it would allow W to think that Baldwin is not talking about *her*. It is as if Baldwin anticipates an inclination in his likely white readers to write off the ignorance of which he speaks as something characteristic of *other* whites- people in whom Ws as a group have a special investment seeing as their less educated and morally impoverished fellow citizens of the poor and working cases. Baldwin aims to dash any hopes such whites might have of adding to their moral capital (to use the phrase so well developed by Betensky) by not being white supremacists or bullying bigots." (Spelman, 2007:124 original emphasis)

In chapter 3 when talking about ignorance in food politics, we will return to this idea of the tendency above of white people to regard other white people and working-class communities as exceptionally ignorant whilst failing to pay attention to the forms their ignorance takes such as colour blindness.

The other point is that white ignorance is connected to (white) privilege in at least two ways: first ignorance *maintains/protects* white privilege; and secondly, not knowing or not needing to know is an *outcome* of white privilege. That is, "while not only whites are susceptible to white ignorance, whites are particularly susceptible because they have the most to gain from remaining ignorant. Benefit, thus, is related to keeping ignorance in place." (Applebaum, 2008:296) This is because the ignorance is aimed at maintaining the status quo, which often entails domination and exploitation (Sullivan and Tuana, 2007). Therefore, if you are oppressed by the status quo, then you will be less invested in ignoring reality and not asking questions and perpetuating distorted views of the world. Thus, "a central feature of white ignorance is the ability to ignore people without white privilege...White ignorance is a form of not knowing (seeing wrongly) resulting from the habit of erasing, dismissing, distorting and forgetting about the lives, cultures and histories of people whites have colonized" (Bailey, 2007:85).

Moreover, the ignorance is a function of privilege because white ignorance has to do with cognitive self-protection (Medina, 2013:5). This means that white people tend to understand themselves as fundamentally good, therefore they tend find it very uncomfortable to hear evidence of the ways in which they may, (un)consciously be complicit in injustice and have the privilege to not listen to these suggestions. Indeed, a function of systemic privilege is the ability to opt-out of uncomfortable conversations about the social locations from which one benefits. This opting out happens because the sense of discomfort is so disorienting as it completely requires a shift in how one sees themselves (as incapable of being complicit in injustice) and the world (as normally just with injustice being abnormal). It also requires thinking about difficult topics, for example the fact that people do not just do well only because they worked hard and merited certain privileges, but also because different social locations come with unearned privileges. These are such uncomfortable difficult ideas, that many white people will resist thinking through these issues in order to avoid the discomfort (Bailey, 2017:885) and to preserve that sense of being good, innocent (Applebaum, 2010:184-186) hard-working people who can never be complicit in injustice and have earned every single privilege by merit only.

Again, to be clear, white ignorance is not only present in white people who are explicitly or knowingly racist or are entering a conversation in bad faith (Mills, 2007:21). The ignorance has to do with what they have systemically been taught not to see, or think about, or ask questions about based on the racial contract to misunderstand the world. In other words,

"There are many things those in dominant groups are taught *not* to know, encouraged *not* to see, and the privileged are rewarded for this state of not knowing. Wilful ignorance is in other words, explicitly taught (although this fact is then usually denied such that social inequalities are not socially constructed but, instead, the result of genes or nature, merit or hard work in culture)." (May, 2006:113 original emphasis)

White ignorance, therefore, entails a collective refusal to know uncomfortable truths about injustice that one would be complicit in, based on their social location (Mills, 2007). These discussions on white ignorance will be carried on in Chapter 2, including a discussion on the specific practices that maintain this type of ignorance. The next section of the discussion will give a bird's eye view of the types of epistemologies of ignorance.

There are at least three types of epistemologies of ignorance as outlined by Linda Martin Alcoff (2007) thus:

"The first, drawn mainly out of Lorraine Code's work, is an argument that ignorance follows from the general fact of our situatedness as knowers. The second argument, drawn mainly from Sandra Harding's work, relates ignorance to specific aspects of group identities. The third argument, drawn mainly from Charles Mills's work, develops a structural analysis of the ways in which oppressive systems produce ignorance as one of their effects. These three arguments are not by any means incompatible: one could develop an account that combined all three (and I suspect Code, Harding and Mills would agree.) But taken by themselves, each argument has different ideas about the nature of the problem of epistemic ignorance and the nature of possible solutions…" (Alcoff, 2007:40)

In this thesis, I refer to all three types of epistemologies of ignorance. I refer to a combination of the first two arguments based on the works of Code and Harding and related discussions of standpoint feminisms to discuss the extent to which a knower's social location is relevant. This is because the question could be raised as to whether it actually matters from whose perspectives we have come to know what we know in food politics. In other words, whether the race, gender and other social locations of knowers are epistemically significant, or whether knowers are generic/interchangeable. This project takes the view, following Code (1993), Harding (1991, 2004) and Collins (2000) that all knowers are situated, and therefore our social locations are epistemically significant in terms of what it is that we know and/or ignore. The rest of this introduction chapter will discuss this argument, before moving on to an overview of the thesis chapters. Concerning the third form of epistemologies of ignorance related to Charles Mills work, this chapter has already laid the foundations by discussing his theories of the Racial

Contract. The discussion (in Chapter 2) will therefore explore the different practices associated with the production and circulation of white ignorance. As Lisa Bowleg et al., summarise these practices include, but are not limited to:

> "(a)the willful ignorance of widely visible social injustices (Alcoff, 2007; Mills, 1997,2007); (b) beliefs in just societies (Alcoff, 2007); (c) the dismissal of countervailing evidence of social injustice (Alcoff, 2007; Alexander, 2010); [and] (d) "color-blinding," which is the practice of ignoring White privilege to provide individualistic explanations for White people's achievements and/or erase how race structures social inequality for Black people (e.g., "I don't see race") (Alexander, 2010; Doane, 2003; Mills, 1997; Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013)."(Bowleg et al., 2017:578)

These practices that "dominant groups— White people and men in racialized and gendered epistemic examinations respectively—engage in cognitive practices to establish and maintain dominance" (Bowleg et al., 2017:578) will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2. The next section (1.3) discusses the relevance of a knower's social location to the production of knowledge and ignorance.

1.3   Relevance of a knower's social location

The question of 'who is it that knows?' is one that has been tackled in different ways philosophically. One view is that knowers are individuals who are interchangeable/generic and self-sufficient in knowing (Grasswick, 2004:85). This is often summarised by the notion of "S-knows-that-p" where S represents the, allegedly, interchangeable/generic knower of a claim. This notion does not deny that S has an identity. Rather it makes the claim that the identity of S is not significant- that is, any other objective/epistemically responsible knower with identical access to the same information would come to the same conclusions about p. This is a claim that has been rejected by feminist epistemologists, who have made the case for situated knowledge. In term of the genealogy of these discussions, we can begin with Lorraine Code (1993/2014) who specifically argued against the S-knows-that-p model of knowing. Code (ibid) made the case that all knowers are situated (Haraway, 1988) in terms of time, space, social identity and experience and therefore it is impossible to have a 'view from nowhere', and hence knowers are not in face interchangeable:

> "Because differing social positions generate variable constructions of reality and afford different perspectives on the world...these analyses derive from a recognition that knowers are always *somewhere* -and all at once limited and enabled by the specificities of their location." (Code, 1993: 39 original emphasis)

In other words, the argument for situated knowers/knowledge was coming against the idea that it did not matter who S was- so long as S was objective, value-neutral, detached and rational (able to achieve a view from nowhere), then the cognitive product (p) would be the same regardless of who S was. Feminist epistemologists were at pains to demonstrate at the time, the ways in which the views of S were actually based on the experiences/interest/perspectives of privileged groups who are usually white, middle-class men and then taken to be the norm, with all other views being constructed as deviant. For example, Nancy Tuana's (2004) work demonstrates the ways in which what we know or ignore about sexual and reproductive health, has been shaped by the funding and intellectual interests of privileged groups in scientific communities, who again tend to be white, male, and middle-class. Tuana (ibid) gives the example of how male genitalia has historically been studied and given more prominence in scientific (and other) discussions, including in scientific textbooks, some of which did not include female genitalia, leading to relative ignorance of female sexuality in comparison to male sexuality in society and in scientific communities. Moreover, she gives the example of how there was so much mis-information about birth control options, including their side effects, and it was only as women began to share their experiences- some by writing into women's magazines, or by attending consciousness-raising groups- that it became clear that what was held as 'objective' truth about birth control was inaccurate. Thus, feminist epistemologists were demonstrating how 'rational' ideas were actually constructed by excluding the experiences and attributes that are often associated with women, and that S was not as neutral as some philosophers had argued:

> "[S] could be anyone or everyone; yet in fact if not by intention, *he* is presumptively male, white, neither too old nor too young, propertied, able-bodied, reasonably educated and articulate and well- off materially *to have* a pencil and a table and other taken-for-granted things with which, as a matter of course, 'ordinary people' in materially replete societies are surrounded." (Code, 2014:150 original emphasis)

Hence, feminist epistemologists argued that true 'objectivity' would require paying as much attention to S (knowers), as we do to p (cognitive product). In other words, "objectivity requires taking subjectivity into account" (Code 1995:44). Feminist epistemologists therefore theoretically and empirically denied the possibility of 'objective/impartial views from nowhere' and instead argued that all knowers are situated and all knowledge is partial.

These ideas on the situated nature of knowledge based on a knower's location on the epistemic terrain (Code, 1993) are related to, and further developed in the arguments made for standpoint feminisms (Harding, 1991). There are at least two versions of standpoint theory- one iteration reflected in the works of Nancy Hartsock (1983) and another iteration reflected in

the works of Sandra Harding (1991) amongst other feminists. The arguments that I am making are more closely linked to Sandra Harding's iteration, but I will explain both views as they try to grapple with the question of the extent to which a knower's subjectivity matters in what is known or ignored.

The first version of standpoint theory built on insights from Marx (1867/1994) about the differences in the standpoint of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat. According to Marx (ibid), the proletariat were both marginal and central to capitalist societies. They were marginal in the sense of their relative lack of cultural and social power in comparison to the bourgeoisie, based on their class. This marginality meant that the proletariat had no vested interested in preserving systems that oppress them. However, the proletariat were also central to the processes of the production of goods and services in capitalist societies, which meant they were aware of both the workings and the shortcomings of oppressive systems. The Marxist notion of standpoint theory then concludes that, the classed positions that people occupy in society gives them distinct perspectives on social reality, with the perspective of the proletariat being epistemically privileged. Nancy Hartsock's (1983) formulation of standpoint theory built on the Marxist view that the material conditions of a person's life directly shapes their understanding of society. This version of standpoint theory begins from women's experiences and argues that all women- by virtue of being women- have experiences that are common to all of them (Harstock, 1983; Rose, 1983; Smith, 1988), particularly experiences that emerge from the "sexual division on labour" (Hartsock, 1983:284). This view of standpoint feminisms argued that women's distinctive experiences of childbearing and child-rearing led to structurally different perspectives from men. As with a Marxist perspective, they argued that women occupy both a marginal and central position in society- marginal because women tend not to occupy positions of power in society (Smith, 1988: 65) and central because women do the work, which is crucial for the functioning of capitalist systems (Smith, 1988:81). For example, social reproduction roles are seen as central because they are the means by which workers are produced, socialised and enabled to work outside of the home. However, the marginality is because social reproduction roles tend to be invisible and not constructed as actual work. Thus in this view, because women's position is both marginal and central in society, they have a more realistic understanding of how society works. According to Barbara Smith (1988), women's experiences then alerted them to the rupture/fault line between dominant views of society, and their view of society based on their dual vision of how society works.

Moreover, as with other versions of feminisms, this version of standpoint feminisms sees women as subordinated (and hence marginal) but constructs that subordination as a shared experience for all women based on their commonalities as women:

"I adopt this strategy with some reluctance, since it contains the danger of making invisible the experiences of lesbians and women of colour. At the same time, I recognise that the effort to uncover a feminist standpoint assumes that there are some things common to all women's lives in Western class societies." (Hartsock, 1983:290)

In other words, there is a recognition of the risks of erasure of various women's experiences that come from focussing only on the commonality of women's lives, but also an insistence that it is theoretically fruitful to focus on those commonalities and hence it is worth the risks.

This iteration of standpoint feminism came under various feminist critiques that I will discuss in no particular order. First was the issue that this iteration run the risk of essentialism (Harding, 1991:178). That is, it was making the claim that some experiences are common to all women in the same way, and therefore making universal claims about all women, which may in fact only apply, to some. Additionally, the insistence of only focussing on commonalities amongst women based on gender meant having to ignore other relevant aspects of identity that also shapes women's experiences. As Elizabeth Spelman (1990) noted, this view assumes that, "each part of [a person's identity] is separable from every other part, and the significance of each part is unaffected by other parts." (Spelman, 1990:136)In other words, the view was being criticised because oppression in society is not just based on patriarchy, or patriarchy and capitalism, but is based on the interlocking nature of various systems of oppression that include racial oppression, that together intersectionally (Crenshaw, 1989) reinforce one another to form a complex "matrix of domination" (Collective, 1986:362; Collins, 1990:225).

Black feminists in particular were vocal in stating that whilst all women were "penalised by their gender, some were privileged by their race" (Collins, 1990:225). So for example, there were discussions about black working class women having quite different experiences of social reproduction to white middle-class women, including the fact that white middle-class women often had the racial and economic privilege to shift their social reproduction roles to poorer, often racially minoritized women. Paying attention to these differences in power between white women and black women particularly in the American context, led to different understandings of the home. Where home had always been constructed as a place of oppression for women, it started to become clear that home spaces had a different and more complicated meaning to African American women, who experienced home spaces as a place where patriarchy was practiced but also a place of respite from racism (Smith, 1983: ii). Another example had to do with sexual violence against women. Whilst rates of prosecution were low across the board, for African-American women there was the added injustice of being constructed as 'un-rapeable.' This construction was based on the controlling image of the Jezebel (Collins, 1991:5) which stereotyped black women as constantly sexually available, promiscuous, and therefore un-

rapeable. This was an idea that stemmed from slavery whereby during slavery it was not a crime for a white man to rape a black woman because of the idea of black women as sexually insatiable (Collins, 1990:179). Thus paying attention to both the gendered and racialized nature of sexual violence led to new insights about the nature of sexual domination in a way that was not possible by only focussing on gender by itself. Hence, black feminists argued that paying attention to the intersection of different forms of oppression was not in tension with opposing sexist oppression, but was in fact a key part of it (hooks, 1984:31). To be clear,

> "The point is not just that there will always be some exceptional individuals whose lives to not fit a given theory. Rather, there will always be whole groups of women whose lives systematically fail to conform. In short, theories that claim that all women share a common social position will always be falsely over-generalized, claiming to apply to all women at best they only apply to some [who are usually the racially and class privileged women." (Stone, 2007:147)

A second criticism of this iteration of standpoint feminism was that it grounded knowledge on the notion of experiences (Scott, 1992). Joan Scott (1992) argued against using experience as "foundational ground of knowledge" (Scott, 1992:26), arguing that experience is fallible, contestable and constructed (Scott, 1992: 24-25). This was a criticism that proponents of this version of standpoint were aware of, and in fairness, they were not arguing that experience in and of itself is knowledge or equivalent to a standpoint. Rather they would argue that experiences have to be thought through and theorized before they become standpoints: "...the vision of the oppressed group must be struggled for and represent and achievement which requires both science...and education." (Hartsock, 1983: 285). That is, experiences and perspectives are not the same thing as standpoints. A standpoints is the "critical consciousness about the nature of our social location and the difference it makes epistemically" (Wylie, 2003:31), which is 'achieved' by producing theories about those experiences and perspectives. That is, a standpoint/knowledge does not *automatically* arise from a particular social location (Intemann, 2010:783-784) although a particular social location may make the achievement of a particular standpoint more possible (see Alcoff, 2006; Collins, 2008) as I will discuss in the second iteration of standpoint feminism.

A final criticism of standpoint theory based on Marxist notions was that insufficient attention was paid to what marginality entails (Bar On, 1993: 94). It was argued that more could have been said about the margins as a site of resistance (Bar On, 1993: 87 following hooks, 1990:151) and not only a site of oppression. Moreover, there was also a sense that more could have been said about how marginalised communities are not themselves free from the dominant ideologies/internalised oppression (Bar On, 1993:94). I will now turn my attention to the

second version of standpoint feminist theory, an iteration that takes into account a number of the criticisms of the first view.

Sandra Harding (1991) articulated the second version of standpoint theory when making the case for 'strong objectivity'- which was a concept aimed at making knowledge less distorted. Rather than arguing for starting from the commonality of women's experiences per the iteration of standpoint above, Harding argues for starting from the specificities of women's lives to produce less distorted versions of knowledge (Harding, 1991: 123). The context of the discussion was the idea in scientific communities that so long as knowers were epistemically responsible and objective, then their social location should not matter. Sandra Harding's (1991) argument in response was that paying attention to the context of discovery was not in contradiction with the desire for 'objectivity'- if anything, a failure to consider the context of discovery would inherently lead to distorted views. This is because science was then being shaped by the views of dominant groups, which were then not being critically interrogated, and this was to the exclusion of more marginalised communities. Harding (1991) argued that strong objectivity would require the following: first, acknowledging all perspectives as partial and situated (Harding, 1991:234), second a reflexive analysis of how a researcher's positionality shapes the outcomes, and finally a determined effort to examine the world from the perspective of the socially underprivileged. Thus, a knower's situatedness refers to,

> "...the situations in which the knower finds herself repeatedly over time due to the social relations that position her in the world. This situatedness develops particular habits of attention that may attune the knower to others' habits of attention or not, depending upon one's social vulnerability. Moreover, this situatedness may be suited to the epistemic resources that prevail in a given society or may not, depending upon whether the experiences that arise from one's situatedness influence the development of epistemic resources. In each case, social position has a bearing on what parts of the world are prominent to the knower and what parts of the world are not. Epistemically speaking, *situatedness* is fundamentally about how relations with others position the knower in relation to the world." (Pohlhaus, 2012:717)

Harding (1991) argued that starting thought from the lives of the marginalized revealed the assumptions that were not being critically interrogated in scientific communities (Harding, 1991: 150). Moreover, it would lead to the generation of new and critical questions, and overall produce less distorted perspectives (Harding, 1991:121). For example, the question of how to conceptualise work took different meaning when examined from the perspectives of women's lives. Work tended to be understood as happening outside of the home, with social reproduction roles being considered as 'natural' and 'instinctive' to women and therefore not work. Starting

from women's lives led to new questions and understandings of how to conceptualise work (Harding, 1991:128) and overall to hidden aspects of social relations (Harding, 1991:127). The unveiling of the hidden unjust aspects of social relations comes about because marginalised communities have less of an incentive to make excuses for why these injustices exist. That is, "members of oppressed groups have fewer interests in ignorance about the social order and fewer reasons to invest in maintaining or justifying the status quo than do dominant groups" (Harding, 1991: 126).

Therefore, whilst all perspectives are situated and partial, they are not epistemically equal: "If knowledge is shaped by a knower's location on a particular social epistemic terrain, and if that terrain is an unlevel knowing field, then it will produce situations where some knowers are epistemically advantaged and other disadvantaged" (Bailey, 2017:289). These epistemic advantages and disadvantages come about because,

> "being vulnerable to others…means the marginalized knower must be aware of the concerns of those in relation to whom she is vulnerable, but those dominantly situated need not know anything of her concerns. Consequently, it is to the marginally situated knower's advantage to acquire and use epistemic resources that make sense of experiences that follow from dominant situatedness. However, it is of no immediate use to those in dominant positions to acquire and use epistemic resources that make sense of experiences that are salient to those marginally situated." (Pohlhaus, 2012: 719).

In other words, marginalised communities end up having to develop a double consciousness (DuBois, 1989:3) in order to survive (Baldwin, 1993:217). That is, they end up having to be aware of dominant ideologies whilst also being aware of the ways in which their own experiences deviate from those perspectives that are constructed as norms in society (Harding, 2004:31). Marginalised groups therefore end up being epistemically advantaged (whilst socially/politically disadvantaged) because they are "in a position of privilege in terms of understanding 'how the word works'" (Bailey, 2017:879).

The partial and situated nature of knowledge is also, what leads to the possibility of solidarity and coalition amongst different marginalized communities, as they share perspectives and learn from each other, as Patricia Hill Collins notes:

> "Each group speaks from its own standpoint and shares its own partial situated knowledge. But because each group perceives its own truth as partial, its knowledge is unfinished. Each group becomes better able to consider other groups' standpoints without relinquishing the uniqueness of its own standpoint or suppressing other groups partial perspectives." (Collins, 1991:236)

That is, it is not possible to be self-sufficient as a knower- all knowers are interdependent on other differently situated knowers in order to attain some forms of knowledge and epistemic skills (Code, 1991; Alcoff, 2001; Code, 2006; Fricker, 2007). However, this knowledge sharing and solidarity is not based on erasing differences amongst various marginalised communities. Rather it is based on acknowledging the partiality of different perspectives, which leads people to be more open to learn from other people, since all oppressions are intrinsically connected (Hill Collins, 1991:222) and cannot be understood in isolation. Thus, not only are knowers not generic/interchangeable, they also are not self-sufficient but also must depend on other differently situated knowers in order to have a more complete understanding (Alcoff, 2001) of how the world works.

To sum up, this section has considered the different arguments that have been made for the epistemic relevance of a knower's identity. It has explored the arguments for the connections between the social location of a knower on the epistemic terrain, and the resulting situated, partial perspectives, some of which are epistemically advantaged over others. This discussion is in the context of thinking about the general neglect of black women's food related perspectives. The next section provides an overview for the rest of the thesis chapters.

1.4   Overview of thesis chapters

This thesis begins from the premise that whilst socially marginalized communities tend to find that knowledge production practices are not geared towards their epistemic interests. In this chapter, I brought up the relative academic erasure of black women's food-related perspectives and experiences (section 1.1), and why this matters (section 1.2 and 1.3). Section 1.2 in particular discussed the conception of ignorance as 'actively produced', and the reality that marginalized communities are likely to find large bodies of ignorance surrounding the issues that are of importance to them/us; whilst section 1.3 discussed the relevance of a knower's social location in knowledge production. I therefore proposed using food as a lens to study ignorance. In later sections of this chapter, and in Chapter 4 (section 4.6), I discuss in greater depth how my research evolved in the fieldwork from wanting to study aspects of food from black women's perspectives, to black women's perspectives about food becoming a lens to study ignorance. The rest of this section provides an overview of the process and outcome of black women's food-related discussions as a lens to study ignorance.

Chapter 2 gives an overview to some of the practices that have been identified in the production of ignorance. These include the practice of thinking of society as fundamentally just (section 2.1); the practice of wilful ignorance (section 2.2); the practice of colour blinding (section 2.3); epistemic injustices and the practice of dismissing counter-vailing evidence (section 2.4).

Section 2.5 discussed how marginalized communities can/have made use of ignorance in strategic ways as part of their liberatory efforts. Overall, the chapter highlights that it is often in the interests of socially privileged communities to be or remain ignorant about uncomfortable truths. It also highlights the epistemic and non-epistemic harms that result in, and flow from, various forms of ignorance.

Chapter 3 rediscovers what (feminist) food scholars have explicitly said about ignorance. Food-related reflections on ignorance as not simply a lack of knowledge are scarce. Therefore the chapter provides an 'alternate reading' with discussions added in. By this I mean that I bring discussions in epistemologies of ignorance more explicitly into a number of the literatures that are discussed, whilst fleshing those insights out with ignorance in mind. It also means bringing together disparate pieces of food-related literatures that would usually not be reviewed together, but are in one-way or another linked to questions of ignorance. Thus, the chapter brings together discussions of celebrity chefs in the UK, with discussions on the role of controlling images in the epistemic violence affecting black women particular in food writing.

Chapter 4 explores the idea that taking the experiences and perspectives of those who are relatively ignored in knowledge production seriously, necessitates centring them in the research, and engaging in dialogue. The chapter affirms that bias-free research is impossible and undesirable. In other words, biases would still occur even when particular methodologies are rigorously followed. Thus, what is needed is new conceptions for recognising how power shapes the research process, that is, the ability to be reflexive. Therefore, I discuss how my initial intention was to have as many conversations with 12 black women in Sheffield about food, with food, in various food-related environments. Rich descriptions of black women's thoughts about food was therefore what I thought was driving my research, and the intention I walked into the fieldwork journey with. Section 4.2, introduces the participants, and how they were selected; section 4.3 describes the three phases of the research process that they were invited to and the information that I gave them in order to be able to make informed decisions as to their participations; section 4.4 describes some of Sheffield's highlights in terms of food and racialized, gendered, classed histories that were potentially the most relevant to my project; section 4.5 describes how I analysed the 24 interview transcripts and field-work diary that resulted from the data collection process.

In section 4.6, I return to reviewing my initial intention- a practice that I had to do quite a few times in the fieldwork. This was because I often felt during the fieldwork that 'I did not know what my research was about. My initial started with learning something _about food_, but the fieldwork took that intention 'somewhere else'. Indeed a messy point of uncertainty is arguably fairly typical in most feminist-informed qualitative research projects. I discuss how the

relatively unstructured nature of the dialogues served to add to those researcher anxieties. I discuss the process of embracing the uncertainty and trying to make sense of it. It is here that I consider how the process of explaining my research motivations to participants in our first meeting, potentially already brought up 'the something else' that at that point was unintelligible to me, namely themes around ignorance. I consider how up to that point I had treated ignorance as 'simply' the backdrop of the project, but not the object of study. Moreover, it became apparent that my project was not a study _about_ food but a project _through_ the vehicle of food. This served to evolve my research, where it went through iterations of food becoming a lens to study ignorance. Moreover, whilst a number of the examples in the project are directly related to food, food also gave rise to other discussions, as is discussed in the empirical chapters.

This project resulted in three empirical chapters which are linked by the idea of considering when epistemic practices go wrong in ways that contribute to ignorance and therefore to epistemic and non-epistemic injustices. In Chapter 5, as I will discuss in the next section, participants kept coming back to a specific food debate- on local food- and thinking about epistemic questions within that food context. In Chapters 6 and 7 however, it was the food that the individual participants and I were handling, that then provided the springboard, for 'triggering' their memory of breakdowns in epistemic practices. For example, a conversations with Cookie about the jollof rice we were cooking, being the context in which, she shares an incident in which someone asked her about jollof rice, in ways that made Cookie feel like she had suffered a credibility deficit. I discuss this and other anecdotes within the relevant chapters. Overall participants seemed to have quite a bit to say about epistemic exploitation, and particularly on epistemic injustices. Chapter 6 considers a specific instance of epistemic injustice- namely, testimonial injustice- through the lens of food. Whereas chapter 7 considers how participants relied on various kitchens as spaces for redressing hermeneutical injustices faced elsewhere. I outline the individual empirical chapters in greater depth next.

The first empirical chapter, (Chapter 5) begins to apply insights on how it is that ignorance is produced. Specifically, I use participant's views on local food discussions, to consider how a failure to think through our situatedness as knowers, contributes to problematic framings of objectivity, and therefore ignorance. As already discussed in this chapter (section 1.3) there is a model of knowing ('S-knows-that-p') that assumes generic, isolated knowers who come to absorb particular beliefs from their surroundings. This model has then focussed on the object of knowledge (P), considering questions as to when a belief is true, and/or justified. Feminists have argued that it is important to pay attention to knowers (S) and to their social location, values and interests. They have problematized conceptions of objectivity based on detachment, value-neutrality, and notions of transcendence that imply having a 'God's eye view'. Instead they

have argued for awareness of the partiality and situatedness of knowledges, *as a pathway* to improved objects of knowledge/'strong objectivity'. This chapter innovatively considers these well-established insights in feminist epistemology in the context of local food discussions. Local food, variously defined, is often constructed as the panacea to the ills associated with/blamed upon industrialised food systems. Whilst the harms and unsustainable practices associated with industrialised farming can be taken as read, the cautions against constructing local food as the universal solution are equally welcome. However, this chapter raises questions on the *framing* of these cautions, so called 'local trap' notion. The chapter argues that local trap discussions, which focus predominantly on 'P', reify the problem ignorance by not giving sufficient consideration to who knowers are and how they are situated. These cautions are reviewed in section 5.2 of the chapter. Section 5.3 then discusses, using discussions with participants, how critically transformative conversations around local food require explicit considerations of the values, interests and social locations of knowers. This in turn revealed the different project that marginalized knowers felt should be part and parcel of trying to work for food justice, including: better representation of black communities in local food initiatives; designing local food initiatives as part of broader agendas to challenge the subordination of women; and considering our culpability in capitalism.

The second empirical chapter (Chapter 6) continues in that thread of, when epistemic practices go wrong in ways that contribute to or result from ignorance, by considering participant's experiences of feeling wronged in their capacity as knowers, and specifically their experiences of testimonial injustice (Fricker, 2007). Section 6.2 begins by briefly situating discussions on testimonial injustice amongst broader discussions on epistemic oppression (Dotson, 2014:115) before discussing at greater length Fricker's (2007) definition of testimonial injustices, and its primary harms. Here I consider other articulations of the primary harm of testimonial injustices (Pohlhaus, 2012) as well as whether testimonial injustices are always about credibility deficit or can be by credibility excess (Medina, 2013). Section 6.3 puts these ideas to work, beginning discussions with jollof rice, goat meat, vegan food, and herbal medicines. Whilst participants tended to suffer harms from credibility *deficits,* the chapter also makes preliminary observations of when credibility excess can be harmful and therefore cause harm of being a truncated subject (Pohlhaus, 2014:105). In this research, this was if and when credibility excesses are tied to epistemic exploitation (Berenstain, 2016:570). Here there is a lot of room to extend these ideas more fully into food territory, for example by beginning with marginalized participants experiencing food-related inequalities such as having to rely on food-banks, and considering questions of racialized, gendered and classed prejudices producing credibility deficits and excesses.

The third and final empirical chapter (Chapter 7) considers how some of the participants made use of different kitchens as spaces as spaces to redress hermeneutical injustice (Fricker 2007). The chapter is not a study of kitchens in Sheffield, and indeed participants referred to different kitchens that had served as spaces to gather with other marginalized individuals and pool their experiences and conceptual resources. The chapter makes a preliminary observation that the two relatively 'older' participants (late 60s and above) did not rely on their current Sheffield kitchens in this way, due to being more isolated to other black women with similar experiences in their everyday life in Sheffield. They therefore spoke about their memories of kitchens elsewhere that had been used as spaces to share and politicise experiences. The, relatively speaking 'younger' participants, a number, though not all of whom had grown up in the UK, talked about their frustration to find other spaces in which they could make sense of, or communicate intelligibly various experiences that mattered to them. Some of the recurring spaces included academia and white feminist spaces. Kitchens were relied upon because of agenda-setting control participants had, unlike other spaces that were characterised by conversation-derailing white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) and privilege-preserving epistemic pushback (Bailey, 2017). These predictable tactics by systemically privileged groups meant that participants lacked the epistemic friction (Medina, 2013:50) needed to push conversations forward in ways that helped them share concepts, language and vocabularies needed to survive injustices. A caution: the chapter does not suggest that participants only had control over their kitchens and no other aspects of their houses. For example, some participants lived by themselves, and so presumably and logically had 'control' over all the rooms in the house. The chapter is able to answer 'why kitchens' as opposed to other spaces (e.g. academia and white feminist gatherings) but does not claim to have a complete answer for 'why kitchens' as opposed to, for example, living room spaces or other 'public' areas of the house.

Chapter 8- the Conclusions chapter considers the main contribution of the project and areas for further research- a few of which have been highlighted. The main contribution of the thesis is providing *empirical* evidence, *through the lens of food,* for how 'well intended' people can have problematic, yet sometimes unconscious, practices and ways of being, which leads to the production and circulation of ignorance. This overall insight is not 'new', and indeed is a key idea in feminist philosophy and epistemologies of ignorance literatures. What my work does is to give empirical evidence and weight to theoretical concepts that arise from philosophical discussions and have as yet been sparingly considered in the context of feminist food studies. In the process it allows us to: question the well-intended framing of the local trap as reifying problematic conceptions of local food; to make preliminary observations on when credibility excess amongst systemically marginalized groups can be part of the central case of testimonial

injustice; and to affirm that there is not just a single 'conceptual hermeneutical resource' and to consider how people go about finding language for what matters to them. The main areas for further research include: considering how to frame epistemologies of ignorance in ways that do not rely on an understanding of whiteness based on privilege and supremacy as has been set up in the literatures and in this research. I briefly consider this point in Chapter 2 (section 2.5) in the discussion on 'strategic ignorance' by Bailey (2007) following Maria Lugones. It is an issue that finds fresh urgency in Linda Martin Alcoff's (2015) consideration of the inevitable decline of white majority for example in the US by 2050; as such, is it possible to conceive of whiteness without white supremacy? How does this speak to ignorance? I also consider ways to extend discussions on epistemic injustice further into feminist food studies.

1.5   Chapter 1 conclusion

This chapter has stated that black female food-related perspectives are relatively neglected, especially considering the 'explosion' of the field(s) of (Feminist) Food Studies. Focussing on this neglect the relative neglect of black women's perspectives in (feminist) food-related discussions provides a good opportunity to think about ignorance in food politics more generally. This is based on the idea that ignorance is not simply a gap or omission in knowledge, but is often actively produced.

The chapter then dealt with the question of whether the social location of a knower is epistemically significant. I discussed the arguments by Lorraine Code (1993) against the S-knows-that-p model of knowing, which assumes interchangeable/generic knowers. I discussed at length the reasons that have been given by feminist epistemologists for understanding knowers as situated and partial, based on their different locations on the epistemic terrain. The chapter has discussed the arguments that what we know or do not know is not simply based on interest and merit in community of knowers, but is political. Thus who can be heard, who is seen as credible and what values shape the knowing process are not neutral or universal questions, but are shaped by different social locations. Therefore, the chapter has set up the connected arguments that ignorance follows from our situatedness as knowers (Code, 1993), and is related to different group identities (Harding, 1991, 2004). This sets up the foundation for a discussion in chapter 2 about the ways in which structural injustices produce ignorance and vice versa (Mills, 1997, 2007).

Chapter 2: Practices[1] that create and sustain epistemologies of ignorance

The previous chapter outlined the three forms of epistemologies of ignorance (Alcoff, 2007) namely, the ignorance that follows from the general fact of our situatedness as knowers (Code, 1993); the ignorance related to specific aspects of group identities identities (Harding, 1991; Collins 2002); and the ignorance produced by oppressive systems as one of their effects (Mills, 1997; 2007). I discussed in greater detail the first two forms of ignorance, discussions that are closely related to standpoint feminist theories. I also discussed theories on the Racial Contract which underscores social contracts, and is the basis for understanding epistemologies of ignorance that follow from oppressive systems (that is, the so called, white ignorance). I also outlined at least four practices, as summarised by Bowleg et al., (2017:578), which are related to the production and circulation of white ignorance. These practices include but were not limited to: colour blinding; willful ignorance of widely visible social injustices; the dismissal of countervailing evidence of social injustice; and the beliefs in society as fundamentally just with injustice as a deviation from the norm. In this chapter, I explore these practices in greater detail, before also examining the ways in which ignorance can be strategically deployed by People of Colour as part of their resistance to oppression (Bailey, 2007). This will form the basis of exploring more food specific examples of the various types of ignorance in Chapter 3. Paying attention to these practices helps to demonstrate the ways in which ignorance is actively produced and take a lot of labour to produce and maintain, which recalls the argument discussed in the last chapter by Elizabeth Spelman (2007)'s argument that ignorance needs to be understood as an 'achievement'. This chapter will examine the four practices associated with the production and circulation of oppressive forms of ignorance in turn, before discussing strategic ignorance.

2.1   The practice of thinking of society as fundamentally just

One factor that contributes to white ignorance is the assumption of everyday life as just/fair, with injustices being the exception/an aberration (Shklar, 1990). In other words, it is the idea that society may have experienced racism, sexism and other forms of injustice at some point (e.g. in the 1960s), but that sufficient progress has been made to the extent that these injustices

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[1] I am aware that the term 'practice' has a technical specific meaning in social practice theories, referring to the combination of materials, meanings and competence (e.g. see Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012 for detailed discussions). However, in this context I am using the term 'practice' more loosely to refer to actions/activities/ways of being. This is consistent with the way authors such as Jose Medina (2013) and other scholars on epistemologies of ignorance talk about the work/labour that goes into constructing ignorance.

are not systemic or an everyday reality but rather absolute exceptions, "a surprising abnormality" (Shklar, 1990:17; see also Fricker, 2007:39). This is based on the fact that,

> "One of the key features of oppressive societies is that they do not acknowledge themselves as oppressive. Therefore, in any given oppressive society, there is a dominant view about the general nature of the society that represents its particular forms of inequality and exploitation as basically just and fair, or at least the best of all possible world. It is very likely, however, that this dominant representation of the unjust society as a just society will have countervailing evidence on a daily basis that is at least potentially visible to everyone in the society. Therefore, cognitive norms of assessment will have to be maintained that allow for this countervailing evidence to be regularly dismissed so that the dominant view can be held stable." (Alcoff, 2007:48).

In other words, a core part of oppressive societies is for justice to be normalised and injustices are abnormalized. Society is represented as a meritocracy, despite evidence to the contrary. This then directly contributes to making various injustices invisible, which in turn contributes to the building of ignorance that then leads to the perpetuation of injustices that are supposedly 'over'. Thus, one of the contributions of the Racial Contract has been to challenge this presumption of a fundamentally just society, a presumption which was found even in knowledge production contexts:

> "Insofar as racism is addressed at all within mainstream moral and political philosophy, it is usually treated in a footnote as a regrettable deviation from the ideal. But treating it this way make it seem contingent, accidental, residual, removes it from our understanding. Race is made to seem marginal when in fact race has been central. The notion of subpersonhood, by contrast, makes the Racial Contract explicit, showing that to characterize things in terms of "deviations" is in a sense misleading. Rather, what is involved is a compliance with a *norm* whose existence it is now embarrassing to admit. So instead of pretending that the social contract outlines the idea that people tried to live up to but which they occasionally (as with all ideals) fell short of, we should say frankly that for whites the Racial Contract represented the *ideal*, and what is involved is not deviation from the (fictive) norm but *adherence* to the actual norm." (Mills, 1997: 56-57 original emphasis).

In other words, injustice is not a sign of a broken system, but of a system working as it should be. As mentioned, this notion of a meritocracy is based on dismissing counter evidence, which is reflective of a wilful ignorance, which will be discussed next.

2.2   The practice of wilful ignorance

White ignorance can be taught in various contexts. These contexts include (but are not limited to): schools (for example in textbooks) or through official forms of memorialisation such as national holidays, museums and statues (Mills, 2007:29). Textbooks, for example, display forms of deliberate forgetting, by being selective as to what histories are included to be taught in schools, and what histories are excluded. Charles Mills (2007) gives an example of this phenomenon using the research of James Loewen (1996) who did a critical study of standard American history textbooks and found a systemic removal of histories on the Indian-white wars that were of considerable importance from 1622 to 1890. He argues that the purpose of this deliberate forgetting is to encourage a "feel-good history for whites" (Mills, 2007:30). Other examples given by Mills are the deliberate burning of archives (e.g. the destruction of state archives in Brussels in furnaces that burned for eight days, as part of the deliberate forgetting of Belgium involvement in Congolese genocide (Mills, 2007:29); the purging of state museums and galleries of the less palatable aspects of history; and the white-washing of history through the use of particular monuments and statues. These are issues we will return to in section 2.5 in looking at how people try and overturn these forms of deliberate forgetting.

Wilful ignorance comes with the benefit of not having to deal with 'ugly' truths that take away a sense of moral innocence and goodness as discussed by Elizabeth Spelman following James Baldwin:

> "People are rewarded or punished for what they know or do not know, want to know or do not want to know, and because of that they may well have an interest in the management of their own and other's ignorance…What are the rewards…for the kind of commitment W (the rhetorically conceived white American) has to not knowing- for W individually and W as a group? Audre Lorde famously asked "What are you paid for your silence?" What does W hope to be paid for ignorance? What does she hope to gain from it? Baldwin has suggested that W will not then have to take under consideration what presumably she would regard as ugly claims about herself and country." (Spelman, 2007:126)

The ugly claims are what I discussed above about being (unconsciously) complicit in injustice rather than morally innocent (ugly claims about self) and about society not being just with exceptional moments of injustice (ugly claims about country). The resulting ignorance also maintains the status quo which reifies existing injustices, which creates other rewards such as inequities in material conditions. Thomas Shapiro (2004) gives the example of doing interviews with white middle-class families whereby they would openly talk about the fact that they had the lives they had because they had parents for example who had paid for their house deposits,

or gifted them large sums of money, or had access to exclusive (in terms of race and class) institutions and so on. And yet when the conversation turned to racial and class based disparities, the same participants would get a sort of 'amnesia' and credit their material conditions fully to their own 'hard work' and would deny that in any way their race and class had played any role in the privileges they were enjoying, and that they were self-made people (Shapiro, 2004:75-76). Hence the idea that wilful ignorance is taught whether consciously or unconsciously yet often denied. Thus wilful ignorance refers to the "carefully crafted methods of not knowing that are a means of perpetuating privilege and dominance. Wilful ignorance entails an agreement to know the world wrongly that is rewarded and encouraged because it serves to maintain status quo." (May, 2006:109)

The 'wilful' in wilful ignorance helps us to connect the arguments in chapter 1 and in this chapter. In chapter 1, I talked about the concept of the situated knower, and how where we are located along the epistemic terrain may make us *less* interested in particular topics or issues. That is the fact that "one's social positionality influences the questions one believes are important to ask and the problems one believes are valuable to pursue" (Applebaum, 2008:296). Additionally, we also have the insight from epistemologies of ignorance about how ignorance is related to having *more* interest in not knowing- being invested in remaining ignorant (Baldwin, 1985:536). This connection in the arguments within feminist epistemology and epistemologies of ignorance is one that Alcoff (2007) summarises as well thus:

> "Where the last argument [on situated knowledge] argued that men, for example, have less interest in raising critical questions about male dominance, the structural argument argues that whites have a *positive* interest in 'seeing the world wrongly' to paraphrase Mills. Here ignorance is not primarily understood as a *lack*- a lack of motivation or experience as the result of social location- but as a substantive epistemic practice that differentiates the dominant group." (Alcoff, 2007:47 original emphasis)

The next practice of colour-blinding is also based on having a 'positive' interest to see the world 'wrongly' as will be discussed next.

2.3   The practice of colour blinding

One of the more accepted and indeed, often celebrated, forms of active ignorance is colour-blindness. Colour blind statement such as "when I look at you, I do not see you as black" or "we all bleed the same colour/ we are all human" are often thought to be compliments (Medina, 2013:36) and ethical achievements (McKinney, 2005; Applebaum,2008:294). However, critical race and anti-racist feminist scholars have pointed out why colour blindness is actually not the

ethical achievements that some people assume they are but are actually a form of culpable ignorance that supports oppression.

The logic behind colour blindness is that since people are discriminated upon based on their race, then if everybody ignored race, then racism would go away. In other words,

> "The logic goes something like this: People who are prejudiced see colour and make unfair judgements based on colour. To be absolutely certain that we are not making unfair judgements based on colour, we should ignore accidental properties, such as colour, and just see people. Colour blindness is essentially a form of ignoring that equates seeing, naming and engaging difference with prejudice and bigotry, and not seeing, naming, noticing and engaging difference with fairness." (Bailey, 2007:85)

Alison Bailey above talks about part of the logic of colour blindness being about seeing race as an 'accidental property', which I will explain. The discussion Bailey (2007) is having, is in the context of discussing the limits of Charles W. Mills formulation of white ignorance. She does not disagree with the points he is making, rather she is thinking about how starting from the point of the Racial Contract limits how far you can understand ignorance including only seeing it as oppressive, and failing to notice the ways people of colour strategically reclaim ignorance as part of their resistance. I will discuss this form of strategic ignorance more in section 2.5. For now I will return to the starting point that she thinks is more appropriate, based on Maria Lugones work on purity and curdling. Maria Lugones work is trying to theorise the frustration people feel in being asked to not pay attention to their intersectional identities. The example is given of for example women of colour, who when working with men of colour against racism, are asked not to bring discussions about sexism into those platforms, whilst when working with white women against sexism they are often made to feel as though talking about racism is 'divisive' (Bailey, 2007:82). This is not a new observation and is one that black feminists in particular were talking a lot about especially in the eighties when making the point that "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."(Lorde, 1984:138)

Maria Lugones work is then trying to theorise this issue about the multiplicity of identities by looking at how the logic of purity and a curdled logic shape different subject. To explain this, she uses the metaphor of making mayonnaise-one of the key steps is to cleanly and completely separate the egg yolk from egg whites. In the end, there is no egg whites in the yolk and no yolk in the egg white. This split-separation is what entails a logic of purity (Bailey, 2007:83). Hence in terms of identity, a split separation creates two subjects- the unified subjects and a fragmented subject. The unified subjects are "marked by universal traits such as 'rational-

autonomous- ends-chooser' and not by privileged racial and gender status. Here, reason *essentially* defined human nature, while sex and race count as *accidental* properties." (Bailey, 2007:83 original emphasis). The example given is how 'a drop of blood' was used to define people as either American or Indian, they could never be understood as both; or the logics behind apartheid (Bailey, 2007:83)

How does the logic of purity and split-separation apply to colour-blindness? To be colour blind entails claiming to separate human from race- that is, 'I do not see you as black, I just see you as a person' is an attempt to cleanly and completely separate the egg yolk of blackness from the egg whites of 'human/person' based on a fictitious unity:

> "To be colour blind you must learn to split and separate race from humanity. Colour blindness relies on the cognitive habit of training the multiple (racial diversity) into a fictitious unity (we are all human). The colour-blind responses to racism initially seem to be just, until we consider how the illusion of equality is purchased at the cost of multiplicity. Colour blindness is just the sort of cognitive dysfunction Mills has in mind. When members of dominant groups actively ignore multiplicity, they practice hearing and seeing wrongly. So, colour blind responses to racism are an agreement to *mis*interpret the word. They are a perfect instance of how whites can act in racist ways while at the same time believing they are behaving rightly!" (Bailey, 2007:85-86 original emphasis)

Thus, colour blindness is problematic because it assumes you are either black (or female etc) or you are a person/human. This in turn fails to consider that even though race is a construction, the effect that has do not go away simply by asserting that racism is now over, or race no longer matters. In other words,

> "Colour and gender blindness often function as naïve disavowals of sexism and racism. Their naivete consists in assuming that racism and sexism are ideologies that can simply be rejected by choosing what we see, as if our genderised and racialized habits of seeing gender and racial markers could simply be rejected by a volitional act that goes against persona training histories and cultural tendencies." (Medina, 2013:37)

Moreover, colour-blindness involves being ignorant of your own and other people's positionality. As has been argued, if someone says to me that they do not see me as black then it also implies a refusal to see racialized and other oppressions as real. That is, 'I do not see you as black' is the same as saying, 'I do not believe you are in any way affected by racism', as Jose Medina argues:

"...the complete refusal to see colour or gender in a racist or sexist society involves implicitly the refusal to acknowledge the force of racist and sexist prejudices and their insidious impact on interpersonal dynamics: "I do not see you as affected by these prejudicial stereotypes, and my social perceptions and social relations are unaffected by them"...It is not accidental that the proud proclamation of colour and gender blindness is often used with respect to oppressed genderised and racialized subjects, for it is used as a denial or disavowal of negative bias and prejudice, that is to distance oneself from racist and sexist ideologies and social discrimination. But presumably those who do not see gender and racial difference do not see sexual and racial privilege either; and, therefore, their blindness is a form of inattention not only to social stigmatisation, but also to privilege: they do not *see* (or fail to pay attention to) how masculinity and whiteness can operate as a locus of privilege in their lives or that of others." (Medina, 2013:37-38 original emphasis)

That is, if a person is being colour blind to me, they are not only ignoring how racialized prejudices still shape systems and everyday life, but also they are ignoring their own social location and privilege by "not even having to consider how they might be contributing to the perpetuation of an unjust system." (Applebaum, 2008:294-295). Hence colour blindness is a form of active ignorance, that Jose Medina argues is supported by at least three epistemic vices: arrogance, laziness, and closed-mindedness (Medina, 2013:39). Colour blindness involves arrogance "insofar as the subject presumes to know all there is to know from his own racial and gender perspectives (often without realising that she or he has one" (Medina, 2013:39). It involves laziness because there is no effort to learn more about how race (or gender etc) still shape systems and everyday life; and it involves closed-mindedness insofar as "there is a lack of cognitive openness to the relevance and importance of racialized or genderised experiences and perspectives." (Medina, 2013:39).

To sum up, colour blindness is a form of active ignorance that is based on a logic of purity, that assumes that one can make a clean and complete split-separation between being a human, and being affected by race. It involves a failure to consider one's own positionality and that of others. It also reflects a naïve understanding of oppression- that it can ended simply by asserting that it has ended. Colour blindness is supported by epistemic vices of arrogance, laziness and closed-mindedness. I will now turn to other phenomena that simultaneously mark harms resulting from ignorance, but also are causes of ignorance. That is, they are "two sides of the same coin, always going together, being mutually supportive and reinforcing each other." (Medina, 2013:27)

2.4   The practice of dismissal of countervailing evidence

A fundamental part of white ignorance involves a "hostility toward the testimony and credibility of non-white people" (Sullivan and Tuana, 2007:3). In other words, there are epistemic harms that both result from and lead to ignorance. Miranda Fricker (2007) identifies two forms of epistemic injustices that occur when one's capacity as a knower is wrongfully denied (Fricker, 2008:69). These two forms are: testimonial injustice and hermeneutic injustice. I will define these concepts briefly here, and discuss them in greater detail in order for the next sections. Testimonial injustice is the injustice of "giving a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word" for no other reason than identity prejudice" (Fricker, 2007:1). That is, it results from an audience failing to give a knower credibility, based on the knower's social identity. Hermeneutical injustice on the other hand is "the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalization" (Fricker, 2007:158). Hermeneutical injustices occur when there are no epistemic resources for both the marginally situated knower and the dominant situated knower to describe systemic injustices. To these two injustices, Kristie Dotson (2012) identifies a third epistemic harm, namely, contributory injustice. Contributory injustice refers to situations where marginalized groups *do* have the epistemic resources required to make sense of their experiences, but privileged communities dismiss/ignore these resources. That is, unlike Fricker's (2007) framing of hermeneutical injustices whereby both the speakers and the audience lack the language and concepts necessary to process these experience, in contributory injustice the speakers do have the epistemic resources, but the audience systemically dismiss these resources. Thus, "The term 'contributory' marks out a typical feature of the injustice where the marginalised are unable to contribute equally to collective understanding of their experiences. This is not due to their having no contribution to make, but because their contributions are systematically dismissed by those outside of the relevant marginalised community." (Tate, 2018:1) The next section discusses these three epistemic injustices.

With regard to testimonial injustices, Fricker (2007) gives the example of Tom Robinson, a black male character in the book *To Kill A Mockingbird.* Tom Robinson is accused of causing a white woman's injuries and is facing a jury to testify of his innocence. The empirical evidence overwhelmingly points to his innocence. However the white jury are unable to hear his testimony, and particularly when he speaks about how he 'tried to help' the white woman. Fricker (2007) points to how the jury is outraged at the thought of a black person claiming to be in a position to 'help' a white person. Thus testimonial injustice is deeply rooted in systemic prejudices and discrimination. Other examples of testimonial injustice could be with how women tend to be constructed as 'too emotional'/ not 'rational' enough and what they are

saying is then not taken seriously; or working classes being seeing as inferior to middle class, or people of colour being inferior to white people. There are different points in history when testimonial injustices have been legal. For example,

> "During slavery, blacks were generally denied the right to testify against whites, because they were not seen as credible witnesses, so when the only (willing) witnesses to white crimes were black, these crimes would not be brought to light. At one point in German South-West Africa, white settlers demanded "that in court only the testimony of seven African witnesses could outweigh the evidence presented by a single white person…Similarly, slave narratives often had to have white authenticators, for example, white abolitionists, with the racially based epistemic authority to write a preface or appear on stage with the author to confirm that what this worthy Negro said was indeed true." (Mills, 2007:32)

Thus testimonial injustices involve the testimonies of people from particular social groups being systematically considered less credible, simply because the people giving those testimonies belong to a social group that "has been historically stereotyped as lacking epistemic credibility." (Dotson, 2011:242) As a result, it involves people being treated as less knowledgeable about their own lives.

Testimonial injustice is not the same as a healthy scepticism that is beneficial to the production of new insights and knowledge. Testimonial injustices are characterised by a defensiveness and what Alison Bailey terms as a "privilege-preserving epistemic pushback" (Bailey, 2017). Alison Bailey discusses this notion in the context of reflecting on her experiences in the classroom as a lecturer. She discusses how in the classroom, she finds that when conversations turns to issues of racialized, gendered, classed and other injustices, the more privileged students in her classrooms tend to find ways to shut those conversations down, and/or argue, and/or to defensively hold on to very problematic positions (e.g. their 'right' to call other people n*ggers) all the while presenting themselves as engaging in 'critical thinking' (Bailey, 2017:877). This is within the context of recognising that "classroom spaces have never been safe spaces: not everyone feels secure and confident in them…classrooms are by nature unsafe spaces." (Bailey, 2017:885). Scholars who write against testimonial injustices are not in any arguing that people from marginalised communities have to be believed in everything they/we say simply because they/we are minoritised. So the discussion here is in thinking through how to distinguish between an ethical disagreement that provides what Jose Medina terms as epistemic friction (Medina, 2013:48) which is beneficial to knowledge, and what Bailey is terming as the 'privilege preserving epistemic pushback' (Bailey, 2017).

Taken together, privilege-preserving pushbacks are defined by Bailey (2017) as,

> "...a form of worldview protection: a willful resistance to knowing that occurs predictably in discussions that threaten a social group's epistemic home terrain...[they are] a family of cognitive, affective, nonverbal, and discursive tactics that are used habitually to avoid engaging ideas that threaten us...[they are the] defensive postures [privileged people adopt] to resist what we perceive to be destabilizing...[they are] barriers made of opinions and prejudices, which are fortified by anger, shame, guilt, indifference, arrogance, jealously, pride, and sometimes silence. These feelings sit in our bodies: our hearts beat faster, our muscles tighten, we scowl, and our minds chatter. Sometimes we shut down completely... [they are] not mere disagreements. As Barbara Applebaum observes, they are discursive strategies deployed to protect our sense of both innocence and goodness... [it is] not only a form of cognitive self-protection, it also helps us to maintain an image we have of ourselves as good people or reliable allies...[they] cannot be dismissed as an occasional set of responses from a few random individuals who happen to be uncomfortable with social-justice topics. These responses are predictable, and their regularity points to their historically deep systemic origins." (Bailey, 2017:879-881)

Some of these practices are ones I have already discussed in earlier parts of this chapter and in chapter 1. I will summarise and tie them together within the context of testimonial injustice. Bailey (2017) begins her discussion with reference to Lorraine Code's notion of epistemic terrains (Code, 1995:39) where Code talks about our social locations determining where we are along the uneven geography of epistemic terrains. This creates epistemic advantage and disadvantage. This an idea that I covered in chapter 1. How this idea gets extended here, is in thinking about what happens when socially privileged people are in a conversation that makes them leave their epistemic home terrain. Being in a conversation that 'forces' one out of their epistemic home terrain is both about mind and affect. That is, a person is being presented with evidence that shakes up their worldview and view of themselves (sense of 'innocence and goodness' that I talked about earlier in this chapter). But then this also comes with a lot of negative affect and emotions- and here Bailey (2017) borrows from Robin DiAngelo's notion of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). White fragility refers to a state of affairs whereby:

> "White people... live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to what I refer to as White Fragility. White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive

moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation." (DiAngelo, 2011:54)

In other words, when socially privileged people are out of their epistemic home terrains, it tends to cause so much discomfort that they tend to use counterproductive defensive emotions as a way to restore equilibrium and take them back to their epistemic home where it is comfortable and familiar. So both Bailey (2017) and DiAngelo (2011) identity these defensive emotions- anger, shame, guilt, fear, shutting down, walking out and so on. These can be distinguished from 'normal disagreement' because there is a pattern and regularity to it, all aimed at preserving privilege. This then can be distinguished from healthy scepticism based on epistemic friction as follows.

Epistemic friction prompts us "to be self-critical, to compare and contrast...beliefs, to meet justificatory demands, to recognise cognitive gaps." (Medina, 2013:50) Practically what does this mean? Epistemic friction is not a 'diversionary red herring' (Bailey, 2017: 883); neither is it characterised by comments aimed at "neutralizing any consideration of...racism and sexism" in society (Bailey, 2017:883)- hence conversations where people are dismissed by being accused of 'playing the gender card' or that involve the exasperated 'why must it always be about race' (I.e. accusations of making something out of nothing- Pohlhaus, 2012) are not dialogues that would be characterised by a beneficial epistemic friction that moves knowledge forward. Epistemic friction is characterised by a willingness to "sit with discomfort" (Bailey, 2017:885) including openly naming that discomfort that comes from "making whiteness, maleness, and heteronormative assumptions visible, decentering them, and rendering them strange" (Bailey, 2017:885). I will now move on to the second epistemic injustice, namely hermeneutical injustice.

The second epistemic injustice Fricker (2007) identifies is hermeneutical injustices. Fricker (2007: 153-154), gives the example of the concept of sexual harassment which existed as a pattern of harms, but for a long time there was not the understanding or legal and cultural terminologies to describe sexual harassment. Thus criminal charges tended not to be brought or sustained, partly because the law at various points lacked concepts that could criminalize various practices associated with sexual harassment, and victims also lacked epistemic resources to describe why those practices constituted a crime. However, as Gaile Pohlhaus (2012) has pointed out, hermeneutical injustices can be wilful, such as when socially privileged people refuse to acknowledge the language, concepts and epistemic resources that socially disadvantaged yet epistemically advantaged communities have developed:

"When a group with material power is vested in ignoring certain parts of the world, they can, therefore, maintain their ignorance by refusing to recognize and by actively undermining any newly generated epistemic resource that attends to those parts of the world that they are vested in ignoring. The resources that would call their attention to those aspects of the world to which they do not attend are the very ones under contestation; hence the dominant group may simply refuse them on the grounds that those resources do not fit the parts of the world to which the group already attends." (Pohlhaus, 2012: 728-729)

Finally, it is also important to note that speakers can have the epistemic resources they need to communicate their experiences, but feel compelled to smother their testimony because the judge the audience as being unreceptive (Dotson, 2011:244). Kristie Dotson (2011) gives the example of how black women tended not to talk about domestic violence in front of white audiences, because they were concerned that they would be entrenching the stereotypes white audiences had on black men and violence. The work coming from critical mental health studies (e.g. see Tate, 2018; Kurs and Grinshpoon, 2018; Crichton, Carel and Kidd, 2017; and Sanati and Kyratsous, 2015) provides useful contemporary empirical case studies of what these injustices look like particularly for mental health patients navigating their way through the health system.

2.5   Strategic ignorance

Ignorance can be strategically reclaimed by marginalised communities as part of their resistance to oppression (Bailey, 2007). This is what Alison Bailey terms as strategic resistance (Bailey, 2007). As mentioned in section 2.2. Bailey develops this notion through her reading of Maria Lugones on the logics of purity and curdling. I already discussed the logics of purity in section 2.3. when talking about colour blindness. In this section I will therefore consider the logic of curdling that can be used to understand strategic ignorance. As mentioned in section 2.3., Maria Lugones uses the metaphor of making mayonnaise to describe the logics of purity and curdling. Whereas purity involved the complete and clean split-separation between the egg yolk and the egg whites (hence no egg yolk in the whites, and no egg whites in the yolk), the curdled logic is based on a failure of that separation:

"Curdle separation counts as culinary failure when making mayonnaise. Mayonnaise is an oil-in-water emulsion. Emulsions are formed when two or more nonmixable liquids (e.g. lemon juice, egg and oil) and blended so thoroughly that the mixture *appears* homogenized. Al emulsions are unstable. Manufacturers must add emulsifiers to puddings and salad dressing to prevent curdling...Curdle separation is never clean. When mayonnaise curdles, it does not separate into distinct parts; instead. ' you are left

with yolky oil and oily yolk' (Lugones, 2003:12)...A curdled logic produces *multiplicitous* identities such as Creole, Mestizo/a, Metis/se and Chicano/a." (Bailey, 2007:84 original emphasis)

Thus curdled logic is another metaphor for talking about intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1989). With regards to ignorance, the specific intersections that are followed is that of the "oppressed-resisting subject" (Bailey, 2007:84).The oppressed- resisting subject looks for ways to not just invert ignorance but to shatter it. This can take different forms such as resisting the construction of being less than human (Mills, 2007) which has different aspects such as challenging European standards of beauty; challenging the white-washing of history; doing reconstructive work by developing new theories, concepts and explanations to challenge frameworks that suppress the views of marginalized communities (Mills, 2007:29-35). Strategic ignorance can also take the form of "of the oppressed combating their oppression by unlearning the oppressor's knowledge, which has been both passively absorbed and actively forced upon them." (Sullivan and Tuana, 2007:2)

But resistance can also take the form of marginalized communities using ignorance to their advantage. Strategic ignorance involves the oppressed-resisting subject using "dominant misconceptions as a basis for active creative response to oppression." (Bailey, 2007:88). This may include acting in ways that conform to stereotypes as part of the resistance. Alison Bailey gives the example of African American female slaves being stereotyped as unintelligent and clumsy. Some of them are now documented as having subversively smashed precious china in their slave owner's house as part of their resistance, but 'getting away with it' by pretending to be clumsy and unintelligent as 'was expected' of them (Bailey, 2007:89). Other examples include how Frederick Douglass learned to read and write by tricking white people into teaching him (Bailey 2007:87). Essentially, playing the 'trickster' is a way to safely navigate the world, for example the black car owners who put on chauffeur hats when driving through certain towns, because black people were assumed to be incapable of being car owners but only drivers (Bailey, 2007:88). The trickster takes advantage of the ignorance of the privileged in order to subvert it.

Thus to sum up, strategic resistance can take two forms: the first being the strategic refusals to understand the world based on dominant views (e.g. of European standards of beauty, and other examples given by Charles Mills; and the second being acting in a way that conforms to stereotypes e.g. pretending to be unintelligent, but with a subversive motive. This can be understood using the curdled logic of subjects as always and already both oppressed and resisting.

2.6   Chapter 2 conclusion

This chapter has discussed in depth at least four practices that allow for the production and circulation of systemic forms of ignorance. These were: the practices associated with the denials of the unjust nature of society; the practices associated with wilful ignorance; the practices of colour-blinding; and the practices based on ignoring/ dismissal of the countering evidence of injustice as the norm rather than as an aberration. These practices demonstrate the ways in which communities that are systematically privileged by nature of their race, gender and class have a positive interest in 'distorting' the world. The chapter also considered the ways in which ignorance can be re-appropriated by marginalised communities as part of their resistance to injustice (i.e. 'strategic ignorance'). Taken together, chapters 1 and 2 lay the foundation of the three forms of epistemologies of ignorance generally. The next chapter will now specifically consider the food-related ways that this ignorance has been discussed.

Chapter 3: A review of epistemologies of ignorance in food politics

In the previous chapters, I have defined and extensively discussed various epistemologies of ignorance and the practices that perpetuate them. This chapter now considers what it is that we know about ignorance through the lens of food. The chapter provides an alternative reading by bringing together disparate food-related literatures around the theme of ignorance. The chapter is divided into 3 main sections, which reflects the main ways questions of ignorance have been so far been approached by food scholars. The three sections are: 'they do not know' (section 3.1); 'they choose not to know' (section 3.2); 'they prevent us from knowing' (section 3.3). As will be discussed in greater depth, the 'they' being referred to, and what it is they are alleged to not know, varies.

Section 3.1 ('they do not know') reviews two aspects ignorance amongst consumers on food-related questions. The first aspect is the ignorance that consumers, particularly in the UK context, themselves seem to feel about not knowing 'where their food comes from'. This is often an anxiety that grows after episodes of food related scares. The second aspect of ignorance is one that became topical in the UK context within the background of fears of a decline in cooking skills. These debates grew in popularity thanks to reality documentaries by white male celebrity chefs in the UK. Here the literature has been in reaction to the idea that working-class women, do not know how to cook 'good' nutritious food especially for their children, and therefore by extension do not know how to be 'good mums'. Discussions here have considered a range of questions that include: whether the use of convenience food in actual fact is evidence of 'not caring'; the unspoken power dynamics used to construct white male celebrity chefs as transcendent, all-seeing, all-knowing knowers; the class privileges that determine who comes up for potentially exploitative 'voyeuristic' scrutiny; and, to a lesser extent, whether 'well intended' yet somewhat problematic actions are better than 'doing nothing at all'.

Section 3.2 ('they choose not to know') considers the production of ignorance in alternative food communities. These discussions are often in the US context. Here, 'well intended' alternative food activists come up with alternative food initiatives such as farmers markets that are alleged to be reflective of white affluence. However, the activists are resistant to considering these questions and consider colour-blindness to be a virtue. As discussed in chapter 2 (Section 2.3), colour-blinding is the practice of claiming to 'not see race' and therefore providing individualistic explanations for privileges. But at the same time, the colour-blind activists often target their initiatives at working class people of colour, whom they presume to be make 'bad' food choices, primarily because they do not know how to make 'good' food choices. These literatures therefore also contribute to showing the racialized, gendered and classed systemic factors that shape people's food 'choices'.

Finally, section 3.3 ('they prevent us from knowing') reviews literature that has explored how controlling images about black women, have resulted in an unlevel knowing field when it comes to food writing. Again, these discussions have often been in the US context. The discussions here begin with the premise that black women in US context, have contributed greatly to various US food cultures because of their ubiquity as slave cooks or hired cooks in domestic homes. Yet there is very little food writing by black women. The literature considers how black women have attempted to rectify this injustice and use their food writing in subversive ways.

3.1 'They do not know'

The first set of discussions about ignorance and food tend to revolve around a *lack* of knowledge, whereby consumers are "alleged [to] lack knowledge about where their food comes from and how it should be cooked" (Jackson, Ward and Russell, 2009: 16). This section considers the two aspects of not knowing (where food comes from; how to cook it) in turn. The lack of knowledge about where food comes from, is argued to be linked to the lengthening of commodity chains (Appadurai, 1986) between the producers of food and its consumers (Jackson et al., 2010), which allows for a 'veil' that obscures a knowledge of the provenance and quality of food (Eden et al., 2008) . These consumer anxieties are even more pronounced in cases where it has become known that food has in some way been adulterated. For example, in the so-called 'horse meat scandal' (Abbots and Coles, 2013), one of the findings was the different number of players including traders and middlemen in different countries the handled the meat or one way or another were involved in the process of bringing it to British consumers, which itself increased the risks of contamination and adulteration (Jackson, 2015). And so it is that discussions on 'not knowing where one's food comes from' continue to grow, "in the wake of a litany of food scares that have shaken consumer confidence in industrial foodstuffs" (Whatmore et al., 2003:389).

The 'litany of food scares' amongst other forms of evidence have created some sort of consensus that the industrial ways in which food is currently mass-produced is leading to various harms, including: harm to planet (e.g. see influential UN Report- Steinfeld et al., 2006) soils (e.g. Guthman and Brown, 2015), vulnerable farm workers such as immigrants (e.g. Holmes, 2013) and child-labourers (e.g. O'Keefe, 2016); compromised food taste and quality (Pollan 2008); harms to animal welfare (Stanescu, 2013), farming communities and landscapes amongst other concerns. As a result, there have been efforts both at the level of government policy formulations and consumer activism and lobbying, to 'reconnect' (Eden et al., 2008: 1046) food consumers and producers, in ways that lift the veils on the "social and environmental relationships that make [food] production and distribution possible" (Alkon and McCullen, 2010: 938). It is argued that having consumers re-engage with their food would come

with a number of benefits such as "providing markets for local farmers and food processors, reversing the decline in the number of family farms, creating local jobs, reducing environmental degradation and protecting farmland from urbanization, fostering community and strengthening connections between farmers and consumers" (Allen, 2010: 296-297). These perceived benefits have led to the growth of 'alternative' ways of providing food to consumers. Here I acknowledge that it is contested whether these strategies are in fact 'alternative' (Whatmore et al., 2003) and if so, what they are alternative to (Holloway et al., 2007:80), especially considering that 'alternative' foods are increasingly having to rely upon, or adopt, 'conventional' food production and marketing strategies such as being sold in big chain supermarkets (e.g. see Jarosz 2008; Holloway and Kneafsey 2007). However, a full consideration of these debates is not within the scope of this chapter (see Wilson, 2012). Be that as it may, these discussions that make the case for the need for 'alternatives' and/or examine their potential, are ultimately aimed at helping consumers "pursue a different relationship with [their] food by getting to know the farm where [their] food comes from and the farmer who grows or raises it" (Rudy, 2012: 27-28).

Discussions about the alleged decline of cooking skills (Jaffe and Gertler 2006), have also tended to be in the context of perceived 'crisis', particularly the so-called 'obesity epidemic' (e.g. Government Office of Science, 2007; Department of Health, 2009; cf. Rich, 2011). In the UK context, these discussions on home cooking skills grew in prominence thanks to food-related documentaries, often starring affluent white male celebrity chefs. These chefs construct themselves as not only interested in food as a means of pleasurable eating, but also as a political topic to which they are, allegedly, well placed to contribute (Hollows, 2003; Lewis, 2008: 62; (Ouellette and Hay, 2008: 472). These types of documentaries not only provided "culinary entertainment... [but were] also deeply involved in the incitement of moral debates around food, social class and representation of place" (Piper, 2013:347). The premise of these programmes tended to be that particular communities, such as white working-class communities living in areas experiencing a post-industrial economic decline- are particularly ignorant and make irresponsible, care-less choices which they need to be 'educated' out of for their own good and the good of all other 'concerned' citizens (Bell, Hollows and Jones, 2017:6-7; Brunsdon, 2000).

One celebrity who has been particularly prolific in this line of programming, and thus come into the attention of (feminist) food scholars has been Jamie Oliver, whose programmes alone had been aired in over 100 countries as of 2012 (Piper, 2013:346). Two of the programmes featuring Jamie Oliver on the 'campaign trail' that received wide attention were "Jamie's School Dinners" (2005) which dealt with his response to the 'crisis' of unhealthy school meals; and

"Jamie's Ministry of Food" (hereafter, *JMoF*) (2008) based in Rotherham (UK). Like other shows in this genre, the subjects were "constructed as 'ignorant' but amenable to 'correction.'"(Bell, Hollows and Jones, 2017:7) Thus audiences were introduced to Julie Critchlow, a working-class mum who was one of the women widely shamed, especially in British tabloid newspapers, for passing chips to their children over the school fence (Fox and Smith, 2011) , in response to what they saw was Jamie Oliver's patronising efforts. Audiences also became familiar with Natasha Whiteman-another white working class mum who was shamed for giving her children takeaway kebabs to eat on the floor whilst they watched a 'massive TV'.

Moreover, the literatures have made more visible the often unspoken classed power dynamics used in the production of these documentaries. For example, there has been consideration of how visual imagery is used to falsely construct the affluent, white male celebrity chefs as transcendent, detached observers and knowers of inequality. As extensively discussed in chapter 1, claiming to have a universal view from nowhere is impossible, undesirable and indeed a power play (Code 1993, 1995; Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1991; Rose, 1993; Collins, 2000). The use of visual methods to construct this sense of a transcendent knower happens in various ways. For example with regards to Jamie Oliver in *JMoF*, Hollows and Jones (2010) give the example of the repeated use of helicopter shots and other long shots that were aimed at constructing him as a "detached observer of Rotherham… [albeit with] middle -class voyeuristic power." (Hollows and Jones, 2010:314). The programmes also often began with shots of him driving into particular places, and ended with him driving out, further adding to the construction of the objective knower who is not implicated in the issues under study, but is able to come into them and drive out of them.

Additionally, there has been some consideration as to how classed privileges determine which populations become more vulnerable to well-intended yet 'voyeuristic' documentaries about their everyday lives. Audience research on these shows has tended to be with predominantly middle-class audiences of the shows (Piper, 2013). These audiences construct themselves, and/or are constructed by the media as, again, being outside of the systems that create the 'food crisis', and simply being morally innocent viewers of a 'freakshow' (Piper, 2013:351) that is aimed at entertaining them through a mixture of class-based shock and disgust. Some of the audiences that have been interviewed have admitted that they too also eat convenience foods or engage in some of the other practices for which others were shamed, but are protected from the same scrutiny by their class privileges. In other words, some participants have admitted to being, in their words, "middle class wankers" (Piper, 2013:351) who simply have sufficient cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) that allows them to be entertained by being disgusted by the working-class "dirty bitches" (Piper, 2013:351; see also Wood and Skeggs, 2008) who feed their

children kebab takeaways. Their middle-class disgust does not reflect the fact that they necessarily have more 'virtuous' culinary practices than these working-class mums do; rather, it is simply a reflection of middle class privileges that allow them to "occupy the position of audience rather than that of the 'freak'" (Piper, 2013:351; see also Rich, 2011).

Moreover, these debates arising from culinary documentaries on people 'not knowing' how to provide 'nutritious' meals for their families tend to be depoliticised and individualised. Food-related inequalities are framed as *primarily* being the result of individuals making 'irresponsible choices'. Within the often-influential culinary documentaries, this individualisation of systemic injustices has sometimes been achieved again, through visual strategies. These visual strategies in culinary documentaries are sometimes deployed to take away from considerations of structural explanations of food-related inequalities, to highlight individual 'failures'. For example Hollows and Jones, 2010 note how in the *JMoF*, whilst one of the working-class mums Natasha Whiteman is talking about the systemic issues that make her rely on welfare benefits, the camera strategically pans out to highlight that she is smoking a cigarette and owns a TV (Hollows and Jones, 2010:315). This contributes to the myth that "poor people are *only* poor because they spend their money on the wrong things" (Monroe, 2013 cited in Barnes, 2014:175 emphasis added). Thus, as complexity is removed from these discussions, poor communities are constructed as 'scroungers' who, if they wanted, could 'reinvent themselves' (Wood and Skeggs, 2008: 179) by "cook [ing] their way out of…poverty" (Bell, Hollows and Jones, 2017:24). The refusal of these communities to accept the 'solutions' given to them, is therefore used against them as evidence of their 'irrationality', and as justification for earning the disgust and anger that will come their way from more 'superior' communities (Lewis, 2008). This class-based disgust and anger is often publicly expressed, for example, how Jamie Oliver referred to working-class parents who chose not to follow his advice as "fucking arseholes" and "tossers" in Jamie's Return to School Dinners, (2006).

Finally, there has also been discussion about the often problematic gendered politics in these discussions. As already highlighted, these working-class women were widely vilified by audiences, tabloid media and/or celebrity chefs as 'junk mums', 'sinner ladies', 'dirty bitches', 'fucking arseholes and tossers' and 'fat scrubbers' (see Fox and Smith, 2011; Piper, 2013; Rich, 2011). In addition, they are also castigated for being 'bad mums'. This is because the provision of 'nutritious' home-cooked food is often constructed in society as 'women's work' (DeVault, 1991; Charles and Kerr, 1998). Therefore, women who 'fail' in this role are constructed as incompetent women and mothers. However, a central premise of most of these documentaries and discussions more generally has since been questioned, namely the premise that reliance on 'convenience' foods is reflective of a lack of care. 'Convenience foods' is a contested notion,

variously defined (e.g. see discussion of different definitions and ways of understanding convenience food by Jackson and Viehoff, 2016:2). However defined, it has been noted that convenience foods can be one way in which people enact care for oneself and others (Meah and Jackson, 2017).

3.2   'They choose not to know'

As previously highlighted, there are a number of problems associated with the industrialised food systems. Moreover, there has been an increase in 'well intended' individuals and communities who have set up 'alternative' food networks to try and address this problem. As previously discussed, food-related inequalities tend to be individualised and framed as being reflective of either, irresponsible choices and/or lack of knowledge amongst poor communities. The assumption within these 'alternative' initiatives often is that 'if people only knew where their food comes from' (Guthman, 2008:387) then they would make 'better' choices, including participating in alternative food initiatives themselves. In response, and particular in the US context, feminist food scholars have scrutinized the racial and classed dimension of alternative food movements and interrogated why it is that working-class, often, people of colour, 'do not participate' in alternative food initiatives.

Building on the idea that spaces are never culturally neutral (e.g. Massey,1994; Kobayashi and Peake, 2000; Dwyer and Jones III, 2000; McKittrick, 2006), research in this area has paid attention to which bodies have access to, and are able to cluster within alternative food spaces. In the process, it has been noted that alternative food spaces, particularly in the US context, tend to be characterised by affluent whiteness (Guthman, 2008; Allen, 2004; Hinrichs, 2000). The affluent whiteness of these spaces is marked first by the fact that these spaces *tend to* only be accessible to affluent white communities who are the overwhelming majority of these spaces (Alkon and McCullen, 2010:94; Slocum, 2006; Guthman, 2008). Secondly, the affluent whiteness is also marked by the discourses that circulate in those spaces, as discussed next.

The presence or absence of particular bodies in various spaces speaks to the racialized, gendered and classed privileges that give them or restrict their access to these spaces. For example, Breeze Harper (2012) writing in the US context notes that working-class African-Americans are often castigated for not participating in initiatives around 'healthy' plant-based forms of consumption. Harper (2012) notes that these individualised discussions fail to consider how working-class African-American's "relationship with healthier food options is influenced by a host of factors not the least of which might very well be environmental racism-lack of access to public transportation to get to healthier food sources and the placement of fast food and liquor store chains in close proximity to you than an affordable produce centre"

(Harper, 2012: 155-156), in contrast with the experiences of middle-class Americans. In other words, race and class privileges are the result from, and are reflected by, differentiated spaces (Dwyer and Jones III, 2000:213; Baldwin, 1998 [1965]: 725).

The combination of racial and classed privileges mean that affluent white communities can 'distance' themselves, physically and epistemically, from the bodies and concerns of people of colour especially those from working class communities. For example, physically, the affluent white communities might be clustered in 'suburbs'/ 'good neighbourhoods' whilst working class people of colour inhabit the 'inner city'/'bad neighbourhoods' (Kobayashi & Peake, 2000). Epistemically, affluent white communities tend to be constructed as the 'centre' whilst working-class people of colour are constructed as the 'margins' (hooks, 1984). The clustering of affluent white bodies in particular spaces, further creates the 'viscosity' (Saldanha, 2007) required to attract other socially privileged communities (Slocum, 2007). Over time this usually leads to the (unintentional) gentrification of neighbourhoods (Ramirez, 2015; Zukin 2008), further marginalizing those without race and class privileges, who often make up the communities that have traditionally lived in an area but are no longer able to afford it.

Despite the evidences that racialized and classed amongst other privileges mark and make spaces, there tends to be a huge reluctance amongst alternative food activists in talking about the affluent whiteness of these spaces. Instead, the practice of colour-blinding (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, section 2.3) is hailed as an ethical achievement. As a result, alternative food activists tend to actively produce white ignorance by equating "seeing, naming and engaging difference with prejudice and bigotry, and not seeing, naming, noticing and engaging difference with fairness" (Bailey, 2007:85). Here, different scholars have talked about how the food activists have been reluctant to discuss racialized and classed differences, and in fact some have been explicitly offended and felt that questions along such lines were themselves racist/bigoted. For example, Julie Guthman (2008) found amongst the participants in her research an,

> "Aversion to questions regarding the ethnicity of customers [which] was founded on the *presumption that the questions themselves were racist*. As one farmers' market manager put it, 'Some of your questions are pretty intrusive— I also found some to be racist. I left these questions blank. This was intentional, not accidental.' Echoed the CSA respondent mentioned earlier, '*Difference is wrong; it is better to try to become colour blind* in how we do things... Your questioning has a slant of political correctness...We are set up for our community.' (Guthman, 2008: 393 emphasis added)

Similarly Rachel Slocum (2006) found a wilful hesitance to talk about questions of white middle-class privilege in alternative food organising:

> "For example, in an interview with another organizing committee member, all my questions concerning the role of racism in food insecurity were struck from the discussion by the respondent's reply to the first question: "I'm not comfortable talking about that—let's move on" (Margaret, PL, interview, 29 March 2004). [Another research participant also commented] "I don't always feel the need to address issues in terms of racism, or power and privilege. Maybe it is a cop out..." (Jim, PL, email communication, 23–24 March 2004)." (Slocum, 2006: 335-336)

Both these examples recall the discussion in chapter 2 (section 2.3) about the logic of colour-blindness that actively produces systemic white ignorance. It is based on the idea that since prejudiced people are those who treat others differently based on 'accidental properties' such as race, gender and class, then the way to avoid being a prejudiced person is to avoid seeing these properties. Hence the avoidance of noticing and discussion of race, gender and class is seen as what is 'better' as an ethical achievement-(Medina, 2013:36; McKinney, 2005; Applebaum, 2008:294) which is worth celebrating. This is why Guthman (2008:393) is having participants accuse her of asking 'racist' questions by asking people to comment on the predominant affluent whiteness of the farmer's market.

Moreover, there is an assumption that a split can be made that separates humanity from their identities such as race (Bailey, 2007:85). In this case there is the illusion that people can simply talk about 'our community' without getting 'bogged down' by issues of racial diversity. This gives the illusion of equality but at the cost of multiplicity (Bailey, 2007) and speaks to the naïve idea that racism and other injustices come to an end by simply not being seen (Medina, 2013:37). This also reveals how "how whites can act in racist ways while at the same time believing they are behaving rightly!" (Bailey, 2007:86 original emphasis). This is especially by talking about racism in individual ways, by assuming that not talking about injustice is what dismantles it.

'Not seeing' properties such as race, gender and class then leads to people having individualised explanations for structural challenges. As discussed in Chapter 2, the failure of systemically privileged people to acknowledge a person's race or gender extends to a failure to also see that personal as being one way or another affected by the force of structural prejudicial stereotypes, and also a failure to acknowledge their own systemic privilege (Medina, 2013:37). Guthman

(2008) gives the example of how the participants in her research individualised structural problem through colour-blinding thus:

> "For example, in responding to the question "What do you think are some of the reasons that it is primarily European-American people who seem to participate in CSAs?" respondents consistently imputed personal characteristics and motives rather than structural problems with access and affordability" (Guthman, 2008:393).

Hence structural inequalities are attributed to personal lack of motivation and lack of knowledge (Guthman, 2008:431) about the importance of 'healthy' eating (see also discussion by Finney, 2014 comparing the responses African-Americans and white people gave as to the minimal participation of African-Americans in the national park system). This is what leads to the 'if they only knew' rhetoric, which assumes that if the contexts of food production were unveiled that this would "necessarily trigger a desire for local, organic food and people would be willing to pay for it (cf. DuPuis 2001) Then, so the logic goes, the food system would be magically transformed into one that is ecologically sustainable and socially just." (Guthman, 2008: 387). This is what contributes to systemically privileged communities having a sense of moral goodness and innocence (Guthman, 2008:434) by not only taking part in these practices when others 'choose' not to, but also by educating others who 'lack the motivation'. This is not an innocent project and indeed has "the markings of colonial projects, in that it seeks to improve the other while eliding the historical developments that produced these material and cultural distinctions in the first place." (Guthman, 2008:436) I discuss these forms of amnesia next.

Colour-blindness in food-related discussions also contributes to a "collective amnesia about the past" (Sullivan and Tuana, 2007: 3). Thus there is not only an obscuring of the structural barriers that prevent participation of working-class people of colour, but also there is the illusion that there was a time when the food system was just, and then it somehow got broken along the way, and the inequalities are a deviation from what was the norm/ideal. This wilfully ignores how historical relations were "built on a foundation of genocide, slavery and layers of racist institutions that have dispossessed racialized groups of cultural pride, land and wealth, in gender and class -specific ways" (Slocum, 2006: 337; see also Garcia, 2001; Mintz, 1985). For example in the United States context, an

> "agrarian imaginary persists in alternative food movement politics, despite the fact that farming in the US continues to be based on white land ownership and non-white labour, with its persistent and well-documented injustices of various kinds...U.S. agricultural

land and labour relations are fundamentally predicated on white privilege...land was virtually given away to whites at the same time that reconstruction failed in the South, Native American lands were appropriated, Chinese and Japanese were precluded from land ownership, and the Spanish speaking Californios were disenfranchised of their ranches." (Guthman, 2008: 394, 435)

Additionally, there is also an obscuring of the racialized and classed dynamic of farm labour. Hence, "market participants valorise the predominantly white vendors who "grow their food", rendering invisible the low-paid, predominantly Latino/a workers who do the bulk of the cultivation" (Alkon and McCullen, 2010: 938-939). Hence the critique of the idea of 'shaking the hand that feeds you' often attributed to Michael Pollan (2008), as it ignores the fact that hands that actually do feed us, are most likely structurally hindered by barriers at the intersection of their race and class, from being at the markets.

Colour-blindness also allows for an ignoring of the ways in which pre-existing injustices can be unintentionally exacerbated through alternative food practices. That is, even within alternative food strategies, there are always winners and losers (Allen, 2010; Allen, 2008; Born and Purcell, 2006; Brown and Purcell, 2005; Goodman and DuPuis 2005; Hinrichs, 2003) because different spaces, scales and strategies embody different material and power asymmetries. A commitment to colour-blindness actively produces ignorance about the varying racialized, classed and gendered detrimental effects and exclusions in alternative food spaces and strategies (for highlights of the exclusions see Dupuis and Goodman, 2005; Winter, 2003; Harvey, 1996).

3.3   'They prevent us from knowing'

Various types of feminisms have historically encouraged a wilful ignorance about food-related topics. Indeed some feminists have historically objected to other feminists engaging with the topic of food. One of the more well-known feminist objections was that of Ruth Hubbard, made in response to Arlene Avakian's call for submission for feminist writing about women and food that included recipes (Avakian, 2005:3). In her objection Ruth Hubbard stated: "haven't we had enough of women being interviewed through the kitchen window" (Ruth Hubbard cited in Avakian, 2005:4). Her objection went on to point to women such as her mother who 'escaped the kitchen' (p.4) by gaining paid employment outside of the home. These women considered food-related roles to be 'interruption' (p.4) to their lives. Hubbard expressed that she considered the 'preoccupation' (p.5) with food by feminists and society more generally to be 'irritating' (p.5). However at the same time she hoped that the feminist collection of food stories that Avakian was putting together would not be complicit in perpetuating inequalities by only considering 'self-indulgent' (p.5) questions related to people having too much to eat, whilst

ignoring 'pressing problems' (p.5) of many other people not having enough to eat. Hubbard goes on to clarify that she was not saying:

> "'think of the poor…' (fill in the blank with your current choice of starving population'), but, to be perfectly honest, I cannot help but feel that it is self-indulgent to put together a U.S collection on 'women and food', when women and feminists are confronting so many problems and engaged in such important struggles in this country and elsewhere." (Ruth Hubbard cited in Avakian, 2005:4).

As Avakian notes, the criticism reflects the idea that because women's engagement with food had been conceptualised as part of our oppression, 'liberation' has often meant freedom from being connected to food" (Avakian, 2005:5). Yet she further clarifies that the collection of feminist writing on women and food was never intended to "contribute to the obsession of the over-privileged [but was,] instead, a critical interrogation of women's relationship to food, of gender and domesticity as it has been constructed in various cultures, and of the ways that race, class, ethnicity and sexuality impact our relationship to food" (Avakian, 2005:5).

But even when various women have wanted to informed about food, they have not always had the room to do so due to prevailing inequalities. For example, Zafar (1999) explores the food writings in two black women's cookbooks namely: Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor's *Vibration Cooking: Or the Travel-Notes of a Geechee Girl* (1970) and Carole and Norma Jean Darden's *Spoonbread and Strawberry Wine: Recipes and Reminiscences of a Family (1978).* These writings, in the U.S context, were aimed at challenging the ways in which racist-sexist stereotypes about black women hindered them from, amongst other things, having a platform to speak authoritatively about food and other issues. This suppression of black women's credibility and knowledges particularly around food becomes more striking in the U.S context considering their ubiquitous presence in kitchens during slavery and after, and therefore their significant role in the creation of Southern cuisines. Thus Zafar (1999) begins by noting the role of racist-sexist stereotypes -also known as 'controlling images' (Collins, 1991:5)- in both creating contexts that are conducive for the simultaneous flourishing and justification of the suppression of black women's knowledges. Before I proceed to discuss how and why these controlling images were countered in the food writing of black women, I will first of all define and discuss what they are.

Patricia Hill Collins (1991) coined the term controlling images to refer to the,

> "images applied to black women that originated in the slave era [and] attest to the ideological dimension of U.S black women's oppression… In this context, certain assumed qualities that are attached to black women are used to justify oppression. From the mammies, jezebels and breeder women of slavery to the smiling Aunt Jemimas on

pancake mix boxes, ubiquitous black prostitutes, and ever-present welfare mothers of contemporary popular culture, negative stereotypes applied to African-American women have been fundamental to black women's oppression."(Collins, 1991: 5)

The function of controlling images is to 'justify' various forms of oppressions as 'natural'. That is, the stereotypes are used to not only give false explanations for the reasons oppressions exist, but also to blame individuals for the systemic injustices they face. Collins (1991) identified the main controlling images as follows: mammies/mammy figure and Aunt Jemimas; Jezebels and breeder women; and welfare queens.

These controlling images have been used in various ways to justify oppressions. For example, the welfare queen stereotype in the U.S portrays black (working-class) women as 'naturally' lazy, negligent women who are pathologically dependent on welfare. This then obscures systemic questions of why particular populations might be over-represented in those who rely on welfare assistance (e.g. see Limbert and Bullock, 2005). With regards to the Jezebel, it stereotypes black women as 'naturally' sexually insatiable, and therefore enjoying sex in whatever conditions and therefore being 'un-rapeable' (Collins, 2000). This image was used during the Slavery period to, amongst other things, prevent the notion that the non-consensual sex that white slave owners were having with black female slaves was 'rape'- because after all, black women are always 'naturally' up for sex with anyone and in whatever conditions. The 'end' of Slavery has not however led to the end of this stereotype. Therefore, even though low prosecution rates in cases of rape and other sexual violence are a systemic problem for all women generally, black women are statistically even less likely to be believed by a jury based on the unconscious notion that black women are 'promiscuous' and 'always up for it' (see for example, Dagbovie-Mullins, 2013; Russell and Hodges, 2005; Pilgrim, 2002). The mammy stereotype is more directly related to food-related discussions and thus will be discussed separately next.

The mammy figure is a controlling image that, again, has roots in slave-slave master relationships. It is based on the mythical image of a 'bufoonish' yet loyal, faithful, obedient, care-free, contentment and well-cared- for black female slave who is 'like family' in white households (McElya, 2007). These narratives of the mammy arose as part of white slave owners' response to slave narratives depicting the horrors and lived experiences of slaves. In response, white slave owners deployed the image of the mammy- a 'much loved', 'content', fat, black female slave- to construct narratives that portrayed "the existence of idyllic race and labour relations in the past" (McElya, 2007:11). This takes us back to discussions in Chapter 2 on how the Racial Contract "*prescribes* for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance" (Mills, 1997:18-19 added emphasis). In other words, that the ignorance here on slave-slave

master relations is not based on 'accidental' omissions, but is actively upheld, in this case, through the production of narratives by white slave-owning masters that were explicitly aimed at countering/negating the testimonies of black female slaves.

Moreover, the 'inverted epistemologies' are seen through the construction of "slavery as benevolent and slave owning as [an] honourable [practice]" (McElya, 2007:4). Additionally, the constant invocation of slaves as being 'like family' is problematic in at least two ways. First, it obscures how the repeated sexual violence black female slaves faced at the hands of white masters meant that a number of the slaves *were* actually family (McElya, 2007:5); and secondly, it seeks to re-define these slave-slave owner relationships as being based on love and affection rather than market forces (McElya, 2007:5). As a result, "enslaved people appeared faithful and caring not because they *had* to be or were violently compelled to be, but because their fidelity was heartfelt and indicative of their love and dependence on their owners" (McElya, 2007:5). Why has the mammy myth/stereotype lingered? Because it,

> "provide[s] reassurance that [white slave owners] patriarchal benevolence was real, and was recognised and appreciated by those they enslaved…[and] because so many white Americans have wished to live in a world in which African Americans are not angry over past and present injustices, a world in which white people were and are not complicit, in which the injustices themselves- of slavery, Jim Crow, and ongoing structural racism- seem not to exist at all. The mammy figure affirmed their wishes." (McElya, 2007:3-5)

This takes us back to the discussion in Chapter 2, particularly section 2.4, about how socially privileged white people tend to prefer to buy into 'inverted epistemologies' that make them feel better about themselves, than to 'sit with the discomfort' (e.g. see DiAngelo, 2011:54) of considering difficult current realities and histories that they benefit from and contribute to even when/whilst being 'well intentioned' (Applebaum, 2010). Therefore, it becomes 'easier' to believe slave-owners that slaves were happy to be enslaved, than to actually believe actual slaves detailing their experiences. In other words, it brings more 'comfort' for socially privileged white people to believe that black women happily seek out unpaid emotional and physical forms of labour that often involve sexual violence, than to think about the systemic injustices that led to these forms of labour.

How does the discussion of controlling images link back to questions of black women's food-writing? As explained above, the stereotypes were themselves constructed to suppress black women's knowledges, experiences, perspectives and voices. Hence in the U.S context, the general populations understanding of what it meant to be a black female slave was being informed more by the white, often male, food and stereotype-infused narratives of slave-

masters, than by the narratives of actual black female slaves (Witt, 2004; McElya, 2007). At the same time, the stereotypes reduced the credibility of black women. As John Egerton (1987:16 cited in Zafar, 1999: 449) explains:

> "They [black women chefs] were "turbaned mammies" and "voodoo magicians" and "tyrants" who ruled the back rooms with simpleminded power; they could work culinary miracles day in and day out, but couldn't for the life of them tell anyone how they did it. Their most impressive dishes were described as "accidental" rather than planned. Their speech, humorously conveyed in demeaning dialect in many an old cookbook, came across as illiterate folk knowledge and not to be taken seriously."

Being 'naturally' good at cooking, sounds like a compliment at first hearing. But what scholars have argued is that not seeing these activities as 'skills' does two forms of work. First of all, it opens up people to exploitation- because, after all, the activities they are doing are not a skill but are innate to their essence, and therefore there is no need to acknowledge, reward or compensate those activities (e.g. see Williams-Forson cited in Nettles-Barcelon et al., 2015: 35; Federici, 1974: 74-76). Secondly, it has also contributed to black female chefs being pigeonholed in their expertise because they are constructed as only being good at 'soul food' or in making 'Caribbean stews' as opposed to, so called, haute cuisine (Zafar, 1999:453). For example, Rosamund Grant (cited in Jackson, 2014: 628), a black female chef and author of a range of food writings that make connections between food, slavery and colonialism in the UK, critiques the way white audiences have boxed her in by food-related ethnic stereotyping. Thus, for example, despite the fact that she is a professional chef with an extensive culinary repertoire, Grant is repeatedly asked by white people to make "Caribbean stew", which she notes does not technically exist.

Because of the impact of these enduring racist-sexist stereotypes on the suppression of black women's knowledges, some food writing by black women has been explicitly aimed at the purpose of social change. The food writings are attempts by black women to "right history [by] writing [about food]" (Zafar, 1999:450). The food writings invite us to pay empirical attention to instances of: culinary racism (Zafar, 1999) which includes the systemic denial of "black people's contributions to the culinary arts" (Zafar, 1999:453); and culinary imperialism (Heldke, 2003) which involves the appropriation and subversion of the cuisines of the systemically socially marginalized communities by more privileged communities (Heldke, 2003:175-193).

Moreover, black women's food writings challenge wilful ignorance by providing alternative readings of history aimed at 'correcting the archive' (Courtney Thorson cited in Nettles-Barcelon et al., 2015:44). For example, recipes for box lunches have become contexts to

consider "Jim Crow transportation and hotel industry, which barred African Americans from public-eating places and restricted their movement on common carrier" (Zafar, 1999:464). In other words, food writing can make visible the racialized, gendered and classed historical contexts of the involuntary migration experiences of People of Colour. Similarly, black female food writers have sometimes subversively infused recipes with commentaries of the histories and ongoing legacies of slavery and racism. Courtney Thorson (2015) gives a poetic example of how the materiality of food can be used to make subversive commentary on often-ignored histories, with reference to Ntozake Shange's recipe for cooking breadfruit:

> "Shange… [uses] food not only to archive black history or build community but also to expand and interrogate the borders of that community. For example, Shange's Trinidian recipe for 'Cousin Eddie's Shark with Breadfruit' theorizes the difficult practice of diaspora with instructions for boiling breadfruit: "Don't be afraid when it changes to a blood red colour, that's the mourning of our ancestors, hungry for us to live now." (Shange, 1998:30)… The gothic turn of 'blood red' and 'mourning' disrupts a standard recipe lexicon, inserting sorrow, violence and death into culinary instructions… Because breadfruit can be poisonous if not ripe or not cooked enough, failure to bring forth the 'blood red' of mourning is literally deadly… Shange pushes the cook to experience the place where this recipe originates, 'mourning of our ancestors and all', in a recipe that demands not just shopping, marinating, grilling and simmering but also confronting the history of slavery… In other words, Shange, like many African American foodway writers, tells us that recipes can teach more than how to cook." (Courtney Thorson, cited in Nettles-Barcelon et al., 2015:44-45).

Finally, in terms of ignorance and food-related knowledge production is the observation that white and male privilege tends to shape which voices are heard/excluded including in 'mainstream' popular debates about food (Williams-Forson and Cognard-Black, 2014; cf Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1991; Rose, 1993). For example, Williams-Forson and Cognard-Black (2014) argue that women, and particularly women of colour, who are involved in food activism and knowledge production, tend not to be offered the same public platforms as their white male counterparts:

> "Women who are food activists, writers, teachers and community organisers generally are not offered the movie options akin to the film adaptations of Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, lucrative book deals such as Michael Pollan's *Food Rules*, or consciousness-raising TV series along the lines of Morgan Spurlock's *30 days*… Where are the voices of Latina, African American, and Asian American women in the current food revolution? … is this lack of visibility yet another instance of women and people of colour being

relegated to the cultural margins or is something else going on here? (Williams-Forson and Cognard-Black, 2014: 304-306)

The question of 'where are the [black women]'s voices in the current food revolution' takes us back to the premise of my research project as explained in Chapter 1. Additionally, not only is ignorance in the 'food revolution' constructed through the neglect of various racialized and gendered locations, but also to how these food 'authorities' are constructed. The white men who have the 'overexposure' in the US food media (Williams-Forson and Cognard-Black, 2014: 325) are constructed as 'neutral' and 'universal' sources, even though some of them e.g. Michael Pollan are fairly affluent white males, and have relied on all-male sources of evidence in their work (Williams-Forson and Cognard-Black, 2014: 315-317). Thus, "the US mediascape repeatedly offers up masculine, white, educated, clever and cultured personas as public intellectuals whose knowledge and experience are axiomatic." (Williams-Forson and Cognard-Black, 2014: 318). This observation takes us back to discussions in Chapter 1 especially section 1.3 that confronted the myth of the allegedly generic, but in actual fact, white male knower (Code, 2014).

3.4.   Chapter 3 conclusion

This chapter has brought literatures on epistemologies of ignorance into dialogue with literatures in (feminist) food studies that speak to ignorance. The review required bringing together various themes and threads within (feminist) food studies that might not often, co-exist in the same discussion, if at all. Moreover, in order to trace how (feminist) food scholars have understood ignorance, there are points where I have had to provide 'alternative readings' of the literature by more explicitly linking insights on ignorance from feminist philosophies, critical race traditions and black-feminisms into food-related discussions. This review therefore contributes to codifying what (feminist) food scholars know about food-related epistemologies of ignorance as I discuss next.

Taken together, these literatures highlight how racialized, gendered and classed food politics is. For example, some of the literatures point to the disproportionate presence of white bodies and perspectives in food-related spaces and discussions. The food-related spaces that have repeatedly been noted as characterised by affluent whiteness, are the spaces in the context of 'alternative' food initiatives such as farmers' markets. The spaces become makers and markers of racialized and classed privilege. The material consequences of affluent whiteness of spaces include but are not limited to: working-class people of colour are often unable to access these alternative food spaces; and the gentrification of working-class neighbourhoods often to their detriment. Yet, despite this clustering of privileged bodies, initiators of these spaces have been

empirically reported –often in the US context- to be unwilling to discuss these privileges. The alternative food activists tend to wrongly consider colour-blindness as a virtue, and dispute that race is an important category for consideration. Some of the empirical results pointed to the ways in which some people purposely avoid discussions of race- considering it an "overused explanation" (Alcoff, 2015:6) for inequalities. But as has been noted, the only way one can consider if race is an 'overused explanation' would be by discussing race. In other words, "we cannot even engage in the debate about when race applies and when it doesn't while there is so much energy spent pre-empting the discussion" (Alcoff, 2015:6). In the context of food-related discussions, feminist food scholars have instead been accused of racism by the white participants in their research, after the researcher have asked questions around affluent whiteness. This avoidance of race talk speaks to the immense labour that goes into the production and maintenance of white ignorance, as people seek to protect their moral innocence.

Additionally, the literatures collectively point the, sometimes problematic various values and interests that pervade food-related discussions. This included the eradication of obesity, a policy that is used to justify gendered and classed surveillance of particular forms of mothering, for example, feeding children convenience foods. Additionally there are also economic interests. For example, celebrity chefs often gain supermarket sponsorships and additional TV programmes, as a result of past culinary documentaries. This does not mean that celebrity chefs intentions stop being 'well intended' but it does contribute to holistic understanding of the context in which their interventions happen. Moreover, there is also the construction of the 'concerned middle-class citizens' who want 'deplorable' communities to take individual responsibility by being educated. The anger and disgust of middle-class 'concerned citizens' against working class mothers for example, has led to a wide variety of insults that were noted here including 'junk mums', 'sinner ladies', 'dirty bitches', 'fucking arseholes and tossers' and 'fat scrubbers' (see Fox and Smith, 2011; Piper, 2013; Rich, 2011).

Finally, there were also liberatory efforts to challenge the erasure of systemically marginalized communities, for example by black women producing subversive food writing. These works make visibile how food is deeply and richly interconnected with questions of colonialism, racism, sexism and other demonstrations of power. These literatures also highlighted the ubiquity of white, male 'experts' in food-related discussions. This has material consequences for example for food writing, in terms of whose food writing is given uptake.

Less fully considered in these literatures is how whiteness shapes food-related perspectives. Thus whilst the gendered and classed politics of culinary documentaries have been extensively considered in the UK politics, less considered is the racialized elements. This may be because

the most popular culinary documentaries are by white affluent celebrity chefs, with white working-class communities particularly working class mums. Whiteness here becomes invisible and normative. Further research could consider this aspect, for example, how whiteness reproduced in culinary documentaries. Having now set up the theoretical framework of this thesis in chapters 1, 2 and 3, the next chapter will now describe how I gathered 'data' in answer to the research question of this project.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter describes and discusses what I felt based on my epistemological and ontological commitments, and readings of feminist food-related methodologies, was the most appropriate (at the time) way of gathering black women's perspectives on food-related questions. As a reminder, in Chapter 1 I talked about how and why this project was aimed at being about using food as a lens to understand ignorance. However, when I set out to do the project and got into the fieldwork, I did not have the understanding of ignorance that I then completed the project with. The project was initially designed to create opportunities for a small group of self-identifying black women to share their perspectives on food-related questions of their choice. In other words, I did not set out to ask participants about their gendered and racialized knowledges of various forms ignorance. Ignorance as a theme arose through analysis of what participants had to say, whereby it became clear that to my participants, food was a lens to think through other questions, and sometimes they did not have that much to say about food (in its materiality). Or perhaps more accurately, the discussions often begun with food (e.g. a specific dish such as Jollof rice; or alternative food politics e.g. on local food; or food preparation spaces e.g. the kitchen) but then become about a 'bigger' issue such as forms of ignorance; epistemic injustices and so on. Food therefore did become a way to discuss issues from palate to planet (Belasco, 2007). In the empirical chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), I try to make those connections (of moving from a food-related topic to a 'planet-related' topic) more explicit. The rest of the chapter begins by discussing my epistemological and ontological positions, before introducing the research participants and research methods. I begin by introducing the research participants before a discussion of the methods as I sometimes make reference to the participants in elaborating upon the methods. A discussion of the methods will also include describing the context of the research (Sheffield, UK) as well as the process of analysing the data. Finally, I return to reflexive discussions on the known-to-me ways that my positionality shaped the research, before making the chapter conclusions with possible areas for further research.

4.1 Overview of ontological and epistemological positions

In the previous three chapters I have already highlighted the ontological position the versions of reality that reflect the experiences of socially privileged communities are the versions of reality that become more dominant in society. Thus for example, whiteness and masculinity tend to systematically structure relations to make the practices and ways of knowing of white, (and especially, middle-class) men, the norm/ normative, while other ways of knowing and doing are constructed not just as different, but deviant (Lorde, 1984; Harding, 1991). Critical race and feminist methodologies have critiqued this practice and long argued that the interests, life

experiences and perspectives of white, often middle-class, male communities, can and should not be taken as representative of all human experiences. These critiques were born from the fact that Critical race and feminist methodologies tend to have an emancipatory ethos; that is, the premise of these research methodologies is to contribute to more just societies for the systemically marginalized (e.g. see Gilbert, 1994).

Moreover, as already extensively discussed in the previous three chapters, and particularly in Chapter one (section 1.3- discussion of feminist standpoint theories) Critical race and feminist methodologies hold the epistemological position that because processes of observation are inevitably subjective, claims to objectivity are power plays; a way for scholars to privilege their own subjectivity. In other words, it is not possible to 'objectively' or 'neutrally' observe the social world, without influencing what we see by the very act of cognition (Harding, 1991) because all "knowledge is produced in specific circumstances and those circumstances shape it in some way" (Rose, 1997: 305 see also, McDowell 1988;). Therefore, whether this is acknowledged or not, all research is marked by the physiological, socio-cultural and theoretical 'baggage' that researchers and participants bring to it: "the sort of knowledge made depends on who its makers are" (Rose, 1997: 307). Moreover, the very process of understanding and explaining involves interpretation, which is inherently subjective as we each understand differently depending on who we are. Rather than making impossible and undesirable claims to 'objectivity', researchers should instead engage in the process of reflexivity as I will discuss next.

Reflexivity refers to the process of "attempting to make explicit the power relations and exercises of power in the research process. It covers varying attempts to unpack what knowledge is contingent upon, how the researcher is socially situated, and how the research agenda/ process has been constituted" (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002:118). In other words, reflexivity provides opportunities to consider how a researcher's biography shapes their ability to "listen, question, synthesize, analyse, and interpret knowledge" (McIntyre, 2008:8) during the research process. Reflexivity is crucial because it is "a strategy for situating knowledges: that is, as a means of avoiding the false neutrality and universality of so much academic knowledge" (Rose, 1997: 306; see also England, 1994). Reflexivity allows us to limit the claims that we make about our work, recognising it as a partial perspective (Rose, 1997: 308). Feminist scholars have been emphatic that because researchers "are not dematerialized, disembodied entities" (England, 1994: 248), the biography of a researcher has a direct impact on the research (see also, Jackson, 1993; Rose, 1997; Hopkins, 2007). In other words, our fieldwork and findings are shaped by our race, gender, class, sexuality, how and whether we are clothed, our senses of

disgust and pleasure, personalities within the fieldwork and so on (e.g. see Valentine, 2007; Bain and Nash, 2006; Longhurst et al., 2008; Moser, 2008).

In my research I did not presume any shared notions of 'universal sisterhood' with my participants (Harding, 1987; McDowell, 1992). As a black, working-class, cis-gendered, straight, immigrant (from Kenya), Christian woman, there were commonalities and differences of race, gendered expressions, class, sexual orientation, country of origin, age, marital status, immigration status, parenthood status, clothing choices and personalities with participants. The similarities and differences variously marked me as both and neither an insider or outsider with the research participants, in ways that were not always foreseeable before the fieldwork (I discuss some of these in the next section). I went into the fieldwork with the understanding that being an 'insider' with some or all of the participants was no guarantee of our ability to connect, and that indeed it was possible to connect across difference (Valentine, 2003: 376). In other words, whilst acknowledging our social locations and hence the sources of our partial perspectives as researchers is a key step in disrupting power dynamics in research relationships, being reflexive, does and cannot eliminate baggage we bring into the research process (Rose, 1997). This is because, as Gillian Rose (1997) argues, our positionality also involves unconscious issues, where we as feminist researcher cannot always say how dimensions of difference influence our own interactions with research participants. The next section attempts to highlight how my positionality shaped the process of constructing knowledge with participants. In order to effectively do so, I will need to refer (e.g. in field-work anecdotes) to the participants or to the phases of research. I will therefore begin by first of all introducing the research participants, followed by research phases, before returning to a critical reflection of the known-to-me ways that my positionality shaped the fieldwork at the point before analysis.

4.2   Introduction to the research participants

I began my field-work by formulating an email that I sent out to various Sheffield-based list-serves which were related to dealing with issues related to either food, women or race (see Appendix 4 for list of forums emailed). Forums relating to issues to do with 'food, women or race-related issues' were chosen because those were the main themes of the project at the time. The forums were identified through online searches (Google). In the email I introduced myself and described my idea for a project with self-identified black women based on dialogues with me on food-related issues. I described what participation would entail including the fact that participants had the right to withdraw consent at any time. I also asked for my call to be circulated 'to relevant networks'. Some of the participants who got in touch with me learnt about my research through these forwarded emails. Still on recruitment, I also advertised my

research in one of the community talks I had been invited to give. This was a collaborative talk aimed at the general public that was aimed at giving an introduction to black-feminist theories during International Women's Month, March 2015, - Kamunge and Johnson, 2015). Only two participants signed up through this talk namely Gisto and Sekhmet. One participant was previously known to me (Katrina) and the other 9 participants were recruited from the email being forwarded around. Even though the email list-serve list (Appendix 4) has quite a few email addressed based in the Universities of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam, only one participant (Jocelyn) was studying or employed by the Universities. As Table 1 (List of Participants) demonstrates, the participants represented a wide 'diversity' of black women. The categories that make up the table namely their age, nationality, race, class, gender and occupation were not necessarily the sole defining features of participants. Rather they were based on the question I asked, "Could you please introduce yourself, and in particular include how you define your gender, race, class, nationality and occupation?" Additionally, as part of the ethical duty to respect and protect the confidentiality/ anonymity of participants, I asked them to choose pseudonyms which would be used instead of their real names. These pseudonyms were part of broader strategies to conceal potentially identifying information; other strategies included scrupulous attention to how I handled the fieldwork recordings, transcripts and notes.

Table 1: List of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Nationality	Race, class, gender	Occupation & recruitment
Alicia	Late 20s	black British Nigerian	black, middle class, woman	Artist Email list
Gisto	Late 20s	African-American	'Mixed race black and white' working class woman	On a gap year in the UK (travelling) Introduction to black-feminisms talk
Katrina	38	French (Guadeloupe)	black French Caribbean; working class; woman	Teaching assistant Known to me
Maito	Late 50s	Kenyan/ black-British	black-African; working class woman	Retired Email list
Shosh	Early 70s	South African/	black-British (African); working class	Retired Email list

		black-British	woman	
Sekhmet	Early 30s	Sri-Lankan/ black-British	Mixed-race black and Asian; Middle class; Woman	Teacher talk
Eucalyptus	Late 40s	Black-British Nigerian	black-British working class woman	Artist Email list
Galaxy	Early 50s	Senegalese/ black-British	black-British (African) working class woman	Caterer Email list
Strawberry	Early 30s	Mixed race Asian and African/ British	Mixed race "Grew up working class but probably middle class now" Woman	Charity job Email list
Osop	Late 20s	Somali/ black-British	British-Somali Working class Woman	office worker Email list
Jocelyn	early-30s	Sierra Leone/ black-British	black-British (African); middle class woman	Psychologist Email list
Cookie	Early 30s	Nigerian	black-African; middle class woman	Office worker Email list

4.3   Introduction to the research phases

My fieldwork began in September 2015 with recruitment, and 'ended' in September 2016. I chose 12 participants because I wanted a small group in order to have in-depth research experiences (Mason, 2002). Multiple food-related methods were chosen, including: one to one dialogues with participants over a meal; food-related activities chosen by individual participants such as attending farmers' markets, going to a local beer festival, spending time at a participant's allotment and food shopping in City Council and super-markets; and finally,

dialogues with participants in their homes in the context of cooking and eating together. This research design is in contrast to the ways in which food-related research tends to rely heavily on "interview data, questionnaire and/or diaries which rely on reports of what takes place" (Meah and Jackson, 2013: 581). The aim of having multiple food-related methods was to allow for diverse opportunities to construct rich and nuanced perspectives that would have been impossible in the context of a single interview. Multiple methods and dialogues were aimed at going into depth and develop 'thick descriptions' of black women's food-related perspectives. Repeat dialogues were also aimed at allowing me to follow up emerging issues and potential themes arising in the research (Mason, 2002).

Participants and I had the opportunity to negotiate their participation in the project. I explained to them that there were 'two main phases' of the fieldwork, an initial dialogue in a place of their choosing, and then a 'second dialogue' in their kitchen, that would happen approximately three to four months after the initial dialogue and that would involve cooking and eating together. I explained that during that the time in between the two dialogues (i.e. the 3-4 month 'break') was when they could suggest activities they wanted me to participate in should they wish, and should their personal and professional time commitments allow.

In this research, I use the language of 'dialogue' in describing 'interviews' with participants. I understand feminist-informed dialogues as involving a back-and-forth, give-and-take between speakers (Collins, 1991). That is, dialogues go beyond having a situation where only the researcher gets to ask questions and the participant gives all the answers. A dialogue would involve the participant getting to know something about the researcher, as opposed to the researcher being detached and passive and treating participants as merely a 'vessel of answers' (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997: 116). The use of the term dialogue also reflects the relatively unstructured nature of the conversations. Thus in practice, this meant that I allowed discussions to "meander all over the place [as participants decided] what parts of their story to tell and which parts to leave out" (Bessarab and Ng'andu, 2010: 39). Some of my participants explicitly stated an appreciation for this form of inquiry. For example, one of the participants commented:

> **Shosh**: I like our discussion, because you are not just asking me a question after question… You are also answering my questions and telling me about yourself… so you learn a bit and I also learn a bit from the discussion… It's partnership… we are learning together and I think that's important. (Dialogue 1 with Shosh, 19th December 2015).

The next section describes these dialogues in more detail.

4.3.1 First dialogue

The research involved relatively unstructured dialogues. The dialogues with participants throughout the project, were intended to branch outwards from the response participants gave to my question in the first meeting. This initial question was: "please tell me about (Valentine, 1997) why you were interested in research about black women and food?" Thus, the initial question in the first dialogue with participants was imagined as an entry point to further, 'bespoke' questions based on the participant's interest in the project, rather than 'fixed' questions to be explored with all participants.

During the first dialogue, the project was explained to each participant using the framework set out in the Call for participants, Participant information form and Participant consent Form that I had emailed out (see Appendix 1, 2 and 3 respectively). All participants were individually invited to ask questions before written consent to participate was obtained. At subsequent engagements, I checked with each participant whether they were still happy to continue in the study and whether they had any additional questions. Therefore, consent to participate was considered to be a process rather than a one-off action (Dewing, 2008). Thus, even though consent was explicitly discussed with all participants at the point of them expressing interest in the project and at the first dialogue, consent was also discussed at subsequent visits.

For the first set of dialogues, the shared meals were either ordered or cooked by participants and eaten at their homes, or more commonly, a meal at local restaurants. In the first phase either paid for the meals (for those eaten outside of the home, or for food ordered in) or I contributed to the meal by taking along appropriate drinks and desserts. One interview, with Katrina, took place at my flat because I knew Katrina prior to the research project, and my flat was halfway between her workplace and her home, so she passed by after work. The table below summarises the location of dialogues in phase 1 of the research:

Table 2: Locations of dialogues 1

Pseudonym	Location of dialogue 1- shared meal at:
Alicia	Street food chef restaurant; lunch
Gisto	Forge dam café; lunch
Katrina	my flat; dinner
Maito	Her house; lunch

Shosh	Her office; sandwich lunch
Sekhmet	Her house; early dinner- ordered in from Saigon68
Eucalyptus	Her house; ordered in pizza
Galaxy	Zest café Upperthorpe; breakfast
Strawberry	Interval café; early dinner
Osop	Efes café; dinner
Jocelyn	Coffee revolution; lunch
Cookie	Her house; lunch

As mentioned previously, the intention was to have as many dialogues in the research occur in a location where the participants and I could engage with food in one way or another. In the first phase, as listed above, this was mostly in the context of local restaurants and coffee shops. I made the suggestions to meet in a coffee shop or local restaurant, but left it to participants to choose when and where. I did not attempt to draw conclusions from their choices. I did provide some guidance in considering possible dialogue locations namely: noise levels (as the dialogues would be audio-recorded); suitability in terms of maintaining confidentiality; and a 'central' location that was accessible particularly for participants to find and travel to.

4.3.2   Phase 2: Optional participant-led activities

I intentionally designed the field-work to include a phase that would allow me to take part in activities that participants suggested if they wished. Participants were made aware from the Participant information form and Participant consent Form (Appendix 2 and 3 respectively) that their participation in the whole project was optional, but particularly for what I termed the 'optional middle bit.' This phase was intended to communicate that I was coming into the research with a partial understanding, rather than as an all-knowing all-seeing researcher (Harding, 1991; Rose, 1997). I wanted to honour the knowledges my participants held that may have been out of my reach based on their/ our social locations. I wanted to acknowledge through my research design that my participants were themselves creative and knowledgeable. This includes the knowledge of how best to gather black women's perspectives about food. Overall, allowing participants to suggest activities was based on "the understanding that people - especially those who have experienced historic oppression - hold deep knowledge about their lives and experiences." (Fine and Torre, 2006: 458)

Table 3: Additional activities suggested by, and done with, participants

Pseudonym	Additional activities suggested by, and done with, participants
Alicia	Went to forums on feminisms; food shopping in Tesco
Gisto	Went to forums during Black History month; went to beer festival and observed a demonstration on how to brew craft beer
Katrina	Food shopping in Moor Market; food shopping in London Road; going to Sharrow-Vale Street Market
Maito	Hanging out at her allotment; food shopping in Moor Market; going to Kelham Island Food Market
Shosh	*-No additional activities suggested*
Sekhmet	Went to forums on 'Why Is My Curriculum White?'; food shopping in Sainsbury's supermarket; going to a farmers' market
Eucalyptus	Went to forums on Food Justice; food shopping in Moor Market
Galaxy	Shopping for spices on Abbeydale Road
Strawberry	Went to forums on climate change
Osop	Food shopping in Tesco; attendance at Eid festivities
Jocelyn	*-No additional activities suggested*
Cookie	Food shopping in London road

One of the more common participant-led activities was going food shopping. In this activity, participants and I would agree a date, place and time to go shopping together. This method is related to, but distinct from, research "go-alongs" (Kusenbach, 2003) in which "the researcher walks with interviewees as they go about their daily routines, asking them questions along the way" (Evans and Jones, 2011: 850). These shopping trips were *largely* those that the participants and I would have individually routinely done anyway, for example, for a weekly grocery shop, rather than a 'contrived' food shop (cf. Kusenbach, 2003: 464). There is an element of 'performance' - these were not people I would ordinarily have gone shopping with, and vice-versa, but it was not 'contrived' in the sense of doing something that participants or I

would not ordinarily do (do a grocery shop). These go-alongs were not audio-recorded, although I made notes in my fieldwork diary afterwards (participants were aware of this from the consent forms and information sheet). How did this phase contribute to the findings? None of the discussions in this phase necessarily directly contributed to the findings, especially since in the empirical discussions the material I use is from the transcripts and notes of the initial and later the kitchen dialogues. I did however read through my fieldwork notes as part of my analysis. In hindsight, this phase allowed me to build rapport with many of the participants, for which one of the outcomes was rich(er) conversations in the kitchen dialogues which I discuss next.

4.3.3 Phase 3: Cooking and eating with participants ('kitchen dialogues')

The final part of the fieldwork involved cooking and eating with participants in their kitchens (hereinafter referred to as the 'kitchen dialogues'). In the end I only had these dialogues with 9 participants in their kitchens after having cooked a meal together. That is, 3 participants did not take part in this phase of the research. This was because: one participant was on a gap year abroad to the UK from USA and was living as a lodger in an arrangement where they were, 'not in charge of the kitchen' (Gisto, 2016) and not allowed to bring guests to it or do any extended cooking in it; another participant (Galaxy) left the country for an emergency due to her mother's illness so we were not able to arrange a second dialogue; and the third participant ('Shosh') emailed a week before the planned meeting to say that she had a 'bad experience with a stranger' (Shosh, 2016) in her home she was no longer having 'guests' coming round, myself included. The cooking and eating sessions lasted on average 4 hours, depending on what participants chose to cook. Participants involved me in the cooking, not just the occasional stirring of food or laying the table (cf. Longhurst et al., 2009). For example, participants cooked the rice and vegetables, whilst I made the stew and dessert. My cooking skills were assumed, which also opened up other avenues of discussion, especially when I did things differently from how they would have done.

The kitchen dialogues were largely influenced by the research methods of Robyn Longhurst, Elsie Ho and Lynda Johnston (2008) in their project which explored how food relates to the immigrant experience of (re)creating home, with a particular focus on the experiences of immigrant women in New Zealand. The research explores the changes to the participant's eating habits during and after migration to New Zealand; the role of the participants in (re)creating 'home cuisines'; and finally the role of food in (re)creating memories of home. The research project involved dialogues with 11 participants that happened first in participant's living rooms, and then whilst preparing and sharing meals together in the participant's kitchens.

Longhurst, Ho and Johnston (2008) highlight some of the benefits they found of having dialogues with participants in their kitchen spaces.

Because I too wanted to talk to participants about food, it seemed to make sense to engage with food, rather than simply relying on reported discussions. This is particularly important as food is material and not just symbolic. Therefore, I hoped that engaging with food (preparing it, cooking it, eating it) in the context of food-related discussions would lead new knowledges than those that would result from simply interviewing people (Brady, 2011). The next section discusses what those encounters in participants kitchens looked like in my research. In the process I expound on some of the benefits and challenges identified in previous similar research.

Conducting research in kitchens has been argued to provide opportunities to privilege traditionally muted voices and knowledges. For example, for Abarca (2007b), her choice to conduct research in Mexican-American women's kitchens whilst sharing a meal, brought her to the realisation that the working-class women she was dialoguing with were in fact 'grassroots theorists' whose conversations reflected "social and philosophical theories from the ground up" (Abarca 2007b:9). For Abarca (ibid) being in the kitchen helped to demonstrate that there was "not just one intellectual form of knowledge but many ways of knowing and being intellectual" in the process altering "Gayatri Spivak's question [from] "Can the subaltern speak?" to the statement "how the subaltern speaks" (Abarca, 2007b: 9). Likewise, in my research I found the ways in which kitchens were used by different participants as spaces of 'many ways of knowing'. This is a finding that that I dedicate a whole chapter to (Chapter 7) and discuss in more detail there.

Additionally, I also found resonance with the idea that conducting research in kitchen spaces also allows *some* participants to be more "relaxed...and more 'in control' of the research encounter." (Longhurst et al., 2009: 336). Therefore, whilst no locational choice can completely erase power differences between researcher and participants (McDowell, 1998), cooking with participants in their kitchens can serve to temporarily disrupt power dynamics in the research. I did not ask participants to give their views on the actual dialogues and which they preferred; but Strawberry commented at the end of the kitchen dialogue with her that:

> **Strawberry:** "It's interesting being interviewed whilst cooking... I was a bit scattier sometimes because I had to be like "Oh hold on, what am I doing?" (laughs) ... But I enjoyed it more... I found it slower and more informal... I enjoyed our first chat but definitely preferred this...especially because it's in my kitchen so I know where

everything is…[her partner] had to take [the dog] for a walk because you were coming and I didn't know how it would behave around you…like she [the dog] is friendly but can be weird sometimes when stressed… I know you had said [in an email] you don't mind dog but I didn't want to take chances and make you uncomfortable (laughs) so we had to talk about that and figure that out when thinking when you could come round, but I still like being here." (Dialogue 2 with Strawberry, 10th March 2016).

Strawberry's observation speaks to at least 3 challenges/issues in making use of kitchen dialogues. First, her observation speaks to how kitchen dialogues heavily rely on trust between researcher and participant, especially because they are happening in 'private' home and kitchen spaces. This trust can be revoked even without the 'fault' of the researcher (for example, how Shosh changed her mind about me going to her home because of a 'bad' experience she had with someone else). Kitchen dialogues highlight how various social reproduction roles do not simply cease to exist or come to a standstill, but have to be negotiated *in order for* and *whilst* the kitchen dialogues to happen. Thus for example, Strawberry had to negotiate care for the pet (to not be distressed) and for me (to not be uncomfortable around a distressed dog) before the research took place. Arguably if she had had trouble arranging pet care whilst I was in the house then the dialogue may not have happened.

The fact that social reproduction roles do not come to a standstill (in order for research to happen) was also highlighted in some of the other tasks I did as a researcher-in-the-kitchen. For example, another participant- Jocelyn- was pregnant during the first dialogue and by the time of the kitchen dialogue had given birth to twins. There were times when I helped with burping a baby and soothing them to sleep, whilst she breast-fed another baby and/or checked on the food. This also speaks to the ways in which kitchen dialogues challenge "the understanding of the social researcher as a detached neutral and distant observer" (Cahill et al., 2010: 407). Presumably this had to do with the fact that I was /am female and child-care skills/experience may have been presumed. In other words, perhaps if I had been a male researcher I might not have had the same access to intimate private spaces. In addition to positionality questions helping to burp babies raises questions of reciprocity, which goes beyond financial compensation. whether researchers pay their participants or not is often an ethical challenge (Hammett & Sporton, 2012). Longhurst et al., (2009) made the decision to reimburse participants with a supermarket grocery voucher for NZ$40.00 (£15), with the justification that in most cases the equivalent of £15 "would have offset the cost of preparing the meal" (page 338). In my research I chose to pay for meals in the first dialogue, reimburse transport costs of any optional activities and give participants £10 to cover food cooked in the kitchen dialogues. Participants were made aware prior to signing up to the research (through the Information

Sheet) of the costs that were to be reimbursed/offset. But the forms of reciprocity went beyond the various cash reimbursements.

Additionally, as Strawberry noted, cooking with participants requires them to multi-task (e.g. pay attention to measuring or weighing out ingredients whilst reflecting on a question) which some participants may find particularly challenging. The practices that go with cooking will therefore have an impact on the pace and nature of dialogue. Some particular steps, for example measuring ingredients, or deep frying, or blending ingredients, or checking whether food was cooked, amongst others, made conversations take a different turn, or pause or stop completely. Trains of thought were often lost, and the kitchen dialogues were markedly slower than the first dialogues as Strawberry noted, which as she implies, is not inherently negative.

Kitchen dialogues were wen the similarities and differences between myself and the participants were largely highlighted. The fact that people were willing to share a meal with me was a mark of, to some extent, me being welcomed in. This is because as Belasco (1999: 1) notes, "to eat is to distinguish and discriminate, include and exclude. Food … establishes boundaries and borders". Additionally, Mennell et al., (cited in Beardsworth and Keil, 1997: 110) state that "sharing food is held to signify 'togetherness', an equivalence among a group that defines and reaffirms insiders as socially similar". Thus, being welcomed to cook and eat with participants in their kitchens/homes can *symbolically* mark an insider status or at least some form of 'inclusion'.

However, cooking and eating together can also mark an outsider status. For example, whilst cooking with Katrina, I was making the stew and added cinnamon (as well as cumin and coriander) and raisins to the chickpeas, sweet potato and squash. This visibly disgusted her, because to her, cinnamon was a sweet spice that was supposed to be used in baked goods rather than in savoury foods. She also found it bizarre that I fried the plantains Naija style', which in Guadeloupe would be eaten as a dessert; for savoury courses plantains would be boiled (which is similar to the 'authentic' way of making them in Kenya or Uganda). The same goes for raisins being in sweet courses. Whereas I, on the other hand, found it hard/impossible to believe that she was encountering this combination for the very first time in a savoury dish, or that fried plantains were fit to be a dessert. This speaks to Mary Douglas's (1972) concept of the grammar of food: the distinctions between sweet course and savoury course, and my blurring of Katrina's distinctions, served to mark me as an outsider of sorts. It also speaks to power dynamics and how cooking momentarily shifts those: participants had a chance to get delighted, or (rarely, and only with Katrina) disgusted or perplexed by my spice mixtures.

Considering that who gets disgusted is political and related to power imbalances (Probyn, 2002), allowing that space where I as researcher could be 'watched', temporarily disrupted those power imbalances. This is particularly relevant in food-related research as it tends to be only the researchers watching what participants are doing in the kitchen, and keeping notes about when they get it 'right' or get it 'wrong', for example in the context of food safety research (e.g. see Wills et al., 2016: 472). As a result, it tends to be that we only have reflections by researchers of their disgust by participant's food choices and combinations (see Longhurst et al.'s (2008) disgust at participants combining sweet and savoury, pavlova and kimch'i). I am not suggesting that researchers should go out of their way to make 'bizarre' food choices as a liberatory strategy. Rather, those moments of 'clashing' when they do occur, are ideal times to reflect on the baggage and insights we each bring to the research.

Not only does engaging with food with participants allow for symbolic and perhaps fleeting moments of 'inclusion' or difference, but also it can directly contribute to the empirical concepts being discussed. In my case, the fact that I was (constructed to be) a 'food researcher' based at a University, not only symbolically marked me the "outsider within" (Collins, 2000) but also gave rise to substantive conversations, some of which directly shaped the empirical findings. Being in academia has been recognised by feminist scholars as a privileged position, regardless of other systemic marginalization. For example, being in academia has the potential to provide "access to the middle-class luxuries, such as education and professional status, that are still relatively inaccessible for most women of all backgrounds" (Kobayashi, 1994: 76). Moreover, being in academia comes with opportunities for platforms where one can be at least listened to (whether they are heard is altogether a separate matter- e.g. see Dotson, 2016) in ways that even, for example class-privileged women may not have the opportunity to be. Being in academia also gives us the final power of interpretation, regardless of any intentions to disrupt power dynamics. As Sarah McLafferty (1995: 307) notes in relation to feminist (and indeed any) research: "except in rare cases, the researcher holds a 'privileged' position by deciding what questions to ask, directing the flow of discourse, interpreting interview and observational material, and deciding where and in what form it should be presented" (McLafferty, 1995: 307).

In the context of my research, being seen as The Food Researcher, meant that sometimes some participants tried to defer to me, particularly in the first dialogue, by adding caveats to their views by saying by saying something along the lines that 'I knew best'. In other words, every so often they would give their view but wonder if it was the 'wrong' one for deviating from food literatures that they might not have been aware of. My response to this was two pronged. First I pointed out that my academic background was not in (Food) Geography and therefore I was a learner just as much as they were. But secondly, that even though I may have had an awareness

of various (academic) food-related literatures, that at the end of the day, only they could be the experts in *their* own experiences and perspectives, which is what I was interested in. This allowed for useful conversations some of which get picked up in the empirical chapters 7, to discuss different types of knowledge for example experiential knowledges, cognitive knowledges amongst others.

Additionally (in terms of being The Food Researcher), even though I had explicitly told people that I was not in their kitchens to 'judge' their food choices, every so often participants would be apologetic for things. Many of these 'apologies' were fleeting, but some led to more substantive conversations. For example, one of the participants- Osop- began to 'apologise' for using canned chopped tomatoes to the stew (which had vegetables chopped by us), rather than 'cooking from scratch'. I assured her that, most importantly, I was not judging her choices, but that equally, I would consider adding a can of tomatoes as still 'cooking from scratch'. This led to a conversation around the difference between say, adding a ready-made tomato sauce to adding chopped tomatoes- most of that part of the conversation does not make it into my final work. However, in the process Osop shared an anecdote of 'being shamed' by a white female colleague for using canned tomatoes- this colleague then 'advised' her to buy Jamie Oliver's 15-minute meals book, because if Osop 'only knew' the 'harm' in a can of tomatoes, she would never use it, and had no excuse to do so 'when she could whip out a good meal in 15 minutes.' This led to a conversation about various forms of privilege and ignorance that make it into my work (Chapter 5). These are not conversations that would necessarily have had a reason to come up in a face to face interview outside of a cooking context, especially since I did not go into the fieldwork intending to research ignorance (it was an emerging theme) and did not have any fixed questions.

The next section now considers the ethical questions that arise from research meals. I began with a table that lists the foods that I cooked and mostly ate with participants:

Table 4: List of foods cooked in the kitchen dialogues

Pseudonym	What we cooked <u>and</u> ate (note: some participants were bulk cooking for the week, and so there are foods we cooked but did not eat on the day)
Alicia	Jollof rice, spinach, chicken, blueberry muffins
Gisto	*Second dialogue was also at Forge Dam Café as Gisto was lodging for a year, and was not 'in charge' of cooking arrangements*
Katrina	Plantains, chickpea and sweet potato squash, pineapple upside down cake

Maito	Mukimo, spinach and beef stew, roasted breadfruit; fruit salad
Shosh	*Second dialogue was in the Moor Market Food Court, because Shosh had a 'bad experience with a stranger' and was no longer comfortable having guests around to her house.*
Sekhmet	Lentils, curry rice, spinach; plantains; apple crumble (served with bought ice-cream)
Eucalyptus	Couscous, grilled tofu, spinach and other vegetables, cornflour porridge; fruit salad
Galaxy	*No second dialogue: she had moved back to Senegal at short notice to care for unwell parents*
Strawberry	Naan bread, lentils, rice; vegan brownies
Osop	Rice, liver stew, pancake; popcorn (served with dates), cardamom tea
Jocelyn	Sierra Leone-style Jollof rice, roast chicken, plantains;
Cookie	Naija-style fried rice, grilled chicken, plantains, coleslaw

As demonstrated in the table, with the exception of Strawberry who is vegetarian (and chose a veg*n meal for us to prepare together) all other meals included meats/fish/poultry/offal as well as various grains and vegetables. By veg*n I am referring to people who do not eat animal flesh at all (but may use some animal products) as well as people who avoid all animal flesh and products from their diet and lifestyles. The food table above provides opportunities to consider another potential (ethical) challenge with kitchen dialogues in terms of the researcher's positionality in terms of their personal food choices and preferences and the participants food 'choices' and preferences.

I came to the research as an 'almost ex-veg*n'. At the time I was grappling with whether going back to eating any animal products would make me a 'bad feminist'. This is because I was aware of not only the questions on animal welfare, but also the overlaps in the systemic abuse of animals and the systemic abuse of women (e.g. see Adams, 1990/2010 for oft-cited work in this thread) and working class, often immigrant, People of Colour. I was conflicted by the sense that to go back to using animal products would make constitute "the maintenance of pleasure… through complicity, through silence, or through the absence or invisibility of resistant alternative appetites" (Williams, 2014: 254). However, I was also aware of the various reasons

why particular Communities of Colour may continue to rely on animal products (e.g. see discussions on the intersections of settler colonialism and various diets). But mostly though I was at a point in my personal life of feeling 'fed up' with 'having to' be steeped in, (often affluent) white veg*n culture in order to be veg*n. To be clear I am not suggesting that there are no (other) working class, black veg*ns- there are, but they too have expressed some of these frustrations (e.g. see work by Breeze Harper that broadly considers "how systemic racism and anti-blackness affect animal advocacy culture" (Harper, 2019; 2010). In the end I made the contestable decision to incorporate back some animal products in my personal life, but to eat whatever was served to me in the fieldwork.

The main, and potentially, problematic, reason for me deciding to eat whatever was offered during the fieldwork was in order to 'build rapport' with participants and 'not be a burden'. In my mind, at the time, because these food 'choices' were not linked to allergies, I felt as though to ask participants to consider them would be an extra 'burden' on them. There were potential risks to my body- (for example see Bartos' (2017) discussion of her body's response to eating meat 'in the field' after years as a vegetarian) but I rightly assumed that they would be minimal. Some scholars would problematize the idea of eating meat in order to 'build rapport' with participants, and particularly. For example, MacDonald and Montford (2014) discuss research meals and the ethical challenge of veg*n researchers attempting to build 'rapport' by appearing "less threatening to their participants in order to elicit material and build relationships" (MacDonald and Montford, 2014: 746). This attempt to build 'rapport' with participants practically then looks like researchers playing down differences in food 'choices' and eating whatever is served. They problematize this willingness to build rapport or extend hospitality over an animal's carcass by asking us to consider for whom hospitality is being extended. In other words, in their view, hospitality at the expense of an animal is not a fair or just hospitality. They argue that this form of rapport is based on *having to* agree with participants and play down differences, which they argue is in fact not only 'impossible' but also 'unethical' (MacDonald and Montford, 2014: 738). Here they emphasise that "to erase difference via the consumption of animals reveals a shallow understanding of power relations, and thus is counter to feminist methodological work that attends to a nuanced understanding of power differentials" (ibid). They also argue because vegetables are *always* cheaper than meat, then, it is in fact more considerate to participants for researchers to decline meat. At the end of the day, in my research, since I was not strictly adhering to veg*n choices in my personal life, I did not feel the need to enforce them with participants. The point remains that the issue of research meals raises important questions of what it means to do liberatory feminist research.

Finally it is important to note that if it is not clearly explained to participants that the method is not a test of cooking skills, it could potentially put off some participants from taking part in the research. This is because participants who feel less confident about their cooking skills may be unwilling to participate if they think that being a 'good cook' was a pre-requisite to participation (Longhurst et al., 2009: 337). Moreover, cooking with participants as a research method presumes that (potential) participants have access to (their own) kitchens. One of my participants, Gisto, did not have access to a kitchen, as she was on a year-long gap year and was lodging at a hostel. We therefore could only have the second dialogue as another shared meal at a local café.

4.4   Why Sheffield?

Sheffield is England's fourth largest city. The city was chosen primarily because of my own connections to it, as a place that I have lived and worked in for six years, which I felt would make it easier to access participants for the research. In the end it turned out that I did not have a problem recruiting participants. In fact, when I sent out an email calling for participants (discussed in section 4.2) even though I only sent it to Sheffield-based list-serves (see Appendix 4), some of those emails were shared widely and I ended up getting expressions of interest from people as far away as London, Birmingham and Glasgow. This project can technically work without collecting views of black women in one city. This is because the study was an exploration of black women's food-related perspectives, not a study of a city. Therefore, one way to advance this research could include 'allowing' participants from different cities to participate, which could further highlight how place shapes those perspectives. However, for this specific PhD project, because I had the intention to have repeat dialogues with participants in ways that engaged food (rationale in this chapter section 4.3), I felt that this would be more feasible if the participants were clustered in one city rather than spread out across the UK.

Sheffield is increasingly recognised as a fairly uneven city with "deep and persistent inequalities" (Sheffield Fairness Commission Report, 2017:2). It has been argued that these geographic systemic inequalities mean that Sheffield may in-fact be better understood as two separate cities in one "because the geographical divide is stark running north-west to south-east through the city [which] means that people on both sides of the divide can, and some do lead separate lives in 'their' part of the city, living, working and socialising in their part of the city" (Sheffield Fairness Commission Report, 2017:12-13). For example, Sheffield has three wards that are poorer than the Tower Hamlets in London, but also has the richest ward (Hallam) outside of London (see Thomas et al., 2009 for an extensive discussion spatial of gaps in 'equality and achievement' in Sheffield along various indicators such as housing, education, health and so on). Some of these spatial social inequalities are related to the rise and decline in

Sheffield's steel industry. This is because the steel industry "was the primary source of employment in the city" (Thomas et al., 2009: 16). The decline in the steel-industry included the closure of mines in the 1980s.

In terms of how these inequalities shape food 'choices', the number of people of experiencing 'food poverty' in Sheffield has continued to increase since 2010, meaning that the number of food banks in the city have increased from 3 in early 2010 to 16 as at November 2013 when the last statistic of food banks in Sheffield was collated (State of Sheffield, 2014). The increased reliance on emergency food provisioning as demonstrated by vulnerable people's increased reliance on food banks in Sheffield is consistent with national trends (Lambie-Mumford, 2017). Yet at the same time as 'food poverty' increasing, the city also has a with a lively 'foodie' scene including an ever-increasing amount of neighbourhood farmer's markets including in recently gentrified areas such as Kelham Island, and the growth of the annual Sheffield Food Festival. Additionally, Sheffield is a unique city in being the greenest urban city in Europe; as well as a city with close proximity to a National Park (the Peak District National Park). For this reason, it prides itself as an environmentally conscious 'outdoor city' (Sheffield City Council website, Outdoor City).

The decline in the steel-industry has also contributed to shaping the politically 'left-leaning, social-justice oriented' nature of the city, particularly as Sheffield was a key site of the 1980s Miner's strikes (Taylor, 1996). The politically 'left-leaning' nature of the city was further highlighted when Sheffield became the first City of Sanctuary in the UK- an initiative to create more welcoming cities for refugees and asylum seekers (City of Sanctuary, 2007); but debated after reflections on the 2016 UK referendum on whether the UK should leave the EU (BBC, 2016), whereby Sheffield backed (by a small majority) what some have seen as a racist Brexit campaign (Stewart & Rowena, 2016; see also Pattie, 2016 n.p. who argues that the 'surprising' vote in Sheffield for Brexit was primarily about 'class divides').

For at least these reasons, it felt as though Sheffield was a city with quite a few 'prompts' that could stimulate robust discussions with black women on food-related issues. Thus even though it has a relatively small population of People of Colour - approximately 11% (Sheffield City Council, 2011), like I said because I had lived here for 6 years, I felt confident in being able to find participants by knowing some of the initial places to advertise my research, and then relying on snow-balling to find additional participants.

4.5   Analysis

In the end my data included tape-recordings which generated 24 transcripts and a diary of observations and other field notes. My research employed thematic analysis as the main form of

analysis. My understanding of thematic analysis was informed by the work of Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006). They identify 6 stages of thematic analysis namely: familiarising yourself with the data (including transcription of verbal data, reading and re-reading transcripts); generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87). Needless to say, in practice, analysis is a messy non-linear process rather than "a linear process of simply moving from one phase to the next. Instead, it is a more recursive process, where movement is back and forth as needed throughout the process. It is also a process that develops over time" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 86).

I chose to do the transcription myself, which gave me the opportunity to get to know my data by listening to it again. Because I did my own transcriptions, I was also able to make notes in my transcripts of non-verbal cues that a third party may not have picked up. For example, I could remember why we laughed at specific points, or could pick up how something was said, in ways that would be harder for somebody who was not there (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006: 40). I read through the transcripts and noted prevalent words, phrases and ideas. After having done a systematic reading through my transcripts I coded manually, using post-it notes, printed transcripts and different coloured highlighters I paid attention to both what was said, as well as how it was said (e.g. laughter, anger, sarcasm and so on). Codes and themes were often based on words, phrases and ideas that were prevalent. However, other words, phrases and ideas also stood out for me because they were said so rarely and so helped me think about what was 'not being said'. The next step was to group similar codes together. For this I used an A3 piece of paper, and put all the post-it notes that went together into themes. On the A3 paper I (tentatively) named the themes. I did this until all the codes were allocated to a theme. This was a process that I repeated over a series of months, I also considered if and how the themes related to each other; whether the themes were distinct and whether any could be combined; and whether there were any codes that did not fit. The penultimate stage was to map themes and explore how they were related to each other and create a coherent narrative about the themes. These themes were identified through an iterative process involving academic literature and analytical themes arising from the transcripts. It is here that initial themes were revised into a coherent narrative following the identification of ignorance as a key theme

I discussed in section 4.3 that cooking and eating with participants shaped the collection of data in this research e.g. by providing prompts and segues into conversations. Did cooking and eating with participants make a difference to the *analysis* of data? Mostly, no. In between the first dialogue and the dialogues that involved cooking and eating with participants ('kitchen dialogues') was approximately 5 or so months on average. Four participants begun the 'kitchen

dialogues' by asking 'what have the others said?'   This provided opportunities for an informal analysis process whereby I verbally though briefly reflected on 'what the others had said'. This mainly allowed for some critical scrutiny of perspectives and as a prompt for further substantive discussions with the four participants who asked for a synopsis of the findings. In the process we negotiated interpretations of data especially when understandings conflicted. These discussions further revealed how different participants and I were differently situated, and hence bringing different experiences and understandings to the research. However, arguably the value addition here is the fact that it is a repeat dialogue, rather than the fact that it was happening whilst cooking and eating with participants in their kitchens. To be clear, cooking and eating with participants in their kitchens did make *direct* contributions to the data *collection* as already discussed in section 4.3, but not to the *analysis* process. In the empirical chapters, however, I do try and draw connections between what was happening in the kitchen, and the conversations that resulted.

4.6   From palate to ignorance: reflexivity on researching ignorance through food

In Chapter 1, I discussed why I set out to hear black women's food stories and perhaps to explore the ways in which their race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, dis/ability and so on impacted their relationship with food. But as part of the evolution of the research, participants turned the focus of the thesis around from food being the object of the study to food being a lens through which different topics could be explored. The process of this 'reversal' in the intention of my research raised significant anxieties for me as a researcher. These anxieties tended to come up in the fieldwork at various points including: as the 'data collection' progressed and came towards the end; and the point of 'data' analysis.

Perhaps it is a common anxiety for most if not all researcher to, at some point in their research, not know what it is about or where it is going. Arguably, however, research methods based on feminist, relatively unstructured, 'emancipatory' methodologies heighten this anxiety. This is reflected in the transcripts at the points when 4 participants asked in the kitchen dialogues 'what the others had said and all my 4 responses are marked by nervous laughter on my part and an "I do not know" based response. My responses were not a reflection of me being unforthcoming to the participants about the findings. Rather it was a reflection of learning to 'sit with the discomfort' of 'not knowing' and not feeling 'in control' of the direction of the research. Thus, whilst I had intended to learn more about food from a relatively epistemically and socially marginalized community, they participated in the research to re-assign food as a lens/window through which *other* 'urgent problems' could be explored. In other words, it was not that food-its materiality, preparation and consumption were not relevant did not give rise to urgent

problems of concern to black women, or were simply the 'self-indulgent' concern of socially privileged communities (Ruth Hubbard, cited in Avakian, 2005:5).

Indeed, as one participant, Alicia, noted "food matters to everyone for different reasons and in different ways" (dialogue with Alicia, 30th March 2016), a comment made in the context of talking about my response to her question of 'what the others had said.' My response to her had included mentioning how at least 3 participants, during the first phase of the research, had sometimes been concerned about saying the 'wrong' thing about food because I was the The Food Researcher to their minds, and therefore the 'expert' in the room. As mentioned previously in this chapter (section 4.3.3), my constructed positionality as The Food Researcher made some participants conscious about saying the wrong thing (and thus added caveats to their responses by saying that I 'probably knew better') or of doing the wrong thing (e.g. Osop's apology for 'not cooking from scratch' by using a can of chopped tomatoes rather than 'freshly' chopped tomatoes). I spoke about my mixed attempts to once again reassure those participants (as had been done with all the participants at the beginning of the research) that my intention in our dialogues was not to make note(s) of the inconsistencies between what they said and did about food as is the premise of some other research in the kitchen. These forms of research that intend to see people's inconsistencies between their sayings and doing *require* researchers to pay attention to these divergences of what is said and done (e.g. saying you care about food safety, but only wiping your hands on the apron after touching the bin or patting the dog- e.g. see Wills et al., 2015) in order to better understand why food safety and contamination continue to be long-standing problems despite Government and other stakeholder initiatives in public health education. As such, Alicia's comment was given to affirm my position that everyone is an expert in *their* own food-stories and perspectives, which is what I was interested in. But also, I use the comment to sum up that participants switching food into a lens to understand other topics such as ignorance, rather than being the object of study, should not necessarily be interpreted as the not-mattering of food to them. It may very well be that, and especially with hindsight, the role of food in my research was always as a window as I explain next.

At the point of designing my research, my intention was to learn more about food but from an epistemically (see Chapter 3 section 3.3) and socially marginalized community with (feminist) food studies- namely black women. In other words, I explicitly did not want to treat food as a lens in the research as is often the case in food studies, because I was persuaded the food itself was worth learning more about. In other words, I was persuaded that food was not only significant for what it symbolically represented (Bourdieu, 1979/2000) because food was "not just metaphorical. It involves mouths, chewing, throats, smells, tastes, textures stomachs, feeling hungry and feeling full" (Longhurst et. al, 2009: 335; see also Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy

2008; Probyn, 2002). However, in hindsight, these were not the issues that were foregrounded to participants as discussed next.

In the context of ensuring that participants gave informed consent to participate in the project through the Call for research participants, participant information sheet, participant consent form (Appendix 1, 2 and 3 respectively) and in person in our first meeting, I led with my research motivation which centred around my frustrations of 'not seeing myself or people like me' centred in food related research (see discussions in Chapter 3, section 3.3.). In other words, I explained that my research was motivated by my personal frustration of the relative neglect of black women's perspectives in (feminist) food studies, and that I wanted to contribute to highlighting and challenging this problem by hearing black women's food -stories in food-infused contexts that would allow us to engage with food together in various ways (e.g. their kitchens). In hindsight, it became clear(er) during my fieldwork that the problem that motivated my research was not a food-related debate that I wanted to advance or counter. Rather, even though at the beginning of the project I did not have the language for it, my main concern was based on the 'gut-feeling' that conceptualising the neglect of black women's perspectives as simply an absence or lack of knowledge was not the most fruitful way forward. This initial 'gut-feeling' that 'educating' white feminists and other food scholars on why black women's voices mattered to food studies not being a fruitful way to move forward was based on my readings of black-feminist writings (e.g. see speech by Toni Morrisons, 1975; Lorde, 1984). For example, Audre Lorde argues that educating socially systemically privileged people about our "needs and existence…is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns, [as well as] a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought" (Lorde, 1984: 113). This is affirmed in a piece by Brittney Cooper (2015) in a special issue journal article on the future of black-feminisms. In this piece Cooper argues that black-feminists like myself,

> "must, in short, stop letting others fuck with our future. I said it, and I mean it…. We keep losing arguments that we should be winning because we have allowed others to set the agenda. We have allowed others to artificially proscribe the limits of black-feminist inquiry, telling us where we have been and where we are, while suggesting that there is nowhere else for us to go. This must change." (Cooper, 2015: 18-19)

In other words, for black-feminisms to keep moving forward, we must go beyond simply reacting the often problematic agenda-setting intentions of various groups such as white-feminisms and instead create space to talk about what it is that we/black women more generally, want to talk about. This again is why I did not begin with a food debate and work from there, but wanted a research design that was relatively unstructured enough to allow

participants to use their stories to set the agenda. It is here that I will reflect on how to define my research methodologies.

In various academic conferences where I presented early iterations of my methods / methodology, I heard my research introduced or discussed as a case study in Participatory Action Research. This was despite the fact that I myself did not use this terminology to describe my research method(ology) and in fact sometimes corrected people. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is, "an umbrella term covering a variety of participatory approaches to action-oriented research. Defined most simply, PAR involves researchers and participants working together to examine a problematic situation or action to change it for the better." (Kindon et al., 2010:1). Thus, whilst there is a spectrum of approaches, some of the key characteristics to PAR include:

> "replac[ing] an 'extractive', imperial model of social research with one in which the benefits of research accrue more directly to the communities involved [and] researchers and participants identi[fying] an issue or situation in need of change [and] then initi[ating] research that draws on capabilities and assets to precipitate relevant action. *Both* researchers and participants reflect on, and earn from, this action and proceed to a new cycle of research/action/refection....*Together* they develop context-specific methods to facilitate these cycles." (Kindon et al., 2010:1 emphasis added)

It is possible to see why my research was often 'confused with' PAR. First, it has an action element- of wanting to see social change happen through the research *in the longer term*. Secondly, it was very interactive and participants got to suggest activities (if they wanted) for us to do together. And finally, the research was relatively unstructured, relying heavily on dialogues. However, I did not approach a community in order to hear from them if they had a problem that they wanted us to research together. Rather, I identified a problem based on personal frustration, I designed the research methods and then invited participants to research. Afterwards the analysis process was done by myself, having thanked and 'ended' the research relationships with participants. Additionally, it was not intended that the research would have any (immediate) benefits accrue directly to the participants. For PAR, it is often the case that participants get to the end of the research and have some satisfaction that an issue *they* jointly wanted addressed has got the attention it deserved and/or the problem has actually improved. Various participants in my research did mention that the process was 'carthatic'; they spoke of the elements they 'enjoyed' more or most; and were obviously invested in the process even by simply asking 'what the others had said.' I did reimburse transport and meal costs so that they were not out of pocket, and did maintain ethical non-exploitative relationships as best as I could. But it would be unethical to claim a 'direct' benefit to participants in the short or longer

term. In fact, in the longer term, this research was with the intention of gaining a doctoral qualification and therefore in the longer term, I will, at least in theory, come out with the most (potential) benefits such as improved career prospects. And finally, the time limits of the research and the realities of being in a neoliberal university as a doctoral student (see Noxolo, 1999) meant that it would have been a false promise to my participants to imply that I could move at their pace, as per my understanding of PAR, would have been necessary. In other words, in PAR, the researcher is simply the 'facilitator' of a process, not the director of it (e.g. see McIntyre, 2008).

Why does it matter what my research was (mis)labelled as being? My immediate hesitance was because of my awareness of debates on how PAR is being co-opted and arguably, is being de-politicised within academia, as Cahill et al. (2010:408) note:

> "However, we are wary of broad application of the term participation because, as has been noted by others, PAR has been co-opted by mainstream social science researchers, used as a tool for capitalist accumulation to increase productivity and competitiveness, and become a form of (social) capital (see Jordan, 2009). Participation may refer to a variety of research practices, some of which may not be participatory at all. Critical scholarship has pointed to the ways in which broad applications of the term participation may mask tokenism and provide an illusion of consultation (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Mohan, 2001). When participation is presented as a set of techniques, rather than as a commitment to working with communities, it may result in the reproduction rather than the challenging of unequal power relations."

Thus whilst my research had an Action element and involved more participation on my part as a researcher and on the participant' part, as explained, it *did not aim to be*, or reach the level of, being 'participatory'. It may be that the lack of additional terminologies to describe research that breaks away from 'business as usual' in terms of being interactive *and* action oriented may be adding to the conflation. It is here that I suggest the concept of **Interactive Action Research**. This would describe feminist- informed research that: aimed to change social structures and practices that maintain injustice for epistemically and socially marginalised communities; was carried out by researcher who are themselves members of epistemically and socially marginalised communities with other marginalised communities as scholar-activists; was based on relatively unstructured dialogue-based methods; had a built in participant-led phase which made room for participants to contribute, if they wished, to the research methods; was reflexive of power dynamics in the research including in being transparent that for whatever relevant institutional constraints, the problem had been identified first, after which participants were invited to make informed decisions of whether to be part of the change. This would provide a

way to describe politicised, participation-driven research that was not 'business as usual' but equally does not reflect the full aims of PAR. Not reflecting the full aims of PAR does not make the research 'less worthy' so long as it is ethical- there are different ways to conduct critical feminist-informed research after all.

4.7   Chapter 4 conclusion

This chapter has described and discussed my chosen methods for answering my research question within Critical anti-racist feminist frameworks. I have discussed with examples, how my chosen methods, which included conducting research in participant's homes and kitchens, provided the necessary prompts for rich conversations with participants. I justified the methods with the aim of having dialogues that allowed for rich explorations of the different food-related experiences and perspectives that different situated participants were differentially exposed to. I further described and discussed the extent to which participants and I were (not) necessarily coming in with the same experiential perspectives and the impact this had on the research. I noted the ways in which food served as a vehicle/lens for other issues and how 'food talk' often provides a window on social relations. This will be expanded upon in the empirical chapters to follow. I have also discussed some of the limitations of these methods, including the assumptions they carry. In this chapter, I also briefly highlighted Sheffield's food and racial context in discussing its suitability for this research.

In terms of contributions, I proposed and defined the concept of Interactive Action Research (IAR) and this chapter is essentially a case-study of what such research would look like. This was in response to the frequent yet well-intended mis-labelling of my research as Participatory Action Research (PAR). IAR provides an extra tool in the definitional toolbox of research that deviates from 'business as usual' in its execution, and is sympathetic to the liberatory feminist social justice approaches and commitments, but has nonetheless for institutional or other constraints, not included participants in the problem identification and analysis stages of the research. Having a separate term contributes to avoiding the co-option and 'watering down' of PAR ideals, when what people mean to say is "more-interactive-and-political-than-usual."

Additionally, this chapter highlighted in a preliminary way, the reflexive role of feminist food researchers who can be put in a problematic position by their research participants when they are treated as, The Food Researcher, that is, as 'food experts' and/or as people who are there to 'police' their food ('bad') food 'choices'. There is a long feminist tradition of considering how the various social locations shape the process and outcomes of our research. However there is little, if at all, explicit consideration of what it means for participants to (potentially) construct us, as the 'experts' on food-related discussions, and the 'police' of 'bad' food choices. I went into the

fieldwork with an awareness of the "strongly moralized" (Jackson, and Meah, 2019: 263) nature of food and food-related discussions. I therefore felt a sense of responsibility to pre-empt any anxieties in participants that I was in their kitchens to 'judge' their food choices (see Rozin, 1999; Coveney, 1999; Jackson et al., 2018: 137-62), or look for inconsistencies between what they said about food and what they did with food. I affirmed that it is possible and sometimes desirable to ethically do research that pays attention to those disparities, for example, with the aim of trying to understand why 'food safety' standards amongst consumers are not improving as desired, despite all the public communication campaigns (e.g. see Dickinson et al., 2014). However, this was not the purpose of my research. Moreover, I went into the fieldwork with the understanding of the various points of expertise participants would bring into the research, including the expertise on *their* food-related experiences.

In this research, there were two interactions in particular that highlighted my treatment as The Food Researcher in terms of food police. Both of these interactions involved 'apologies' from participants about either the presence of fizzy drinks in their fridge, or, for using a can of chopped tomatoes in a stew, rather than 'fresh' tomatoes. This highlighted the deeply moralized and often gendered (e.g. Fox and Smith, 2011) nature of 'convenience' foods (see Jackson, et al., 2018) more broadly. The discussions that arose contributed to the theme on the ills of the industrialized food systems, and local food as an panacea, even if aspirationally- a theme that is picked up in a slightly different form in chapter 5. More work can be done to explore how our treatment in feminist food-related research as food police or food experts shape the research that we do with participants.

Ignorance emerged as the overarching theme through thematic analysis of the transcripts and fieldwork notes. I described the iterative analysis process I undertook in more detail in this chapter (section 4.5). The next three chapters expand on how the issues of ignorance that emerged within food-related discussions with participants. Chapter 5 begins the empirical discussions with how failing to consider the situatedness as knowers, as is often the case in local food discussions, contributes to different forms of ignorance. Chapter 6 considers the testimonial injustice, one of the epistemic harms that contribute to or result from various forms of ignorance. Finally, Chapter 7 considers how participants used spaces such as kitchens to redress hermeneutical injustices.

Chapter 5: The production of ignorance in local food politics

5.1   Introduction

In the previous chapters, I set up the theoretical argument of this project, that black women's food-related experiences and perspectives are a useful lens for understanding epistemologies of ignorance. This first empirical chapter uses participants' unprompted views on local food discussions, as a lens to explore the forms of ignorance linked to, and arising from situated knowing and group identities. The fact that participants had so much to say specifically about local food without prompting affirms that local food discussions are not inconsequential. Not only have these discussions grown in ubiquity over the last decade, but also, they have generated substantial social movement and policy attention and actions. The claims made about, and through the lens of local food, directly shape 'common sense' understandings of inequality in society. Using empirical data constructed with self-identifying black female participants, this chapter discusses the ways in which ignorance is produced in food-related discussions through an insufficient consideration of the situatedness of knowers.

The *outcomes* of these often-problematic discussions on local food have already been highlighted in the literatures, particularly those that call for more 'objective' thinking by cautioning against 'falling into the local trap'. Born and Purcell (2006) coined the term the 'local trap' to describe this phenomenon. The local trap refers to:

> "the tendency of food activists and researchers to assume something inherent about the local scale. The local is assumed to be desirable; it is preferred a priori to larger scales…the local trap is suggesting that the local scale is inherently good. Far from claiming that the local is inherently bad…there is nothing inherent about any scale. Local-scale food systems are equally likely to be just or unjust, sustainable or unsustainable, secure or insecure." (Born and Purcell, 2006: 195)

However, there is a potential danger of reifying problematic conceptions of 'objectivity' based on detached and disembodied discussions of scale, that ultimately lead to unsatisfying, relativist conclusions (e.g. see Winter 2003:31): the local scale sometimes has ethical outcomes and sometimes does not. It is an 'unsatisfying' conclusion in the sense that it does not provide actual pathways towards social justice, particularly for various stakeholders who are increasingly aware of the ills associated with/blamed upon industrialised food systems. The feminist epistemological concept of the situated knower, in contrast, introduces 'strong objectivity' into the discussions by paying attention to the diverse values, interests and social locations shaping local food discussions, and by introducing a more rigorous methodology for critical and transformative interactions.

Discussions on local food tend to follow the problematic 'S-know-that-p' (Code, 1993) model of knowing, discussed in greater length in chapter 1. In other words, there is the assumption that consumers (S) are interchangeable and fungible; therefore any consumer with access to the evidence on the unsustainable nature of industrialised food provisioning, will have the object of knowledge (p) that 'local is best'. Food scholars who have called for greater 'objectivity' in these discussions through the notion of the 'local trap' (Born and Purcell, 2006; Purcell, 2006; Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman, 2012; Agyeman, 2013) or similar notions such as 'unreflexive localism' (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005: 36) have tended to focus on the object of knowledge (p). In this chapter's section 5.1 I discuss in greater detail some of the cautions that have been made for example on questions to do with the nature of scale. These scholars tend to emphasise that the aim of those discussions is not in any way to vilify local food initiatives. For example, Dupuis and Goodman (2005:360) caveat that their "critique is meant to be cautionary, not destructive of the alternative food agenda (against global, big, conventional, environmentally degrading food systems)." Similarly Born and Purcell (2006:195) caveat thus:

> "To be clear, the concept of the local trap is not an argument against the local scale per se. We are not suggesting that the local scale is inherently undesirable. Rather, the local trap is the assumption that local is inherently good. Far from claiming that the local is inherently bad, the article argues that there is nothing inherent about any scale. Local-scale food systems are equally likely to be just or unjust, sustainable or unsustainable, secure or insecure."

In other words, the aim of these discussions is not to argue for a particular position (local is inherently good or bad), but to help improve the justificatory process by which these knowledge claims are made. That is, to help people consider whether they have good reasons to believe what it is that they believe about local food, sustainability and so on. However, the framing of these discussions does not actually then do the work that it is intended to do. In other words, it is trying to not argue for a specific conclusion (local is inherently good/local is inherently bad) rather it is trying to help food scholars, consumers and activists consider whether they have good reasons to believe what they believe, and does so by focussing on scale. This creates contexts that actively encourage the production of racialized ignorance, because the assumption around the nature of the knower (generic/fungible) are left intact and no critical methodology is given to aid transformative conversations around local food politics and sustainability. This also leads to an unhelpful relativist state- local is sometimes just, sometimes not- with no clear way forward. Thus, arguably, one 'avoids falling into the local trap', only to fall into a relativist 'trap'.

This chapter argues that achieving 'objectivity' in local food discussions would require "taking subjectivity into account" (Code, 1995:44). In other words, by making explicit the

considerations of 'S'- not as an atomist generic knower, but as a situated knower whose social location, values and interests *must* be taken into account (Code, 1995,2012), we begin to take steps towards 'strong objectivity' (Harding, 1992, 1995). Moreover, the very process of encouraging explicit considerations of the diversity of social locations, values and interests that knowers bring into their knowledge claims, encourages robust transformative dialogues. These in turn invite considerations of the 'bigger picture'- namely, desires for social justice- with critical reflections on the extent to which different local food initiatives in different contexts align or deviate from the larger goal.

This chapter empirically contributes to our understanding of ignorance, by addressing the forms of ignorance that arise from a lack of consideration of our situatedness as knowers and of our group identities. It speaks to how ignorance arises from our situatedness, but can also be challenged through our situatedness. Additionally the chapter makes contributions to debates on feminist epistemology between feminist empiricist and standpoint theorists, on which forms of diversity allow for a flourishing of feminist values (Intemann, 2010). The chapter helps us to understand that both the forms of diversity identified in feminist empiricism (diversity of values and interests) and standpoint theory (diversity of social locations) are required, rather than an either-or position.

The rest of the chapter begins by a review of the cautions that have been made about the knowledge claim of local food as the panacea to food injustice. Section 5.3 then discusses the relevant research findings in more detail. This chapter draws from dialogues with 4 participants namely: Sekhmet, Strawberry, Gisto and Eucalyptus. The participants were introduced in greater detail in Chapter 4 (section 4.2). I will briefly re-introduce them here. Sekhmet was an early 30s, dual nationality and mixed race (Sri-Lankan and black-British) middle-class, female, teacher, who was recruited after a talk. Strawberry was also in her early 30s, also mixed-race black and Asian woman. She noted that she 'grew up working class but was probably middle class now'. Strawberry worked in a local charity and was recruited through the email sent out to various organisations (see Appendix 4), but did not specify which specific email list-serve she was part of. Gisto was a late-20s African American woman who was on a gap year in the UK during the time of the interviews. She identified as a working class woman, mixed race black and white and was recruited after a talk on introduction to black-feminisms given as part of my public engagement. Finally, Eucalyptus was a late 40s, black-British working-class woman with Nigerian parents. She worked as an artist and was also recruited through the emailed Call for Participants. Section 5.4 concludes by considering how this work can be taken forward.

5.2   Review: the often problematic nature of local food discussions

Local food discussions have grown in ubiquity over the last decade; for example, the term 'locavore' was the Oxford English Dictionary's 2007 word for the year. The growth of these discussions is driven by the near unanimity within and outside of academia of the unsustainable nature of the current industrialised food systems (e.g. see Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, 2002: 96; and oft-cited works by Raj Patel (2007); Marion Nestle (2002; 2006; 2015); Michel Pollan (2006; 2008); Eric Schlosser (2001); Barbara Kingsolver (2007); Mark Bittman (2008;2013) as well as documentaries such as Food Inc. (2008) amongst others). These harms associated with or linked to industrialised forms of food provisioning including (but not limited to): concerns about the impact of mass-produced and highly processed foods on people's individual health (e.g. Menon, 2016); the environmental impacts of industrialised farming (Shiva, 2000, Geber et al., 2013) including the increasing toxicity of soils (Guthman and Brown, 2015); the racialized, gendered and classed exploitation of farm workers many of whom tend to be immigrants (e.g. Holmes, 2013) or sometimes even child labourers (e.g. O'Keefe, 2016); amongst other pressing concerns. Overall, there has been a growing conceptualising of food as a network of relationships with soils, plants, animals and all the people both near and far who grow, package, transport and sell our food. This inter-dependent network of relationships (Massey, 2004; Allen, 2010) all gets affected by our food 'choices', hence the need for more ethical and sustainable practices.

It is within this context that local food initiatives are constructed as the inherent solution to the problems associated with industrialized food systems. Local food is understood to be fresher, better quality and better for human health (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000); the minimization of 'food miles' and therefore increased environmental sustainability (Norberg-Hodge et al. 2002) and a 'geography of regard' (Sage, 2001) as consumers have increased opportunities to know first-hand the conditions their food was grown or reared in (Rudy, 2012: 27-28) and to care about or for rural landscapes, soils, farmer's livelihoods, farm workers and farm animal welfare. However, the received wisdom that local food is the *inherent* panacea to unjust food systems has been problematized (e.g. Allen et al., 2003; Hinrichs 2003; Winter 2003).

In other words, scale is socially constructed (Born and Purcell, 2006) and has different outcomes in different contexts. Thus, different literatures have discussed how/that that local food discussions tend to frequently misrepresent climate change science and other ideas around ethics. This matters, as 'well intentioned' people and policies then add to inequalities, rather than meaningfully challenging them. The faulty argument that has attracted the cautions against the local trap, can be innovatively summarised as follows:

Premise 1: Industrialised, processed food is unethical as it is environmentally unsustainable, and often harmful to health and wellness of farm and factory workers, consumers, soils and animals;

Premise 2: The *local* scale is the opposite of the *industrialised;*

Premise 3: Local food is *inherently* to be desired as the sustainable, ethical choice.

Whilst all the premises have come under scrutiny, the second and third premises are the focus of most of the literatures cautioning against the 'local trap'. For example there have been debates on whether it can ever be ethical to feed oneself or one's family 'processed' food, for example through considerations of love and care as forms of ethics (e.g. see Probyn, 2006). But these debates around the first premise are not usually related to considerations of the merits of local food initiatives; scholars thinking about premise 2 and 3 often take it as read that on the balance, the evidence suggests that current industrialised systems of food provisioning are undesirable and social justice would require urgent action to remedy this. The next section of the review considers the literatures that have critiqued the faulty logic of premise 2 and 3 of the argument made to conclude that local food initiatives are inherently just.

One of the problematic assumptions that has already been identified in local food discussions is the assumption that local scale is the opposite of the industrialised scale. Born and Purcell (2006) argue that part of the roots of the local trap, include the conflation of industrialized, capitalist systems with the global scale that assumes that "global agriculture is somehow the same thing as capitalist agriculture, that globalization necessarily equals capitalization...What follows logically from this assumption is that resistance to capitalist agriculture... must be necessarily local." (Born and Purcell, 2006: 199). In response, the caution has been made that industrialized capitalist agriculture can occur at any scale.

Arguably what drives the conflation between industrialized-capitalist food provisioning and global scale, is the perceived distance (Eden et al., 2008: 1046) that consumers increasingly feel between themselves and food producers. This is particularly in the wake of food scares that intensify the sense that consumers do not 'know where their food comes from' and whether it is to be trusted. Increasing proximity (Eriksen 2013: 50-51) between food producers and food consumers has therefore become a key policy and activist theme. The perceived distance between food producers and consumers is both geographical ('food miles') as well as a relational distance (the inability to literally and metaphorically 'shake the hand that feeds us').

Whilst some of the above benefits to people and planet can and do accrue from locally produced food, they are not *inherent (*Born and Purcell, 2006: 195) or even guaranteed benefits, as has

already been pointed out in various literatures (Hinrichs, 2003; Dupuis and Goodman, 2005; Winter, 2003). For example, geographical scales are sometimes irrelevant as to whether a product is sustainable or not. Thus, for example, beef, whether sourced locally or not, is still inherently more unsustainable than other less land and water intensive foods that might be grown further away (Stanescu, 2013; Steinfeld et al., 2006; cf. the position of Rudy, 2012). This is because cows require significant, and, per the influential report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Steinfeld et al., 2006), disproportionate amounts of time, grain and land before reaching steak-readiness, during which time they also emit significant amounts of climate-changing gases.

Moreover, and perhaps counter-intuitively, the greenest foods are sometimes further away, as transportation sometimes accounts for less in terms of greenhouse gas emissions than how the actual food is grown or reared. In other words, science demonstrates that some foods grown locally in a greenhouse tend to be less environmentally friendly than the same sun-ripened foods even when transportation is accounted for (DEFRA, 2005). Additionally, the scale where food is grown is not a *conclusive* indicator of whether or not it was grown using pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals. In other words, there is often a conflation of 'local food' and 'organic food' which misrepresents the fact that it is possible to be a local farmer and farm at large scales (debunking the myth of modern farming as reflecting 1950s family farms) and/or still use chemicals to grow food.

Aside from the more scientific and logistical misrepresentations above, there are also racialized, gendered and classed amongst other silences within discussions of ethical eating. It has been argued that some of the discussions around ethical eating border on problematic able-ist assumptions that if a person does not have a 'healthy' 'productive' body then they are worth-less. For example, Kim Q. Hall (2014) discusses the ways in which the discussions particularly in the US alternative food movements are based on the idea that eating particular types of foods "prevent or cures disability" (Hall, 2014: 178) which Hall argues "uncritically relies and perpetuates the notion that disability is undesirable and in need of eradication" (Hall, 2014: 178).

Additionally, there is the question of whether it makes sense to place the burden of resolving structural food inequalities on the tables of individual food consumers through their purchases/forks. In other words, it is problematic to convert political and social problems into individual problems with consumption-based solutions (Brown, 2006:704). In terms of local food politics, a common argument here is that consumers need to be willing to pay more ('pay the real cost of food') in order for a number of the structural food-related inequalities to be resolved. Whilst there are conversations to be had for example with regards to the price of

foods in relation to farmers' livelihoods, it is also the case that a significant and growing number of consumers already pay more than they can afford for necessities (e.g. see the growing problem of food poverty leading to consumers resorting to emergency food provisioning such as food banks- Lambie-Mumford, 2017). Over-emphasising these forms of ethical practices contributes to the notion of ethics as elitist, whilst also overlooking other forms of ethical practices for example in the demonstrations of love and care to feed one's family (e.g. see Probyn, 2002: 36).

Moreover, some of the ethical eating discussions are based on problematic and romanticised notions of gender. For example, (liberal) feminist activism is commonly 'blamed' for structural food inequalities. Here there is a tendency to rely on problematic narratives of post-war femininity to make the case for families (and usually women) making the time to grow their own food as well as engage in other forms of food provisioning e.g. butchering and slaughtering one's food as women in previous generation did (e.g. see work by Laura Shapiro that debunks some of the myths on post-war femininity e.g. Shapiro, 2017). Finally is the issue that symbols of resistance often get co-opted by capitalist structures (e.g. see Belasco, 2007). Hence initiatives that initially begin as politicised 'alternatives' to problematic mainstream practices, tend to be co-opted into the mainstream and de-politicised. This is the case also with 'alternative' food and strategies (e.g. processed foods are now increasingly 'sold with a story' Freidberg, 2003: 54) being co-opted.

Finally, there are also racialized discussions in alternative food activisms which are often wilfully ignored as already extensively discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.2). There I discussed the tendency for participants in ethical food discussions to refuse to perceive systematic discrimination, and to possess a convenient amnesia about the past and its legacy in the present. This speaks to how localities are constructed as homogenous without consideration for how intersections of different systems of power impact on people's food 'choices'. This means that "certain actors and agendas may be empowered by food system localization while others may be disempowered or left out" (Agyeman, 2016: July 26th).

Moreover, these discussions tend to construct localities as discrete and ignore the relationality of scale (see Herod, 2003 and Herod, 2010 for summaries of extensive debates in Human Geography on what scale is). In other words, scales do not stack upon each other like 'Russian dolls' (Massey, 2004) and go from local to regional to global, but rather demonstrate an interdependence. This means, as Sally Marston argues (2000; see also Marston et al., 2005,) that what happens in one scale, will have effects on other scales. For example, decisions that get taken in one place, will have repercussions elsewhere. Moreover, global scales are made up of many different localities and that what happens in various localities will have consequences not

just in other local scales but also globally (Allen, 2010:301; Born and Purcell, 2006:198). It also means that it is not the case that the local scale is reactive whilst the global scale is dynamic. Rather, global changes are reconstituted by smaller scales.

Thus to sum up the discussion so far, I have identified the faulty argument that has led to the notion of the local trap, and discussions on how to avoid it. However, and as argued at the beginning of this chapter (section 5.1), these discussions tend to focus on the object of the knowledge claim, but without questioning the problematic model of knowing that assumes interchangeable knowers. By extension the work of improving the justificatory process- which is the aim of these cautions against the local trap-remains undone. Indeed the conversations are in danger of advocating for problematic conceptualisations of objectivity that reflect a value-neutral, detached, 'view from nowhere'. It is here that the concept of situated knowing can reframe these conversations about objectivity in local food discussions, by encouraging conceptualisations of strong objectivity that align with feminist values. Strong objectivity here refers to 'less distorted' knowledge claims that arise from taking into explicit account the *inevitable* biases, interests and values that shape knowledge (Harding, 1991). The argument I am making here can be summarised as follows:

> Premise 1: Conceptions of objectivity that inadequately consider that a knower's social location, values and interests are relevant features in assessing knowledge claims are problematic;
>
> Premise 2: The notion of the local trap pays attention to the cognitive product, with insufficient attention to the question of 'who is it that knows';
>
> Premise 3: The notion of the local trap is a well-intentioned yet problematic framing of how to achieve objective thinking about local food.

To be clear, particularly with regards to premise 1, there has been some mention of how scales are not homogenous, and therefore people within a particular locale do not benefit or lose equally. Indeed, it has been noted that pre-existing inequalities within a locale can be intensified within local food initiatives (e.g. see Hinrichs, 2000; Winter, 2003; Born and Purcell, 2006:202). These considerations however are still at the point of thinking about the object of knowledge (is local best) rather than at the point of consideration of the context of discovery, which means that the social construction, and perspectival nature of knowledges (Haraway, 1988) is ignored.

The concept of the situated knower on the other hand, encourages explicit considerations of the socially differentiated and socially interactive nature of knowers. In other words, knowers are neither generic (Code, 1993) nor self-sufficient (Code, 1991; Alcoff, 2001; Code, 2006) and

therefore "knowledge claims are always socially situated" (Harding, 1992: 442; see also Rose, 1997). Moreover, knowers need to engage each other in public processes of critical scrutiny of their knowledge claims, because the process of knowing is inherently interactional (Longino, 2002). This process of critical scrutiny must include, per Longino (2002): publically recognised forums for criticism; the uptake of criticism; shared public standards among knowers; and tempered equality of intellectual authority. I will now flesh out these criteria and insights on situated knowing in the next section that considers the relevant research findings.

5.3   Findings and discussion

Unprompted by me, a number of participants specifically brought up local food, variously defined, within their anecdotes. The participants engaged with local food differently- some intentionally 'supported' local food initiatives, or at least made intentional efforts to buy local food for various reasons, whilst others engaged by not going out of their way to support local food initiatives or to specifically buy local food. Participants seemed to bring conversations to the point of the conditions of justification; that is, the component of knowledge that asks us to consider whether we have good reasons to believe what we believe –as opposed to having true beliefs that are lucky guesses. This issue of justification came up for some participants because, in the process of explaining to me why they supported local food initiatives for example, they found themselves unable to give reasons for their belief other than, it reflects the received wisdom, and 'what you are supposed to think'. This was the case with Sekhmet; the conversation occurred during the kitchen dialogues, and was prompted by my observation of the muddy carrots that we were using in our cooking.

> **Beth:** It has been a long while since I washed mud off vegetables…actually the last time was when I was home in my parent's farm…
>
> **Sekhmet**: there is something to be said for muddy vegetables they always taste so yum! Well, all local food always does!… Sometimes I cheat and buy some vegetables pre-cut from the super-market, which I know some feminist would consider unethical… you know that I am not growing them myself or chopping all the food myself… but these are very anti-feminist ideas…because that that is a very privileged thing to say …but then again I am also in a privileged position because I can buy local fruit and veg from Beanies [a veg*n shop in Sheffield] just round the corner…
>
> **Beth:** do feminists actually say you *have t*o grow your own food? Okay wait…(laughs)let's actually begin by …what do you mean by buying local and why did you say it's a privileged thing?

Sekhmet? Well, because…In first world countries, buying local is posh mostly. But at home, it is the poor women who sell local food by the roadside, sometimes from their small farms…So I guess in some places buying local food is a privileged choice… It's interesting though because now at home, the type of Buy Local you find here is catching on… You still have roadside vendors, who are selling local, mostly organic, stuff, but across the road you have the upper-class elite organic shops, and it's all packaged in very fancy ways, and you pay through your nose and the labels will be like [in a sarcastic tone] "these vegetables were grown with love, and you can go to our website and see more" (laughs)…but they fail to see that now local food isn't affordable for locals., and that local farmers are being harmed by people adopting posh views of what local food is…

Beth: So why do you support it?

Sekhmet: (laughs) I haven't actually ever thought about it much… I mean we get told that supporting local food is what you are supposed to do, I have never really thought about it much…till now (laughs)… I actually need to think about it some more"

(Dialogue 2 with Sekhmet, 25th June 2016, original emphasis)

The beginnings of the discussion reveal the various definitions and proximities that Sekhmet attaches to 'local food' (Eriksen, 2013). Local here refers to geographical and relational proximity- food bought from an independent shop 'just round the corner'. The relational proximity aspect is underscored by contrasting muddy food bought from Beanies, with 'pre-cut supermarket vegetables'. Additionally, Sekhmet uses proxies of mud on vegetables as further evidence of the 'local-ness' of the food: she suggests that there is something causal about mud and authentic locality (see also Eden et al., 2008:1048 where participants also used mud as evidence of being local). Finally, her understanding of local food also includes local food as having inherent qualities- it '*always* tastes so yum' (emphasis added).

Beyond questions of how local food is defined, we also get into issues of the values, interests and social locations that shape her beliefs, as well as the process by which she came to these beliefs. This discussion begins with self-disclosure of having grown up on a farm, and having points in my life where I do/have been able to eat food 'fresh from the farm' as it were. Being a daughter of a small-scale farmer in the Global South is a social location that comes with values and interests that we do not necessarily pick up here. Sekhmet does however bring up her (mis)understanding of feminist ethical values, which to her include engaging with food by growing and preparing it yourself, and/or not relying on supermarkets as this is 'cheating'. I begin to question whether this actually reflects a true statement of feminist beliefs. Indeed it has

often been argued that feminists are to 'blame' for why people no longer engage with food, because feminists, (some versions of), have been very much in support of convenience foods. This support for convenience foods by some feminists was based on the idea that food-work is oppressive to women, and women's energies could be better spent outside of the kitchen/home (see discussion by Williams, 2016: 272-274 in the context of cookbooks, on the historical feminist preference for convenience foods and technologies). Sekhmet's belief here on the feminist position on convenience foods (such as pre-cut vegetables) is potentially mistaken. Be that as it may, she recognises that if it is indeed true that using pre-cut, supermarket bought vegetables is inconsistent with challenging the systemic oppression of women, that this is a 'privileged' idea. She further recognises that her being middle-class puts her in a 'privileged position' of being able to have the 'choice' of whether to buy vegetables at a supermarket or at an independent shop that will sell them at a premium. The question of privilege allows us to move the conversation to other social locations, values and interests shaping her opinions.

It could be argued that considerations of one's values, interest and social locations hinders 'rational' thinking, as the discussions are not 'open-ended' but have pre-determined ideas. There are at least two ways to respond to this. First of all, feminist philosophers have argued that it is both undesirable and impossible to transcend the specificities of one's location in order to reason. Indeed the desire to do so, by itself reveals the assumptions one is making about what counts as a reasoned argument. Secondly, this interaction highlights that even an initial commitment to particular values does not necessarily pre-determine the conclusions. For example, even the commitment to opposing the multiple forms of subordination that different women face in different ways, still leaves a lot of room to reason on what that actually looks like in terms of food. In this interaction alone we can see understandings of feminisms that would call for women to re-engage with food as part of their feminist commitment, and versions of feminisms that would encourage convenience foods and so on (for work considering how feminist commitments shape food engagement see Adams, 1990, 2000; Hollows, 2003; Szabo, 2011, 2013). The point here is not to adjudicate on which is the 'correct' feminist position. Rather it is to make the case that values, social locations and interests need not be transcended in order for critical reasoning to occur.

This interaction also then highlights questions of justification. When asked about why she supports local food initiatives, Sekhmet admits that she does not actually know why; she has 'never thought it through' and has only adopted the practice, as it is what one is 'supposed to do'. The tripartite definition of knowledge recognises that the necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge is 'justified true belief'. In other words, it is not enough to simply hold an opinion, or indeed to sincerely hold to that opinion. As we have begun to discuss, challenging ignorance

requires critical dialogues that consider whether an opinion is false/mistaken, and is justifiable. To be clear, it is not that any one person has access to The Truth. Rather, as discussed, knowledge claims are inherently partial, which is why it is important to consider the assumptions that shape the fragments of Truth. But saying that no one person can claim to the full Truth is not the same as saying that knowledge claims are epistemically equal. Indeed feminist philosophers have argued that some knowledge claims are better, and 'less distorted' than others. The better, less distorted knowledge claims are those that are the product of critical dialogue (Longino, 2002).

Then we come to the suggestion that 'buying local is what you are supposed to do'. This speaks to deliberate interventions to encourage people to change their behaviour to more ethical/sustainable practices. However, Sekhmet reflects on the fact that there is not, in fact, a homogenous conceptualisation of local food: local over 'here' is 'posh', it comes with a premium, and is a performance of distinction (Bourdieu, 2000). In contrast, local over 'there' is around necessity- working-class, subsistence, often female farmers, selling by the roadside. She argues that conceptualisations of local in Global North are being exported to the Global South, in ways that cause harm to farmers' livelihoods and to food accessiblity- 'local is no longer affordable to the locals'. Moreover, the idea that buying local is what one is 'supposed to do' raises additional questions: according to whom/ according to which epistemic community? What is the make-up of this epistemic community? Is the epistemic community reflective of tempered expertise of all? For example, would working-class roadside female vendors in the Global South have as much intellectual authority as others within that epistemic community? Has the idea that is what you are 'supposed to do' been exposed to, and withstood, criticism?   Considering these questions helps us realise that ethical and moral obligations often reflect unquestioned, problematic 'views from nowhere' which transcend specific locations (Haraway, 1991). In other words, it is a view that does not reveal the interests and biases that shape it, and in fact may claim to be abstracted and detached from those specificities.

The point is not that buying local is not what are you 'supposed to do'. The point is to argue for the fostering of environments where rigorous, transparent and inclusive critical debates flourish. This is particularly because, 'views from nowhere' are often reflective of white and/or male power that is then mis-represented as universal (Harding, 1991, 1998; Longino, 1990, 2001; Wylie, 1996). From this interaction, it is clear that there have potentially been failures to encourage reflexivity (Harding, 1993) or democratic discussion (Longino, 2001) within local food discussions. As a result, the assumptions that have procedurally shaped a knowledge claim are not exposed for critical scrutiny. Related to this point, this interaction also highlights how starting knowledge claims from the perspective of diverse marginalized communities

encourages greater reflexivity about knowledge claims. Reflexivity, in turn, allows for people to consider the partial nature of their claims. For example, as Sekhmet considers the impact of various constructions of local, she realises that conceptualisations of local food that are more reflective of affluent whiteness are being transported to the Global South, with the effect that 'local food is no longer affordable to the locals'. Thus 'roadside vendors' and consumers in the Global South for example, are more likely to be aware of, and take issue with, particular constructions of local food that are being uncritically universalised. This does not mean that marginalized communities have *automatic* epistemic privilege; rather their partial knowledges have the *potential* to see the divergence between more privileged dominant views of how the world works, in comparison to their own lived experiences.

The partial nature of all knowledges also speaks to the need for epistemic conversations that cut across multiple social locations and knowers, in order to have a fuller, truer understanding of reality. Therefore, the claims around local food that arise from the inclusion of diverse marginalized communities are to be preferred over those in which marginalised communities are excluded, as Strawberry also noted.

Beth: Wow, that's the biggest bag of lentils I have ever seen (laughs)

Strawberry: I know right?! (laughter) We get it cheap because we bulk buy from Lembas, which is this big warehouse not too far from here…they only sell local food…although when I say that I mean, food from the whole of the UK, which I think is the most local you can get, unless you don't want to eat good food, or eat at all (laughs)

Beth: Do you buy local food on purpose or…?

Strawberry: Yeah I guess so… A lot of the considerations I make in my day to day life are about what will cause the least environmental impact…But it's not easy because in this country, local food is only about environmental stuff and I agree that it's always better in terms of food miles… But I know that even food that is grown in this country …. gets grown in one place and then it will get driven 20 miles, and then it will get packaged and driven another 20 miles to the warehouse, and then it gets driven to the supermarket … So even food grown in this country is travelling a lot more than you would want. But main problem for me is that because the people who are in charge are largely the white middle class people who are setting up community supported agriculture… I know a few people doing this… it becomes about what they want…So the focus is better tasting food, avoiding pesticides and chemicals… challenging mass grown food…you know, trying to be environmentally friendly and to know where food comes from…all that… But it's not about racial justice…

Beth: Is that a problem?

Strawberry: Yes it needs to be a problem! (laughs)… erm, I have thought about the fact that a lot of black people I know in Sheffield can't afford to support local food schemes, like veg-boxes… it's expensive…but then our food *shouldn't* be cheap, but also our wages shouldn't be so low… local food can connect up these projects… The solutions need to be bigger because it's a much bigger systemic problem… you know… here local food is just a white middle class hobby… no one wants to talk about race in local food… but like in the States…like I have heard of how local food in Brooklyn… there's like a couple of projects that mainly black communities are in charge and growing their own food in their own communities in ways that connect with issues of racial inequalities… That's what."

<div align="right">(Dialogue 2 with Strawberry, 10th March 2016 original emphasis)</div>

Like Sekhmet, Strawberry also 'falls into the local trap'. Whereas Sekhmet claimed that local food was *inherently/'always'* better tasting, here Strawberry claims local food is i*nherently/ 'always'* the more environmentally sustainable choice, because it has fewer 'food miles' (Lang and Heasman, 2004) associated with it. As highlighted in the review (section 5.2) the notion of 'food miles' has been critiqued as being "a rather *simplistic* notion that the further food travels between farm and plate, the greater must be its negative environmental impact" (Kemp et al., 2010:504 emphasis added; see also Coley et al., 2011:919 who also describe it as a 'simplistic emblem of sustainability'). For example, a 'seminal' report by The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA, 2005) found that in the UK context, foods that come into the country via sea transport, actually account for less carbon dioxide emissions (12%) than the emissions caused by road transport with in the UK (77%) (DEFRA, 2005:95). The fact that 'food miles' is a concept whose science is flawed, and yet is still deployed in food-related discussions and policies, has caused some to question whether the notion of 'food miles' has become a way to circumvent trade rules:

"Under WTO agreements (in particular Article III of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1947), member countries have an obligation to not treat products imported from other member countries less favourably than products of national origin. Clearly, certain lobbyists are arguing that imported food should be treated less favourably than domestically-produced food, which would be in breach of the UK's international obligations. Furthermore, the DEFRA report (2005, p. 2) points to the illogicality of singling out food products separate from other goods: "Why worry about 'food miles' but not 'other product miles'?"" (Kemp et al., 2010:505)

In other words, the transformative possibilities of local food in relation to climate change cannot be taken for granted, as there are different ways that greenhouse gas emissions accrue even locally. Moreover, economic values and interests have played a role in driving the 'food miles' agenda. For example, supermarkets using 'food miles' labels as a way to differentiate themselves from competitors as eco-conscious (Wallop, 2007; Rosenthal, 2008). For Strawberry, she begins by saying that local food is always best for environmental sustainability because of 'food miles' but then proceeds to talk about road transport, which seems to suggest that she recognizes that environmental sustainability is not as simplistic as miles from farm to fork.

In addition to her explicitly stated values and interests in environmental sustainability, she also argues that food justice should contribute to racial justice. She notes that amongst 'those in charge' of local food initiatives and discussions, particular values are more likely to find resonance: sustainability, taste, 'freshness', provenance, organic, and supporting artisan producers. However, 'those in charge' of local food initiatives in her local context, who from her experience are over-represented by white middle-class people (cf. Alkon, 2012; Slocum,2006, 2007; Guthman 2008, 2011, 2013) wilfully ignore questions of racial equality and justice. Strawberry considers that the full possibilities of local food initiatives fail to be claimed by the ignoring of racialized questions, which means the initiatives become extensions of 'white middle class hobbies'. The critique that alternative food initiatives fail to reach their transformative potential because they are extensions of 'white middle-class hobbies' is not new (e.g. Goodman, 2010:205). These critiques are often made in the context of considering the make-up of participants in these initiatives that tend to insist on being colour-blind (Guthman, 2006; 2008) whilst being overwhelmingly patronized by white middle-class consumers (Slocum, 2006, 2007 Guthman, 2008; Goodman and Goodman, 2007).

Strawberry goes further to consider questions of decision-making in these initiatives (cf. Allen, 2010:298). She argues that it is not *inevitable t*hat affluent white people 'should be in charge' of these discussions, or indeed that questions of justice should be ignored. Having an all white, mostly male leadership in these initiatives is an 'accidental-on-purpose' situation that needs to be problematized she argues. She points to how in other contexts such as Brooklyn USA, some of the local food projects are designed in ways that enable racially marginalized communities to take the lead. This then allows those projects to centre the interests of marginalized groups, and overall to be initiatives that make direct useful contributions to racially minoritized groups' claims to justice. This is in contrast to the projects she is aware of in Sheffield that reinforce hierarchies by the wilful neglect of discussions on race in terms of the project goals and leadership. Local food initiatives can become liberatory tools, if and when they are directed to

answer the questions arising from the predicaments of working-class people of colour, rather than when they are 'white middle-class hobbies'. For Strawberry this includes addressing the oxymoron that food is too cheap to be produced sustainably (Carolan, 2018; Hodges, 2005) and yet not affordable enough, to be accessed by everyone, all the time (Patel, 2012; Holt-Gimenez and Patel, 2012). This question of a lack of shared 'end goals' by which the merits of local food initiatives and discussions can be evaluated was also raised by other participants, as has been or will be explored. Indeed it has already been noted in the literatures that part of the problematic nature with discussions on alternative food initiatives is that the alternative initiative itself becomes the goal, as opposed to a pathway towards justice (e.g. Born and Purcell, 2006: 197).

Additionally, there were questions as to whether the reliability of public avenues for critiquing alternative food knowledge claims, as discussed with Gisto. The conversations began because the area that she lives in has began holding farmers markets, with one scheduled on the day of the research. The discussion arose in the context of talking about my difficulties in finding her house (for the research), because of having to navigate through an unusually busy area that was not well known to me. This led to a more general conversation around her engagement with farmers markets more generally.

> **Beth:** So do you attend the farmers' market in the area?
>
> **Gisto:** No because I am not too bothered about local food…
>
> **Beth:** What do you mean by 'not being bothered by local food'?
>
> **Gisto**: I don't know … I think of local food in line with white people who make a big deal of sourcing locally and how you *must* support British farmers… you know, Empire! Like I get annoyed by the commercials…you know, like those [*mocking voice*] "Here is Joe and his farm" and like Lidl did it with their vegetables, Burger King did it with British Beef… I don't go out of my way to buy local food…if it's cheaper, yes, but that's it … because in those types of places [farmers' markets] people have the easier conversations…they focus blame on multinational corporations, rather than how *all of us* are complicit in capitalism…right? so even if the profits are made by local, smaller traders, it's still within a larger system of capitalism, and that's what needs to be critiqued.… the end goal of farmers' market and local stuff becomes the creation of another market, which it shouldn't be… it should be about justice… But is that possible? Who knows? (laughs) because you still have to *compete* to make a profit … I think it's important to realize the limitations of those initiatives, a number of which do not even attempt to make deeper critiques of the system… Like they don't even talk about how you could be a farmer

making artisan cheese locally, but you could be hiring people on a very low wage, so the fact that it is local actually makes no difference...

(Dialogue 2 with Gisto, 5th January 2016 original emphasis)

Again here we have the suggestion that alternative food initiatives often actively produce ignorance by assuming answers to the question(s); what is the goal of change and how do we get there? Thus we have seen that for Sekhmet opposing food injustices needs to be understood as part of a broader goal of opposing the systemic subordination of all women, not just privileged ones. For Strawberry opposing food injustice and environmental unsustainability, needs to be part of a larger goal that sees the flourishing of racially minoritized groups- this flourishing involves the ability to influence decisions and create initiatives that address the systemic concerns of racially minoritized communities, even whilst responding to felt needs such as hunger. Here we have Gisto talking about how opposing food injustice needs to be part of a larger goal to dismantle capitalism, which she understands to be the root cause of food-related injustices and inequalities.

Gisto views capitalism as a system of power relations (Marx, 1976; Young, 1981; Jaggar, 2002), rather than simply as a system of exchange relations. In other words, for Gisto, capitalism is not simply a market society that is characterised by fair/just voluntary exchanges of labour and wages. Rather, her view is a system in which transactions, including transactions within the 'alternative' food system, are fundamentally exploitative with employers abusing their power over workers to take advantage of them. Moreover, Gisto suggests that capitalism is a structural cause of ignorance. She talks about how capitalism encourages exploitative, classed, labour relations to remain hidden, by its preoccupation with profits for example by supermarkets, who Gisto claims, have portrayed white male farmers as the face of 'alternative' food justice. . Thus consumers are able to focus on the creation of new markets, growing profits, the entry of new unique products such as artisanal cheese, without necessarily feeling the need to be concerned by how workers are treated. Alkon (2010:947) has already mentioned the preoccupation within alternative food initiatives with 'shaking the hand that feeds you'- she notes that, in the US context, the actual hand that feeds those attending the farmers markets, are likely to be the hands of working-class, often undocumented immigrants of colour, who would themselves be unable to participate in those markets. In this way, alternative food initiatives actively produce ignorance of the contributions of people of colour to food system, in order to "valorise the role of white people." (Alkon, 2010: 947). To Alkon's (ibid) observation, Gisto suggests that food systems actively produce ignorance by not encouraging critical reflection on questions of 'how *all of us* are complicit in capitalism' as discussed next.

Gisto argues that our very participation in capitalist systems makes us complicit. She does not explicitly say complicit 'for what', beyond stating that we are all 'complicit in capitalism'. Therefore she seems to be suggesting that we are 'all' complicit in the perpetuation of systemic injustice by our participation in exploitative classed interactions, and by our failures to talk about our complicity. Debates around questions of complicity have focussed on two different groups of people. With regards to systemically marginalized groups, the complicity debate has been interested in addressing the question of to what extent can marginalized people perpetuate their own oppression, for example through internalized racism and sexism (e.g. see Bartky, 1990; James, 2003)? With regards to systemically privileged communities, the debate on complicity considers in what ways do often, 'well intended', systemically privileged people contribute to the perpetuation of injustice? (e.g. see Gordon, 2005; Applebaum, 2010). The underlying assumption behind discussions of complicity is that,

> "recognising that one is complicit… is a necessary (albeit not sufficient) condition of challenging systemic racial oppression. Most significantly, since the white complicity claim presumes that racism is often perpetuated through *well-intended* white people, being morally good may not facilitate and may even frustrate the recognition of such responsibility." (Applebaum, 2010: 3 original emphasis).

There are at least two different ways in which people have been understood to be complicit in perpetuating injustice. First, by the individual actions that they do or do not do, that directly cause harm. In other words, there is a clear link as to how an individual's actions or inactions were part of a chain that led to harm. The second way in which complicity arises, namely through 'ways of being' (May, 1992). Here complicity is linked to the *negative attitudes* one chooses to hold that contribute to fostering oppressive climates, even when one does not directly do a harmful action. Examples here might be if one holds sexist views that contribute to rape culture, then they are complicit in the harm of sexual violence, even if they themselves have never inflicted sexual violence on anyone (e.g. see May and Strikwerda, 1994). In other words, "one is responsible for all of those things over which one has control and responsibility for one's state of mind is added to the normal range of things for which responsibility is assigned." (May, 1992:19, cited in Applebaum, 2010: 126).

However these conceptualizations of complicity have been critiqued for being *individualistic* and overly focussed on *negative* attitudes that cause overt harm especially in the past (e.g. see Young, 1990; Applebaum, 2010; Sullivan, 2006). Focussing on the negative attitudes and actions that make one complicit fails to recognise that harms can be caused by people who were actually intending to do good (O'Connor, 2002:121). These conceptualisations also suggest that one can be absolved of responsibility, by doing something for example protesting an injustice.

Scholars have noted that wrongs can be committed even in or by the very process of trying to rectify wrongs. For example, Sara Ahmed (2007) talks about how white people can inadvertently re-centre themselves into a conversation by asking about what they should do in response to injustice, which also implies thinking that they can transcend the critique:

> "to respond to accounts of institutional whiteness with the question, "what can white people do?" is not only to return to the place of the white subject, but it is also to locate agency in this place. It is also to re-position the white subject somewhere other than implicated in the critique … The impulse towards action is understandable and complicated: it can be both a defense against the 'shock' of hearing about racism (and the shock of the complicity revealed by the very 'shock'); it can be an impulse to reconciliation as a 're-covering' of the past (the desire to feel better); it can be about making public one's judgement ('what happened was wrong') or it can be an expression of solidarity ('I am with you'). But the question, in all of these modes of utterance, can work to block hearing; in moving on from the present towards the future, it can also move away from the object of critique or place the white subject 'outside' that critique in the present of the hearing. In other words, the desire to act, to move, or even to move on, can stop the message getting through." (Ahmed, 2004).

Coming back to Gisto, she suggests that initiatives aimed at social justice have the potential to lead to unfair outcomes. This is because of unlevel playing fields laden with capitalist power dynamics that shape how people relate to each other and who is (dis)advantaged within those social interactions. Gisto gives an example of interpersonal power dynamics, which are also reflective of causal complicity. This is in the example she gives of a farmer who hires workers to make artisanal cheese for farmer's markets but pays exploitative wages. There is a direct harm here being done to the workers who are paid exploitative wages. Moreover, there is also the harm of people not questioning these exploitative wages, and therefore contributing to environments where exploitative wages are normalized and deemed acceptable. This thought affirms the finding of Allen et al., (2003) about the ways in which alternative food initiatives and discussions can be selective in their priorities, including in ignoring questions of harm to (farm) workers (Allen et al., 2003:73; see also Goodman and DuPuis, 2002 who also talk about the tendency to only focus on food consumption without thinking about production and vice versa).

Gisto points to various other causal connections of harm: the organisers of farmer's markets that focus on creation of new markets instead of justice; the employers that pay exploitative wages; the white people who fail to recognise how their conceptualisations of local food reflect whiteness; those who participate in these initiatives and those who do not. Gisto is not suggesting that one can simply disavow and dis-engage with capitalism. Rather she is

encouraging attention to the fact that it is not simply a neutral, or indeed just system that has injustice as an aberration (cf. Alcoff, 2007). Overall, she is arguing against a simplistic understanding of social change based on shifting behaviour from buying or not buying particular products that are constructed as most sustainable. These efforts, she argues, only lead to superficial reforms of oppressive structures that actually leave them intact.

However, Gisto is also encouraging a move away from individual conceptualisations of complicity, or accounts of complicity based on causal connection, to considerations of collective complicity. She is suggesting that efforts towards food justice will be thwarted without considerations of the complicity of *all* of us. With regards to the media, she suggests that it is implicated in the creation of messages of gender, race and nation that work to influence each other. For example, the media circulates white androcentric views of the normative farmer ('Joe the farmer') and speaks of communities as undifferentiated homogenous groups, failing to pay attention to how social location of gender, race, class among others position people differently in relation to inequality.

Overall, failing to consider intersectional frameworks leads to questionable explanations for food-related and other inequalities. Whereas intersectional frameworks provide more robust interpretations of food-related inequalities. Considerations of the values, interests and social locations that shape knowledge claims help to reveal taken for granted assumptions that influence those claims. This allows for the re-generation of critical questions which overall contributes to the production of less distorted knowledge claims. Failure to consider our situatedness, actively contributes to inverted ways of seeing, as Eucalyptus noted in her interaction with me during our second dialogue.

> **Eucalyptus:** Would you like some tea or coffee? I think I actually have Kenyan tea! (chuckles)
>
> **Beth:** Aaaawww bless! But I am okay for now thanks… I am not actually a huge tea or coffee drinker, which is weird considering my grandmother was a coffee farmer, and you know, as you say Kenya obviously grows a lot of tea leaves (laughs)
>
> **Eucalyptus:** Gosh that reminds me how I went to a forum the other day, and there were people from [*name of organization withheld to protect Eucalyptus' anonymity*], which is this very twee middle class white institution that emphasises local food… [The organisation] has it that they aren't sourcing food more than 120km from where it is consumed… but they were talking about food miles whilst drinking coffee and eating chocolate biscuits… So I asked, 'Does the emphasis on local food mean you will give up eating avocados, coffee, and chocolate?' And they said coffee is part of local food because

it's roasted locally!... And I was like...okay, we obviously have to think about ... half the food that is being grown that is local now, wasn't local in history...and some of those food histories are harsh...like food that has connections to a history of rape and slaughter... You know, and they were like, oh avocados are also local food because of the "Columbian Exchange"... and I was like, it was no exchange - they gave people syphilis and took the tomatoes or avocados or whatever!... their local food thing is a cover up to support specific people and things get twisted for that purpose....so now they are even talking about British farmers as 'peasant farmers' (laughter)... they are taking this thing called neo-peasantry...you know, taking from *Via Campesina* and applying it to British farmers... girl! Do you know any 'peasant farmers' in England?!...People talk about local food like local is pure and there's only good politics in local... But local is a mixed bag ...with very specific people deciding what it means...like in this forum, which was for two days, the price of the meals and accommodation alone probably meant that there were many people who couldn't afford to be part of those talks... so you have people happy to talk about how local food reduces food waste, which is great, but food justice should be about saying no to the waste of vulnerable people's lives! (Dialogue 2 with Eucalyptus, 2nd July 2016)

Here, Eucalyptus begins with offering hospitality to me, noting that she even has Kenyan teas and coffees, which presumably I would be interested in due to my Kenyan nationality. We have a bit of a laugh around the (false) idea that people *obviously* like the foods or drink that are ubiquitous in their nationalities or cultures. This opens up a discussion about how local food is conceptualised in ways that serve particular economic interests. Here she considers her interactions at a food forum where local was defined based on geographical region- food purchased within 120 kilometres of where it was grown. Eucalyptus considers that this definition of local would of course limit a number of foods, including some of the foods at the forum. This causes her to ask questions about what she sees as disparities between the official policy and the actual practices. It is here that she thinks that the definitions of local food become creative and seemingly hypocritical, as they are aimed at facilitating interests that remain un-named.

Here Eucalyptus argues that patterns and histories of colonialism continue to be relevant to contemporary food politics yet are often ignored. She gives empirical examples of white ignorance about the role of colonial oppression in the provision of particular foods, for example with the Columbian Exchange. Nunn and Qiann (2010: 163) define the Columbian Exchange as follows: "The Columbian Exchange refers to the exchange of diseases, ideas, food crops, and populations between the New World and the Old World following the voyage to the Americas by

Christopher Columbus in 1492." Eucalyptus argues that the exchange of food that is often hailed as progressive, came with the direct exchange of diseases such as syphilis and was within a context of colonial explorations - facts which are often ignored at the forum. This is reflective of white ignorance that is related to the collective denial in white communities about uncomfortable truth, such as the fact that "current geographic construction and allocations of resources among localities and groups of people are the product of often violent accumulations that have enriched some areas and impoverished others." (Allen, 2010: 302).

Additionally, Eucalyptus points to the lack of democratic inclusion of marginalized communities in these forums as part of the reason for the lack of reflexive, critical thinking (cf. Harding, 1993). She notes that the forums are over two full days, and have exclusionary lunch and accommodation costs. This has a direct influence on who is in the room and what is on the agenda. She takes us back to the question of the larger goal of alternative food initiatives, a point that has come up with other participants. Moreover, she argues that this leads to the co-option of concepts developed by people of colour for their survival. She gives the examples of the co-option of ideas from *La Via Campesina*, a Latin American movement of peasant farmers that is widely credited with developing ideas around 'food sovereignty'. Eucalyptus suggests that smallholding peasant farming does not exist in the UK. Whilst this may be factually inaccurate, it is the case that peasant farming is more ubiquitous in the Global South (e.g. see Nyeleni Declaration, 2007; Edelman, 2014). Additionally, food sovereignty movements arose in opposition to Global North practices, such as the dumping of corn from US to Mexico (Jarosz, 2014). Moreover, these terms are concepts continue to emerge in contexts with challenges that do not translate in the Global North, such as a scramble for land unprecedented since the 'Scramble for Africa' (Oxfam, 2011). Failing to recognise these histories truncates the goals of food justice. Thus she gives the example of how local food initiatives are often seen as a pathway to end food waste. Eucalyptus does not dispute the merits of reduction of food waste, but argues that it is not a sufficient goal. For her, food justice needs to contribute to ending the 'waste of vulnerable people's lives', food waste only being an aspect to this goal. Precisely because food justice and the end of systemic gratuitous violence are not seen as 'going together', there is room for fruitful conversations, conversations which cannot happen if those most likely to be impacted by food injustice and gratuitous violence are not in the room.

5.4   Chapter 5 Conclusion

Local food discussions are characterised by fairly fixed ways of thinking of and acting; for example, thinking that local food and the practices associated with it are *inherently* more sustainable and ethical. These discussions have grown in response to 'legitimate' concerns about the ills associated with, or blamed upon industrialised food systems. As has been

previously noted, the premise of the literatures that essentially caution against falling into the 'local trap- that is the belief that the local scale is *inherently* to be preferred- is not to dismiss the mounting evidence of the problems associated with industrialised forms of farming. Rather, the premise of these critiques is to ensure that the proposed 'alternatives'/ 'solutions' are well grounded and lead to socially just outcomes for all.

This chapter contributes to (feminist) food studies by suggesting that a focus on the propositions about local food by itself, as is the case with theories on 'the local trap', does not actually do the intended work of forming less distorted views about local food. Using dialogues with black women, the chapter has proposed re-framing these discussions through feminist epistemologies and in particular the concept of the situated knower. This concept starts from the assumption that knowers are not epistemically interchangeable (Code,1995; 1999) or equivalent (Collins, 1986, 2002; Harding, 1993; Longino, 2001; Wylie, 2003; Intemann, 2010). Paying attention to the diversity of values, interests and social locations that different knowers bring to (local) food discussions should lead to tangible improvements in both the process and outcome of food-related beliefs. The chapter affirms that who knowers are in food-related discussions merits attention because it exposes relationships between taken for granted ideas, values and interests and (mis) uses of racialised gendered and classed power.

This chapter makes a preliminary contribution to feminist epistemology and particularly the debate between feminist empiricists and standpoint theorists on which type of diversity contribute to the conceptualisations of 'objectivity' that align with feminist values. As Intemann (2010:790) notes, there has been a greater convergence between the positions of feminist empiricists and standpoint theorists. However, a key remaining point of debate between the two camps is whether a diversity of values and interests (feminist empiricism school) or diversity of social locations (standpoint theorists) leads to greater 'objectivity'. The chapter supports a both-and position (i.e. both values and interests, and social location diversity as necessary pre-requisites). Additionally, this chapter affirms Alcoff's (2007:240) observation that whilst the three forms of ignorance have slightly different premises, they are actually inter-related. The discussions provides empirical evidence of how oppressive racialized, gendered and classed systems reinforce forms of ignorance related to group identities and situated knowing.

This chapter noted that critical transformative dialogues require that "every member of [a] community be regarded as capable of contributing to debates" (Longino, 2002:132). The next chapter (Chapter 6) picks up on and discusses in greater detail, through the lens of food, how participants felt harmed in their capacity as knowers.

Chapter 6: Black women's experiences of testimonial injustice through the lens of food

6.1:   Introduction

The last chapter discussed, through the lens of local food discussions, the importance of recognising knowers as not generic and fungible, but are situated subjects whose social locations, values and interests shape their experiences and perspectives. The chapter therefore helped us understand the forms of ignorance that are linked to our situatedness as knowers. This chapter considers the epistemic harms that result from, and contribute to, various forms of ignorance. As discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, knowers are interdependent and inevitably rely on the testimony of others (Nelson, 1990). Thus, what we know or do not know depends on a large part on who we believe to be credible to make knowledge claims (Fricker, 2007).

In this chapter, participants spoke about ways in which they felt they had been given less credibility than they deserved in various contexts, based on harmful stereotypes and prejudices. Here participants used the food that we were handling or talking about as prompt to talk about how they felt harmed in their capacity as knowers in contexts that were not related to food. This was particularly through experiences of testimonial injustices, which I defined in section 6.2. As I conclude in section 6.4, while the chapter provides telling examples of black women's vulnerability to identity prejudicial credibility deficits (Collins, 2000; Dotson, 2011), and epistemically exploitative (Berenstain, 2016) credibility excess, participants only used jollof rice, vegan food and goat meat as vehicles for discussions on epistemic injustice. There is therefore a lot of scope to extend 'the lens of food' in this area, in future research. Section 6.4 gives an example of what this might look like in future research projects.

This chapter makes a preliminary empirical contribution to the debate on whether credibility excess is part of the central case of testimonial injustice as described briefly in the next section. In this research whilst most participants gave examples of experiencing credibility deficit, one anecdote related to credibility excess and provides a point to abstract from, on credibility excess in relation to testimonial injustice. This research suggests that prejudicial credibility excess has the potential to cause harm as it can be linked to other injustices such as epistemic exploitation (Berenstain, 2016:570) as will be discussed in the findings. Discussions on credibility excess often are in the context of socially privileged individuals being presumed to know (Medina, 2013), in ways that cumulatively harm marginalized people and also cause socially privileged people to be impervious to new learning. This chapter briefly considers credibility excess of *marginalized* people.

The next section (6.2) reviews testimonial injustice with attempts to link it to food-related discussions. Insights on testimonial injustice have so far been applied to: the philosophy of

medicine (e.g. see Lakeman, 2010; Carel and Kidd, 2014; Carel and Gyorffy, 2014), to discuss the epistemic standing of medical patients especially those with mental health illnesses; the philosophy of education (e.g. Frank, 2013; Kotzee, 2013), to discuss questions of prejudice in classrooms; and to philosophy of law, to discuss prejudice within legal processes for example by jury committees. The review will therefore recall some insights in Chapter 3 (particularly section 3.3) which discussed feminist writings that have explored how and why black women tend to be systemically "not seen as authorities…in matters of food- culturally, politically, and socially" (Williams-Forson cited in Nettles-Barcelon, 2015:35). Section 6.3 will then discuss instances of prejudicial credibility deficit and excess through the lens of food. Participants discussions often started from a food-related concern but led to other non-food-related discussions, as already noted in Chapter 1. Finally, the chapter ends with areas for further research highlighted in section 6.4

This chapter draws on dialogues with 3 participants namely Cookie, Alicia and Eucalyptus. The dialogue with Cookie also involved one other person who has been given the pseudo-name Moron in this research. His relationship to Cookie, or why he was present in her flat at the time of the research remained unclear during and after the fieldwork. As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.3), there were sometimes other people in and out of the participants' kitchens during the dialogues for various periods of time- often just 'quick' encounters e.g. making a cup of tea. These people were informed by myself that a research project was ongoing and that a tape-recorder was running but that anything they said that was picked up on the tape, especially with regards to the research, would <u>not</u> be used in the research, unless they opted in. Without exception, all the third parties said they did not mind having their thoughts included in the fieldwork. However, I did not actually make use of the thoughts and opinions of the third parties with the exception of Moron, as the interaction actually became relevant to the research. As noted, I did not gain any biographical data on Moron. In terms of the other participants, they were introduced in Chapter 4 (section 4.2). By way of reminder, Cookie was a middle-class, Nigerian, Muslim, immigrant woman in her early 30s, who simply stated that she was an 'office worker'. She was recruited through the email Call for Participants, but did not state which specific email list-serve. Alicia was a black-British middle-class woman in her late 20s who worked as an artist and was recruited via the email Call for Participants. Finally Eucalyptus was a late 40s, black-British working-class woman with Nigerian parents. She worked as an artist and was also recruited through the emailed Call for Participants.

6.2 Review: Testimonial injustice in food-related discussions

Feminists have noted that some forms of injustices are of an epistemic nature (e.g. see Frye, 1983; Lorde, 1984; Spivak, 1988; Collins, 1991; Code, 1995) and constitute epistemic oppression. Kristie Dotson defined epistemic oppression as the, "persistent epistemic exclusion that hinders one's contribution to knowledge production...an unwarranted infringement on the epistemic agency of knowers." (Dotson, 2014:115) There are various types of epistemic oppressions including: epistemic injustices (Fricker, 2007); testimonial quieting and silencing (Dotson, 2011); and epistemic exploitation (Berenstain, 2016). Testimonial injustice is one of the forms of epistemic injustices identified by Fricker (2007). By epistemic injustice, Fricker (ibid) was referring to a "wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as knower" (Fricker, 2007:1). She identified two types of epistemic injustices: testimonial injustice, and hermeneutical injustice. Here I will only concern myself with testimonial injustice, and pick up on hermeneutical injustice in Chapter 7.

The central case in testimonial injustice is an "identity prejudicial credibility deficit" (Fricker, 2007:28). In other words, testimonial injustice occurs when a hearer's prejudice against a social group to which a speaker belongs, interferes with their evaluations of a speaker's credibility, and therefore the speaker suffers a credibility deficit. According to Fricker (2007:35) a negative identity prejudice is defined as, "a widely held disparaging association between a social group and one or more attributes, where this association embodies a generalization that displays some (typically, epistemically culpable) resistance to counter-evidence owing to an ethically bad affective investment." As discussed in chapter 2, the example that Fricker (2007) gives is from Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, in which an all-white jury refuses to believe a black defendant because of racial prejudice.

Fricker (2007) identifies the primary harm of testimonial injustice as the dehumanization of a knower in their capacity as knower (Fricker, 2007:44). This happens through the process of 'epistemic objectification' in which speakers are "demoted from subject to object, relegated from the role of active epistemic agent, and confined to the role of passive state of affairs from which knowledge must be gleaned." (Fricker, 2007:132). In other words, subjects suffer from the loss of epistemic authority, by being demoted from subject to object. Over time this objectification could also contribute to the loss of a speaker's epistemic confidence, and potentially to them smothering their testimonies- for example, victims of sexual violence not speaking up because of past prejudices that mean they suffer credibility deficits.

Gaile Pohlhaus (2014) however disagrees with Fricker (2007) on the primary harm of testimonial injustice. She argues that it is not so much that subjects become objects; rather that a person's subjectivity is 'truncated' or 'circumscribed' (Pohlhaus, 2014:105). In other words,

rather than a Subject-Object framing of Fricker, Pohlhaus (2014) suggests a Subject-Other framing, in recognition that one is "relegated to the role of epistemic other, being treated as though the range of one's subject capacities is merely derivative." (Pohlhaus, 2014:107) As a result, a speaker is "not permitted to contribute in ways that extend beyond or trouble the veracity of the dominant experienced world." (Pohlhaus, 2014:107)

There are therefore two different camps on the nature of testimonial injustice, with the case being made for or against narrower definitions of testimonial injustice. In her original account, Fricker (2007) argued that testimonial injustice is *only r*elated to credibility deficit, a view she maintains in later accounts (Fricker, 2010). Testimonial injustice occurs "if and only if she [a knower] receives a credibility *deficit* owing to identity prejudice in the hearer" (Fricker, 2007:28 emphasis added). Other scholars, most notably Jose Medina (2011,2013), have argued that credibility *excess* can also be an epistemic injustice. For Fricker, a knower whose credibility is inflated more than they deserve by a hearer (i.e. a case of credibility excess) is not harmed because giving someone more credibility than is due "does not undermine, insult, or otherwise withhold a proper respect for the speaker qua subject of knowledge." (Fricker, 2007:20) Moreover, she argues that credibility excess is usually not disadvantageous to the speaker (Fricker, 2007:18).

I have discussed that a key part of testimonial injustice, is the lack of identification of a subject as a knower, based on negative prejudices. In Chapter 3 (section 3.3), I reviewed literature that spoke to how the ability for black women to produce food-related knowledge production has been harmed, as a result of prejudiced controlling images (Collins, 2000:72-81). As a recap, in Chapter 3, section 3.3. I did the following that has some relevance to this chapter: defined controlling images, identified the four main categories, namely: mammies, matriarch, welfare queen and whores (Collins, 2000:72-81); and more fully discussed the mammy controlling image and its impact on black women's food writing in particular (Zafar, 1999; Witt, 2004). I also gave examples from the literatures on how racist Eurocentric conceptions of what counts as 'good food' or knowledgeable food-making, often had the effect of reducing black women's credibility as professional chefs. However, these discussions whilst related, are not necessarily examples of testimonial injustice, particularly because they do not point to specific testimonial moments where a hearer is unable and unwilling to hear a speaker's testimony due to the hearer's prejudice. In other words, that set of literatures, speaks more to epistemic exploitation (defined at the beginning of this chapter) more generally- that is, those literatures do speak to the problematic unjust ways in which black women have been hindered or excluded from acquiring or producing knowledge more generally, but without necessarily being instances of testimonial injustice as I have described it. This chapter therefore makes contributions to

knowledge by allowing us to think about the nature of testimonial injustices, in *or* through-the-lens-of, food-related discussions. The next section describes and discusses the findings more fully (section 6.3) with suggested contributions on areas for further research considered in section 6.4.

6.3   Findings and discussions

In this research, participants often referred to past experiences of suffering credibility deficit due to stereotypes and prejudice from a hearer. However, in one situation, the testimonial injustice actually played out in my presence, during the third phase of research, that is the kitchen dialogues (see Chapter 4, section 4.3 on research design). This instance was with Cookie in her kitchen. I arrived to find that Cookie had already begun cooking some foods, as she was bulk cooking/'meal-prepping' for the week in addition to us cooking together. She had one other person in her kitchen, who I have given the pseudonym 'Moron' (for reasons that will hopefully become clear based on his problematic behaviour). At this point, Moron had already verbally consented to the tape recording (which he was explicitly made aware of). I did not ask and neither did Cookie venture to disclose what the nature of her relationship was to Moron or why he was in her house/kitchen. Cookie had also just delegated to me what I should cook and was getting on with preparation of jollof rice. Having got through the preliminaries, I stated the obvious that the kitchen/food cooking smelt very nice. It is here that Moron chimed in and articulated several identity prejudices against Cookie primarily and myself, that meant that Cookie in particular suffered a credibility deficit. The interaction is quoted at length, in order to give a sense of the build up of the identity-prejudicial credibility deficit (Fricker, 2007:28).

Beth: Mmm, it smells so good…

Moron (speaking to me): That means you have no taste… if you are calling her food good, it means that you have not eaten good food before…her food is definitely not good…

Beth: Sorry?

Cookie: My sister, ignore him… oh by the way I learnt a tip about soaking the rice for jollof in hot water to get the starch out, then you wash it, before you add it so that..

Moron (interrupts): Beth let me ask you a question, do you know how to cook? Do you know your way around the kitchen?

Beth: Why?

Moron: Because if you knew your way around a kitchen like a real woman then you would know good food… if you have also eaten good food, you would know her food isn't good…

Cookie: Just ignore him, he is one of those men that needs women to be in a certain place…

Moron: no but look at her… … just look at her… she is so fat…I don't know who would marry her…

Cookie: I don't think Beth cares because she is also big…

Moron: But Beth's fat is in the right place… it's hard to take *you* seriously…

Cookie: Beth…

Beth (interrupts): If it's okay I would prefer not to have my body talked like I am not here about if you don't mind… I think we should postpone the interview…

Moron: No I'm just saying she is …I think I am a much better cook…even other men say that my food is really good… my jollof rice only takes 25 minutes to cook…look how long hers is taking…she can't even fry eggs…so you should come interview me, unless you too you're not serious…like her I don't even think she is straight…

Cookie: (shouting)Yeah I am at least Bi… and maybe I am even a lesbian I am still working it out…I don't need to hide that anymore so…and by the way here's no jollof that takes 25 minutes, anyways you asked me a question…

Beth: I really think we should postpone the interview to another day or time if you would prefer…or like when it's just the two of us…

Cookie: Not it's fine… I will not be bullied… I don't like people taking the piss with me, let's carry on…So my dad likes his jollof …

Moron (interrupts): make sure you explain to her that in our culture fathers don't really go into the kitchen…

Cookie: (shouts very angrily to him) she know African culture! (deep breaths; speaks in normal voice) anyway, …what was I saying? Oh yes about jollof…

<div align="center">(Dialogue 1 with Cookie, 20th April 2016 emphasis in original)</div>

This interaction reveals Moron's failure to take Cookie (and less importantly, myself) seriously as knowers based on the various prejudices and stereotypes he held against us. Primarily these

prejudices were linked to his stereotypical understanding of an ideal (black-African) woman, which included a thin (or 'fat in the right places'), heterosexual woman, who 'knows her way around kitchens'. Since Cookie 'fails' (in his view) to meet this essentialist understanding of African women, he questions her participation in research that was seeking to 'give voice' to black women, and by extensions, questions my competence as a researcher in including Cookie in the research. He questions and invalidates Cookie's woman-ness based on essential understandings of biological abilities of women to cook, and her sexuality, which is problematically outed in the interaction. Cookie rejects Woman as a fixed or essential identity and becomes visibly angry at being constituted as 'Other'- as what Woman is not- and at being silenced, constantly interrupted and spoken over by Moron.

Moron's prejudices are reinforced by the epistemic vice of arrogance (Medina, 2013; Cassam, 2016). First, Moron repeatedly fails to listen, and interrupts both Cookie and me repeatedly. This failure to listen, prevents him from learning from either Cookie or I, and particularly from Cookie, who arguably knows her own lived experiences of food better than he would. His arrogance is demonstrated by his brag that 'even other men' have affirmed that he [Moron] makes good food. His arrogance only goes into supporting the argument that *systemic* progress on sexism cannot be evaluated only be the indicator of the presence of more men in kitchen, especially because men then tend to use their 'progressive' practices of 'helping' in the kitchen to generate cultural capital (e.g. see Hollows, 2003a , 2003b; Szabo, 2013). In this case, the fact that Moron is (allegedly) a competent cook only serves to give him the unfounded conviction that 'he knows better'.

Arguably, Moron is harming himself and actively contributes to production of ignorance by failing to listen and learn to people who are at a different location to him on the epistemic terrain. It does not occur to him that perhaps Cookie's lived experiences of being a fat, bi-sexual, black-African woman would give her unique perspectives that he could learn from as a heterosexual male. His arrogance becomes an obstacle to knowledge and so contributes to the production of ignorance. There is knowledge to be gained, whether that is food-related knowledges e.g. on other tips and tricks Cookie has learnt from others on how to cook jollof; and/or knowledges on the lived experiences at the intersection of fat-shaming, queerphobia and racist-sexism. But Moron's attitude to fat, LGBTQA*, women incapable of cooking or recognising 'good food' prevents him from gaining those knowledges. However, the primary harm remains to Cookie as a speaker, who is harmed in her capacity as a giver of knowledge (Fricker, 2007:5,150).

Moron's prejudice and arrogance also threatens to obstruct the production of knowledge in another way. Not only is he constantly interrupting and speaking over us, and (unconsciously)

trying to make us lose our epistemic self-confidence (Fricker, 2004:49), but also his behaviour threatens to bring the research dialogue to a halt. Cookie becomes increasingly angry as the interaction continues. This makes sense when it is remembered that "anger is the emotion of injustice… a morally and politically appropriate response to daily injustices." (Bailey, 2018: 93) Her anger is "a knowing resistant anger. 'Knowing' because, in Lorde's [1984:127] words, it 'is loaded with energy and information' and 'resistant' because its vibrancy endures repeated silencing." (Bailey, 2018:103). Here the information that it is loaded with is the frustration and exhaustion of repeated attempts at silencing (Bailey, 2018) but also the determination to speak up.

Thus, in this scenario, I become increasingly concerned about my responsibility as a researcher in ensuring that the participants do not come to foreseeable harm. Of course, Moron seems to be a guest of Cookie's, who was there before I arrived, and this was her house and her kitchen and therefore I wanted to respect her agency in that situation. My suggestion therefore is to 'postpone' the dialogue until a more conducive time. Cookie however feels that to do so, would be to give in to being 'bullied' by Moron and so she presses on. The question did arise in my mind after the interview as to whether I was unintentionally encouraging Cookie to smother her testimony (Dotson, 2011:242-244), based on my perception of the growing hostility of the situation. However, I concluded that to not have raised the option to Cookie to postpone the dialogue would have been more irresponsible on my part as a researcher. Here I respected her wishes to press on with the research, which we did. Moreover, Moron was not the intended audience for Cookie's testimony, I was. In addition, I certainly was not "unwilling or unable to gain the appropriate uptake of [her] proffered testimony" (Dotson, 2011: 244), rather I wanted to be ethical in my dealings. There is always a danger of speaking over others whilst trying to advocate for them (Alcoff, 1991). In my case, because she explicitly said she was happy to continue, the research dialogue went ahead.

Moron eventually left and the rest of the dialogue could continue. For a while we (or at least I) tried to make sense of what had happened and how in the world a conversation that begun with the smell of rice could become such a heated discussion. I began by saying I was sorry for us to have been in such a situation, and her response was that it was not the first time she had been harmed in her capacity as a knower, through the backdrop of a conversation around jollof rice. In the incident with Moron Cookie was constructed as not worthy of participating in a testimonial exchange. As highlighted, Moron's overall perspective is that I simply should not be asking _her_ for information in the first place (Fricker, 2007:130) and the fact that I was, in his opinion, calls my own competence as a researcher into question. However, there are also

instances in which speakers are invited to share information, but are then treated like 'epistemic objects' (Fricker, 2007:133) and/or 'truncated subjects' (Pohlhaus, 2013:99-114). This was the case for the other testimonial exchanges that make up the rest of the chapter. In these exchanges, participants were asked for their opinions by various inquirers, but in ways that were problematic

> **Beth:** I am not sure how a discussion about jollof smelling nice became about...
>
> **Cookie:** Well it is not your fault... jollof seems to fire up people (laughs) (pause) oh gosh like one time went to an office function and I made jollof and this white woman asked me what I did...and I told her...and she said with that voice, [*imitates patronising tone*] "Oh but that's not how Jamie makes it" ... Do you understand what I am saying? ... It's like she was an authority on making jollof because she had seen Jamie Oliver make it...and the rest of the conversation was that what I did was wrong, because Jamie Oliver did it differently... If he made it, it's a sign that they can eat it now and his way is right, yet these are things we cook every day and have done so for decades... And it's not even about if he cooked it correctly because the way that I make it for example will be different from someone else in Lagos will be different to women in the village who makes jollof with charcoal complete with the smoky flavour...or just other food daily...and cooking is a skill...what I mean, is white people do this ... make themselves authorities and no credit is given to whom credit is supposed to be given, to whom credit *should* be given." (Dialogue 1 with Cookie, 20th April 2016 emphasis in original)

The conversation begins with me still reflecting on heated exchanges and attempts at silencing with Moron, at the beginning of the kitchen dialogue. It is here that Cookie suggests that jollof is a meal that for many people is infused with symbolic meaning in ways that make people emotive about it. She does not actually elaborate on what it is about jollof that 'fires people up', but perhaps we can imagine that jollof speaks to questions of identity, whether that is the identity of a 'progressive male' who is able to make 'good jollof' as we saw with Moron before, or national identity and so on. Regardless, it is a dish with symbolic meaning. As we allow our thoughts to settle, she remembers another incident where she felt she received a credibility deficit, based on the prejudice of her being a truncated subject (Pohlhaus, 2014) again with regards to jollof rice. She talks about a testimonial exchange with a colleague at an office bring-and-share party. Cookie had made jollof for this party, and her white female colleague came up to her and compliments the jollof and is curious about the recipe.

Here Cookie's (nameless) white female colleague could potentially be commended for being curious. Curiosity is after all an epistemic virtue (Medina, 2013:44) that usually facilitates

rather than hinders knowledge production. However, it has also been noted that curiosity, within food contexts, and amongst socially privileged groups, tends to be problematic and reflective of culinary colonialism (Heldke, 2003). Lisa Heldke (2003) who coined the term 'culinary colonialism' defined it as, "an attitude with which persons of racial privilege approach the food of the ethnic other. The attitude is characterised by an obsession with novelty, a view of the Other as a resource for one's use and adornment, and a passion for 'authenticity'" (Heldke, 2006:214). This discussion helped to burst the myth that the only way people exhibit racial prejudice in food contexts is by being close-minded for example by not eating so-called 'foreign foods'/ 'ethnic foods'.

The willingness of white people to be curious and try new foods was often used as a marker of racial tolerance. Discussions on culinary colonialism and 'eating the other' (e.g. see Duruz, 2010) helped to show that engaging with Other people's foods can also be a way in which socially privileged people show their (un)conscious racial prejudices. This is not to say that the food-related curiosity amongst socially privileged groups *always* lead to harm, or that people cannot engage with Other people's foods in respect-full ways (e.g. see Flowers and Swan, 2012). Equally, that is not how epistemic virtues and vices are assessed; the question is not whether it always/*invariably* leads to particular outcomes but whether it *normally* facilitates or gets in the way of knowledge production (Cassam, 2019). This has led to debates about the on-the-ground practices that socially privileged groups can adopt when interacting with so-called 'ethnic foods' in respectful ways. In this context though, Cookie's colleague's curiosity is the context in which she treats Cookie, not so much as an Object per Fricker (2007) but as a truncated subject per Pohlhaus (2014) as discussed next.

In response to Cookie saying how she made the jollof at the party, her colleague's immediate response was to mention that that method is not what Jamie Oliver would do. Giving Cookie's colleague the 'benefit of the doubt' might lead to the conclusion that she is simply making a harmless, if a bit boring, statement of fact- you make it one way, Jamie Oliver makes it another way. But it is important to remember that the 'benefit of the doubt' is itself racialized (Williams, 1991, 2016)- in other words, race tends to play a determining factor in who receives the benefit of the doubt. It still does raise questions, even it was 'intended' as a 'well meaning' statement of fact.

First of all, to say that Jamie Oliver makes jollof differently, is not epistemically interesting. As Cookie herself acknowledges, different people will have different ways of making the same food- the way she made jollof for an office party in Sheffield, is inevitably going to be slightly different to how someone in Lagos with intermittent electricity might make it, and will be different again to jollof made in rural areas where people only have access to charcoal, and are

perhaps cooking jollof as a necessity rather than as a 'party food'. That is, within the culinary communities, gender, race, class and spatialities will mark reliable patterns of difference that shape culinary experiences and knowledges. But more importantly, it raises the question of 'why Jamie Oliver'? Why is it specifically the image of Jamie Oliver that was invoked in the interaction? Again, it could have also been a well-intended humorous reference to the fact that Jamie Oliver had come under fire particularly from West African communities after he made jollof that people felt did not meet the necessary and sufficient conditions to be termed as jollof - the so-called 'jollof-gate' of 2014(BBC Trending, 2014). But Cookie pre-empts these ideas by indicating that the interaction was not one of mundane if not boring observations, or indeed, of good-humour and inside jokes. Rather, there was a distinct sense that this was a credibility issue- Cookie's colleague speaks 'like she was an authority on making Jollof because she had seen Jamie Oliver make it.'

Cookie suggests that Jamie Oliver receives a credibility excess. As Medina (2013) points out, 'powerful' people often have the privilege to not know, but also "can be spoiled...in a disproportionate way the privilege of knowing (or, rather, *of being assumed to know*...)" (Medina, 2013:32 emphasis added). Jamie Oliver is a professional chef, and as Cookie herself observes, cooking jollof is a skill that can be learnt. So of course he does have some expertise with regards to food. But what Cookie takes exception with is how Jamie Oliver is assumed to have a universal, 'view from nowhere' by her office colleague. Hence, rather than affirm the partial nature of Jamie Oliver's, her own and indeed, all knowledges, Cookie's colleague constructs Jamie Oliver as one who transcends all specificities and therefore has (culinary) views that can be universally applied. The flipside of assuming that Jamie has universal views and as 'always knowing best' is that Cookie then suffers a credibility deficit in her colleague's hearing. In this way Cookie is treated by her office colleague not as *a thing* that does not have potentially useful insights, but as a subject- just an unreliable one. And here she is constructed as unreliable because her views do not conform to those of Jamie Oliver- who is constructed as a god that gives divine directions as to which foods are now 'acceptable'. She is constructed as an informant- a person to mine information from but not to actually listen to. She is not seen as, "capable of contributing to epistemic practices uniquely, that is from her own distinct lived experiences...She is not permitted to contribute in ways that extend beyond, or trouble the veracity of the dominantly experienced world." (Pohlhaus, 2014:107) Thus because her recipe 'troubles' what Jamie Oliver has said, she is no longer allowed to contribute. In other words, she is discredited because her contributions "move beyond the scope of the world experienced from dominant subject positions." (Pohlhaus, 2014:110). Cookie uses value-related words such as 'credit' not being given where it is due. But here the value she is interested in, is the epistemic

value of testimonies. She hints at how questions around exploitation have a role in thinking through credibility deficits, but does not fully engage with this question. This was however picked up by Alicia, as I discuss next.

In Chapter 4, I briefly discussed my positionality as a 'failed vegan'/ 'ex-vegan' in relation to how I went into the research prepared to eat whatever meal was put before me. There I talked about the main reason why I quit 'institutionalised' forms of veganism was related to the whiteness of those spaces- again, not just in the bodies that populated them, but in the ideas that were uncritically circulating. In a different conversation with Alicia my 'ex-veganism' days had come up. Here she explores my experiences a bit more- which affirms again the idea that the kitchen dialogues were dialogues- participants could ask me questions, in the same way that I was asking them questions. The background assumption of these conversations is that for many African communities, meat plays a significant symbolic role in cultural festivals. Hence she begins with humour about the oxymoron of the concept of 'African vegan' in trying to understand how I navigated everyday realities. But then she also wonders whether I attended any formal meetings by vegans in Sheffield. I explain that yes I did, but my last one was a forum in which the group decided to collaborate with The Sun newspaper- a problematic newspaper that in my view, often supports Far Right agendas including hateful messages against immigrants and people of colour more generally. The group's view was that the abuse of animals trumped any other consideration, and The Sun allegedly had wider readership than other British newspapers such as The Guardian, and thus to them, was the more logical choice. Me saying that reminded Alicia of a space where her testimony was invited, and in some ways she suffered a credibility excess, but this was harmful as it was linked to epistemic exploitation (Spivak, 1999:370).

> **Alicia:** How did you survive as a vegan? (Laughs)
>
> **Beth:** Well I am not even sure I was a proper 100% vegan outside of food... (Alicia laughs)...I know! Was I even African right! (Raucous laughter)...but yeah I am sure my shoes and stuff may have had some animal products...but anyway...anyway...please don't ask me about my motivations because I am so bored by those conversations (laughter)...
>
> **Alicia:** Did you go for vegan meetings?
>
> **Beth:** A few...my last was one was one where they invited a speaker who they talked about their collaboration with The Sun newspaper to fight for animal rights...the same day The Sun had those we-hate-immigrants type headlines and the usual sexist crap...and when I questioned that collabo the whole room felt so awkward as though

people were struggling to make the connections...in that classic talking about racism and stuff is divisive to The Cause...well...

Alicia: Yeahhhhh gosh....(pause) yeah I've been to those types of spaces...Recently I saw a forum being advertised...it was supposed to be about equality...but just from the title [of the forum], I just knew that black women would not be included... I told that to a white friend who asked if I was going, and who, it turned out, knew the main organiser, who was also white...I mean of course the organisers were white... anyway so they invited me and [Alicia's colleague] to go speak to them.... it just felt very 'native informanty'. And [lead organiser] was taking copious notes as though we were data that she was mining. And in my head I was thinking, 'Pay us! Pay us to fix what is wrong'...

Beth: But is paying people the answer?

Alicia: I definitely think that we should be paid for whatever shit we do for them...

Beth: Why?

Alicia: Because I no longer have no interest to hold their hand by doing it for free...*They* were being paid to do it, because they were supposedly the best placed people to do this work...But this should be *their* work, and so in terms of fixing systems that really only benefit them, they *should* be doing this work, not getting paid to then mine us for information, and only after protest... ah gosh, like on the actual day, [a well-known, male black-British speaker]did the keynote...

Beth: of course!

Alicia: (shouts) RIGHT?!!! (laughs) ahhhhhh (shouts)SO MUCH RESPITE!! (laughter) It's like white British people can't seem to think of any other speaker the minute race comes up...

Beth: anyways I interrupted you sorry..

Alicia: No! this is good...so then anyways in Q and A, this white dude made a comment that part of the problem as to why racism still exists was there are all these other equality groups like gender, and disability and taking up money from race activism. And [the speaker] was like, "yeah it's like me rocking up to a disability forum and saying what about race? It's a diversion" and I put up my hand and responded that ... as a black *disabled* woman, I think it's extremely problematic to present that as though there are no issues of race when talking about disability, and talking about it as though these are two separate things... But he got so defensive, like "oh it's like a doctor, doctors have to

focus on specific things"… shit… none of them, *none of them* had any interest in hearing me.

<center>(Dialogue 2 with Alicia, 5th January 2016 original emphasis)</center>

The conversation picks up from the idea of how ignorance and injustice can and does circulate even in 'progressive' spaces made up of 'well intended' people who are in actual fact trying to address injustice. It affirms the idea that it is possible to try and address epistemic and non-epistemic harms, but *inadvertently* cause further harms in the process (e.g. see caution by Dotson, 2011). Thus my reflection on my frustration of groups that were trying to encourage compassion especially for non-human animals, but were doing so in coalition with right-wing media and not giving uptake to my verbal protest of the irony of speaking about compassion through an outlet like The Sun newspaper, provides a context to speak about other epistemic exclusions (Dotson, 2011).

Alicia brings up three related incidents that left her feeling damaged in her standing as a knower and as a human being. The first was seeing an advert for a racial equality forum, and from the advert 'knowing' that black women would be excluded from the forum. She does not say what 'gave it away' in the advert that black women would be excluded- was it a gut feeling, or specific words and phrases? She does not say. She simply then reflects on sharing her discomfort with a white friend who asked her if she would attend the forum. Upon hearing of Alicia's frustrations, this white friend does the virtuous thing of bringing those frustrations to the awareness of the organisers and there being a meeting where Alicia could potentially talk to the organisers about how to make the forum more inclusive. Alicia suggests that it is self-evident that the organisers of such a forum would be white. It is not clear why she thinks that: does she mean that it is self-evident that white people would be the most willing to do organise forums on racial equality? This would not follow, especially considering most of the work on critical whiteness is aimed at helping white people understand that racial inequality is as much their problem and concern as it is that of people of colour. It may be that she is meaning to say that it is self-evident that a forum on racial inequality that has been problematically framed as to exclude black women's bodies perhaps and views, is more likely to be the work of white organisers. Be that as it may she does attend the meeting with the organisers. It is here that we can begin to think about credibility excess for marginalised communities and whether it is part of testimonial injustice.

In one sense, if the problem being raised is that of speakers routinely suffering from credibility deficits due to prejudice and stereotypes, one can see why a potential solution could be to give a credibility excess to those speakers. As mentioned, Miranda Fricker (2007:18-20) maintains that credibility excess towards marginalized groups does not cause harm and therefore is not

part of the central case of testimonial injustice. There has been some response to consider how harm might arise in credibility excess. For example, Davis (2016) talks about the stereotypes that 'all Asian kids are good at Maths' that leads to credibility excess where for example, Asians will be approached by people who need help in Maths. Davis (2016) discusses that this can cause harm because a) it assumes that, that is the only topic Asian children might be interested in, and so might not be encouraged to explore other topics, b) it means that people assume that Asians then have nothing useful to share about other topics beyond Maths and c) if you are an Asian child who is bad at Maths you might not receive the help and support you should, because aren't you supposed to be good in Maths anyways. Thus the question: "Whether credibility excess constitutes a central case of testimonial injustice depends on the answer to this question: can a speaker who is overly esteemed in her capacity as a knower be harmed *qua* subject and transmitter of knowledge in virtue of the inflated estimation?" (Davis, 2016: 486) Alicia's examples show two ways in which credibility excess can cause harm to people in their capacity as knowers: through objectification and exploitative research practices (her experience); and through being encouraged to develop bad epistemic practices that makes one impervious to knowledge (the keynote speaker) as I discuss next.

Alicia is invited to the meeting, and everything she says is 'scribbled down furiously' by the white organisers. Whilst this might be commendable, in actual fact she feels exploited and describes the as 'native informanty', and raises questions as to why the white organisers were being paid (does not say by whom) to do the job of organising equality forums, if everything she is saying is coming to them as news. One could argue that the organizers are scribbling furiously as part of actively listening to her concerns. But Alicia seems to suggest that what she is saying does not seem to be ideas that had previously been taken into consideration by the organisers, and their 'furious scribbling' is reflective of them 'mining' her in ways that feel exploitative to her. So first of all this brings up the problem of compulsory representation (Davis, 2016) which further excludes people epistemically. Therefore,

> "Although marginalized knowers are invited to participate in epistemic exchanges, the invitation is extended to the individual only insofar as the individual satisfies a certain description (woman, person of colour, sexual minority, and so on). We might refer to this kind of inclusion as *de dicto* inclusion. By granting a speaker *de dicto* inclusion, hearers do not offer her full participation in the relevant epistemic community. One might say that she—the particular speaker in question—is not really invited to participate, anyone who looks like her would do. She—the person—is still epistemically excluded, even as she—the woman, the person of colour, the sexual minority—is asked to perform a specific act of epistemic labour. That is, she lacks epistemic inclusion. When

a speaker is merely *de dicto* included, the subject is still marginalized—for the subject herself is not really included." (Davis, 2016:490)

In other words, Alicia is invited to the meeting, in her capacity as a black woman, to bear the burden of representation for all black women everywhere. The meeting does not inspire confidence in her that she is being heard for her specific concerns, but that she is just the fungible face of black women, in that meeting to 'perform a specific act of epistemic labour'. Alicia suggests that the organisers would not even consider giving her thoughts in that meeting as a form of 'labour' epistemic or otherwise. In a sense this reflects the mammie stereotype (Collins, 1991, 2000; McElya, 2007) -discussed more fully in Chapter 3, section 3.3- namely that it is black women's nature to happily meet the physical, emotional and epistemic needs of white people, at their own personal expense. This is what the unarticulated (in that meeting) demands by Alicia for a wage do- it marks that labour, as labour (Federici, 1974: 74-76). The demand for a wage is not primarily to receive a particular lump sum at the end, but to mark that activity as work, from the presumption that the ways in which society shows that an activity counts as 'work' is through remuneration. This demand further highlights that this meeting is characterised by epistemic exploitation, which Berenstain (2016:570) defines thus:

> "Epistemic exploitation occurs when privileged persons compel marginalized persons to produce an education or explanation about the nature of the oppression they face. Epistemic exploitation is a variety of epistemic oppression marked by unrecognized, uncompensated, emotionally taxing, coerced epistemic labour. It maintains structures of oppression by centring the needs and desires of dominant groups and exploiting the emotional and cognitive labour of members of marginalized groups who are required to do the unpaid and often unacknowledged work of providing information, resources, and evidence of oppression to privileged persons who demand it—and who benefit from those very oppressive systems about which they demand to be educated."

Alicia herself talks about the white organisers demanding information, about structures that they themselves benefit from (directly, through being paid to organise a problematic forum, and more structurally through the privileges that come with whiteness). One could say that the white organisers cannot be legitimately expected to know everything about equality. Indeed. But that partial, situated nature of all knowledge is precisely why from the beginning there should have been black women amongst other minorities as part of the forum planning and/or a reduction in the scope of the forum rather than pretence of it being 'anti-every-oppression' (Tate, 2014) equality forum. Moreover, it is legitimate to expect greater reflexivity by equality forum organisers of ways in which they could be contributing to harm. In other words, correcting injustice requires reflexive critical social awareness (Fricker, 2007:91) based on an

awareness of the relationship of privilege and power. This reflexive awareness would include an awareness of historical dynamics (e.g. between white feminists and black women); structural power relations (e.g. of a white person organising and leading Equality forums) and social contexts.

The harm of credibility excess is also seen in the keynote speaker, who is well known for being invited to (British) forums that are predominantly white. And so when Alicia says who the keynote was, and given what she had said before, my immediate response was 'of course' to which she loudly affirms as finding resonance and 'respite' with her. My 'of course' was in the sense that I had also observed this speaker, as one whom white communities tend to favour, and be very comfortable around his framings of race. But also, the (not new) observation of how in equality discussions one would think that 'all the black people are men, and all the women are white' (to borrow from Hull, Bell-Scott and Smith, 1982). By that I mean that black *men*'s experiences of racialized power dynamics tend to have more uptake, and therefore they are likely to receive platforms over black women. This is not a new observation and is one black-feminists in particular have made over the years (Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1991; Collins, 2000; Cooper, 2015).

But beyond this shared cathartic moment in the research project, I encourage her to continue and she talks about how a white man articulates in the Question and Answers (Q & A) session of the forum, his perspective as to the persistence of racial inequality. His view is that the persistence of racial inequality is primarily a funding problem- and the fact that other competing causes such as gender and disability justice projects, are 'taking money away' from racial justice projects. The keynote speaker agrees to 'white dude's' framing of the problem and goes to suggest how inappropriate it is, to bring up questions about disability for example, in discussions about race. Actually, the keynote's example is given to say that if he went to a disability forum and talked about how race impacts disability, he would be seen as out of topic, and in *his* view, rightly so.

Alicia takes exception to this framing, and speaks from her concrete experience as a disabled black woman, that the logic of racist and able-ist power dynamics reinforce each other, and quite simply, it is possible to be black and disabled, disabled and black- it is not a fiction to imagine that identities can and do intersect (Crenshaw, 1989). The keynote however, is unable to give uptake to her views that a commitment to intersectional approaches is not what is holding back racial justice. If anything, he dismisses her using medical metaphors that suggest that she is thinking like a general practitioner rather than one who has specialised and gained expertise-presumably, as he has. The forum is very much set up as 'ignorant audience asks short

question, knowledgeable keynote provides expert answer' rather than one where various types of expertise in the room can be recognised.

This keynote speaker receives a credibility excess to the point that it does him a dis-service: he stops being able to be reflexive and learn from alternative descriptions of the problem, and re-articulate his position. But the credibility excess he receives also then does harm to others, in this case devaluing Alicia's observation that affirms Lorde's (1984) insight that "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."(Lorde, 1984: 138) Thus credibility excess amongst marginalized communities can be a testimonial injustice when it is based on/results in epistemic exploitation, and/or when it encourages them to develop epistemic vices that facilitate them harming themselves as speakers, and harming others in the process.

Finally, testimonial injustices do not only cause harm to individual speakers, but can also cause harm to the intellectual traditions of entire groups (Collins, 2000:3-8) as suggested by Eucalyptus. The conversation began as we exchanged our experiences of eating different meals based on goat meat in different geographical contexts. As a British woman of Jamaican descent, she talks about how she likes and dislikes curried goat done. She then asks me, a Kenyan immigrant, if I cook curried goat. I talk about my preference for roasted goat, which is more ubiquitous in Kenyan contexts. The conversation briefly turns to questions of terroir, and how goat meat 'here' is 'flavour-less' to the point of sadness, which we both laugh about-perhaps a knowing laughter. I then ask her about her experiences of eating roasted goat meat if any. It is here that she remembers having eaten roasted goat meat at a forum that prided itself on being 'diverse' and therefore including many different types of foods. She mentions that she actually was not able to enjoy the meal, as at the same time she was experiencing harms in her capacity as knower, as she explains:

> **Eucalyptus**: Do you cook curried goat?
>
> **Beth:** No I never have, I have eaten it but never cooked it. We do eat a lot of goat meat in Kenya, but it is usually roasted, just with salt and pepper and served with salsa and sides… I definitely prefer that to curried goat. Mmm mmmm mmm, so good (laughter). I rarely have it in the UK, mostly in London… but goat meat here is so bland, it's sad (laughter)…Have you ever had roasted goat meat?
>
> **Eucalyptus**: Once in London… it was actually at this forum that tried to be diverse, argh but it was a horrendous- the experience, not the goat meat (laughter) although I didn't enjoy the meal much… It filled me with so much sadness to know that I've got to prove myself and jump through extra hoops…

Beth: How so?

Eucalyptus: Well, I did this art installation for [name of company] that prides itself on being socially just and amplifying voices...It was for a global forum they were having and my piece was one of the ones to be featured in the eating area.... I took the gig because I needed the money...We agreed on the contract and then I did the installation... when it was time to pay up, they were like, 'Oh, but we bought you lunch as a token of our gratitude'... but that's not what we had agreed! Why would I agree with a multi-national organisation to have £6 lunch as payment for *hours* and hours of work? ... But even before that, they brought an artist to 'help me' with the installation... I am not sure why, because it's something I had done before numerous times, and was getting on just fine - in fact that's where the Director saw it and asked for me to do an in-house consultancy... So this artist, who, remember, is supposed to assist me because she went to art school or whatever... she's a white woman... and she would say, ... one time she wanted to build a part of it with wood and it was going to cost £2,000... I didn't even think that was necessary... but they listened to her and approved it... Meanwhile, I needed fabric for £54 in total, and they said no – this was [shouting] IN THE SAME MEETING - that they didn't have money.... This is after approving 2,000 FUCKING POUNDS for the white woman, when IT WAS MY PROJECT... Sorry, I don't want to come across as 'the angry black woman' but I am still really angry... angry, first of all, for them not to acknowledge me... but then the worst bit was later to say I "inspired" the installation rather than curated it... But this sort of erasure is not uncommon... I am invisibilised, my name is not mentioned... In rendering me invisible, so are the names of generations of black women and women from the Global South...."

(Dialogue 2 with Eucalyptus, 2nd July 2016 original emphasis)

Eucalyptus is invited to contribute her artistic knowledge and skills in an installation to be featured in a 'global forum.' The process then brings up a range of epistemic and non-epistemic harms. In terms of non-epistemic harms, is the breach of contract that she claims was in place before the installation was done. She says that the organisation, which 'prides itself on being socially just', tried to pay her by giving her a 'thank you lunch' in return for 'hours and hours' of work, as opposed to financial compensation. To her it is illogical that she would have even agreed to do a time- consuming job that would be compensated with a lunch. Here there are economic harms being done, that reinforce the sense of precariousness- 'I took the gig because I needed the money'- that she was already feeling. But additionally there are the epistemic harms.

First, she has a white female artist brought in to 'help' her with her installation, even though she did not request for such assistance. She is confused and feels insulted by this as, the organisation approached her, after one of their representatives ('the director') saw an iteration of that installation elsewhere, which suggests to Eucalyptus that they know that she has the artistic capacity to pull it off. Perhaps there were other explanations, for example, she might have seemed overwhelmed and unable to meet deadlines and so the organisation brought in help. However, the deeper problem becomes that this artist, perhaps because she has professional qualifications in art, ends up having greater say over Eucalyptus on Eucalyptus' installation. Again, one could suggest that perhaps there are other explanations: for example, it could be that this artist, precisely because of her professional expertise, is able to see a missing component for example that is crucial to ensure the installation meets Health and Safety requirements. Thus, it might be that the organisation considers £2000 suggestion as an efficient way to spend money, whereas £54 on fabric, perhaps does not fit within the cost balance. Either way Eucalyptus feels that this charity is not giving uptake to her views, let alone 'amplifying' her voice.

Giving uptake does not mean wholesale agreement with a view but requires engaging with it. In this case, the white woman who was brought in to 'help' has expertise in art from her formal education; whereas Eucalyptus has know-how knowledges and expertise (Hawley, 2011). What attitudes should the organisation and the white female artist have adopted? It seems extremely obvious to say that the organisation should have had a conversation with Eucalyptus as to why they felt the need to bring on a white 'helper' for her installation, after having invited her to do to her installation for a forum aimed as 'amplifying marginalised voices'. As mentioned, they could very well have had good intentions, but these are inconclusive and irrelevant when assessing the harm caused.

Additionally, they would have needed to think more critically about how they disagree with Eucalyptus. Again, it does not mean uncritical agreement with Eucalyptus 'because she is marginalized'. Rather, it is more about considering the racialized, gendered and classed power dynamics within those interactions. This interaction raises questions as to whether Eucalyptus and the white female artist can be considered as 'peers' and therefore how to handle their disagreement (Feldman, 2007; cf. Kelly, 2010). Arguably this would have required a consideration of all the available evidence, and for the organisation and artist to substantially revise their opinions of what was needed in the installation in the direction of Eucalyptus, or, to point Eucalyptus to resources that might help her understand why they hold the views that they do, in ways that allow for greater engagement. These are just suggestions. The most obvious ethical behaviour would have included considerations of the politics of citation, and being

aware of the harms that come from co-opting the work of marginalized people. This co-option is what makes Eucalyptus extremely angry, but she is hesitant to display that anger in full as she does not want to be constructed as the angry black woman as this stereotype is further used to diminish what black women have to say- that is as further evidence against their credibility as I discuss next.

As previously discussed, anger is a legitimate response to injustice (Lorde, 1984; Bailey, 2017). Anger is a way to challenge dehumanization: "In getting angry one claims that one is in certain way and dimensions respectable. One makes a claim upon respect." (Frye, 1983:90). Eucalyptus feels disrespected for the actions already discussed: being paid with lunch instead of finances; having someone brought in to 'help' her, who ends up having more say in the project than she does; not being properly cited for her work and so on. She should be angry about this. However, black women are more vulnerable to being dismissed as 'angry' as Roxanne Gay (2016) notes:

> "I AM an opinionated woman so I am often accused of being angry. This accusation is made because a woman, a black woman who is angry, is making trouble. She is daring to be dissatisfied with the status quo. She is daring to be heard. When women are angry, we are wanting too much or complaining or wasting time or focusing on the wrong things or we are petty or shrill or strident or unbalanced or crazy or overly emotional. Race complicates anger. Black women are often characterized as angry simply for existing, as if anger is woven into our breath and our skin." (Gay, 2016: 10th June original emphasis)

In other words, when women and particularly black women are angry, they are more likely to have whatever it is they are saying dismissed. The idea is that anger is 'irrational' and certain people such as black women, are stereotyped as being more likely to be angry and irrational. The anger is used to deflect from the issue at hand. That is, the situation is constructed as 'you only feel this is unjust, you are angry', rather than, 'you are angry and rightly so, because this situation is unjust' (see Ahmed, 2010: 68). This deflection on the basis of anger is simply a way to construct wilful ignorance, because then people do not have to listen to what you are saying. For example, Audre Lorde (1984) talks about being in an academic conference where a white woman said to her, "Tell me how you feel but don't say it too harshly or I cannot hear you" to which Lorde replied, "But is it my manner that keeps you from hearing, or the threat of a message that [your] life may change?" (Lorde, 1984:125). This gets to the heart of the problem-that people become so invested in their 'moral innocence' as 'good people', running 'progressive' organisations that 'amplify' voices, to the point that any suggestion that they could

be part of the problem, is going to be something they deflect from because it is too uncomfortable a truth. A more just approach would have been to consider the 'epistemic content' of Eucalyptus' anger (Bailey, 2017:100-101) and instead learn from it.

These injustices resulting from silencing, Eucalyptus argues, have implications not just for her, but also for her but for whole groups of black women: 'In rendering me invisible, so are the names of generations of black women and women from the Global South'. In other words this silencing has political implications in the suppression of knowledges not just for her but systemically. By invoking 'women from the Global South', Eucalyptus might be reminding us that racism makes it costly for people to speak up about racialized inconsistencies, and therefore the difficulties she was having in speaking up, might be even more amplified for people in even more vulnerable situations. Moreover, she may be recalling the idea of perhaps the organisation privileging western ways of knowing by taking on white woman with a formal art degree to 'help' Eucalyptus, and that this may have connections to systemic issues such as the disappearance of particular forms of knowing due to the privileging of Western ways of knowing (Bailey, 2017). Overall it gives urgency into considering how to make spaces more reflexive in ways that move them beyond tokenistic actions. Thus, 'amplifying' the voices of minoritized communities should not be about simply including faces, foods (e.g. goat meat) and art-works that 'look different' (Puwar, 2014). These token acts of diversity can conceal inequalities and unconscious ways of being that reproduce racialized, gendered and classed power that contributes to ignorance. Identifying how power and ignorance circulate is an ongoing project. This is because "wilful ignorance circulates even in the most progressive spaces. We can make these spaces of ignorance mindful but never ignorance free." (Bailey, 2017:888) The next chapter will discuss how participants sought to redress some of these epistemic injustice.

6.4   Chapter 6 conclusion

This chapter discussed black women's experiences of epistemic injustices and particularly testimonial injustices, through the lens of food-related discussions. The contributions of this chapter begin with the application of literatures on epistemic oppression and testimonial injustice to food-related contexts. Outside of Philosophy these discussions tend to be applied to education-related contexts (e.g. Kotzee, 2013); discussions of rape and domestic violence (e.g. Jenkins, 2017); and discussions around the testimonial injustices that medical patients, especially those living with long term or chronic mental health conditions, suffer (e.g. Crichton, Carel and Kidd, 2017). This work began with food as a prompt for discussions of testimonial injustice in non-food related contexts. How does this change or contribute to what we know?

The discussions affirm that racialized (Fricker, 2007:23-29), gendered (Fricker, 2007:86-88), classed amongst other prejudices distort people's perceptions of who is considered credible and who is not. The chapter affirms the view that black women are often subject to epistemic injustices at the various points that their/our race and gender intersect with class and sexuality amongst other hierarchical social locations. Participants began their discussions by talking about jollof rice, goat meat, veganism. These discussions then became prompts that reminded them of instances where they were harmed in their capacity as knowers, by suffering credibility deficits because of prejudices and stereotypes. These prejudices were linked to prejudices audiences had to speakers who were 'less-than-women' because they were fat, Queer and 'unable' to cook; or prejudices linked to controlling images of black women as mammie figures, or prejudices linked to angry black women, or otherwise 'irrational' black women. Moreover, the chapter highlighted how systemically privileged hearers give themselves epistemic authority by using various markers of (alleged) epistemic competence: for example, the fact that they are men who known how to cook, and have received affirmation from other men that they are good cooks; the fact that they are formally educated and have art degrees; the fact that they have large platforms and have 'specialised' in the topic of race and so on.

There is still a lot of room to extend these discussions on testimonial injustice deeper into food territories, as participants here began from food, into broader considerations (e.g. a discussion on goat meat, that led to discussions on art installations and testimonial injustices). This chapter encourages feminist food scholars to pay attention to epistemic harms arising from food-related scenarios. Often the focus is on material harms and deprivation- for example, hunger/ 'food poverty', lack of access to resources and so on. These non-epistemic harms matter, but focussing *only* on them may obscure the gravity and scope of a problem. An example project might be to consider the testimonial injustices faced by highly stereotyped people in food-related debates, for example the nature of testimonial injustice faced by the increasingly growing number food bank users.

The chapter also considered the primary harm of testimonial injustice. Through empirical discussions, it affirms that the harm is not so much a demotion from subject to object per Fricker (2007:132), but the assessment of speakers as unreliable, truncated subjects (Pohlhaus, 2014:105) whose opinion is only solicited, to the extent that it does not challenge dominant ways of knowing. The chapter also highlighted various epistemic vices that contribute to testimonial injustices such as arrogance. However, it also suggested that, following Heldke (2003) particularly in food contexts, curiosity can be an epistemic vice (cf. Medina, 2013), that obstructs the production of knowledge. This would be an area for further research: can curiosity be an epistemic vice? It would require thinking about what is it that might make curiosity

epistemically vicious. Additionally, within the debate on whether credibility excess is part of the central case of testimonial injustice, the chapter suggests that credibility excess amongst systemically *marginalized* communities can potentially be part of testimonial injustice, <u>when</u> it is linked with epistemic exploitation and/or encourages the development of epistemic vices.

The chapter also highlighted how being silenced *feels* like, by considering the anger of various participants as they shared their stories about being silenced. It affirms the idea that anger has epistemic content (Bailey, 2017) and that rather than deflect that anger, and encourage people to smother their anger, there should be encouragement to sit with anger, and think about what that anger from a person experiencing injustice, is asking us to change about ourselves (Lorde, 1984:125) and our practices. Anger is not an emotion that is really considered in food literatures, and so there is definitely scope for work in that area. For example, what is the epistemic content of anger within communities experiencing food injustices?

The final empirical chapter of this thesis now considers how participants sought to redress epistemic injustices, but particularly hermeneutical injustices that they faced. More specifically, it considers how participants relied upon kitchen spaces, as spaces to develop alternative epistemic communities, in which they could pool into collective hermeneutical resources, in ways that were impossible in other spaces they had been to including classrooms and feminist spaces.

Chapter 7: Redressing hermeneutical injustices in the kitchen

7.1   Introduction

Epistemic injustices simultaneously facilitate, and flow from, various forms of ignorance. In the previous chapter, food was used as a prompt to discuss a type of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), namely testimonial injustice, and participants' experience of it. This final empirical chapter discusses how participants sought to redress epistemic injustice, and particularly hermeneutical injustice (Fricker, 2007) in kitchen spaces. Hermeneutical injustices happen, "when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experience." (Fricker, 2007:1). As highlighted in Chapter 2, hermeneutical injustices can refer to situations where no one, not even the speaker, has the language or necessary resources to make sense or communicate a harm. This may be a non-epistemic harm (e.g. sexual harassment, before the term was coined), which then takes on epistemic dimensions because there is a gap in the collective meaning-making resources both for the speakers and the audience. However, and as will be further discussed in the review, there are situations in which the speaker has resources to make sense of their experience, but is unable to communicate it, particularly to audiences who because of their wilful ignorance do not have the same resources (Medina, 2013; Dotson, 2012; Mason, 2011). Or it might be that the speaker is still unable to make sense of their experiences, but other people have the resources they need, and so the speaker seeks to engage other people in different spaces in order to come to a better understanding of their lived experience (Goetze, 2018).

The chapter grew from some participants' reflections on their difficulties in finding spaces to reflect upon, or communicate their diverse lived experiences as black women. These reflections by participants arose in this research in one of at least two ways namely: in the context of the 'kitchen dialogues' (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3) and specifically in the context of unprompted reflections by participants of the ways in which participating in this research project had proved to be 'cathartic;' or in discussions of the process of planning for the final phase of the research (see Chapter 4, especially section 4.3 on the phases of the fieldwork). The age of participants seemed to reveal a difference in which kitchens they talked about, and why they were 'reclaimed' as potential experience sharing-and-politicisation spaces. In other words, what was common amongst the set of participants was the importance placed on spaces for black women to share and reflect upon, and perhaps politicise their lived experiences; and that kitchens tended to lend themselves for this purpose. However, there was an age difference in whether the participants were talking about their current Sheffield kitchens or previous kitchens; and what the exact epistemic functions or assumptions were brought out in kitchens.

For the relatively-speaking 'younger' participants (late twenties to thirties) kitchens were relied upon as experience-sharing-and-politicisation spaces, because of their frustration that other potential avenues that they had, to different extents, participated in were 'not built for them', to use a phrase of one of the participants. This was particularly for the 'younger' participants who had been formally educated. For this group, the kitchen was an alternative knowledge production space, because other potential experience-sharing-and-politicisation spaces had made participants feel (more) marginalized. The other potential experience-sharing-and-politicisation spaces that came up for this group of participants included universities, and social justice forums. Kitchens were then chosen because they were located within homes where participants felt they could expect to have their experiences and perspectives taken seriously unlike in the other spaces such as university spaces where they felt there was an active ignoring of diverse racialized, gendered, and classed perspectives. In other words, participants began by making the case that kitchens were within 'their space' (their homes) and their experiences and perspectives could be centred in ways that systematically failed to happen in other spaces. In terms of why the kitchen as opposed to other rooms in the house, the major theme seemed to be around the idea that figuring out survival, has to happen within the context of sorting out necessities, many of which are sorted out in the kitchen. This then reflects a different way of knowing, a knowing that is grounded on everyday realities- both in the sense of arising from everyday experiences, but also in the sense of happening within the context of everyday responsibilities.

The (relatively speaking) 'older' participants (aged late sixties and seventies) also spoke of their previous reliance on kitchens as spaces to share and politicise experiences. The difference was that the kitchens they spoke of in this way were not their Sheffield kitchens but kitchens elsewhere in the Global South; and were not so much framed as the 'alternative' space but perhaps the primary space. The two 'older' participants who shared their reflections on the epistemic significance of kitchens suggested that the primary need for alternative experience-sharing and politicisation spaces arose because they had not had the opportunities for formal education and/or participation in activism spaces such as feminist gatherings; and/or because they did not have other 'women only' spaces to share personal experiences. The two 'older' participants (65 years and above) who spoke about having used kitchens in this way, Maito and Shosh, spoke mainly of their memories of kitchens elsewhere, in Kenya and Congo DRC. Here they talked about how kitchens had been used for women to make sense of their experiences of domestic and sexual violence respectively. Some of these discussions then proceeded from 'simply' information sharing, to being politicised on the grounds of oppression. In other words, in the process of these women (in the two contexts) developing and finding language for their

common experiences with other women, *some* of those conversations begun to pay attention to power and oppressive structures.

Why the kitchen? These, relatively speaking 'older' participants worked from the obvious assumption that experiences can only be *shared*, where there is more than one person involved; kitchen spaces, in those contexts, were the spaces where women were most likely to gather, and to gather at foreseeable times. Women were more likely to be found in the kitchen because of patriarchal norms that constructed food-work as 'women's work'. However, these spaces were then 'reclaimed' as appropriate spaces to have confidential, sensitive conversations about sexist practices. This was further aided by the fact that in those contexts cooking was often communal, and/or the social locations shaped material conditions including rhythms of life amongst people within a particular geographical range such as women tending to cook around the same time and therefore having foreseeable times when they could drop in on one another and have discussions whilst other work happened. In contrast, their Sheffield kitchens had not played that role, because of relative isolation linked to issues related to race, gender and age.

What is the chapter's contribution? Literatures on epistemic injustices more generally tend to be discussed by feminist philosophers in terms of the nature of the injustices and their primary harms. The question of _where_ people challenge these injustices is less explored in feminist philosophy. Feminists, and black-feminists in particular, have been on record as to the reality that there are spaces which are reclaimed to challenge the silencing and isolating nature of oppressions (Steele, 2012; Wilkin, 2012) amongst marginalized communities more generally, including the 'suppression of black women's knowledges' (Collins, 1991:40) more specifically. Some of the identified (alternative) hermeneutical spaces that marginalised communities have relied upon to make sense of, and to communicate from, their lived experiences of systemic injustices include, but are not limited to "black living rooms, _kitchens_, barber shops and beauty parlours" (hooks, 1991: 4, emphasis added); "black churches" (hooks, 1996:57); music spaces (e.g. see Davis', 1999 comprehensive analysis of the subversive role of the music of black women such as Billie Holiday, Gertrude Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith); and more recently, online spaces such as blogs (Keller, 2012), Tumblr (Pilkington, 2015), Twitter and other social media(Park and Leonard, 2014; Loza, 2014).

Whilst kitchens have been already mentioned as being spaces where marginalized communities communicate and make (political) sense of their experiences and construct new knowledges, there is not as yet a sustained consideration around 'what is it about the kitchen' that allows it to provide this avenue. On the other hand, (feminist) food scholars who have studied what happens in kitchens, have mainly looked at the extent to which kitchens are oppressive spaces for women; and/or the material food and non-food work that happens in kitchens. So far, these

(feminist) food scholars have not sufficiently considered, if at all, the hermeneutic significance of kitchens for marginalized communities.

A caution. The implications of this chapter are not that influential hermeneutical spaces such as academia or particular feminist forums should be left unchallenged, because marginalized groups can use their kitchens to educate themselves. This chapter does contribute to re-valuing kitchen spaces and to offering preliminary thoughts as to the processes by which marginalized groups pool their collective hermeneutical spaces. This does not take away the need for broader structural changes (Anderson, 2012:171) within academia for example. The connection here may be that marginalized groups are finding alternative epistemic communities and spaces to educate themselves on the things that matter most to them, in ways that allow them to make demands for change. Perhaps here we can think of the wave of student activism that came out of South Africa (Rhodes Must Fall; Fees Must Fall), Oxford and Missouri, whereby the lessons that people were gaining from other spaces fired up their demands for change.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. Section 7.2 provides a discussion on the spaces in which black women fill in gaps in collective hermeneutical resources. The discussion will begin with considering what 'collective hermeneutical resources' are (Fricker, 2007; Medina, 2013; Mason, 2012; Dotson, 2011) before reviewing some of the spaces that have been identified. Section 7.3 will discuss the empirical findings including, the specific lacunae the participants identified and why they chose the kitchens. Section 7.4 will conclude by proposing some ways to take these initial thoughts forward in future research.

This chapter draws on dialogues with five participants namely: Shosh, Maito, Alicia, Osop and Katrina. The participants were introduced in Chapter 4 (section 4.2). Shosh was a retired, black-British, working-class woman of South-African descent in her early 70s recruited via the email Call for Participants. Maito was a retired, black-British working-class woman of Kenyan descent in her late 50s who was also recruited via the email Call for Participants. Alicia was a black-British middle-class woman in her late 20s who worked as an artist and was recruited via the email Call for Participants. Osop was a black-British working-class woman of Somali descent, who identified as an 'office worker' and was also recruited via the email Call for Participants. Participants were not required to state which specific email list-serve they saw the call on, but Appendix 4 lists the different list-serves the email was sent to. Finally Katrina was a 38 year old French-Caribbean working-class black woman who worked as a teaching assistant in Sheffield, and was the only participant known to me prior to the research project.

7.2 Review: spaces in which black women fill in gaps in collective hermeneutical resources

As highlighted, hermeneutical injustices stem from a gap in collective hermeneutical resources (Fricker, 2007:1). This gap could be a gap that affects everyone including the speaker. The oft-cited example is that of the Carmita Wood case (Fricker, 2007:150-161). Carmita Wood was working in a university and facing, what we now know to be, sexual harassment from her bosses. She was unable to get redress from the university, because there were no concepts or vocabulary legally or in popular culture, to make sense of sexual harassment. This was at a time (1970s) when such behaviour was often described as 'boys being boys' and/or victims were accused of 'not having a sense of humour' and so on. Moreover, there were not many other women in academia which meant that Carmita Wood was hermeneutically marginalized from other people who might have been able to make sense of the situation with her. Eventually Carmita Wood quit her job, but also started meeting with other women in a feminist group to share experiences. It is here that she had her 'aha moment', as they were all able to identify the patterns and make sense of the harm. It was at this point that the term 'sexual harassment' was coined, a concept which is now known globally. So here we see one aspect of the primary harm of hermeneutical injustice, namely, that people are prevented from being able to make sense of the wrongs they face. In other words, the speaker finds that "a patch of her social experience which it was very much in her interests to understand was not collectively understood and so remained *barely intelligible even to her*" (Fricker, 2007:162 emphasis added).

Additionally, hermeneutical injustices also led to the harm of being prevented from sharing experiences in ways that others find intelligible. In other words, it is possible for a speaker to have the knowledge about a non-epistemic wrong they are facing, but to realize that an audience finds them unintelligible, because that audience does not have the same resources. Thus, "the subject is rendered *unable to make communicatively intelligible*, something which it is particularly in his or her interests to render intelligible [which leads to] prejudicial exclusion from spread of knowledge" (Fricker, 2007:162 emphasis added). A contemporary example here, given by Goetze (2018:79), is the ways in which LGBTQ* communities are often a step ahead from the rest of society in terms of creating concepts and vocabulary to describe various notions such as that of being 'agender': "Members of these communities may understand a person's experience of being genderless perfectly well. But many who are differently situated continue to struggle to make sense of this nonbinary gender identity" (Goetze, 2018:79). Similarly, examples have been given of mental health patients who meet in patient support groups and come up with terms and concepts that perfectly make sense of their experience, but these ideas are ahead of where science and 'formal' medical knowledges are (e.g. see Carel and Kidd, 2014).

The fact that it is possible for people to be able to make sense of their experiences (to some extent), but still find themselves in contexts where they become unintelligible, contributed to the debate on what is meant by 'collective hermeneutical resources' (Fricker, 2007:1), a gap in which is part of the central case of hermeneutical injustice. Jose Medina (2013) argues that Fricker's (2007) discussion of collective hermeneutical resources, relies on a cumulative understanding whereby "we can pool all the hermeneutical resources available to all group" [?] (Medina, 2013:103). Thus, systemically marginalized communities may have hermeneutical resources that are not available amongst dominant groups - whether that is based on their wilful ignorance or otherwise. In such situations, if it is true that collective hermeneutical resources are cumulative, then these marginalized communities will technically not be experiencing hermeneutical injustice, as they will have the interpretive resources required to make sense of their experiences, even though they may still face the epistemic harm of being unable to communicate those experiences. This is because there has to be a _gap_ in the collective resource for hermeneutical injustice to arise.

In contrast, Rebecca Mason (2011) and Kristie Dotson's (2012) accounts of how they understand Fricker's (2007) _collective_ hermeneutical resources is that there is "but one set of collective hermeneutical resources that we are all equally dependent upon" (Dotson, 2012:31; see also Mason, 2011:300). Therefore, _everyone_ fails to have that resource. In other words, the experiences become "difficult to conceptualise for the marginalized and the perceiver alike" (Dotson, 2012:32); "everyone fails to understand" (Mason, 2011:303). However as already noted, and as Dotson (2012) and Mason (2011) argue, it is not the case that _everyone_ either has a hermeneutical resource or does not - there are situations in which communities such as feminists or minorities (racial, gendered, classed, sexual, disabled etc) have come up with language and concepts to interpret various experiences that other communities might be unaware of. Importantly, if it is true that Fricker's (2007) conceptualisation of hermeneutical injustices is only in cases where everyone fails to have interpretive resources, then this would miss out a number of epistemic harms.

Miranda Fricker (2016) has responded to this debate and clarified that her original framing of collective hermeneutical resources already contains the understanding of "the existence of localised interpretive practices that may perfectly capture a given range of experiences but whose meanings are not sufficiently shared across wider social spaces" (Fricker, 2016:167). She elaborates that collective hermeneutical resources are those "concepts and conceptualisations that are held in common" (Fricker, 2016:163). This means that even though there may be resources available in one community but a gap elsewhere, if a person is being harmed by being

prevented from acquiring knowledge or communicating their experience then they suffer hermeneutical injustice (Fricker, 2007:162).

Black women are vulnerable to suffering hermeneutical injustices. Black-feminist literatures have already considered at length how black women have historically been unable to attain knowledge of their racialized *and* gendered experiences because of a failure in intersectional approaches (Crenshaw, 1989; Beale, 1970: 146; King, 1988, 2016; Spillers, 1984). Thus, black women have often found our/themselves in situations where conversations about race only consider masculine experiences, or feminist conversations about gender privilege white women's experiences (Carby 1987; Guy-Sheftall 1995; Collins, 1986, 1991, 1995; Lorde, 1984; Mohanty, 1988; Bailey, 2010, 2014). However, they/we have found spaces in which to share experiences and find or create the language we need for things that matter. For example, the experience of having our experiences erased because we are both black *and* female amongst other identities, has led to the creation of new language such as Double Jeopardy (Beale, 1970: 146); Matrix of Domination (Collins, 1993); Multiple Jeopardy (King, 1988, 2016); Triple Oppression (Jones, 1949); Interstices (Spillers, 1984); Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989); and Misogynoir (Bailey, 2010, 2014.; see also Trudy, 2014). All these different concepts are aimed at providing language that captures how systems of domination interlock and overlap (Collective, 1986), which other feminists and race activists were failing to capture.

Black women's vulnerability to having their experiences erased in different hermeneutically influential spaces, has required them/us to find alternative spaces of thought. For example, Patricia Hill-Collins (1991: 40) notes that, "historically, the suppression of black-feminist thought has meant that black women intellectuals have traditionally relied on alternative institutional locations to produce specialised knowledge about a black women's standpoint." This suppression of thought is not simply historical. Arguably, the 'suppression' of black women's thoughts continues to be reflected in both the relative absence of black female bodies in academic institutions especially in senior positions (Collins, 1991: 33; Equality Challenge Unit, 2015; Solanke, 2017), as well as in the material ways that racism and sexism organise themselves to systemically dismiss the ideas of black women as intellectual (Hong, 2008; Lorde, 1984).

The contemporary suppression of black female knowledges in academia is reflected in various practices including, but not limited to: the constructions of experiences and perspectives that do not align with the experiences of socially privileged groups as deviant or unintelligible; the colour-blind racism experienced by black academics (Bonilla-Silva, 2012); the 'demands' for black female academics to take up unpaid and unacknowledged emotional and other forms of labour including the shifting in responsibility for discussions aimed at 'fixing' injustice to the

bodies that are seen as 'decolonial' (Frankenberg, 1993:80; Kobayashi and Peake, 2000: 400); the attack of black female student leaders by right wing press (e.g. the case of Cambridge University student Lola Olufemi's attack by The Telegraph newspaper who plastered her face on the front page of their newspaper with a claim they later retracted as false, but after Olufemi had already been subject to racist and sexist trolling - Khomami and Watt, 2017); anecdotes of black female students and staff who have to work with academics who hold problematic perspectives on race and gender, or even engage in racist and sexist abuse without consequence (Ahmed, 2016); and finally, academics 'having to' rely on concepts and methods that are entrenched in colonial routes in order to be 'rigorous' or to fail to rely on them at a cost to academic careers (Dotson, 2013) and so on.

Small wonder that Shirley Tate (2014) talks about the 'ordinariness of racism' in (allegedly) 'tolerant' institutions such as universities which in reality can be knowledge productions spaces in which "racism melts into thin air even as it permeates their spaces, their very walls" (Tate, 2014:69). Moreover, these injustices continue to be perpetuated because racially minoritized university staff and students understandably stay silent/smother their testimonies (Dotson, 2011) about their everyday experiences for fear of being (further) victimised. Thus black women may rely on alternative spaces of experience sharing, processing, politicisation and language creation, because hermeneutically influential avenues such as academia, media, white feminist forums and race-related forums remain closed or hostile to them.

What is the role of these alternative spaces of knowledge production? They serve as spaces where marginalised communities "have learned oppositional ways of thinking that enhance our capacity to survive and flourish" (hooks, 1996:57). Learning oppositional ways of thinking begins with but does not end with sharing of experiences. In other words, the sharing of experiences between (black) women does not *automatically* equate to developing a feminist consciousness (Scott, 1991: 787; Hemmings, 2012:156). As per discussions on standpoint theory in Chapter 1, whilst sharing of experiences by itself is valuable in making racialized, gendered, classed amongst other stories and injustices visible, in order for discussions of personal experiences to be 'liberatory', they must be rooted in understandings of structural conditions (Scott, 1991; Nash, 2011). A commonly cited example of a black woman sharing of experiences in ways rooted in understandings of structural conditions is the speech by Sojourner Truth in 1851 to the Akron Women's Rights Convention. In this speech Sojourner uses her experiences of various forms of violence to point to the systemic racialized inconsistencies in the treatment of women. Thus, the process of learning oppositional ways of thinking requires reflecting on, questioning and unsettling of existing racialized, gendered, and classed amongst other structural assumptions. Starting from personal and community

experiences of violence, social exclusion, being silenced, and how these experiences feel, provides varied perspectives on the politics of racialized and gendered relations.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, so far it has been asserted that black women have historically relied upon kitchens as an alternative space of experience sharing and sense-making (e.g. hooks, 1991: 4) because "the kitchen operates as a safe space, and an organizing space to create sites of resistance outside of the kitchen" (Kohl and McCutcheon, 2015: 750). However, this is not a claim that tends to be followed and nuanced by empirical exploration. This could be because literatures on kitchen spaces tend to be dichotomised around whether kitchens are empowering or oppressive spaces for women. Thus the *empirical* focus with regards to the use of kitchens by women of colour generally or black women specifically has tended to concentrate on how kitchens can provide a space where (immigrant) women of colour empower themselves by pursuing entrepreneurial food work to create livelihoods. For example, Meredith Abarca (2006) explores the entrepreneurship of Mexican-American women through kitchens; Williams-Forson (2006) considers the entrepreneurial food-work of African-American women; whereas Robson (2006) considers the entrepreneurial food-work of Nigerian Hausa women. A common thread of these discussions is that, unlike the narrative of many white women, entrepreneurial food-work tends to arise from a place of necessity for women of colour, rather than from discovery of a 'second act' based on one's passions (e.g. see Nettles-Barcelon, 2017 for more on the rising trend of often white, college-educated, female bloggers leaving unsatisfying jobs behind for full time work in their kitchens). This chapter in contrast focusses on the epistemic significance of kitchens, with reference to redressing hermeneutical injustices.

7.3   Findings and discussion

Discussions about kitchens sometimes began as participants' unprompted reflections of their kitchen memories, in anticipation of the planned kitchen dialogues in phase 3 of this project (see Chapter 4, section 4.3 on the research methods). It is here that they considered the significance that various kitchens held or failed to hold, as the dialogue with Shosh below considers:

> **Beth:** Thank you so much for your time; I have enjoyed our chat… I would like to tell you about the next visit which you can opt out of obviously…
>
> **Shosh:** me too and I am looking forward to having you round to my kitchen… I have really missed having good discussions with African women in my kitchen… I used to do it all the time, especially when I lived in Congo DRC, and at the end of the day we all cooked around the same time, and everyone could go round each other's kitchens and talk about the day, just us girls (laughs)… I don't have that here… I don't even really

know my neighbours here to talk about stuff like race (laughs) and I have got tired of being preached to by white women in some of the forums I tried... you know what I mean?

Beth: erm, not quite yet (laughs). So...for example, what is it that you miss?

Shosh: Well...it's hard to explain...I guess I found words in those kitchens... because... (pause)...it's interesting how now even science is proving a number of these things that I first heard of in the kitchen... so....I was gang-raped...soldiers gang-raped me in public...it happened twice... Before the second time, this old woman I didn't even know, came and told me at the market, "The soldiers are around, you should use these leaves...grind them, put them in your vagina, they will not know it is there, but it will keep you safe". ... When I got back to the house I told the other women as we were cooking and they said "Yes we are all using the leaves".... After the second gang rape, I didn't get it [*not clear whether 'it' refers to a sexually transmitted disease or to pregnancy*] ...But some other women didn't use these traditional methods, because of their Christian faith... that's what....that's when...I started thinking about the things that are killing African women such as rape and how Christianity plays a role in why we don't speak out...and we debated this numerous times in each other's kitchens because we realised it wasn't enough to give each other herbs and keep getting raped...we really talked, sometimes it would *sound* like a fight (laughs) because we had different opinions, but I saw that even uneducated women in the village know more than we do, even when they might not always be able to explain why....why they think what they think...But here...here I just cook...but actually I should start inviting other women round, not like my neighbours, but others in the same boat, so we have a place we can just talk about our issues without interruption..." (Dialogue 1 with Shosh, 19th December 2015)

For Shosh, her memories of kitchens were of food-work space in which to challenge hermeneutical ignorance about rape as a weapon of war, an ignorance which when left unchallenged makes the claims of victims unintelligible (see also Pohlhaus, 2011). At the time, Shosh was in a context where women's gathering happened 'by default' in kitchen spaces at particular times of the day, as they dropped in on each other during cooking times. In other words, the kitchen was a space that had been 'relegated to the women' in ways that were reflective of patriarchy, but in ways they subverted (Davis, 1999; hooks, 1991). It is here that they then share their, sadly, ubiquitous experiences of rape by soldiers. Initially some of these conversations focussed on helping women to change and adapt their own behaviour in order to cope with oppressive systems. For example, women shared knowledges on which plants can act

as spermicides/abortifacients for 'the next time' gang rape inevitably happens. Those sort of dialogues were not aimed primarily at challenging or critiquing unjust structures that make rape culture ubiquitous. Thus initially, the kitchen is a space to share information- to share news 'about the day', and news of upcoming terror ('the soldiers are coming') and exchange strategies.

However, over time the kitchen also becomes a space to 'find words'. This begins to speak to the initial absence of interpretive resources on 'rape as a weapon of war'; in other words, "the recognition that rape in wartime is not a simple 'by-product' of war, but is often a planned and targeted policy" (Buss, 2009:145-146). Interpretive resources challenging the myth of rape as an 'unfortunate by-product of war' have been growing steadily since 1993 (Baaz and Stern, 2013:2), with various UN Resolutions, feminist action and writings, including on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo DRC (e.g. see Card, 1996; Meger, 2010; Alcoff, 2018). Thus the women in Shosh's anecdote were suffering cognitive harms of not having knowledge about the systemic uses of rape to share. In other words, it was not a global hermeneutical lacuna.

However, over time, as the sexual violence and experience sharing continues, the women begin to challenge the myth that rape was inevitable or natural, as the women 'realise that it is not enough to just give each other herbs' to cope with rape. The kitchen dialogues become a pathway to grow in consciousness that it is fruitless to simply respond to rape by exchanging information about helpful herbs. A more fruitful pathway is seen to involve paying attention to 'what kills [African women]'. The women seem to come to a realization that (sexualized) violence is built *into* oppressive systems (Mills, 2007; Mills, 1997:22), as a necessary precondition for more powerful communities being able to maintain an otherwise unjust status quo in favour of the powerful. These black women having spaces to challenge the belief of inequality and violence as neutral and inevitable also speaks to how for many marginalized communities, oppositional knowledges are not a luxury, but are "essential for [their/our] survival", (Collins, 2007:257), sometimes quite literally.

One of these perceived oppressive structures is religion and in particular Christianity. This is *rigorously* debated amongst the women based on their multiple experiences of being African women, (for some of them) being Christian, and the ubiquity and oppressive nature of rampant sexual violence. In noting, whilst she laughs, that the discussion became so animated that they sometimes *sounded* like a fight, Shosh affirms the view that knowledge is "produced collectively through the clashing and meshing of a variety of points of view" (Longino, 1990:69). These differences in opinions have potential to allow for false assumptions to surface (Solomon, 2001) and for various conceptualizations to be creatively explored (Kitcher, 2011; Solomon, 2006).

This in turn then strengthens the most justified perspectives by reminding everyone in the dialogue of what evidence (fails to) exist for various views (Anderson, 2006).

It is here that Shosh realises that even 'uneducated women' have interpretive access to resources that even 'we' do not have access to. Her reference here to 'we' could be in reference to the fact that she and I, although with a 40-year age difference between us and 'originally' from different African nationalities, have both had some access to formal education. And yet despite our formal education (for her an undergraduate degree, and for myself, Graduate school) we may be *relatively* ill-equipped, per Shosh, to make sense of particular experiences. This speaks to how systems of oppression influence material conditions and experiences (e.g. rural 'un-educated' African woman, versus, diasporic formally educated African women) which leads to different pools of evidences and beliefs. In other words, social locations directly shape and limit what it is that we can know. The knowing that comes out of particular spaces is likely to be over-looked, unless or until when it is 'confirmed' by more readily accepted ways of knowing e.g. 'scientific thought.'

Finally, Shosh considers why her current Sheffield kitchen does not serve the same function. She pins this down to her relative isolation more generally, for example with not feeling like she knew her neighbours in Sheffield well enough 'to talk about stuff like race'. It is not clear who the neighbours are, or why she does not feel comfortable to talk to them. It may simply be nothing against those specific neighbours, but rather a reflection of race issues as 'sensitive' topics that might not be appropriate 'neighbour discussions.' She does hint to the fact that her neighbours are not 'in the same boat' to her or myself. It is not clear if her neighbours were also (African) black women, whether she would feel more comfortable to engage in kitchen dialogues.

Similarly, another participant, Maito, also in her late 60s/early 70s, reflected on her previous experiences of having/finding kitchens as a space to give or share names to problems (Ahmed, 2014; Lorde, 1984:36) in ways that she so far had not found in Sheffield:

> **Beth:** Is this kitchen similar to your previous one?
>
> **Maito**: Not really.. well, I had an indoor and an outdoor kitchen... But I think the biggest different is that my kitchen in Kenya, there were often other women there and it was where I have learnt so much about life, from the other women who come in and out... Like even now... you are here and we are chatting and exchanging ideas that take us forward... One time I was facing domestic violence, and my husband was so rough... but it was in that kitchen I learnt from other women about marital rape, which I had never

heard about...and also I learnt what I would need to do to protect my share of the property because I was afraid I would get kicked out with nothing...I don't have that here

Beth: I'm sorry to hear about that... why do you say you don't have that...

Maito: Well, for starters all my neighbours are white, I know one a bit better but not the others, we just say hi... but you know we wouldn't have the sort of chat we are now having (laughs) the one next door I noticed she read The Sun... I think you have to be on the same page... and back home people also dropped in and out more, so were in the kitchen anyway and we could compare notes about everyday things and talk deep things...most of my friends are in London and we meet after a long while in big groups with spouses and kids so we can't really catch up...it's a lot of fun, but there are just things you can't talk about in a big group with men there and you have a short time to catch up...here, I am still finding my feet finding people on same page...

(Dialogue 2 with Maito, 12th June 2016)

For Maito, her previous kitchen(s) in Kenya provided her with spaces to revisit marital experiences including her experiences of marital rape; facing looming divorce; and learning how to protect her share of the marital property, through the legal process of making potential buyers of the marital land aware of her common law claims to it ('caveat emptor'). Concepts of marital rape and caveat emptor are concepts that have been developed in feminist and legal communities (e.g. see Hasday, 2000; Martin et al., 2007; Lefcoe, 2004). Specifically, for 'marital rape' Maito confesses to at the time having 'never heard about it before'. She does seem to know that the sexual activity with her then husband was deviant but lacked the language for it. The kitchen became a supportive environment where empathy could flourish amongst women who were 'on the same page' and had the opportunities to regularly come together to consider the patches of gendered experiences that were very much in their interests to understand (Fricker, 2007:162). Maito becomes a beneficiary of other women who had learned the names for problems that previously had no names - such as marital rape - and imported those tools and language to Maito's kitchen (Brownmiller, 1990).

In contrast, her Sheffield kitchen highlights her relative alienation from other people who might be on the 'same page' about 'deep things'. Again she notes her relative isolation in Sheffield, noting that her close friends live in London and only infrequently get together. It is not to say that all her friends would necessarily be on the 'same page'. For example, she notes how particular conversations would be difficult to have in London, first for pragmatic reasons in the

sense of having a lot to 'catch up on' and very little time to do so during social reunions. But she also hints to the presence of men in those social gatherings as prohibiting particular conversations. She does not say specifically which conversations are smothered or why. However, this does imply that one aspect of 'being on the same page' for her includes dialogues (Collins, 2009:279) with other people who have shared lived (gendered) experiences (Collins, 2009:276). Indeed Shosh notes that the other instances of testimonial smothering, this time with her Sheffield neighbours, also happen because of inability to have dialogues with her Right-wing tabloid-reading white neighbours. Therefore "the content of [her] testimony feels unsafe" (Dotson, 2011:244) leading to only 'polite' greetings with the neighbours but no discussions. This affirms the view that,

> "for black women new knowledge claims are rarely worked out in isolation from other individuals and are usually developed through dialogues with other members in a community. A primary epistemological assumption underlying the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims is that connectedness rather than separation is an essential component of the knowledge validation process" (Collins, 2000:260).

Hence for Shosh and Maito, their previous kitchens had provided opportunities for connectedness and black women-centered dialogues (Dotson, 2015:2323) with other women with similar lived experiences, which their current Sheffield kitchens did not afford. Moreover, they hinted at finding the content of their lived experiences to potentially be 'unsafe' in particular spaces or with particular people, and therefore they smothered their testimonies.

This issue of having conducive environment for meaning making was also brought up by other participants, who found other hermeneutical spaces hostile to making sense of racialized and gendered experiences, in ways that caused some participants, such as Alicia to turn to their Sheffield kitchens. The conversation begins with her unprompted reflection that she was 'glad' that our final research dialogue was happening in her kitchen. When I ask why that is, she at first talks about the fact that her kitchen is a 'safe space', thinking about it in a more literal way, before 'correcting herself' upon her own realization that there is also a concept of 'safe spaces', a concept which she has strong feelings about. She suggests that the concept of 'safe spaces' racialized and gendered, and has different meanings amongst systemically privileged groups, than it does to systemically marginalized groups. She argues that the concept of 'safe space' is often deployed by racially privileged groups in ways that are reflective of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) and therefore in ways that harm people of colour, by maintaining ignorance and shutting down conversations. In contrast, she has found her kitchen to be a space

characterized by epistemic friction (Medina, 2013:48) that allows for the conversations 'we' want to have to move forward:

Alicia: I am actually glad that the second interview was in my kitchen…

Beth: Do you enjoy being in the kitchen?

Alicia: Well, I like this kitchen, because it's my kitchen…it's quite small, but it's still mine… I am surrounded by things that make me quite happy…and even like my parents' kitchen at home, it's comfortable… but there are things that bug me, like how my brother just stands at the door of a kitchen and does nothing other than talk *at* you… but my kitchen is still a space for me and my sisters or cousins to talk about stuff…it's a safe space…argh no I don't mean safe space because I hate that term

Beth: Why is that?

Alicia: because like when I hear the phrase 'safe space' I think of white people…

Beth: why?

Alicia: Because white people tend to use the term 'safe space'…there's something about that term, and how it's used even by other feminists and activists in spaces where people of colour are in no way safe, like there's no way that you can tell me that meeting with white feminists or white socialists who have never thought about race critically can make for a safe space…the definition of safe spaces for white people, is completely different for people of colour…

Beth: so what does a safe space look like for you?

Alicia: I don't know, I don't think there can be a blanket statement, because it depends on what is said on the day in that space… I don't really believe that there is a single place you can go to, where we won't be dealing with something…so even like when I am home, and I enjoy being home, but there are different things that I have to negotiate…and then when I am here, in my place, there is the issue of having a disability…so it's not unsafe because I am very particular of who I want to be in this space and how I want things to work in this space…

 Beth: Why is that?

Alicia: well, because I am exhausted in going to spaces where people don't know…I think there's a privilege in not knowing…you have the ability to not know…and there are major issues like Muslims are facing, that educating white people about our humanity

cannot be my priority…they need to just go read… and people say "oh how are they going to learn if you don't speak to them?" because there is a difference between conversations like the way we are having now that both people are exploring ideas, and actually just being mined for information, where it kind of feels like the other person has just decided to be too lazy to read themselves and they just want a quick answer that we can provide for them… So I like that in my kitchen I can choose who comes in and together we decide what we talk about, and even when we disagree, none of us feel like, 'I am in a place where I am not supposed to be and my issues don't matter' because we start from similar basics… and also because I have no interest to hold the hand of white people and teaching them like we end up being made to do… This should be *their* work, and so in terms of fixing systems that really only benefit them, they should be doing this work… But I think we need to think about in what contexts are knowledges deemed as valuable… because there are things that we get from some spaces which are invaluable and we can't get elsewhere… But in other contexts, they are taking what we have done and turning it into shit… But I don't think the focus of the conversation should be on what *they* are doing, but on the ideas *we* want to take forward…"

(Dialogue 2 with Alicia, 5th January 2016; original emphasis)

Alicia begins by suggesting that a pre-requisite of being able to find and share the language and concepts that are needed to make sense of issues that matter to people, is a safe space. She initially uses this term in a more literal way to mean a place where she feels 'comfortable' and surrounded by people who care for her (e.g. her sisters and cousins) even though it cannot be problem free. For example, one of the things that bugs her in her parent's kitchen, is her brother's inability to cross over the threshold and be in the kitchen doing the work that is supposed to be done, but rather chooses to 'stand at the door' without helping. Moreover, her brother is not invested in dialogue, which, as already mentioned, is a crucial aspect of the process of making sense of things (Collins, 2009:279). Instead she describes him as talking 'at' her and the other women in the kitchen, rather than with them. His poor epistemic practices mean that he is hindering himself from gaining new knowledges from those in the kitchen, because he has no interest in listening to them. Moreover, it dehumanizes those in the kitchen, because in order to dialogue with someone, you have to recognize them as a subject rather than an object. The practice of talking *at* people dehumanizes people into objects and constructs that speech into the "speech of a subject and object" (hooks, 1998:131) which further reifies domination. She contrasts this with her experience of her own kitchen, which she finds to be a 'safe space', but not in the way she understands the concept of 'safe space' to be deployed.

The concept of 'safe space' is often argued to be problematically deployed by minoritized, often left-leaning staff and students who, it is argued, lack intellectual stamina to handle difficult conversations, in ways that hinder their own and other people's intellectual activity and learning (e.g. see BBC Radio 4 programme by Professor Matthew Flinders (2018) on 'viewpoint diversity', in which some UK based academics express feeling 'censored' on questions on race, immigration and Brexit if they hold 'controversial opinions)' . Even though the concept of 'safe space' is increasingly invoked or critiqued both in academia and outside of it (e.g. see Shulevitz, 2015), the content of the term is not always clear. For example, Alicia herself makes it clear that she is using the term 'safe space' in a different way to the concept of 'safe spaces' that she has come across in other contexts such as amongst white feminists or white socialists. She resists my invitation to define what she means by safe space, fearing that that would be coming up with a 'blanket statement' for what inherently is a situated, ephemeral spaces: the 'safety' of a space, 'depends on *what is said* on *the day* in *that* space'. In other words, the epistemic content on a given day in a particular space can make it safe or unsafe. As she clarifies, 'there isn't a single place you can go to, where we won't be dealing with something'. In other words, a safe space is not a fixed problem-free place you go to (cf. Anzaldua, 2002), but rather a problem-mindful space you create. Thus even her own home, which she had complete 'control' over as it was a house she owned and lived by herself, is not problem-free but comes with issues to 'navigate' around being a disabled woman. Some of these 'negotiations' may have been to do with the physical architecture of the place; so returning to the kitchen, she mentions that it is 'small' and yet, overall, is emotionally 'comfortable' *to her.*

In some contexts, safe spaces are critiqued by those who feel that their 'right to free (potentially offensive) speech' is curtailed, which, they argue is antithetical to intellectual progress in academic contexts. These critics have argued that the creation of 'safe spaces' is increasingly leading to 'hypersenstive' knowers who are encouraged to 'self-infantalize' at great expense, in ways that, allegedly, would have been unthinkable in past generations. For example, Judy Shulevitz, 2015, piece with regards to safe spaces in the context of discussions about 'campus rape', dismisses these spaces as spaces filled with play-doh and videos of puppies, whilst requiring an 'army' of mental health counsellors in ways that were not needed by 'hardier generations' of students in times before. Alicia's account of what she means by safe space does have elements such as those denigrated by accounts of those who critique safe space. For example, she talks about her kitchen as being a place where she is 'surrounded by things that make [her] quite happy'. She does not expand on which particular objects in the kitchen she has in mind here. And previously she had talked about a safe space for her depends on 'what is said on the day' which implies that she might find certain ideas troubling or 'triggering'. Those who

argue for safe spaces have argued that knowledge claims are not self-contained, and if left to uncritically circulate, have the potential to cause epistemic harm.

Here what Alicia does is not to wholeheartedly receive or reject the concept of safe space. Rather, she suggests that there are different definitions to safe space, and that some well-intended conceptualisations can cause harm. Thus, considerations of how 'what is said' or not said in particular places affecting its 'safety' seem to be central to the crux of what a 'safe space' is for her. This affirms that the discussions about safe space are not primarily about physical safety- the importance of which is relatively agreed upon, but on "discursive safety" (Stengel and Weems, 2010:506). The difference in conceptualisations of safe space tends to be in how people understand 'safety' with some, well-intended, definitions conflating safety with comfort. For example, some working definitions of 'safe space' envision it as "a place where *anyone* can *relax* and be *fully self-expressed*, <u>without</u> *fear of being made to feel* <u>uncomfortable,</u> unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age or physical or mental ability" (Freedman, 2014:4 emphasis added). In other words, in a safe space, ideally there will be nothing said that makes anyone uncomfortable because of their gender, race, class and other social locations. This conflation of safety as *comfort* for <u>all</u> is one that Alicia critiques as discussed next.

Alicia claims that white feminists often talk about creating 'safe spaces' and yet do so without having to engage with uncomfortable truths about their whiteness and their complicity in racial oppressions (e.g. see Srivastava, 2006). This critique would apply to white socialists as well, Alicia claims. The outcome is that these spaces become safe *for them* rather than safe for marginalized communities, for whom 'these spaces are in no way safe'. As will be developed in the chapter, this affirms the idea that spaces are not neutral in terms of racialized, gendered and classed politics (McKittrick, 2006; Gilmore, 2007), but bear various legacies "of pain, stench, restriction, constriction, inhumanity and injustice" (Davis, 1999:367) whether this is recognised or not. This means that, other participants noted, racialized, gendered, classed amongst other systemic privileges, will afford systemically privileged people the privilege to already be comfortable in spaces, even in ways that they may not recognize or be able to articulate. In other words, "the reality [is] that the more comfortable a space is for white [people], the more likely it will be violent for [people] of colour" (Applebaum, 2017: 873). Therefore, critical thinking and the production of knowledges therefore results from supportively subverting this entitlement to racialized comfort at the expense of marginalized communities (see Srivastava, 2006 on 'white tears'). In other words, it is the unwillingness to sit with the discomfort (Yancy, 2012) that comes from examining uncomfortable truths that works to hinder learning from taking place

(Boler, 1999; Applebaum, 2017, Bailey, 2017), and to actively and further exclude marginalized voices and perspectives from those spaces. For this reason, Alicia turns to her kitchen.

Though Alicia had a 'complicated' relationship with various kitchens - liking some things and being 'bugged' by others - she recognised kitchens and particularly her own as a space where her experiences as a black disabled woman could be centred rather than marginalized. For Alicia, kitchens provide a 'safe' opportunity to start from her 'concrete experiences' (Collins, 1990:209) at the intersection of being black, female, Muslim and disabled. This allows her in conversations with others in the kitchen to begin deconstructing prevailing notions (Collins, 2002:258) particularly of gender and class which are constructed in other spaces as allegedly having nothing to do with race. This is in contrast to spaces where the categories of class or gender are used to make visible and legitimise particular people's experience (e.g. white working class women) whilst subjugating the experiences of others (e.g. black, disabled, Muslim women).

In contrast, Alicia's kitchen provides the 'safety' of agenda-setting. First of all, dialogues in the kitchen space allow Alicia to 'choose' who and what makes up that conversation. In other words, the kitchen space offers opportunities to "use [their] on-the-ground experiences with injustice as their starting point" (Bailey, 2017: 876) for discussions. Alicia's kitchen is also safe because she has 'control' over who comes into her home, and 'what is said on the day'. This does not imply that everyone who comes into her house for dialogues has to agree with her (Boostrom, 1998:907) and indeed they do not. Rather, she says "together we decide what we talk about, and even when we disagree, none of us feel like, 'I am in a place where I am not supposed to be and my issues don't matter'". This affirms the idea that kitchens can serve as a "private place in which black women establish… a sense of authority, *not to dominate but to resist and survive* white supremacy" (Davis, 1999:375 emphasis added).

Moreover, it is a place to be with others who 'get it', or in Alicia's own words, a space with other people "with the same *basics*" (emphasis added). Being with people who have the same starting points does not pre-determine the conclusions as already discussed, Rather it affirms that "'getting it' is important to solidarity work – so many experiences are made harder if other people do not, cannot, or will not 'get it'; get what is going on" (Ahmed, 2019). What the discussions so far suggest is that the refusal to 'get it [the basics]' can be wilful in certain spaces (Pohlhaus, 2011). In contrast, this kitchen becomes a place where "[black] women's experiences (from their unique vantage point) [are] at the centre of discussions and claims" (Davis, 1999:365-366). Of course being a black woman, does not in and of itself imply that one 'gets it' (Scott, 1992; Alcoff, 2000; Applebaum, 2008). For example, it is possible that there may be those who did not fully appreciate how racialized and gendered logics impact upon ableist,

Islamophobic power systems, or had fautly interpretations of those experiences. But what Alicia emphasises here is that her kitchen space becomes a space where there is 'no hand-holding for white people', who she feels she ends up having to 'educate' about her experiences (Berenstain, 2016).

Alicia notes that there is a difference in the labour being done such as 'in the conversation we are having' and the labour being done to educate people who have been too 'lazy' to educate themselves about 'systems that really only benefit them' (cf. Mills, 1997, 2007). Alicia does not specify what the difference in that labour in different conversations is. She seems to imply it is related to the labour that allows conversations to move forward, and the labour designed and demanded by oppressive systems to "fuck with [black women's] future" (Cooper, 2015: 18-19) by distracting them/us from the issues that matter most to them/us (Morrison, 1975) through constant requests for repetition of 'the basics' from systemically privileged people, who have the privilege to not know (see Lorde, 1984:117 – "how many times has this been said before?'")

In this way the kitchens becomes a space for epistemic friction (Medina, 2013:48) that prompts those in the kitchen "to be self-critical, to compare and contrast [their] beliefs, to meet justificatory demands, to recognize cognitive gaps, and so on (Medina, 2013: 50). Thus for example, Alicia talks about being able to contrast dominant understandings of safe space, with understandings of safe space that align with her experience as a black woman; she talks about being able to contrast dominant understandings of individual merit, with knowledges of 'systems that only benefit them'; she is able to contrast the devaluation of particular knowledges, with an awareness of the value of knowledges 'you can't find elsewhere; finally, she is able to contrast dominant understandings of whose work it is to educate or learn about racialized privilege.

The epistemic friction available in the kitchen is in contrast to white-dominated spaces she had attended that were characterised by privilege-preserving epistemic pushbacks (Bailey, 2017) such as 'if you don't educate us, how will we know?". This is a clear pushback, by which I mean, following Bailey (2017) the 'world-view preserving' habits and practices of dominant communities in learning settings, that could pass as critical thinking but actually work to obstruct and hinder knowledge. As Alison Bailey (2017:883) notes "epistemic friction is impossible when conversations are pulled onto epistemic terrains where terms such as white-privilege…have absolutely no hermeneutical currency." Thus in Alicia's kitchen, learning is facilitated rather than hindered because of creating a space in which terms such as white privilege do have hermeneutical currency, in ways that enable rigorous considerations of Islamophobia, racism, sexism and able-ism with other black women.

Kitchens are a knowledge production space where marginalized communities can potentially 'feel at home' enough to learn, in ways that can potentially go beyond the kitchen into transforming academic spaces. Alicia talks about how in the kitchen dialogues, no one feels that they are 'not supposed to be there' in contrast to their experiences in academia (cf. Coleman, 2015:3 who argues that there is no racialized gap in attainment, but rather a racialized gap in belonging). This speaks to what feminist scholars have already noted that "spaces acquire the shape of the bodies that 'inhabit them'" (Ahmed, 2007:156) and therefore people's social locations influence how far they can 'feel at home' in particular spaces. That is, social locations influence who is deliberately or unintentionally silenced or heard, and therefore which lived experiences are paid attention to or invisiblised, including even in feminist spaces. The 'concrete experiences' that are brought into kitchen dialogues therefore, become a point of entry to shed light on larger socio-political questions by drawing attention to social injustices in society. Alicia's kitchen allows her to move the focus of the conversations from what 'they' (systemically privileged people) are doing to what it is 'we' want to create.

Thus, participants tended to on kitchens as alternative spaces to make sense of the experiences that mattered most to them, because their "bullshit detectors start pinging and the pinging is never addressed in any serious systematic way" (Wilson, 2017:858) in other spaces. For example, for Alicia it was the 'bullshit' of white feminists *still* not addressing race in particular forums, or white socialists who *still* presume that class can be understood without any reference to other categories of power (Lorde, 1984:114-123). The idea of ringing yet unaddressed 'bullshit detectors' frustrating participants into the kitchen to find and make sense of their experiences was repeated by another participant, Osop. The conversation began after I complimented her beautiful kitchen, to which she informed me that she had made some investment to it, because it was a space where she spent a 'bit of time' in both for food-work and epistemic work, as she explains below.

> **Beth:** you have an absolutely beautiful kitchen
>
> **Osop**: thank you! I have done some work to make it nice because I spend a bit of time in here
>
> **Beth**: Why is that?
>
> **Osop:** well, I don't mind cooking but also I have started this thing...so me and a group of like 5 other black women have been getting together here to talk... because like (pause)...so in this seminar we had a couple of weeks when stuff on Race came up, and I

was the only black woman...the rest were 12 white men and 2 white women...and when people asked questions, the lecturer kept asking me to give an answer from my life, as though I was there to teach his class! as though I am there to educate them yet we are there to learn too...although I say that when in actual fact I learnt nothing...With the other friends in the kitchen, we've talked a lot about how we find ourselves getting into the same conversations especially with white people in class, and they think they are bringing something new to you, but you are bored and not learning. Like we end up explaining things to them, and we are not learning...and that is work that we are not being compensated for... conversations like the one we are having here, or that I have with the others...they give us the freedom to say "I don't understand"... especially because in classrooms, we often don't give ourselves that space, because we understand the hostility of the environment and so why would you make yourself more vulnerable... like we go to classes and hear and see lecturers speak racist shit. In my conversations with the others last time, we were trying to figure out why we found it so fucked up that we are supposed to grant lecturers the courtesy of their ignorance in that space because it is the correct professional thing to do...We talked about how there is a framing of white fragility as civility...For some of us it was the first time to come across that idea... which means that we should not be visibly disturbed by what we are encountering from the lecturers or other students because it's not 'professional'. When actually calling their behaviour out for the bullshit that it is, would help them make their work better... I guess here in this kitchen we can just get on with imagining the kind of world we want to live in...

(Dialogue 2 with Osop, 25th May 2016)

Osop reflects on her experiences as an academic student and emphasises how deprived of opportunities for intellectual growth she feels. She talks about and reiterates the idea of academia being a space where 'she is not learning'. She gives an example from a module that had discussions about race. In this classroom environment, the lecturer arguably abused his power by picking on Osop, the only black (female) student, and asking her to share personal racialized narratives for the benefit of the class. She resents this, as she realizes that it is not her responsibility to educate the other 14 white students about race and bear the burden of representations (Hall, 1996), and particularly by being put in a setting where she feels coerced to share personal experiences. Moreover, the lecturer could have instead focussed on discussions that allowed white students to confront their 'unconscious habits of white privilege' (Sullivan, 2006) through discussions around critical whiteness. This would have served to shift

the discussions about race as only something people of colour 'have' or are interested in, but to also make visible whiteness.

Osop suggests that she is not able to speak out against this behaviour for the 'bullshit that it is' because she 'understands the hostility of the environment'. This affirms the suggestion that even in "racial dialogue settings, white [people] are always the safest persons in the room. It is black and brown folks who run the risk of being seen as 'too sensitive', 'too emotional' or some such thing, while white [people] can almost always content ourselves with the belief that we are calm, level-headed and rational no matter how absurd the things we say may be" (Wise, 2004). This again speaks to the fact that classrooms are not neutral spaces, but are microcosms of society (DiAngelo and Özlem, 2018; Bailey, 2017: 877). Speaking up against injustices, can construct a person as *the* problem: "you can become a problem by naming a problem" (Ahmed, 2015:9). "When you expose a problem you pose a problem." (Ahmed, 2014). There are real risks to socially marginalized staff and students speaking up against injustices in academia (Leonardo and Porter 2010: 140). Indeed, they/we may be made to eventually drop out or resign (e.g. see Professor Sara Ahmed's reflections on resignation from Goldsmiths, University of London, due to issues around her raising questions around sexual harassment and misconduct in the university).

Osop invites other black women to her kitchen for dialogues, one of which includes recognizing particular forms of behaviour in the classroom as 'bullshit', yet not being able to conceptualise why that is, especially since ignoring those problematic behaviours is constructed as being 'professional'. Initially, the group do not seem to have language for this situation of the requirement to behave in ways that are 'professional' but actually keep 'bullshit' behaviour intact. This affirms Sara Ahmed's observation that the names of problems tend to lag behind the problems (Ahmed, 2015:8). A conceptual lacuna. It is in the kitchen dialogues that Osop and friends learn about and deploy the concept of 'white fragility' to problematise the norms of academic professionalism that work to keep ignorance and injustice circulating. Robin DiAngelo (2011) coined the term 'white fragility' to talk about how:

> "White people... live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to what I refer to as White Fragility. White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing

situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium" (DiAngelo, 2011: 54).

Again, here, participants and those in their kitchen dialogues make use of a concept that had been developed ('white fragility') but that they initially did not have the knowledge about, in order to make sense of their experiences as well as communicate intelligibly. They conclude that there are conceptions of what it means to be 'professional' in academia that in reality are reflective of white people's entitlements for racial comfort. This entitlement resulted in Osop feeling as though one could not be '*visibly* disturbed' by the 'racist shit' done by lecturers or other students, because to be so would be 'unprofessional'. Osop reflects that white people's lack of awareness on their own white fragility is harmful to them, in that they fail (sometimes wilfully) to have opportunities to reflect on how to improve their epistemic practices. But also, this ignorance causes harm to those who first of all face those injustices and then have to put up with it and smother their testimonies of harm. In contrast, kitchens can serve as space where lived experiences are affirmed in ways that then allow for a re-orientation towards the creation of new worlds. "Being against something is also being for something, something that has yet to be articulated or is not yet" (Ahmed, 2010:175).

Finally, it must be said that having 'alternative' spaces of knowledge production is not the goal. Rather it is a means to make sense of injustices and to find the language and ideas we need to systemically transform hermeneutically influential spaces such as academia (see also Anderson, 2012). However, practically, taking back what we have learnt from the kitchen can pose problems. This is because the lessons we learn might make sense to us and other black women outside of academia and potentially to other academics of colour, but not to those who have to legitimise our work. This was a fear that some of the research participants had on my behalf, for example with Katrina, particularly because it had come up that at every key milestone of the 'research journey' I had had white academics legitimising my work. Indeed this was no different to previous study where I had never had an academic of colour as a lecturer in my Undergraduate or Masters studies. That conversation with Katrina, around never having had 'someone who looked like me' ever teach me in Higher Education, had come up in the second phases of the research as we went food shopping. In the third phase of the research, the kitchen dialogues, we pick up on conversations and talk for around 2 hours at which point I felt that was a good place to stop. It is here that she apologises for 'getting side-tracked' and wonders if we need to schedule 'another interview'. In the process of wondering whether she would have preferred me not to use the material from that discussion, she clarifies that *she* sees its value, but wonders whether I will be able to intelligibly communicate it back to academia, not because

she questions my abilities, but rather in recognition of the gap in collective resources that might make it harder to be understood.

> **Beth**: So let me see how we are doing for time...

> **Katrina**: Oh no! We started the interview and it got really interesting and I got side-tracked... just yapping away about so many thought-provoking ideas... I am really sorry: we probably will need to reschedule to do the interview?

> **Beth**: Okay, I will try not to panic here (laughs) because that *was* the 'interview' and I thought I had got your consent when I asked if you were okay to go on and for me to record. I apologise if not and would be more than happy to delete it and reschedule...

> **Katrina:** No, no, no, I am absolutely fine with the consent stuff... No, don't get me wrong, I absolutely enjoyed it and especially the fact that you weren't just asking me questions. I had a chance to hear your views and also ask you questions, and I need to buy some of the books we have talked about and obviously I have taken the titles... But are you sure though you won't get told to do it again by your supervisors?

> **Beth:** You know, it's funny - you are the second person to say something along those lines, why do you say that?

> **Katrina:** Well, maybe you should listen (laughter)... I just know from my experience that some academics have very narrow ideas, like you know, you need to have a questionnaire and be able to compare results... You are going to black women's kitchens, which those sort of academics might find weird...you are cooking, eating and having amazing chats for hours... and I know it's hard work that is so necessary for the black community, and you know this is hard work....but I don't know if *they* know that or will see this as real data, you know what I mean...

> **Beth**: Yeah I think so, but I think it will be okay...

> **Katrina**: Well, when they send you back, you know where to find me (laughter).

> (Dialogue 2 with Katrina, 13th March 2016 original emphasis)

Katrina considers that particular ways of doing research that have tended to be privileged in academia, can wilfully obscure other knowledges from being intelligible. She talks about knowing 'from her own experience', how concepts and ideas that have arisen within Positivist contexts tend to be easier to communicate back to academia, as opposed to knowledges created with black women, in their kitchens, over dialogues and food (see also Smith, 1999; Bernal and Villalpando, 2010: 171). Black women's kitchen dialogues that grow from concrete lived

experiences, are vulnerable to being dismissed as "commonplace, taken-for-granted knowledge" (Collins, 1991:34; see also Christian, 1988: 68) in contrast to more privileged knowledges that reflect "white male interpretations of the world" (Collins, 1990:327). Katrina's concern is one that has historically been raised before. For example Patricia Hill Collins notes that,

> "black women have long produced knowledge claims that contested those advanced by elite white men. But because black women have been denied positions of authority, they often relied on alternative knowledge validation processes to generate competing knowledge claims. As a consequence, academic disciplines typically rejected such claims. Moreover, any credentials controlled by white male academics would then be denied to black women who used alternative standards, on the grounds that black women's work did not constitute credible research." (Collins, 1990:329)

In other words, and simply put, "deviation is hard" (Ahmed, 2018). The kitchen itself is already not the 'norm' of where knowledges are produced; black women are constructed as not the norm of those who can know; anti-racist feminist-informed dialogues over good food that evokes laughter, pauses and reflection, anger, are constructed as not the normal way to generate 'real data' and so on. Yet my final empirical word ends on a note of hope. This is because of knowing that others have come before me who have paved the way, and make it possible for to recognise this as 'work...hard work...hard necessary work'. It is also based on the hope that is built on, rather than at the expense of, a concrete recognition of the difficulty of survival that is not made easier by silence. Ultimately, "I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect" (Lorde, 1984:40).

7.4   Chapter 7 conclusion

This chapter has discussed participants' reflections of their kitchens as spaces to find and share concepts and language that allow them to make sense of the experiences that matter to them. The participants went on to speak to the alternative spaces that they create or have found in kitchens, whereby they can: share their experiences of living in white and/or male dominated societies; and, have the space to reflect on what is unjust and should be transformed in society from the diverse perspectives of black women's lived experiences. These concrete experiences relate to black female experiences of violence, and other gendered, classed, racialized and disabling inequalities. Some of the other hermeneutical spaces participants had been involved in had been characterised by white fragility, in ways that did not provide the epistemic friction needed to take conversations forward. However, the discussions have pointed to the fact that

searching for alternative knowledge-production spaces is not the same as looking for spaces in which all beliefs and opinions of marginalized communities are accepted without question. In fact, because there is so much at stake, making sense of the conditions and causes of oppression can get quite heated. Indeed, various participants spoke about how their kitchens were or had been spaces of 'vigorous debate' and sometimes disagreement, but always respectful and with similar 'starting points'. Additionally, the kitchen dialogues with participants also provided a space to interrogate what counts as knowledge (particularly through some of their anxieties of my research findings being 'rejected' by white or male academic 'gatekeepers'. The discussions included some, albeit limited, reflection on how the potential for kitchens as an alternative space for knowledge production varied between different geographical locations.

The discussions tended to point to concepts that participants may initially have not been aware of, but learnt about in the kitchen space from and with other black women who had similar lived experiences. These concepts included 'rape as a weapon of war'; 'marital rape'; 'caveat emptor'; 'white fragility'. Kitchens were also spaces to assess concepts such as 'safe space' and consider the ways in which they facilitate or hinder conversations moving forward. Some problems still remained un-named. For example, what is the name for the problem at the intersection of anti-black racism, sexism, Islamophobia and ableism? The understanding that systems of oppression reinforce each other means understanding oppressions as not 'added on' (racism + ableism+ sexism +Islamophobia) but as interlocking with each other (Collective, 1986). Thus, for example, the sexism that black women face, will have logics of racism steeped in it, meaning that it will look different to the sexism face by white women, hence the name 'misogynoir' (Bailey and Trudy, 2018). Similarly, what is the name for the problem at the confluence of racism, sexism, ableism and Islamophobia that some black women face? This is one area for further research. Additionally, it would also be fruitful to consider further the idea that some of the codes of 'professionalism' and what it means to extend academic professional courtesy as pre-emptive forms of 'white fragility' in academia. There is resonance here with Sara Ahmed's (Ahmed, 2012) work on how some of the resources that are put in place to prevent harm, are also used in neoliberal academic contexts to hinder discussions about harm (e.g. 'we do not have a racism problem, we even have a policy on race equality'). What specifically are the norms within problematic conceptualisations of professionalism in academic settings (classrooms and beyond) that are used to maintain ignorance and injustices even unconsciously?

Another area for further research however, would be the question "why the kitchen?" The chapter does provide some answers, which speak to kitchens being spaces where epistemic friction is possible, but these remain unsatisfactory to me as a researcher. The kitchen was chosen for some participants, because certain ideas e.g. white privilege, lacked hermeneutical

currency in other hermeneutically influential spaces such as classrooms. This lack of interpretive resources meant that those participants felt as though their presence was constructed as simply being there to educate systemically privileged people on matters that they could and should educate themselves on. In contrast, kitchens were a place where black women-centred dialogues could take place, in ways that illuminated the experiences that mattered most. But why the kitchen? There was a sense of control, in being able to choose who to hold space with. My caution here is the danger of essentializing kitchens as 'women's place'. Having said that, this did not seem to come up amongst participants. It still leaves questions as to why not another room in the house e.g. living room spaces, particularly for participants who lived by themselves or were in Queer relationships and therefore the issue of 'women only spaces' may not have arisen. Thus the main answer here remains that it was chosen in opposition to other spaces that participants felt remained invested to practices that circulated ignorance.

The final area for further research would be to explore the concepts and language coming out of black women's kitchens to make sense of various types of injustices that as yet do not exist in other interpretive contexts. As highlighted previously, the research was able to pick up on problems that do not yet have names, and problems with names created in other interpretive contexts and then shared in the kitchen. Further dialogues would be needed to pick up on the theorization that is happening in the kitchen that provides language that does not exist elsewhere. The next chapter marks the final chapter of this project and sums up the contributions and areas for further research.

Chapter 8: Research contributions and way forward

8.1   Introduction

This final chapter considers the main contributions of this project. The introduction of this project observed that is has become axiomatic to note that food-related discussions, within and outside of academia, have grown exponentially. However, black women's food-related perspectives and experiences have been marginalized from these discussions (Williams-Forson, 2011). This matters: being hindered from contributing to knowledge production is a form of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1998; Dotson, 2011). The purpose of the project was not to 'prove' our (black women's) absence. Rather, this context of erasure became an opportunity to reflect on epistemological problems (Dotson, 2015:2323) such as 'why we do not know what we do not know'. In other words the focus of the project evolved into considering how ignorance works, and therefore by extension why black women's epistemic erasure remains a stubbornly persistent problem despite decades of black-feminist activism within and outside of academia. In this way, it invites (feminist) food scholars to reflexively consider what and whose perspectives are constructed as normative in food-related knowledge production; to ask, "whose questions get raised for investigation?" (Twine and Warren, 2000: xii)

Thus the project used food-related discussions with self-identifying black female participants as a lens to explore epistemologies of ignorance. A key assumption of this thesis therefore was that the food-related perspectives of marginalised communities generally, and black women in particular, can provide a useful lens and *starting point* (Harding, 1993:62; Harding 2008; Wylie, 2003; Intemann, 2010) from which to understand the various forms of ignorance that contribute to, or challenge, various forms of injustice in society.

The stated aim of this thesis was to contribute to anti-racist feminist understandings of ignorance, through the lens of food-related discussions with self-identifying black women. The contributions of this project therefore come about by bringing literatures in epistemologies of ignorance into dialogue with literatures in (feminist) food studies. Food-related discussions were chosen as the vehicle to think about ignorance because "it has long been established that food is a powerful tool for analysing almost any kind of issue" (Williams-Forson, 2011:8). The thesis contributes to understandings of ignorance through critical exploration not only of injustices caused by, or resulting from various forms of ignorance, that continue to circulate in food-related discussions, but also wider encounters with ignorance. The rest of this chapter begins with a summary of the research, told as a story that reflects (on) its motivations and evolution (section 8.2). This is then followed by section 8.3 which considers the main

contributions to knowledges on food, ignorance and feminist research methodologies that have been made through this project, and finally, the areas for further research (section 8.4).

8.2   The story of my research

The project came about because I was interested in doing a feminist-informed research project about food. I read widely and was particularly interested to see what black women had had to say about food, and which debates they were engaging in particularly in the UK context. I started with black women as I have long-standing social justice commitments to see improvements in the lives of other black women. As the first woman in my extended family-of-origin to attend university and do a PhD, I feel a certain level of responsibility to use my education in service of black women outside of academia, at whose knees I learned about all that matters most to me. This of-course makes me 'biased', but the project sits within a feminist school of thought that recognizes 'coming from somewhere' as not only inevitable, but also desirable. Indeed objectifying (Haslanger, 1995) claims of objectivity that allege to be value-neutral (Longino, 1990, 2001; Harding, 1991,1998; Wylie, 1996, Collins, 2000), universal (Haraway, 1991) and emotionally detached (Bordo, 1987; Cooper, 2015) have long been recognised by feminists as the ones that are the problematic 'god-tricks' (Haraway, 1991) and power-plays. I was further persuaded by feminist thought that starting from marginalized women's lives generates more critical questions (Harding, 1991:123), as it permits a recognition of unspoken assumptions (Harding, 1991:121) and therefore makes possible an understanding of the mechanisms of oppressive systems (Harding, 1991:126; Collins, 1991:236). While I did find some feminist food-related work that centred black women's perspectives, mostly in the US context, it became clear that, in a field in which many authors start their thoughts by celebrating or acknowledging the unprecedented growth in (feminist) food studies, there was a noticeable paucity in black women's perspectives. Chapter 1, section 1.3 discussed in greater detail the epistemic significance of a knower's social location, relying on the thoughts by Lorraine Code, Sandra Harding and Patricia Hill Collins (Harding, 1991; Code, 1993; Collins,1991, 2000)

To *contribute* to rectifying this paucity, I designed a food-infused project that centred black women's food-related perspectives. The project had three phases: the first dialogue over a shared meal in a location chosen by the participants; an optional phase in which participants could suggest an activity of their choice; and the third phase which involved dialogues in participants kitchens. Chapter 4, section 4.3 went into greater detail on the phases of the research. Participants were recruited through emails sent out to various organisations in Sheffield that matched the key words at the time of food, race, and/or gender (see Appendix 4). The emails included the call for research participants (see Appendix 1) and a participant

information sheet (see Appendix 2) both of which provided further information about the project. Chapter 4, section 4.2 provides greater detail on who the participants were. Whilst this was not a study *of* Sheffield the city was chosen because of its unique racial and food landscape (see section 4.4). The project does not claim to make any contributions to what we know about Sheffield as a city, as this was not the focus of my research.

The project was purposely food-infused (cooking it, sometimes buying it with participants, eating it with participants) as I had been persuaded by other feminist scholars that food is 'good to think with' not just in an abstract way, but by also having it in the research as part of the commitment to 'take food seriously' (Probyn, 2002; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008; Hayes-Conroy and Martin, 2010; Hayes-Conroy, 2010; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010; Brady, 2011). However, as I will explain shortly, whilst there was food in the project, 'taking it seriously' arguably did not pan out, and remains a potential area for further research. The field-work was also intentionally relatively unstructured in terms of the dialogues, because of the premise of the project that black women's voices had been relatively marginalized in (feminist) food studies. I therefore wanted the participants themselves to contribute the food-related agenda, through the guiding question during the first dialogue, "could you please tell me about why you are interested in a project about black women and food?" The different answers they gave provided the different avenues that were explored with the 12 different participants. In different academic conference contexts my project has been described as Participatory Action Research (PAR). I discuss in a preliminary way in Chapter 4, section 4.7 that I consider this to be a mis-labelling because a central part of PAR is problem-setting with participants, whereas this project already had a problem in mind and invited participants to an *interactive*, social-justice informed project. I offer the term Interactive Action Research as a potentially helpful tool to describe work that has emancipatory goals, but is not 'participatory' and would rather not co-opt the terminology.

It was as the fieldwork proceeded that it become more obvious that the project was not <u>*about food,*</u> from the perspective of black women. Chapter 4, section 4.6 provides an autobiographical description of this realization and the accompanying researcher anxieties in realizing that participants were using food to tell me about 'something else'. Chapter 4 section 4.5 describes the process by which I thematically analysed the dialogue transcripts and field diaries, and came to the realisation that food was being used by the participants as a vehicle to talk about ignorance. With the benefit of hindsight, as I describe in section 4.6, it was always clear that I had set the project up around ignorance. This is because in the first dialogue with participants, I explained the motivation of my research (as part of providing them with information necessary to give or withhold informed consent to participate in the project) as tied to my frustration with

feminist food scholars that made me wonder 'why do we not know?' and 'how can we *still* need to talk about intersectional approaches'. As a result, the research question evolved into: How can black women's food-related perspectives inform feminist understandings of ignorance?

I examined the treatment of questions of ignorance by feminist philosophers and critical race scholars. These scholars, within the field of epistemologies of ignorance (Sullivan and Tuana, 2007), have persuasively argued that there are forms of racialized and gendered ignorance that are substantive epistemic practices, rather than absences of knowledge (Alcoff, 2007). With regards to racialized ignorance, this ignorance is deployed *usually* by systemically racially privileged groups, as part of the Racial Contract (Mills, 1997,2007). Chapter 1, section 1.2 defined and discussed the Racial Contract, "prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance" (Mills, 1997:18-19). The Racial Contract makes it clear that race, as a social construct, has a definite history (see also Guglielmo, 2003; Painter, 2012). There was a particular history as to when some communities were constructed as white, and therefore human, whilst others were white-but-not-white-enough, and others were 'not white' and therefore not human, but savages and barbarians. The section also described the argument of how the Racial Contract sets up the economics of whiteness, that sets up racialized differentials in wealth and justified the use of colonialism, genocide and other forms of racialized violence to acquire and protect wealth.

Finally, the Racial Contract also shapes epistemic habits and unconscious ways of being (Sullivan, 2005, 2014). It explains that privilege can only be maintained through the inverted epistemology that society is fundamentally just, a raceless meritocracy, with instances of injustice as aberrations. The whole of Chapter 2 (section 2.1-2.5) was dedicated to discussing various everyday habits and epistemic practices that make up a commitment to remaining ignorant. Overall the chapter affirms the argument that it takes an immense about of labour to be ignorant (Spelman, 2007), but also that (racialized) ignorance is not only practiced by those who use racial slurs for example, but also by those who would consider themselves to be 'good people' with 'good intentions' (Baldwin, 1963/1993). Indeed, it is this fear of leaving one's home turf and confronting one's self and worldview that keeps people committed to their ignorance in fear of losing their sense of moral innocence (Lorde, 1984; Applebaum, 2017; Bailey, 2017). Thus instead they would prefer to be colour-blind and believe that to be a moral virtue (Medina, 2013); insist that society is a meritocracy despite evidence to the contrary (Shklar, 1990:17; Fricker, 2007:39); indeed, refuse to listen to counter evidence from people with lived experiences of navigating oppressive systems (Lorde, 1984; Dotson, 2011, 2012, 2014,2016; Medina, 2013; Fricker, 2007, 2010; Pohlhaus, 2012; DiAngelo, 2011) all whilst having the

confidence that their inverted epistemologies will be validated by systems of power (Mills, 1997; Applebaum, 2008).

The next step was to consider how these insights have been applied within food literatures, which was the concern of Chapter 3. Within the UK context ignorance is primarily treated as an 'absence of knowledge', with the literatures reacting to various 'moral panics' in society around an decline in cooking skills, particularly amongst working-class mums, which led to their over-reliance on convenience foods to the detriment of their children's health (Fox and Smith, 2011; Rich, 2011). These debates became more prevalent because of the rise in the popularity of culinary documentaries starring affluent, white, male celebrity chefs such as Jamie Oliver (Piper, 2013; Bell, Hollows and Jones, 2017). The racialized politics of these culinary documentaries has been insufficiently explored, if at all. Indeed, whiteness is taken as normative or at least invisible, and the focus of literature has been on the gendered and classed politics. Here the Othering of working-class mums is extensively discussed, with reflections on how they are insulted by 'concerned citizens' as being 'junk mums', 'sinner ladies', 'dirty bitches', 'fucking arseholes and tossers' and 'fat scrubbers' (see Fox and Smith, 2011; Piper, 2013; Rich, 2011) because of their reliance on convenience foods. On the other hand there are projects that have sought to trouble the understanding of convenience foods as always 'bad' or 'unhealthy' and to be avoided, particularly because there is a wide spectrum of what falls under convenience foods ranging from frozen vegetables to ready meals (Jackson and Viehoff, 2016; Meah and Jackson, 2017).

Additionally, there have also been considerations of ignorance within the context of alternative food politics. This has again also been within the context of a 'crisis' whereby it is increasingly accepted that the industrialized ways in which food is produced and consumed are not sustainable for people and planet (Steinfeld et al., 2006; Guthman and Brown, 2015; O'Keefe, 2016; Stanescu, 2013). Chapter 3, section 3.2 discussed how particular communities in the US context are often constructed as needing to be educated on 'good' food. These are often working-class communities of colour, whereby the assumption often is that the reason that they make 'bad' food 'choices' is because they do not know better, and 'if they only knew' then they would participate in alternative food initiatives and overall make 'better' choices (e.g. see Guthman's students assumptions, discussed in Guthman, 2008). Work in this area has taken on the colour-blind assumptions of alternative food activists, and demonstrated their wilful refusals to consider the significance of racialized inequalities in food-related contexts (Guthman, 2008; 2011, 2013; Slocum, 2006, 20007; Harper, 2012; Alkon and McCullen, 2010; Alkon, 2012) and society more generally (Ramirez, 2015; Zukin 2008).

Finally, food-related literatures have spoken to how ignorance shapes whose work and ideas are taken up, for example in food-writings. This was the concern of chapter 3's section 3.3. Black-feminists have been particularly prolific in this area, showing the ways in which controlling images (Collins, 1991: 5) about black women have hindered their food-writings from gaining uptake. The mammy figure- the mythical image of a 'buffoonish' yet loyal, faithful, obedient, care-free, contentment and well-cared-for black female slave who is 'like family' in white households (McElya, 2007) has been particularly relevant in food writing (Witt, 1999). This is because it contributes to the notion of black women generally, and black female chefs specifically, as buffoons who just happen to be 'naturally' good cooks (Davis, 1999:368), but not in any way that reflects skills that would have any relevance for example in 'haute cuisine' (e.g. see experience of Rosamund Grant, cited in Jackson, 2014: 628). In response, black women have found ways to subversively contribute their food writings, using food-related thoughts and practices as platforms (Williams-Forson, 2006) to talk about the politics of, and beyond, food (Courtney Thorson, cited in Nettles-Barcelon et al., 2015:44-45; Zafar, 1999).

Taken together, these theoretical insights further shaped my understanding of what the participants in this research project had to say and contribute to discussions around ignorance. The project yielded 3 empirical chapters that considered: the ways in which ignorance circulates through failures to consider the situated knower in local food discussions; the ways ignorance is produced and experienced both through identity prejudicial credibility deficits, and credibility excesses that are tied to epistemic exploitation; and finally, how kitchen are used as spaces to redress hermeneutical injustices. These ideas are expounded upon in the next section that considers the thesis empirical contributions to knowledge.

8.3   Empirical contributions to knowledge

This thesis used black women's food-related discussions as a lens to explore epistemologies of ignorance. The thesis makes the point that whilst black women continue to be vulnerable to systemic marginalization in academic, popular and everyday knowledge production, we also create ways to make sense of what matters most to us. This vulnerability to not being counted as sources of information and knowledge in food-related and other discussions, is part of what actively produces collective forms of ignorance that lead to other types of injustices. The thesis empirically demonstrates how ignorance is produced through insufficient considerations of the social locations, values and interests that knowers bring into discussions and shape their knowledge claims. For example in the first empirical chapter, unprompted by me, participants reflected on how local food discussions and initiatives have crystallised into 'what you are supposed to do' without critical reflection (Sekhmet, 2016). These discussions on local food with participants arose through the lens of talking about lentils; muddy vegetables; a farmer's

market in the area; and offers of Kenyan tea. However their views also pointed to how the current well-intended attempts to improve the justificatory process in local food discussions, espoused the notion of 'avoiding the local trap' (Born and Purcell, 2006; Purcell, 2006), could potentially reify the problematic conceptualisations of 'objective' discussions. This is because the 'local trap' notion encourages scrutiny of the inaccurate propositions made about local food ('local food as the panacea') without a similar focus on who the knowers are and how they are situated along the epistemic terrain. Explicit considerations of who the knowers are in local food discussions, what their values and interests are, whether these values and interests have been publicly subjected to critical transformative debates can contribute to partial yet less faulty discussions on the problems and potential solutions of the food systems.

These discussions with participants contributed to broader discussions of the racialized nature of the food system through the goals they articulated. These goals included conceptualisations of food justice that not reflections of 'white middle class hobbies' which involved consideration of the relationality of scale, including paying attention to how narratives of what local food means 'over here' are exported 'over there' with the consequence that 'local food is no longer affordable to the locals', and explicitly critiquing capitalism by making links between colonialism, genocides and contemporary food provisioning. Further goals included envisioning a world in which food is affordable to all yet not cheap, and having people of colour directly involved in shaping the vision for food justice, including being involved in leadership of alternative food initiatives.

The views of participants highlighted that the problematic food systems that plague us are not 'broken' but are functioning as intended - an idea that takes us back to discussion on the Racial Contract. Julie Guthman (2008) teaches us to pay attention to the rhetoric that circulate in food-related contexts (e.g. 'if they only knew') and see the work they do in the production and circulation of ignorance. An area for further research from these discussions would be to take on the rhetoric of 'the broken food system' and consider the work it does to obscure the logic of the Racial Contract.

The thesis affirms that racialized (Fricker, 2007:23-29), gendered (Fricker, 2007:86-88), classed amongst other prejudices distort people's perceptions of who is considered credible and who is not. Food also served as a prompt for participant's memories of experiencing identity prejudicial credibility deficits. These discussions arose through the lens of the smell of jollof rice; sharing recipes for jollof rice; discussion on veganism; and cooking goat meat. These discussions prompted participant's memories of instances where they were harmed in their capacity as knowers, by suffering credibility deficits because of prejudices and stereotypes.

These prejudices were fatphobic, Queerphobic, misogynist, and racist. The accompanying problematic stereotypes were around black women who were 'unable' to cook being unqualified knowers; stereotypes of the angry black woman; and stereotypes of black women as mammy figures. Moreover, the thesis highlighted how systemically privileged hearers give themselves epistemic authority by using various markers of (alleged) epistemic competence: for example, the fact that they are men who known how to cook, and have received affirmation from other men that they are good cooks; the fact that they are formally educated and have art degrees; the fact that they were well recognised speakers who often got invited to various forums to speak about race and so on. In contrast to Fricker (2007:18-20), the thesis makes a preliminary observation that marginalized communities (cf. Medina, 2013) can be harmed in their capacity as knowers through credibility excesses (cf. Davis, 2016), *when* these are linked to epistemic exploitation. Additionally, in contrast to Medina (2013:44) who characterises curiosity as an epistemic virtue, this thesis affirms the view that curiosity, particularly of systemically privileged communities, and particularly within food-related contexts, tends to reliably be an epistemic vice, for example leading to culinary colonialism (Heldke,2003).

Finally, being in the kitchen space prompted the reflections by some participants of other instances in which they, together with other black women, had resourcefully relied on their kitchens in order to redress hermeneutical injustices. The relatively 'older' participants spoke about their memories of reclaiming previous kitchens in Kenya and Congo DRC into spaces to make sense of and find language for their concrete experiences of marital rape and property dispossession, and rape as a weapon of war. These participants spoke to not using their current Sheffield kitchens in the same way primarily due to an absence of a connection with others who have had a taste of similar lived experiences. Meanwhile the relatively younger participants reclaimed their kitchen spaces due to experiences of white fragility in other hermeneutically influential spaces such academia and (white)feminist spaces in which particular notions such as white -privilege had no hermeneutical currency. This meant that there was insufficient epistemic friction in these other hermeneutical spaces to have the discussions that mattered to participants, or to move them forward. Here participants reflected on discussions that aimed to: find a name and greater clarity for the oppression at the intersection of racism, ableism, Islamophobia and sexism; to clarify ways in which some codes on academic professionalism are expressions of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) that allows injustices by lecturers to go unchecked (cf. Ahmed, 2012); and the work that the term 'safe space' does especially when deployed by systemically privileged groups.

Overall, this project has used dialogues with black women to consider the extent to which ignorance is actively produced and redressed in food-related discussions and spaces. The thesis

makes meta-contributions to food geographies, feminist food studies and epistemologies of ignorance. On food geographies, for example, the thesis shows how racialized dynamics have been overlooked in debates on food localism. Moreover, the literature review on epistemologies of ignorance in food politics in Chapter 3 makes a contribution to food studies by connecting food studies and epistemologies of ignorance literatures. On feminist food studies, the thesis shows how domestic spaces such as the kitchen are being innovatively reclaimed by marginalized communities, as spaces to redress hermeneutical injustices. Finally, for epistemologies of ignorance, the thesis shows the significance of specific sites in the production/contestation of ignorance (in academia, media and everyday life) through the lens of food. By interviewing individual participants, the thesis ended up with individual accounts that point to systemic issues around epistemologies of ignorance. While the empirical chapters of the thesis focussed upon some instances of individual ignorance, these are reflective of/produced within a broader set of (power) structures which reproduce systematic (epistemologies of) ignorance. Further work (beyond the scope of this PhD thesis) is needed to explore further the systematic reproduction of ignorance.

8.4   Suggestions for further research

The intellectual cross-pollination of (feminist) food studies and epistemologies of ignorance raised compelling questions, some of them by participants for which they did not suggest answers. These questions would make for fruitful research. A number of the potential areas for future research have already been extensively discussed in within the empirical chapters. This section collates some of those ideas, a number of which are not yet fully formed in terms of what such a research project would look like. The hope here is that it may inspire others to borrow from this 'wish-list' and do the remaining work. This list is, of course, not an exhaustive one, and is not in any order of significance.

Suggestion 1:

The background frustration that led to this project was the relative neglect of black women's perspectives in (feminist) food studies. The research cautions on the danger of (feminist) food studies being shaped solely by the perspectives and interests of privileged white academic feminists. For example, the dichotomized way in which the field is developing/has developed is part of the problem, where sub-fields focus on 'race and food' or 'gender/women and food' with a scarcity of projects that take an intersectional approach and centre black women's perspectives and experiences (Williams-Forson, 2011). Almost 14 years after Avakian and Haber (2005) made a call for the field of feminist food studies, there is now a substantive body of work that could be reviewed to audit the various feminist commitments represented. A

previous iteration of this project attempted to map out how the various schools of thought on the source of, and solutions to, women's systemic oppression, shaped the themes and questions within the field. This mapping was dropped for this final iteration, in keeping with the theme of epistemologies of ignorance. However, such a review would serve to remind us that when we talk of *feminist* food studies, we, feminists, are not necessarily referring to the same project.

Suggestion 2:

To explore questions of ignorance in ways that take up Linda Martin Alcoff's challenge (2015) of reimagining whiteness in ways that are not tied only to its privilege and tendency to supremacy. Alcoff (2015) considers this to be an urgent project considering the inevitable decline of white majorities by the year 2050 (p.2). How would an account of whiteness that is not tied to supremacy change how to we engage with racialized ignorance?

Suggestion 3:

From the literature review: an exploration of the racialized politics of influential culinary documentaries, for example the documentaries involving the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, which have already repeatedly come up for feminist scrutiny for their gendered and classed politics.

Suggestion 4:

This thesis had the initial intention to avoid mind-body dichotomies by paying attention to the materiality of food in research about food. As already discussed, my positioning in relation to the research and the discussions had with participants evolved the research from being about food, to using food directly and indirectly as a vehicle for exploration of ignorance and therefore considerations on visceral politics were dropped from this final iteration. Therefore, there is a lot of scope to extend a number of these ideas into food territory. For example through:

a) A further exploration of testimonial injustices in food politics. Chapter 3, section 3.3 discussed the impact of controlling images in food-writing; while Chapter 6 explored testimonial injustice through the lens of discussions that begun with food. An example of a project here could be to take a community such as food-bank users, and consider how their social locations shapes the credibility they receive and the significance this has for epistemic injustice. This could also the context to give more thought to whether credibility excess amongst marginalized groups is only an instance of testimonial injustice within contexts of epistemic exploitation;

b) Consideration of the extent to which the materiality of food further shapes our understanding of ignorance as a substantive epistemic practice.

<u>Suggestion 5:</u>

To return to black women's kitchens in order to:

a) Further explore through kitchen dialogues, the gaps in collective hermeneutical resources that black women are coming up against. In particular to pay attention to the contemporary problems for which there are as yet no names, and the names which are being created in kitchen spaces;

b) To give more thought to how and why some black women's kitchens have the potential to be spaces of epistemic friction- what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for kitchens as spaces of epistemic friction?

<u>Suggestion 6:</u>

To give more thought to notion of Interactive Action Research (IAR), the suggested name gifted to the feminist scholars to deal with the problem I found of well-intended feminist academics using the term Participatory Action Research (PAR) in 'loose' ways to introduce or describe my work in academic forums. The term IAR is intended to avoid co-option of what it means to do PAR, a co-option which obscures the reality of doing social justice informed research in neo-liberal academies and particularly as an Early Career Researcher. However, the term IAR was developed pragmatically, with minimal discussion to literatures on PAR in this research, as at no point did I claim that my research was participatory.

<u>Suggestion 7:</u>

To explore how and why the rhetoric of 'broken food system' contributes to epistemologies of ignorance.

My hope is that all these partial pieces of work will contribute to the more just and compassionate world we all long for.

--END--

Appendix 1: Call for research participants: "black women in Sheffield's food experiences"

· Do you <u>self-identify</u> as a black woman?

· Are you currently living in Sheffield (UK)?

If so, you are invited to participate in a research project about black women's food experiences. The project is a small-scale study as part of my PhD. I am trying to understand what our (black women) food experiences are, and use that to think through how they can inform a set of food literatures that has mostly not centred our voices. It's up to you to decide what 'food experiences' you do or do not want to talk about, whether that's your experiences of growing your own food/buying food/ cooking or otherwise preparing food/ eating food/abstaining from food/wasting food/washing up…the list is endless! You can choose to pull out of the project at any time, including after having signed the consent form, and without any further explanations to me.

Participating in the research will involve:

a) A 90-minute face-to-face conversation at a place of your choosing. It will be an opportunity to learn more about the project and ask any questions you may have. I will then ask you to sign a consent form. This dialogue will be audio-recorded.

b) Kitchen dialogue: This will be a 3-hour activity where we will prepare and share a meal together. It will be up to you to decide what we cook together. A £10 reimbursement will be provided to cover the cost of the ingredients- please keep this in mind as you decide the meal. During this dialogue, we will follow up on the ideas coming up in the first dialogue. This dialogue will be audio-recorded.

c) Should you wish to, you are free to invite me to any other food-related activity that you would like me to be a part of. This dialogue will not be audio-recorded; however, I may make notes of our interactions in my field diary. I would like to emphasise that during this or any other dialogue, I will not be making judgements of your food choices e.g. whether you are cooking or eating 'good' food or 'bad' food.

If you are interested in participating, or if you have further questions, please contact me- Beth Kamunge (<u>e.kamunge@sheffield.ac.uk</u>). This project has received ethical approval from The

University of Sheffield. Should you have any concerns about how I conduct the project, please contact my supervisors: Dr Daniel Hammett (d.hammett@sheffield.ac.uk) or Professor Peter Jackson (p.a.jackson@sheffield.ac.uk).

Note: In this research, I am particularly keen to speak to black (African or Caribbean descent) women. This is because these voices have been marginalized in food-related research. However, it may be that you are a woman who is not of African or Caribbean descent, but you *self-identify* as Black- you are welcome to get in contact should you wish for a chat.

Appendix 2: Participant information sheet

Information Sheet- "black women in Sheffield's food experiences."

Purpose of the research project

This is a research project about black women's food experiences. The project is a small-scale study as part of my PhD. I am trying to understand what our (black women) food experiences are, and use that to think through how they can inform a set of food literatures that has mostly not centred our voices.

Who are my potential participants?

I would particularly like to invite you to take part if you: self-identify as a black woman and are currently living in Sheffield. I emphasize the phrase "self-identify" to indicate that you can interpret the categories above whichever way you choose and it is not for me to agree or disagree with your interpretation. I am particularly keen to speak to black (African or Caribbean descent) women. This is because these voices have been marginalized in food-related research. It may be that you are a female ethnic minority, not of African or Caribbean descent, but self-identify as Black you are welcome to get in contact should you.

Do you have to take part?

This is only an invitation, which you can refuse. If you are interested in participating in this project, but you still have questions about some aspects of the research outlined here, I would be happy to discuss this further with you face to face. You can withdraw your consent at any time during the project, without any further explanation to me.

What will happen if you take part?

Participating in the research will involve:

a) A 90-minute face-to-face conversation at a place of your choosing. It will be an opportunity to learn more about the project and ask any questions you may have. I will then ask you to sign a consent form. This dialogue will be audio-recorded.

b) Kitchen dialogue: This will be a 3-hour activity where we will prepare and share a meal together. It will be up to you to decide what we cook together. A £10 reimbursement will be provided to cover the cost of the ingredients- please keep this in mind as you decide

the meal. During this dialogue, we will follow up on the ideas coming up in the first dialogue. This dialogue will be audio-recorded.

c) Should you wish to, you are free to invite me to any other food-related activity that you would like me to be a part of. This dialogue will not be audio-recorded; however, I may make notes of our interactions in my field diary. I would like to emphasise that during this or any other dialogue, I will not be making judgements of your food choices e.g. whether you are cooking or eating 'good' food or 'bad' food.

Are there any risks to taking part?

Since the research involves cooking together and sharing some meals, there may be risks related to food allergies. However, since these are foods that you will have chosen (e.g. you will decide what to cook during the kitchen dialogue) the risks are minimal.

Will photographs be taken?

With your permission, photographs will be taken of the food and drinks, and of eating and drinking together. All of the pictures would be used to help me remember the conversations we had. I will also use the photos as visual aids in public talks and conferences about this research, and future work. None of the photographs will be taken without your explicit consent.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

I will reimburse your local travel and refreshment costs when we meet. In the kitchen dialogue, I will donate £10 as compensation for the food we cook. Beyond that, there will be no financial payments/benefits in taking part in the research. Overall, since so little is known and understood about the experiences of black women's food experiences, this project would allow us to add to the evidence base.

Will my participation be kept confidential?

All personal details will be kept confidential and stored separate from any audio recordings or notes that come out of the interview. This will be kept in a password protected external hard drive in The University of Sheffield server, which is a secure location. At the beginning of the project, I will ask you to choose an alias that you would like to go by, and from then onwards, all recording and transcripts will be filed under that name.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study will be used for the completion of this PhD and for academic blogs, conference papers and academic articles or book chapters. If you would like to receive a research summary sheet with key points from the research, please let me know and this will be sent to you following the completion of this PhD project.

Whom can I contact if I have further questions or concerns?

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me: Beth Kamunge e.kamunge@sheffield.ac.uk or you can contact any of my supervisors:

Dr. Daniel Hammett: d.hammett@sheffield.ac.uk
Professor Peter Jackson: p.a.jackson@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Participant consent form

Title of Project: black women in Sheffield's food experiences

Institution: The University of Sheffield's department of Geography

PhD Student: Elizabeth (Beth) Kamunge

Supervisors: Dr. Daniel Hammett (The University of Sheffield); Professor Peter Jackson (The University of Sheffield)

Beth's email: e.kamunge@sheffield.ac.uk

 Before we begin this dialogue, I (the research participant) understand and agree to the following:

- I am participating on a voluntary basis and can withdraw my consent to participate in this project at any time, without having to give Beth any explanation.
- All personal information relating to me (specifically, name and chosen alias) will be kept in a separate file from all recordings, transcripts and notes from these dialogues;
- Beth may audio-record or make notes of our dialogues and will keep any transcripts or notes in a password locked external hard drive separate from any of my personal information;
- All recordings, transcripts and notes will be kept under a false name (alias) that I have chosen (filled out below), unless I prefer to have my real name used;
- I am not required to answer any questions Beth asks that may make me feel uncomfortable;
- I will not be paid for my contribution to this project, other than a reimbursement of local public transport expenses; refreshment costs when meeting with Beth and a £10 reimbursement of cooking costs for the kitchen dialogue;
- Any recordings, transcripts or notes made from my participation in this project can be re-used for conference presentations, academic papers and other dissemination activities. ␣

Please sign two copies of this form- one for you to keep for your records, and one for my records. Thanks!

Chosen Alias:

Interview Participant Full Name:

Participant's phone number and email:

Interview Participant signature:

Date:

Beth Kamunge signature:

Appendix 4: List and rationale of email list-serves used for participant recruitment

The call for research participants was sent out on 14th September 2015 via email:

<u>**Email:**</u>

> *"To whom it may concern:*
>
> *My name is Beth Kamunge and I am a PhD student at the University of Sheffield exploring black women's food experiences. I am currently calling for participants. Would you be so kind as to circulate the call for research participants and participant information sheet below [see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2] to your mailing list, for any participants who may be interested in being involved in my research project?*
>
> *Thanks in advance and please let me know if you have any questions.*
>
> *Best wishes,*
> *Beth Kamunge."*

The next section lists the list-serves that the email and attachments were sent to. Most of the list-serves are self-explanatory from their name; an additional description is given for the less obvious list-serves (e.g. LaDIYfest Sheffield).

1. The University of Sheffield's Black & Minority Ethnic Students' Committee

2. *LaDIYfest Sheffield: 'LaDIYfest Sheffield is an inclusive, DIY, anti-capitalist, community-based feminist collective involved with local activism and a range of events and activities, culminating in a weekend of festivities at the end of the year…' (LaDIYfest Sheffield website).*

3. Sheffield Feminist Network

4. Sheffield City Council's BME Network

5. Sheffield City Council's Equality and Involvement Committee

6. The University of Sheffield's Islamic Circle

7. The University of Sheffield's LGBTI* Committee

8. The University of Sheffield's Disability and Dyslexia Committee

9. The University of Sheffield Women's Committee

10. The University of Sheffield's Afro-Caribbean Society

11. African Affairs Network Sheffield

12. Amnesty International Sheffield

13. The University of Sheffield's cooking society

14. Sheffield bee-keeping society

15. *Sheffield baking society*

16. *Abundance- GROW Sheffield: a collective that 'aims to stop this waste by helping people harvest their fruit, then helping either re-distribute it to worthy food bank projects, or helping to run workshops so the public can learn the wonderful art of home preserving of fruit' (GROW Sheffield website, accessed 11th September 2015)*

17. Food Cycle Sheffield: *the local chapter of a national collective that 'reclaims surplus food that would otherwise be wasted, and cooks it into tasty, healthy meals for communities' (Food Cycle website*, accessed 11th September 2015*)*

18. *Real Junk Food Sheffield: 'a non-profit social enterprise saving food from being wasted and making it available to the people of Sheffield.' (Real Junk Food website, accessed 11th September 2015)*

19. *Sheffield Food Collective: 'We're a group of people that live in Sheffield that saw how the cuts were affecting people and how poverty was getting worse here. It upset us and we were shocked by it and we wanted to see what we could do to help, so we hooked up with some people that run different food organisations and food banks [to share ideas]' (Sheffield Food Collective website, accessed 11th September 2015).*

20. Sheffield On A Plate

Rationale:

As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.3), these list-serves were chosen because they were Sheffield based list-serves that related to the research project's keywords (at the time) of race, gender and food. Thus all the list-serves represent Sheffield-based collectives that potentially attract diverse communities of 'People of Colour and women' (numbers 1 to 12) who might have potentially been interested in talking about their food-related perspectives; or were food/drink

related collectives (numbers 13-19) that potentially had self-identifying black women who, again, may have been interested in talking about food-related perspectives.

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