



A University of Sussex DPhil thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

The Route of the Land's Roots:
Connecting life-worlds between Guinea-Bissau and
Portugal through food-related meanings and practices

Maria Abranches

Doctoral Thesis

PhD in Social Anthropology

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

2013

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

PhD in Social Anthropology

Maria Abranches

Doctoral Thesis

The Route of the Land's Roots:

**Connecting life-worlds between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal
through food-related meanings and practices**

SUMMARY

Focusing on migration from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal, this thesis examines the role played by food and plants that grow in Guinean land in connecting life-worlds in both places. Using a phenomenological approach to transnationalism and multi-sited ethnography, I explore different ways in which local experiences related to food production, consumption and exchange in the two countries, as well as local meanings of foods and plants, are connected at a transnational level. One of my key objectives is to deconstruct some of the binaries commonly addressed in the literature, such as global processes and local lives, modernity and tradition or competition and solidarity, and to demonstrate how they are all contextually and relationally entwined in people's life-worlds. In order to do so I trace Guinean foodstuffs and plants from their origin sites in Guinea-Bissau to their final destination in Portugal. I examine, first, the significance of the Guinean land where they grow. Second, I look at the adaptations that take place in Guineans' relationship with that land when it 'travels' – through its food and plants – to Portugal. Third, I explore food-related ways in which the past, present and future of a Guinean life-world that is 'disrupted' by migration are brought together through memory practices and future projects of migration and return. Finally, I examine practices of food exchange as gifts and trade across borders. By starting with production and ending with exchange practices, this thesis emphasises that both are not necessarily alienated from each other, even when they are physically distanced by migration. The unique relationships they generate and the role played by Guinean land's special properties, as well as the fact that these are able to travel, through the food and plants that share its substance, to Portugal, enable Guineans' local life-worlds to be connected in a transnational context.

Table of contents

SUMMARY	3
List of illustrations	7
Acknowledgements	8
Chapter 1. Introduction: historical and fieldwork settings	11
1.1. Introduction.....	11
1.2. Between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal: setting the scene.....	13
1.2.1. Guinea-Bissau: early movements and cultural encounters	14
1.2.2. Trade and agriculture: from colonialism to post-independence political economy	17
1.2.3. Liberalisation and structural adjustment reforms	20
1.2.4. Migration from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal	22
1.2.5. The Guinean presence in Lisbon	25
1.3. Methodology: data collection and writing.....	26
1.3.1. Multi-sited ethnography	26
1.3.2. The beginning of the journey: fieldwork in Portugal.....	30
1.3.3. Looking for the origins: fieldwork settings in Guinea-Bissau.....	35
1.3.4. Back to Portugal	40
1.3.5. Outline of the thesis and the dilemmas of ethnographic writing	41
Chapter 2. Conceptual and theoretical framework.....	44
2.1. Introduction	44
2.2. Gendered transnational life-worlds.....	44
2.2.1. Migration and transnationalism	45
2.2.2 A phenomenological approach	48
2.2.3. Some notes on gender in African societies	51
2.3. Land, territory and ethnicity	55
2.3.1. Perceptions of land and agriculture in Africa	55
2.3.2. Land as territory and ethnicity: from academic theories to grounded insights.....	58
2.3.3. Land and performativity in the construction of identities.....	63
2.4. Migration, material culture and food: the false search for ‘authenticity’	64
2.5. Memories, modernities and traditions.....	68
2.5.1. A spatial and material approach to memories	68
2.5.2. Memories and historical subjectivities: colonialism, ‘modernities’ and ‘traditions’	71
2.6. Theories of exchange: gifts, reciprocities and trade	77
2.6.1. Giving and reciprocating.....	77
2.6.2. Conceptualising trade within local and global economies	79
2.6.3. Understanding an informal landscape	84

Chapter 3. The origin of Guinean living things: connecting people, plants and land.....	86
3.1. Introduction	86
3.2. ‘The land where you were given life’: urban fresh vegetables, farmers and the land that connects both	90
3.2.1. Women, farming and crop commercialisation in Guinea-Bissau	96
3.3. Tracing food from Guinean orchards, wild fruit trees and waters	98
3.4. Plant- and animal-based medicinal products from the Guinean woodlands	103
3.5. Conclusions.....	108
Chapter 4. The travel of the land through its living things: adaptations in perceptions and uses of Guinean foods and plants in Lisbon.....	111
4.1. Introduction	111
4.2. ‘How’s your body?’ Food, health and protection	113
4.3. Migration and the negotiation of ‘original’ Guinean land.....	115
4.3.1. Food encounters: Guinean food’s positioning in relation to ‘the other’	116
4.3.2. ‘Is it really Guinean fish?’ Endowing exogenous food with Guinean values	119
4.4. Preparing <i>moni</i> during Ramadan: religious foodways in a transnational setting.....	123
4.5. ‘It is just a drink’ or the spirituality of food: understanding ‘contradictions’ in Guineans’ perceptions and experiences of special foods.....	127
4.6. ‘I want to be a modern <i>murru</i> ’. ‘Spiritual-religious’ powers in foreign land.....	131
4.7. Conclusions	136
Chapter 5. Connecting the past, present and future: migration, return and memories amongst migrant food traders and their kin.....	140
5.1. Introduction	140
5.2. Migration and the search for ‘development’: the imagination of a better life or the fear of bodily deterioration.....	143
5.3. Food, cosmopolitanism and <i>djanfa</i> in return projects.....	148
5.3.1. The dilemmas of return: reconciling cosmopolitanism and threats of <i>djanfa</i>	149
5.3.2. The role of Guinean food and plants in the return	154
5.4. Memory, space and food	157
5.4.1. Remembering Guinea-Bissau in Lisbon’s food markets	157
5.4.2. Expressions of ‘colonial nostalgia’ in Bissau and Lisbon.....	161
5.5. Conclusions.....	165
Chapter 6. Giving, reciprocating and trading across borders: the role of food in exchange relationships	169
6.1. Introduction	169
6.2. Food sharing obligations and remittances: who gives and who reciprocates?.....	173
6.3. Guinean food markets and food transactions: relationships in spaces and systems of exchange.....	177

6.3.1. Economic solidarity: credit, debts and ‘informal exclusivity agreements’	177
6.3.2. ‘Community’ and ‘impersonal’ exchanges: negotiating with kinfolk, co-ethnics or strangers.....	180
6.3.3. Guinean food markets of Lisbon: continuities, new encounters and expressions of discrimination	184
6.4. The Fula trader’s social status: scale and direction of the trade	188
6.5. Trade as a livelihood strategy	191
6.7. Conclusions	196
Chapter 7. Concluding reflections: ‘re-grounding’ the land’s route.....	201
Bibliography.....	213

List of illustrations

Figure 1. Map of Guinea-Bissau	15
Figure 2. Rossio, Lisbon. At the back, the Palace of Independence, where the Disabled War Veterans Association used to operate.....	31
Figure 3. Damaia's 'Bandim market' in Lisbon	34
Figure 4. A man's stall at Caracol market	37
Figure 5. Women food sellers at Caracol market	37
Figures 6 and 7. Wilson's food distribution	87
Figures 8 and 9. A vegetable garden and an agricultural swamp area divided in plots, in Bissau.....	91
Figure 10. <i>Bideira</i> selling okra that would be sent to Lisbon, at Caracol market, Bissau.....	97
Figures 11 and 12. Women catching mangos and taking them to the state office to weigh, at the state mango orchard in Cumura, Guinea-Bissau	100
Figure 13. Animal products to be used for amulet-making and bottles with dried and liquid tree-parts to be used as medicines, at Bandim's pharmacy, Bissau	105
Figure 14. Materials and tools used for charm-making in Lisbon, including the tape mentioned by Seco.....	132
Figure 15. Airport of Bissau. Bags of Guinean foodstuffs to be sent to Lisbon.....	146
Figure 16. A <i>mesa</i> in Damaia selling tree bark and roots, palm oil, mangos, baobab fruit and velvet tamarind (dry pulp), with a radio on top playing RDP Africa	158
Figure 17. Neusa's agency in Bissau.....	170
Figure 18. Foodstuffs for sale in bulk in Caracol, Bissau	181
Figure 19. Small pre-arranged packages of foodstuffs for sale in Damaia, Lisbon.....	181

Acknowledgements

It has been said that the right answer to life and the universe is 42. Not sure of what this means, I believe number 4 to have been more meaningful in my PhD-related universe. In fact, the four years of my PhD journey were lived in four different countries, which quadruples the number of people to whom I am thankful. I therefore apologise in advance for not being able to acknowledge everyone, and hope that those who are not mentioned but still played an important part in the journey know that they were not forgotten.

In England, where the journey started, I am above all thankful to my supervisors Russell King, Katie Walsh and James Fairhead. What started as a team of three ended up (surprisingly!) in four, and I feel most fortunate for having benefited from my three supervisors' knowledge, experience and endless generosity. The reason for this unusually large supervisory team was a departmental change halfway through my PhD. I want to thank the students and staff both at the Sussex Centre for Migration Research where I officially started but from where I unofficially never left until the end of my PhD, and those in the Anthropology Department of the University of Sussex, where I always felt simultaneously 'in place' and an 'intruder' until I officially registered in it. Today I have one foot in each, and although I now see this as a privileged situation from which I benefited enormously, a certain 'crisis' of 'disciplinary identity' caused me some discomfort whenever, for example at conferences, I was asked what my PhD was in. I could have answered that it was in anthropology, migration or even human geography, but none of these answers alone seemed satisfactory. As absurd as this might seem, the departmental change gave me the grounds to say more comfortably that I was studying anthropology and will hopefully, with time, allow me to fully say 'I am an anthropologist'. In the meantime, I have also learned to appreciate the interdisciplinarity that I have always considered valuable when it came to other researchers, but that made me feel slightly lost at a certain period of my journey. I should therefore also thank the people who asked those 'disciplinary identity' questions and made me reflect more deeply on such issues, and again my supervisors for having so patiently put up with my indecisions and insecurities, and for having always advised me wisely. Amongst others in the UK, I am thankful to my PhD colleagues (in all disciplines!) for the stimulating formal and informal encounters and discussions they organised, as well as to the

wonderful general intellectual environment at Sussex. Further encouragement and motivation was received from the students and staff at the SOAS Food Studies Centre where I happened to knock at once, and whose door was so kindly and enthusiastically opened.

In Lisbon, my first acknowledgement goes to Marina Temudo, who so willingly shared her vast knowledge of Guinea-Bissau with me and who, together with Ramon Sarró, always advised and encouraged me in a very special way. I am also indebted to Heidi Pinto, who generously offered me Guinean Creole lessons and helped me to prepare my fieldwork trip to Guinea-Bissau in ways that words cannot describe. Carolina Höfs played an essential role in facilitating my access to the Guinean community in Largo São Domingos, and for that I am grateful. I am also thankful to Zé Augusto and his family for the stories shared about Guinea-Bissau, and to the Landim family, with whom I had my first Guinean meal ever, especially to Rosângela (Zita), Isabel and, in a special way, to Euclides (Quito), whose loss in the course of fieldwork was a terrible shock. Carlos José Mendonça ‘Alante’ – the representative of Guinean students in Lisbon at the time – changed not just the course of the particularly rainy and gloomy day we first met, but of my whole fieldwork in Lisbon, with his knowledge, enthusiasm and support. Finally, I thank Lorenzo Bordonaro, Chiara Pussetti, Clara Carvalho and Eduardo Costa Dias at the Lisbon University Institute (ISCTE-IUL) for their support and information at the initial stage of my fieldwork, and Fernando Luís Machado for having provided support and guidance over the last twelve years.

In Guinea-Bissau, Miriam Makeba Nicolay and her family were my first hosts, to whom I am grateful for exceptionally guiding me during my first days in a new city and country, as I am to Binta Baldé, Nhalim Biai and Raimundo Có for the same reasons. I am indebted to Heidi’s family, who welcomed me like one of them. I especially have to thank João and Emília Cruz Pinto for the endless evenings of storytelling in their veranda, where I learned so much about the history of Guinea-Bissau and life in general. Isabel Garcia de Almeida (Belita) and David Francisco Vera Cruz (Xikinho) were not only my second and longest hosts in Bissau, but my constant support after each day of intensive fieldwork. Nearly every evening over dinner they asked me how things had gone in the field and helped me to reflect on my material and to raise new questions in ways that I had never expected. To thank the special friendship of Alexandre Abreu I find no better words than the ones he used – ‘a friend and fellow traveller who shared many special moments and made everything much easier’. At INEP (*Instituto Nacional de Estudos e*

Pesquisa) I am grateful to the Director Mamadú Jao for having institutionally hosted me in the first place, and to Miguel Barros for his friendship and support throughout my stay in Bissau and beyond.

Above all, I am indebted to all my research participants in Portugal and in Guinea-Bissau, who shared so much of their lives with me. Although unfortunately I cannot name them in order to preserve their anonymity, I find some peace of mind in thinking that they know how much I appreciate their help and friendship that remains to present day.

The fourth year of my PhD journey was spent in the city of Huambo, in Angola, where I did most of my writing up and was able to partly relive the excitements of fieldwork, by accompanying John's experience in his field. There, I am thankful to the musicality and joy of living of the people of Angola and to the friendship of others who, like us, had come from far away. They have all rescued me from the solitude of writing and brought light to the hardest moments.

It has been four years since I started this journey. Although the time frame between starting and finishing a PhD may vary, no matter how long it takes it often feels like a life time, in both positive and, at times, less positive ways. To me, it was a life time in a more literal sense, since it started with the end of one life and finished with the beginning of another. At the beginning of my four-year journey I experienced the sudden loss of someone who had not only given me life but also inspiration to live it. He had encouraged me to start the PhD in the first place, and taught me to find space not just for the needed academic rigour, but also for enjoying the poetics of that journey I was about to start. Alongside this wounding loss there has been an encounter of the utmost importance to my life. John, my partner, whom I met at the beginning of this journey, has not only patiently accompanied the progress of my thesis and improved it with his insightful comments and help in editing but, above all, brightened the more difficult times with his growing love, encouragement and support. Four years after the loss of my father, as if things found their own way to balance out, a new life is about to come out of my encounter with John. I doubt, however, that our daughter will ever read my thesis, and I wonder if my father actually would. In any case, this thesis is dedicated to his memory.

This research was funded by the Fundação para Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) of the Portuguese Ministry for Education and Science (SFRH/BD/47395/2008).

Chapter 1

Introduction: historical and fieldwork settings

1.1. Introduction

When I arrived in Portugal in May 2010, coming back from Guinea-Bissau to complete the last stage of my one-year, multi-sited fieldwork, I was introduced to Aliu, a Muslim Fula migrant trader in Portugal, originally from the Guinean interior region of Bafatá. He had been pointed out by my other research participants as one of the first protagonists of the story I had been following for nearly one year – that of the Guinean food and plants that regularly travel from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal, sent by Guineans in Bissau and received by their migrant relatives in Lisbon. We met in Largo São Domingos – a square in the Lisbon downtown area of Rossio that Guinean migrants use for socialising and exchanging homeland food, and one of the most important field sites in my research. There, Aliu confirmed the story that his brother had told me in Bissau. From both sides, the two siblings had contributed to the early stages of the making of a Guinean transnational life-world through food. Their original initiative of starting to send and receive food and plants across borders was intimately related not only to Aliu's personal history of migration, but also to the larger history of cultural encounters and events that contributes to shape memories of the past and simultaneously experience space and the everyday in the present. Pointing to a tree nearby, Aliu explained:

'In the old times, the Disabled War Veterans Association was right here, behind that tree, and that's where we started selling. I was a colonial soldier between 1973 and 1974 in Guinea-Bissau, and I came here to receive a pension. When I arrived in 1989, however, I was told that only the injured were entitled to it (...). But we were always hanging around here. We even had lunch at the association, people slept there... that's how we started selling here. (...) We saw that there was demand. People who had come to Portugal, like us, they liked those things. So, we asked our relatives there to send more of these foodstuffs over here for us to sell. (...) After us, other people started doing the same, and now there are many sellers, as you can see' – he concluded, pointing to the others sitting around us.

Although I did not meet Aliu and his brother until halfway through my fieldwork, the initial concern of my thesis was to examine the effects of the activity they had started in the early 1990s. In fact, I was at first especially interested in the practice of Guinean trade across borders and in what it represented socially and economically for Guinean migrants and their families at home.¹

Before I embarked on the fieldwork journey, I did not know exactly what kind of traded material I would find, or what channels were used for sending and receiving it. The fact that transnational trade has been an understudied area of research in Guinean studies and that Guinean migration has also been overlooked in studies of migration in Portugal was, in fact, what motivated my interest in the field and my choice for the Guinean context as the empirical focus.² Yet it did not take long before food emerged as one of the key topics of conversation and as a constantly present material in Guinean migrants' lives. It proved to be not only the first travelling material if we look at it through the lens of the history of Guinean migration to Portugal, but the one that remains still the most significant, if considering the quantity and regularity with which it travels. Moreover, as I understood throughout the course of fieldwork, food and plants proved to involve much more than the social and economic effects of the trade that had initially interested me.

I therefore extended the focus of my thesis and endeavoured to understand, first, what made these materials significant for Guineans. In order to do that, I adopted a multi-sited methodological approach that enabled an all-inclusive analysis. Following this approach, I looked at production sites in Guinea-Bissau and at people and food's relationship with the land where the crops are grown. I then followed the food's journey from those soils to the local food markets of Bissau and from there to the final destination in Lisbon, where they are either exchanged by Guinean traders in spaces such as that described by Aliu, or delivered directly to Guinean households, often as gifts. This provided evidence of how practices and meanings related to food, both on special occasions and in everyday life, are as much part of the material and social world of migrants as they are of those who stay back home. As a result, it also helped to

¹ As the people of Guinea-Bissau do, I will occasionally refer to Guinea-Bissau as 'Guinea' and to Bissau-Guineans as 'Guineans' throughout the thesis. It should not be confused with neighbouring Guinea-Conakry – formally known as République de Guinée – and its people.

² Drawing on his fieldwork from the 1990s, Machado (2002) referred to Muslim transnational food trade between Portugal and Guinea-Bissau as an incipient activity with possible tendency to grow.

understand how physical distances are bridged between both worlds through food-related meanings and experiences.

The main premise of this thesis is that in the making of a Guinean life-world with migration, materials like food and plants, as well as related practices of production, distribution and consumption across borders, are important vehicles through which to examine the reconciliation of people's localised intimate experiences with globalising forces. While carrying out this examination, I hope to offer a better understanding of how the Guinean life-world is made, through the use of those materials, from both countries of this migratory landscape. I therefore follow a multi-sited analysis, centred on the way both migrants and their families at home affect and are affected by the circulation of Guinean food and plants.

1.2. Between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal: setting the scene

Before moving on to the analysis, I will contextualise my fieldwork settings and offer a brief historical account of the construction of Guinea-Bissau's socio-cultural and economic landscape on the one hand, and of Guinean migration to Portugal, on the other. Although this account will provide general contextualising information, I will highlight the historical aspects that more directly concern my research participants' personal histories. In this regard, it is important to clarify that, intentionally, the choice of participants in this thesis did not follow any specific categorisation that forces people into groups. My participants include therefore men and women of different ethnic origins, for example, whose distinctions will be highlighted throughout the thesis whenever relevant. As I will discuss in the next chapter, where I conceptualise such differentiations, the fact that people do not belong to rigidly defined categories required that I took that diversity and the relation between different groups into account when trying to understand the making of the Guinean life-world. As the discussion of my research methodology later in this chapter will show, the selection of the participants followed my key methodological option of first tracing Guinean food and, from there, the people involved in making it circulate, from producers to traders and consumers in the two countries.

1.2.1. Guinea-Bissau: early movements and cultural encounters

Guinea-Bissau is a small country situated on the West African coast, whose territory officially covers 36,125 km² (including over 8,000 km² of swampy marshland and 3,200 km² of terrain periodically covered by rain). It is bordered by Senegal to the north and east and Guinea-Conakry to the east and south, and has a population of about one and a half million inhabitants (INE 2009).

Society in today's Guinea-Bissau is a result of the long history of migrations across West Africa, as well as wider movements through the continent, which originate from, amongst other routes, the Atlantic slave trade and the trans-Saharan trade paths (Davidson 1966). It is this long history of movements that, alongside hostile campaigns of religious conversion and territorial conquest of different people, makes Guinea-Bissau an extremely complex ethnic mosaic from early times up to present day, despite its small dimensions in territory and population (Pélissier 2001a). In spite of the difficulties in estimating numbers, around thirty main ethnic groups (excluding subdivisions) are nowadays thought to live in the country, of which the Balanta, Fula, Mandinga, Manjaco and Pepel are the most significant (Machado 2002).

Far from being clear-cut distinctions, however, most ethnic categorisations are made up of complex boundaries, stemming from the fluidity of past movements, transpositions and reciprocal influences of various cultural traditions, ethnic merging and subdivisions, close relations to other peoples of similar language groups that transcend national borders, Islamisation, and colonial campaigns (Lepri 1986; Lopes 1987). The conceptual framework and historical subjectivities regarding the notion of ethnicity will be presented and discussed in the next chapter. Yet I shall now make clear that in spite of the shortcomings of any 'ethnic' designation, I will henceforth use the term 'ethnic groups' to refer to this diversity, which I try to look at from the Guineans' perspective, vis-à-vis its importance in the generation of relationships and in the making of their life-world.³

³ The controversy surrounding these designations also originates from different colonial traditions. Thus the Fula are also known as Fulbe, Fulani or Peul, according to English or French nomenclature, just like the Mandinga are named Maninka, Madinka or Mandigo. In this thesis, I will follow the most common designations used in Portuguese contemporary sources, since they were the ones used by my Guinean research participants.



Figure 1. Map of Guinea-Bissau

Source: <http://www.mapsorama.com/category/africa-maps/guinea-bissau/>

The Fula and the Manjaco are the most represented ethnic groups amongst Guinean migrants in Portugal. They are also, alongside the Mancanha and the Mandinga, those who performed the largest migratory movements to neighbouring countries during colonial times (Carreira 1960; Carreira and Meireles 1959). The Manjaco and the Mancanha are coastal people, organised in political units known as *reguladu* (kingdoms), who share, with each other and with the Pepel, an affinity in terms of language, agricultural production, religious system and hierarchical socio-political organisation. In the early twentieth century, many moved towards Senegal and Gambia in search of better work opportunities and as an attempt to escape colonial taxation policies implemented by the Portuguese (Gable 2003; Galli and Jones 1987). The Mancanha are nowadays, alongside the Pepel – who, however, have had a limited participation in international migration – the ones who farm the soils of Bissau, whence the fresh vegetables and fruits that are sent to the migrant community in Lisbon grow. On the other hand, the Fula and the Mandinga are Muslim peoples from the interior regions of the country. During colonial times, they performed seasonal migration movements from

the eastern regions of Gabu and Bafatá to Senegal and Gambia, to work in groundnut plantations, wooden craftwork, weaving and shoemaking, as well as trade. Nowadays Fula migrants in Portugal prevail in the food trade business, selling the products that the Mancanha and Pepel women harvest in Bissau.⁴

Dates and events that describe the first Fula's arrival in what is now Bissau-Guinean territory are imprecise and differ in historical sources and in people's oral accounts. Yet acknowledging their past movements is important to better understand their relationship with other ethnic groups. During my encounters with non-Fula in the field, the Fula were often referred to as 'foreigners', 'travellers' or 'not children of the land'. In colonial accounts of the population of Guinea-Bissau (then known as Portuguese Guinea) the Fula and the Mandinga were already described as 'people from over-borders and invaders' (cf. Carreira and Meireles 1959).

The persistence of this view in contemporary Guinea amongst Guineans of other ethnic groups might first be related to historical subjectivities related to past territorial invasions in the region, where the Fula and the Mandinga have for centuries competed for land conquests. In this process, also due to their involvement in the slave trade, they marginalised other Senegambian groups, pushing them towards the coast (Vigh 2006). Second, many Futa-Fula – people of a Fula subdivision who migrated from the Futa-Djallon region (now part of Guinea-Conakry) in the eighteenth century – still move from present Guinea-Conakry to Guinea-Bissau, contributing to shape the multifaceted image of the Fula as foreigners. Third, as Aliu's narrative has shown, the Fula cooperated in higher numbers with the colonial power. This was due to a common interest in fighting against the 'animists of the coast' and to the fact that, given their clothing and writing practices, as well as their politically centralised structures and the abidance by a 'religion of the book', the Portuguese saw them as less 'backward' than the coastal people and strategically negotiated with their chiefs (Lopes 1982; Teixeira da Mota 1951).

Many Fula chiefs were thus intermediaries in the relationship between the local population and colonial authorities, who aimed at extending Portuguese ruling power to the interior. Yet despite its small dimension, Guinea was one of the Portuguese colonial territories to present the strongest resistance to colonial power, and Portugal had not

⁴ In addition to these ethnic groups, who play the major roles in contemporary Guinean migration to Portugal, the Balanta are also worth mentioning. They outnumber all other groups by representing about 30% of the population in Guinea-Bissau and occupy a corridor between the Muslims of the hinterland and the people of the coast.

only tenuous military control but also little success in colonialist cultural impositions in the territory (Mendy 2003; Péliissier 2001b). Only from 1914, within the project of 'integrating', 'civilising' and 'Christianising' the population, did Portugal introduce a special legal system which lasted until 1961 and that divided the population into the 'indigenous', the 'assimilated' and the 'civilised'. This division was made according to criteria of linguistic competence and 'manners and customs', where only the 'civilised' were to be granted full rights (Mendy 2003; Teixeira da Mota 1948).

Notwithstanding examples such as this imposed social structure, however, people have been showing their own strategies of resistance and negotiation throughout history. Gable's (1998) research on African and Portuguese representations of each other during colonial times, for example, and Carvalho's (2002) analysis of Manjaco chiefs' iconographic representations, provide several examples of the continuous negotiations that took place between colonisers and colonised in Guinea-Bissau. As Carvalho put it, 'this relationship should be understood in its double meaning of the establishment of relations of power and dominance on the one hand, and of the creation of new symbols and signifiants on the other' (2002: 94). In fact, in the long process of peopling that combined peaceful migratory waves with movements of military conquest, there was neither a clear-cut imposition of structures of domination, nor an exclusion of ancient structures of the defeated people. Instead, different elements were borrowed and permeable boundaries created. An interesting example is the creation of a distinct sociocultural group whose descendants do not consider themselves to be part of an 'ethnic group' like the others. These are known as 'Geba Christians' and result from the conversion of autochthonous people who congregated near the Portuguese trading outpost of the Geba river in order to benefit from available economic opportunities.

1.2.2. Trade and agriculture: from colonialism to post-independence political economy

Trade played a key role in the history of the region, and is intimately linked to the movements and encounters described above. For centuries, before the Portuguese presence on the coast, a network of inter-societal long-distance trade had developed with strategic crossroads in Guinean territory and beyond, mainly by Mandiga rulers of the inland kingdoms who secured the trans-Saharan trade in ivory, gold, and slaves (Mendy 2003). In D'Almada's key chronicles from the sixteenth century, itinerant

Mandinga merchants were generally associated with the gold trade, and described as very experienced merchants with skilled trading instruments and techniques, such as fine scales and cylinders made of fowl feathers or cat bones, where the gold was hidden to avoid thefts in their long journeys across several kingdoms (D'Almada 1841[1594]). Mandinga religious leaders, then known as *bixirins*, were seen as sorcerers working as 'agents of the demon', and described as the most powerful itinerant merchants of Guinea, who traversed long distances and arrived at every port in the region. They traded 'witchcraft in lamb horns and prayers written on pieces of paper' (Dornelas 1625, cited by Carreira 1966) – the same items that, as my ethnographic chapters will show, are still used by contemporary Mandiga healers in their work.

The Fula's involvement in trade is, on the other hand, described in more recent colonial accounts. They were previously mostly herdsman and cattle traders who travelled long distances in order to find pasture and water for their cattle. They have also been involved in the slave trade and in violent Islamisation campaigns, especially in the nineteenth century. Itinerant trade of other goods amongst the Fula, such as forged jewellery, knives and other instruments, was described as a later tradition that replaced older occupations of goldsmith, blacksmith and tanner, and transformed the basis of Fula economy, making it shift towards the notion of individual property (Silva 1953).⁵

Colonial accounts of the *feiras grandes* (big markets) that rotated weekly between different Manjaco and Mancanha settlements described both Mandinga and Fula Muslim traders (known as *djila*) as coming from distant locations to exchange beads, dyed cloth, animals and other articles in these spaces (Carreira 1960). Descriptions from the 1960s portrayed Mancanha and Manjaco women and children sitting down in the shade of baobab trees selling beans, millet, maize, cassava, sorghum, palm oil, palm kernels, chilli, rice, eggs, yams, Guinea gumvine and other fruits, cattle, *sabon di tera*,⁶ baskets, clay and iron objects, hoes, mats, cloths and snake oil. Still taking place today with weekly periodicity, these rotating markets (known as *lumu* in Guinean Creole) were also, like they are today, occasions to exchange news, discuss politics, arrange weddings and organise funerals or initiation ceremonies (Carreira 1960). Nowadays, long-distance

⁵ The Balanta, on the contrary, have for centuries imposed internal group restrictions upon activities conducive to individual gain, hence being for the most part farmers (specialised in rice production) with little involvement in forms of economic exchange.

⁶ Black soap, or 'soap from the land', made from palm oil or pounded groundnuts and ash from baobab bark.

traders selling in these markets are usually Fula who import their goods – such as clothing, radios, batteries and bicycles – from Senegal, Gambia or Guinea-Conakry (Forrest 2002).

Large-scale imports and exports, on the other hand, were in the hands of European trading houses from the early nineteenth century. These firms took the bulk of exports to Germany, England and France, and supplied imports from these countries as well. Cape Verdeans, Portuguese and Lebanese traders, headquartered in Bissau, acted as intermediaries for foreign firms. Other Africans, alongside some Cape Verdean and Lebanese traders, were set in isolated trading posts and village shops. On the lowest level of this layered system of commerce were the itinerant African traders who had dominated trade in the eastern parts of the country during precolonial times (Galli 1995: 55).

The Portuguese were, in fact, unsuccessful in stimulating large-scale private investments in Guinea, in contrast with other colonies, particularly Angola and Mozambique. In Guinea, the first land concessions (*pontas*) of the nineteenth century – of mainly groundnuts, followed by sugar cane and rice – were not taken by the Portuguese, who avoided Guinea due to what they considered its unhealthy climate, but rather by Cape Verdeans who migrated to the mainland in order to escape a famine in the 1860s. Contracted Guinean farmers kept their traditional techniques of production and took de facto ownership of the land, and these small-scale concessions functioned as commercial centres rather than plantations until the mid-1900s (Galli and Jones 1987).

The colonial government's agricultural development actions started in 1945, introducing new and improved varieties of rice and groundnuts, animal traction and commercial tree cropping, and diversifying food and export crops (Galli and Jones 1987: 35). However, they were hindered by insufficient government budgets, scarcely improved physical and technological conditions, paternalistic social relations and a lag in price increases as compared with other West African countries (Galli 1995). After the start of the independence war in the 1960s, exports declined dramatically, and a new understanding of agricultural development, partly occasioned by the Green Revolution and its new technological package, went hand in hand with the suggestion of trying to eliminate the small middlemen in order to monopolise Guinean trade for Portugal. Yet the incorporation of some of the new ideas in colonial practice was quickly undermined by the independence war. Until independence, therefore, the economy remained mainly

dependent on small farmers and, in general, strongly-entrenched indigenous local power structures and social and economic practices outdid an infrastructurally undeveloped state (Mendy 1990).

Guinea-Bissau declared independence unilaterally in 1973,⁷ after a decade of a liberation struggle led by the influential Amílcar Cabral, who was assassinated eight months before the country's declaration of independence. The newly-installed PAIGC⁸ government pursued the nationalisation of the economy and the control of agricultural trade, in some ways similar to Portuguese colonialism's efforts to 'nationalise' trade (Galli 1995: 73). The economy was to be run through a network of 120 People's Stores (*Armazéns do Povo*) and SOCOMIN, the government agency responsible for guaranteeing a fair exchange of agricultural products for imported goods. The intention was to channel part of the agricultural surplus into the urban sector and foster the creation and development of a thus-far hardly existent industrial sector. Yet the reality turned out to be quite different. Due to low crop purchase prices and the inadequacy of this system to cover a nation of 3,600 villages, these outlet stores proved unable to offer the required diversity of products at affordable prices, and experienced increasing shortages of goods and corrupt practices including profiteering by managers (Forrest 2002: 239; Galli and Jones 1987: 113). Consequences such as the stagnation of agriculture, impoverishment of farmers and increase of informal trade and migration were only exacerbated within rural communities. These problems were also compounded by a poor road infrastructure that hindered the transport of goods to the city, regularly cutting villages off from commercial circuits.

1.2.3. Liberalisation and structural adjustment reforms

The liberalisation and structural adjustment programme (SAP) reforms of 1987 benefited for the most part the already privileged elite owners of the land concessions. Since these major beneficiaries of medium and long-term loans were high-ranking government officials rather than commercial farmers, only a few hectares were rendered to commercial farming. Moreover, the government policies forcing the direct exchange of imported rice with cashew nuts have also contributed to the impoverishment of farmers.

⁷ Independence was recognised by Portugal only one year later.

⁸ African Party for the Liberation of Guinea and Cape Verde.

These policies,⁹ which had first been generated by the competitive low prices of imported rice, proved unsuccessful due to a later rise in its cost and the fall in the price of cashew nuts.

Rising levels of inflation and growth of external debt, in conjunction with a history of ill-designed economic and agricultural policies, demographic pressure and climatic changes have thus limited commercial farming and exacerbated the deterioration of the population's economic conditions. Meanwhile, as Forrest (2002) puts it, 'most of the population obtained consumer goods and sold agricultural products on informal, inter-ethnic, local and long distance trading circuits that harked back to precolonial times' (2002: 261).

In a country where, until today, the majority of the population works in agriculture, the end of state control over trade has, however, also resulted in diversified opportunities for food production and small-scale trading activities in Bissau and its outskirts. Despite the increase in poverty, with the percentage of Guineans with a daily income below two dollars rising from 49% in 1991 to 64.7% in 2002 and 69.3% in 2010,¹⁰ these small-scale income generating activities, mainly performed by women, have proved to be a successful model (Aguilar *et al.* 2001; Forrest 2002; Havik 1995). The production of rice in the extensive swamp areas around the city, subsistence and market-oriented smallholdings and spontaneous food markets have expanded in the urban periphery. In fact, the landscape in Bissau is nowadays made of vegetable gardens that appear continuously between built areas not far from the urban centre. In peripheral quarters, the density of construction progressively diminishes until swamp areas used for agricultural land fully dominate the landscape (Lourenco-Lindell 1995).

The fact that state investments were mainly concentrated in the city generated an increasing distance between the small urban-political elite and the rural majority of Guineans. Forrest (1992), who defines this process as 'de-linkage', traces it back to the immediate post-independence period, whereas Abreu (2011) maintains that the liberalisation phase of the country's history stood for the final consolidation of that disconnection. In any case, this increased distance was not only experienced by the rural population, but also by the majority of urban dwellers, who were not part of the elite and

⁹ They included the intensification of the production of cashew nuts, which became the country's primary export (Galli 1990).

¹⁰ Although the reliability of such indicators might be questioned, they were reported as part of the World Bank's most recent development indicators (source: http://data.worldbank.org/country/guinea-bissau#cp_wdi).

who felt the deterioration of their living conditions as much as it was felt in rural areas. If we look at the complex impacts of such processes in the geography of African cities like Bissau, this distance is embodied in the division between the urban centre (*prasa*), where the businesses and services that serve the small elite are concentrated, and the unplanned peripheral settlements with lack of basic services like electricity, sewage or running water. My fieldwork in Bissau was mainly conducted in these latter neighbourhoods, where the majority of my research participants lived – like the majority of the city inhabitants – and worked as smallholders or food sellers in local markets.

1.2.4. Migration from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal

Although the first flow of Guinean migration to Portugal followed the onset of Guinea-Bissau's independence and Portugal's return to democracy in 1974, more massive inflows occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. These movements were related both to the search for better work opportunities and to a series of post-independence conflicts, which included a civil war in the period 1998-99, the assassination of the president and head of the armed forces in 2009 and four coup d'états, the latest as recent as April 2012. Notwithstanding the rapid growth of migration to Portugal, Senegal is still thought to host the largest community of Guineans abroad, in spite of a lack of recent sources that confirm this. The Manjaco, in particular, continued to move to Senegal (and, some, from there to France) in the post-independence period (Galli and Jones 1987; Machado 2002).

As Aliu's narrative revealed in the introduction above, Guineans' different patterns of participation in the liberation war are also part of the earliest migration records to Portugal. People of Fula ethnic origin who, like him, had sided with the Portuguese, were denied major political roles and influential positions within the PAIGC, and saw some of their local chiefs assassinated. Many, then, left the country for Portugal.

Guinean migration to Portugal had its most significant growth between 1986 and 1996, shifting from the tenth to the fourth most represented foreign nationality (Machado 2002). In 2010, the Portuguese Office for National Statistics, even if overlooking a potentially large number of undocumented migrants, placed Guineans as the fifth largest group of the total non-EU population in Portugal, with 19,304 individuals (INE 2011). Initially there was an over-representation of men amongst Guinean migrants, which pushed men like Aliu into areas of trade normally run by women, such as fruit and vegetable selling, but nowadays there is a more balanced gender distribution. The

migration of women and their leading role as food vendors altered the gendered composition of selling places and practices in Lisbon, and longer-established men moved to the transnational agency business or ownership of small shops. Transnational agencies, known in Creole as *ajensia*, are small-scale, usually family-run partnerships that include at least one relative in each country, specialised in facilitating the sending and receiving of all sorts of different products – including food and plants – between migrants in Portugal and their kin in Guinea.

The representation of different ethnic groups in the migratory context is, as it is in Guinea-Bissau, more difficult to estimate. The only survey conducted with Guinean migrants in Portugal, coordinated by Machado in 1995 with 400 individuals, revealed that half of those arrived in the first half of the nineties were Fula, Mandinga, Manjaco and Mancanha. It is thus probably not a coincidence that the same ethnic groups represent the majority of my research participants in Lisbon and, partly as a result of kinship ties, also in Guinea-Bissau.

The selectivity of international migration, which requires, at least within initial flows, previous accumulation of human capital (cf. Massey *et al.* 1993), is not entirely represented amongst my Guinean research participants in Lisbon. In terms of educational background, although my youngest informants have often completed secondary school levels, adult Fula traders are mainly either illiterate or have only received incomplete primary education. According to their narratives, the leading importance ascribed to Muslim education in their villages of origin and to the perpetuation of an old tradition of trade within the family played a stronger role. Moreover, the most recently arrived did not speak Portuguese, but only ethnic languages and Creole – the most widely spoken language in everyday social and economic relations, and the one I communicated in with my research participants in the field. This is associated with the fact that Portuguese, in spite of being the official language of Guinea-Bissau, is used mainly in governmental domains and amongst the elite of Bissau, but is not spoken by the majority of the population.¹¹

¹¹ It is also linked to shortcomings in the educational sector. In fact, Guinea-Bissau was reported in 2006 as one of the West African countries with the greatest difficulties in universalising primary education, which is, in the opinion of many, due to the fact that it is still conducted in Portuguese, in spite of the poor Portuguese language skills of many educators. Preliminary data from 2010 indicate a primary schooling rate of 67.4% at national level, and 23.5% as regards secondary education in Guinea-Bissau. Amongst adults, illiteracy rates were estimated at 63.4% in 2000 (MEPIR 2011; PNUD 2006).

Trying to categorise Guinean migrants according to a system of class differentiation is also a difficult task, due to the blurred forms of social organisation in Guinea-Bissau. First, apart from the separation between the elite and the majority of the population, the weak capitalist organisation of production in both rural and urban Guinea-Bissau does not leave room for a significant 'classic' bourgeoisie. Second, relatively independent smallholders comprise the majority of the rural population (Abreu 2011; Temudo 2008). Third, the way in which different ethnic groups are organised in more or less hierarchical or decentralised societies adds to the complexity involved in attempts to categorise systems of class, which brings extra difficulty to any effort of analysing the selectivity of Guinean migration.

In terms of economic integration, the growing labour demand in construction and public works in Portugal, between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, favoured the informalisation of the labour market in this sector and the turning of a 'blind-eye' to the recruitment of illegal migrants, especially from Portuguese-speaking African countries. The first wave of Guinean migrants to Portugal, mainly composed of male workers, entered this sector in that period. Ever since Machado's study with data from 1995, however, there has been little academic concern with Guinean migrants' insertion in the labour market in Portugal, their livelihood strategies and ways in which they cope with economic uncertainty.¹² Hoping to contribute to fill this gap in the literature, these topics will be explored ethnographically in chapter 6 with data from my fieldwork.

From the late 1990s, new migration flows from Eastern Europe also targeted the informal market. Paradoxically, this new era of economic flexibility saw illegal paid work being tolerated while accompanied by a political discourse promoting migration control (Peixoto 2002). The need to better understand the relationship between informality and migration gains even more relevance in the present economic context, where important changes are taking place. In the early 2000s, Peixoto described the labour market opportunities in the informal construction sector in Portugal as abundant, and prospects for the future as promising (Peixoto 2002). However, the economic crisis of 2008 was to overturn things. Economic stagnation in Portugal has, since then, impacted upon the construction and public works sector, leaving many migrants unemployed. Moreover, the informal nature of their occupations did not entitle them to any form of compensation. As a consequence, there is now not only a decrease in migration flows,

¹² A few exceptions are of the works of Carreiro (2011), Có (2004) and Quintino (2004).

but also an increase of return migration. Calls for increased immigration control culminated in the new immigration act passed in August 2012. Amongst other regressive measures, sanctions on undocumented migrants became more severe, namely through the facilitation of expulsion, which was justified by the need to adjust the national juridical framework to European policies on migration. The impact of this law upon the recently-arrived migrants who, while struggling to regularise their situation, use Rossio as a space to socialise and sell homeland food as a livelihood strategy is as yet unknown.

1.2.5. The Guinean presence in Lisbon

In 2010, 83% of the Guinean population in Portugal lived in Lisbon and its periphery (INE 2011).¹³ Rossio, described in the introduction above by Aliu, is an important space for Guinean migrants in Lisbon in different ways.¹⁴ It is not only a place of residence for some, but a space of socialisation and exchange of things and news from home, for many. The establishment of the Disabled War Veterans Association in 1974 and Guinean war veterans' use of that space played a significant role in its social construction.¹⁵

An earlier African presence in Rossio has been accounted for in Loude's (2003) vivid historical ethnography, where it is described as a vibrant place of long-established trade fairs and markets that linked city and countryside. Loude highlights the fact that Guineans took over the district which had for centuries been occupied by black slaves walking the streets with ladders, lime wash buckets and brushes, offering their lime wash painting services – a sixteenth century slaves' task – to the houses of the area. Today, Rossio still connects centre and suburbs, as its major train and ferry stations (where many Africans disembark, coming from the periphery where they live) provide evidence for.

Guineans nowadays use the upper and lower parts of the square, whose topography follows Lisbon's typically hilly landscape, according to gendered and

¹³ My fieldwork in Portugal was therefore centred in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, which includes the city of Lisbon and its outskirts.

¹⁴ Although the precise name of the square is Largo São Domingos, Guineans commonly refer to it as Rossio, which comprises not just the square but the larger area of that downtown neighbourhood. I will use my research participants' designation of the place and refer to it as Rossio throughout this thesis.

¹⁵ The building where the association operated until 1993 is known as the Palace of Independence (see Figure 2).

business-specialisation divisions that reproduce the configuration of Bissauan markets, as I will explore in chapter 6. The area is mainly occupied by Fula and Mandinga women food vendors, male *sapateiros* (charm-makers who sew lucky charms in leather, literally called ‘shoemakers’ in Guinean Creole), and *ajensiadores* (agency owners), who occupy distinct physical positions in the square. Rossio was one of my key field sites in Lisbon, but not the only one. In the next section I will offer a detailed account of my methodological choices and fieldwork settings.

1.3. Methodology: data collection and writing

A wide-ranging understanding of the way Guinea-Bissau and Portugal are brought together through the migration of people and their foods, as well as through their continuous connections, which include historical subjectivities resulting from the events described above, is only possible through the use of multi-sited ethnography. This was my first key methodological choice. After introducing the academic debate that has been built around this method, including a discussion of its advantages and limitations, I will describe my own journey in the field and, in conclusion, the complex journey that followed: that of ethnographic writing.

1.3.1. Multi-sited ethnography

The work of anthropologists such as Appadurai (1996), Coleman and von Hellermann (2011), Gupta and Ferguson (1997), Hannerz (2003) and Marcus (1995), who have deeply reflected on meanings of field locations when doing ethnography with progressively less spatially bounded groups and less homogenised cultures, have greatly influenced my methodological options. Marcus, who first coined the thesis of ‘multi-sited ethnography’ in 1995, defined it as ‘designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some sort of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defined the argument of the ethnography’ (1995: 105). Within this ethnographic method, he distinguished six techniques of ‘following’: 1) the people, 2) the thing, 3) the metaphor, 4) the plot, story or allegory, 5) the life or biography and 6) the conflict. This thesis is methodologically inspired by the technique of tracing things,

through which people's movements, signs, histories and lived experiences are also followed.

However, even if using the movement of things as the guideline for my research, I situate that mobility in tangible practices and spaces. I argue that grounded research is needed to address the materiality of migrants' pathways, insofar as 'transnationals' are not only mobile and 'travelling through', but also emplaced and 'dwelling in' places (Dunn 2010). Although it may at first appear as a contradiction, I maintain that multi-sited research can be combined with a micro-scale approach to transnationalism (focusing on individuals and families' experiences), to better understand how physical distances are bridged and ensuing ambiguities narrowed through the appropriation of familiar objects. I am also inspired by Coleman and Collins' (2006) focus on the need to examine the means through which the global is brought down to earth, and by Mitchell's (1997) 'transnational spatial ethnographies', where she emphasises the importance of grounded empirical work to better understand transnational processes. I also draw on the argument put forward by Burawoy *et al.* (2000) that grounding globalities in everyday life through ethnography can sharpen the understanding of wider processes of globalisation and transform their abstractions into more precise and meaningful conceptual tools. This chosen approach to multi-sited ethnography will hopefully contribute to attenuate some of the criticisms that the multi-sited method has unsurprisingly received, particularly those related to a supposed focus on transnational processes and practices rather than an actual concern with the participants in the research (Wilding 2007).¹⁶

Multi-sited ethnography has opened several debates on the notion of anthropological field. Within these debates, the multi-sited method has been accused, on the one hand, of neglecting the methodological commitment to spend long periods in one place (cf. Candea 2007). On the other hand, however, there is a widely accepted determination to give up old ideas of territorially fixed communities and stable, localised cultures (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), which interestingly seems to oppose a commitment that often takes an unchanging locality for granted. What is more, how can one claim that there is more truth in bounded field-sites, when truth is anyway always situated and

¹⁶ Part of the criticism of Marcus' programme focused on its seductive character, which did not allow the first generation of multi-sited ethnographers much room for self-critical reflection. This recognition motivated a collection of essays edited by Falzon in 2009, where the challenges and thrusts of multi-sited fieldwork are discussed by several scholars (including Marcus himself) and directions of collaborative research are identified (Falzon 2009).

partial, mediated by the ethnographer's presence and the way we seek to understand and experience the world, as well as by the self-reflection we demand from our informants (Appadurai 1988b; Clifford 1986; Rabinow 1977)? Rapport and Dawson (1998) add the anthropologist's identity to this debate and argue that anthropological knowledge also derives from movement – the movement represented in a cultural journey into reflexivity (1998: 33).

Coleman and Collins (2006) suggest that it was partly the competition of allied disciplines using methodologies uncomfortably overlapping with anthropology that motivated anthropology's immersion in remote and bounded fields as a way of reaffirming a disciplinary identity. However, many anthropologists nowadays agree that 'traditional' anthropological matters such as family and kinship do not disappear in transnational contexts (cf. Gardner and Grillo 2002). On the contrary, it is precisely because family and kinship relations are altered and strongly influenced by the migration of relatives that this migration and those migrant relatives need to be taken into account in anthropological research. On the other hand, bringing the context of origin into research on migration allows for a wider understanding of the migrant experience. As Hannerz (2003) notices, to be at both points of departure and of arrival is an ideal methodological strategy in studies of migration. Yet in spite of some ethnographic examples of the use of such methods, a few of which related to food and trade (Alvarez and Collier 1994; Cook and Harrison 2007), Guinea-Bissau (Johnson 2006) and other aspects of a transnational West African world (cf. Stoller 2009),¹⁷ most research on migration, even if focusing on transnational relations and connections, is ethnographically positioned in the 'arrivals hall' only, exploring the points of departure largely from the migrant's narrated experiences.¹⁸ Following on from this debate, in spite of the initial disciplinary dilemmas that I identified in the acknowledgements of this thesis, I tried to benefit from contributions from other research fields whenever relevant to my own research, especially those that result from more interdisciplinary studies of migration or African studies.

¹⁷ In 2008, a special issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* was dedicated to the transnational linkages and multi-sited lives between Africa and Europe (Grillo and Mazzucato 2008).

¹⁸ An exception of this tendency is Abbotts' (2009) study of the relationship between Ecuadorian families separated by migration to New York, through fieldwork conducted in Ecuador.

Within the intricate debate that attempts to find ways and methods to better understand the link between local experiences and global forces, Blok (2010) has argued for an alternative methodological framework inspired by Latour's (2005) actor-network theory (ANT). Latour's emphasis on the agency of material things is useful in the context of my research, in the sense that it can help to better understand how Guineans share their worlds with a variety of other things that might transform those worlds. Blok's proposed method – the 'ethno-socio-cartography', or 'mobile ethnographies of situated globalities' – draws on a critique of Burawoy and Marcus' theories which, he argues, continue the divide between localities and globalities, making any experience of the global impossible. Instead, he suggests, as ANT does, globalities are about the mobile circulation of social-material forms that can be empirically traced within situated assemblages and connections.

Nevertheless, Blok's focus on the mobility of local realities, although useful, rejects the deep immersion in local life-worlds that I see as a key means with which to understand such processes. More than focusing on mobility as the topic of research in its own right, I use this mobility to reach the materials, spaces, practices and relationships that, from both countries, are part of Guineans' making of a transnational life-world. Furthermore, mapping large-scale global fields and forces often seems to provide a perspective in which Africa is a victim of global processes (de Bruijn, van Dijk and Gewald 2007). Instead, an emphasis on local processes at work in Africa, or on how global processes are interpreted and adapted locally, should contribute to overcome victimising approaches focusing merely on limited opportunities and constraints (Chabal, Engel and de Haan 2007). Detailed ethnographic accounts are, as West and Sanders have put it, 'required to enhance our appreciation of the myriad ways in which people around the world engage with globalizing processes, ranging from resistance to embrace, but including, most importantly, the vast and complex swath of strategies lying in between' (2003: 11). By adding the transnational context to this debate and looking at how these processes are lived by Guineans in both countries, I hope to contribute to this long-standing methodological attempt at situating the connections between globalities and localities.

In order to do this I divided my fieldwork into three different stages: three initial months in Portugal, the next six months in Guinea-Bissau and three more months back in Portugal. These different (and arguably short) durations of each field phase are part of what has been addressed as one of the limitations of multi-sited fieldwork. However, this

movement allowed me to better observe how the material I was focusing on travelled from Bissau to Lisbon, and embarking on the journey myself always represented enriching moments of participant observation. Moreover, I benefited from the fact that Lisbon is my hometown. Starting the journey in Lisbon facilitated, in many ways, my access to spaces with which I had always been familiar and, from there, my transition to Guinea-Bissau. It also allowed me to meet my research participants on several other occasions after fieldwork, whenever I visited home. On the other hand, the decision of not breaking my Guinean fieldwork in two phases, like I did in Portugal, resulted from recognising that such a rupture would not, at that point, contribute to build up the relationships I was establishing in a setting that, unlike Lisbon, was unknown to me.

1.3.2. The beginning of the journey: fieldwork in Portugal

In June 2011, during a trip back to Portugal, I saw Samira in Rossio, where the story of Guinean food travelling to Lisbon had started with Aliu. Samira was a young Fula woman who helped her mother in the food trade business, and one of the first Guineans I had encountered in this space of Guinean socialisation at the beginning of my fieldwork, in September 2009. Sitting down on a public bench in the upper part of the square, casually catching up under a warm sun, Samira recalled the time we first met, nearly two years before.

‘Remember when these people thought you were the police?’ – she asked with a friendly laugh, pointing at other Guineans sitting around us.

Although I smiled at the thought of that long-gone episode, almost forgotten then in my mind, it evoked some of the initial tensions of my ethnographic fieldwork. Before setting off to explore the origin site of Guinean foodstuffs, I delved into the arrival geographies of a migratory landscape where, for three months, I made myself present and then slowly participated in the Guinean life-world, which was transnationally being made from here since Aliu and others first arrived. Due to its importance for Guineans in Lisbon and to my familiarity with this area of my hometown, I chose Rossio as the first field site from where to start the journey.

The episode recalled by Samira had taken place during the first weeks of my fieldwork, as I was sitting with her mother Dála on an old cardboard box that had been

unfolded on the floor under a tree.¹⁹ From a public bench nearby, Boar – a baobab fruit ice-cream seller – asked me if I had been there the day before with the police. I did not immediately understand the woman’s question, and looked apprehensively at my friend Dála, anxiously looking for help. Boar pointed at a man standing next to her and explained:

‘He was the one to ask.’

I had left earlier the day before, and did not know about the police raid – whose frequency I later came to realise – that had taken place after my departure. The man standing near Boar was spreading the rumour that I might have been involved in it. Dála, seemingly angry at the accusation, contended that I was not even there when it all happened. Boar nodded in agreement, and the man finally apologised, uneasily justifying the mistake with another *branku* (white person) he seemed to have seen there, who resembled me.



Figure 2. Rossio, Lisbon. At the back, the Palace of Independence, where the Disabled War Veterans Association used to operate

(Photo taken by a 6-year old Guinean boy)

¹⁹ *Sinta* – the Creole word for ‘sitting’ – is widely used by Guineans to indicate socialising occasions pictured as simply spending time together. Invitations to sit down increased as my presence became familiar to them, and seats were frequently improvised with undone cardboard boxes, plastic crates or old tins of paint to welcome me and other ‘guests’.

The irregularity of the transactions daily performed in that space, the presence of undocumented migrants and the resulting frequent police intervention were part of the main reasons for initial suspicions that led to incidents like this one. Having anticipated such tensions, my concern with gaining my research participants' trust from the beginning was overcome not only by being present daily in their informal exchange and socialising spaces, but also by regularly explaining the purpose of my research. Gender is an obvious factor that influenced my immersion in this and other field sites. In Rossio, the fact that women food vendors occupy separate spaces from male healers and charm-makers facilitated my approach to women in the first place. Drawing on feminist and other ethnographic literature looking at questions of gender (cf. Abu-Lughod 1993; Amit 2000; Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993; Conaway 1986; England 1994; Faithorn 1986), I managed to overcome an initially more difficult access to male informants through that first contact with women. This difficulty was even more successfully overcome after my return from Guinea, when my innocuous intentions became clear and, more than that, I was considered a member of the families I had been in closer contact with in Bissau.

The process of creating trust-based relationships both with men and women included, on the other hand, some uncomfortable situations related to the conventional image of the white fieldworker as an outsider endowed with power (cf. Rabinow 1977) and to sometimes excessive solicitations from my research participants. Yet because relationships are, in the West African context, created and maintained through gifts, debts and reciprocities, I had to constantly reflect on how to recognise the differences between what was the dialectic character of fieldwork on the one hand, and the expectations that were an intrinsic part of the relationships that were being created, on the other. In fact, alongside a few awkward situations (some of which will be described in the ethnographic chapters that follow) there was also often a return or compensation for my gifts or help provided in different respects, usually translated into the offer of Guinean foodstuffs or invitations for a cooked meal. My participation in these relationships of giving and reciprocating was therefore both a cause of occasional tensions and doubts and a valuable way of better grasping the complexities of such relationships.

My ethnographic journey did not strictly follow the direction of the movement of food that guided my research. This choice was linked to the methodological intention of getting a first glimpse of a little-known reality, by becoming acquainted with the key objects that are part of the migrant material world and with related practices of

exchange, and introducing myself and my research to the community of Guinean migrants in Portugal. This would, I hoped, facilitate my access into the following (yet historically preceding) side of the objects' journey: Guinea-Bissau. By the end of the first three months I had been able to move from mostly observational approaches to a more active participation in the field, which was made possible in such a short time frame by, amongst other things, fortunate encounters. Dála and her daughter Samira – long-established food traders in Rossio with whom a trust-based friendship relation was easily and quickly established – are examples of such encounters.

A less anticipated aspect that played in my favour was the extraordinary close nature of Guinean networks. This worked as an ideal gateway for my constant introduction to new people in the field, as well as for a relatively easily built up constellation of trust-based relationships, made possible by gaining the trust of an initial handful of people. It also allowed me to more easily move from Rossio to other spaces. The second key field site of my research was Damaia, a peripheral municipality to the north of Lisbon, where a large number of African migrants live in a deprived area of unplanned settlements. Here, one street occupied with Guinean vendors of mainly food and 'traditional' medicines became known as 'Bandim market' of Damaia, the name of Bissau's largest market.²⁰ Additionally, because Damaia train station links it directly to Rossio on a ten-minute journey, I often moved back and forth between the two places, as several Guinean traders and clients also did.

From there, I extended the fieldwork settings to other significant yet smaller-scale spaces where practices of exchange and gatherings were performed by Guineans, linking people and things in such performances, not only in Lisbon and its outskirts, but also between those spaces and similar ones in Guinea-Bissau. My close affiliation with the people who daily used these spaces created an initial concern that I might have restricted potential relationships with other people in other spaces. Yet as I soon came to realise, even the Guineans who I met elsewhere in the city through different gateways were for the most part also related (either through trade, kinship or other networks) to those who more habitually used the spaces that had become my main ethnographic locations.

²⁰ This street is located in a specific neighbourhood of Damaia. Yet following, once again, Guineans' own way of designating such spaces, I will refer to it as Damaia.



Figure 3. Damaia's 'Bandim market' in Lisbon

At this early stage of fieldwork, informal conversations and participant observation formed the core of my data collection methods. Towards the end of those first three months, I occasionally helped my informants to sell their produce whenever their presence was required elsewhere, and I accompanied others in their itinerant trading routes. This allowed me, amongst other things, to get acquainted with regular clientele, who seemed to find my role as food seller and my then reasonable level of Creole rather amusing. Interviews were, during this early fieldwork phase, not used at length. Before leaving for Guinea-Bissau, I conducted (and recorded) only four detailed interviews amongst traders and customers, who were given freedom to structure their narratives. My intention of conducting more formal interviews had been planned for a later stage of fieldwork. It was nonetheless the course of fieldwork itself that determined the direction of the methods used and, accordingly, it was my encounter with these four people and the interest they showed in my research that motivated these interviews. As a result, I widened my knowledge of the Guinean social and material world and was introduced to new topics to explore in the second stage of fieldwork: Guinea-Bissau.

Before leaving, my informant Seco – a Mandinga charm-maker and healer who had already become a friend – took me to his place for a free consultation of my luck and destiny (*djubi sorti*), as a goodbye gift. Fortunately, the way the cowry shells fell on the cloth indicated success in my trip to Guinea, as well as a safe return to Portugal afterwards.

1.3.3. Looking for the origins: fieldwork settings in Guinea-Bissau

On my fifth day in Bissau in December 2009, I woke up to find Miriam (my first host in the city) and her friend Binta engaged in laid-back conversations inside the quiet house, away from the animated sounds of the courtyard, where three or four young maids were cooking and cleaning, the boys were watching a noisy TV show, men were eating and agitatedly discussing business matters, and the kids were playing. I decided to sit with the two women for a quiet start of the day, without yet knowing that the incredibly intertwined nature of Guinean networks that had stunned me during the first part of my fieldwork in Lisbon, was about to be continued from that same day on in Guinea-Bissau, and that the laziness of those first days of settling down was about to come to an end.

‘So, tell me the names you have. I might know them’ – said Binta, referring to the contacts I had been given by my research participants in Lisbon, of their relatives living in Bissau.

To my surprise, Binta gave an amused laugh, followed by brief information (including neighbourhood of residence) on most of the people I cited from my notebook. Her husband and mother, she then told me, were also migrants in Lisbon, the latter being one of the women selling food in Rossio. Without time to recover from the overwhelming feeling of surprise resulting from such coincidences, I was suddenly invited by the two enthusiastic women to get into Miriam’s car and look promptly for those people. And so we did. During this tour through people’s houses and *mesas*,²¹ I made my first acquaintances with many of those who would later become my research participants and friends. These encounters, accompanied by excited phone calls to Lisbon to let their migrant kin know I was there, made me better understand the

²¹ Literally meaning ‘table’, the word *mesa* is used, in the context of Guinean markets, to describe a small selling place that is usually rented, not always implying a physical stall but sometimes only a piece of plastic laid out on the floor or an improvised plastic crate, with the goods displayed on top.

importance of Guinean hospitality, where an *ospri* (guest) means not only someone temporarily staying over, but also a passing ‘visitor’, ‘foreigner’ or ‘pilgrim’ (Scantamburlo 2003). As a consequence, I quickly became everyone’s guest, and food was often offered to me in return for news from an imagined Europe.

Miriam and Binta’s guided tour of Bissau served nonetheless additional purposes. On our way to Bairro Militar – the first neighbourhood we visited – Miriam stopped near a small house and went inside with an empty plastic bottle, leaving Binta and me waiting in the car. When I asked what that was about, Binta explained that her friend was buying plant medicines from a healer, to be taken for weight loss. They were worried about the upcoming New Year’s Eve party and the need to fit into elegant dresses, which they also had a look at along the way in a clothing trader’s house.

On our way out of Bairro Militar’s market, where one of my contacts worked, Miriam called my attention to a man selling twisted copper and silver rings and bracelets for protection against evil eye. She purchased a ring and suggested that I took a bracelet for myself, which I did, even if my friend Seco had, a week before in Lisbon, predicted success in my trip to Guinea.

While travelling around the peripheral neighbourhoods of Bissau with the two women that day, I observed the consequences of the rapid growth of the capital’s population (by 80% between 1995 and 2005). Currently accounting for 25.5% of the country’s population (INE 2009), nearly 90% of Bissau residents live nowadays in those neighbourhoods, which stretch from the city centre where I lived to unplanned settlements lacking the most basic services (MOPCU-DGHU 2005). Since most Guinean migrants in Lisbon come from Bissau – even if originally from rural areas – and a large part of their families live in those neighbourhoods, it was here that most of my fieldwork in Guinea was conducted. Many of those neighbourhoods are spread on both sides of the Airport Road (*Estrada do Aeroporto*) – the main road that, leading out of the city, goes past the airport of Bissau. The airport, where key food-related performances were staged three times a week, on flight days, became another important field site of my research from the early stages of fieldwork in Bissau.

However, since my ethnographic fieldwork in Guinea did not immediately follow the sequential order of the chain, I started by addressing those responsible for sending the material across borders – the migrants’ relatives whose contacts I had brought from Portugal. Only after that did I move to the local markets of Bissau where the material is

purchased, and from there to the horticultural smallholdings in the capital and its outskirts, where most travelling foodstuffs originate. After having become familiar with that pathway I began to follow the produce on those three days a week, starting off in the smallholdings in the early morning, moving to the markets in the afternoon and to the airport of Bissau in the evening. Once a week, I also visited Tony's agency. Tony had set up a weekly air cargo system that offered a more organised channel to send things to Lisbon for those who had larger businesses. With a partner in Lisbon, his agency worked as intermediary between the Guinean community and TAP's (the Portuguese airline company) official air cargo services. Each Friday afternoon he received his clients' packages, dealt with agriculture inspection procedures and took the packages to the airport, to be dispatched to Lisbon on that evening's flight.

Notwithstanding the multiplicity of important field sites, it was Caracol market that, like Rossio in Lisbon, quickly became my central field location. Here I was honoured with the friendly title *Maria di Caracol* – a name that most of my research participants still address me with. Caracol, which started with a spontaneous agglomeration of sellers and rapidly expanded since 1988 (Lourenco-Lindell 1995), is where most Guineans go in search of cheaper vegetables and fruits to send in large quantities to their migrant relatives in Portugal. The open area occupied by the future travelling crops in Caracol market is characterised by the same kind of gendered spatial divisions that are reproduced in Rossio. Whereas men improvised a few stalls with structures of wood and sold a variety of food products such as canned tomatoes and beans, cooking oil, or powdered juice drinks, women used the same kind of cardboard, plastic crates or tins of paint as in Lisbon, to sit down and arrange the vegetables on the ground for display.



Figure 4. A man's stall at Caracol market



Figure 5. Women food sellers at Caracol market

As in other field sites, my presence and participation in the animated life of Caracol was made easier by a lucky encounter on my very first day at the place. As I arrived, a young Balanta man selling plastic bags addressed me with a friendly smile, in good Portuguese.

‘Are you Portuguese?’ – he asked me, before continuing: ‘Are you looking for someone?’

After a few seconds of hesitancy, without having really planned what to do or say on my arrival in such an unfamiliar place where everyone else seemed to know each other, I decided to be straightforward about my presence there. I briefly explained my research, and that I was hoping to meet those responsible for acquiring the foodstuffs I had become familiar with in Lisbon. Maio, who later became a good friend and valuable help in the field, took me by the arm across the market and, approaching a group of three women sitting together, introduced me to each of them, providing me with additional information on their migrant relatives’ names and kinship relation. Coming as no surprise by now, it turned out that I had already met their relatives in Lisbon.

The majority of the smallholdings I visited were spread around Bissau’s periphery and in the region of Biombo, adjacent to Bissau, since fresh vegetables and fruits require geographic proximity to the capital and its airport for a safe arrival in Portugal. Unlike these products, the journey of dried and smoked fish and seafood, palm oil or wild plants that are used as medicines might start far away from the urban centre. Occasionally, then, I travelled to the south and to the eastern regions of the country to meet those responsible for finding the right produce and sending it to Bissau. The surroundings of Bandim market in Bissau also became recurrent in my daily field tours. This was mainly due to the conglomeration of the agencies mentioned above, which facilitate the sending and receiving of products between transnational families in Guinea-Bissau and Portugal. In those spaces, I spent inspirational mornings observing and informally chatting with clients who arrived with Guinean food and other things to send to their migrant relatives, while simultaneously collecting mobile phones, clothes or money sent as remittances. Given that I was constantly invited to daily meals and other events and celebrations involving food preparation and consumption, people’s households played a continuous key role in my participant observation spaces as well.

My six-month fieldwork in Guinea-Bissau was not, however, without difficulties. Within the inevitable tensions involved in transnational kinship relations, where

demands and obligations between migrants and their relatives at home incite secrecy in different ways, my knowledge of both sides occasionally put me in particular uncomfortable positions. First, I sometimes experienced the feeling of being used as an intermediary for reinforcing demands from either side. Second, due to that same secrecy involved in these relationships, I was at times left with uncertainty as regards the details of certain events. Finally, there were a couple of faux-pas that I was responsible for. Aware of these constraints (which will be described in detail in the ethnographic chapters), I tried to minimise eventual hazards by keeping a discrete position that would assure my participants of my reluctance to interfere in their relationships.

On the other hand, these very same difficulties were also important to make me understand the complexity of individuals' lives and their confrontation with everyday choices, struggles, new pressures, ups and downs in their relationships, failure to predict their future and changes in individual projects and points of view (Abu-Lughod 1993: 14). Gradually, whenever presented with uneasy situations resulting from my privileged dual position, my fear of not grasping the 'truth' of certain events diminished. As an example, the indecisions of one of my participants regarding a return to Lisbon, where she had migrated in 1993 and from where she occasionally travelled to Bissau for temporary visits, were particularly annoying. Constantly changing her mind on whether she wanted to extend her stay or quickly go back to Portugal, she offered me different motivations for each choice every time we met. This first made me go as far as questioning her honesty and resisting the temptation of advancing my own interpretations of a 'supposed' truth. Yet it took me a single phone call back home to recognise my own hesitancy in similar decisions, and understand the importance of portraying such indecisions as people narrated them to me. They are, above all, part of people's lives, and therefore relevant in themselves. Moreover, as I mentioned above, 'the truth' is anyway always situated and partial (Clifford 1986).

Although informal conversations and participant observation remained the main methods used for data collection, halfway through my stay in Guinea-Bissau I started to conduct more formal interviews. By the end of the six months I had conducted forty interviews with consumers, traders, producers, senders, healers with expertise in travelling medicinal plants, agency owners and other intermediaries, or simply return migrants with stories to share. Even though most of the interviews were recorded, the few that I was not allowed to record usually translated the complexities and secrecies of

a successful business or of transnational kinship relations, and required special care when handling the data, ensuring that anonymity was guaranteed.

Some of these interviews were, towards the end of my fieldwork in Guinea, conducted with the core group of my research participants. Our daily conversations and my participant observation in their regular activities and special events had yielded a depth of information that I initially thought formal interviews would not enhance. Moreover, as our friendship developed I had been allowed to ask questions that enabled me to fill in the gaps at any time. Yet those interviews proved to be an added valuable source of recorded expressive narratives.

On the night of my return to Portugal, I had the privilege of finding several of my research participants at the airport, as usual. Together with personal gifts wrapped with the same adhesive tape used to parcel up their regular travelling packages, they presented me with so many pieces of luggage and other smaller items to be collected and distributed at the airport of Lisbon that I felt utter relief when, pushing my heavy trolley across the arrivals area in Lisbon, I reached the end of the passageway signed 'nothing to declare'...

1.3.4. Back to Portugal

As soon as I reached the arrivals terminal in Lisbon, I met my research participants on that side of the chain for the first time in six months, and delivered the luggage that had been given to me, as the carrier, by their relatives in Bissau. As I walked down the passageway, my informant Wilson, who was by then a friend, was the first to ask me how it went. Noticing my excitement as I briefly narrated my experience in Guinea-Bissau, he looked to the ground for a moment and asked:

'Don't you think you're too involved now, to keep enough objectivity in your research?'

In fact, the first weeks upon my return to Portugal were used to reflect on the preceding findings with what went from an overwhelming sensation to the more distanced view that my friend Wilson recommended and literature advised (cf. Amit 2000; Clifford 1986). The three following months represented the gradual assembly of a complex jigsaw puzzle that had started to fall into place a year before. During these final

months, I conducted twenty-seven further interviews with different informants, from old acquaintances to new contacts brought from Guinea-Bissau. Above all, however, I intensified my daily participant observation experiences – which my condition as ‘just arrived from Guinea-Bissau’ facilitated – and extended them to the new spaces that had been unfolded in Guinea-Bissau. The airport of Lisbon was the primary example of such spaces.

The feeling of truly participating in the relationships that were an important part of my research was fully achieved when I started to send back gifts myself, searching, like my research participants, for possible carriers of the laptop, battery, photos, phones or grapes (a fruit that a friend in Guinea had once tried and missed since then) that I wanted to send over. In return, I still occasionally receive the same cashew nuts, groundnuts, baobab fruit and other foodstuffs that are the key materials explored in this thesis.

1.3.5. Outline of the thesis and the dilemmas of ethnographic writing

Before moving on to the conceptualisation and theoretical discussion of the key topics that I examine in this thesis, and from there to the ethnographic chapters, I shall briefly address my choices for this model of writing and presentation of the material. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) have emphasised the fact that, since the social world does not present itself as a series of separate analytic themes, ethnographic writing can often be a frustrating business (2007: 193). For nearly two years, as I tried to find the best way of doing justice to the complexity of interrelated data, memories, theories and arguments that seemed impossible to order at first, I lived with this frustration.

First, the choice of explaining my methodology before the conceptual and theoretical debates follows the logic of situating the methods used in each field setting immediately after a historical and geographical description of those same settings, and the need to account for explaining my multi-sited approach at the beginning of the thesis. The final order of the next chapters follows the themes that I chose to address in this thesis, considering what I interpreted as their key importance in the making of a Guinean transnational life-world that reconciles experiences of local and global forces. Certainly, the fact that my interpretations are limited and partial, as has so often been pointed out in relation to ethnographic fieldwork and writing (cf. Amit 2000; Clifford

1986; England 1994; Geertz 1973; Rabinow 1977), was part of my frustrations. Yet even if not living up to the ideal, I concur with Clifford's (1988) view of participant observation as an important means for producing knowledge from an intensive, intersubjective engagement, and I share van Maanen's (1988) view of its product – ethnographic writing – as distinctive, inquisitive and intimate, but also credible and rigorous.

The themes that I chose to examine have so far mostly been studied separately in academia. By merging them with a multi-sited analysis, I hope to offer a better understanding of how the reconciliation identified above occurs in the making of the life-world of a particular group of people. In the first ethnographic chapter (chapter 3), I look at the importance of agricultural production and of Guinean land in its origin setting. Chapter 4 examines adaptations in bodily and 'spiritual-religious' meanings and experiences of food and plants which, deriving from that land, might be subject to changes with migration. In chapter 5 I address the ways in which the past, present and future of the Guinean transnational world are brought together through memory practices as well as future projects of migration and return, in which food or the participation in food-related practices plays a role. In this analysis I will try to understand not only ways in which the past is shaped by the present and future, but also how conceptions and experiences of 'modernity' and 'tradition' are understood by Guineans and remade through food-related practices, rather than superseding one another according to a western view. Finally, in chapter 6, I look at practices of exchange across borders and at the channels through which they are performed. Here, I focus not only on trade activities, such as that performed by Aliu and his brother, but also on giving and reciprocating seemingly (but not necessarily) without an orientation towards profit. The fact that trade – my first interest when I started this research – is presented at the end of the thesis does not make it less important. On the contrary, it is precisely when analysing practices of distribution in a differently organised society and linking them to the experience of local production with which I start the ethnographic chapters, that the connections between the general and the particular become clearer.

The choice of which figures to include followed a careful concern with offering a visual illustration of some of the descriptions without putting my participants' anonymity at risk. Hence, the people who are shown in the figures are either not directly related to the stories I describe, or informants who have specifically asked me to have their photos shown, even if they remain unnamed in the captions and their actual names were changed in the text. The photos were all taken by me unless otherwise stated. The

participants introduced in the text and the stories included in each chapter – which are always, as van Maanen (1988) has called attention to, strategies of the writer – were chosen according to their ability to illustrate the arguments made. In order not to jeopardise or misread the power of these stories, I chose to place the conceptual and theoretical debates in a separate chapter, which however follows the same order of the arguments presented in the ethnographic chapters. Although the way in which the detailed descriptions of my ethnography interweave with the argument and theoretical context is brought up throughout the thesis, the final concluding reflections will provide a more systematic summary of these connections.

Chapter 2

Conceptual and theoretical framework

2.1. Introduction

Guineans and their living things – foods and plants – are the main actors performing the script on which my thesis is based. The scene, set in Portugal and Guinea-Bissau, is traversed by migration. With my multi-sited approach I set out to analyse the place of food and plants in Guineans' transnational life-worlds, by looking at how migrants continue, change or adapt perceptions and experiences related to these products, as well as the ways in which their home-based kin's social lives affect and are simultaneously affected by those continuities and changes. In other words, I want to understand how broader distances are bridged through individual and community experiences of sending, receiving and (re)appropriating foods and plants.

This chapter will present and discuss the main conceptual and theoretical approaches that influence my research. The topics conceptually discussed in sections 2.3., 2.4., 2.5. and 2.6. of this chapter are therefore elaborated and analytically developed through the use of my ethnographic material in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, respectively. First, however, I will address two broader theories that have guided the course of my thesis – transnationalism and phenomenological perspectives – as well as gender, which is an important theme throughout my research.

2.2. Gendered transnational life-worlds

In order to understand the connection between life-worlds in Guinea-Bissau and in Portugal, I draw on theories of transnationalism on the one hand, and on the embodied nature of cultural experience, influenced by phenomenological perspectives, on the other. The specificities of the African and migratory contexts bring about the need to offer detailed attention to the conceptualisation of gender as well. Gender, as I explained in the previous chapter, plays an important role in my thesis and, even if not constituting a separate focus of analysis, will be more explicitly examined in relation to specific topics

where it emerges more concretely. I will now address the current debates, as well as my own position on these three major concepts and theories.

2.2.1. Migration and transnationalism

In 1992, Glick Schiller and her colleagues used the notion of transnationalism to address what they then saw as a new immigrant experience, where a multiplicity of familial, economic, social, organisational, religious and political ties was maintained by migrants in both 'home' and 'host' societies (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992). Between the later years of the same decade and the beginning of the 2000s, further academic critique was applied to the rapidly growing field of transnationalism, which had caught on across several disciplines (cf. Kivisto 2001; Portes 2003; Vertovec 1999).

Since then, scholars have generally argued for transnationalism's longer existence than what had been initially acclaimed, maintaining that it is not in reality a new phenomenon, but rather one which is taking place on a larger scale and with a faster temporality than in previous periods (cf. Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Levitt 2004; Mitchell 1997). Others have pointed out the need to move away from the idea of escaping state control that transnationalism presupposes, since the large population of worldwide refugees and irregular migrants with limited rights provides evidence of the persistence of state control over population movements (Friedman 2002; Kearney 1995; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004). Gupta and Ferguson (1992) have also called attention to the exaggerated eagerness to celebrate the freedom and playfulness of the postmodern condition and globalisation, since individuals have not become free-floating monads within these apparent contradictions, in spite of their undeniable rapidly expanding and quickening mobility.

Associated with the debate on transnationalism is thus that of globalisation, within which several critiques have developed. Massey (2005), for example, has criticised the imagination of globalisation as an unbounded free space, which ignores important inequalities. She discusses the notion of 'global space' and sees it as a product of practices of power, resulting from a process which is, contrary to what is often argued, not universalised. For Massey, the global space is, like modernity, an imagined geography that ignores structural divides, inequalities and exclusions. In their attempt to bring in the importance of space into studies of transnationalism, Jackson, Crang and Dwyer

(2004) also draw attention to the multiplicity of transnational experiences and relations, arguing that ‘we must not let the often elite ideology of transnationalism blind us to the practical and emotional attachments to and in place’ (2004: 6-7). They are hence sympathetic to Escobar’s (2001) premise that, for most people, culture sits in places. On the other hand, if we evoke the long history of past migrations in the West African context that I described in the previous chapter, we have to recognise that culturally mixed or plural societies are not a western novelty resulting from a recent movement of culture throughout the world. The great cultural plurality that can be observed in Guinea-Bissau beyond and before the ‘trans-’ or ‘hybrid’ cultural discourse became widespread in western academia, challenges both views of a late modern ‘global space’ and of a fixed attachment to place, and favours a contextual and relational approach to the connection between place and culture.

By merging this view of transnationalism with the multi-sited fieldwork on which I draw my methodology, I am interested in understanding the manners in which the integration of people’s particular worlds into a larger system of relationships influences the existence of localised lives, as well as how these localities help to shape those larger systems. I set out to explore the Guinean life-world through grounded practices in both geographical spaces (Guinea-Bissau and Portugal), considering that to focus on individuals and families that create closely interconnected social networks, rather than on the interconnections beyond and across state boundaries, allows for a better understanding of what it means to be ‘transnational’. Brah’s (1996) contribution with the notion of ‘diasporic space’ is particularly useful to understand the way migrants’ lives are entwined with the lives of those staying put, as is Smith’s (2006) argument that transnational life ‘can also include the experience of stay-at-homes in close relationships with travellers’ (2006: 7). In this regard, one of the questions that I will try to answer is how people in Guinea-Bissau experience transnational practices and relationships through the migration of relatives.

In anthropology, except for a few examples of early studies on international migration, such as those that integrate Watson’s (1977) edited volume on different migrant communities in Britain, early research on migration in the African context was centred on the rural-urban arena (cf. Epstein 1958; Mayer 1961; Mitchell 1956; Parkin 1969). It tended to understand migration as leading to the breakdown of local culture, often related to irreparable changes in agricultural production (cf. Richards 1939) and to a debate opposing ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition’, which I will address later in this chapter.

Later studies have moved on to other views of migration but, as Gardner and Grillo (2002) have called attention to in their introduction to a special issue of *Global Networks*, the study of transnationalism in anthropology has been centred on remittances and economic activities, rather than on other important forms of transnational practices of migrant families. In the same special issue, this gap in the literature is tackled by several social anthropologists through the analysis of performances and meanings of life rituals and other ceremonies with a transnational perspective, focusing on the importance of the household and family-level perspective in studies of migration.

It is my intention to contribute to this complex debate with ethnographic examples from migrants' everyday lives, as well from everyday practised experiences by their kin at home. One of the challenges of such a task is that, as Highmore (2002) has put it, 'the everyday is always going to exceed the ability to register it' (2002: 3). Lefebvre's (1991[1974]) definition of the everyday as 'totality' makes things even more complicated. How to grasp both the general and the particular might be a difficult job, but it is precisely the ways in which both are reconciled in people's lived experiences that I want to explore in my thesis.

Without wishing to ignore obvious inequalities brought in by the notion of globalisation, I want to shift away from broad migration theories of 'push and pull', within the African context in particular, to offer ethnographic insights into migrants and their kin's dynamic and creative strategies to make sense of their world, resulting from opportunities that are found through the migration experience. In this way, I also want to contribute to eschew representations of victimhood that can often be found in discourses of globalisation in Africa. Moreover, although I concur with Massey's (2005) claim that it is the understanding of economic or political processes of globalisation as unavoidable that legitimates the imposition of programmes of structural adjustment, as has been the case in Guinea-Bissau, in this thesis I am more interested in revealing people's agency and inventive ways of taking advantage of such processes.

Following on from here, my approach to transnationalism is influenced by Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec's (2003) transnational practices, which include memories, stories and emotions, as well as by Smith and Guarnizo's emphasis on embodied social relations between individuals situated in 'unequivocal localities' (1998: 11), as opposed to a transnational condition of being. When empirically following these relationships and practices, I draw on an already acknowledged need to move beyond the essentialising

tendency to describe dualities such as local and global when addressing transnational processes (cf. Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Mitchell 1997). As Gardner (2009) has contended, human migration must be understood both in terms of individual lives and biographies as well as broader structural factors. Regarding apparently opposing dualities, I also share Hannerz's (1996) view of what he names 'transnational connections' as 'too complicated and diverse to be either condemned or applauded as a whole' (1996: 6). Without judging these connections, then, I will try to understand Guineans' own views and double-ended making of their life-worlds in both countries, through the sending of food and plants to migrants from their families back home.

2.2.2 A phenomenological approach

Anthropologists like Lévi-Strauss (1968) and Douglas (1972) provided early key insights on the meanings of food, but their semiotic and structuralist analysis overlooked people's lived experiences around commensal life. When examining the making of a Guinean transnational life-world through people's foodways²² I am inspired by the phenomenological perspective, in which the subjective and objective aspects of reality are not divided by clear boundaries, but rather necessarily articulated in intersubjective realities.²³ This is a particularly useful theoretical lens with which to explore the influence of materials like Guinean food and plants, whose importance in Guineans' lives seems to derive both from their apparently 'symbolic' form (meanings) as much as from their bodily and organic qualities. In order to explore both forms I therefore draw on theories that understand reality and meaning as one and the same thing, in the sense that people make reality by attributing meanings to things. An 'anthropology of experience' has been increasingly followed since the mid-1980s, when an undue focus on meaning, discourse, structural relations and political economy started to be seen as oblivious of everyday experiences, contingencies and dilemmas that weigh on people's lives (Desjarlais and Throop 2011: 92-93). Within the phenomenological focus on the life-world, one of the most influential contributions is probably the idea of body subject and the direct relationship between the human body and its world.

²² The term 'foodways' has been used in literature in a wide range of disciplines, usually in relation to social and cultural culinary practices. In my thesis I use the term to refer not only to practices of food consumption, but also of production and exchange.

²³ Phenomenology has been differently defined within a variety of positions. See Desjarlais and Throop (2011) for a thorough review on phenomenological approaches in anthropology.

In anthropology, the body as a site of analysis owes much to Heidegger's (1962) conceptualisation of being-in-the-world and Merleau-Ponty's (1962[1945]) emphasis on the embodied person as the subject of experience. Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) practice theory, although situated outside the phenomenological perspective, has also been a central reference of most analytical and theoretical work on the embodied experience. Focusing on the notion of 'habitus' as a system of routinised dispositions that emerge out of the relation to wider objective structures, Bourdieu presents a structurally mediated mode of subjectively perceiving and appreciating the lived world. In his theory of the body, perception and thought are inculcated through activities performed in symbolically structured space and time. Bourdieu tries to merge phenomenological subjectivism with structuralist objectivism, arguing that neither alone is enough to explain social action. 'Habitus' therefore explains individual experience while retaining the role played by objective structures, and the concept's use in studies of migrant transnationalism is especially helpful, since migrants' everyday experiences are necessarily linked to the structural context in which those experiences occur, both in socio-economic and politico-institutional terms.²⁴

Bourdieu's critique of phenomenology draws on the argument that it 'sets out to make explicit the truth of primary experience of the social world' (1977: 3), hence unquestioning what is familiar and taking the apprehension of the world as self-evident. Amongst other critiques of Bourdieu's practice theory,²⁵ Piot (1999) puts forward its deeply eurocentric conception of persons and the social, which betrays a self-evident economism. In fact, Piot contends, how can we use conceptual terms like 'strategy', 'interest' or 'accumulation' of symbolic capital outside the terrain of certain cultural politics based on the late twentieth century's capitalism? (1999: 16). In this regard, it is worth mentioning van Binsbergen's (1988) notable attempt to apply a neo-Marxist paradigm to Manjaco society in Guinea-Bissau, which has developed outside the centres of capitalism. In that attempt, he associates cases of mental distress amongst the Manjaco in Guinea-Bissau with the disruption of the balance between ties with home and the economic participation in an outside world under a capitalist mode of production, which is evident amongst migrants when they return. However, recognising the difficulties that lie in adopting such a paradigm, he observes that returns are actually

²⁴ Vertovec (2009) offers a review of studies that account for the notion of 'transnational habitus'.

²⁵ Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) provide a list of such critiques – which are usually associated with the little room it leaves for agency and social change – and responses.

an extra source of stress rather than a recovery of spiritual and bodily comfort, due to the ritual and financial obligations that migrants have to fulfil. Further examples of the inadequacy of eurocentric or economicist approaches are brought forward when examining Africans' relationship with the nonhuman world of spirits and ancestors, as I will explore below.

Yet Bourdieu's discussion of the multidimensional sensuous and corporeal qualities of human practices and things is relevant in the context of my research, since it helps to situate Guinean food and plants in the interplay between objects, personal stories and broader narratives. He describes the world of objects as a book 'read with the body, in and through the movements and displacements which define the space of objects, as much as they are defined by it' (Bourdieu 1990: 76). Echoing Bourdieu's theory, Connerton's (1989) focus on bodily practice and performance influenced the theoretical focus of my examination of food-related practices. In similar ways, Weiss (1996) uses the concept of 'engagement' to capture the reciprocal interchange between people, their world and its objects. When exploring the relationship between gender and the material world, Moore (1994) draws attention to the insufficiency of representational theories in explaining it, in the sense that meaning is interpreted by acting social beings, rather than merely inhering in symbols. The body is thus seen as the set of activities constructed in space, and embodied practices as what gives meaning to that construction (1994: 71). Moore's more recent concern with 'hopes, desires and satisfactions' (2011) has also been a source of inspiration in the conceptual framework that I apply in my thesis, due to its engagement with temporal processes and the potentialities of human agency and human subjectivity in meaning-making and, consequently, in new ways of being.

In human geography, where important research on migration and transnationalism has been conducted, the body has also taken a central role (cf. Longhurst 1997; Nash 2000; Rose 1999; Thrift 1996). In the 1970s, Buttimer (cf. 1976) was already trying to stimulate a debate between phenomenological approaches and human geography, in order to enhance the connections between space and the human experience. Since then, many have argued for a turn away from language and texts towards non-representational theories, focusing on expressive embodied practices, showings and manifestations of everyday life, and linking performativity and bodily practices together (Thrift 1996).

Although I draw on the phenomenological and material perspective, my concurrent concern with giving voice to my informants in order to alleviate (as much as possible) the threats of misinterpretations made the corporeal dimension initially more difficult to pin down. As Nash (2000) has put forward when exploring the academic use of the concept of performativity, new methodological issues are raised by such theories, including '[w]hat happens to the project of "giving voice" to the marginalized, if the concern is with what cannot be expressed rather than what can?' (Nash 2000: 662). This task was nonetheless assisted by the powerful complement that an embodied approach to the study of migration and transnationalism seemed to offer to the focus I wanted to lay on individuals, their objects and the spaces where the relationship between both was materialised. On the one hand, as Dunn (2010) has put it, 'when the scale of analysis is upon migrants rather than migration flows, and upon transnationals rather than upon transnationalism, a much more complicated and realistic picture emerges' (2010: 1). On the other hand, this complexity can be better tackled through an embodied approach since, as Gardner (2002) has argued, transnational movement is first and foremost a series of physical events, whose effects are experienced in the body (2002: 3), and studies of space and place have shown how it is through the body that space is perceived, lived and produced (cf. De Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1991[1974]).

While working on how to understand the sensory experiences of others, I was also inspired by wide literature on the ethnographer's own experiences in the field (cf. Abu-Lughod 1993; Amit 2000; Appadurai 1988b; Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993; Clifford 1986; Conaway 1986; De Souza 2004; England 1994; Faithorn 1986; May 1993; Rabinow 1977; Rose 2004) where it is, as Dudley (2010) puts it: 'often if not always a *sense* of it – tastes, sounds, bodily sensations, smells and of course sights – that comes to mind first' (2010: 4) [author's emphasis]. This embodied approach plays an equally important role when analysing gender issues that go beyond symbolic oppositions of semiotic perspectives.

2.2.3. Some notes on gender in African societies

When looking at the way in which Guinean life-worlds are connected through migration, it is first essential to acknowledge the history of Guinean migration patterns to Portugal, including the earlier over-representation of men and later equality of gender distribution which, as I described in the previous chapter, changed the organisation of space and

exchange activities amongst Guineans in Lisbon. Here, I draw once more on Moore's (1994) emphasis on the way embodied activities invoke symbolic meanings of the organisation of space, rather than the inverse. In addition to the influence of historical migratory patterns, I question in what other ways these gendered processes change with migration. Are there any changes in relationships of power deriving from the women's role of guaranteeing the presence of vital Guinean food and plants to those living in a distant place?

In feminist literature on Africa from the 1970s and 1980s, the women's role of providing food for family consumption has been analysed as a burden, resulting from the long hours dedicated to subsistence agriculture, whereas men engaged in growing cash crops (Moore 1988). The penetration of capitalism into subsistence economies, through the growth of commercial agriculture and wage labour, is acknowledged as having had a generally negative effect on rural women, especially due to the introduction of new forms of technology and changes in land tenure systems that discriminated against them (cf. Ahmed 1985; Brain 1976; Mueller 1977; Wright 1983). However, on the one hand, Guinea-Bissau has maintained predominantly non-capitalist modes of production, as I discussed in the previous chapter. On the other hand, it has also been argued that women in the pre-colonial and pre-capitalist world did not necessarily have a greater degree of independence (Afonja 1981; Huntingdon 1975). Moreover, one of the difficulties pointed out in the thesis on the feminisation of subsistence agriculture is the dichotomy it sets up between subsistence and commercial farming (Moore 1988). Boserup (1970) emphasised the fact that a limited view of subsistence activities may ignore the fact that some women can gain economic independence from the sales of their own crops. Usually, however, this is enough only to provide for basic daily needs rather than to be used for savings or investments (Mueller 1977). Hence, in spite of some criticisms of these views and of the different degree to which capitalism has developed in different African countries, the differentiated way in which women have been affected by such changes and their position of vulnerability has been widely recognised.

Another manifestation of this position is petty trade. In the urban informal economy, women's involvement in petty commodity production and commerce has been seen as severely precarious (Moore 1988). Although its existence is recognised to precede the advent of colonialism or the penetration of capitalism, it is seen as having developed in a way that allowed lower-class women only to 'survive' in the urban economy.

Under certain circumstances, however, it can also provide opportunities for capital accumulation, political influence and economic autonomy. Moore called attention to the danger of ‘simplistically portraying men as the winners and women as the losers’ (1988: 79), since women cannot be seen as passive recipients of social change. In the context of Guinea-Bissau, some have claimed that women’s creative strategies for gaining an independent source of income are often overshadowed by analyses of the downgrading consequences of externally induced structural adjustment policies (Aguilar *et al.* 2001; Havik 1995). As Havik (1995) stressed, ‘to label the commercial circuits in Africa, where women stand for the majority of buyers and sellers, with the notions of “subsistence”, “informal” or “parallel” seriously stigmatised their study in Africa and other continents. Segregation according to gender patterns in the vocabulary of development has overlooked women’s role as dynamic promoters of social, cultural and political changes’ (1995: 25) [my translation]. Drawing on De Boeck’s (1999) analysis of shifting gender categories in the diamond trade between Angola and Congo, I will try to understand whether and in which ways Guinean women participating in the transnational food trade from Bissau and from Lisbon construct their own strategies for alternative gendered scenarios. In the war context in Angola, De Boeck has shown that women do not view themselves as passive victims of masculine realities. Instead, they actively seek to construct an identity for themselves by manipulating strategies in the trading business. Following on from this, I will try to provide answers to the following questions: do Guinean women use the transnational exchange relationships in which they are involved to their own benefit? Does the material exchanged play a role in their strategies?

When analysing relationships of power between men and women it is important to bring back the feminist debate from the 1970s and 1980s, where claims have been made to understand the social organisation in African societies – which are, however, far from homogeneous – in non-western terms. Scholars like Guyer (1981) or Whitehead (1981) have called attention to the fact that household and family do not overlap in all societies. In Guinea-Bissau, the concepts of *fogon* (literally meaning ‘stove’) and *moransa* add extra complexity to the reality. *Moransa* is the basic unit of social and territorial organisation of many ethnic groups, and refers to the residential area where the extended family of one to three generations live in more than one house, usually surrounded by a fence. *Fogon* is a relatively independent unit of organisation of production, processing, consumption and distribution, and one house may have several

fogon (Temudo 2011). The control and allocation of resources has to be studied in view of such complex forms of organisation. What is more, it is dependent on a web of rights and obligations that often go beyond biological relationships, since kinship relations can be claimed – as they are in Guinea-Bissau – independently of any biological link, in order to legitimise certain connections, such as those resulting from a shared village or region of origin.

Women can also gain access to resources by utilising non-kinship links. In fact, examples of female associations that go beyond forms of domestic gathering are abundant in many African countries. In Guinea-Bissau there are several associations of women farmers and sellers in markets which, in Bissau, each neighbourhood organises locally. Forms of female economic solidarity, including rotating credit schemes, are another important source of saving and potential source of capital for their business enterprises. In spite of variations in form, they follow a basic pattern where women contribute with a fixed amount to a group's fund on a regular basis, which is then weekly or monthly given to each contributor in rotation. Guérin's (2006) more recent study on such systems in Senegal, like van Binsbergen's (1999) case study of a young woman's use of credit-based savings in her transition from village lifestyle to urban patterns of commodity consumption, reveal women's active rather than passive role in creating situations of income earning.

However, it is also necessary to deconstruct 'gender myths and feminist fables' (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead 2008). In the edited volume with this title, Cornwall draws attention to the fact that the powerful social imagery of female solidarity that assumes women's inherent cooperativeness with each other may be only one side of the story. Drawing on fieldwork in Nigeria, Cornwall finds examples of tensions, conflicts, contradictions and even hostility amongst women to each other and to men. She brings them to light in order to recognise 'the other stories' about these relationships, which have most of the time been ignored by feminist literature. One such example is precisely that of savings and credit groups, where men are sometimes called to participate and even administrate the money because 'women cannot be trusted' (2008: 152).

In my thesis, I will look at both sides of these relationships, and at what changes with migration. The fact that household, family and other forms of gendered micro-level relationships are linked to wider processes of social and economic change – not just colonial policies or liberalisation, but also migration – has been recognised in

anthropology for several decades now. Studies of rural-urban migration in Africa from the 1980s demonstrated that women's migration was often also an economic strategy (cf. Bozzoli 1983; Izzard 1985). More recent changes in international migration patterns indicate that women no longer migrate mainly to follow their husbands. Although mostly focused on the people involved in the transnational food trade, I will also address Guinean women and men's motivations and strategies related to migration.

Finally, the fact that gender is not a homogenous category is of extreme importance in the context of my research. As Moore has put it, forms of difference in human social life (such as gender and ethnicity) are always experienced in interrelation with each other, and no primacy can be established to one over others (1988: 196). Regarding the ethnic dimension, a certain tendency for different ethnic groups of Guinea-Bissau to live social changes differently has been observed. This is for example evident in the over-representation of the Fula and the Manjaco amongst Guinean migrants in Portugal. But how are such ethnic categories constructed? I will now conceptually discuss the issue of ethnicity, in relation to the notions of land and territory.

2.3. Land, territory and ethnicity

Understanding Guineans' perceptions and relationships with the land, which endows people, plants, animals and spirits with the same substance, is of central importance to answer the questions that I raise in my thesis. The ways in which land is essential for Guineans will be ethnographically explored in chapter 3. Below I introduce and debate the main theoretical contributions to the study of African land, perceived – as it is amongst Guineans through the Creole notion of *tchon*, which I will use throughout this thesis – as having a variety of meanings that range from resource-use to homeland, territory, soil or earth. Recognising the way these meanings are connected is essential to better understand how ideas of territory and ethnicity are constructed and experienced amongst Guineans.

2.3.1. Perceptions of land and agriculture in Africa

Richards (1939) offered one of the first detailed anthropological essays on African land and food. According to her observations amongst the Bemba in then northern Rhodesia,

land was not measured, assessed or conceived in 'European' ways. Instead, the bush was seen as one unit ready to supply food, wood, ash, building material, medicines, plants or game, and the success in getting hold of those supplies depended on supernatural powers (1939: 234). To them, to be 'lucky' or 'unlucky' regarding the land's supplies embodied a whole notion of obligations and gratifications towards the chiefs and ancestors. Failing to keep these would result in a withdrawal of supernatural blessings in relation to the land.

In the context of Guinea-Bissau, Temudo (2008) advances the notion of 'spirit of politics', according to which most people subscribe to a 'basic cosmology' where the land is perceived as inhabited by spiritual entities (known in Guinean Creole as *Iran*), regardless of how strongly influenced by Islam or Christianity. The importance of the land in Guinean cosmology is thus related to the contracts that the first settlers in a territory made with these spirits, giving them the right to be called owners of that land (Temudo 2008). Hence, as Sarró (2010) has described regarding the coastal region of Guinea-Conakry, people are simultaneously landlords and strangers, since even the first-comers must consider themselves strangers to the spirits of the place, 'the ultimate autochthones of the region' (2010: 235).

As regards land tenure, a customary system based on the principle of social equity and the right to subsistence farming for all still prevails in Guinea-Bissau (even though the land law defined land as belonging to the state, and the changes introduced in 1998 created a market value for land, with economic utility being required when it was used by the community). However, as Lentz (2007) has noted, African 'traditional' land tenure cannot be thought in terms of a coherent, homogenous and stable system of rules and beliefs, since novel forms of land transactions interfered even before the advent of colonialism. In some areas of Guinea-Bissau, for example, Islamisation challenged existing spiritual authorities that protected the land. Even if Guineans' basic cosmology was not radically affected and both spiritual and religious domains continue to overlap amongst Islamised groups (as they do amongst the Christianised), Islam has been used as a political tool to gain hegemony over certain territories (Temudo 2009), where first-comers had to adapt to a number of changes, including in agricultural practices.

Yet the fact that colonial economic and agricultural policies have played a role in resource-use in many African countries is widely recognised. With colonialism, more layers of rights, institutions, perceptions, interests and strategies with respect to land

were created (Lentz 2007: 43). Writers like Chanock (1985, 1991) went as far as arguing that a communal ownership of land was an ‘invention’ resulting from a joint venture between colonial administrators and the chiefs who held the land in trust, in order to serve the interests of both. Pottier (1999) offers several examples in which colonial administrators – in some respects like developers today – approached local farming as backward, primitive and unscientific, seeing it as the reason for economic stagnation and decline, or even social and moral breakdown. In their consequent attempts to move the economy towards ‘modern’ forms of production, the cultural context was hardly taken into account, and few questions were asked regarding the desirability and appropriateness of western interventions. The complexity of the social and cultural factors that were part of local practices of smallholder farming was thus ignored, and erroneous ‘scientific’ agriculture policy assumptions led to the impoverishment of smallholders not only in economic terms, but also in their diet and health. In Guinea-Bissau, as I described in the previous chapter, the ill-designed agricultural policies that go from colonial times to the liberalisation period were unsuccessful in producing significant changes and equally responsible for the stagnation of agriculture and the impoverishment of farmers.

Today, as Pottier (1999) argues, anthropology needs to reflect on the way globalising and localising forces are dynamically interrelated. Changes in ‘local cultures’ are not only the outcome of externally induced policies, but also of the reshaping of those ‘external’ influences, in which localised meanings and practices are often inscribed. Likewise, although commercial land transfers in West Africa have clearly challenged the ‘traditional’ land sale prohibition, linked to the spiritual dangers of such transactions that could result in detriment of fertility and risks to the community, this shift has not been abrupt. In fact, vibrant land markets were developing in the West African forest belt in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (Lentz 2007). Shipton and Goheen (1992), for example, have argued that there was an infinity of often unnamed land arrangements and transfers – sometimes even loans – in African agricultural societies, in which the intentions for land use by the outsider – either survival or money accumulation – played a role.

Accounting for all of these influences and interplays in the history of African land, in the next chapter I will look at Guinean production sites and agricultural practices. I will also explore the relationship between such practices and specific forms of social organisation since, as Fairhead and Leach (1996) have pointed out, considering

local representations of the land in terms of western categories that separate nature from society and culture obscures inhabitants' own perceptions of social and ecological relations. In the Kissidougou region of Guinea-Conakry where the authors conducted fieldwork, these categories are, as for Bissau-Guineans, not alienated from each other, and they are often studied in the literature as forms of ethnic identity. How is land related to ethnicity in the Guineans' life-world? Before exploring these relationships ethnographically in the following chapters, I will now introduce the complex theoretical debate that has developed over the concept of ethnicity.

2.3.2. Land as territory and ethnicity: from academic theories to grounded insights

Bohannon (1967) provided one of the first critiques of European views of African land through the example of the Tiv of Central Nigeria, for whom geography is seen as social organisation and not as grid-type maps made up of bounded pieces of land. This geographical imagery differs substantially from western notions of territory and property, and acknowledging it is essential to better understand how Guineans perceive space and territory and, ultimately, ethnicity.

Considering maps in terms of social relationships in space provided the basis for lineage and territorial grouping in Africa. When critically debating the idea that cultures and societies map onto geographical territories, Gupta and Ferguson describe space as 'a kind of neutral grid on which cultural difference, historical memory, and societal organization are inscribed' (1992: 7). Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977) critique of objectivism, where he states that it might be significant that culture is described as a map to an outsider, who can then have a sense of the inside by linking a system of axes to the body (1977: 2), Gell (1985) offers a useful distinction between maps and images. Maps are, to him, absolute 'non-indexical' spatial location of places and objects. They are, however, not in opposition but rather intrinsically related to 'indexical' images or sensory based beliefs. In the context of the Baga of Guinea-Conakry, Sarró (2010) argues that we should get rid of the 'map' way of conceiving place in order to understand people's geographical imagery, which is concerned with a common way of doing things more than with any fixed territorial boundaries. Likewise, Fairhead and Leach (1996) have explored the ways in which the physical and social uses of land are intimately related amongst the inhabitants of Kissidougou. Similar observations have been made in

other regional contexts. Morphy (1995), for example, has explored the relationship between kinship and land, pointing out their mutual implications amongst the Yolgnu of Australia. 'Map', to them, is the way in which the ordered world of the ancestral past is transformed into place and recreated in personal experience.

In the context of Guinea-Bissau, however, Vigh (2006) has criticised the fact that clear ethnic aspects of Guinean politics are not openly spoken of in the Guinean political scene or in academic work on the Guinean context. Davidson (2003), like Vigh, calls attention to the importance of natal locality in the 1998 civil war and in the distribution of votes in the election of 2000, for example. However, Davidson discusses the ambiguities of people using postcolonial nation-states as the reference for their birthplace. Such ambiguities result, she argues, from the colonial attempt to make order out of seemingly chaotic identities, and the postcolonial inheritance of a European classification schema that assigned individuals to ethnic groups. Yet Davidson questions the extent to which such legacy was imposed, resisted or eventually internalised and assumed into a new subjectivity. Following Ranger's (1983) work on the 'invention of tradition', Davidson contends that nations need to establish a sense of the past in order to legitimate their presence in the present. In this respect, Mbembe's (1992) analysis of postcolonial power is useful because it sees the postcolonial relationship primarily as cohabitation between 'ordinary people' and the state that have to share the same living space, rather than as a relationship of either resistance or collaboration.

In his analysis of the Kaabu,²⁶ Lopes (2005) also emphasises the role played by colonialism in producing changes in the organisation of space. Drawing on Amselle (1985), he contends that in pre-colonial times there was a skilful continuity of cultural practices, which colonialism disrupted by reinforcing differences and, in the case of the Kaabu, by imposing territorial divisions with the granting of the territory of Gambia to England, Casamance to France and Geba-Corubal (in Guinea-Bissau) to Portugal (2005: 20). He argues that further complexity lies in the imposition of the formation of a state that is exogenous to Africa and that forces Africans to reunite a territorial patrimony and unify and integrate different peoples in a solid physical unity (Lopes 1982: 53-54). The question of the legacy of colonial borders and whether or not they should be maintained was later addressed by Heimer (2002), who challenged researchers on Africa to

²⁶ An old kingdom whose territory is presently divided between Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal.

investigate the strength and consistency of ‘national identities’ that emerged from these imposed territorial divisions. Giving the example of Guinea-Bissau, he called attention to the fact that while a clear ‘national identity’ was revealed in the liberation war – where the history of resistance was the longest amongst the Portuguese African colonies – the postcolonial experience shows that ethnic, regional or religious identities did not lose any of their strength.

In his work amongst the Jola of southern Senegal, De Jong (1999) also argues that ethnic identity is largely a product of the colonial period, resulting from labour migration and urbanisation processes that took place during that period and afterwards, and from the consequent need for the reunion of all members of the community in a village of origin. Yet within the wide discussion of whether ethnicity existed before colonialism or is a product of colonial politics, opinions diverge. In the context of Guinea-Bissau, Jao (2003) offers the example of the Mancanha to demonstrate how, precisely because migration precedes colonialism, the notion of ethnicity already existed in pre-colonial times with reference to a common land of origin, rather than being a merely colonial invention. To the Mancanha, the main conscious internal reference that distinguished them from their neighbours was, and still is, the geographical area of Bula (see Figure 1).²⁷ Drawing on Carreira’s descriptions from the 1960s, where he observed that people’s own designations were directly related to the region, village or neighbourhood of origin (Carreira 1964), Jao contends that the locality, lineage or even surname might be the most important reference in the formation of ethnic identities.

There is, as can be seen, extreme complexity and subjectivity surrounding the role played by colonialism and power relations in Africa in shaping what are now generally known as ethnic groups. Like Jao, I argue that relationships of power are not merely an outcome of colonialism or postcolonialism. As I discussed above, negotiations concerning new settlements between landlords and strangers started in pre-colonial times and continue today in many African countries (Lentz 2007; Sarró 2010). The history of migrations across West Africa that I described in chapter 1 and the ensuing fluidity of transpositions and reciprocal influences of various cultural traditions bring subtleness and ambiguity to any attempt to historically identify ‘indigenous’ and ‘strangers’. This also contributes to endow most ethnic categorisations that are known in

²⁷ In today’s administrative divisions in Guinea-Bissau, Bula is known as ‘sector’, which includes several villages.

today's Guinea-Bissau with complex boundaries rather than clear-cut distinctions (Leprie 1986; Lopes 1987).

Although these intricate theoretical debates contribute to rethink the conceptualisation of ethnicity in Africa, I also believe that they might bring the risk, as happens with other fundamental concepts in social sciences, of a saturation of meaning. In my thesis, I do not ignore important ethnic implications in Guinean politics, such as those explored by Vigh (2006). Yet I draw on the understanding of ethnicity as a notion that has mostly been 'constructed' in relation to the 'other' (either pre-colonial, colonial or postcolonial), resulting from social and cultural differences between groups that help them to create a sense of belonging, even if subject to continuous transformations and adaptations (cf. Barth 1969; Eriksen 2010; Wimmer 2008). In the migratory context, where new encounters are in place, understanding this construction gains particular relevance.

In my research, I follow Karner's (2007) concern with the significance of ethnicity in people's daily lives, and the way it constrains and enables social action, helps to make sense of the world and is an emotional and biographically grounded way of living, experiencing, perceiving and remembering (everyday) life situations (2007: 4). As Karner puts it, 'is ethnicity not also about the most familiar experiences and practices that clothe people's (early) lives, about sounds, sights and smells that surround us, become familiar, and will trigger memories whenever encountered again? Is ethnicity not also about the taste of familiar foods, the experienced rhythm of daily life, the multiple layers of meaning we detect and negotiate in our first language? Is ethnicity not also – on the level of such experiences, sensations and memories – simultaneously shared and profoundly personal?' (2007: 34).

Although I agree with the fact that it consists of an imported designation, even if referring to internal perceptions, I refer to 'ethnic groups' or 'ethnic belonging' throughout this thesis in order not to make an already complex conceptual framework overly complicated. But most of all I tried to focus my observation on how Guineans themselves address this issue. When being introduced to me as Fula, Mandinga or of other groups, they made use of the word *rasa* (race), just like I was introduced to others as being of Portuguese 'race'. '*Abo i di kal rasa?*' (what is your race?) was one of the most commonly asked questions in Guinean Creole that I came across during fieldwork. Moreover, I witnessed various encounters between Guineans in Guinea-Bissau and in

Portugal who, after identifying a shared ethnic affiliation (usually meaning a common region of origin and common acquaintances in the home town or village), began to address each other as *familia* or *parenti* ('family' or 'relative'), suggesting the creation of kinship relations through geographic proximity, as Gardner (2008) has suggested for Bangladeshi migrants in the UK.²⁸ Another interesting fact is the way Guineans categorise ethnic nomenclature in different ways. Fula sub-divisions, for example, were once described to me not as Fula-Forro, Futa-Fula and Fula-Preto, as external sources do, but as Fula-Leve (literally, 'light Fula'), Futa-Fula, and Fula-Forte (strong Fula), who the informant described as the pure Fula from Gabu (the Guinean part of the old Kaabu kingdom), like himself.

In her studies of the Mandinga, Johnson (2006) adds the need of deconstructing western views of religion and ethnic belonging as two separate dimensions, since it does not find equivalence in how people define themselves. Acknowledging the limitations of imposed categorisations, Johnson noted how Guineans often define themselves as either *Musulmano* (Muslim) or *Criston* (Christian) before providing an ethnic affiliation. To add extra complexity to these categorisations, both Muslims and Christians maintain, though to different extents, pre-Islamic and pre-Christian practices and beliefs, as my ethnographic material will also show.²⁹ The influence of those ancient practices derives, as it does in other African contexts (cf. Bâ 1981; Gottlieb 1982), from the notion of land that I started by addressing above and the relationship that it secures between people, plants, animals and spirits, thus following the 'spirit of politics' advanced by Temudo (2008). As Bâ has put it, '[t]he symbiosis that came about [between Islam and African tradition] was so great that it is occasionally hard to make out what belongs to one tradition and what to the other' (1981: 196).

Finally, in an attempt to merge the phenomenological approach that I discussed above with the analysis of Guineans' sense of belonging to a certain ethnic group, locality or land as a common way of doing things in space, I make use of theories of performativity when exploring the construction of identities.

²⁸ Relevant to the context of this discussion is Guinean migrants' creation of associations with reference to a common region of origin. These associations are usually named 'friends', 'relatives' or 'children' of a certain region of Guinea-Bissau. Carreiro (2011) and C   (2004) offer some detail on their constitution and role (in Portuguese).

²⁹ Additionally, Dias (1999) has explored the role of new evangelical churches that have more recently spread in Guinea-Bissau.

2.3.3. Land and performativity in the construction of identities

Performativity, much of which has been inspired by the work of Butler (1993) on gender and sexuality, has also touched upon notions of ethnicity and belonging (cf. Bell 1999; Edensor 2002; Fortier 1999). Performativity thus matters not only for the construction of a new spatial assemblage that is practised, dynamic and interactive (Rose 1999), but also for understanding a more ample construction of self through action. As Sahlins (1985) points out in his introduction to *Islands of History*, in Hawaii one may *become* a 'native', i.e., by right action if, for example, eating from the same land, thus becoming part of that land's substance (1985: xi-xii) [author's emphasis].

In 1983, Watson named such performed identities as Lamarckian – as opposed to a Mendelian model of fixed traits transmitted in succession of generations – to describe the people from Papua New Guinea's eastern highlands. In his ethnographic account of the Tairora, Watson stressed the role of the environment in creating identity, drawing attention to the importance of common links to the land such as food that springs from the local soil, in a performed construction of people's identities. Is 'children of the land', in Guinea-Bissau, a term exclusively reserved to the native-born, or can it be constructed in similar ways to those described by Sahlins and Watson? In what ways does migration and the introduction of new foods produce changes in such processes? What role does the origin land play when exploring expressions of authenticity?

Particularly relevant to my attempt to provide answers to these questions are Appadurai's (1988a) and Ben-Ze'ev's (2004) investigations of the way regional homeland and ethnicity are associated with food. Appadurai (1988a) has studied this association through an analysis of Indian cookbooks. In the Indian context, he contends, regional dishes become codified as ethnic and representative of a certain region, which facilitates inter-ethnic foodways and cosmopolitanism on the one hand, but reinforces the image of an ethnic other, on the other. The idea of an 'Indian cuisine' is therefore entwined with regional and ethnic cuisines and emerges, Appadurai argues, as an expression of cosmopolitanism which, alongside internal divisions, is common in other modalities of identity and ideology in emergent nations. In her study of the Palestinian context, Ben-Ze'ev (2004) explores the historical consciousness of Palestinians through their return visits to the villages and towns that have since 1948 been appropriated by the state of Israel. She contends that plants and food, although important to retrieve memories of regional homelands and local patriotisms, are signifiers of a wider context of a besieged

nation, where the difficult conditions of Palestinian nation-building would make overt internal competition inappropriate (2004: 149).

When addressing the relationship between the construction of places and of terrains of belonging, Fortier (1999) draws on the notion of performativity to criticise views of cultural practices as typical expressions of an ethnic identity, seen as resulting from that identity rather than performing it. Similarly, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of food, space and belonging as products of dynamic rather than static practices; as entwined processes involving embodied, emotional and material experiences. Drawing on performativity theories when trying to explore the way people make sense of their life-world, I also concur with Hall's (1996) argument that the concept of identities is simultaneously necessary and impossible. Its impossibility lies in the risk of transforming the individual either in part of a homogeneous group or in a deranged, fragmented and free-floating self, an exaggeration that has been criticised by others, as I discussed at the beginning of this chapter (cf. Gupta and Ferguson 1992).

However, as argued by Nash, turning away from representations would mean abandoning important intersections between discourses, perceptions, materials, spaces and practices (2000: 661). To Hall, identities are precisely the positions that the subject is forced to take up while aware that they are representations (1996: 6). I therefore set out to explore the relationship between Guineans' embodied practices and perceptions of their material and social world, through an examination of their relationship with land, food and plants in a transnational context.

2.4. Migration, material culture and food: the false search for 'authenticity'

Alongside the academic debate on transnationalism, the notion of home and the need to reconceptualise it in relation to the transnational experience have been the focus of a number of studies on migration and diaspora. These debates and empirical evidence have cut across disciplines like geography, anthropology, sociology, feminist, cultural and postcolonial studies (cf. Ahmed 1999; Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Blunt 2005; Brah 1996; Chapman 2001; Fortier 2000; Gardner 1993; Levitt and Waters 2002; Rapport and Dawson 1998; Robertson *et al.* 1994; Salih 2003; Walsh 2006). Home is now usually seen as part of a physical and cognitive cosmos constructed, like space, through a set of practices and memories, where objects play a significant role. It is thus seen as a process rather than a

static place, involving material and symbolic elements not just left behind, but also newly encountered and negotiated in a new country.

Studies tackling the link between migration and material culture, aiming at better understanding migrants' home-making practices, have in the meantime proliferated (cf. Basu and Coleman 2008; Burrell 2008; Dalakoglou 2010; D'Alisera 2001; Miller 2001, 2008; Parkin 1999; Tilley 2006; Tolia-Kelly 2004), but usually they offer ethnographic evidence from only the destination side of the journey. Key analytical contributions like the essays in Appadurai's (1986b) edited collection do, however, highlight the biography of things and the importance of tracing their shifting status in their circulation through different contexts.

Within a material culture perspective, it was the work of Douglas and Isherwood (1996[1979]) and Bourdieu (1984) that brought consumption into anthropological enquiry, by regarding consumer objects as carriers of meaning that enable individuals to make sense of their social world. Focusing on the way particular cultural frames transform the meanings of things that cross borders, Howes (1996), like Appadurai, argues that goods can be recontextualised and endowed with different cultural meanings from those involved in the original production, bringing in the importance of looking at both sides. Through the examination of forms of representation of 'otherness' and appropriation of native American culture by the dominant American society, Howes argues that, on the one hand, westerners searching for authenticity in 'ethnic products' refer to a western perspective of authenticity. On the other hand, the presence of western goods in small-scale societies has often been disregarded by anthropologists in the past, much like the commodification of tradition (through tourist trade, for example) was lamented, under the claim of endangering cultural authenticity and meaningful social relations (Howes 1996).

The above-discussed importance of the land for Guineans made me place land and its living objects at the core of the analysis of migrants' home-making practices. The concrete relationship between food – as an object of material culture – and migration has been at the core of a growing number of studies (Ben-Ze'ev 2004; Brown and Mussell 1984; Hage 1997; Kershen 2002; Law 2001; Petridou 2001; Ray 2004; Wilk 1999).³⁰ Yet within these, too, a multi-sited approach that accounts for both sides of the migration is

³⁰ Interest in the field has more recently resulted in a special issue of *Food, Culture & Society* edited by Harry West in 2011.

still lacking. Cook and Harrison's (2007) study of the complex relationship between producers, consumers and intermediaries across borders is an exception. They attempt to trace the connection between the lives of one family in North London and a group of farmers in rural Jamaica by focusing on the consumption and production of hot peppers. While so doing, Cook and Harrison bring forward the ambiguity entailed in the notion of authenticity, in the sense that to Caribbean migrant consumers, the exact origin of the hot pepper sauce they used did not seem to matter. Another interesting contribution to understanding people's perception of authenticity regarding food is put forward by Long and Villarreal (1998). They explore how products used in Mexican cuisine can be seen as part of Mexican identity, tradition and ancestral heritage by consumers abroad, whereas at the production site the same products are actually perceived as transmitters of modernity, given their growing importance in the global market and cross-border export, which are seen as signs of modern industry. Within food culture studies, I draw on Abarca's (2004) suggestion of the use of 'originality' rather than 'authenticity', since food is, like other expressions of culture, always changing through creative adaptations that result from encounters with new foods.

Authors like Goody (1982) and Mintz (1985) have placed history at the heart of the anthropological study of food and foodways. Mintz's influential socio-historical study of sugar, for example, demonstrates the importance of looking into historical processes when socially analysing foodways and meanings of authenticity. Entangled in social relations rather than being abstractedly fixed, meanings of food are constantly subject to change. As Mintz has put it, '(...) the anthropology of just such homely, everyday substances may help us to clarify both how the world changes from what it was to what it may become, and how it manages at the same time to stay in certain regards very much the same' (1985: xxvii).

When debating cultures, Sahlins (1999) suggests that the notion of authenticity is contrary to the human social condition, where 'no people are the sole or even principal author of their own existence' (1999: 411). The idea of 'loss of authenticity', he argues, seems to be a legacy of bourgeois self-consciousness. Likewise, De Boeck (1999) contends that the discourse of lost cultural virginity and authenticity overlooks processes of continuity and strategies of local resilience. As Spooner (1986) points out in relation to the oriental carpet, while our desire for authenticity makes us want to promptly and sophisticatedly reconstruct the social context where it originates, the original meanings of its decorative elements might have been largely forgotten by the people who weave

them, 'who probably anyway think about their work in terms that would not provide answers to Western queries about meaning' (1986: 199). Authenticity is, then, not so much related to genuineness but to the interpretation of genuineness.

Following on from this debate and drawing on my multi-sited approach, after having traced Guinean foodstuffs historically through a close look at production sites, land and ethnicity in Guinea-Bissau, chapter 4 will be dedicated to the understanding of how Guinean migrants perceive and experience changes in their foodways. The intimate and corporeal importance of food has been described by others in different contexts. Dudley (2010), for example, describes this importance for the Karenni refugees in northwest Thailand in relation to myths and rituals, to traditional approaches to health and illness and to general conversation (2010: 56). As Weiss (1996) puts it, 'concrete objects, namely cooked foods, are considered as embodiments of social practices, whose specific form and properties (e.g., their gendered dimensions, their temporal unfolding, their centrality or periphery) can be recognized and interpreted through the experience of these foods' (1996: 125). In her work in the Melanesian context, Strathern (1988) analyses the threatening unfamiliarity of the European social and material world that comes with the arrival of European things, and the ways in which the people of Vanuatu adapt those things to their own ends. As Strathern argues, 'they Vanuatize things derived from the European world rather than Europeanize themselves' (1988: 81). Are Guineans in Portugal adapting the newly found food in similar ways? In Cook and Harrison's (2007) work, for example, first generation Caribbean migrants in London complained that there was something wrong with the 'English food' that their children were eating. It was, for them, 'contaminated' food that provoked diseases which Caribbean healthy food would avoid. The relationship between health and food amongst Guineans will also be explored in chapter 4.

Yet disturbances of the health balance are not only caused by the material properties of the land. I will therefore also look at specific food-related products whose 'spiritual-religious' properties require a special analysis. The role played by the special powers acquired by some foodstuffs and plants through the land where they grow has in fact been associated in the literature with notions of health and illness (Århem 1996; Frankel 1986; Ngubane 1977; van Binsbergen 1988). Although going into detail on a Guinean categorisation of illnesses and their causes is not part of the main scope of my

thesis,³¹ I will try to understand the way in which changes in the physical environment, resulting from the distance with the powerful Guinean land, impact upon the corporeal and spiritual wellbeing of Guinean migrants, and how they cope with those changes and are able to recreate a sense of home and place.

Although I contend that an analytical emphasis on the material world is important, my approach is not object-oriented as in Baudrillard's (1996) work, whose textual approach results in a tendency to reduce objects to a system of signs divorced from their social context and material use. I draw on material culture theories but not on the passivity of people towards objects, since I contend that people are capable of creatively resisting, contradicting and changing the meanings of things and their own location in an established order. As Miller (2008) has put it in *The Comfort of Things*, we order things as much as they order us. An influential body of work in this respect is the actor-network theory (ANT) which, through the work of Latour (2005) in particular, has reanimated the emphasis on the agency of material things, as I discussed in the previous chapter. Yet my approach to material culture, while not rejecting the capacity of objects to influence people's lives, is more centred in people's own perceptions and physical experiences of those objects. Within these perceptions and experiences, memories play a central role.

2.5. Memories, modernities and traditions

My approach to memories follows the focus on practice and embodied experience that I take up throughout this thesis. The way in which the historical subjectivity that is embedded in memories generates complex entwined perceptions of what is 'modern' and what is 'traditional' in people's lives was one of the central questions in my research. The variety of overlapping cultural encounters that contributes to these constructions, which I will now discuss, has informed my choice of using the plural when introducing the three concepts in the title of this section.

2.5.1. A spatial and material approach to memories

A spatial and material perspective has been adopted in several studies on memory (cf. Boym 2001; Carsten 2007; Cole 2001; Connerton 1989; Stewart and Strathern 2003). Nora

³¹ Frazão-Moreira (2009) explores this relationship amongst the Nalu of southern Guinea-Bissau.

(1984), who first coined the concept of ‘spaces of memory’ (*lieux de mémoire*), has been criticised for his evolutionary and dichotomous view, since he deliberately associated those spaces with modern societies and distinguished them from a previous utopian epoch of ‘milieu of memory’, where societies were so infused with tradition that there was no need to self-consciously create links to the past (Carstern 2007; Legg 2007). Connerton (1989), also concerned with group spaces, suggests that social memory is constructed through images conveyed and sustained by performances.

Carsten (2007) calls attention to the centrality of a sense of place when analysing processes of kinship and memory. In Carsten’s edited volume, Pine’s essay is particularly relevant for my case study, since it reminds us how land – materialised in fields, pastures, forests or mountains – is a bearer of historical meaning, even if not a site of commemoration in Connertons’ or Nora’s sense (2007: 106-107). In Boym’s (2001) work, the concept of ‘diasporic intimacy’ is especially useful for examining Guinean migrants’ practices of remembering home in Lisbon’s food markets, where gossiping and secrets (examples of that intimacy) help them to make sense of their lives in a foreign environment. A further contribution is made by Stewart and Strathern (2003), when suggesting that people travel with their own inner landscapes and remember particular places through images of how they looked and what it felt like to be there (203: 4-5). In his study amongst Nigerians in Nigeria and New York, Stoller (2009) focuses on the importance of the senses and describes ‘embodied memories’ as cultural memories infused in familiar objects and narratives. Karner (2007) also contributes to a sensorial approach to memory by relating familiar sensations, experiences and practices to ethnicity, as I addressed above in this chapter. I draw on this sensorial and embodied perspective when investigating the reproduction of Guinean food practices and food-related spaces with migration and its relationship with memory.

Lambek and Antze (1996) contend that we need to look at the cultural vehicles through which memory is embodied and objectified. Although food is one such cultural vehicle, anthropological studies of food and memory do not abound. Holtzman (2006) offers a detailed review of studies where the relationship between food and memory was implicitly addressed in relation to nostalgia, exchange, ethnicity, nationalism and gender. However, as Abbots (2008) has noted, anthropological studies that explicitly address the relationship between food and memory have most of the time centred on the dimension of ‘forgetting’ in mortuary feasts (cf. Battaglia 1992; Bloch 1985; Eves 1996; Munn 1986). Eves (1996) argues that these are important ritual practices that invoke

memory as much as other acts of gift and food transmission (1996: 271). Yet the act of sharing, giving, reciprocating and exchanging meals in spaces of everyday socialisation, in which I centre my research, have been less investigated in relation to memory.

Sutton's (2001) work on the relationship between food practices and spaces with memory in the Greek Island of Kalymnos is one of the few exceptions. Drawing on a growing body of literature on the anthropology of the senses (Classen 1997; Howes 2004; Retsikas 2007; Rosaldo 1994; Seremetakis 1994, Stoller 1989) and on Proust's (1981[1919]) famous discussion of the memory of the senses evoked by food in his description of the 'petites madeleines', Sutton's work is innovative in the sense that he considers some of the everyday contexts in which food is bought, prepared and consumed as producers of memory. He understands food as a provider of temporal rhythms, since people actively anticipate future food events and look backwards to past meals while eating. When describing sensory memories as scents, sounds, tastes, aesthetics and textures that trigger a collective connectedness to a 'territory of culture', Tolia-Kelly (2010) also provides an important contribution in this regard. With examples drawn from her fieldwork amongst Asian migrants in London, she stresses the influence of landscape and intimate ecologies on people's identification with places, arguing that such body-memories can be evoked through contact with materials like plants. Gardening, for example, reproduces past practices of planting and kitchen-gardens that women used to carry out in India or Africa, prior to migration (2010: 76-77). Ben-Ze'ev (2004), too, stresses the role of plants and food as markers of an 'internal Palestinian map' of tastes and smells for refugees. In the discipline of geography, Law's (2001) study is particularly relevant to my research, due to the emphasis she puts on the materiality of a particular place of 'olfactory aesthetics and politics'. Created by Filipino women in Hong Kong, this place stages the negotiation of relationships between personal, urban and transnational space, while food from home is being cooked. Drawing on these approaches, I will analyse the extent to which Guinean migrants in Lisbon create spaces such as that explored by Law, and use their plants and foods to recall tastes and smells of their or their ancestors' regional and ethnic roots.

Sutton's view of food as a provider of temporal rhythms influences my concern with the effects of food in bringing the past, present and future of the Guinean transnational world together, which I analyse in more detail in chapter 5. I am also inspired by Moore's (2011) recent concern with 'hopes, desires and satisfactions' that, though difficult to capture, attach us to the world and augment our potential for

connection and sharing (2011: 22). When examining Guineans' future projects of migration and return, which are clearly propelled by affective dispositions such as those described by Moore, I try to identify the role of food in helping to create such dispositions. Moreover, when focusing on the lives of Guinean food traders and their families, I draw on Munn's (1992) notion of 'temporalisation', regarding the way in which exchange and remembering are interlinked by a system of past debts that require future compensations.

In geography, in addition to anthropology, an interest in nostalgia and memory, intimately linked to migration and the notion of home, has led to similar preoccupations with past, present and future. Blunt (2003), for example, highlights the notion of 'productive nostalgia' to show how nostalgia is often oriented towards the present and the future, as well as the past, and should not be seen solely in terms of loss, mourning and the impossibility of return, but rather as a desire for both proximate and more distant homes (2003: 717). In his review of geographies of memory and forgetting, Legg (2007) draws attention to the way in which the materiality of the environment seeps into and provokes memories (2007: 458). In my thesis, I look at the materiality of not only food and plants as material objects but also of the spaces through which those materials travel in their journey from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal – food markets in particular.

Another question that I raise in this regard is how Guineans conciliate seemingly conflicting memories from an 'undeveloped' past with images from a 'developed' future that migration generates. In the West African specific context, Piot's (2010) study on what he calls 'nostalgia for the future' amongst the Togolese is essential to understand these apparent contradictions. In chapter 5 I attempt to deconstruct such paradoxes in relation to the Guinean life-world, by borrowing Piot's idea that people in West Africa are nowadays 'longing for a future' through the appropriation of commodified imaginaries and desires, clearly visible in widespread requests for exit visas.

2.5.2. Memories and historical subjectivities: colonialism, 'modernities' and 'traditions'

The fact that memory is socially and historically constituted has been agreed in the above-mentioned key works, which theoretically influenced the trajectory of my research. In their different ways, all these authors looked at people's historical

consciousness and subjective perceptions of their past. As Stoller (2009) puts it, '[h]istory is therefore internal and external, personal and impersonal, centered and decentered, partial and whole. It charts the rough texture of lived experience along a path that originates in the distant past' (Stoller 2009: 87). Appadurai's (1996) notion of 'nostalgia without memory' is particularly evocative of the way memories are embedded in oral histories that reconnect descendants with their ancestors in ways that make people look back to a world that they may have never known, therefore never lost (1996: 29-30).

The importance of historical subjectivity emerges in remarkable ways when we look at the multiple and overlapping histories and cultural encounters that complexly shape processes of remembering and forgetting a past of violence associated with the colonial period (Cole 2001). In the African context, in fact, several authors have been concerned with the postcolonial memory crisis and the striking boom of 'colonial nostalgia' (Bissell 2005; Ferguson 2002; Stoller 1995; Werbner 1998). Many have linked their analysis of these memory processes to the old western conceptualised dichotomy between modernity and tradition, which has been widely criticised in recent years (cf. Appadurai 1996; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Ferguson 1999, 2002; Gable 1995, 2006; Piot 1999).

Shaw (2002) contributes to this discussion by exploring West African modernities through memories of the slave trade. Arguing that the integration of this region into the Atlantic world influenced social and cultural practices even in rural parts of Africa, where they appear at first glance to be the antithesis of 'modernity' and 'cosmopolitanism', Shaw offers examples of how the encounter with Europe over the last three hundred years can be traced in apparently 'traditional' forms of divination. The fact that human leopards, witch guns or contractual relationships with river spirits can be seen as 'old' forms of modernity challenges our conceptions of 'the modern'.

In this regard, the anthropological fieldworker's embarrassment described by Ferguson (2002) when reading the letter left by two Guinean children who wanted to become like the 'important European people' to whom they addressed their note³² is particularly evocative. However, Ferguson's view can also be criticised for its reproduction of the distinction, often embodied in the western imaginary, between

³² In August 1998, two dead Guinean boys (from Guinea-Conakry) were found in the landing gear of a plane landing in Brussels, together with a letter addressed to 'Excellencies, members, and officials of Europe'. The letter explained the reason for the trip and asked for help in rescuing Africa from poverty, wars, illness, lack of children's rights and general suffering (Ferguson 2002).

‘western modernities’ as original and ‘African modernities’ as copies. Inspired by Taussig’s (1993) work on ‘mimesis and alterity’, Gable’s (2002) critique of Ferguson focuses on the fact that the two boys were not copying what ‘we’ had created. Drawing on his study of the Manjaco in Guinea-Bissau, Gable claims that they might have instead borrowed western formats to say ‘quintessentially African things about the responsibility putative kin have toward one another in an emerging global community’ (2002: 575), and that modernity is authentic as long as it is original. Following Sahlins (1999), Moore and Sanders (2001) call attention to the unlikelihood of people resisting or criticising the technologies and conveniences of modernisation (2001: 13). What many do instead is to find their own cultural space in the global scheme of things. In Sahlins’ (1999) words, they ‘indigenise modernity’, hence producing authentic (original) modernities in Gable’s (2002) and Shaw’s (2002) sense.

‘Modernity’ has been accused of being embedded in neo-colonial constructions of the world and of working as an ideological tool in global power relations (cf. Escobar 1995). Within this discussion, the notion of technology, often seen as a purveyor of development and modernity, is particularly relevant in the context of my research, since it is central in Guineans’ perceptions of healthy and unhealthy food, as well as in the way it influences projects of migration. In his work on food security, Pottier (1999) stresses the fact that developers conceptualise their intervention amongst food-insecure people in ways that resemble colonial policies, assuming that people want to ‘progress’ and ‘develop’ by moving away from what they consider ancient practices that do not suit modern conditions. Yet the official debate on world food security, Pottier contends, has become divorced from the realities food-insecure people face, and people might respond in inventive ways by inscribing local meanings to global policies. As others concerned with the ‘development discourse’ have argued, ‘development’ means different things for different actors (cf. Escobar 1995; Grillo 1997), and in my thesis I am more concerned with what it means for Guineans, both migrants and those ‘left behind’. Hence, when I investigate Guineans’ experiences of what they perceive as ‘development’, I try to overcome the ‘trap’ identified by Mills (1999), according to which the weight of the concept forces us to create an imaginary of inequality that might not correspond to the varied and even at times oppositional subjectivities formed by the people who appropriate and reinterpret these idioms in different contexts (1999: 99). Bordonaro (2009) has looked at the appropriation of the development discourse amongst the Bijagó youth of Guinea-Bissau. I also draw on his analysis but I extend it from its influence in

migratory projects to the way it also influences projects of return amongst migrants. Moreover, my focus on Guinean land and food introduces new insights into this analysis, which will hopefully contribute to overcome commonly assumed divides. Food is here, as in relation to memory, a key material with which to explore these ambiguities.

Counihan (1984) and Seremetakis (1994), for example, who have researched contemporary social and economic change in the Italian region of Sardinia and in Greece respectively, argue that the onset of modernity – defined by Seremetakis as the extreme division of labour, perpetual specialisation and rationalisation – is responsible for the effacement of food as a vehicle for social memory and a decline in customary foodways. This view, however, seems to ignore the interactions that I discussed above. Hence, one of the questions that I raise in my thesis is, as I put forward in the previous chapter, how understandings of ‘modernity’, ‘development’ and ‘tradition’ are formulated by Guineans, and how they are related to food production and consumption.

Within this debate, I uphold the view that cosmopolitanism is not necessarily a sign of modernity or, to put it in Piot’s (1999) words, cosmopolitan and modernity are as much African as they are European, since encounters between peoples of both continents have mutually influenced each other over the last 400 years and there are no bounded, culturally homogeneous African cultures. If by cosmopolitanism we mean that ‘people partake in a social life characterized by flux, uncertainty, encounters with difference, and the experience of processes of transculturation’ (1999: 23), then African villagers’ encounters with spirits, elaborate systems of solidarity, demands and obligations and constant migration of relatives make them, according to Piot, as cosmopolitans as any European. As Moore (2011) has questioned, why do African subjectivities always seem to be transformed by what comes from outside, whereas nothing new seems to come from the continent? (2011: 74). Drawing on Werbner (2002), Moore also questions the notion of ‘new’ in current postcolonial studies, as if interdependence and mutual entanglement had not been part of African subjectivities before.

On the other hand, arguing that everyone is cosmopolitan might obscure notions of conviviality or differentiation, as Fardon (2008) calls attention to. Tradition, Fardon argues, might be important to contemporary ethnic identities in the sense that it makes them comprehensible and worthwhile both to their members and to outsiders (2008: 235). In the migratory context, Tolia-Kelly (2010) refers to ‘diasporic memory’ and argues

that within migrant communities' need to situate their identity between different coordinates, national identity might be as important as citizenship in the UK.

My theoretical position draws from both sides of these discussions. While I agree that differentiation cannot be ignored and is, in fact, not ignored by Guineans themselves, in chapter 5 I will look at these ambiguities and reconciliations not only in relation to Guineans' memories (including expressions of 'colonial nostalgia'), but also regarding the way they influence migrants' and their home-based kin's projects of migration and return. My multi-sited approach thereby follows Piot's (1999) thus far overlooked suggestion of critically 'tacking back and forth between Euroamerican and African knowledge practices' (1999: 24). As Piot argues, doing at once an ethnography of Africa and of Europe might open a productive space for the interrogation and unsettling of longstanding anthropological assumptions of what is 'modernity' and what is 'tradition'.

In order to do this I bring the 'invisible realm' (West 2005) of the Guinean life-world into my analysis, which is based on the general view that the land is inhabited not only by people, plants and animals, but also by spiritual entities to whom one might appeal to exert a powerful material influence upon the world. Yet rather than using the terms 'sorcery', 'witchcraft' or 'magic', which are often applied in academic discourse, I follow Guineans' own use of the terms rumour, jealousy and the practice of *djanfa* (which, resulting from those rumours and jealousy, is intended to harm others). In fact, even though a lot has been written about 'sorcery' and 'witchcraft', the fact that these are not unproblematic concepts, but rather insufficient translations of local terms imbued with greater material weight than western observers tend to think them capable of carrying, has been addressed before (cf. West 2005). In the context of the Mueda plateau in northern Mozambique, West (2005) noticed that the word *magia* (the Portuguese term for 'magic') was avoided by Muedans themselves when translating the local term *uwavi*, and that *feitiço* (sorcery) was instead preferred. Likewise, in the context of my research, *magia* was rarely used by the Guineans I encountered and *djanfa* might in fact be translated as the act that results from sorcery. However, my preference for the local term also derives from the fact that I did not focus on the power that, either learned or passed down from parent to child, enabled one to become a 'sorcerer'. Instead, I looked at how ordinary people feared or were victims of gossip, rumours and jealousy of other ordinary people, through threats or acts of *djanfa*. In this regard, it is worth bringing in the importance of the spoken word as analysed by Bâ (1981) in the West African context.

Although he centred his analysis on the concept of ‘magic’ as the management of forces in Africa, Bâ’s definition of words as forces that underlie the visible world and that can act on spirits that have the power for action (1981: 172) helps to contextualise the importance of rumours and gossip within the ‘invisible realm’ as I address it in my research.

Regardless of the problems of translation and of these terms’ failure to capture the essence of the invisible world, I could not ignore the fact that this world is for Guineans, as in other African countries, an important part of the everyday rather than of the extraordinary (Moore and Sanders 2001). A brief reference to this debate is thus worthy of consideration, especially as regards its more recent association with a phenomenological perspective. Evans-Pritchard’s (1937) symbolic approach to ‘African witchcraft’, focused on systems of belief, remains one of the first major treatises on the topic. Since then, however, anthropologists have increasingly agreed that ‘witchcraft’ is not just a belief about the world but a patent feature of it,³³ and phenomenological approaches, on which I draw in my theoretical framework, have been commonly adopted in anthropological studies of ‘African witchcraft’ (cf. Jackson 1989; Kapferer 1997; Stoller 1995). In his study amongst the Muedans, West (2007) takes these approaches further and speaks of ‘embodied metaphors’. To West, metaphors (like the sorcery lions he explores in his work) are not just ways of talking about social realities that stand for themselves, ‘but also *embody* themselves – in the Muedan case, in the body of dangerous predators’ (2007: 63) [author’s emphasis].

Moreover, I concur with the view that contemporary practices such as *djanfa* should not be seen as a traditional practice or a sign of backwardness and lack of progress, but rather as part of African modernities, as I addressed above.³⁴ In his critique of practice theory, Piot argues that in societies where people are not just tied to other human beings but also to the nonhuman world of spirits and ancestors, where the visible body is connected to an invisible one, people may use these beings to amplify their powers and affect their relationships with other humans in ways that are not captured by much Euroamerican social theory (1999: 19). Furthermore, the fact that modernity has not led to the convergence of societies and cultures is indicative of the existence of multiple modernities (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993). In his study of the Haya of

³³ Moore and Sanders (2001) offer a detailed review of the history of anthropological approaches to ‘witchcraft’.

³⁴ See also Geshiere (1997).

northwest Tanzania, Weiss (1996) has shown that sorcery practices are not concerned with contrasts between former ways of life and the hazards of the modern world. Instead, they illustrate the connections 'between bodies and commodities, semantic values and economic transactions, rural livelihoods and urban travels, as well as local "experiences" and global "events"' (1996: 219).

This leads me to the final large theme of my research, which is addressed in chapter 6 in more detail, although present throughout this thesis – the actual practice of exchanging food across borders, and how it influences these connections between the 'local' and the 'global'. I will now discuss the main conceptual and theoretical framework that has influenced my analysis of this topic.

2.6. Theories of exchange: gifts, reciprocities and trade

The practice of exchanging Guinean food is as important as production and consumption in the process of making it available for migrants in Lisbon, and is therefore at the core of my research. The way physical distances between production in Guinea-Bissau, cross-border exchange and consumption in Lisbon are bridged will be analysed in association with the link between local and global economies, as well as community and impersonal relationships.

2.6.1. Giving and reciprocating

One form of exchange that has been widely addressed in anthropological literature ever since the classic works of Malinowski (2005[1922]) and Mauss (1990[1950]) is that of giving and reciprocating. It has been studied, however, more in respect to the Pacific region (cf. Carrier 1992; Gregory 1980; Hagen 1999; Sahlins 2004[1972]; Weiner 1985) than in the African context. Piot (1991) drew attention to this gap in Africanist literature, and suggested that Bohannan's (1955, 1959) theory of exchange amongst the Tiv of Nigeria, dating from the early 1950s, should be retrieved and its application tested in other African contexts. Bohannan argued that the Tiv divided exchangeable items into ranked categories or 'spheres', where items in one particular ranking were neutrally exchanged amongst themselves but not with those in different spheres. An inter-ranking exchange would be morally charged according to the value of the item and to whether the conversion was happening downwards or upwards. To Bohannan, however, such spheres

were highly vulnerable to contact with European currencies, which were the eventual cause for the standardisation of all items' value and the collapse of the system.

Piot (1991) picked up this ranking system and tried to apply it to the Kabre of northern Togo. He concluded that the Kabre exchange spheres exist not so much to group items in categories of exchange, but rather to order types of relationships. Within these relationships, Piot identifies the role of the initiator and the respondent, and explores the way in which these positions change in a second exchange (or reciprocity) and in which relationships are therefore maintained through the creation of debts.

I will draw on this debate and extend it to a transnational level, by exploring if and how such relationships are continued or changed across borders. The relation between anthropological theories of gift exchange and migrant remitting was examined by Cliggett (2005) in the context of rural-urban migration in Zambia. Cliggett suggests that gifting exchange in this case is less related to the economic value of the gift than it is to a way of investing in social relations over time. This view, like Piot's, opposes Bohannan's ranking of gifts. In Bohannan's hierarchy, food and other subsistence products were positioned in the lowest ranking. Likewise, in his study of the nature of wealth and power, Graeber (1996) examines the way in which wealth, as an object of display, is in some sense an adornment to the person, and becomes the most important object of exchange. He gives examples from countless societies in which the most highly valued forms of wealth consist of objects of adornment in the literal sense. Munn (1986), too, in her study of practices of value creation on Gawa, has suggested a hierarchy in types of goods, where perishable and generic substances like food stand at the bottom, and imperishable valuables at the top. Yet for Munn food might gain value through the act of giving. The fact that not only the social, spiritual and material value of food changes through practices of sharing, giving, reciprocating or exchanging, but also that such practices transform the way people create kinship relations, has been explored in the work of scholars like Uzendoski (2004) or Weiss (1996). Sutton (2001) sees food's perishability as its distinguishing characteristic, since unlike solid objects, it *internalises* debt [author's emphasis], calling for acts of remembrance and reciprocity (2001: 160). Strathern (1985) also calls attention to the caution needed when analysing the relationship between persons and things, in the sense that some things might not be perceived as detached from people. Is Guinean food, given its shared substance with people, in this position? In this thesis I will examine the ways in which relationships of exchange are generated through gifts of food, and whether these gifts might be

considered a source of wealth for migrants as much as the adornment and imperishable valuables addressed by Graeber and Munn which, in the context of my research, can be materialised in migrant remittances sent in the reverse direction.

Godelier (1999) has also argued that in societies where it is believed that things are, like persons, endowed with a soul, gift-giving encapsulates and amplifies part of the essence of social relations, which are extended beyond the boundaries of the society to the whole cosmos (1999: 105). However, he then goes on to stress the differences between such societies and today's capitalist society, where the majority of social relations are impersonal, conducted mostly in an anonymous marketplace. In my thesis I will question this view of opposed forms of local and global exchange. By bringing the transnational element and the two sides of the exchange into the analysis, I will try to explore ways in which they are more connected than could at first sight be expected.

2.6.2. Conceptualising trade within local and global economies

Trade as an economic activity is a key driving force for the circulation of Guinean food, often entwined with gifting processes. The importance of the economic value of things is emphasised in Marxist theory, in which self-interested markets replace the human in the exchange and transform 'use value' into 'exchange value'. Changes in the value of things therefore depend on the markets and dominate people, rather than the inverse. The family-based Guinean exchange of food on which I focus is not dependent on large-scale markets in the Marxist sense, nor is the economic value of Guinean food more important than its social value for Guineans. Yet the integration of its trade in a capitalist society must necessarily generate some changes, which I will explore in chapter 6 of this thesis.

Commodities can be defined as objects of economic value. However, as scholars like Appadurai (1986a), Parry and Bloch (1989) or van Binsbergen (2005) have put it, to oppose the spirit of reciprocity, sociability and spontaneity in which gifts are typically exchanged, to the profit-oriented, self-centred and calculated spirit that fires the circulation of commodities is to oversimplify things. What is then entailed in the cross-border food trade practice amongst Guineans?

The anthropology of markets draws the distinction between physical marketplaces on the one hand, and the market principle on the other. Whereas the former is usually associated with periodic, peasant open-air spaces, the second is linked

to global commercial exchanges of a more abstract kind (Appelbaum 2005). Markets as physical spaces are privileged locations for ethnographers to study social interactions of different kinds. In Guinea-Bissau, as elsewhere in Africa, they have been fulfilling multiple social and economic purposes since pre-colonial times, as I described in the previous chapter. When examining the markets of Bissau and related female networks and strategies, Domingues (2000) encountered similar informal mechanisms of regulation as those observed by Stoller's (1996) study of the organisation of African markets. In chapter 6 I will look in detail into such mechanisms and extend their understanding to an examination of both the physical and the market aspects of the exchange. Moreover, following my multi-sited approach, I will extend this analysis to the reproduction of such spaces and mechanisms in Lisbon.

In order to do this I draw on Gudeman's (2001) model, which identifies two realms of the economy: community, designating on-the-ground social relationships and contextually defined values, and market, which consists of impersonal, global and anonymous short-term exchanges. For Gudeman, as for most anthropologists nowadays, even exchanges of more abstract kind are only relatively independent of local cultural and social processes, and the two realms of the economy are entangled in institutions and practices, in spite of being commonly separated in contemporary discourses on economy.

Yet before elaborating on this debate it is useful to revisit the scholarly tradition influenced by Marx (1992[1867]) and Simmel (1978), which focused on the capacity of money to transform social relations, mainly by breaking down forms of social solidarity and promoting individualisation, hence separating people from objects through commoditisation. In the African context, the influential work of Meillassoux (1973), inspired by this strand of thought, stressed the loss of actuality of kinship as the main expression of the rise of market economy in peasant social organisation. His functionalist approach has however been criticised, especially his understanding that forms of rural economic organisation were only maintained to fulfil the needs of capitalism, as well as his disregard of the existence of multiple modes of production within peasant social formations (Donham 1999; Terray 1972). Pottier (1999) has also argued that the gift-to-commodity sequence has not taken place everywhere, and that the spread of markets has not necessarily resulted in homogenisation and cultural impoverishment or in the loss of gift-giving economies. Following Long (1996), Pottier brings forward the concept of 'relocalisation', in the sense that changing local conditions are not dictated by

hegemonic capitalist interests, but rather 'relocalised' within local forms of organisation. In her study of the Jima in Ecuador, Abbots (2008) also observed that money did not compromise the intimacy of existing exchange systems; rather it was incorporated in them. Evers' (1994) paradigm of 'the traders' dilemma' has also considerable relevance for my study. The trader's moral obligation to share proceeds with kinsfolk and neighbours on the one hand, and the necessity to make profits, on the other, clearly illustrates the complexity of the negotiation between an economic and social arena in such relations. Arguing for the inapplicability of western stereotypes to other cultures, Strathern (1985) also developed a critique of conceptual pairs such as kinship and economy, a division that she saw as ultimately traceable to the alienability of labour power in capitalist societies.

The positions of the socio-economic and the cultural aspects of trade have also been debated in literature on migrant entrepreneurship. Migrant economic activities have been explored as a result either of opportunity structures – the labour market and institutional framework of the host society – or of the group's close networks. However, a cultural dimension that sees certain ethnic groups as having an intrinsic 'business culture' or a 'cultural predisposition to business' has been more widely criticised (cf. Kloosterman, van der Leun and Rath 1998, 1999; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Light and Gold 2000; Portes, Guarnizo and Haller 2002; Zhou 2004). Instead, it should be argued that the development of such a culture is often a reaction to structural factors such as unemployment or discrimination (Barrett, Jones and McEvoy 1996). Pécoud (2001) called for the need to further explore the connection between business and culture in the case of ethnic minority groups, since ethnic economies are necessarily embedded in a socio-cultural context and economic life is in any case influenced by culture. More relevant to the context of my research is Zhou's (2004) emphasis on the advantages of adopting a new perspective that goes beyond the one centring on the host country only, in the study of transnational economic activities.

In chapter 6 of this thesis I draw on the interplay of the community and market realms of the economy in a transnational context as a means to offer new insights into the complexity of exchange practices. The shifting relationships between local actors and global stages that take place through the interaction of market and place have been investigated by Bestor (2003), within an anthropological approach to space and place. Through the example of the transnational tuna trade, Bestor argued that market and

place are not disconnected through the globalisation of economic activity, but rather reconnected in different ways. He was interested in how transnational networks of trade create social structures that link previously unarticulated segments of local societies, economies and politics. Focusing on trade between Mexico and the United States, Alvarez and Collier (1994) highlight the differences of ethnic social organisation. Through the example of southern and northern Mexican truckers, they provide evidence of how distinctive cultural styles of economic organisation are used as a way to secure a definitive and singular presence in alien territory. Yet apart from a few examples such as these, in studies of transnational economic activity it is the side of the host country that is usually examined, whereas little is known about the effects on the communities involved in production or intermediary trade in sending countries. By combining a multi-sited methodology with insights from economic anthropology and migration studies, I hope to contribute to filling this gap. Through a close look at transnational kinship and social networks that, from both countries, play a role in the exchange, I argue that both domains of the economy defined by Gudeman have to be explored in order to better understand how local economies and local systems of value and exchange are incorporated in new ways into wider global market networks (Stone *et al.* 2000: 9).

Much of the debate on migrant and ethnic business has been centred on the interactive relationship between migrant traders' involvement in co-ethnic and kinship networks, entailing a complex array of solidarity and obligation elements, and in the socio-economic and politico-institutional environment of the host country. This dual framing is what Kloosterman, van der Leun and Rath (1999) have named 'mixed embeddedness', following Polanyi's (1944) famous concept of 'embeddedness', which expresses the idea that human economy has always been embedded in society and that a self-regulating market economy could never be possible.³⁵ A further insight is offered by Kothari (2008), who introduces the notion of migrant traders' cosmopolitanism, suggesting, in a way that follows the view of cosmopolitanism debated above in this chapter, that the concept cannot be limited to an elite, educated western traveller. On the contrary, for the Bangladeshi and Senegalese street traders in Barcelona that her research focuses on, cosmopolitanism is acquired through their use of networks, multiple cultural encounters and the process of living in and moving through a variety of places, where openness to others is necessary to sustain a livelihood in an uncertain and

³⁵ Others after Polanyi have borrowed the concept of 'embeddedness' when analysing the relationship between economic transactions and existing social relations (cf. Granovetter 1985).

unfamiliar environment (Kothari 2008). Likewise, Pécoud (2001) has argued that although the existence of immigrant communities usually generates a demand for 'ethnic products', few businesses can survive by relying exclusively on co-ethnic customers. He illustrates this view with the example of Turkish shops in Berlin, which have started adapting their products to customers of other ethnic groups in Germany.

To what extent do similar adaptations take place amongst Guinean food traders in Lisbon? What 'old' and 'new' networks do they use? Within networks mobilised in economic activities in the West African context, religion has been pointed out as a resource that might be used to gain authority and social status, as well as new contacts for the business, such as in the case of the Senegalese Murid (Bava 2003; Buggenhagen 2011; Evers 1994). Gender, too, can play a role in such strategies, as the female economic solidarity practices analysed by Guérin (2006) demonstrate. In their comparative research on Korean and Iranian businesses in Los Angeles, Min and Bozorgmehr (2000) emphasise the influence of class resources in migrant business patterns, such as size, type and location. Their findings indicate that Korean migrants, relying more on ethnic resources than Iranians, establish on average smaller businesses, serving mainly co-ethnics and low-income minority customers. Iranian businesses, which more often mobilise class resources, are usually larger, more dispersed, and serve a larger population of white customers. Although my research is not a comparative one and trying to categorise systems of class in Guinea-Bissau is, as I explained in the previous chapter, a difficult task, all these are relevant questions to reflect on when analysing Guinean migrants' transnational food trade.

Equally relevant to the context of this research is Portes and Zhou's (1992) definition of 'bounded solidarity' and 'enforceable trust'. The first is created through migrants' cultural distinctiveness, reinforcing their common origin, shared cultural heritage and mutual obligations amongst co-ethnic business owners, workers and customers. The latter reinforces the commonly accepted norms and guarantees the application of sanctions by the community in case of deviance (Zhou 2004). Drawing on the notion of trust and its implications for Guinean traders, I will explore how it is built in relation to networks of kinship, co-ethnics or strangers.

When locating this discussion in specific regional contexts, there are further important elements to consider. As MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Canga (2000) point out in their study on Congolese traders in Paris, migrants' choice for operating outside or at

the margins of the law can be counterbalanced with the construction of reliable social relations that are the basis of their own created order. Cassarino (2000), in his research on Tunisian entrepreneurs in Europe, advanced an interesting view on migrants' possible preference for a low profile and limited interaction with formal institutions in order not to jeopardise or compromise other types of more informal established networks. Because much of this debate is associated with the informal sector of the economy, I will now situate the concept of informality in my research.

2.6.3. Understanding an informal landscape

Informality in contemporary Africa has been examined in the literature as either an occasion for dynamic, vibrant and creative livelihood practices, or as an agent of poverty, collapsing economies, ethnic conflict and violent civil wars.³⁶ In her study of business and social networks involved in informal commerce in Cape Verde, Grassi (2003) emphasised the crucial fact that local informal sellers are active participants in the formation of global spaces. Yet rapid informalisation is not a uniquely African phenomenon, and understanding its importance in the Guinean and Portuguese social landscapes is important to my multi-sited research. As I described in chapter 1, informality has been favoured in the construction and public works sectors in Portugal. Another sector of the informal labour market in Portugal, which is at the centre of my research, is hawking. As Lopes (2006) observed in relation to the gypsy communities of Lisbon, hawking is seen by the Portuguese state as a dubious occupation which challenges the norms of an industrialised, capitalist economy. Ironically, though, as Lopes goes on to argue, associating such unconventional work with 'predatory', 'parasitic' or 'wasteful' activities practised by marginal groups goes hand in hand with the current threats to more stable, salaried work (2006: 333).

Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec (2003) have stressed that less formality, more than institutionalised relations, can enable greater flexibility and responses to the challenges that transnational migration poses over time. In fact, as opposed to approaches analysing it as a pre-defined separate sector of the economy, I examine informality as resulting from a variety of opportunities which can be explored through the lens of personal relationships and individual dynamics, and not only through state regulations and their avoidance. I therefore argue for the need to pay attention to the coexistence of formality

³⁶ Meagher (2007) provides an overview of this literature.

and informality in different contexts, as well as to their mutual advantages and disadvantages, instead of idealising either and ignoring their permeable boundaries. Although I take into account the history of power relationships amongst differentiated social segments, I reject the state-centric definition of what is legal or illegal in the context of this research and argue for the advantages of considering the migrants' point of view.

In Portugal, unlike the more formal migrant business structures run predominantly by Asian migrants, migrants' informal street trade has not received attention in research on transnationalism and migration, ethnic entrepreneurship or economic anthropology.³⁷ One of the reasons for this oversight might be related to the fact that such activities of exchange, although socially and culturally dynamic, are relatively small in scale and limited in terms of their economic contribution to migrants' and their families' incomes. Yet they are often key alternative strategies to paid work, especially in view of the recent economic crisis in Europe, and understanding these experiences will fill an important gap in current research. What is more, there has been limited appreciation of the way social networks (a paradigm that has, since the mid-1990s, been favoured to the detriment of informality) vary within or between different African societies (Meagher 2010). To this lack of attention, I argue, we can add a general neglect of the way these differences might be influenced by migration, and Africans' consequent participation in a wider transnational context. In chapter 6 of my thesis I will contribute to fill this gap by providing evidence of food street trade as a particular kind of informal transnational activity performed by a particular group of migrants and their home-based kin.

Experiences and perceptions of food and plants that Guineans use for the making of their transnational life-world can be tackled by observing production, consumption and exchange practices across borders, as well as the necessary adaptations that take place with migration. It can be tackled in the everyday spaces through which those things travel, in landscapes of memories from a past use of that material and in future projects where those things influence decisions in different ways. The following chapters will present my ethnographic and analytical interpretation of observations of these processes.

³⁷ Examples of existing studies on more formal ethnic businesses in Lisbon can be found in Fonseca and Malheiros (2004) and in a special issue of the Journal *Migrações*, edited by Oliveira and Rath (2008).

Chapter 3

The origin of Guinean living things:

Connecting people, plants and land

‘Amongst the things of the world are the people, the animals, the plants. All of them are living beings, endowed with spirit (...). They are all born, grow up, have children, get ill/old and die’ (Montenegro 2009: 13) [my translation].

3.1. Introduction

By the end of the first part of my fieldwork in Lisbon, as I was preparing my field trip to Guinea-Bissau, the important meanings of the notion of Guinean land and its intimate relation to people and food had been pointed out by my participants, directly and indirectly, on several occasions. Each Sunday, Wilson’s distribution of Guinean food in the housing estates of a peripheral district of Lisbon – an old shanty town converted into social housing in 2005 – generated such occasions, by stimulating conversations about the Guinean land which, although physically distant, was made present through the arrival of food that had grown in it. In those neighbourhoods, where many Guineans lived but no Guinean food shops or street markets were available, Guineans counted on the arrival of Wilson’s van to supply them with their preferred foodstuffs. As he slowly approached the area each week, there was usually someone who, from a window, a balcony, a courtyard or a coffee shop nearby, would notice his presence and announce it to the neighbours. On those gathering occasions, as the produce was held and smelled and the details of the exchange were negotiated with Wilson, the fertile land whence those food products originated was remembered.

On one of those Sunday mornings, a young Guinean woman was grilling fish outside a block of flats in one of the neighbourhoods. Aware of the arrival of Wilson’s van, she promptly shouted up a name to the window of a nearby first floor, while trying to keep down the fire from the grill. As soon as the child who had been called came to the window, she said excitedly:

‘Go to my place and get my wallet quickly. Teresa’s son is here.’

Then, turning to Wilson, she added, smiling:

‘I want shrimp to pound. I haven’t had it in more than two years!’

A friendly conversation, soon shared by other residents who had in the meantime come outside, developed along with the smell of the woman’s grilled fish, mixed with the different smells of Guinean foodstuffs that emanated from Wilson’s van, evoking a feeling of what the people gathered around the van described as *sodadi di tera* (nostalgia for the land).



Figures 6 and 7. Wilson’s food distribution

Yet land was, for them, associated with more than nostalgia and memories. The ways in which the Guinean transnational life-world is brought together via the travel of food and, to a certain extent, of the land wherein that food originates, were still to be ascertained at that initial stage of fieldwork. Later, the role played by food (and land) in offering corporeal and spiritual protection, in influencing future migratory and return projects and perceptions of ‘development’ and ‘modernities’, as well as in generating new relationships of giving, reciprocating and exchanging across borders, were examples of such ways that I identified. In addition to the activation of memories, they will be addressed in turn in the following chapters.

First, though, it is important to examine the meanings entailed in the notion of land for Guineans, since it will allow for a better understanding of what it means for migrants to feel connected to their land and the ways through which they try to reinforce

that connection. In this chapter, drawing on the theoretical framework concerning land, territory and ethnicity that I discussed in the previous chapter, I look at three different yet interconnected meanings of Guinean land. The first is related to the agricultural soil or resource-management practices, obviously important in a country that relies predominantly on agriculture. Looking at land as spaces of production – including cultivation areas, wild vegetation, water and forests – will set the basis for the comprehensive analysis of the relationship between production, exchange and consumption across borders that I will address in this thesis. The second set of meanings is, as Montenegro (2009) puts it in the quote that introduces this chapter, the relationship between all living things – animals, people and plants – as well as between these and the spirits of the ancestors (the *Iran*), seen as the first and true owners of the land. Finally, land is linked to the notion of territory as the country or region of origin. Examining this final meaning of land using a historical approach will help to provide answers to some of the problems related to the notion of ethnicity discussed in the previous chapter, especially those raised by trying to position cultures within western-inspired maps (cf. Bohannan 1967; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Morphy 1995; Sarró 2010). Looking at how these meanings of land are interrelated in the Guinean life-world will provide the basis for my endeavour, throughout this thesis, to better understand the ways in which different aspects of Guinean sociality are worked over through the relation with the soil and agricultural processes, as well as with the spirits and ancestors (cf. Fairhead and Leach 1994, 1996; Gottlieb 1982).

In view of the way people perceive land and territory as connected to kinship and to a 'way of doing things' (Sarró 2010), special occasions might require a return to that origin territory – the vital Guinean *tchon* (an important Creole notion that can be translated as land, soil or territory). Wilson, for example, was the son of a Mandinga man and a Manjaco woman, well-known in the housing estates where he circulated from the time she was the one providing their residents with Guinean food. Since the Manjaco were widely represented amongst the residents of the area, as they are within the Guinean migrant community in general, Wilson and other Manjaco addressed each other as *parenti*, while recalling people and places left behind a few or many years ago. With the young woman who was grilling fish on the occasion described above, Wilson discussed the wish to be buried in *tera di Manjaco* (Manjaco land), which is seen by many as an important way to reconnect the spirit and the land after death (Gable 2006; Teixeira 2008).

Following Appadurai's (1988a) and Ben-Ze'ev's (2004) studies of food's relationship with regional or national belonging in the Indian and Palestinian contexts, respectively, this chapter will explore similar connections amongst Guineans. In which situations does Guinean food signify regional or ethnic divisions, a historical consciousness of the physical unities that preceded colonial territorial divisions or, especially in the migratory context, a sense of national belonging, for example?

In order to try to answer these questions, I will look at how perceptions of land embody the interplay of territory with 'ways of doing things', and at how agricultural work and the relationship between all living things that inhabit the soil impact upon perceptions and experiences of different plant- and food-related products. I will therefore focus on the material importance of land for the Guinean life-world. The stories observed during Wilson's weekly food distribution shed some light on this importance from the migratory side. Yet the key role played by Guinean land, from where food originates, and people's relationship with that land, cannot be looked at only from the destination pole of the migratory journey. Since one of the main arguments I make in my thesis is that both sides have to be considered in order to better understand how the Guinean life-world changes with the migration of people and things, this chapter will offer a more detailed look at the side of the country of origin.

The effects of international migration on conceptions and organisation of land and territory in the home country have however received little attention in the literature. To my knowledge, no notice has been given to the consequences of migrants' demand for products originating in Guinean land to the people involved in land-resource activities at home, however small-scale that demand might be. The role played by those in Guinea-Bissau in allowing for a link to be kept between migrants and Guinean land has also been widely ignored. In this chapter I try to fill these gaps in the literature, by introducing the products and the people that, from Guinea-Bissau, play a key role in bringing the Guinean transnational life-world together. I trace food products and plant medicines, as well as animal-based products used for amulet-making, back to the Guinean soil where they spring from before flying across borders to reach the migrant community in Lisbon.

The chapter is divided by types of products. In each section I identify meanings of land as resource-use, territory and relationships that are associated with each product, in order to try to better understand the complex connections involved in these

conceptions, while simultaneously creating the link to wider socio-economic spaces by means of migration. Having the biography of things as the guideline to this thesis, I will provide here the ethnographic evidence needed to understand how, from the side of the country of origin, people and land are connected through those things. It is only after acknowledging the importance of this connection that changes and continuities in the way land is important for migrants can be understood. Although one of the sections of this chapter focuses on plant- and animal-based medicines and amulets, it is food and plants that will remain the key living things under analysis in my thesis. The limited travel of animal-based products from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal is part of the motivation for my choice to refer more briefly to this kind of material, when compared to foods and plants. Amongst other reasons, that limitation is due to difficulties of shipment in terms of agricultural inspection, as well as to easier forms of adaptation of that material that migrants found in Lisbon, as the next chapter will show.

3.2. ‘The land where you were given life’: urban fresh vegetables, farmers and the land that connects both

When I arrived in Bissau for the second part of my fieldwork, identifying the origin of the Guinean food to which I had been introduced in Lisbon was what I had defined as my first task. In fact, looking at the relationships between the land where the foodstuffs grow, the farmers who harvest that land, and other people involved in the process of sending those foodstuffs to Lisbon, was important for me to better understand the complex relationships between people and land, and how they influence food- and ethnic-related perceptions and experiences on both sides of the migration.

As I came to understand upon arrival in Bissau, most Guinean fresh vegetables – which comprise the majority of the foodstuffs that travel to Lisbon – originate in Bissau and its surrounding areas. The increasing reliance of urban households on agricultural activities was mentioned earlier in this thesis as a way of coping with the rising living costs felt by urban dwellers after the introduction of the SAP reforms. It is precisely in the vegetable gardens and swamp areas used for agricultural land that dominate the landscape of Bissau (Lourenco-Lindell 1995) that those travelling vegetables grow.

In addition to cost-effective advantages for transnational traders, the proximity of production sites to the city is of key importance for the activity of sending food to the

migrant community, due to the need for the produce to arrive fresh in Lisbon. A need for internal transportation over a longer distance would hinder the process, in a country where a general electricity shortage inhibits proper refrigeration and poor road infrastructure makes transport of goods to the capital inefficient.



Figures 8 and 9. A vegetable garden and an agricultural swamp area divided in plots, in Bissau

The urban smallholdings (known in Guinean Creole as *orta*) where the ‘migrant’ vegetables grow are harvested mainly by Pepel women whose ancestors settled long ago in Bissau,³⁸ and by the Mancanha from the neighbouring coastal areas of Bula and Có (see Figure 1). The Pepel, being historically from Bissau, were entitled to their plots of land in the city according to customary law and to the contracts that the first settlers made with the *Iran* who inhabited that territory. Most of the Mancanha have, instead, either bought their plots or rent them from the local Pepel *regulo* (king), to whom they pay between 3,000 and 10,000 CFA francs (between five and twenty dollars) a year, depending on the extent of the land. During the rainy season, the Balanta are hired for rice cultivation in Bissau’s salt water swamps, a period which was often described to me by Pepel and Mancanha farmers as *tempu di Balanta* (the Balanta time).

Ethnicity, as I discussed before, is understood as a way of doing things. Given the importance of agriculture in Guinea-Bissau, this way of doing things includes similar cultivation methods. The notion of *tempu di Balanta* illustrates the need to shift away from the conceptualisation of ethnicity as bound to a fixed territory, since people of different ethnic origins move geographically, even if temporarily, for different purposes.

³⁸ The city of Bissau is also known as *tchon di Pepel* (Pepel land).

It is also an example of the relationship between ethnicity, agriculture and food. In fact, in spite of the negotiations and fluid boundaries of such constructed categories, different ethnic groups share similar cultivation techniques,³⁹ are specialised in specific products and cook distinct dishes, often dependant on the biodiversity of their *tchon* of origin. Moreover, while other ethnic groups were specialised in different economic activities in the past, such as long-distance trade amongst the Mandinga or cattle raising amongst the Fula, the Mancanha have historically been farmers whose migration, both internal and to Senegal during the nineteenth century, often followed the search for new arable land (Jao 2003). Fanta, a Futa-Fula woman who regularly bought foodstuffs to send to Lisbon, once shared her view of the different relationships that the Fula and the Mancanha had with agricultural products:

‘The Mancanha’s *badjiki* and *djagatu* are better than those of the Fula from Bafatá [in the east]. The Fula know more about trading than about farming. The Fula, when buying foodstuffs, force everything into a bag and tie it. The Mancanha do it carefully in order not to damage the produce.’

Nevertheless, some Mancanha farmers in the Pepel territories of Bissau have now different aspirations, which require a detachment from agricultural work. It was not rare, during fieldwork, to hear them being criticised by women of other ethnic origins, who identified their present unwillingness to harvest the land, as their ancestors used to do, with manifestations of laziness. As Teresa – Wilson’s Manjaco mother – once put it:

‘According to tradition, the Mancanha were the ones to harvest the fields. Then the Pepel started to replace them, because the Mancanha don’t want to do it anymore.’

Negative perceptions of agricultural work in Guinea-Bissau are however not just experienced by the Mancanha. The influence of historical processes in forming such perceptions has been analysed by Temudo and Abrantes (2012), who have shown that post-colonial failure in improving the living conditions in rural areas, the low price of agricultural products and obstacles to their transport and commercialisation, as well as the perception that development funds are being usurped by the urban elite and projects’ staff, are amongst the main reasons for the negative views of agricultural-based livelihoods, especially amongst the youth (2012: 29).

³⁹ Temudo (2011, 2012) has written extensively about the Balanta’s techniques of rice farming.

Yet these views are not limited to rural areas. In fact, the deterioration of the living conditions of the majority of the urban population shaped similar perceptions in the city. When I visited Pona's plot of land in the Bandim area of Bissau, one of her sons, who was brushing part of the land while his sisters watered another part, shared his discontent with me:

'This job is very tiring. It makes us grow old too quickly!'

In this instant of seeming despair he looked me in the eyes and asked for my support, while complaining about the absence of mechanised production techniques that could help him in his task. He wondered if I could help with new technology that might ease his work, given my European provenance. Yet it is precisely the fact that all agricultural systems are rainfed and maintained through endogenous techniques where agro-chemicals are not used that makes Guinean consumers in Bissau and in Lisbon perceive Guinean produce as healthier and tastier than exogenous food, as I will show in the next chapter.

A more recent phenomenon that contributes to shape negative views of agricultural work in Bissau seems to be precisely the participation in the transnational food trade, due to the new aspirations it generates. This involvement, especially amongst Mancanha farmers, strengthens their own migratory hopes and plans, linked to the imagination of a wealthier life in Europe. Mila, for example, was a Mancanha farmer whose plot of land was situated near the airport of Bissau. She had established a close relationship of exchange with the Fula relatives of migrant traders, who bought her produce to send to Lisbon. Her awareness of her vegetables' final destination clearly played a role in intensifying her migratory projects. At the end of my first visit to her plot of land, as she accompanied me to the main road to find a local transport that could take me home, Mila asked me to help her follow her crops on their weekly journey to Portugal.

'Can you help me?' – she asked me in a begging tone. 'Who is going to take me? There are no jobs here, you see? There, I could do anything! All my *kandja* [okra] and *badjiki* [roselle leaves] go to Portugal. Why can't I make it too?'

On the other hand, Mila's discourse when presenting her cultivated plants to me revealed the intimate relationship between plants and social practices in Guinea-Bissau, where birth, health, death and fertility are common problems to plants, animals and

human beings, and the grammar that regulates these three worlds, all originating in the same land, abides by the same set of rules (cf. Fairhead and Leach 1994, 1996).

‘*Badjkii ka padi inda*’ [the roselle leaves haven’t given birth yet] – she explained, pointing to the cultivated area where the leaves should already be growing, as we were approaching the end of the dry season. On the same occasion, she told me about the unknown illness that was affecting *djagatu* (African eggplant), causing a widespread death of the plant that season, and not allowing for it to have *fidju* (children). Such an intimate relationship between plants and social practices is linked to the notion of land as the connection between all living things. As people in Bissau often told me:

‘They [Guinean foodstuffs] are part of the land where you were given life [*tchon ki bo padidu nel*].’

When I visited her plot of land after we first met at Caracol, the local food market where she sold her produce, Mila confessed to have initially thought I was involved in the business of sending Guinean food to Portugal. Once the reason for my curiosity became clear to the women farmers, I started receiving endless invitations to visit their plots. It was on one such occasion that I met Diya, another Mancanha farmer who became one of my key informants and friends, and whose frequent travels to the Mancanha territories of Farim, Bolama and Bula were an example of the complexity of Guineans’ perception of land and of the actual importance that regional territory gains on some occasions.

Aware of my presence in the local food market of Caracol – where the vegetables that would be sent to Lisbon were bought, predominantly by the Fula – and of the fact that I had been visiting several plots of land around Bissau, Diya first asked Teresa, who I had met on my first visit to the market and was coincidentally her sister-in-law, what my intentions were. Teresa tried to explain my research to her. Having overheard the explanations, however, I interfered in the conversation and helped to clarify my purposes.

‘So why don’t you tell her that I have an *orta* too?’ – Diya energetically asked Teresa.

Turning to me, she added:

‘When can you come and visit it?’

And so I did. However, it only happened after several failed attempts. Dija often missed our previously arranged appointments in order to attend the funeral of relatives or acquaintances in Mancanha *tchon*. When we finally met again, she said:

‘*N’ka pui dia gos. Ora ku n’pui dia, utru alguin ta lembra di muri.*’ [I’m not going to set a date for us to meet now. Every time I set a date, someone else remembers to die].

For Dija, such events were an occasion to go back to Farim or Bolama – territories of Mancanha settlements following their internal migratory movements – or even to Bula, believed to be the ancestral origin of all the Mancanha,⁴⁰ and meet with other Mancanha friends and relatives nowadays spread over different regions.

In fact, special ceremonies and rituals amongst the Mancanha take place most of the time in Bula or Có, where they go back frequently, following the notion of *tchon tchoma* (the land is calling), which is common to most groups when it comes to rites of passage such as initiations, marriages or deaths. This ‘calling’ from the land is also why the young Manjaco woman who was grilling fish during Wilson’s Sunday distribution near Lisbon, as described in the introduction of this chapter, felt the need for her funeral to take place in Guinea-Bissau.

Understanding what *tchon* means for Guineans is important for the discussion of land as linked to the formation of ethnic identities, associated with particular ways of doing things but also to a particular regional homeland. As I mentioned before, territories, cultivation techniques and food are associated in specific ways with certain ethnic groups. Through her own life history, Quinta, one of my informants in Lisbon once explained such connections. In her discourse, the entwinement of religion and ethnicity and their interplay with territory were emphasised, providing evidence of the complexity of such processes:

‘It depends on the *tribu* [tribe]. Each *tribu* has its own dish (...). My father is Cape Verdean and my mother is a Christian from Bafatá. But I am *fidju di Farim* [daughter of Farim]. Our traditional food... We, sons of Farim, what we like most is *brindji di skilon* [dish of fish broth with rice]. It’s a Christian’s food.’

⁴⁰ There are different stories about the origin of the Mancanha. One legend says that the name Mancanha derives from Emancanha – the first son of Brahma (the son of a Fula king) and Mbula (a Mandinga princess). Because their parents were enemies, they ran away and had their son Emancanha in a safe fertile land that is now called Bula (Fonseca 1997).

I cite Quinta's narrative in this chapter due to the way it exemplifies the connections involved. The way food is used by migrants like her as signifiers of their contexts – the house, the village, the region, the religion or the nation, as Ben-Ze'ev (2004) has argued for the Palestinian context – will be revealed in the next chapters. As I will then show, the arrival of Guinean foodstuffs in Lisbon is a way for migrants to compensate for the physical distance that has been imposed between them and their *tchon*. By moving from the origin land to the migration setting, Guinean foodstuffs take part of that *tchon* with them, offering bodily and spiritual protection, influencing memories and projects of return and impacting upon relationships of exchange – the topics that will be explored in the following chapters. Women play a key role in enabling this process from the homeland, and I will now focus on the impacts that the transnational trade of food has upon their livelihoods.

3.2.1. Women, farming and crop commercialisation in Guinea-Bissau

The land where the vegetables and fruits that travel to Lisbon grow is mainly harvested by women. These vegetables and fruits comprise the key ingredients in the sauces (*mafe*) that accompany rice (*bianda*) – the main staple food in Guinea-Bissau – when meat and fish are not affordable. They are especially important for migrants, since it is often these sauces that, made with produce from Guinean land, endow exogenous food with a Guinean taste and value. *Badjiki* (roselle leaves), *djagatu* (African eggplant), *kandja* (okra), *malagueta* (chilli) and *sukulbembe* (West African pepper) – as well as palm oil and groundnuts – are used to prepare sauces like *kaldu branku* (chilli and lemon), *kaldu di tcheben* (palm oil), *kaldu di mankara* (groundnuts) or *baquitche* (okra and eggplant), for example.

In Guinea-Bissau, as elsewhere in Africa, women's agricultural activities are an example of how resource-management practices have intersected with local and wider processes of socio-economic change. In addition to the important feminist debate concerning the effects of such changes on women's positions within relationships of power and the need to understand the heterogeneity of social organisation forms in African societies, which I discussed in chapter 2, I concur with Aguilar *et al.* (2001) and Havik's (1995) view of the situation in Guinea-Bissau, according to which more recent processes of change such as those resulting from the SAP reforms actually generated new livelihood opportunities for women in the urban context. Moreover, urban commercial

farming is now targeting not only the local food markets of Bissau, but also those in Lisbon, created through migrants' need for homeland products. Women's urban smallholdings, which were initially a creative response to the dilemmas generated by those processes of change, nowadays also respond to that new demand from the diaspora. The result is that women urban farmers, who harvest the land both for subsistence and commercial purposes, are more able to accumulate personal savings and have therefore increasing opportunities for social and economic independence.

It is nonetheless necessary not to succumb to a romantic view of such changes. As the feminist debate has shown for other African countries (cf. Boserup 1970; Moore 1988; Mueller 1977), women commercial farmers in Bissau, who are known in Guinean Creole as *bideiras*, use most of their earnings in the household, and are therefore unable to spend much on personal items. *Bida* – the etymological origin of the term *bideira* – means 'life'. *Bideira* thus embodies a whole notion of a particular gendered social world, referring not only to women farmers or vendors of small foodstuffs in markets, but to women who search for or make life (*fasi bida*). What is more, *bideiras* are not necessarily only farmers, but also intermediaries who buy the produce from the farmers and resell it in the food markets of Bissau, adding extra complexity to the way money is generated and distributed.



Figure 10. *Bideira* selling okra that would be sent to Lisbon, at Caracol market, Bissau

Linked to women's income from the activity of *bideiras* and the above-mentioned use of that income in the household are gender-distinct earning patterns, often translated in men's larger but more intermittent income and women's smaller but more regular earnings, resulting from what *bideiras* call *bindi pikininu* (small selling). As women often explained to me, their small but regular income from commercial farming is mainly employed in basic supplies for their children and to help each other and their mothers, following practices of female solidarity commonly found in West Africa. Not without a touch of criticism towards the men's use of money, Mila once told me:

'For us, women, it's just *kansera* [tiredness]. We can't sit down. We have to come here [the *orta* and the market]; we can't wait for our men. Because the men of today... One day they bring something home, the other day they don't. So, we have to come here to make a little money to help our children, to pay for their school and buy them rice and clothes. And to help our mothers as well, because now they have nothing to help us with, so we have to help each other. We can't leave it all in our husbands' hands!'

Another new element that results from *bideiras*' participation in the transnational trade of food is their emerging migratory projects, as the example of Mila illustrated above. Being the producers of the foodstuffs that perform an ever more desired travel to Europe contributes to reinforce these projects. In Caracol market, where *bideiras* sell their crops, readymade slogans announcing the freshness of the vegetables and a guaranteed safe arrival in Europe could often be heard. '*Odja i badjiki pa Europa!*' [Look, here's *badjiki* to send to Europe], as *bideiras* often shouted in the market, revealed an awareness of what their vegetables' final destination was. This awareness, associated with images of a wealthier life in Europe, often strengthened the desire for migration. The complex ways in which such perceptions of wealth are associated with a desired development that simultaneously threatens the food's qualities will be examined in detail in chapter 5. I will now explore the origins of other kinds of produce that, although in smaller quantities, also travel to Portugal.

3.3. Tracing food from Guinean orchards, wild fruit trees and waters

In addition to fresh vegetables, there are other foodstuffs that, being an important part of Guineans' eating habits, also reach the migrant community in Lisbon. The fact that

they can endure longer conservation periods makes them originate most of the time far from Bissau and often go through more intermediary levels between production and consumption. The impacts of that distance upon the exchange relationships established with the migrant traders' kin, the creation of new strategies of transporting the goods to the city, as well as the way in which some of these foodstuffs are, like fresh vegetables, associated with particular ethnic groups, production techniques or regions of origin, will be examined in this section.

Examples of such food products include palm oil and palm kernels – the main ingredients in *kaldu di tcheben*, one of Guinea-Bissau's most iconic dishes – groundnuts, cashew nuts and other popular fruits such as Guinea gumvine (*fole*), baobab fruit (*kabasera*), *néré* (*faroba*) and velvet tamarind (*veludo*) – the last three sent as dry pulp to be prepared as juices. In addition to these, mangos are one of the most desired food-products by Guineans, and the mango season in Guinea-Bissau is especially awaited, just as it is highly celebrated in Lisbon when the first fruits start to arrive, sent by the migrants' kin. As I was planning my trip to Guinea-Bissau around November 2009, all my Guinean friends and informants insisted that I could not come back to Lisbon before the start of the mango season, approximately in April the following year. Having followed their advice, it was when the first fruits started to fall in Bissau that I could observe their importance, not just in terms of consumption, but also of commercialisation. My visit to Dija's *orta*, after several failed attempts due to her need to attend special ceremonies in 'Mancanha land', as I described above, provided evidence of the importance of mango exchange and of the impact that the high demand of that fruit from the Guinean migrant community of Lisbon had upon her and others' livelihood strategies.

When I arrived at her house in Cumura, about six miles from Bissau, the neighbours approached me from the backyard to say that she had not come back yet. I did not immediately understand where she would come back from, yet I sat down waiting near them, as they prepared cashew wine by mashing the fruit and leaving it to ferment. It was not until she arrived with her husband, their children and large basins full to the brim with mangos that I realised where they had been – to the state mango orchard (*granja*), where she regularly bought mangos to resell in the streets of Bissau or directly to the transnational traders who then shipped them to Lisbon.

'More than fifty women come every day!' – she excitedly explained, aware of my sudden interest in that business.

Although she had called me to see her vegetable *orta* on the other side of the main road, I was now really willing to visit the *granja* as well. Mango was one of the main seasonal fruits travelling to Lisbon from Bissau, and part of the mangos picked by Dija and her family had that destination. Offering me three mangos to take back home after I accompanied her to the vegetable *orta*, Dija invited me to come back the following week to visit the *granja*.

I went back as agreed. This time we walked together to the mango orchard, where she introduced me to the different state officials: the *chefe de posto* (the person in charge of the orchard), the staff who managed the large scale where dozens of women queue to have their mangos weighed, and the young boys from the surrounding *tabanka* (villages), who were hired for the specific task of climbing the mango trees with a long stick and picking the fruits from very high up. Down by the trees, two women caught the mangos that the boys threw down with a stretched cloth held from both sides.



Figures 11 and 12. Women catching mangos and taking them to the state office to weigh, at the state mango orchard in Cumura, Guinea-Bissau

Dija, like other women, collected and bought these mangos from the state officials for 200 CFA per kilo. Reselling each fruit, which weighs around half a kilo, for 150 or 200 CFA, she managed to double the money invested. That day, Dija had bought more than forty mangos to sell in bulk to Teresa and Djariatu, two of the transnational food traders on the Bissauan side of the chain. They would soon reach Lisbon's informal market.

Other food products purchased to send to Lisbon were acquired in large quantities from any of the several storehouses spread in Bissau that sell in bulk, or from

the nearby weekly markets (the *lumu*, described in chapter 1), whose regularity rotates between regionally strategic locations, allowing for commercial exchanges to take place between the rural and urban or peri-urban areas. One of the storehouses in Bissau from where the produce was bought to send to migrant traders in Lisbon was that of Inussa. Inussa was a Susu *lokatero* – the name given to those responsible for the transport of rural producers' goods to the city – from the south. He and his associates represented the complex interethnic mix that characterises the southern region where they, as well as the products they brought to Bissau, came from – Tombali. Amadu, one of his associates, was Fula, and managed the storehouse. Malam was of Nalu origin, and had specialised in transporting kola nuts, abundant in his region of origin. Karamó was also Nalu, specialised in the palm oil business. When asked about the reason for such apparently well defined product specialisation, they simply retorted: 'This is where my luck is.' This clear organisation of the business which surprised me at first was, however, part of the informal organisation of African markets that generally characterise all food-related activities, in which product specialisation is an important part. This is a practice that, as shall be seen in chapter 6, is reproduced with migration. Yet the constant reference to 'luck' that they continued to bring forward in conversations related to the business made me realise that it was also, as Richards (1939) observed long ago in northern Rhodesia, the embodiment of the relationship with the land's living things that blessed their business and should therefore not be broken.

Inussa's job as *lokatero* consisted of a rented truck, a storehouse where the products were kept in Bissau and an organised weekly journey to the difficult-to-access southern regions, acting as facilitator or intermediary between the producers in the south and their clients in Bissau, who would later resell these products in the local markets or sell in bulk to the transnational traders' kin. In addition to palm oil and kola nuts, different species of dried or smoked fish and seafood (*djafal*, *bagre*, *gandin*, *kuntchurbedja* and oyster, amongst others) were bought from storehouses such as Inussa's, to send to Lisbon. Although artisanal fishing is practised in the estuary of the Geba River, where the city of Bissau is situated, these urban fishing activities are not large enough to enter the transnational trade of food, and most fish that travels to Lisbon originates in other parts of the country. It therefore goes through more complex intermediary levels than the vegetables of urban production in the exchange chain. Yet close relationships are also established, not so much between producers and buyers, but between the latter and intermediaries like Inussa. On one of my visits to Inussa's

storehouse in Bissau, I was introduced to Buba *Skalada*, a friendly nickname associated with his job of bringing species of dried and salted fish (known as *skalada*) from the south. As we started talking, I realised that he sold this product weekly to Safiatu, one of my informants in Bissau who then shipped it to Lisbon. Soon after, over a drink in the evening, Safiatu exclaimed:

‘So you met *Skalada* already?’

And we both laughed at the way in which the people involved in the Guinean transnational food exchange were so closely interrelated, which luckily made it so much easier for me to meet most of them.

In fact, in spite of the larger distance between production, distribution and consumption in the case of these products, and of the consequent need for more negotiations, the exchange relationships established between intermediary and client still followed an informal contract of exclusivity comparable to those established between farmers and buyers of urban vegetables. This exclusivity is another element playing a role in the well defined regulations that characterise African markets, which I will explore in detail in chapter 6.

Furthermore, just as urban vegetable production is associated with the Mancanha, certain types of fishing activities are also related to specific ethnic groups and territories. *Selebsonh*, for example, is a small type of dried fish also known as *pis Balanta* (Balanta fish), since it is mainly fished and sold by women of this ethnic group, in the southern regions of Guinea-Bissau. Transnational traders and consumers in Bissau and in Lisbon are aware of this fish’s origin and its link to a particular *tchon* and to specific fish preparation techniques. Once, pointing at her recently arrived packages of small dried fish that her daughter had sent from Bissau, Kadi – a Guinean food seller in Lisbon originally from Bolama Island – exclaimed with a longing smile:

‘In Bolama we have really good fish; I miss the way we used to eat it fresh. Having it dried like this is more a tradition from the south.’

Kadi’s reference to Bolama as her homeland – more than to an ethnic group of origin – which she associated with a certain food tradition (fresh fish) is illustrative of the difficulties that lay in any attempt to position Guinean ethnic groups in maps. Having initially told me she was Fula, given her father and husband’s Fula origin, she later laughed at the idea of ‘ethnic belonging’ and said:

'I am *Bolanhes* [from Bolama]. I am everything.'

She was then not only referring to the complex ethnic mix that characterised the female lineage of her family, but also to the larger historical process entailed in the history of Bolama Island, which has been inhabited in different periods by Africans and Europeans of many different origins who never fully dominated the area (Pélissier 2001a).

Unfortunately, 'Bolama style' fresh fish could not endure a long travel without proper refrigerating conditions. However, dried fish trade across borders also faces obstacles, mostly linked to processes of agricultural inspection, and only small quantities are able to circulate. The same obstacles are faced by plant medicines, whose healing properties make them an essential material for Guinean migrants in Lisbon to cope with the disconnection from Guinean land. I will now trace these plants' origin, as well as that of animal-based products used for amulet-making.

3.4. Plant- and animal-based medicinal products from the Guinean woodlands

Most Guinean plants are endowed with a variety of healing qualities that are used for an array of medicinal practices. From fruit trees, for example, it is not just the fruit that is used to make juices. The seeds, leaves, branches, roots, trunk and bark have specific properties which, combined with different preparation and application methods (for example boiled, dried or uncooked, either to drink or to clean the body with) fulfil specific medicinal purposes. As elsewhere in Africa, a wide range of Guinean forest products and their effects and uses have been identified and labelled by European and African technicians in collaboration with traditional healers and wise men (cf. Gomes *et al.* 2003).⁴¹ They have also been examined in Frazão-Moreira's (2009) anthropological study of the relationship between the Nalu from the Tombali region in the south of Guinea-Bissau and their surrounding natural world. Nevertheless, the ways in which Guineans relate to concrete medicinal plants vary significantly, even more so when international migration is concerned. In Lisbon, some diseases are seen by migrants as resulting from a change in food habits and life-style, usually involving an accumulation of stress and anxiety. Stories regarding appropriate medicinal plants used for each specific treatment did not always coincide and were even contradictory at times, but

⁴¹ In the broader West African context, a new six-volume edition of *The Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa* (Burkill 1985) provides a detailed description of a variety of plants and their uses.

comprised an important part of daily conversations amongst migrants. The wide range of effects they are thought to produce and the required specialised knowledge that only some people possess, either inherited or learned, contribute to these varied perceptions, drawn together by the general belief in the products' beneficial properties.

Like fish, wild plant medicines are shipped and sold dried, which makes them last longer and imposes fewer restrictions on their territorial origin, by diminishing the need for proximity to the capital. Since Fula and Mandinga migrants from the eastern regions of Guinea-Bissau play the key role in making these plants available in Lisbon through their family-based transnational trading networks, most travelling medicinal plants originate in the eastern savannah woodlands of Gabu and Bafatá, rather than the dense forests of the south.

Infali was a Mandinga healer who managed a 'pharmacy', as the open space for *mesinhu* ['traditional' medicines] transactions was known in the Bandim area of Bissau where it was situated. On my first visit to his pharmacy, he gave me a tour around the square and showed me every type of plant and animal product, explaining each associated effect. The products were brought from the eastern savannah woodlands around Bafatá and Gabu, either directly by specialised hunters and herbalists, or by intermediaries who travelled to the forests to get the products and resell them in the city. Infali performed his healing job in his house at the back of the square where his pharmacy stood or, at times, having the patient lie on a mat in that same open space.

In his pharmacy, two different kinds of *mesinhu* could be found. The first kind, made of tree parts, is known in Creole as *mesinhu di tera* (medicines from the land), which brings in the importance of the land and the trees that grow in it. It is especially important for migrants in foreign land to alleviate the corporeal adversities brought on, amongst other things, by cold temperatures and unknown food, but also, depending on the application method, problems resulting from jealousy and threats of *djanfa*. The second kind is not only made of plants but also animal products (such as wild pig tooth, lizard or hare skin, turtle shell, cowry shells, porcupine spines, gazelle, buffalo or ram horns), and used as amulets. These, like plant medicines or in combination with them, can help to solve problems that go beyond health-related issues, such as work, family quarrels, intimate and emotional life, children's success in school and, amongst migrants, problems resulting from their migrant condition, like difficulties in obtaining

official documents or work permits (Saraiva 2008: 262). They can also provide protection against *djanfa*, express gratitude or make payments.

Infali defined both types primarily as *mesinhu di saude* and *mesinhu di asuntu* ('health medicines' and 'mind-related medicines'), the former being more often used by *kuranderu* (healers), the latter by *murú* (Muslim diviners). Being a Muslim Mandinga himself, he did not initially refer to the work of *djambakus*, who perform divination practices as the *murú* do, but rely on bush spirits rather than on God and the Qur'anic texts. Hesitantly, I asked Infali about the *djambakus*. His answer was straightforward:

'The *murú*'s work is valid, but the *djambakus*'s is not. They don't have *statutu* [status]... They don't have proper training, you see? They do what they want. The *murú* is real because they use the Book, and they learn how to use it in school.'



Figure 13. Animal products to be used for amulet-making and bottles with dried and liquid tree-parts to be used as medicines, at Bandim's pharmacy, Bissau

This distinction is not always, however, so clear-cut. In fact, I was first taken to Infali's pharmacy by my friend Dembó, a Muslim Biafada who had spent the morning telling me about his family's relation to the *Iran* of his village of origin near Bambadinca, in the eastern region of Bafatá, and how this had been hindering his future, especially creating obstacles to his plan of migrating to Portugal. Dembó used Infali's skills as diviner and healer to free him from this curse. The treatment, he said, involved verses from the Qur'an and specific plants endowed with the power of the bush spirits from the land whence they originated. Dembó's narrative and the different powers associated with

the products used therefore contribute to reinforce Johnson's (2006) argument that religion and ethnic belonging are not necessarily seen as two separate dimensions. It also exemplifies the fact that although Guineans often present themselves primarily as Muslims or Christians, the ancestral spirits generally find a space in the lives of both. Infali, too, after having claimed not to believe in the assistance that non-Muslim herbalists and healers are thought to gain from forest spirits, pointed to a man sitting nearby and introduced him to me as a renowned hunter with a sacred relation with the forest. The extent to which that sacredness had to do with the interference of God or of the forest spirits was, however, left unclear. In fact, as it was to happen often during fieldwork, the Mandinga, as well as the Fula, made frequent sharp distinctions at the level of discourse between Islamic healing practices, which draw their powers from God and the Qur'an, and the non-Muslim ones who rely on the bush spirits as a source of power. Yet in practice, as Dembó's narrative has shown, the material and spiritual properties of Guinean land, which are both important to most Guineans, make the two domains overlap.

With migration, the use of plant and animal medicines suffers adaptations, as I will show in the next chapter. Before Infali had to leave to assist a female patient who had arrived in the meantime, he went inside to fetch a cardboard box with three bottles containing a dark liquid, and explained:

'This is *mesinhu* for pancreas ailments. It must not be boiled. The roots stay in water for five days, and only then can the liquid be drunk. The correct dosage is one glass three times a day, for three days. If you take it for longer, it causes nausea and vomiting.'

After a pause, shedding some light on the adaptations that migration necessarily generates, he continued:

'But this kind of *mesinhu* is difficult to ship to Europe. Customs might accept the dried roots, but not the liquid infusion. The problem is that if one sends the roots, people there might not know the exact dosage.'

His nephew Quemo, who managed an *ajensia* nearby, responsible for sending and receiving families' gifts and reciprocities across borders, used to ship medicinal plants every week to Portugal, on behalf of his clients. Confirming the frequent practice

of sending *mesinhu* without prescription, he upheld his uncle's view of the problems related to the use of these medicines by migrants:

'They should preferably be sent with instructions on how to take them, or after a phone call where the patient in Portugal would learn the correct usage once the plants arrive, yet this is not always done. Only people with power can give these instructions, like my uncle.'

Moreover, Infali and other specialised healers in Bissau were concerned with the fact that although some *mesinhu* could not be given to 'white people' (*branku*), due to what they considered 'different constitution and habits', Guinean *mesinhu* traders in Lisbon might nonetheless sell them indiscriminately, in view of economic gains. Infali's concern with migrant vendors' possible unethical commercialisation of medicinal plants could be partly related to the historical view of the Fula – who prevail in the migrant trade business – which I described in chapter 1. In fact, the relationship between perceptions of the Fula as foreigners who have long been travelling large distances in search of better business opportunities and trade provides evidence of the complex and entwined meanings of land for Guineans. The fact that the Fula are often not seen by others as 'children of the land' – as Guineans of other ethnic origins frequently told me – means they are perceived as lacking that special relation with the land. Instead, they are seen as seekers of a more individualised well-being and material wealth, historically linked to the way they are described in the literature as a semi-feudal group dominated by a hierarchy of chiefs, nobles and religious men who lived from added value extorted from the lowest categories of farmers and artisans (Lopes 1982). Yet Fula *mesinhu* sellers in Lisbon had also ethic concerns regarding the commercialisation of these materials, which can be used for spiritual and bodily protection but also to enact *djanfa* on others. Aware of his responsibility as a migrant food and *mesinhu* trader in Lisbon, Alfa, for example, explained:

'I can't sell them to just anyone. These are medicines, it's a matter of responsibility. I can only sell to people I know, and only if I'm sure that they know how to use them.'

What is more, in terms of consumption, the Fula – either at home or abroad – like all Guineans, need to find comfort of both body and mind and, for them too, this comfort can be partly found in the land, through food and *mesinhu*. The next chapter will offer further insights into the Fula's relationship with the land.

3.5. Conclusions

This chapter has introduced the origin settings of the main products that, originating in Guinean land and travelling to Lisbon to be exchanged and consumed by Guinean migrants, will be explored in relation to different topics in the following chapters.

The ethnographic material presented here has demonstrated the importance of different meanings of land for Guineans, and ways in which these meanings overlap. First, land is important for resource-using activities of different kinds – cultivation areas, wild vegetation, water and forests. Second, intimately related to these activities are other aspects of socio-economic life, where specific techniques of land-use and related cultivated or wild products, for example, can be associated with particular ethnic groups. This fact is linked to geographical images according to which people of the same ethnic origin share similar lineages in space and ways of using land, as well as similar foods. Third, although a common region of origin might be important for different ethnic groups, the land, seen as a whole, is inhabited by spiritual entities that influence the Guinean life-world regardless of religious or ethnic differentiation.

Examples of the ways in which these meanings of land are intertwined have provided evidence of the complexity involved in trying to conceptualise ethnicity in Guinea-Bissau or, as I hope to have done, in trying to understand how Guineans perceive ethnicity. Alongside a close examination of people's perceptions, a historical approach is essential to reflect on how cultures and peoples did not cease to be identifiable on the map only with the increased mobility of people in the present, as anthropologists like Gupta and Ferguson (1992) called attention to two decades ago. Instead, in the West African region, a long history of migrations and cultural encounters set the basis for the complex relationships and negotiations of space between first-comers and late-comers (cf. Lentz 2007; Sarró 2010), as well as between these and the spirits who were the first true owners of the land (Temudo 2008). The way Guineans of a particular ethnic group nowadays identify their homeland with a particular space is linked to these historical movements that go beyond the political borders of present-day Guinea-Bissau, as perceptions of the Fula as foreigners or travellers are an example of. This historical consciousness acts therefore in conjunction with people's actual place of birth and with a way of doing things that includes the consumption of particular foods and techniques of land use.

Finally, the relationships established between people, plants, animals and spirits define another important meaning of land, linked to the life-bringing expression that land embodies. This relationship is visible for example in the language used to address the life-cycle of plants, animals or people, where to be born, to grow up, to have children, to be ill or to die are rituals that connect all living things. The role played by the spirits in these relationships is more evident in plant and animal-based medicines, not necessarily because spirits inhabit the savannah woodlands where these materials originate more than the fields where vegetables grow, but because their intervention is necessary for the healing and divination practices that require the use of those materials.

I have also looked at gender issues and at how wider processes of socio-economic change such as the SAP reforms have impacted specifically upon women's livelihoods, in particular those related to urban agriculture. Although gender will be analysed throughout my thesis not as a separate homogenous category but as an aspect of embodied social practices that interplay with other ways of inhabiting space, such as ethnicity and religion, I gave special attention to gendered urban farming in this chapter. The key and active role played by women in these activities could not, in fact, go unremarked, and the Guinean Creole notion of *bideiras*, which will be used throughout my thesis, had to be explained at this point. Their important role in making Guinean food-products available in Portugal was also explored, as were the ways in which their participation in the transnational trade of food impacts upon their own projects and aspirations.

The ethnographic material presented here has also provided evidence of the importance of commercial strategies, since vegetable and tree-cropping, as well as wild plant and animal use, are all at least partly oriented towards acquiring money. Several processes of change have introduced new difficulties and dilemmas in terms of resource-management, but also new interests and opportunities to which people have responded in creative ways. Migrants' demand for Guinean products is one of the ways in which land use – especially women's urban commercial farming – has found a new incentive. Even if at a small scale, this new demand impacts upon local social dynamics of resource use and on people's individual projects, just as migrants' livelihoods and everyday experiences are influenced by things springing from Guinean land.

The inevitable disruptions that international migration brings about in the relationship between Guinean people and land will be examined in the following

chapters. People like Wilson, whose van filled with Guinean produce is eagerly awaited each Sunday in the same peripheral neighbourhoods of Lisbon, play a fundamental role in compensating for that disruption. Like him, many other Guinean food traders in Lisbon contribute to a link being kept between migrants and Guinean land. The next chapter will introduce some of these migrant actors and analyse the adaptations in food-related practices and perceptions that take place with migration. Drawing from what has just been said, I will also explore ways in which these adaptations introduce changes in perceptions of regional and ethnic belongings. Following the distances imposed, one of the questions to be asked is whether or not the legacy of colonial borders gains more importance with migration.

Chapter 4

The travel of the land through its living things:

Adaptations in perceptions and uses of Guinean foods and plants in Lisbon

‘Even if I buy the meat... the chicken here, I have to cook it in the Guinean style. I cook a Guinean sauce with palm oil, for example. I don’t know... it has to be spicy.’ (Rosa, Lisbon)

4.1. Introduction

Having accepted her invitation for lunch, I arrived at Kadi’s house in the periphery of Lisbon at around one o’clock in the afternoon. As usual, greetings consisting of enquiries about our health and our family’s were exchanged. *Kuma di kurpu?* – Literally translated as ‘how’s your body?’ – was followed by a description of the body’s condition, which can either be ‘fine’ (*kurpu sta diritu*), ‘lacking feeling’ (*n’ka sinti kurpu*), or ‘refusing’ (*kurpu ka seta*), the last two indicating illness. The food Kadi was preparing in the kitchen could already be smelled from the corridor. Inviting me to the living room and making sure I was accommodated before heading to the kitchen to finish cooking, she asked an old woman she addressed as aunt to entertain me with stories about Guinean food. She had become a good friend and knew, in fact, my research interests well.

The old aunt was Quinta, her brother’s mother-in-law, who was visiting from Bissau. Kadi’s brother, resident in England, had arranged a trip to Portugal for his mother-in-law to treat severe varicose veins in hospital, under a bilateral cooperation programme between Ministries of Health in Guinea-Bissau and Portugal. Kadi had not been consulted in these arrangements, but was expected to host and assist the woman during her stay, following customary solidarity practices that characterise West African structures of kinship.

Health treatment was one of the most common reasons for migration to Portugal amongst my research participants. Most of the time their migration ended up in longer stays than the short period envisaged by this kind of visa, due to the complicated and lengthy bureaucracy involved in both medical and permit renewal procedures. Moreover,

the purpose of getting treatment in hospital was often concealing more important migratory intentions, usually linked to eventually finding a job that would enable a short-term accumulation of savings. But migration to get health treatment was not only concealing other intentions. It was also ironically intertwined with the risk of weakening one's body upon arrival in Lisbon – a risk that Strathern (1988) also identified amongst Vanuatians who, in the Melanesian context, consumed things derived from the European world. Although many of my Guinean informants emphasised this risk, it was mainly the elders who suffered in an unfamiliar environment, away from the strength customarily offered by the invigorating Guinean land and its vital foodstuffs.

This chapter deals with bodily, but also spiritual and religious meanings and experiences linked to different food products. When moving from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal, how do these food products keep the essence drawn from Guinean land? On the other hand, what is lost, what is found, and what has to be adapted? And, finally, how do migrants perceive and experience these changes?

In order to answer these questions, I adopt a phenomenological perspective that focuses on people's lived worlds and on the connections between their understandings and experiences of things. This approach, I argue, will help to better understand the ways in which the changes that migration introduces in Guineans' attribution of meanings to certain foods are linked to the way in which, through those meanings, they produce an actual embodied experience of those foods.

When carrying out this analysis I will make use of the three meanings of land identified in the previous chapter. I will try to understand, first, the interplay between changes in food consumption in Portugal and the perceptions of organic agricultural practices in Guinea-Bissau. Second, I look at the relationship between ethnic and regional foods and plants and the interference of foreign land in reconstructing those foods' and plants' meanings in a wider context, questioning whether the legacy of colonial borders and a sense of 'national belonging' gain more importance with migration. Third, my ethnographic accounts of the way new meanings and experiences of foodstuffs and woodland *mesinhu* are negotiated with migration will include a close look at the relationship between these products and the spirits that are part of the same land's substance. Regarding this third meaning of land, I will examine the role played by certain living things in reconnecting the body and the spirits when they are physically separated. When trying to give answers to these questions, I draw on key works on

material culture and on the relationship between food and migration that I discussed in chapter 2. In particular, I follow Appadurai's (1986a) argument that meanings of things are not abstractly fixed, but rather entangled in social relations, and Abarca's (2004) notion of 'original' rather than 'authentic' food, a choice that by focusing on newness, contributes to remind us that culture – including food culture – is always changing.

Moving from spaces of production – examined in the previous chapter – to the destination side of the migration, where changes in food-related practices inevitably occur, I will examine ways in which migrants remake food's tastes and values to make sense of their life-worlds. Yet because I want to understand, in my thesis, how food products and related practices contribute to bridge the distance between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal, I will make use of my multi-sited ethnography to refer to examples of practices in Guinea-Bissau as well, either performed simultaneously in both countries or split between them.

4.2. 'How's your body?' Food, health and protection

Kadi's lunch – a rich goat meat dish with rice, chilli, *baguitche* and pounded okra, vegetables that her daughter had sent from Bissau and part of which she sold in Damaia – was served after 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Until then, and also following it, the conversation revolved around the topic of food, to a great extent involving the old aunt's complaints about 'European food'. With Kadi already at the table with us and the television showing the afternoon news, the two women gave examples of what they considered the more natural quality of Guinean food, due to the absence of chemical fertilisers or feedlot livestock in its production.

'I don't trust the meat here' – Quinta started by saying, before she continued to explain: 'The minute a chicken or a cow is born it is instantly fat. How is that possible? That's not natural! I eat it here only because I have no choice.'

Then, suddenly, some last-minute news showed on television – a well-known Portuguese actor had just died of pancreatic cancer. The two women, shocked by that news, followed attentively the television report on the life of the actor and his friends' reactions to his death, occasionally sighing and expressing pity. Once the subject changed on the screen, they debated such unfortunate common cases of cancer in Europe, and related them to food habits. While arguing for the need to make regular

check-ups in hospital in order to avoid serious complications, they also considered that Guinean foodstuffs, as well as *mesinhu di tera* played an important role in preventing or treating such illnesses. Banana leaves, for example, had a special effect in preventing cancer. Following the case of the famous actor's death and the discussion of its relation to food, Kadi highlighted the benefits of banana leaves by giving the example of a Portuguese woman vendor in Damaia whose cancer was treated with *mesinhu* made with dried banana leaves, brought from Guinea-Bissau by a Guinean fellow vendor. This example is relevant not only to understand the relationship between food, body and health for Guineans, but also to acknowledge the way practices of solidarity also take place, in the migratory context, between Guineans and Portuguese who share the same spaces of exchange, as happens in Damaia. Furthermore, it provides evidence of ways in which, in Lisbon, some Guinean plant medicines might be perceived as benefiting 'white people's' bodies as well – a practice whose possible ineffectiveness was raised by Infali in the previous chapter.

Amongst Guinean migrants, there are particular health risks that result from the disruption in the relationship between the person and the land, and the consumption of Guinean food is a way of enabling a link to be kept, therefore minimising those risks. Return migrants are particularly aware of the health risks and needs of those who live abroad. Echoing Quinta's complaints, Augusto, now living in Bissau after having been resident in Portugal for nineteen years, described an intense bodily discomfort felt during his first years away, which he thought was caused by the changes in climate and food habits. He evoked the 'absolute insufficiency of European foods' felt upon arrival in Portugal, and recounted the adversities experienced during his final year of high school in a small town of west-central Portugal, when eating in the school canteen with other students. His constant sickness alerted the social services' staff, who called a Guinean doctor coincidentally resident in the same town. Following medical advice, Augusto prepared a bottle of lemon juice with chilli (*kaldu branku*) to pour on his meals, in order to gradually get used to the new food without going through an abrupt change.

Another example is that of Teresa, Wilson's mother, who suffered from diabetes. In spite of living in Portugal since 1993, she went regularly to Guinea-Bissau, where she believed she regained strength. Once, as she proudly told me, she surprised her doctor in Lisbon after a four-month stay in Bissau drinking baobab fruit juice three times a day, from where she returned with her blood sugar levels significantly reduced. Juca and Luis, who were living in Lisbon for over twenty years, upheld this view of Guinean food:

‘We are used to Guinean food. We think it gives us... you know, more energy. We eat those things and we feel better.’ (Luis)

‘There are diseases that people get in Europe... Guinean food can prevent them. Diabetes, stomach infections, high blood pressure... This is why Guineans prefer their food, so that they can stay healthy.’ (Juca)

When asked to explain this preference, the absence of chemicals in agricultural production was the most common reason given by my research participants in Lisbon, as it was for Guineans in Guinea-Bissau. ‘Guinean food is better because we don’t use chemicals in agriculture. That’s the positive side of it being a less developed country’ – they commonly said, interestingly opposing some of the views of farmers who, like Pona’s son exemplified in the previous chapter, aimed at getting access to technological production techniques that could facilitate their work.

Guinean consumers often referred to the fertility of Guinean land as the reason why chemicals were not needed in agricultural production. The way they combined perceptions of development as negative for food production with development as opening up new possibilities for personal gain that reinforced their migratory projects will be analysed in more detail in the following chapter. In this chapter I will focus on forms of adaptation that, taking place with migration, are related to the actual way in which different foods and plants are combined, how Guineans perceive and experience those combinations, and how they influence people’s positions in transnational terrains of belonging. On the one hand, new encounters with different foods necessarily produce mutual influences and the need for negotiation. On the other hand, just as the perception of Guinean land is not necessarily bounded by a geographical territory, what is perceived as Guinean food amongst migrants does not always originate in the fertile Guinean land, as I will now explore.

4.3. Migration and the negotiation of ‘original’ Guinean land

Although a large number of Guinean vegetables, dried fish, seafood and fruits travel from Guinea-Bissau to Lisbon, either destined for trade or as a gift from Bissau-based kin, new products that are found in Portugal might be used by Guineans with similar protective intentions, just as they can offer Guinean food a special position in their mutually constitutive relationship. The fact that some products with important healing qualities

are actually bought in Portugal allows for the importance of the land to be pragmatically negotiated. My initial desire of tracing all Guinean food's origin back to a Guinean land was frustrated when I realised that the produce that was clearly of exogenous origin to me, could be considered Guinean food to my research participants. There are, in fact, for Guineans, alternative processes of endowing foreign land with Guinean values, which reflects the way in which the 'western' search for authenticity that I discussed in chapter 2 ignores people's complex interpretations of the value of things (cf. Appadurai 1986a; Howes 1996) and overlooks the many ways in which they not only interpret but actually create new foodways critically and creatively. This section will examine these new food-related encounters and negotiations and their importance in Guinean migrants' making of their life-world.

4.3.1. Food encounters: Guinean food's positioning in relation to 'the other'

Maimuna, a Muslim Fula woman originally from Gabu and a trader of Guinean food with the help of her daughter from Bissau, illustrates the inadequacy of establishing well defined boundaries between Guineans' perceptions and experiences of different foods, as well as between the spiritual and religious domains in their lived experiences, which are both linked to the 'basic cosmology' that, as I mentioned earlier, is part of the way people conceive the land (Temudo 2008).

On one afternoon spent together at her house, Maimuna talked about the importance of her Muslim practice, as well as that of the spirits in offering protection against the *djanfa* that someone whose identity she could not reveal to me had put on her. Jealousy and *djanfa* were well known to her, since success ran in the family from the time of their early ancestors, who reigned in the Gabu region, she explained. To ensure complete protection, she had not only asked trustworthy relatives in her homeland in Guinea to perform a protective action with the help of the local *Iran*, but had also two miniature statues of catholic saints blessed by the Pope when he had visited Lisbon a few months before. The two statues were laid carefully on her bedside table. As we were talking, she took one and kissed it gently:

'I asked my sister to give me this one. Here people don't help each other as they do in Guinea. I know she [the saint] is protecting me.'

Worried not only about practices of *djanfa* and the malicious talk of others, Maimuna was mostly concerned with her poor health condition, which had made her migrate to Portugal twenty years before. Pursuing that concern, she combined *mesinhu di tera* with conventional medicines in Portugal, and was attentive to all foodstuffs' qualities. In order to get the best from each, she mixed Guinean and European foods,⁴² just like she used different medicines and various religious and spiritual elements to ensure complete protection to her body and mind. On another occasion, as I passed by the coffee shop underneath her flat, I saw her sitting at a table outside with two friends. She was having a jar of lupini beans – legume seeds customarily eaten in Portugal as snacks. As I passed by, she invited me to join them and explained her food choice:

'I was told it's good for diabetes, and since I like it, I decided to try.'

In addition to Maimuna's combination of different foods, there are specific events that promote similar interactions. Every year in June, the city festivities (*Festas de Lisboa*) take place in each *bairro* (neighbourhood) of Lisbon, which then enter a performance competition on the 13th June (Lisbon's patron saint's day). Sardines and *bifanas* (pork meat sandwiches) are typically consumed in these local events spread across Lisbon's *bairros* during that month. Guineans' participation in these festivities provides evidence not only of the relationship they establish with local food, but also of the embedding of Guinean food in wider social and cultural landscapes.

'In my *bairro* I always participate in the *festas*' – my friend Cidália once told me. 'I drink beer and eat sardines and *bifanas*. I love it!'

Later, however, she rectified her taste for Portuguese food at the *festas*:

'I have to season the *bifanas* my way, though, because here they only use salt.'

At these *festas*, Cidália used Guinean sauces to endow exogenous food with a Guinean flavour, following one of the adaptation strategies that I examined above. More than that, however, she took the chance to sell her Guinean meat cakes and *longuissa* (a thin kind of sausage), prepared with a combination of local meat and Guinean herbs and chilli.

'They're a success amongst the Portuguese!' – she proudly told me.

⁴² Maimuna, like other Guinean migrants, often referred to the food found in Portugal as 'European food' or *kumida di branku* (white people's food).

Further examples of feelings of satisfaction linked to others' recognition and appreciation of Guinean food were easily observed throughout fieldwork in both countries. During lunch with Kadi and her aunt in Lisbon, for example, the old woman highlighted the way foreign entities support the quality of Guinean foodstuffs:

'Our products have vitamins that have already been confirmed by groups of Italian doctors who work in Guinea, through Caritas.⁴³ Caritas has even created a centre in Guinea, where they teach about food practices, about what is more nutritious for children and also for adults. And they really recommend many of our products, like *lalu* [pounded baobab leafs], which is very rich in vitamins and very good for children. *Kandja*, *badjiki* and *djagatu* are also very rich in vitamins, and *djagatu*, for example, is used against diabetes as well. It is proved.'

Linked to this satisfaction is a sense of pride that many Guineans – migrants and return migrants in particular – revealed when talking about their food and the recognition of its qualities by others. In a conversation held in Bissau, a former student in Cuba recalled the annual date in which a group of Bissau-based parents of Guinean students in Cuba organised themselves in order to send large quantities of Guinean foodstuffs to their children – an agreement they had with the extinct air company Air Afrique. With a smile, he described the day food arrived as a moment 'of pride'. It was then prepared by the Guinean women of the student community and shared with others who, he recalled, used to praise their food. Another return migrant, who had spent several years working as a cook in a children's home in Portugal, related similar contentment felt in acquainting others with Guinean food. One day, at the home, she was asked to cook Guinean food on the occasion of Xanana Gusmão's official visit, the President of East Timor at the time. After lunch, her anxiety levels grew stronger as she answered the call to actually meet the President in the dining room. Only after receiving his personal compliments for the tasty *kaldu di tcheben* that she had prepared did she find relief and, ultimately, intense satisfaction.

By introducing the notion of pride, I am certainly not arguing for a return to the categories of cultural and national boundaries as hegemonic constructions, which would in any case be overthrown by the particular Guinean notion of land and territory that I discussed earlier in this thesis. I am instead bringing in my research participants' own

⁴³ *Caritas Italiana* is an ecclesiastical charity, represented worldwide.

designation of a particular feeling related to their wish to give their food external visibility and recognition, as a vehicle for socially and culturally linking geographically distant spaces.

And yet, do Guinean migrants still refer to their ethnic and regional origins when consuming specific foods in Portugal? Or is their sense of identity as Guineans reinforced and prevailing, when compared to their connection with a regional territory that embodies particular forms of social organisation? After having examined some of the new encounters between different foods with migration and the way in which they influence Guinean migrants' foodways, as well as Guinean food's positioning in these mutually constitutive relationships, I will now explore processes of negotiation of Guinean food values which impact upon the negotiation of Guinean meanings of land, understood as territorial and ethnic belonging.

4.3.2. 'Is it really Guinean fish?' Endowing exogenous food with Guinean values

A recurrent example of these negotiations is materialised in fish. *Bentana*⁴⁴ and *bagri*⁴⁵ are widely consumed fish species in Guinea-Bissau. In Lisbon, however, these fish are mostly acquired frozen in fish wholesale markets in the outskirts of Lisbon, or fresh from Cape Verdean women peddlers, who obtain it from Portuguese male vendors in wholesale facilities.⁴⁶ The uncertainty of the fish's origin – often actually farmed in aquaculture – was however not important for Guinean migrants, who shrugged their shoulders with apparent indifference when I asked them about it and resolutely called it Guinean fish. The sauces with which it would be cooked and the technique of smoking it, widely used in Bissau and reproduced in Lisbon, as well as the practice of sharing meals, are ways for Guineans, I argue, to remake the food's taste and value in a way that is consistent with their reordered material world. Moreover, smoking fish and reselling it within the Guinean community in Lisbon became a specialisation of some Guinean migrants, therefore providing the basis for an alternative job opportunity.

⁴⁴ *Tilapia guineensis*.

⁴⁵ *Arius parkii*.

⁴⁶ See Fikes (2008, 2009) for an account of the dynamics of Cape Verdean women's fish selling in Lisbon.

Alongside fish, maize undergoes a similar process where, in addition to the role played by migration in the negotiation of 'Guinean land', the manner in which ideas of regionalism and ethnicity might, too, be reconstructed with the help of exogenous land, can also be observed. Following Abarca's (2004) use of the notion of 'originality' rather than 'authenticity' within food culture, it is possible to see how perceptions of regional or ethnic dishes are creatively and 'originally' recreated through the use of foreign land. Unlike fish and vegetables, whose consumption is widespread amongst Guineans, maize is, alongside millet and sorghum, one of the key crops in the specific dietary customs of the Fula from the eastern regions of Guinea-Bissau. Hence, while the fact that fish's adaptations generate an apparent indifference amongst Guinean migrants might be linked to what Ben-Ze'ev (2004) considered, amongst Palestinian refugees, as the need to retrieve memories from a wider context, maize is a signifier of regional differences. Observing Fula migrants' enthusiastic consumption of roasted maize in Lisbon while referring to their villages of origin, where some of their relatives still grow this food crop, contributes to reflections on the way food is important to activate people's historical consciousness and subjective perceptions of their past (cf. Ben-Ze'ev 2004; Stoller 2009; Sutton 2001).

In reality, most of them had migrated to Bissau several years before, and many of their home-based kin now lived in the capital, having been pulled from the countryside due to their migrant kin's investments, especially in house-building, in Bissau. Yet although I argue that most Guinean foods invoke a wider context that, more than either regional or national, is linked to subjective perceptions of Guinean land, the practice of sharing foods that remind migrants of the village provides homely sensations based on perceptions of the past that help to make sense of a transnational world. In Lisbon, however, the maize that is offered does not originate from those regions, or from Guinean land. It is locally produced, and usually bought from Portuguese or Cape Verdean women sellers before being roasted by Guinean Fula women on charcoal grills, and sold within the community. Once again, it is the fact that it reaches its final consumers from the hands of the Fula women sellers – who are also responsible for roasting it, following similar techniques as those used in Guinea – and is then shared within the community that endows it with Guinean 'Fula' taste.

A third interesting example of such negotiations is that performed by Sali, a Guinean restaurant owner in downtown Rossio, who specialised in cooking and selling yams after five o'clock in the afternoon, when her work in the restaurant cools off.

Despite buying the yams from a wholesale market on the outskirts of Lisbon, the act of distributing and sharing them with other Guineans compensates for this uncertainty in terms of the produce's origin. Being, above all, an obvious strategy of accumulating savings for Sali, she contributes to reinforce community ties through her practice of yam exchange.

As regards the relationship between Guinean migrants and the processed industrialised foods that they generally name 'European' or 'white people's' foods, the association of food with a specific territory becomes even more blurred. Industrialised foods do not rigidly correspond to a point on a map. Guineans' notion of 'European foods' is built upon the idea of industrialised processes of food production where consumers are physically distanced and relationally detached from the food's soil of origin, which is often undistinguished, more than it is linked to a 'European land'. However, as the stories above have shown, although these distances and uncertain soil mean that 'European foods' are perceived as unhealthy, their value can also be remade when they are combined with Guinean ingredients. An interesting example of these reconstructions can be found in rice – the main staple food in Guinea-Bissau and the predominant ingredient in Guinean dishes. Guineans in Lisbon usually buy 25-kilo rice bags from Chinese shops at more affordable prices, which come predominantly from Thailand. In Guinea-Bissau, too, rice is largely imported, following the government policies after liberalisation that I described in chapter 1. Likewise, grains such as *fonio*⁴⁷ or millet, when available in Lisbon's markets, are often brought from France by Fula traders who have networks established in different countries, therefore having an uncertain provenance. Yet this is not seen as particularly problematic by Guineans, who find ways of endowing the foodstuffs with Guinean or regional taste.

Exploring the ways in which the need for adaptations is experienced by migrants will contribute to provide an answer to the more general concern of my research – the role played by the land where Guinean food grows in bringing together a Guinean transnational life-world. Land as agricultural soil and related cultivation techniques – one of its meanings that I identified in the previous chapter – plays an obviously essential role in making Guinean food be perceived as healthier, given the absence of chemical fertilisers. Yet exogenous land might be 'made Guinean' – to make a parallel with Strathern's description of the Vanuatians 'vanuatizing' European things to their

⁴⁷ A widely cultivated cereal in the eastern savannah woodlands of Guinea-Bissau.

own ends in the Melanesian context (1988: 81) – following the inevitable rupture with the land of origin after migration. Rosa, introduced in the quotation that opened this chapter, was a Guinean resident in one of the neighbourhoods supplied by Wilson's Sunday distribution of Guinean food. The Guinean spices and sauces she used when preparing food – relatively easy to access in Portugal given the regularity of the arrival of the necessary ingredients from Bissau, such as fresh vegetables, palm oil or groundnuts – enable another common form of adaptation. The importance of these sauces (*mafe*) in Guinean dishes was explained in the previous chapter, and their capacity to endow exogenous food with a Guinean flavour in Lisbon is noteworthy. In fact, I was often invited to share a 'Guinean meal' in which the only 'Guinean ingredients' were the ones used in the sauce. This proves that the relationship between food and land as territory (either country or region of origin) is also negotiable through the changes generated by migration.

Yet ethnographic examples of adaptations in food practices and meanings of land with migration were as frequently observable as other occasions when the origin of the produce in actual Guinean soil was explicitly referred to as healthier and preferred. Kadi and her aunt's conversation narrated in the beginning of this chapter is an example of such preference. Others, like Buassata, one of my informants in Bissau who managed a transnational agency with a cousin in Lisbon, added to the ambiguities that often frustrated my attempts to understand how Guineans actually judged the importance of Guinean soil. Pointing out his migrant cousin's desire for homeland bananas, in spite of this fruit's wide availability and lower cost in Portugal, he once said:

'My cousin sometimes asks me to send him bananas. He has bananas in Lisbon, but he yearns for his.'

Then, reaching for my hand, he made me get up from the chair I was sitting on and accompany him to the backyard.

'Come, I'll show you something...'

In the backyard of the house, which was his cousin's, stood a banana tree.

'These are the bananas he likes' – he said quietly, pointing to the tree.

Following on from these examples, I argue that the apparent contradictions that can be found in the importance of 'native birthplace' (Davidson 2003), which I discussed

earlier in this thesis, are transferable to food, as another living thing that shares the same land's substance.

Certain foodstuffs are also used by Guineans in a number of bodily rituals related to birth, marriage or death. After giving birth, for example, banana leaves are boiled and the mixture is used for the women's traditional bath that is intended to clean and close the body again – Quinta explained during lunch at her niece's house. Marriages also require the sharing of special meals to guarantee fertility to the bride. *Manda kabas* (the marriage proposal, literally translated as 'send the calabash') involves the offer of certain products that perpetuate the ties between both families, such as drinks, palm oil, rice, tobacco and kola nuts, as I often observed during fieldwork in Bissau. Funerals and death rituals, too, entail the sharing of food as a way of not only reinforcing solidarity and obligation networks between relatives and friends, but also assuring the maintenance of a harmonic relation between the living and the dead. Since relatives and friends are physically separated with migration, the way these rituals are continued has to undergo a series of adaptations.

Amongst migrants, ensuring the reception of specific food-products from Bissau is one of the first concerns when it comes to ritual performances. Sometimes the ritual is carried out simultaneously in the two countries, or divided into two different parts, each to be performed in each country, therefore contributing to reinforce the links between migrants and their kin in both spaces. In the next section I will examine the role played by particular foods in allowing for that link to be kept during the celebration of special rituals. I will do so by providing ethnographic evidence from Ramadan, an important religious festivity for the majority of Muslim migrants in Lisbon that, by occurring simultaneously in Guinea-Bissau and in Portugal and involving the preparation of a special dish, reveals the association between foodstuffs and the celebration of important rituals in the two countries in particularly interesting ways.

4.4. Preparing *moni* during Ramadan: religious foodways in a transnational setting

In my year of fieldwork, Ramadan started during the second part of my ethnographic research in Lisbon, in the summer of 2010, and its relation to fasting visibly introduced new meanings and experiences of space and food during that period amongst the Fula –

who comprise the largest part of Muslim Guinean migrants – and the Mandinga. Guinean bars and restaurants located in Rossio and Damaia – the main areas of the city and its outskirts where migrants socialise and exchange food from home – started serving dinners, while reducing the number of lunches, adjusting the business to the new practices of commensality introduced by this ritual. Nevertheless, in spite of the reduced movement of buying, selling and consuming foods during the day, Guineans still regularly attended these places for social gatherings. The conversations regarding Guinean food were then not only about its qualities and availability or scarcity in Lisbon's markets – dominated by the Fula themselves – but about its absence in daily practices of commensality.

On the first day of Ramadan, the ambience in Rossio was quieter than usual. Some of the elders seemed to persistently moan about something that I could not immediately understand. When asked how they were doing, I realised it was the extremely hot temperatures of that summer in Lisbon that, they believed, made fasting more difficult.

'Kalur na matan!' [The heat is killing me] – many of them answered to my greeting questions.

I had more often heard migrants grumble about the cold European weather, whose consequences for the body were partly handled with the help of Guinean food. Yet they now complained of body weakness and headaches provoked by what they considered a terribly dry heat, and expressed longing for the Guinean rains and humidity that could be felt at home at this time of the year:

'This heat is dry and stays in our body. We feel as if we have fever' – one of them explained. 'In Guinea, the heat makes us sweat and that's good, because it cleans our skin.'

In fact, sweating has been associated in other West African contexts with the flow and movement that express health (Fairhead and Leach 1996). Blocked sweat, on the contrary, as other human and ecological 'blockages' or other obstacles to the flow of crop production and human reproduction (Gottlieb's 1982), provoke illness, which again reveals the importance of a socio-ecological order that I explored in the previous chapter. Moreover, the fact that it was summer meant having to wait longer hours before being able to break the fast, since the sun did not set until about half past nine in the evening.

In spite of these complaints, however, Ramadan had been wished for and prepared in advance. *Moni* – a dish prepared with millet, sugar and water – is the first meal typically consumed by Guineans when breaking the fast after sunset. It is traditionally a Fula dish, said to be originally consumed by the *djila* (itinerant traders) due to its energetic and nutritional qualities. Just like these were needed during the long-distance travel for trade amongst the *djila*, they are now beneficial during the Islamic fast in Ramadan, to compensate for lost calories. On the days preceding the beginning of Ramadan, the origin of the ingredients and the preparation of that dish became common topics of discussion amongst the Fula women sellers in Lisbon. As Ramadan finally started, they organised their trade activities in order to ensure the availability of large quantities of millet during the next month. Some acquired a great amount of pounded millet (or corn, depending on the availability), usually made in Senegal and sold in manufactured sachets by the African shops in Lisbon. Others had the millet pounded and sent by their relatives from Guinea-Bissau. Another adaptation in this case was the replacement of *liti durmidu* (curdled milk), which is normally added to the recipe in Guinea-Bissau, by yogurt or cream in Portugal. In either case, its preparation, exchange and consumption were moments of shared satisfaction where the ingredients' origin seemed to play less of an important role than the practices involved.

In Damaia, complaints could also be heard about the hot weather. Here, however, there was more activity than in Rossio. Given the peripheral location of this shanty neighbourhood and the consequent lack of police control over exchange activities, women *moni* vendors used the street to prepare it, reproducing similar outdoor spaces of food preparation as exist in Guinea-Bissau. Sitting together in circles with one large basin each, they mixed millet flour with water until small round grains were formed. As they prepared it, they chatted about friends' and relatives' lives in Portugal and in Guinea-Bissau – the gossiping that many migrants commonly complained of and that influenced their life trajectories, as I will show in the next chapter. While mixing the *moni*'s ingredients with their hands, these women vendors shared images from the past and present, brought together by this annual religious event that was being celebrated in both countries.

Those who were not involved in the trading network often preferred to have the pounded millet sent directly by their families from Guinea, in order to have it available for the rest of the month and avoid having to buy it at higher prices from the Fula vendors in Lisbon. The first family I was invited to join for breaking the fast was a

Mandinga family who had 25 kilos of pounded millet stored in several bags in the kitchen. It had been brought by a fellow villager recently arrived in Portugal, temporarily hosted at their place.

I arrived slightly after sunset, and fast had been broken fifteen minutes before. The oldest brother, who had invited me, had already started his prayers. Since he was the oldest and most respected member of the family, he could not leave the prayer room that evening. I was therefore welcomed by the children of the house, who pointed me to the kitchen where the younger brother was. Surprised by my arrival, he protested at the fact that he had not been informed about my visit, or he would have waited for me so that we could break the fast together. Since it was already too late for that, I sat with him and his wife at the kitchen table with my own bowl of *moni* with cream, listening to their enthusiastic explanations of Ramadan's meanings and related practices. A signboard at the kitchen's door announced the fast's timetable for the rest of the month, which slightly changed each day, depending on the sunset.

'It was given to all members of the Muslim community at Lisbon's central mosque' – they explained to me with a smile.

For this family, however, as for other Mandinga and Fula, Ramadan is not only a celebration of a widely shared religious identity as Muslims. Since ethnic personhood and religious identity are often seen as one and the same (Johnson 2006), the Mandinga, like the Fula, see this as a time when geographically distant families are reunited, even if not physically, through a special synchronised religious practice. By families (*'familia'* or *'parenti'*), in this case, they mean wider kinship-based or ethnic-based relations. The Mandinga and the Fula, who are often perceived as strangers in Guinea-Bissau, take this chance to celebrate their 'Mandinganess' and 'Fulaness' at a global scale, with their own history, perceptions and practices, in which their special food occupies a central place.

In addition to changes in the way rituals involving food products are performed transnationally, the relationships between people, plants and spirits, which is one of the meanings of land for Guineans, undergo similar important changes. Certain foods, that I will now introduce, are particularly illustrative of the way these relationships change with migration.

4.5. 'It is just a drink' or the spirituality of food: understanding 'contradictions' in Guineans' perceptions and experiences of special foods

When I first encountered Kadi's aunt over lunch, she looked at the cowry shells that adorned my Guinean sandals and expressed enthusiasm for what was, to me, a simply decorative object:

'It's very good that you have those. Do you know what they are for?' – she had asked me then.

After a moment of hesitancy, she broke my uncomfortable silence by saying:

'They're for your protection!'

Just as cowry shells are used as healing and protective objects, as well as for divination purposes by Guinean healers, some foodstuffs can fulfil similar functions. Kola nuts are an example of such foodstuffs. Later in the afternoon during my visit to Kadi, she excused herself and left the house to get two kola nuts from the car, which was parked downstairs. When she left, her aunt explained:

'I asked her for those kola nuts. One is for me to eat, as I really like kola! The other one is for *simola*.'

Simola, which can be literally translated as alms, consists in a payment for the assistance of the spirits or God in freeing the person from trouble or *djanfa*. Quinta had dreamt of opening a kola nut which had gone bad inside, and associated the image in the dream with her ailment.

'It's because of my foot. Something is wrong inside my body' – she said.

Dreams, like the land, link human beings to the spirits of the ancestors and might predict the future or offer orientations on how to proceed in certain situations (Jedrej and Shaw 1992). Following Quinta's interpretation of her own dream, she would later go to a crossroad near her niece's house and place a kola nut at the intersection, while offering a prayer.

'It's a place of passage and junction of different paths' – she explained.
'Spiritually, the kola nut will be multiplied and solve the problem in my foot.'

Abu, a Muslim Fula man who was part of the small urban elite of Bissau, once narrated a personal episode also involving the offer of kola nuts. His narrative adds an interesting aspect pointed out by Abu himself – the fact that the importance of dreams, *simola* and the spiritual value of the product crosses over the notion of class:

‘There are people who have dreams... This week, I had to buy one hundred kola nuts and offer them to the mosque, because someone had a dream where I was doing it. Even with all the high education that one gets, one has no choice. It is as if I am *mandjidu* [tied]. I can’t deny it – kola nut has an important meaning.’

Kola nut is one of the foodstuffs that better illustrates the relationship between the body and the spirits which, as already seen, are intertwined by a shared land. Guinean materials like this one and the practices involving them are able to guarantee the continuation and stability of that relationship with migration. On the one hand, being an addictive, stimulant fruit, kola nut plays a key role in comforting the migrant’s body. On the other hand, it materialises the spirituality of things and the role played by those things in generating or maintaining social relations. If, as Mauss advanced in the context of Maori law and religion, given things are endowed with *hau* (spiritual power) that is passed on from giver to receiver (1990[1950]), kola nuts embody a double meaning in the act of giving. Not only can they be sent from Guinea-Bissau, like other foodstuffs, as gifts to the migrant kin, but offering them symbolises respect and is part of greeting or thanking rituals. It also acts to initiate or strengthen existing relationships, in courtship practices, formal proposals, weddings and funerals (Drucker-Brown 1995), performed by Guineans in both countries. As Quinta’s story has revealed, they play a central role in *simola*, a payment that might be linked, as it was in her case, to health-related problems. The spiritual and corporeal significance of kola nuts was confirmed by Abu, who explained:

‘Kola nut is one of the main fruits consumed in Portugal. It is not only a good stimulant, especially needed because of the cold in Europe, but it is also extremely important because it symbolises respect and forgiveness.’

Amongst migrant men in particular, kola nut’s quality as a stimulant is also related to a condition of sexual impotence described to me as common during the first period of migration, resulting from the change in climate and food habits and the already mentioned more general weakness of the body.

As a result of their role as payments to God or the spirits, offering kola nuts is often part of the *murú's* or *djambaku's* recommended treatments. In Lisbon, like in Bissau, my conversations with the elders in communal spaces of Guinean conviviality were frequently interrupted by a neighbour or a passer-by who would stop to make an offer. White kola nuts are more valuable than the red and more frequently used as *simola*, alongside other white products, such as rice, milk, salt, candles or a simple piece of paper, since white signifies purity. On one occasion, when I was in Rossio with my food vendor friends, a man came by with two cartons of milk and handed them to Djara, one of the 'big women' who daily occupied that space. Squatting down, he addressed her in Fula. Djara, another woman and the two men who I was sitting with in a circle, in the shade of the same tree, raised their hands with the palms facing up and joined them in the air, while one of the men offered a prayer in Arabic. Having been left for a moment unsure of what to do, I was fortunately assisted by the other woman in the circle, who took my hands and placed them in the right position. At the end of the prayer, the donor thanked them and left. Then, pointing to the man who had prayed, Djara explained to me:

'I asked him to do the prayer because he's the oldest man. In the prayer, he thanked the *simola* and wished for its donor to attain whatever he was asking for.'

Then, looking at the two cartons of milk still inside the supermarket plastic bag, she took one and added:

'Take this.'

As I, though thankful, declined the offer, she gave it to an acquainted client who was passing by.

The sense of offering to others what had been received as an offering was still unclear to me at that time, and it was not until later that I worried whether by having refused the carton of milk, my attitude might have been negatively perceived as trying to escape the implicit logic of gifts that, as Godelier (1999) argued, creates new debts and binds individuals in new relationships that give rise to a set of reciprocal rights and obligations (1999: 44). Likewise I wondered, only then, what kind of prayer Quinta, who had introduced herself to me as Christian, might have offered at the crossroad outside her niece's house. Although it was now too late to ask her, God or the spirits who

mediate these pleas were still to overlap, during fieldwork, on a number of other occasions.

Trying to identify the materials whose spirituality endowed them with the power of being used as *simola* was not always an easy task either. Once, for example, at the end of a Guinean memorial service in Lisbon, someone announced that *simola* was going to be distributed amongst all the participants, ‘as a way of thanking everyone for attending the ceremony’ – my friend Aminata explained then. I was at first surprised to receive a small bag with a packet of digestive biscuits and a coca-cola can inside. My wonder increased when, looking at the others’ packs, I realised that everyone else had received a bottle of water instead of coke. Water had been explained to me as endowed with meanings related to purity. But what about my coke? When I raised the issue with Aminata, however, she did not seem to find it odd, and answered ‘it is just a drink’, reminding me of how Johnson’s Mandinga participants responded to her enquiry about packages of biscuits being distributed instead of rice flour in funerary sacrifices in Lisbon. ‘Flour is flour’ – they had told her (2009: 101).

How are these adaptations understood and experienced by Guinean migrants in Lisbon then? Why was it that I often interrogated changes in food practices that Guineans themselves did not seem to question? The problem, I argue, and also the analytical solution that I suggest, is that people do not understand *and* experience things as two separate realities, like I was then assuming. The phenomenological perspective that I adopt here is useful to acknowledge that, in the process of making meaning of their new experiences in Lisbon, Guinean migrants are actually creating an experienced reality that makes sense to them.

The interplay between foods of different origins, as well as between the influence of bush spirits or God in endowing food with special powers such as the one that allows them to be used as *simola*, is also observable in Guinean healers’ work and in the plant- and animal-based objects that they use, which were introduced by Infali in the previous chapter. Although, as Infali’s narrative has revealed, Muslim and non-Muslim healers (the *muru* and the *djambakus*, respectively) make use of different materials, I will only focus on the work of the former, given their numeric prevalence amongst Guinean migrant healers in Lisbon. As I will now show, the objects they use are, too, often creatively and pragmatically adapted, as is the use of the ‘spiritual-religious’ powers of the land, when these performances are staged across the two countries.

4.6. 'I want to be a modern *muru*'. 'Spiritual-religious' powers in foreign land

Seco was the Mandinga *sapateiro* and healer who had offered me a free consultation just before my fieldwork trip to Guinea-Bissau (see chapter 1). The leather sachets he sewed to be used as amulets (*mesinhu*) were usually fixed around the patient's belly or neck. In Portugal, however, they are more often kept in a purse or in the pocket, Seco told me, in order to avoid the suspicious or invasive gaze of others. This need to adapt the way in which *mesinhu* is used indicates that the same material which often fulfils the function of protecting against the adversities resulting from migration, can simultaneously be a reason for those adversities. Amulets, in fact, which are commonly worn by Guinean migrants in order to protect them against the threats of discrimination that might be experienced in the new country, are at the same time a reason for the discriminatory gaze of non-Guineans. They are, too, an example of interesting adaptations that take place in relation to the use and meanings of certain materials, as well as to related perceptions of ethnic belonging.

Seco's cousin Baciro, a healer and charm-maker like himself, lived in Bambadinca, a small town of eastern Guinea-Bissau. From there, Baciro sent special animal skin to Seco, which could not be found in Portugal. Alongside ram and other bush animals' horns, he bought those skins from specialised hunters in the local weekly market, before having them sent to Bissau and, from there, to Lisbon. Yet most of the remaining material, as Seco revealed, can be easily found in Lisbon:

'Lisbon has many shoemaking shops that sell most of the leather we need: sheep, goat and cow. Here, the leather is even more perfect, due to mechanical tanning processes. In Guinea it is done manually, and the leather is harder (...). Here we can buy black leather already prepared, there's no need to manually dye it (...). Most of our work is done more easily here than there. There, for example, they cover the *mesinhu* with pieces of cloth that need to be ironed. Here, we found this new cloth tape, which is much easier to use (...).'

Similarly, working tools such as needles, screwdrivers and strings are bought in local shops. In addition to the practical advantages of using tools and materials found in Portugal, as described by Seco, the costs of getting them from Guinea, which include the price of transportation to Bissau and from there to Lisbon, would render the business unprofitable.



Figure 14. Materials and tools used for charm-making in Lisbon, including the tape mentioned by Seco

As regards the work of Muslim healers and diviners, which differs from that of *sapateiros*, the difficulties, however, intensify, as does the need for adaptations. The reason for this divergence is the nature of the healers' work and the materials used, which primarily include the 'secret' powers of writing (*skrita*)⁴⁸ and not only animal- and plant-derived products. Complementary objects such as the cowry shells that adorned my sandals and protected my body – also used by healers in their divination work – were easily acquired in small plastic sachets from any of the several Chinese storehouses in Rossio, and did not require an 'authentic' Guinean *tchon*. It was, however, the power of the Qur'anic inscriptions contained in the little leather sachets sewed by *sapateiros* – which are believed to truly protect or help the bearer of amulets (Mommersteeg 1988) – that entailed more difficulties when being used far from Guinea-Bissau. One of the reasons for such difficulties is that the religious powers of *skrita* work alongside the 'spiritual' power of the land. As Seco explained:

'It is more about *skrita*. All other materials are complementary to the writing of certain verses of the Qur'an. We learn how to do it from the elderly healers' secrets. And for it to be perfect, unlike the work of *sapateiros*, it's easier to do it in Guinea.'

⁴⁸ Seco referred to the powers of *skrita* as *sigridu* (secret), suggesting that they derived from sources that go beyond God and the Qur'an.

Proximity to Guinean land is important when the ailment or problem that the patient suffers from requires that charms are buried under the fire where women cook, or at the entrance door of the patient's house, on the ground (*tchon*), in order to benefit from the land's spiritual powers. Adaptation, in these cases, requires creativity.

'We try to be creative' – Seco went on explaining. 'Where can we bury it here that is as hot? Sometimes we try a heater, or a car's motor. But it won't be under the ground; it won't be in contact with the soil. Where can we find a place here where people cook on the *tchon*? (...) How can we dig our floors, or the walls of our houses? In Guinea, you can do it with a knife, and no one will feel it. You see? Reality is different here, and we need to adapt.'

Animals used in healing and divination rituals, unlike the leather used to cover charms, also present difficulties in terms of access. Guinea fowl (*galinha di matu*), for example, is commonly used in such rituals. On the occasion of our conversation, Seco needed to perform a healing ritual to free a patient from *djanfa*, which involved cooking *galinha di matu* in special water where 'sacred' ink from *skrita* had been infused. The alternative, in this case, was to divide the ritual between both countries. With a phone call to Bissau, Seco asked his cousin Dembó to buy the animal and offer it to an elderly woman. In Portugal, the patient would dilute the ink in water and wash their body with the liquid, instead of eating the chicken cooked in it. The *djanfa* would thus be successfully removed through the use of both geographical spaces, spiritually and materially connected via this ritual.

Sometimes, due to similar obstacles faced with migration, Seco's cousin Baciro, like other healers in Guinea-Bissau, performed his healing practices at a distance. Baciro gave an example of one such performance:

'Next week I'll work for an emigrant, so that he can pass an exam for university. He hasn't been able to because he's black. I will do the work from here and he pays me only after he passes the exam. (...) Working at a distance is more complicated though. If he needs to offer a *simola* of goats, he won't be able to do it there, so he has to send money over here so that someone can do it for him.'

Amidst these adaptations, migrant healers and *sapateiros* like Seco criticised others who, with migration, seemed to suddenly gain more powers than the ones they had at home. The fear of dishonesty in the work of migrant traders of *mesinhu* had been

brought up by Infali and his nephew in Bissau. Just as they had mentioned the unethical shipment of *mesinhu di tera* without prescription and its likewise indiscriminate commercialisation in Lisbon, with no appropriate knowledge of its dosage, so, too, were some migrants criticised by others for publicising a false healing and divination knowledge, while their expertise was, in Guinea-Bissau, restricted to the work of sewing charms. Seco, for example, saw the act of distributing flyers, which became a common practice amongst Guinean migrant healers to advertise their work, as morally inappropriate. Announcing themselves as ‘astrologists’, many have seen in this practice a way of targeting a wider clientele, which the word *muru* would not attract. In these adverts, some added in titles such as ‘master’, ‘professor’ or ‘scientist’. Seco, however, contested such a practice. In his view, it was an immoral deceitfulness, a commercial opportunism embodied in the impersonation of learned men, which, in fact, they were not. He, instead, having reached halfway through secondary education and practiced as a teacher in Bissau, considered his studies to be a tool for his work as a healer.

The way Seco understood the importance of formal education as equivalent to the Qur’anic School for performing his activities was, initially, confusing me. Was the power of healing not granted through a process of inheritance, recognisable through people’s surnames, as Seco and others had explained to me before? Or, at most, by means of learning the elders’ secrets, or the powers of the Qur’an in Islamic schools? Seco, however, seemed to use his formal education as a tool for being able to practice a ‘modern’ kind of ‘traditional’ healing:

‘I don’t publicise my work, because I have a different ambition. I want to be a modern *muru*; to combine the two knowledges. I have an academic knowledge, thank God. Many *muru* don’t even know how to write their names. I am different from them. If someone needs, I can write a Qur’anic verse in Portuguese. That’s my secret weapon.’

On the other hand, having studied the Qur’an with a master in Gambia, the importance of his religious education was in no way absent from his discourse. My initial wish to understand from which domain his authority as a Mandinga healer originated was never clearly satisfied. Instead, his discourse moved constantly from the importance of formal education to the key role played by his Gambian Muslim master. Yet it is precisely Seco’s notion of ‘modern *muru*’, which puzzled me at first, that provides evidence of the way healers challenge the definitional boundaries of ‘traditional healing’

in myriad ways, by adopting ‘modern’ methods, borrowing ‘traditions’ from other times and places, and even inventing new traditions from scratch (West 2007: 39). This is a topic that I will develop in the next chapter.

Seco’s religious education in Gambia provides, once again, evidence of the importance of the land as social relationships in a space that is not confined to nation-state borders, but to the notion of what might be called, in Seco’s case, his ‘Mandinganess’. The importance of a ‘Mandinga land’, understood historically as being related to a wider region that includes several states which now neighbour each other, can be exemplified through the story of one of the materials used in his healing practice, given to him in the past by his Mandinga Gambian master:

‘I need to go back to Gambia and find the master who taught me there. When I was learning with him, he gave me a horn to use in my practice, but it’s not powerful enough anymore.’

As a result of the horn’s loss of efficacy, Seco now had to complement his work by offering a large number of prayers throughout the night:

‘I don’t sleep enough, because I have to pray all night to compensate. I am too tired. I need to exchange this horn for a more powerful one, but only the master who gave it to me in Gambia can now change it over.’

Ethnicity – seen as a common *tchon* of, for Seco, Mandinga origin – is an important element that interacts in the work of migrant healers, but so is the interplay of different beliefs. In Portugal, Seco had clients of various origins, ranging from different African nationalities to Brazilian and Portuguese. Aware that not all of them were Muslims, he not only made use of Qur’anic texts, but also of the Bible, which he kept on a shelf in his room, side by side with the Qur’an.

Yet this interplay was, for Seco, not just a strategy to gain more clients. Alongside the obvious wish to satisfy his varied clientele, he also considered it to be his own special power, derived from his good Portuguese reading skills and wider cultural knowledge, which complemented the ‘secret’ powers of the Qur’anic inscriptions contained in the little leather sachets. For him, it was the advantage of his educational level that, combined with ‘traditional knowledge’, strengthened his authority. Seco’s narrative shows, on the one hand, that the idea that school in Africa, being of an exogenous imposed nature, is the locus of reproduction of postcolonial state ideologies and social

inequalities (Mbembe 1985), should not make us overlook the active relationship that Africans also establish with school, appropriating it as a strategy for attaining a new form of social prestige (Bordonaro 2009). On the other hand, seen through the lens of migration, it shows that migrants need to find a comfortable position where sense is made of the worldviews of others without rendering their own views of the world nonsensical, just as western anthropologists have long searched for a solid ground between worldviews (West 2007).

4.7. Conclusions

This chapter has examined meanings of Guinean foods and plants and the ways in which those meanings and related experiences change with migration. Guinean products travel to Portugal to offer protection to the migrant's body and mind, as well as to secure or generate new relationships, not only between people, but also with the land from which they have been physically separated. Yet some adaptations are required with migration. As this chapter has shown by adopting a phenomenological perspective, these adaptations take place not only in relation to the attribution of meanings, but also to migrants' lived experiences of those changed meanings.

With the stories presented in this chapter, I hope to contribute to the anthropological debate around people's role as active agents in instilling their own meaning into objects (cf. Appadurai 1986a; Howes 1996) and striving to create 'material and social routines and patterns which give order, meaning and often moral adjudication to their lives' (Miller 2008: 296). Yet by drawing on a phenomenological perspective, I add that while doing so, people not only interpret meanings but also create new worlds by experiencing those remade meanings as a new reality.

First, bodily meanings of food and plants, as well as related practices that are part of the making of the Guinean life-world have to be readjusted with migration, following the necessary corporeal adaptations to a different climate, diet and way of life (Gardner 2002). This is why when they return, migrants use the re-immersion in the land where they were born to regain health. Second, although spiritual and religious meanings of the land endow certain products with special powers, these also have to be adapted when far from that land. In Lisbon, the use of digestive cookies instead of rice flour in funerals is an example of adjustments in the spirituality of certain foods. Other examples provided

in this chapter, such as that of fish and maize, show how cooking methods and the act of sharing food are part of the adaptation mechanisms that can endow foreign food with Guinean values. Alongside other products that, by actually moving from Guinean land to the migration arena, take part of the soil with them, these mechanisms are ways in which, I argue, the strangeness of foreign land can be compensated for, and the link between migrants and their land can be maintained, giving them the feeling of being connected to the community.

Religious rituals also contribute to bridge distances, as was shown through the example of Ramadan and the consumption of *moni* in this period, both in Guinea-Bissau and in Portugal. Another way to compensate for the strangeness of foreign land is to reinforce the qualities of Guinean food by comparing it to the new foods encountered, as well as by gaining its recognition and appreciation from others. Yet the complexity of such processes is demonstrated by the fact that new foods are not always perceived as inferior. On the contrary, some might be consciously consumed for their similar healthy qualities, like the lupini beans tried by Maimuna.

In most cases, however, 'Guinean land' is seen as healthier and as an essential carrier of wellbeing for migrants. Like the Caribbean migrants studied by Cook and Harrison (2007), most Guineans in Lisbon perceive 'European food' as 'contaminated' due to the chemicals used in industrialised methods of production. Quinta's narrative regarding 'European food's' relationship to cancer and other illnesses in Europe was illustrative of such perceptions. Interestingly, this discourse intersects with Portuguese and other European discourse on organic food as healthier. Echoing Raymond Williams' (1973) analysis of the rural idyll myth in English writings from the sixteenth century, rural foods are now commonly idealised by Portuguese commentators addressing foodways. Industrialised foods are, on the other hand, lamented both by Guineans and Portuguese, showing that the positionality and relationality of such perceptions might bring them closer than could at first be expected.

Nevertheless, the notion of 'Guinean land' is not necessarily bound to political borders. Instead, Guinean food continues, with migration, to act as a marker of regional and ethnic roots, seen in more subjective ways. Following the discussion from the previous chapter, a historical approach is needed to understand why Fula migrants, for example, recreate, through the use of foreign land, meanings and experiences of consumption of food crops from the eastern regions of Guinea-Bissau where they or their

ancestors are from, without overtly considering those crops' foreign land as a loss of authenticity. In fact, the anthropologist's desire for reconstructing the social context (or, in this case, the land) whence things originate (Spooner 1986), just like the outsider's common demand for authenticity (Abarca 2004), does not always find correspondence in the way the people concerned interpret that social context. Hence, the answer to one of the questions that I raised in the introduction of this chapter seems to be that there is no reinforced sense of 'national identity' amongst Guinean migrants, but rather the continuation of their intertwined experiences of both 'Guinean' and 'ethnic' land and food, not as opposed, but as complexly connected forms of spatial and social organisation.

The Fula and the Mandinga's relationship with the land is, following Guineans' 'spirit of politics' (Temudo 2008) explained in chapter 2, not less important than that of other ethnic groups who were not influenced by Islam or have not been as mobile in the past. The mobility that has long characterised their history – which makes others often view them as 'foreigners' – only means that the Fula, for example, refer to Bafatá and Gabu (the eastern regions of Guinea-Bissau) as their land of origin, as much as to today's Guinea-Conakry – subjectively indicating the old Futa-Djallon region – as their imagined ancestral land, with no apparent sign of conflict or contradiction. Likewise, the Mandinga like Seco imagine a 'Mandinga land' that goes beyond national borders. The importance of the land to them can be observed when, for example, they speak of their crop specialisation, cultivation techniques and food preparation methods as related to their particular way of being and doing, like less mobile ethnic groups.

Moreover, following Bourdieu's (1977) argument according to which social actors are made through their bodily practices, and Sahlins' (1985) observations in Hawaii, where sharing the same food made strangers become part of the land's substance, it can be argued that eating 'Fula food' makes 'Fula bodies', more than actually living in the Fula region. Regardless of the relation to a well-defined territory that, as I explained in the previous chapter, cannot be positioned within western-inspired 'maps', 'Fula bodies' are therefore made through food consumption, whether the 'Fulanness' of the material is embodied in the ingredients used or in the methods of preparing or eating it. This makes the term 'children of the land' not necessarily reserved to the native-born, being the reason why, by eating Guinean food, I 'became' Guinean to my research participants, or by eating Fula food I 'became' a Fula, as they often told me. The relationship between the body and the land amongst Guineans was also evident in the exchange of greetings that I

started by describing in the introduction of this chapter. In fact, as in other West African countries, ‘agreeing’ or ‘accepting’, for example – which are ways of responding to greetings – indicate health as much as success in agricultural activities, revealing the way in which social and ecological relations are entwined (Fairhead and Leach 1996: 144).

What is more, even if the Fula did not speak as overtly of the spirits that inhabit their land of origin and often tended to deny their existence in initial conversations, the overlapping of the spiritual and religious domains was evident in performances such the offer of *simola* and the spiritual power of the produce it involves, as exemplified by Abu. The way in which the spirits that inhabit the land maintain their relationships with people and food – which materialises the third meaning of land – at the destination side of the migration is however more clearly observable in the adaptations carried out in relation to *mesinhu*. In spite of their material differences as compared to foodstuffs used in daily meals, plant and animal products used as amulets complement Guinean food in providing protection to the migrant abroad, whether in terms of health or mind-related issues. Seco’s narrative offered some insights into pragmatically-driven adaptations of the materials used, as well as into the ways in which healing rituals are performed through the use of the religious and spiritual powers of the Qur’anic inscriptions. These adaptations contribute to forge a unique path in foods’ and plants’ biography with migration, as well as in people’s relationship with those products.

Moreover, just as Seco had to adapt the materials and tools used in his charm-making and healing work, he also made use of not only different beliefs about the world, but also different ways of making worlds (cf. Geshiere 1997; Moore and Sanders 2001; West 2007). His wish to work as a ‘modern *muru*’ suggested a valorisation of what he perceived as ‘modernity’. Yet this ‘modernity’ – which I will address in more detail in the following chapter – did not eliminate his experience of ‘tradition’. For Seco, they are not seen as contradictory. On the contrary, it is precisely the way in which both domains are combined that constitutes his strength and positively differentiates him from other healers. It is an example of migrants’ inventiveness regarding new ways to make the best of what is offered to them from both contexts.

Chapter 5

Connecting the past, present and future:

Migration, return and memories amongst migrant food traders and their kin

‘When you stay a long time abroad, if someone sends you a mango, you will eat it with great pleasure, and you will start remembering... I know some people even cry, because those things bring memories back from childhood.’

(Buassata, Bissau)

5.1. Introduction

On arriving in Rossio on a Sunday afternoon, I received the usual invitations to sit down with the different groups of Guineans, gathered in circles in the shades of the few trees in the upper part of the square. That afternoon I decided to sit near Meta, the recently arrived Mandinga woman who used that space on weekends to sell homemade *ondjo*⁴⁹ juice, *konserve*,⁵⁰ and other small foodstuffs. Djara and Dála – two elderly Fula *bideiras* with whom she was often together – were occupying the same shade. From the two elders, Meta usually received support in different aspects of the new life in Portugal, offering them her help in their food selling business as a return. I had not had the chance to chat with them for some time, and thought it was a good opportunity to catch up. After telling them about my morning spent with Wilson – of whose mother, Teresa, they were a good friend – in the food distribution tour around the housing estates outside town, I listened to Meta’s concerns regarding the need to find a more stable job than the temporary replacement position she then had at a local supermarket. At that point, two women unknown to me came by and sat with us. They were well dressed in fancy *bazan*⁵¹ garments, ornamented with large golden bracelets and earrings that rattled as they vigorously gesticulated and spoke to each other in drawling French. Cheerfully, they talked about their businesses and the money they owed each other.

⁴⁹ The roselle red peduncle fruit.

⁵⁰ A sauce made of lemon, onions, Knorr stock cubes and chilli.

⁵¹ An expensive dyed fabric of Malian origin.

One of them sat down with us and introduced herself to me after her friend left. She was Adama, a Guinean Fula living in Portugal since 1980, involved in what she considered to be a successful African clothes trade, which mainly involved the same kind of *bazan* garment as she was wearing that afternoon. We stayed there chatting until, at around six o'clock, as usual, Sali came down from her restaurant with cooked yams to sell. Most of us then bought one, but Adama refused them. Only with Sali and the other women's firm insistence, pointing to the fact that even I – a *branku* – was eating it, did she finally take one. Looking at the yam that had been passed on to her with a suspicious look, however, she complained:

'Is it eaten like this? Don't you have a knife?'

Sali passed her a knife. Yet the friendly and mocking dispute continued when she wasted part of the yam as she was trying to peel it. The other women harshly reproached her. Sali took the knife back and peeled the yam herself, as Adama, smiling, justified:

'You know, I'm from *prasa*.'⁵²

Ironically, when we got up to go home after Adama's display of a successful image, Meta gave the alarm: the seat of the woman's skirt was torn. With the others' prompt reaction, a cloth was quickly found for her to tie around the waist and, amongst remaining laughs from an afternoon well spent, we all went home.

In the two previous chapters I examined the way in which land and its living things are perceived and experienced in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the adaptations that these perceptions and experiences go through with migration. This chapter will bring the past, present and future of the Guinean transnational world together. Following Sutton's (2001) examination of food as a provider of temporal rhythms and Munn's (1992) focus on 'temporalisation' as the temporal connectivity between people, objects and space, I explore the role of Guinean food and food trade in influencing these connections amongst Guineans on both sides of the migration. I will do so by focusing on Guinean food traders in Lisbon and on those who, from Bissau, facilitate the transnational food trade. More specifically, I examine how their future projects of migration and return, on the one hand, and memories from the past, on the other, are shaped in a continuum that helps to bridge distances in their life-world.

⁵² The urban centre of Bissau.

The way in which projects of migration and return are motivated or hindered by images such as that portrayed by Adama makes it important to analyse the influence of perceptions of ‘modernity’ in the construction of these projects. The anecdote above, taken from a space of Guinean socialisation in Lisbon, is a provocative opening to some of the questions to be explored in this chapter.

To me, at first, Adama’s cosmopolitan style, shown in her jewellery, clothing and particularly way of eating yams that differentiated her from the other women, seemed to illustrate the African enthusiasm about ‘modernity’ identified by Ferguson (1999). Adama was, I thought then, like Ferguson’s Africans, claiming equal rights of membership in an unequal global society (Ferguson 2002), embodying this desire through mimetic appropriations of cosmopolitan styles (Gable 2006). This episode, however, made me later raise some new questions. Could this enthusiasm and appropriation of ‘modernity’ be associated with life in Europe only? Adama’s claim to be originally part of the small urban elite of Bissau (*prasa*) seemed to indicate that her cosmopolitanism had not been acquired with migration, but was rather part of her previous lifestyle. How is ‘modernity’ embodied in projects of migration from Bissau, as well as in return projects that are shaped in Lisbon? How is it entwined with expressions of ‘tradition’ in Guineans’ lived experiences? Finally, what is the role played by food and the food trade in shaping these perceptions and experiences amongst Guineans?

The first two sections of this chapter will try to answer these questions. In order to do so, I draw on the debate on historical subjectivities as part of African’s entwined perceptions of ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition’, which I discussed in chapter 2 (cf. Gable 2006; Piot 1999; Shaw 2002; Stoller 2009). I also draw on the argument according to which people are less likely to resist or criticise the technologies and conveniences of modernisation (Moore and Sanders 2001: 13) than they are to create their own ‘indigenised modernities’ (Sahlins 1999: 410). Focusing on the notions of development, cosmopolitanism, gossip, jealousy and *djanfa* (the local term whose insufficient translation as ‘sorcery’ or ‘magic’ I explained in chapter 2), I will thus look at how Guineans experience and reinterpret these idioms and practices, by exploring how they influence projects of migration and return on the one hand, and perceptions of healthy food and corporeal wellbeing on the other. Although I concur with the authors cited above in seeing these notions not as opposed expressions of ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition’ but as equal parts of ‘African modernities’, I nonetheless also try to understand, as

Fardon (2008) has suggested, what is hidden behind the view according to which everyone is cosmopolitan.

The final section will examine the contextual and historical construction of memories. Drawing on the spatial and material approach to memory that I discussed in chapter 2, and on Munn's (1986) and Sutton's (2001) argument that exchange and remembering connect the present to the past and future through the creation of a system of past debts and compensations, I will maintain the focus on Guinean food traders and their home-based kin as the main actors in such processes. I will try to understand how their memories are shaped in spaces of food consumption and exchange in both countries, and how these are reconciled with their projects of migration and return.

I also explore the notion of 'colonial nostalgia' through the stories gathered during fieldwork in both countries, since it exemplifies the spatial and historical configuration of memory, where the consciousness of a colonial past cannot be ignored. Adding my ethnographic accounts centred on the role of space, history and food in shaping memories and nostalgia to the ones on future projects will bring the future, present and past together, thus contributing to a better understanding of the way Guineans remake their life-worlds with migration.

5.2. Migration and the search for 'development': the imagination of a better life or the fear of bodily deterioration

In Guinea-Bissau, the imagination of a better life in Europe in terms of economic gains for the smallholders, the *bideiras* and others involved in the task of sending Guinean foodstuffs to Portugal is materialised in that constant movement of food to which they contribute. Examples of the producers' wish to follow their crops to Lisbon were already given in chapter 3. To some of them migration was such an important part of their plans and aspirations that they could name and describe places in Lisbon where they had never been – Rossio and Damaia in particular – only by having heard stories of the street markets that would be their foodstuffs' final destination. Alongside the role played by the travel of food in activating or exacerbating this desire, how do perceptions of Europe associated with notions of 'development' and 'progress', and often conveyed by the cosmopolitan attitudes of return migrants, shape this desire to migrate? In this section,

through the stories of Yasin and Dembó, I will illustrate the way in which migration, starting as a project until it is accomplished (in Yasin's case), can be influenced not only by the transnational trade of food, but also by the wish for 'development' – the same development that, as examined in the previous chapter, threatens the quality of food production.

Yasin

Yasin – Kadi's daughter, who sent the foodstuffs her mother sold in Lisbon – was 23 years old when we met in Bissau. While her ethnic background was, like her mother's, a complex mix that made it difficult to 'map' in the constellation of Guinean ethnic groups, her young age was representative of the majority of the Guineans who, amongst the people responsible for sending food to their relatives in Portugal, aspire to migrate. For the elders, instead, the threats that unfamiliar environments and foods pose to their body make most of them fear migration more than or as much as desire it. 'Europe is not made for old people' was an idea that I frequently heard in people's conversations.

The successful way in which Yasin's story developed is not, on the other hand, typical of most of the stories that I witnessed in Bissau. Unlike her, most of the Guineans I met had not succeeded after years of attempting to migrate. Yet precisely because she offered me the privilege of accompanying her journey and experience of both sides during my fieldwork and beyond, I intentionally chose to narrate it here.

Yasin was already gathering all the documentation needed for her visa application during my fieldwork in Bissau. When we first discussed her future migration to Portugal, she had told me:

'I just want to see what it looks like. I have the right to do it, just like you came to see how Guinea is!'

Later, as our friendship grew stronger and the complex – and, to her, frustrating – bureaucracy linked to the visa application became a regular topic of our conversations, Yasin started to constantly refer to an imagined Lisbon as we shopped for vegetables in Caracol market, or as we met at the airport in the evenings, when she was having her packages of foodstuffs shipped. In fact, conversations held at the airport of Bissau, with Yasin and with other young Guineans, often revolved around migratory plans and aspirations, providing evidence for the importance of the materiality of the environment

not only in provoking memories, as it has more often been addressed in the literature and as I will examine below in this chapter, but also in imagining the future.⁵³ At the airport of Bissau, the desire for migration was materialised by the dispatched Guinean food and *mesinhu* that performed the movement most of their senders wished for. To Yasin, as for the younger senders in general, having food sent three times a week impacted upon this desire in particular ways, since it represented a family obligation that imposed restraints on their personal lives. Emphasising those restraints, Yasin started presenting her intention to me as more than briefly visiting Lisbon. One night, as we sat outside the check-in area at the airport with her aunt Aua, she sighed:

‘This is not a job! I won’t come to the airport on a weekday anymore, only on weekends. Today I had to miss classes again, and my mother doesn’t understand that.’

Then, more optimistic, she added:

‘I hope I can get there by August!’

‘If you ever get a residence permit you will never come back’ – suggested Aua.

Yasin smiled and, after a short silence, retorted:

‘How hard is it to get one?’

Yet alongside this desire to migrate which was turning into a longer-term project, she also shared with other Guineans the image of Europe as a place that aged people, resulting from the weakening of the body described in the previous chapter. In fact, when I showed her the photos of her migrant relatives, which I had taken with me to Bissau after the initial phase of fieldwork in Lisbon, I thought she would smile with nostalgic joy. Instead, she had said with a grimace:

‘They look so old! Europe really ages you!’

This conscious fear of bodily deterioration was more noticeable amongst the elders, but was not exclusive to them. It seemed to go hand-in-hand with the general will to accumulate wealth or, as was more evident in Yasin’s case, to pursue an individual

⁵³ Elsewhere I analyse in detail the ways in which the materiality of the airports of Bissau and Lisbon influence Guineans’ experiences and imagination of space and mobility (Abranches 2012).

project that could liberate her from the family obligation of sending food for her mother's trade activities in Lisbon.



Figure 15. Airport of Bissau. Bags of Guinean foodstuffs to be sent to Lisbon

Yasin's migratory project was not accomplished in August but only four months later, in December. When I met her in Lisbon the following summer, she was, as her aunt had predicted, already applying for a residence permit. This would not be difficult to get, she hoped, given her mother's Portuguese passport, obtained on account of her long-term residence in Portugal. In spite of an initial stage of what Yasin described as severe difficulties related to life in a new city and the cold weather of December, she now considered staying for an indeterminate period in Lisbon. This intention was linked to the chance of moving towards 'development', a notion that she, like other young people, perceived as linked to the possibility of continuing her studies.

'Now I like it more here, due to development. I think I still have a lot to learn' – she then told me, before revealing her plan to study information technology.

The way young Guineans associate Europe with development reveals the 'appropriation of developmentalist discourse' put forward by Bordonaro in relation to the Bijagó youth, as a discourse that, although imported, can be employed to express frustration, needs, and aspirations (2009: 71). Alongside schooling, technology was often seen as another channel through which to achieve 'development'. Technology – which was, in the view of many of my research participants, the downside of development when used in agricultural production – was to Yasin, as to others, one of the main components

of their 'development project' in Europe. Studying informatics was, for them, a way to escape the feeling of *koitadesa* – a Creole notion which indicates the perception of being unfortunate and poor – and to participate in a wider project where acquiring knowledge played an important role.

Dembó

Dembó was a 32-year old Biafada. He was introduced in the previous chapter as the one responsible for sending the materials that Seco, in Lisbon, needed for his charm-making and healing job. He was also the one to first take me to Infali's pharmacy in Bandim market in Bissau, as I narrated in chapter 3.

Dembó was, of all my research participants, the one who more insistently spoke of his desire to migrate. Unlike Yasin, however, he did not have a close relative in Lisbon who could help him in the process, and often complained of the lack of solidarity of his uncles and aunts in Portugal, who he imagined to have a wealthy life yet were unwilling to help him – financially and with the necessary procedures – to migrate. Nevertheless, his desire to migrate was, too, embedded in the consciousness of bodily weakening that Europe represented, which he, like other Guineans, perceived as resulting from the disruption with the vigorous Guinean land and nutritious foods, as well as from an unhealthy lifestyle and unfamiliar environment. Aware of that threat, he considered Seco's healing job in Lisbon and his own responsibility of shipping plant medicines and materials for amulet-making to be of great importance.

'Many people there get several diseases, I know' – he said. 'But they can't always come back to receive treatment, and this is why it is important that we, here, send them *mesinhu*.'

On the other hand, Dembó's imagination of migrants' wealth resulted from other kinds of material goods exhibited by return migrants who he was acquainted with.

'Sometimes I feel as if I'm losing my mind, because I think of my *bida di koitadi* [poor life] here, and I see others who are in Portugal or Spain and have houses and cars... one of them built two or three houses here; others, when they come to visit, they bring ten different sets of bed linen' – he explained.

Then, following a moment of silence, he leaned forward, speaking in a hushed tone:

‘I am suffering now, Maria, but it will get better. I am going to study IT. Nowadays, if you don’t use computers you are like a mobile statue, you won’t know what’s going on in the world.’

Like Yasin, Dembó defined the lack of technological skills as associated with being stagnant and with a lack of development, which he hoped to overcome with migration.

‘I know that one day... I don’t know which day, at what time, or in what year, but I’ll be in Portugal. Or in Europe! No one can be punished forever’ – he concluded.

This reference to punishment follows the way in which Dembó’s story exemplifies the interplay of a desire for ‘modernity’ and ‘development’ with the influence of *djanfa*, a topic that I will examine in more detail in the next section. In fact, for Dembó, it was the *djanfa* put on him by an uncle that had been hindering his long-established plan to migrate. After his mother’s death, Dembó’s uncle inherited the woman’s cattle and farm, according to tradition. In order to keep his inheritance safe, the uncle made a contract with the village *Iran*, according to which Dembó would die if he would ever try to get part of his mother’s possessions. Taken by fear that Dembó might claim them if he was ever to gain more power, his uncle’s contract with the *Iran* included a ‘clause’ in which Dembó would not succeed to migrate abroad – the young man’s long-term aspiration – unless permission was given by the uncle himself.

Migration and migratory plans, as I have shown, exemplify the complex interplay between desired and threatening outcomes of ‘development’. If ‘development’ is, on the one hand, a resource in people’s struggle to overcome either the feeling of *koitadesa* of their lives, or the family obligations related to the sending of food and *mesinhu* that inhibit the accomplishment of their individual aspirations, it is also perceived as having a negative impact upon the production of food and on corporeal wellbeing. I will now look at the interplay between cosmopolitanism, jealousy and threats of *djanfa* embodied in return projects, and the role food plays in such juxtapositions.

5.3. Food, cosmopolitanism and *djanfa* in return projects

Return migration was not part of my initial research questions, nor was it one of my primary interests at the beginning of fieldwork. Yet as often as I found myself discussing

migratory projects with people like Yasin and Dembó in Bissau, conversations with Guinean food traders in Lisbon were frequently about return aspirations and more concrete return projects. Moreover, I later encountered several of them in Bissau, when they were on temporary returns to visit home. Returns, in fact, as I found out in the course of fieldwork, generate privileged situations from where to observe ways in which the two life-worlds that migrants inhabit come together – the central ethnographic concern of my thesis. In this approximation, the interplay between cosmopolitanism and threats of *djanfa*, resulting from jealousy and the power of gossiping, was one of the most evident realities experienced by my research participants. By drawing on the inadequacy of seeing ‘witchcraft’ or ‘sorcery’ as opposed to ‘modernity’ (cf. Geshiere 1997; West 2007), as well as on the importance of understanding how migration influences these already historically changeable phenomena (Moore and Sanders 2001), I will focus on how Guineans perceive and experience the interplay of these domains as less conflicting than it might at first seem to the outsider.

In the previous chapter I examined this interplay through the example of Seco’s healing practices, when wanting to become a ‘modern *muru*’. In this chapter I will first explore the ways in which cosmopolitanism and threats of *djanfa* are reconciled in the return experience. Second, I will look at the interference of food and woodland *mesinhu* – the materials through which I examine the bridging of distances between Guineans’ life-worlds throughout my thesis – in those experiences of return. The influence of the materiality of the environment will be considered not only in relation to food as an object, but also to the spaces materialised by the travel of food, such as the airport.

5.3.1. The dilemmas of return: reconciling cosmopolitanism and threats of *djanfa*

The airport of Lisbon, just like that of Bissau, can be seen as an iconic place materialising the link between the two homes, entwining past, present and future. For first-generation migrants, homeland food is one of the first things to be missed and one of the reasons highlighted for a desired return. Guinean foodstuffs arriving at Lisbon airport materialise the longing for home and an imagined return from a visit to Bissau amongst the migrant food traders who go to the airport three days a week – when the TAP direct flight arrives – to collect their packages of foodstuffs and plants. Here, return projects were discussed

at length, encouraged by the symbolism represented in that space of constant arrivals of not only people, but also food and plants. Conversations held at the arrivals terminal of the airport of Lisbon amongst migrant food traders were often accompanied by a recently arrived bag of cashew nuts, immediately opened and shared between those nearby, while waiting for further packages to arrive.

On a summery Saturday morning, Aua – Kadi’s sister – arrived in Lisbon with her 19-year-old son and three trolleys filled with luggage, after a five-month return trip to Guinea. Kadi and other relatives were awaiting her at the airport. After an excited exchange of greetings, Aua opened her bags and distributed the contents with her sister – mangos, Guinea gumvine, okras, roselle leaves, different sorts of dried fish and seafood and, amongst other things, a five-litre container of palm oil which had leaked in the bag.

This episode took place before Yasin’s successful migration, and Aua had the photos I had taken of the two of them in Bissau. While worried about the produce spread at the entrance hall of the airport and trying to clean the red stains from the palm oil left on the floor, Kadi – Yasin’s mother – looked at her daughter’s pictures with an expressively longing smile. Like her sister, she wanted to spend a period of a few months at home. In her case, however, a return was not advised by doctors in Portugal, due to her unstable health condition resulting from a snake bite during her last visit home in 2005.

‘There is more to be said on that matter, though’ – she considered, before continuing: ‘I had a good life here until 2005. Someone who was jealous of me there made the snake bite happen.’

This reference to jealousy and *djanfa* highlights, on the one hand, the imagination of an easy accumulation of wealth in Europe held by relatives in Guinea-Bissau. Migrants’ cosmopolitan attitudes such as that narrated in the introduction of this chapter, when performed during return visits home, contribute to shape that imagination. On the other hand, the threat of *djanfa* adds to the economic, legal, bureaucratic and political reasons that hinder migrants’ return projects.

‘I can’t go back to Guinea now because of someone’s evilness...’ – Kadi concluded with a longing expression, still looking at the photos.

Most of the time, however, the home-based kin's imagination of a wealthy life in Europe did not correspond to the real situation faced by the migrant abroad. This discrepancy was defined by another research participant in Lisbon, Sumayla, as 'the emigrant myth'. As he explained:

'If going back to Guinea to make business, one has to start slowly, due to the emigrant myth. When I lived there, I didn't have any problems with carrying heavy stuff, for example. Now, if I do it there, people will talk. They will think that I should hire someone to do the heavy job. They don't know that the work I do in Europe is much heavier, and they create all this confusion around it. Also, if one goes there and stays for more than two months, they will start wondering: "why doesn't he go back to Europe...?" This is the emigrant myth.'

The ambiguity therefore lies in the fact that, if return migrants are not expected to do hard work given the social mobility that they are thought to have gained with migration, adopting cosmopolitan comportments and exaggerated acts of worldliness is not a welcomed practice either. Ferguson (1999) identified similar dilemmas amongst Zambian urban workers who returned to the village, finding themselves obliged to disguise their cosmopolitanism. As for Ferguson's Zambians, the powerful and effective sanctions imposed on Guinean returnees who 'show off' consist of ostracism, gossip, withholding of help when in need, burning down of houses, assault and 'sorcery', such as Kadi was victimised with. Moreover, disguising one's cosmopolitanism could be, I argue, a way to avoid demands from relatives at home, who count on their migrant kin's visits home to provide them with extra offers and pay for all expenses. This – which Guinean migrants referred to as *pidi, pidi* (ask, ask) – was, more than a conscious reason to avoid cosmopolitan attitudes, another motive often given for postponing returns.

While planning or imagining their return, Guineans were conscious of the conflicts that certain attitudes could cause. Fatu, a Susu migrant woman resident in Damaia who had been involved in the transnational food trade in the past, gave the example of the 'café lifestyle' that she adopted in Portugal – an expression that many use as a portrayal of a Portuguese way of life – as a practice that would not be well accepted in Bissau.

‘I got used to this café lifestyle, but people in Guinea would talk...’ – she said. ‘They immediately recognise someone who came from Europe, even if you dress in African clothes. And they gossip. They really gossip a lot.’

Yet in Portugal she had adopted the ‘café lifestyle’ precisely to escape the gossip and rumour that are part of the social life of Damaia’s ‘Bandim market’, where most Guinean residents of that area socialise. Hence, gossip and rumour, which are based on words that, as I explored in chapter 2, might have the force to make the spirits act more quickly on those who they are directed at (Bâ 1981; Cole 2001), have to be avoided from both sides in order to keep away from eventual forms of *djanfa*. However, even if such threats might come either from Guineans at home or abroad, Fatu and others considered the risks to be higher in Lisbon.

‘Guineans there talk too much, and that only leads to trouble’ – Fatu said.

Being momentarily unemployed, she spent the afternoons at a local café looking for job offers in daily newspapers. At the café she knew all the waiters and many of the regular customers, most of whom were Portuguese.

‘They’re mostly old men and women with nothing to do. They feel lonely and just sit here looking at what’s going on. They like me, and I like them. They’re harmless’ – she explained.

Like Fatu, Dála saw a tendency for self-centredness amongst Guinean migrants, associated with a sort of uncontrolled desire for that wealth accumulation that had been part of the migratory project, which was contrary to Guineans’ common solidarity at home. As she put it:

‘Back home Guineans really help each other, but here they are... Gosh! Here they’re always looking, always talking too much! People are really goodhearted there. But not here, here they change. Here they want more and more, but they can’t find it. So, they always want to know what you are wearing, what you are eating, what you are doing... it’s too much!’

For these reasons, her daughter Samira’s plan to temporarily return to Bissau was to be kept a secret amongst the migrant community in Lisbon. Still unaware of the importance of such secrecies, I was once alarmed when, as I showed my contentment with the fact that Dála’s daughter might be taking the same flight that I was going to, on

my fieldwork trip to Guinea within a few weeks, the women in Damaia asked, clearly surprised:

‘What? Samira is going to Guinea?’

My unintentional faux pas during fieldwork were luckily most of the time compensated by occasions for being of assistance to someone else. 25-year old Sandra – descendent of a complex mix of Futa-Fula, Pepel, Geba Christians and Cape Verdeans – who had lived most of her life in Portugal and decided to return permanently to Bissau, provided one such occasion. The potential reintegration dilemmas identified by Fatu were actually felt by Sandra, to whom the effects of the ‘corrosive travel’ that migration embodies (Robertson *et al.* 1994) were deeply felt. Four years before we met she had decided to move back to Guinea to stay with her mother, with whom she had never lived before, while studying Law at a private university in Bissau. She hoped to specialise in Environmental Law and find a job in that field, which she considered promising in Guinea-Bissau. Sandra, however, did not have an easy reintegration, and called me constantly for a coffee and cigarette, which she considered an escape from the things that she could not get used to.

‘Just sitting here and having a cigarette and a coffee as we’re having now’ – she confessed – ‘is something I cannot do by myself. If someone sees me they will immediately call me *bandida* [cheat]. My friends from university only get together at each other’s houses, but I really like going out for a coffee. In Lisbon, my friends and I would spend an entire afternoon just sitting at a café.’

And she concluded:

‘Oh, I really miss that!’

Sandra and Fatu’s preference for a differentiated social space – the café – characterised by a distinct lifestyle, to use Bourdieu’s (1984) terms, embodied a sort of cosmopolitanism that was not well accepted by their Guinean acquaintances in Bissau. This, however, does not imply a Guinean ‘traditional’ view where any sign of ‘modernity’ is punished with gossip or *djanfa*. On the contrary, just as ‘sorcery’ is an example of a complex historical phenomenon that haunts the elite as much as the rest of the population (Geshiere 1997), cosmopolitan lifestyles are paradoxically condemned by the same Guineans who simultaneously see the fact of having a migrant relative as an

element that positively distinguishes them from others. It is true that I did not find, amongst return migrants from abroad (or in the views of those who planned to return), the space for celebrating their personal freedom of movement that Gable (2006) found in his study of the Manjaco's return to the village in Guinea-Bissau. However, I also contend that the tension between embracing change and creating (or recreating) continuities, sometimes in conflicting and contradictory ways, is part of Guineans' (both at home and abroad) daily lived experiences. I will now look specifically at the role played by food and plant-related products and practices, by providing some ethnographic examples of how they help to deconstruct these dichotomies and alleviate the dilemmas entailed in the return.

5.3.2. The role of Guinean food and plants in the return

The influence of food and foodways in home-based Guineans' view of their migrant kin's attitudes as either cosmopolitan or localist, or as a mix of both, was never directly mentioned to me as was clothing, lifestyles like the use of cafés, or other material goods, such as the houses, cars and bed linen described above by Dembó.

Unlike these goods, exogenous food was neither viewed as 'modern' nor as a signifier of worldliness or success amongst migrants. On the contrary, as my field evidence has shown, it was the endogenous organic method of production of Guinean food, seen as a positive outcome of Guinea-Bissau's lack of agricultural and economic development, that led to it be perceived as healthier and preferred to 'European foods', also amongst migrants. It was, too, the reason for return migrants to regain strength through a return to the Guinean land and to the consumption of Guinean food without the need for adaptations. In fact, unlike the first-generation resident Koreans in Japan studied by Lee (2000), I have never encountered a Guinean migrant who, upon return to Guinea-Bissau, saw their penchant for Guinean food disappear through what Lee identified as bodily transformation. On the contrary, upon return, food is one of the first compensations for a period spent away.

Yet some performances of cosmopolitanism or displays of success also involved food, such as the one described in the introduction of this chapter. When performed by return migrants or during return visits, the display of images of success was sometimes related to the generation of status that the practice of feeding others brings, in addition

to the reinforcement of unity and social ties (Janowski 2007). Ansumane, an elderly Fula trader of Guinean food in Lisbon who was on a temporary return during my fieldwork in Bissau, illustrated the way in which such images might be shaped. Having invited me to see the progress in the construction of his new house in Bissau – one of the main material embodiments of migrants' success, as Dembó's discourse revealed above – he directed me to the porch, where we sat together for the rest of the afternoon. At a certain point, more than ten children arrived, running from all directions, into the house. Gently smiling, Ansumane saw the women in the house go inside and get a bowl of rice with white sauce to give to the children, who sat in a circle on the porch near us, eating.

'I always do *simola* to the children in the neighbourhood' – Ansumane explained, keeping his posture of a successful man. 'Everyday around this time I offer them a bowl of food.'

A different kind of attitude was once performed by Samira – Dála's daughter – at the end of her 3-month visit to Bissau. Accompanying her sister to Caracol market in order to buy the foodstuffs that her mother had asked her to bring back to Lisbon, she walked slowly in her high heels, keeping a distance from her sister, embodying what was to me the expression of an outsider. When she saw me, she said immediately, as if justifying her presence in the market:

'Oh, you are here? I never come here! No, these places... not me!'

Yet interestingly, Samira did not seem to raise the attention of the *bideiras*, who continued their selling activities without a comment about her attitude. Intrigued by how they perceived what was to me an exaggerated performance of worldliness, I asked them if they knew Samira.

'Oh yes, we know her well, ever since she was a baby' – they said.

Then, emphasising what was apparently more important in that scene, one of them continued:

'She's going to take our foodstuffs to Portugal. Guineans in Portugal can't live without our food.'

Playing a different role than food, plant- and animal-based *mesinhu* are, due to their 'spiritual-religious' properties, especially important in alleviating the dilemmas of

return. Serifo, for example, was a Muslim Fula whose forced return was considered a result of *djanfa*, due to his mother's act of 'showing off' with the remittances she received from him. As he explained:

'I was caught in Portugal and repatriated to Guinea. When I arrived [in Guinea], people told me it had been *djanfa* – someone from here wanted me to be repatriated, because I was sending all this money to my mother and she was a woman, so my uncle thought that she was just showing it off (...). I told my mother that she should have been more discreet. There are so many people trying to migrate, and they never manage... I managed, but the others are still trying. She shouldn't have had that pride... "Oh, my son is in Europe", you see?'

The use of plant *mesinhu* was as a way to free him from the *djanfa* that had been put on him:

'When I came back my mother gave me *mesinhu* to take and to bathe with, so that the evil would go away' – he continued explaining.

His reference to *mesinhu* was however not absent from the complex overlap of religious and spiritual domains which, as I addressed before, are part of Guineans' beliefs and experienced realities. When explaining the effects of *mesinhu* in alleviating his return, he started by saying:

'I don't believe in those things, but my mother really wanted me to take them. I never believed it.'

Then, as if having given it a second thought, he added:

'I have only done it before I went to Portugal because there was a wise man in the village who was really wise; whatever he said that would happen, happened. So I told him I wanted to go to Portugal but I had no money. And his prayers helped me to go.'

Having examined the role of food and *mesinhu* practices and of combined expressions of cosmopolitanism, gossip, *djanfa* and development, as well as the part played by Guineans' participation in the transnational food trade in shaping projects of migration and return, I will next look at the way migrants in Lisbon shape their

memories of home in spaces of food exchange and consumption, as well as at expressions of ‘colonial nostalgia’ that can be observed amongst Guineans in both countries.

5.4. Memory, space and food

The relationship between food, space and memory was conceptually reviewed and discussed in chapter 2. I now draw on my ethnographic material to explore ways in which migrants’ memories of Guinea-Bissau are contextually and historically constructed in the new spaces of food exchange and food sharing they inhabit. Benefiting from my multi-sited ethnography, I will also look at examples from the lives of Guineans at home and how they experience that historical consciousness which, also there, entwines an idealisation of the past, expressed in ‘colonial nostalgia’, with the uncertainty of the present.

5.4.1. Remembering Guinea-Bissau in Lisbon’s food markets

Memories can be activated or reinforced through food practices in markets such as those of Damaia and Rossio. For Guinean migrants, as for people elsewhere (cf. Law 2001; Munn 1986), these are places of performative memory practices that are activated through the exchange of food, its consumption – either in the street or in any of the local Guinean bars and restaurants – and preparation, as when roasting the maize or preparing the *moni* during Ramadan. On such occasions of embodied experience and physical practices related to food, memories are materialised in powerful bodily sensations, as Buassata described in the opening quote of this chapter. They are also activated through the reproduction of socialisation practices that Guinean food traders and their clients used to perform in Bissau’s food markets. The act of gossiping, on which I focused above, plays a role within these socialisation practices. The news brought in by a newly-arrived client was always excitedly received, and often included reports on recent marriages and deaths at home, as well as outcomes of family quarrels or court cases of common acquaintances. News about recent developments in Guinea’s tumultuous political life were amongst the most sought after, and most Guinean street sellers and shopkeepers had small radios constantly playing RDP Africa,⁵⁴ whose

⁵⁴ Portugal’s public service broadcasting in Africa.

programmes always stimulated new conversations on Guinean politics amongst its listeners.



Figure 16. A *mesa* in Damaia selling tree bark and roots, palm oil, mangos, baobab fruit and velvet tamarind (dry pulp), with a radio on top playing RDP Africa

Moreover, memories triggered by spaces of food exchange are also embedded in a historical consciousness (cf. Ben-Ze'ev 2004; Sutton 2001), as well as in the idea of land as ethnic territory and its association with specific foods or plants, which I discussed earlier in this thesis. One of Fodé's clients once illustrated this relationship by narrating the story of some of the neighbourhoods of Bissau – a city that was originally, as I explained in chapter 3, territory of the Pepel. It was on a summer afternoon that I visited Fodé at his Guinean food shop in the outskirts of Lisbon. Ernesto was a client, but also a neighbour and friend of Fodé, and had been sitting in silence at the back of the shop for a while, as Fodé narrated his latest business-related preoccupations to me. Then, slowly, he entered the conversation. After a timid introduction, his initial silence developed into sharp enthusiasm, which resulted in endless stories of lost Guinean ethnic groups, different ancient practices and beliefs, healing qualities of Guinean plants, fruits and roots from certain trees, several recipes and methods for all sorts of maladies and lively accounts of past encounters. The story of Bissau, he contended, was associated with the importance of specific trees. As he explained:

'Pilum [a neighbourhood in Bissau] is called that, but most people don't know why. It is called Pilum because there was a tree there... the tree that gives a small

round yellow fruit called mandiple.⁵⁵ In Pepel language, mandiple is pilum. So, they would say: “I’m going to get pilum”, and when the Portuguese came they gave that name to the area. There are lots of beautiful stories like that... Mindará, the neighbourhood where Bandim market stands, the Pepel called it *Osombra*.⁵⁶ Why? Because in the times of our big men, of our ancestors, that was an area with only very big trees. But these names are getting lost now...’

Ernesto’s narrative is illustrative of Appadurai’s (1996) notion of ‘nostalgia without memory’, in the sense that the informant’s memories are embedded in histories that took place long before his time, but still help him to reconnect to the Guinean land. It is also illustrative of the way memories are embedded in the history of a colonial past (Cole 2001). Other encounters that I had when regularly visiting Guinean sellers in their spaces of food exchange and socialisation led me to new spaces where similar associations between food, space and memory could be observed. In Damaia’s ‘Bandim market’, one afternoon, I met Cidália and her husband. They were sitting in Aminata’s regular selling place when I arrived, helping to watch over her *mesa* during a brief absence of my young vendor friend. Yet they, too, had a bag of smoked chicken for sale by Cidália’s feet, which her husband had specialised in smoking, and she, in selling.

‘I sell these in Monte Abrãao market on Saturdays’ – she told me. ‘I shall take you there sometime.’

I visited Monte Abrãao with Cidália a few Saturdays later. It consists of a weekly formal market in one of Lisbon’s periurban municipalities, not far from Damaia. Being another space of performative food memories for Guineans, different influences are however played out in it, given the majority of Portuguese vendors, clients and passers-by that distinguishes it from Damaia’s ‘Bandim market’. When we arrived, her husband Braima was already there with a group of Guinean friends. At an open-space bar near the entrance, he kept the bags of smoked chicken out of sight, under a table. Beers, draught wine, *bifanas* and hamburgers were being served, in what could be considered a ‘typical Portuguese bar’. In fact, when she noticed Braima at the table, Cidália said:

‘There they are at the *bar di Tuga* [bar of the Portuguese].’

⁵⁵ *Spondias mombin*.

⁵⁶ Linked to the Creole word *sombra*, which means ‘shade’.

On the back wall, a poster with the words *Rota dos Sabores* (Route of Flavours) could be seen alongside the flags of six lusophone countries: Cape Verde, Mozambique, São Tomé, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Brazil. Cidália explained their preference for this place:

‘We don’t have a licence to sell in this market, but here we can sell discretely, to our *parenti*, while we *djumbai*.⁵⁷ We call it *bar di Tuga*, but others call it *bar di Guineense* [bar of the Guineans], since we’re always here.’

The way the process of othering is shown in this narrative is an interesting one. For Guineans, that was the bar of the Portuguese. For the Portuguese, it was the bar of the Guineans. Space is therefore not just an object for memory practices, but also for creating a sense of belonging, which both Portuguese and Guineans did in relation to each other. Observing these relationships is important when analysing the way identities are constructed, since this construction presupposes precisely that distinction between ‘us’ and the ‘other’ (cf. Barth 1969; Eriksen 2010; Wimmer 2008).

Cidália was the descendent of a complex ethnic mix from Bolama and, being a Christian, enjoyed drinking wine and eating pork meat sandwiches. The Guineans that gathered around this bar at Monte Abrão on Saturdays were, in fact, unlike in Rossio and Damaia where the majority was Fula and Mandinga, of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Although people like Cidália and her husband dwelled in all these different spaces, this was a weekly occasion for others, who did not use Rossio or Damaia on a daily basis, to socialise.

I joined them at the bar for the rest of the morning, during which several Guinean clients and friends walked in to buy Braima’s chickens or sell homemade baobab fruit ice creams. The interaction was conducted mostly amongst Guineans, but it was only rarely limited to the economic exchange. Although constant attention seemed to be dedicated to finding clients, especially given the concealment involved in the exchange and the need to keep the products out of sight, memories of similar *djumbai* in which they used to participate in Guinea-Bissau were often activated. The qualities of Guinean food and other food-related topics were common themes of conversation. Yet Guinean politics was most of the time the main topic and, within these discussions, the historical configuration of memory became more obvious. One of Cidália and Braima’s

⁵⁷ A Creole term meaning ‘to be together’ or ‘to socialise’, which often includes the sharing of food and is, amongst migrants, an occasion to share memories from home.

friends at the bar that day, Beto, provided evidence of such processes. Being also from Bolama Island, he exemplified, like Kadi, who I introduced in chapter 3, the complex way in which ethnic imagination is constructed by Guineans from Bolama, where the history of the *tchon*'s first owners is more ambiguous.

'My father is Manjaco, and my mother is a Geba Christian. I have Portuguese grandparents. That thing about race doesn't make any sense to me. I don't have a race' – he said.

Amidst such multifaceted interconnections, moreover, Beto's memories of home were associated with the recent colonial past. As he narrated:

'Once, on a bus in Lisbon, a man told me: "Go back to your country", but I answered that I could bet I knew more about this country than he did. For better or worse, I was born in Portuguese land [colonial Portuguese Guinea] and, until now, I remember the names of the rivers and railway stations of Portugal. I learned them at school, even though I didn't even know what a railway station was back then.'

And then, smiling, he added:

'The elders on the bus agreed with me.'

Beto's story illustrates, on the one hand, a particular situation of racial discrimination – an example of wider discrimination often experienced with the new encounters that take place in Portugal, which I will address in the next chapter. On the other hand, it exemplifies the complex spatial and historical configuration of memory, where the consciousness of a colonial past might be used as a tool with which to deal with that same discrimination. Since that consciousness cannot be ignored, I argue, when examining memory in the context of Guinea-Bissau, I will now focus on the way it is materialised in Guineans' lives.

5.4.2. Expressions of 'colonial nostalgia' in Bissau and Lisbon

'Colonial nostalgia' has been described as an unsettling expression for the ethnographer, when coming from those who struggled to overcome the European domination and exploitation, or from their descendents (cf. Bissell 2005; Ferguson 2002; Stoller 1995;

Werbner 1998). In the Guinean context, in fact, one can ask how the colonial economic, political and cultural repression, alongside a widespread neglect from Portugal towards then Portuguese Guinea, where the population saw hardly any improvement in living standards, infrastructures, local manufacturing, health or education (Galli 1995; Lobban and Mendy 1997), can now be longed for. On several occasions during fieldwork in Lisbon, particularly with the male Fula *mesinhu* vendors, many of whom had sided with the Portuguese during the liberation war, I heard accounts where colonialism was perceived as a better age. Often, sitting beside their open van from where the *mesinhu* was on display for sale, they discussed *tempo di Tuga* (the time of the Portuguese). I would then hear things like:

‘The Portuguese left us all good things. What did the PAIGC do? Nothing!’

Similar critiques of Guinean post-independence politics were a constant part of Guinean migrants’ conversations in their spaces of socialisation. Different from Guinean food, which brought a sense of satisfaction, wellbeing and pride to Guineans in both countries, the unstable political situation of Guinea-Bissau was severely criticised and a motive for embarrassment and shame. It was apparently also a reason for forgetting the brutalities of a colonial past and, instead, associating that past with the ‘good times’. Dála, in Portugal, narrated her memories of the colonial past as associated with her contribution in the war as a washerwoman, siding with the Portuguese:

‘I like to work. Ever since *tempo di Tuga*, I left the house to be their washerwoman, so that I could earn some money and help my family. Half of the Guineans were with the Portuguese. The other half – the Balanta and other tribes – would ambush us and set the bush on fire, and we had to run home. Then a Portuguese soldier stayed and guarded the place while we washed. I was in the war from the beginning to the end, for 13 years, washing the Portuguese’s clothes! Everyday we’d go to the bush to wash, since there was no well in the house. We made the war of the Portuguese, we worked so much for them – everyday washing, ironing... everyday!’

That participation, which should now entitle her to receive a pension from the Portuguese state, had however not been compensated. Yet instead of seeing the Portuguese state as responsible for the situation, she censured her fellow Guinean women for their lack of solidarity, a shortcoming that is generally perceived by Guineans

as a result of migration, as Dála's narrative already illustrated above, and of the consequent need for individual survival:

'I once asked a lawyer, and he told me I should get witnesses. And there are so many others here [in Lisbon] who were also washerwomen!' – Dála explained. 'The thing is that there they were known by a different name, which is not the same name by which they're known here. Sometimes, if I manage to identify one, she says: "fine, fine", but never does anything. Here people don't help their compatriots. They change with migration.'

To Dála, the PAIGC was also to blame for her present situation:

'I was asked if I had a washwoman's card. I had the card, I had a Portuguese passport, a Portuguese ID... Everything! But when the PAIGC came they took it all. They took all our documents!'

This 'colonial nostalgia', which can be a strategy of resistance for migrants, may also be a way to criticise the present in Guinea-Bissau, motivated by the distance between the majority of Guineans and the new politico-military elite that have been using their positions for personal gain rather than furthering democracy and working for the improvement of people's living conditions (Embaló 2012). It is precisely the widespread sense of foreboding and ever more precarious daily life that people are facing, in which the neoliberal reforms and the negative consequences of the Structural Adjustment Programme played a role, that makes them idealise the past. In fact, amongst the *bideiras* of Bissau, this nostalgia was, too, a common topic of conversation. On 1 April 2010, a failed coup d'état took place while I was in Bissau. When I went to Caracol market the following day, I was surprised to see it operating with no apparent disruptions. Inussa, who had just arrived from the south, laughed when I asked him what he thought about it. Teasingly, he said:

'I was the one who solved all this. The moment I arrived in Bissau, Indjai⁵⁸ apologised for having threatened the prime-minister.'

⁵⁸ António Indjai was the vice general chief of staff at that time. Together with the former navy commander Bubo Na Tchuto, he tried to overthrow the military leadership and the prime minister on 1 April 2010. They withdrew the following day due to massive protection from the people of Bissau and immediate international pressure.

In spite of the way the people of Bissau had gathered near the prime minister's office the previous day, demanding his immediate liberation, the woman *bideiras* of Caracol market claimed to be used to these 'political and military foolishnesses' and to the 'unwise people who run the power'. Teresa, who was visiting from Lisbon, seemed more upset at the recent events. She shook her head with dismay and said:

'I was never in Bissau before when such things happened. Yesterday I was already here [at the market] when it all started. I had to leave hurriedly and walk all the way back home. It was scary.'

In Bissau, like in Lisbon, 'colonial nostalgia' was more evident amongst the Fula. This, however, cannot be thought only in terms of many Fula's cooperation with the Portuguese and their shared historical interest in fighting against the 'animists of the coast'. More than that, as Bissell (2005) has argued for the Zanzibari, it is associated with the imaginative resource that the colonial past provides: 'a realm rich in invention, critical in possibility – for people struggling with the present, hoping to secure what can no longer be found in the future' (2005: 240).

Nostalgia, like other forms of memory practice, can only be understood in particular historical and spatial contexts, and does not necessarily mean the wish for a return to the past. To Beto, the consciousness of colonisation was a strategic tool against discrimination. To Dála, colonial memory might have been a way to deal with the difficulties faced by the lack of solidarity amongst her fellow Guinean migrants, as well as with the difficulties that she went through after Guinea's independence. Often, this 'colonial nostalgia' was combined, in Lisbon, with a more general nostalgia for the home country, presently exacerbated by the economic crisis in Portugal and the deterioration of migrants' living conditions. This interplay, where life in Guinea is simultaneously longed for and its politics criticised to the point that colonial times are portrayed as better, is part of the apparent contradictions that are however not perceived as such by Guineans themselves, who find their own ways to reconcile them. In Guinea-Bissau, in particular, alongside this nostalgia for the past, there seems to be a strong 'nostalgia for the future' in Piot's (2010) terms – a future that replaces untoward pasts, and that is partly embodied in widespread migratory projects. During fieldwork in Bissau, in fact, I shared Piot's struggle to understand what he called 'the paradoxes of everyday life in contemporary West Africa', that is to reconcile such desires for displacement, partly resultant from political disappointments of recent decades, with the fact that the

Guineans I knew were, like Piot's Togolese, proud of their land, 'fully in their skin and infused with hope and dynamism', filling the streets and the everyday with 'hustle and laughter' (2010: 20). To understand such paradoxes I draw on Moore's (2011) suggestion that hope has a temporal character that forces us away from a history of ideas too strongly attached to rationalities and ideologies, and animates us towards possible futures (2011: 144-145).

5.5. Conclusions

By tackling memories and future aspirations of migration and return amongst Guinean food traders in Lisbon and their kin in Bissau, this chapter has contributed to existing literature on conceptions of home as dynamic processes, 'involving the acts of imagining, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving "homes"' (Al-Ali and Koser 2002: 6). It has also shown how Guinean migrants write their presence in the new spaces they occupy while imagining possible futures and being simultaneously nostalgic for the past – in this way maintaining not only the link between proximate and distant homes (cf. Blunt 2003; Castern 2007), but also between past, present and future.

Food plays a key role in the process of collapsing space and time. As Cook and Crang (1996) have contended, foods are materials and practices 'inhabiting different times and spaces which, far from being neatly bounded, bleed into and mutually constitute each other' (1996: 131). In this chapter I have therefore examined not only the materiality of food, but also of the practices and spaces of food exchange and consumption in Lisbon that play a role in the process of keeping an active link with Guinea-Bissau. Unlike Counihan (1984) and Seremetakis (1994), whose respective work on Sardinian and Greek food indicate that the onset of modernity has resulted in a decline of customary foodways and therefore in the fall of food as a vehicle for social memory, I argue that, even with the need for adaptations like the ones I described in the previous chapter, maintaining their foodways is a way for Guinean migrants to guard against loss.

Yet I have not only focused on the migrant's perspective. In order to better understand the process of bridging distances, I have also explored the viewpoint of the people in Guinea-Bissau, hence bringing a new insight into this analysis, resulting from my multi-sited approach. At home, the desire for migration is usually studied as

materialised by the financial and social remittances received (cf. Levitt 1998), as well as by tales of migration that help to build up aspirations for a wealthier life in Europe. Although this was also evident in my observations, this chapter has provided evidence of what has not so often been explored – the fact that amidst these objects and accounts that travel from Europe to the home country, the imaginaries of migrants' kin at home can also be produced through the things they send in the opposite direction. Food materialises this reverse process in the Guinean case. Like the women farmers of Bissau, the relatives of migrant traders who weekly send food products to Lisbon build their migratory projects based on their participation in the transnational circulation of food.

From the migrant's perspective, return projects were examined as contributing to bridge the distance between both countries and between the past, present and future in the making of Guinean life-worlds. Returns can be imagined, provisional or repatriated and, like migration, they take place over space and time, developing their own histories and trajectories (Long and Oxfeld 2004). Return projects, like migration, reconcile past memories with new tensions, creating new transnational spaces of what Rouse (1991) named 'pluri-local' homes.

Rumours and threats of *djanfa* are part of the tensions that interfere in the shaping and accomplishment of future projects of return and migration. As this chapter has shown, *djanfa* can take place as a result of the display of wealth and cosmopolitan attitudes amongst migrants or return migrants, and consequent entwined feelings of pride and jealousy. Similar two-sided family solidarity has been found by Riccio (2008) amongst the Senegalese, who find support and counselling, but also competition, conflicts, arguments and frustration within the family. In this regard, it is worth revisiting van Binsbergen's (1988) observations amongst the Manjaco of Guinea-Bissau, according to which the ritual and financial obligations that are expected from return migrants constitute an extra source of stress. The already mentioned *pidi, pidi* (ask, ask), which I will explore further in the next chapter, is an example of how my own findings concur with these observations.

However, just as I have analysed 'witchcraft' and 'sorcery' (*djanfa*) as practices that connect local experiences and global events (Weiss 1996), I have looked at these local expectations and conflicts entailed in the return not as opposed to cosmopolitanism and development, but as an intrinsic part of it. Food is a key vehicle with which to rethink these reconciliations. Samira's behaviour in Caracol market and

the *bideiras*' reaction to it are illustrative of ways in which cosmopolitanism, like tradition, can be brought into 'focal awareness' or be momentarily 'out of focus' (Munn 1992) according to people's choices. Ansumane's distribution of food amongst the children of his neighbourhood also illustrates how Guineans can reinvent tradition as a sign of cosmopolitan success. What is more, when the focus is on food, a recovery of spiritual and bodily comfort is felt by Guineans during temporary returns, as seen through the examples provided in the previous chapter.

These apparent contradictions are therefore not opposed realms, but rather combined in people's life experiences. Likewise, threats related to the weakening of the body and the deterioration of the food produced with modern methods associated with development, which have been examined in the previous chapter, are combined with the perception of new opportunities, especially for the young people, resulting from that same 'modernity' and 'development'. This confirms the ambiguity that prevails in people's engagement with social and economic transformations, where a desire to be 'modern' is combined with deep anxiety about that same 'modernity' (Mitchell 2001). Following Mitchell's argument that representations of social change are often corporeal, the fear of industrialised foods explored in the previous chapter is an example of bodily threats that, however, must not be read as an unequivocal rejection of 'modernity' (Mitchell 2001: 5). Such ambiguities confirm the importance, highlighted in chapter 2, of acknowledging the fact that 'development' means different things for different actors (cf. Escobar 1995; Grillo 1997; Mills 1999), and in different situations and contexts.

Although I did not explicitly focus on gender, the importance of gender relations in the display of wealth or cosmopolitanism in Guinea-Bissau should not be ignored. Here, I follow Fardon's (2008) suggestion that seeing everyone as cosmopolitan ignores important differentiations. There is, in fact, an important gap in the literature regarding the understanding of African women's return migration, which the historically longer migration of men as compared to women and consequent more widespread return of men have thus far left us with.⁵⁹ Even more widely studied gendered subjectivities in transnational contexts, such as women's requests of gifts and money to migrant men, have more often concerned other regional contexts (cf. Strathern 1988), as has the women's act of reminding migrants of their moral duties through gifting of food (cf.

⁵⁹ Filipino female migrants are an exception, and studies of their return visits can be found, for example, in Constable (2004).

Abbotts 2011). Little is known about reintegration processes of return migrant women in Africa and the way they are depicted by others. Narratives from my fieldwork, like the story of Serifo's mother, provided some evidence with which to start thinking of these specificities. In a way, she seemed to have followed Gable's (2006) Manjaco men in praising her worldliness and new wealth resulting from her son's migration and ensuing remittances, in spite of the threats faced by adopting such an attitude. The inflicted sanction in this case can be seen as an outcome of the inequality of gender relations and the fact that Serifo's uncle thought he should be the one in charge of the remittances received. Yet alongside the important role played by gender or age in the way returns and migration might be desired or lived differently, findings from my fieldwork suggest that the basic cosmology which conceives the land as inhabited by spiritual entities is a key element, common to most Guineans' lives, and essential to take into account in such processes.

In addition to migratory and return plans, there are other ways in which to understand how the link is kept between both lands, sometimes without the physical travel of people. Memories are one such way. I have analysed the materiality of the environment in activating memories (Legg 2007), by focusing on Guinean practices of socialisation in spaces of food exchange and consumption. The way conversations about home in such spaces materialise both the desire for return and severe criticisms of the political situation in Guinea-Bissau is an indicator of people's subjective perceptions of their past, and of food's role in forming a historical consciousness.

Following Sutton's (2001) 'sites of food memories', I have shown that exploring people's historical consciousness and subjective perceptions of their past can be done through food, as an object or place for memory practices. Moreover, a socio-historical approach to memory allowed for a better understanding of Guineans' idealisation of the colonial period as a time 'when things worked' and of the Portuguese as 'having left only good things in Guinea'. In her *Memories of the Slave Trade*, Shaw (2002) distinguishes between discursive and practical memory as two poles of a continuum. Between both poles, Shaw contends, there are several intermingled forms of memory that do not necessarily contradict each other. For Guineans, too, 'colonial nostalgia' is used strategically and contextually, interwoven with diverse social memory practices.

Chapter 6

Giving, reciprocating and trading across borders:

The role of food in exchange relationships

‘Cashew nuts, groundnuts... Nothing? Has nothing been sent to me?’ – one of

Jorge’s regular costumers was once asking, as I entered his agency.

‘My wife must be cheating me!’ – he went on as Jorge shook his head.

(At Jorge’s agency in Lisbon)

6.1. Introduction

‘*Velho!* [Old man] Do you know Jorge’s place around here?’ – The taxi driver pulled the car over a passerby and asked for directions to Jorge’s agency, in one of Bissau’s peripheral neighbourhoods. The place was known to many of my friends in Bissau, who used it for sending homeland gifts to their migrant kin and, concurrently, to receive regular financial and material remittances from them. Although it was not immediately easy to find, the taxi driver eventually located the place, surrounded by a small market, a bar serving drinks and a local restaurant where I was to share meals with Neusa – Jorge’s sister-in-law – her cousins and clients, in the months to come.

The agency consisted of one large room where suitcases, cardboard boxes, plastic bags and other kinds of wrapped belongings were piled on shelves, on chairs and on the floor, either to be collected by clients in Bissau or to be sent by air to Lisbon. Old car seats furnished the customers’ waiting area and the staff’s improvised office space near the window, where transactions were registered and packages organised. Jorge, in spite of giving his name to the agency and being in charge of the business, had been a migrant in Lisbon for nearly twenty years, and was therefore on the other side of the chain. In Bissau, it was his sister-in-law, Neusa, who took care of the agency with the help of her younger brothers and cousins.

In their agency – one of many spread around the city – clients regularly came in to collect packages of clothes, shoes, jewellery, drinks (mainly wines and spirits),

building materials and electronic consumer goods such as TV screens and mobile phones, sent from Lisbon by their migrant relatives. Not as immediately perceptible as those large packages but more significant for their quantity and regularity of arrival, were money and envelopes with documents linked to Guineans' widespread migratory projects and aspirations. Necessary for the visa application, certificates and records obtained in Portugal and sent to the applicant in Bissau materialised the kin's help in the process.



Figure 17. Neusa's agency in Bissau

In the reverse direction, Guinean food dominated. On the day of my first visit, as well as on all days with direct flights to Lisbon, Neusa's clients came in with a variety of foodstuffs to be sent by air to their migrant relatives. Palm oil bottles, small packages of fresh vegetables, cashew nuts, groundnuts, fresh fruits and homemade *konserve* could be seen inside their bags, well wrapped by Neusa's helpers after being checked.

On the destination side of the journey, Guinean migrants regularly dropped in to Jorge's agency in Lisbon to ask if their packages had been delivered. A large front room with two desks and a back room where the material waiting to be sent or collected was stored served as his Lisbon office. There, I often saw clients come in with high expectations of their home-based kin's provision of Guinean food, as shown in the field diary excerpt at the beginning of this chapter.

The complexity involved in West African structures of kinship, where solidarity, obligations and demands are combined in different ways, can partly be understood by looking at the process of giving and reciprocating objects across borders, which agencies such as Neusa's and Jorge's facilitate. Yet the ways through which Guinean food reaches the migrant community in Lisbon go beyond processes of transnational giving and reciprocating, and the trade of food for profit is the main motive for the continuous circulation of Guinean food. However, as others have noted (cf. Appadurai 1986a; Parry and Bloch 1988; van Binsbergen 2005), an approach opposing the spontaneous spirit of gifts to the calculated spirit of commodities is oversimplified. In fact, as many of the stories thus far narrated in my thesis have revealed, the relationships involved in making Guinean food circulate from Bissau to Lisbon either as a gift or a commodity are not always easy to distinguish, and the role of food as one thing or the other is often entwined in such processes.

This final chapter thus deals with processes of transnational giving, reciprocating and trading food and plant medicines, by looking into what they involve economically and socially in the two countries. This chapter will bring to a close the all-inclusive multi-sited analysis with which I structured my research, by revealing how practices of giving, reciprocating and trading food across distances are not necessarily alienated from local production in Guinea-Bissau or from the importance of Guinean land that I started by ethnographically examining in chapter 3. The focus on food and plants will contribute in new ways to understand that process. What is the unique role played by Guinean food and plants – whose biography I traced from the land where they grow to their final destination in Portugal – in linking production and exchange across borders? How does food influence transnational relationships of giving, reciprocating and trading – essential for Guinean life-worlds to be connected with migration?

In order to answer these questions I will first focus on the relationship between anthropological theories of gift exchange and migrant remitting. In this respect, I will try to understand what the circulation of food and *mesinhu* in one direction, and of financial and material remittances in the other, can tell us about changes in the value of things and in the relationships generated. On the one hand, I hope to contribute to the long-standing anthropological debate that, as I discussed in chapter 2, has classified food either at the top or at the bottom of relationships of exchange (Bohannan 1955, 1959; Graeber 1996; Sutton 2001) or seen relationships as being able to change those positions

(Appadurai 1986a; Munn 1986; Piot 1991; Uzendoski 2004; Weiss 1996). On the other hand, understanding the way in which value is ascribed to food and to financial and material remittances is important to acknowledge the role that both migrants and their kin play in these relationships. Notwithstanding the existence of previous studies on these relationships (cf. Cliggett 2005) and on the financial obligations of the migrant member of the family in research on Africa and migration (cf. Grillo and Riccio 2004; Koser 2002; Stoller 2003), the active and not just dependent role played by the migrant's kin in the home country has most of the time been overlooked.⁶⁰ Bringing the side of these kin members to light will introduce new insights into the study of kinship relations of giving and reciprocating.

Second, I will look at how the transnational system of Guinean food exchange for profit operates. Following Gudeman's (2001) model introduced in chapter 2, I will try to understand how the communal and market realms of the economy are intertwined or, putting it in other words, how local systems of value and exchange are incorporated, without declining, into global market networks, with the migration of people and things. The Guinean life-world, where informal but clearly regulated mechanisms of solidarity, obligations and sanctions in case of dispute – in which the notion of trust plays a central role – are continued with migration, provides interesting examples of how such mechanisms are put into practice in the economic arena. The alienation between production and consumption, resulting from commodities' integration in smaller predominantly non-capitalist economies from the production side – as is the case of Guinea-Bissau – and larger-scale markets from the consumption side, has been addressed in several reworkings of Marx's famous discussion in *Capital* (1992[1867]).⁶¹ Yet what happens when trade and consumption in the market economy are physically separated but relationally are not alienated from production in largely non-market societies, remains unclear. I hope to contribute to fill this gap in economic anthropology and migration studies by bringing into the analysis the two sides of a migratory journey where all those involved in the commodity chain are closely interconnected.

Since lively manifestations of these complex relationships are embodied in spaces of food exchange, I will also examine the ways in which Guinean traders, clients and

⁶⁰ Abbots (2011), who has worked on the sending of *cuy* (guinea pigs) from Jimeño women in Ecuador to their migrant kin in New York, suggests that gifts and money are expected as a return.

⁶¹ Some of which are forcefully exposed in Appadurai's (1986b) seminal edited collection.

other passers-by are bodily engaged in the construction of those spaces in Lisbon, reproducing the food markets of Bissau while simultaneously constituting new encounters. I therefore draw on the performative and embodied experience and construction of place that I discussed in chapter 2, as well as on Stoller's (1996) study of African markets, to explore the ways in which these spaces of exchange are, although appearing chaotic to the outsider, clearly regulated through the implementation of informal mechanisms (1996: 777-778). Given the Fula's key position within the Guinean food trade in Lisbon, I will also look at the relationship between food and the embodiment of the Fula trader's image, as well as at the livelihood strategy that food trade represents for them both in Guinea-Bissau and in Portugal.

6.2. Food sharing obligations and remittances: who gives and who reciprocates?

The essential role played by migrants' relatives in Bissau in guaranteeing Guinean food and *mesinhu's* accessibility to their kin in Lisbon could be observed through the movement of people at Bissau-based agencies. At Neusa's, for example, this movement was constant from early morning on the three weekly days offering a direct flight to Lisbon. After the taxi-driver dropped me off on my first visit, I sat on one of her old car seats, while she organised the records and her two cousins took care of the packages. It was a flight day, and people came in and out continuously with heavy plastic bags filled with foodstuffs. Neusa's cousins placed the bags on the scale until reaching an agreed amount, charged at 4,000 CFA (a little less than eight dollars) per kilo. They then wrote the sender's and the recipient's names on an airline tag and stuck it to the bags, which they would later take to the airport and search for a luggage-free passenger who would agree to carry them. If everything went well, the bags would be ready for collection the following afternoon in Lisbon.

Men came into Neusa's agency just as frequently as women with bags of foodstuffs to send to their migrant kin. However, as shown in my accounts in the previous chapters, women play the key role amongst those involved in the transnational food trade from the Bissauan side, not only in harvesting but also in buying the fresh produce in the local food markets, packing it and going to the airport to have it sent. Yet just like the use of agencies such as Neusa's does not seem to be gender-specific, men

and women received such gifts equally in Lisbon, illustrating current migratory patterns, no longer overrepresented by young male Guineans.

Age, too, plays an evident key role in the gifting process. As some scholars have suggested, seniority might even supersede gender in many African societies, where a man or a woman who achieves the position of an elder embodies a different gender (Miescher 2007). As already seen through the example of Yasin in the previous chapter, it is often the youths who are responsible for sending the foodstuffs that their older kin sell in Portugal. Likewise, gifts of food are more frequently expected to come from younger relatives to their elders.

Yet food giving is linked to special obligations that concern all Guineans, regardless of age. These obligations are associated with food's vital functions and unique qualities. What changes, then, when families are geographically separated? Does the sending of food from Bissau to Lisbon remain an obligation that takes place regardless of the material and financial remittances received? Or can it be seen as a way of reciprocating those remittances?

Identifying who gives and who reciprocates within these multifaceted and ongoing transnational kinship relations is made more difficult when exploring Guineans' own positions on such matters. In fact, in my conversations with families in both countries, the view from one side often contradicted the other, each considering that it was them helping the distant kin. Within the mutual recognition between donor and recipient that gift exchange establishes there is also a complex perception of the distribution of costs, since the money used for buying and shipping food can be either the Guinea-based kin's or be seen as part of the migrant's remittances. I will now explore such ambiguities in the Guinean reciprocity system.

One of my main questions in this regard was whether food giving is an obligation regardless of an eventual return, or if it consciously anticipates a direct compensation. The act of offering food as one of the most significant ways of welcoming guests was obvious from the early start of my fieldwork. Several times in Guinea-Bissau I found myself coming back to my hosts' house with heavy packages of mangoes, bananas, cashew fruits and nuts, groundnuts, coconuts, vegetables and chickens, offered to me by my research participants when I visited their homes, the markets where they sold the crops or the smallholdings where they grew them. Back in Lisbon, similar offers and

invitations for meals were as much a recurrent experience as they had been in Guinea. The importance of offering food in Guinea-Bissau and the continuation of this practice in Lisbon was once reinforced by Sali, the Guinean restaurant owner in Lisbon, who explained:

‘Many people don’t have money to pay, but I have to serve them the food anyway. Food is something we cannot refuse to others. From the time when we lived in Guinea, we were taught to share food. Everyone who comes to your house is welcomed with food. So this is what we do here as well.’

Armindo, a frequent receiver of homeland food who lived and worked in close proximity to other Guineans in the suburbs of Lisbon, narrated similar obligations related to sharing:

‘In the neighbourhood where I live, if the neighbours know that I have received food from home, lunch has to be at my place. (...) In my workplace [a construction site], at noon, we all go to the canteen with our lunches packed from home. Everyone starts looking at each other’s containers, to see who has *kumida di tera* [food of the land]. If I happen to have some, the others will say: “today we’re eating food from home!” and we will all share it.’

When looking at the process of sending food across borders as a gift, the principle whereby food, given its vital function and distinctiveness by symbolically representing home, hospitality and assistance, is ‘more readily, or more necessarily, shared’ (Sahlins 2004[1972]: 215) does not disappear. The obligation of sharing food seems to be as important in Guinea as it is in Portugal and also between one country and the other. Sending homeland food to distant relatives is, in fact, a way of ensuring assistance and reminding them of home, alleviating the threats of loss and discomfort felt when away from familiar land.

However, I argue that the expectation of a future form of compensation is a less overt part of these offers, and that this compensation is, for the home-based kin, materialised not only in the remittances received but also in support for the accomplishment of their migratory intentions. On the one hand, cross-border gifts of food might be, more than a way to reciprocate remittances, an intentional way of anticipating the arrival of remittances as a return, in this way maintaining relationships, as Piot (1991) has argued, through the continuous creation of debts. On the other hand,

just as migrants are compelled to remit as a way to remain connected to those at home and keep the path for return open (Cliggett 2005), their kin in the home country might use the process of giving to guarantee support in the accomplishment of their own migratory intentions. Dembó's story, narrated in the previous chapter, shed some light on such anticipations. Although the materials he sent to Seco from Bissau were, more than gifts, part of Seco's requests, needed for his charm-making job, Dembó saw the sending of those materials as a way to guarantee future help in accomplishing his migratory plan.

'I always send him exactly what he asks me to, because tomorrow I might be there and need a favour from Bissau' – he said. 'If I fail now, others will fail me later, and I don't want that, because I know that I will get there [to Portugal] someday. I don't know how, but I will.'

Moreover, observing the way Neusa's clients used the agency in Bissau to ship gifts of food and simultaneously ask if any visa-related documents had arrived from Lisbon seemed to indicate that, contrary to several descriptions of sharing food as an obligation that expects no direct return, what is at issue is, as Malinowski put it long ago, a 'mutual exchange of gifts' (2005[1922]: 70).

Furthermore, if jealousy and the act of gossiping on who received what from whom might generate changes in the practice of sharing, these changes rarely concern food. Related acts of secrecy – a 'hidden exchange' of things, as Bercovitch (1994) put it – where people act in a way that keeps others unaware of what has occurred are more often associated with other materials. Shipments of financial remittances from Lisbon, for example, were sometimes sent in especially concealed ways. Their arrival in Bissau, in spite of examples of display like that performed by Serifo's mother, described in the previous chapter, was also frequently hidden, in order to avoid the gaze and envy of others, which could lead to insistent pleas for loans or, in the worst cases, to practices of *djanfa*. In Lisbon, however, the arrival of food was rarely hidden, and its sharing with others was also common practice amongst traders, hence blurring the boundaries between food's role as commodity and gift. The trade of food, understood as a practice of exchange that involves profit, was therefore often performed in ways that entailed similar dilemmas of conciliating solidarity, obligations and personal interests. Likewise, some agencies in Lisbon, which play an important intermediate role in the transnational gifting system, also run as small shops of Guinean produce. Or, as is more often the case,

most Guinean shop owners also fulfil the intermediary function of *agensiadores*, once more bringing together food's important roles as gifts and commodities. I will now look at the relationships involved in the commercial exchange of food, in order to try to understand how community and more global connections are entwined, how food influences these connections and how the dilemmas resulting from obligations, solidarity and the need to maximise profit change or are reproduced with migration.

6.3. Guinean food markets and food transactions: relationships in spaces and systems of exchange

Guinean food traders in Bissau and in Lisbon, even if frequently protesting against the constant requests for loans (*pati*) from customers and other fellow vendors, were often forced to 'lend' products which would most probably never be paid back. Drawing on the notion of the 'traders' dilemma' coined by Evers (1994), in this section I will analyse the way in which customary relationships of exchange are continued or changed by migrant food traders. Within these relationships, I will first focus on informal systems of economic solidarity. Second, on the way the communal and market realms of the economy put forward by Gudeman (2001) are intertwined when the local system of exchange is incorporated into wider market networks. Third, on the new encounters that take place in physical spaces of food exchange in Lisbon. For the analysis of these topics I contribute both with my multi-sited perspective and with my focus on food as a material endowed with unique values that might challenge common assumptions in studies of exchange.

6.3.1. Economic solidarity: credit, debts and 'informal exclusivity agreements'

The notion of *pati* (which can be translated both as 'to give' or 'to lend') could be constantly heard when transactions were performed in spaces like Rossio and Damaia, in Lisbon, and Caracol, in Bissau, as well as in several other arenas of food exchange. Many clients accumulated debts to the sellers with whom a relationship of exclusivity had been established, and from both sides sanctions were applied if those relationships failed to be kept. Sellers, however, only rarely demanded the repayment.

When questioned why that repayment was not asked for, in spite of being a constant motive for side conversations and sighs of complaint, Guinean traders always seemed vague and ambiguous to me in their answers. One of the most common explanations was simply that ‘Guineans cannot say no’. During an attempt to explain the system of credit and debts that I was so eager to understand, Dála told me:

‘I don’t know. I have always acted this way, ever since I was a *bideira* in Bissau. I give, and then I feel ashamed to go after the customers and ask for the money back. Most of them eventually pay me back, but it can take a long time.’

Entering the conversation, Boar – the baobab fruit ice-cream seller in Rossio who I introduced in chapter 1 – brought up the notion of solidarity, suggesting that the recent economic crisis could only reinforce the need for mutual help. However, not long after this discourse of tolerance, she good-humouredly said to a client who was asking for a ‘loan’:

‘N’ka tene sorbete di pati, so sorbete di kumpra!’ [I don’t have ice-cream to borrow, only ice-cream to buy].

In spite of a few examples of protest and even refusals to offer these forms of credit like the one provided by Boar, which generally entailed the kind of playfulness exemplified in her discourse, the majority of the transactions involved them as a strategy to maintain the trust-based relationship between seller and customer, since if credit was refused, the client could easily break the relationship and economically harm the trader. However, just like the process of giving and reciprocating across borders was used to reinforce kinship relations, the system of informal credit was more than a simple economic strategy. Even if not always conscious or explicit, the fact that ‘Guineans could never say no’ was a way to secure a future compensation in case of need. Moreover, for women in particular, selling on credit is, as in other West African countries, a means of increasing power and social outreach (Guérin 2006). The fact that the system is mainly managed by women puts them in control of the exchange and of the way the debts are settled, which usually implies that the return may come in the shape of a needed favour.

Alongside selling on credit, there are other gendered customary systems of economic solidarity that are continued with migration. *Abota*, for example, is the Guinean Creole word for the rotating saving system that I described in chapter 2, in which each person gives a fixed amount of money every day, week or fortnight to the

person who acts as manager of the group, and the distribution of the total saved amount rotates between each member. The manager is always a woman, as well as most of the members, although men can also participate. In spite of the importance of women's management of the group, the participation of men, as well as a general preference for smaller groups, often resulted from what Cornwall (2008) identified as the myth of female cooperativeness with each other, and cases of women's breach of the agreement were constant motives of complaint. Although this is a longstanding practice in Guinea-Bissau, the women in Rossio have intensified its implementation, they explained to me, after having felt the impacts of the financial crisis and consequent economic stagnation that has characterised Portugal in recent years. To them, the current increase in the number of participants was due to the consequences of the difficult economic situation that has hit migrants with particular intensity.

Yet notwithstanding necessary changes that derived from the migratory experience, the relationships between Guinean vendors and clients followed similar patterns of informal agreements in Bissau, as they did in Lisbon. There, women farmers had their fixed clients – the *bideiras* who, in Caracol, always sold the produce to the same person who, in turn, would send it to Lisbon. Sometimes the exchange was performed directly between farmer and the migrant trader's kin; at other times through the use of more levels of intermediate action. Often, during the afternoons spent at the market of Caracol, I saw farmers, *bideiras* and clients quarrel about breaks in those informal agreements, which led to a change of the people involved in the relationship. When I met Mila, for example, she had an agreement with Fanta and Safiatu, to whom she directly sold her crops before they sent them to their relatives in Lisbon. However, new contracts were established at the beginning of each rainy season, in October.

'It depends on who asks me first' – she explained.

The creation of these relationships had started out, for Mila, years before, when the first traders began to send food to Lisbon. Samba, one of the first to inaugurate this kind of transnational trade with his brother Aliu in Lisbon, who I introduced in chapter 1, had been her client in Bissau:

'I saw him and, after him, a growing number of people buying large quantities of some foodstuffs on specific days. Once Samba approached me and asked if I

could bring him the produce once a week. He explained that he was sending it to Lisbon. We started working together, it went well, and then others asked me too.'

Relationships of exchange involve, nevertheless, further elements of complexity than the practice of selling on credit and informal exclusivity agreements. Ethnic and kinship relations, for example, influence the way transactions are performed. There are, moreover, new actors who have recently generated changes in the transactions. The next section will introduce these actors and their different influences in exchange relationships.

6.3.2. 'Community' and 'impersonal' exchanges: negotiating with kinfolk, co-ethnics or strangers

Amongst the most recent entrants in the Guinean transnational food trade are Chinese migrants. In Lisbon, part of the long-established Chinese entrepreneurial activities have recently been redirected towards an African clientele, with several Chinese-run shops being named 'African Shops', employing Guinean shopkeepers and offering the same food products that are sent by Guineans from Bissau. Some Guinean migrant traders have therefore become intermediaries in these transactions. Moreover, the complex web of intermediary levels with the involvement of Chinese migrants created situations in which the produce is sold in bulk to the Chinese by Guineans who receive it from Bissau, and bought by other Guinean vendors from Chinese shops in Lisbon before reaching the final client.

Some Guinean migrants claimed to prefer negotiating with the Chinese in order to avoid risking the kind of conflicts resulting from the community obligations described above. Guinean narratives about transactions with the Chinese in Lisbon often referred to the advantages of certainty of payment. If carried out between Guineans, the social obligation of facilitating an informal system of credit and debt inhibited the guarantee of an immediate payment for traders. Moreover, some saw the Chinese success in the business as resulting from stronger family support networks.

'Guineans, on the contrary, cheat each other. If they have the money, they say they don't, and they don't pay' – Mário, one of my research participants in Lisbon who decided to sell exclusively to Chinese shops, once said.

Likewise, Guinean consumers occasionally preferred to buy certain products in Chinese shops, whose selling system was considered more beneficial in this period of economic crisis. The main difference lay in the fact that Guinean food vendors sold already arranged small packages of foodstuffs with fixed prices (a combination of a handful of *kandja*, *djagatu* and *badjiki*, for example, was charged 2.50 Euros). These prices had been initially established by the first traders and thus far maintained by all, with no variations, being also part of Guineans' informal regulation of exchange mechanisms. Chinese sellers had, instead, created a more open system of exchange by selling the produce by weight, leaving the client with the choice of buying smaller quantities if not having enough money for the pre-arranged packages.



Figure 18. Foodstuffs for sale in bulk in Caracol, Bissau



Figure 19. Small pre-arranged packages of foodstuffs for sale in Damaia, Lisbon

However, due to the above-described informal contracts of exclusivity between Guineans, the involvement of Chinese migrants in the Guinean food trade was not perceived as threatening by Guinean sellers. As Admir, a Fula shop owner in Damaia, explained:

‘Now the Chinese are selling Guinean food too, but that doesn’t bother me, because my clients already know me and they will come to me first. There’s a lot more people selling now, but each of us has their own fixed clients. Only if I don’t have the product they’re looking for do they go to look somewhere else.’

Some Guinean traders’ preference for supplying Chinese shops instead of other Guineans was associated with the wish to avoid the risk of social conflicts as put forward by Mário above, suggesting that social networks of relatives, co-nationals or co-ethnics do not necessarily result in frameworks of trust. According to some male Fula traders in

Lisbon, for example, wife-to-husband relationships might involve more risks, due to the tension between women's domestic obligations and their limited access to individual economic gains. The economic benefits from the transnational business could therefore be an opportunity for women to challenge these inequalities. Teresa – who was on a return visit when I met her in Bissau – and her migrant husband were one such example. Once, in Caracol, as she was telling me that the time had come for her to go back to Lisbon, a *bideira* sitting nearby shook her head and teased, laughing:

'You're not going back until you finish stealing your husband's money.'

Noticing my puzzled look, Teresa felt the need to clarify:

'She says that I don't tell my husband how much I really spend here. If I spend 5,000 CFA francs on vegetables, I tell him that I've spent 10,000 CFA, as he's the one sending the money.'

'Is that true?' – I asked hesitantly.

In an ambiguous manner, Teresa shrugged her shoulders, turned to the other woman with a look of complicity, and answered, smiling:

'That's what she says...'

Such secretcies related to the use of money involved in transnational trade relationships were obviously not easily revealed, and I was often left with uncertainty as to how the money was actually being distributed. Yet in spite of risks like the one shown in the example above, for the men who, in Lisbon, were dependent on their wives' shipment of food from Bissau to supply their small shops, the wife's previous experience of migration was seen as playing an important role in avoiding deceit. An acknowledgement of the current economic difficulties in migrants' lives and consequent survival needs, rather than the image of wealth that Europe conveys to those who have never left Guinea-Bissau, was thought to be a reason for keeping to the agreement on the Bissauan side. As Fodé once said when I visited his shop:

'60% to 70% of the families in Bissau depend on their migrant relatives. They think that we have everything, that we lack nothing. So, if I send them money to buy foodstuffs for me to sell here, they won't understand my need, and they won't do

it. They will use the money for the household. It has to be someone who already knows how difficult life is here.'

Idrissa, a young man who was running the family's small Guinean shop in Lisbon during his father's absence, confirmed the ambiguity entailed in transnational family obligations and added the key role played by age, showing how its importance in the gifting process can be inferred to relationships of exchange. To him, the safest relation was the one between children and parents:

'Deceit and betrayals also happen within families, but not between parents and children. Fathers and sons know that they work for the family, and no one can see their own family starving. But if it is an uncle, then he will have a separate house, and will also want to bring money to his house. If there's not much money, it gets complicated.'

When conflicts occur, Guinean food vendors in Lisbon adopt changes in the provisioning process. In some cases, they terminate the relationships that had been previously established with senders in Bissau and start buying the produce from other migrant vendors who, by managing to receive larger quantities, also act as intermediaries. It is not as profitable, but less risky. As Sali, who now made use of this system to stock her restaurant put it:

'I've had bad experiences. If the person there takes my money, then, what will I do?'

A shared ethnic belonging is another aspect that influences relationships of exchange in ways that are continued with migration. Addressing other Guineans with the same ethnic origin as 'relatives' or 'family', Guinean migrant traders were happy to meet and sell to their 'kin' in Lisbon, even if they had never met before. Such encounters would trigger off memories of regional homelands and dishes – a relationship that I analysed in previous chapters and that provides evidence of the fact that consumers across borders are not alienated from production, in spite of the physical distances involved. Yet the fact that the Fula occupy most food selling spaces in Lisbon can leave Guineans of other ethnic origins with fewer business possibilities. One such example in Rossio was that of Boar and Nala. Having started by setting up a shop of Guinean products in a shopping centre not far from Rossio, the two Mancanha sisters soon had to close it down due to growing competition by the Fula, who had arrived more numerous

in the meantime. ‘And you know, a Muslim has to buy from a Muslim’ – Nala explained, not so much with reference to Muslim requirements of specific foods, but more to a common way of addressing the Fula and the Mandinga more generally as Muslims.

‘Now we’re fine, because what we receive from Bissau, we now sell to the Muslim traders, who then sell to their Muslim clients’ – she continued explaining, emphasising their present role as intermediaries.

In addition to that role, they had in the meantime engaged in baobab fruit ice-cream selling in Rossio, ‘because this is something that no one else sells. It became our speciality.’ Nala’s reference to product specialisation illustrates one of the informal mechanisms that regulate the organisation of African markets, as the work of Inussa and his associate *lokateros* had already unveiled in chapter 3. Alongside the traders’ fixed physical positions occupied in spaces of exchange and the agreed prices practised by all, each trader’s specialisation in specific products is part of that organisation. I now move from the exchange system to the physical marketplace in order to explore the ways in which the organisation of Guinean food markets is reproduced in two different spaces of food exchange in Lisbon and its periphery – Rossio and Damaia. I will look not only at continuities but also at the changes generated by migration, such as the new encounters that take place between Guineans and non-Guineans and their impact upon Guinean traders’ economic strategies.

6.3.3. Guinean food markets of Lisbon: continuities, new encounters and expressions of discrimination

Even if not evident at a first sight to the outsider, to whom African markets might appear governed by chaos (Stoller 1996), the way they are regulated follows informally established rules, which are dependent on the relationships examined above. Dála, for example, used to sell baobab fruit ice-cream in Guinea-Bissau, but was unable to reproduce that practice in Lisbon, due to Boar and Nala’s anticipated specialisation.

‘I’d like to make ice-creams here as well,’ – she once confessed – ‘but Boar is already selling them... I don’t do it so that she doesn’t get upset, and starts talking’ – she concluded, referring to the idea of gossiping that is, too, as seen before in this thesis, an important factor in regulating behaviour.

Just like Boar was known for her homemade ice-creams in Rossio, Sali was recognised for yam selling in the late afternoon, which provided an important occasion of food sharing and conviviality, also part of African markets' social roles. As she explained:

'I used to prepare and sell African juices and croquettes, and sell them here in Rossio, and at the mosque. But then everyone started selling the same and I decided to try something new: boiled yams! There's no one else selling those!'

Rossio and Damaia – the two key spaces of Guinean food exchange in Lisbon examined in this thesis – reproduce the historical informal organisation of markets in Guinea-Bissau, first described in the colonial accounts from the 1960s, as I recounted in chapter 1. The way both spaces are socially and materially constructed with a variety of informal services that fulfil multiple purposes for their 'dwellers' (such as Guinean restaurants, bars, shops and a mosque) and have been used by Guinean sellers and clients to share memories, news and meals, discuss politics or other aspects of everyday life, was ethnographically analysed in previous chapters of this thesis. Regarding these spaces' impact upon Guinean traders' economic performances and business strategies, the first aspect to notice is the distinction in terms of how both are organised. Damaia is an area of spontaneous squatter constructions, which makes it more deeply permeated by informality in terms of how the trade is performed. The advantages are obvious – there is less control on street selling without a license, and some local shops have been established without the need to engage in the bureaucratic and costly official procedures for setting up and maintaining a business. The location of Rossio in Lisbon city centre, on the other hand, does not necessarily endow Guineans' trade activities with more formal mechanisms, but creates more constraints in overt performances of informal street selling and the need for further financial capital for those wishing to set up a shop in the area.

In conjunction with these different configurations, the relationships established also differ. In Damaia, most clients and passers-by are Guineans or other Africans – Cape Verdeans in particular – who reside in large numbers in that neighbourhood. With Cape Verdeans, conversations about the differences in food between the two countries would often gain an enthusiastic tone of friendly competition. Moreover, Cape Verdean women are, as seen in chapter 4, the sellers of the maize and fish that comprise key products of Guinean commensality, hence interacting with Guineans from different positions.

In Rossio, the more complex interactions that can be observed result from the way Guineans and non-Guineans share that space. Being primarily a space of socialisation for Guineans, hence narrow in scale as a 'food market', Rossio does not follow the city regulations as does the African market explored by Stoller in New York City, for example, where organised tourist circuits bring 'camera-packing Europeans to "shoot" the African market from a safe distance' (1996: 779). Yet Guinean foodstuffs are similarly part of the attractions of this Lisbon downtown area for foreign tourists, who I often saw discretely pointing a camera at them as they walked by. Whereas this would normally cause initial protests and 'stop that!' exclamations, it would leave my Guinean friends amusedly laughing once those tourists embarrassingly put their cameras away and left. For the foreign tourists and the Portuguese who I sometimes saw approaching the Guinean food sellers, apparently driven by curiosity, kola nuts seemed to be the produce generating the greatest interest. Kola nut sellers were usually happy to make the curious passers-by try it, alerting them to its bitter taste. Funny faces and exchanged laughs were part of these daily encounters, in which a sense of satisfaction was felt by the sellers who brought their homeland food to the knowledge of other people.

Yet for non-Guineans, certain features of the Guinean construction of that space seem to be less visible. Informal restaurants, for example, remain unnoticed to the majority of the local population, as does the nearby storehouse basement which is used as a mosque, serving an essential function for Muslim Guinean sellers who can use the place for daily prayers without detriment to their business. This 'invisibility' is probably part of the reason for the absence of a mediatised image of marginality or insecurity in the area.

Nevertheless, discrimination also occurs. In spite of the friendliness with which Guineans addressed the curious passers-by and the satisfaction with which they explained the meanings and tastes of the products they sold, I was occasionally told stories about the others' look of disdain, '(...) especially from the elders who live in this area' – Seco once told me. Then, pointing to a woman who was leaning against the opposite wall, he continued:

'This old woman always looks at us like that, complaining that we obstruct the sidewalk.'

After a moment of silence, he finally asked me:

‘What do your relatives think of you always being here with us Africans?’⁶²

There was often an allusion to Rossio as ‘our space’. The uncomfortable suggestion of an eventual suspicious look from other locals towards my presence in that space was an indication of a sort of landscape of group identity or ‘ethnoscape’, as defined by Appadurai (1996). Yet the ‘ethnoscapes’ of today’s world are, as Appadurai has also argued, profoundly interactive. As already seen, Guineans’ reinvention of home with the help of familiar senses brought in by homeland food was intertwined, especially in Rossio, with encounters with others who also contribute to socially construct that space.

Yet in Rossio, as compared to Damaia, there are more constraints on the way exchanges are performed. In spite of the general curiosity of passers-by, women food sellers have to keep their products more hidden, preferably in a way that allows them to easily pack if the police arrive. A recent increase in police intervention was, in fact, a common complaint. According to the Guinean food traders, it targeted not only those ‘unconventional’ exchange activities, but also undocumented migrants.

In view of these difficulties, attempts had been made by some of the women food vendors in Rossio to negotiate with the city council for more formal ways of running their economic activities. In fact, many women vendors aspired to open a big African market as in other European cities. To many, the Barbès market in Paris was the example to follow. ‘It’s as if you’re in Africa! It’s the centre of Africa in Europe!’ – they would say with gratifying expressions, referring to that space as a source of African food variety, cheap prices and, above all, the opportunity to overtly sell or buy products at a larger scale. Yet schedule-related constraints of officially recognised spaces of exchange in Lisbon, which limit these formal markets to one or two days a week or to restricted opening times, would not allow the market space to fulfil its multiple social and economic purposes for Guineans. This suggests that, as Cassarino (2000) or MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Canga (2000) have argued, limited interaction with formal institutions might be preferred by migrant traders in order not to jeopardise other types of more informal established networks.

‘Can’t you see how we stay here until sunset every day?’ – Meta once said. ‘This is what we do in Guinea. We can’t do it any other way!’

⁶² When referring to their ‘relatives’ – *parenti* – Guineans usually mean people of the same ethnic origin or even, in Portugal, simply other Guineans. By alluding to my relatives in this context, Seco was referring to other Portuguese.

Police intervention also targeted the trade of stolen clothes and jewellery that a small group of socially vulnerable Portuguese men and women with drug addiction problems had informally established in the area, after having identified Guineans as potential customers of such items. Once bought by Guineans, these items were sent to Bissau alongside other materials acquired in several local markets, either as gifts or for trade, usually by making use of the courier system from the airport of Lisbon. Since trade in the reverse direction is, in conjunction with its performance at a larger scale, part of what shapes a trader's social status, I will now shed some light on this kind of exchange.

6.4. The Fula trader's social status: scale and direction of the trade

As seen at the beginning of this chapter, small packages of clothes, shoes, drinks and jewellery were amongst the most regular arrivals at Neusa's agency. During special periods like the one preceding Christmas, Jorge's office in Lisbon intensified with the shipment of larger quantities of packages of clothes, shoes, toys, mobile phones, electronic equipment and building materials to be sent to Bissau, charged at ten Euros per kilo. Yet these items were not always sent as gifts. Often, they also had trading purposes.

The trade of materials from Europe to Africa, if performed at a large scale, provides traders with an image of success and a higher social status, unlike the family-based trade of food and *mesinhu* that my research participants were involved in. Such larger-scale economic activities that embody the image of a successful business and economic achievement have been found in the context of other West African countries, such as in MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Canga's (2000) study of the Congolese trade between the Congo and Paris. For my Guinean research participants, however, these activities were more difficult to put into practice due to the higher initial investment needed. When performed, they were most of the time occasional and secondary. A Fula foam mattress seller that I met in Bissau had an interesting view of Guineans' participation in trading networks:

'Everyone these days calls themselves a trader' – he said. 'In Guinea-Conakry there's an organised network of traders who travel frequently to China and Dubai, just like there is in other West African countries. Only Guinea-Bissau is still doing trade at a small scale.'

Although the majority of the transnational food traders were of Muslim Fula origin, the religious aspect was rarely put forward as related to their involvement in trade, unlike the Senegalese Murid, for example, who associate a religious fervour with their authority as successful traders involved in vast global routes, set up not only to mobilise religious resources but also new contacts for business (cf. Bava 2003; Buggenhagen 2011; Evers 1994). References to an association between religion and trade were occasionally given, but were more often related to the small income and difficulties involved in the trade, and to how these affected the religious practice. Abdulai, an agency owner in Bissau explained:

‘It is in our origins. Mohamed, the prophet, was a trader, and this is why he asked Muslims to follow his steps, and they succeeded.’

As he continued the explanation, he emphasised the small income and the demanding physical and financial efforts that had to be undertaken in order to have the transnational exchange performed successfully:

‘Small trade is *kusa di koitadesa* [a poor man’s thing]. It is only done to earn some money to support your family and your faith in God. If you are *koitadi*, you can’t love God. If you don’t have enough to eat, how can you sit and pray?’

Abdulai’s narrative suggests that, more than the religious aspect, class might influence the scale of the business, as Min and Bozorgmehr (2000) observed amongst Korean and Iranian businesses in Los Angeles. However, as I explained in chapter 1, class is a more difficult issue to tackle in the context of my research. On the one hand, the limited capitalist organisation of production in rural and urban Guinea-Bissau and a largely impoverished population limits the possibility of clearly identifying systems of class in Guinea-Bissau. On the other hand, the focus of my research is on the circulation of Guinean food and plants and to explore a comparative perspective is beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet it is worth mentioning that a network of importers and exporters of different products from Europe or Asia to Guinea-Bissau was also observable in Bissau, and I encountered some of them on different occasions during fieldwork. These, mostly men, had usually been long-term migrants in Portugal in the past, or had Portuguese partners in the business, which seems to suggest that, following Min and Bozorgmehr (2000), in fact, their larger businesses might mobilise class more than ethnic resources.

However, in Bissau, I occasionally came across Fula small traders of food who self-identified as successful transnational traders. The story of Ansumane, whose pride in feeding the children of his neighbourhood in Bissau was narrated in the previous chapter, illustrates the performance of success and social status. When I visited his new house he started by proudly showing me the stand that he was building in the front yard, where he planned to sell the clothes and shoes he had brought from Lisbon in a ship container.

‘I’m a lucky man. I don’t lack anything here’ – he said, smiling. ‘I am building a big house, and we’ll have electricity and water soon. When you come back to Guinea you can stay here.’

After a pause, he continued:

‘I have everything I need in Lisbon too.’

He partly associated his success with the trade of the materials he acquired in Europe. In Lisbon, where he had migrated in 1990 and now spent half of the year, he divided his activities between Guinean food and *mesinhu* selling in the street of Damaia and a small shop of other African products – mainly Malian music and films – he owned nearby. As we sat on the porch of his new house in Bissau with some of his neighbours, I inadvertently threatened the successful image he was portraying when I asked how his business in Damaia was going, now that he was not there. He turned to me with a frantic angry look and shouted repeatedly in my ears:

‘*Disa kila! Disa kila!*’ [Leave it! Leave it!] ‘That’s a secret,’ – he then continued, to my relief, with a calmer and whispered voice – ‘my family here doesn’t know that I have business there.’

This incident with Ansumane was, I thought at first, related to the importance of the business scale to the trader’s social status. Trade from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal, where food and *mesinhu* are the key materials in terms of regularity and quantity exchanged, is done at a small level and performed as a necessary livelihood strategy more than it is related to any higher social status. It was therefore hidden by Ansumane, I thought, due to the little success it embodied. Yet when we later met in Lisbon, Ansumane gave me a different explanation for his reaction of a few months earlier:

‘I need to make my family in Bissau believe that I am only living from benefits here, so that I can avoid the *pidi, pidi* [ask, ask] from them’ – he then said.

Revealing the complexity of such performances, Ansumane’s attitude of displayed success was therefore combined with the need to conceal part of his achievements, due to the risks resulting from the home-based kin’s imagination of migrants’ wealth that I examined in the previous chapter, and ensuing demands.

To Fula migrants, in fact, Guinean food trade is a livelihood strategy more than a source of social status. What is more, it is the continuation of a skill acquired in Bissau or even before, by learning as children with their ancestors in the villages of origin or after migration to the city, where it was already a livelihood strategy that contributed to the household domestic economy. The next section will explore the role of trade as a livelihood strategy for Guineans in Guinea-Bissau and in Portugal.

6.5. Trade as a livelihood strategy

The diversification of livelihood strategies is widespread in Guinea-Bissau and constitutes, as for migrants nowadays, a key coping strategy in the face of low and uncertain incomes. For many food traders in Bissau and in Lisbon, the involvement in trade activities started at a young age, often as a way to help their families. Alfa, a Fula food and *mesinhu* seller in Damaia, used to go from Mansoa to Bissau – a distance of about 60 kilometres – to sell groundnuts and kola nuts in the city, at the age of 12. Admir, who now owned a food shop near Alfa’s *mesa*, had a similar early experience in small-scale trade in Guinea-Bissau, which he associates with the Fula’s perspicacity in the business:

‘The Fula are traditionally farmers and herdsmen, but they have long ago become the predominant ethnic group in trading activities’ – he explained. ‘My brothers still have cows in the village near Bafatá where I lived until I was 8 years old, but I started selling in Bandim market in Bissau. I started by helping an older trader, by selling plastic bags, carrying his things from the storehouse... I was 20 years old then, and still a student. Then the old man started giving me some small things to sell, and I started little by little. In Guinea people say that the Fula have an eye for money, and that if they want something, they go after it.’

In Lisbon, however, most male Fula traders and agency owners who arrived during the 1980s and 1990s had their first work experience as migrants in the construction sector, rather than in trade. Likewise, many women food vendors moved from an initial period of practice in the domestic or service sector to a later involvement in the food selling business. Nowadays, instead, in view of the widespread job shortage that currently affects the Portuguese economy and migrants in particular, occasionally selling food in spaces like Rossio or Damaia is an alternative source of income during the initial period of migration for the more recently arrived. Most Guinean migrants nowadays arrive with short-term visas that often, as I explained before, are intended for health treatment. Yet many have the intention of prolonging their stay, and a work contract and regular contributions to the social security system are needed in order to be able to apply for a stay permit. This was Meta's primary aim after one year in Portugal, which she had spent selling *ondjo* juice and *konserve* in Rossio, having migrated with a temporary visa to accompany her son's treatment in hospital. Although, during my period of fieldwork, she managed to find a temporary replacement job in the cleaning sector in a supermarket and thereafter combined both activities, her wish was to find a more stable job with a work contract through which she could apply for a stay permit.

Like the more recently arrived, she was not yet endowed with the necessary social networks and financial capital for having Guinean foodstuffs sent from Bissau. Her involvement in the Guinean food trade thus consisted of buying the ingredients needed to prepare the *ondjo* juice and *konserve* sauce from Dála, with whom she had established a relationship of mutual help. With those ingredients, she prepared the juices and sauces at home and took them in small reused plastic bottles and containers to sell in Rossio. The products provided by Dála were occasionally bought by Meta on credit, following the informal financial practices described above. In return, she helped Dála by selling what was left of the elderly woman's produce later in the afternoon. The fact that Meta lived in Rossio facilitated her late stay and allowed Dála to return earlier to her more distant home, if her daughter or oldest granddaughter were not there to help.

Those who arrived immediately after Portugal's accession to the European Economic Community in 1986 benefited from the 'blind-eye' recruitment of illegal migrants – the government's response to the growing labour demand, especially in construction and public works (Peixoto 2002). Yet in the casual-wage sector, the same informality that was part of the new era of 'economic flexibility' came to more negatively

affect longer term migrants during the economic crisis of the late 2000s since, as I explained in chapter 1, it left many unemployed migrants with no access to social benefits. Alfa, who migrated to Portugal in 1988, recalls the first two decades of his stay as prosperous times, when ‘there was a lot of money, and many jobs.’ However, the fact that his taxable income was undeclared made him now ineligible to apply for unemployment benefits. His involvement in the food trade business, which started during the nineties and quickly progressed to involve large quantities of material with which he supplied other Guinean vendors, has also changed more recently. A decline in the food trade business was, for Alfa, not only due to clients’ current limited budget, but also to situations of conflict and mistrust that sometimes occur with kin on the Bissauan side, as I explained above.

The risks of the courier system are also linked to the impracticality of establishing a trust-based relationship with passengers who are about to move across borders. After receiving a monetary compensation for agreeing to act as carriers, travellers can easily fail to keep the commitment of taking the luggage from the conveyer belts upon arrival in Lisbon, with fear of customs control. The fact that receivers can only count on a loose physical description of the carrier does not endow them with much control of the situation. One of the strategies that can be put into practice to minimise this risk is, as I mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, to make use of the more official weekly air cargo system that worked alongside the courier scheme. During my period of fieldwork, it was Wilson’s father who, from Lisbon, was responsible for receiving the cargo of all migrant food sellers who used that system. In Bissau, Tony gathered everyone’s packages once a week, and used TAP official air cargo services to dispatch them. Tony had started his activity of correspondent on the Bissauan side of the organised air cargo system in the early 2000s, after having worked for a Portuguese importer-exporter of wines and mangos, with whom he learned the necessary skills and made useful contacts with official dispatchers and TAP air cargo officials in Bissau. Yet he now felt, too, the effects of the economic crisis in Europe on his work. While he had at first about 1,000 kilos of parcels to dispatch each week, this amount was recently reduced to half. The prices charged by the two Guineans responsible on both sides – which include agricultural inspection, customs, and dispatch – were, in fact, considered too expensive by the majority of the traders, who complained of the cost increase in a period of more deeply felt economic instability. In spite of its risks, many thus preferred the courier system or, those who sent larger quantities, a combination of both. Others

still, like Alfa, who had experienced a betrayal of trust that led to the end of his relationship with the person on the other side of the exchange, or Meta, not yet endowed with the necessary social and financial means, bought the foodstuffs from other fellow traders in Lisbon.

For the majority of long-term residents the transnational trade of food was seen as a small-scale, often secondary occupation. Due to the gendered migratory patterns described in chapter 1, these longer-term traders were often men, who had in the meantime found the means for opening small shops or who carried on supplying other vendors in Lisbon, and only rarely sold in the street. For these, food trade was often not perceived as ‘work’. Admir and Mário, for example, started this activity only by insistence of their wife and sister, respectively, from Guinea. In fact, for women in Guinea – responsible for fulfilling the household’s basic needs – engaging in food trading activities is one of the few options that allows them to guarantee that those needs are satisfied and, if possible, accumulate some individual savings. Even amongst civil servants, a general problem of delayed salary payments in the country has led most women to develop a second activity for economic gain. Informally selling homemade meals and ice-cream or buying clothes in Senegal to resell in Bissau are common materialisations of such practices.⁶³ Hence, contrasting with the younger generations to whom, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, participating in the transnational food trade might be an undesired family obligation, expanding their local trading activities to a transnational level is often seen by the women already involved in trade in Bissau as an opportunity for larger economic gains.

Admir, currently unemployed but occasionally on short-term contracts in the construction sector, was involved in the food trade by owning two small Guinean shops.

‘This was my wife’s idea, not mine, because I was here to work’ – he said, dissociating trade from the notion of a job. ‘I am a carpenter. I learned the skills here, and that’s my expertise. Trade is, for me, a supplementary occupation. When I’m working, trade is only secondary.’

⁶³ Information provided in an interview conducted in January 2010 with the president of the association of women in economic activities in Bissau – AMAE (*Associação das Mulheres de Actividade Económica*), Fátima Camara de Barros.

The largest part of his income came from his job as a carpenter. Yet for him, starting up a larger-scale trade was a desired project, which however required exclusive dedication and considerable financial capital – which he did not have – for the initial investment. As he put it:

‘What pays for my meals at home is my job. I earn more in construction, but it’s not a regular job. Sometimes there’s work, sometimes there’s not. If I had the means, I’d dedicate myself only to large-scale trade.’

His wife Lola, who had joined him in Portugal in the meantime, having left her sister responsible for the sending of food from Bissau, shared her husband’s desire. When we met in Bissau, she had told me:

‘If I find a way to send things in container ships, then I can send larger quantities and sell them at cheaper prices. At the moment, the prices of Guinean foodstuffs are too expensive for people’s purchasing power. You’ve seen it... we’re just selling to survive, not to save.’

In fact, regardless of the way and scale in which the trade was performed, migrant food vendors felt the impact of the recent financial crisis on business. Sali, based on her experience with the restaurant, complained:

‘In the past, I used to rent this place by myself. Now I had to ask for my sister and another friend’s help, so that I didn’t have to close it down. Back then, I used to make 200 Euros or more a day. Now I make 60 or 70 maximum. The Portugal of today is not the same as before.’

Nevertheless, she still considered the food business to be more advantageous than other kinds of commodity trade. As she put it:

‘*Si krizi ten o i ka ten, bariga ten ku kume.*’ [Whether there is crisis or not, the stomach has to eat].

Yet Guinean food is not the only essential product for migrants’ wellbeing. Although sent in smaller quantities, *mesinhu di tera* are likewise part of migrants’ needs and of traders’ livelihood strategies. As I explored in chapter 3, the specialised knowledge required to deal with these powerful tree-parts entails not only particularities in the practice of shipping them, but also in its commercialisation. Although most traders in

Lisbon combine it with food selling, *mesinhu* vendors should be endowed with a specialised knowledge of the plants' healing properties, dosages and uses for treatment. Yet ensuring that the right instructions – essential for the product to be effective and not harmful – will be practiced by the final client becomes more difficult with the large number of intermediaries who participate in the transnational network of *mesinhu* trade, which generates the risk of misinformation regarding the names and effects of each plant. Aware of that risk and of the serious corporeal consequences that might result from wrong usage, some migrants preferred to seek treatment in hospital rather than making use of medicinal plants or, more often, they combined the use of both. As happens with other 'binaries' that I have attempted to deconstruct in this thesis, a combination of elements from both life-worlds are contextually used in order to make the best of them.

6.7. Conclusions

In the previous chapter I looked at the way in which food products provide a geographical connectedness across borders and at how this generates kinship relations. In this chapter I extended this analysis to the process of sending and receiving food. In the context of migration from Bangladesh to the UK, Gardner (2008) observes that the cross-border help offered by migrants to those 'left behind' depends on forms of relatedness that are measured both through kinship and geography, and that those who wish to maintain or enhance such connections tend to invest heavily in familial relationships, for example through the arrangement of marriages. In the Guinean case, as this chapter has shown, the act of gifting across borders is an important way of investing in these connections, and homeland food plays a unique role in reinforcing them.

Agencies such as Neusa's and Jorge's facilitate the circulation of gifts between the Guinean migrant community in Lisbon and their home-based kin. They therefore contribute to maintain and reinforce transnational kinship relations based on solidarity, obligations and demands related to gift-giving from one side to the other. The combination of a focus on food with the transnational dimension challenges the common understanding of Guinean families' obligations of giving and reciprocating. First, gifts of food are based not only on the obligation of reciprocating remittances or on the belief of a future compensation in return, but also on the fulfilling of special obligations related to food sharing. Second, Guinean food, like other objects originating

in Guinean *tchon*, is endowed with high social and material values that are of particularly great importance for migrants. As the ethnographic chapters of my thesis have shown, food's bodily and spiritual protective qualities, its power to activate homeland memories and to conciliate the appealing and threatening images of 'modernity' and 'development', as well as its intimate relationship with the body, which is able to 'make' Guinean or Fula people by consuming it, are part of what creates that value. Guinean food's high social value might thus relegate the economic value of financial and material remittances circulating from Lisbon to Bissau to a minor role in the reciprocity system. Following on from this, the more commonly studied sequence in transnational processes of gift-exchange, where migrants remit and their home-based kin reciprocate, might also be rearranged, challenging the positionality of migrants' kin as the only dependents within these relationships of exchange.

Yet as this chapter has shown, food does not circulate only as a gift. Even agencies like Neusa's and Jorge's often combine their role of facilitating the circulation of gifts with the selling of food as a commodity. This unveils interesting connections which add to Kopytoff's (1986) argument in which 'commodity' can be seen as a phase of an object's life history. In the case of Guinean food, what this scenario has shown us is that two similar products performing the same travel with identical origin and destination, as well as producers and consumers alike, can simultaneously follow two different paths – as gifts and commodities.

Food trade is therefore another channel through which the circulation of food helps to bridge distances in Guineans' life-worlds. Like food giving, the relationships involved in trade are regulated by special informal arrangements that are used both to cope with the unpredictability of daily life and to uphold community obligations. Exclusivity in the relationship between vendors, intermediaries and clients, as well as informal credit systems, are examples of these agreements and of how financial strategies and personal aspirations are intertwined with communal solidarity and collective constraints in small-scale economies. Or, as Appadurai (1986a) has put it, of how the cultural dimension needs to be brought back to the study of market economies and the calculative dimension to small societies that tend to be over-romanticised (1986a: 12).

The way community and impersonal relationships are entwined in Guinean practices of food exchange is observable in the actual spaces where that exchange occurs. Guinean food and *mesinhu* vendors in Rossio – more than in Damaia – need to engage

with ‘the other’ (the police, the Portuguese and other African passers-by or foreign tourists, for example) and adopt strategies that, as Kothari (2008) has observed in another regional context, are linked to the need ‘to survive in conditions of social and economic vulnerability, discrimination, and exclusion’ (2008: 501). Unlike Kothari’s Senegalese and Bangladeshi ‘global peddlers’ in Barcelona, however, the traders this thesis gives voice to are not constantly moving between different locations. Moreover, instead of more ‘globalised’ items, they sell and buy homeland products within their own community. Nevertheless, the way they inscribe their presence in those spaces is also influenced by new encounters and interactions, supporting Appadurai’s (1996) idea that ‘ethnoscapes’ are interactive rather than spatially, historically or culturally bounded.

Within these interactions, the participation of Chinese shop owners in the Guinean food trade is an example of the intervention of new economic actors. Yet amongst Guinean migrants, new exchange relationships derive not just from the trade’s penetration into larger-scale markets with migration, but also, in some cases, from sanctions and conflicts that might occur within ethnic or kinship networks involved in the exchange. In fact, trust, which has been widely addressed in literature on ethnic and migrant entrepreneurship (cf. Ben-Porath 1980; Kloosterman, van der Leun and Rath 1998; Portes and Zhou 1992), enables solidarity and informal exchange practices such as selling on credit but also generates risks.

Risks are therefore part of these relationships, and the other side of informality. They are evident when, for example, the cargo is caught in airport customs due to lack of agricultural inspection, or when one of the parties fails to keep their role in the agreement. This is part of the ‘traders’ dilemma’ that Evers (1994) has explored in *The Moral Economy of Trade*, where both individual gain and social relations have to be maintained. A particular example of this morality can be seen in the selling of *mesinhu*. The need for specialised knowledge of these materials’ special properties and correct usage makes them more often subject to an ‘immoral’ commercialisation, as migrants’ eventual preference for treatment in hospital and Infali’s fears revealed in chapter 3 provide evidence for.

The fixed prices respected by all Guinean food vendors in Lisbon are another example of the moral economy of trade, which also provides evidence of the informal organisation of African markets. Alongside price regulation, the products sold and physical spaces occupied are regulated through informal mechanisms and the people

involved abide by informal agreements based on the nature of their relationships. Looking at such spaces of food exchange in Bissau and in Lisbon also contributes to unveil the way in which the link between both worlds is reinforced through processes of farming, selling, buying and consuming Guinean food across borders. In fact, when buying from *parenti* or members of the same ethnic group in Rossio or Damaia, Guinean migrants are not only reproducing exchange practices performed in Caracol, nor merely following the obligations and social demands related to the trade's dilemma. They are also reinforcing the proximity with their land of origin, as they are when consuming regional food, even if adapted in ways that were revealed in chapter 4.

However, Guinean food's high value as an essential material for Guineans' corporeal and spiritual wellbeing does not seem to influence the social status of the Fula food traders. Unlike in relationships of giving and reciprocating, where the people responsible for sending homeland food are endowed with an equally important position in the exchange, food trade seems, at first sight, to follow Bohannan's (1955, 1959) or Graeber's (1996) hierarchy in types of goods, where perishable and generic substances like food stand at the bottom, and imperishable valuables at the top. However, I argue that what these ambiguities seem to suggest above all is that, as Strathern (1985) has called attention to, people and things might be related in ways in which the dichotomy between the two does not make sense. I therefore contend that the manner in which Guineans and their food are perceived as sharing the same material and spiritual substance endows food with a special value that is difficult to position on a scale.

Food trade is evidently a livelihood strategy in Bissau as much as in Lisbon, even if the processes of socio-economic change that have enabled it are of a different kind. In Bissau it was mostly an opportunity for women, resulting from the economic liberalisation and the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1987, as well as from the rapid expansion of the city's population. In Lisbon it was, on the one hand, the informalisation of the economy of the early nineties and, on the other, the more recent job shortage that has both facilitated and forced this to be a key source of income for migrants. From Bissau, except for younger Guineans, the transnationality of the food trade is seen as an advantage from which the home-based kin try to benefit as well. The need to maximise the gains from both sides is what often creates conflicts within transnational families involved in the business, apart from for youths who more frequently participate in it out of collective constraints and obligations towards their

elders. My multi-sited approach has hopefully contributed to a more detailed understanding of these processes, showing how the close interconnection between all those involved in the commodity chain allows for production, trade and consumption to remain intimately linked in migrants' perceptions and experiences of Guinean food, in spite of the physical distance that separates them from the smallholdings, orchards, wild fruit trees, waters and savannah woodlands where that food grows.

Chapter 7

Concluding reflections:

'Re-grounding' the land's route

Wilson, Kadi and her aunt Quinta, the women food sellers in Rossio, and *agensiadores* like Neusa and Jorge, who introduced each of the four ethnographic chapters of this thesis, are key actors playing an important role in enabling the 'travel' of Guinean land. After having followed *the route of the land's roots* between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal, I will now try to 're-ground' that route, not by assuming its movement from detached to fixed space, but by reflecting on how my grounded research has contributed to understand the implications of that mobility. The premise of this thesis was that the way in which migrants simultaneously reshape both their 'local cultures' and the new influences found in the country of destination can be examined through food-related practices and meanings. It was also that this reshaping equally impacts upon and is impacted by the localised lives of Guineans in Guinea-Bissau. By having examined ways in which Guinean migrants make their life-worlds through food-related practices such as distribution and consumption, as well as how such practices are linked to meanings and uses of the land in Guinea-Bissau, I have provided evidence of how transnational contexts are grounded in local activity and everyday life. By merging three broader theoretical-methodological approaches – transnationalism, phenomenology and multi-sited ethnography – this thesis has shown how Guineans on the two sides of the migration make their life-world in a way that is simultaneously local and integrated into a larger system of relationships that links them both.

The phenomenological perspective was used as a key theoretical tool with which to respond to the criticisms that studies of transnationalism have received for focusing on the connections rather than on the actual experiences of people's lives (cf. Appadurai 1996; Burawoy *et al.* 2000; Coleman and Collins 2006; Coleman and von Hellermann 2011; Gardner and Grillo 2002; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Mitchell 1997). My use of multi-sited ethnography was therefore combined with a micro-scale approach to transnationalism, by focusing on the lives of migrants and their families at home (including non-biological food-related connections) and on how they affect and are affected by the circulation of Guinean food and plants.

As I discussed in chapter 1, the interrelation between global and local dynamics in the Guinean context can historically be traced to pre-colonial times. In fact, larger processes that resulted from pre-colonial movements and invasions in the region, as well as 'external' forces derived from colonial, post-independence and liberalisation policies, were reshaped rather than merely imposed on people's localised lives. First, the long history of cultural encounters and influences in the region resulted in a complexity of 'ethnic affiliations' with fluid boundaries that characterise present-day cultural differentiations in Guinea-Bissau. This complexity endows the Guinean life-world with the uniqueness of a remarkable variety of languages, cultural practices and forms of social organisation. Second, an equally long history of ill-designed economic policies that resulted in the impoverishment of the majority of the population has also given rise to new opportunities and adapted meanings that people created or inscribed within those 'external' forces. The expansion of subsistence and market-oriented smallholdings, as well as of spontaneous food markets in the city of Bissau, is an example of the inventiveness that characterises people's livelihood strategies and responses to globalising influences. What is more, the failure of both colonial and post-independence governments' agricultural development policies and of the incorporation of a technological package is simultaneously the cause for Guineans' view of their food as healthier. The absence of exogenous techniques that make use of agro-chemicals is seen, in fact, as one of the main qualities of Guinean land, as my ethnographic material has provided evidence for in chapter 4.

Hence, technological development is, for Guineans, both desired and unwanted. Whereas it is unwanted in relation to food production by most of my research participants (although young urban farmers like Pona's son might see an eventual use of new technology as an advantage), it is also seen, alongside education, as a purveyor of 'modernity' that influences their projects of migration, as the stories of Yasin and Dembó showed in chapter 5. Yet like technology, my research has shown that education is not merely a sign of 'modernity' that opposes 'tradition'. Seco's wish to be a 'modern healer', based on the ensemble of his traditional, religious and formal education, illustrates this fact. Within the theoretical debate that has for some time been concerned with seemingly opposed processes such as localisation and globalisation or similarities and differences, the argument that stands against the likelihood of people actually resisting technology and modernisation (cf. Moore and Sanders 2001; Pottier 1999; Sahlin 1999) can thus be applied to my ethnography, if we consider that, while not resisting changes,

people do not passively incorporate them either. What I suggest is that Guineans who, in both countries, are involved in the production, consumption and exchange of Guinean food and plants, take advantage, contextually and relationally, of the opportunities that are offered to them locally on each side, regardless of these opportunities' association either with 'modern' or 'traditional' forms of social life. Seeing these as opposed is, in any case, part of a strand of western academic thought that is sometimes unthinkingly replicated, even after the widespread criticism of recent years (cf. Appadurai 1996; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Ferguson 1999, 2002; Gable 1995, 2006; Piot 1999; Shaw 2002), more than it is part of how the people concerned experience them.

Alongside taking advantage of contextual opportunities, Guineans also play an important role as dynamic promoters of global flows (of food, memories, imaginaries or relationships). The flow of Guinean migration to Portugal that started in the 1980s and 1990s, and of the materials that followed, have inevitably produced changes in people's lives in the two countries, but also in wider social and economic landscapes. Once more, migrants do not only adapt to the new society they integrate, nor do they merely stay at its margins. In a more economic sense, Kloosterman, van der Leun and Rath (1999) have named this dual framing 'mixed embeddedness', drawing on Polanyi's (1944) influential conceptualisation of 'embeddedness', according to which social relations have always been part of economic transactions. Guinean migrants are thus involved in their community networks as much as they inscribe their presence in the host country's socio-economic landscape.

In this thesis, however, I have gone beyond the economic dimension and focused on the multiple ways in which migrants' and their kin's closely established relationships interact with more global dynamics of different kinds. In fact, these are not just found in economic transactions but also, as the previous chapters have illustrated, in a variety of everyday intimate experiences. After having identified food and plants – and the land where they grow – as key Guinean materials used in the making of that everyday, I have focused on them as privileged vehicles through which to examine these connections.

An example of those everyday experiences is the way in which people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds remember their specific food, and the performative manner in which they construct their 'identities' through that food. When analysing these differentiations, I drew on the view of ethnicity as a way of doing things in space (Sarró 2010), which can also be related to different methods of production and food

preparation. Ethnicity, however, might be overshadowed by other forms of identification and ‘ways of doing’. Certain foods and dishes produced or prepared in specific ways can thus be Fula or Manjaco, as much as they can be *Bolanhes* (from Bolama Island, where a complex ethnic mix predominates), Christian or Muslim, hence revealing the importance of geography and religion, in addition to ethnicity, in people’s identities.

Although my research was not religious-, gender- or ethnic-specific, precisely to be able to better grasp the diversities and complexities of the Guinean life-world, the role played by Fula traders in the transnational exchange of Guinean food gave them a predominant position in the thesis. The way they celebrate their ‘Fulanness’ when consuming their foods or preparing them in ‘Fula ways’ has to be examined with reference to historical events that have long meant they are seen by others as strangers or even more negatively portrayed as pursuing individualistic more than community interests. Their long history of geographic mobility and the influence of Islam in their life-worlds, however, do not diminish the importance of their relationship with what they consider ‘Fula land’. This land, which might correspond to the eastern regions of Guinea-Bissau or the old Futa-Djallon territory, hence dating back to precolonial times and preceding contemporary national borders is, like Mancanha or Pepel land, equally influenced by the ‘spirit of politics’ (Temudo 2008), where the spirits are the true owners of the land and influence the living things that grow in it. What is more, the fluid and contextual boundaries of ethnic belonging, territory or religion are also occasionally entwined with the importance of Guinean land as a whole, in relation to the actual national borders. ‘Guinean food’ is therefore, on certain occasions, more important than other distinctions. In order to better understand these apparent ambiguities I argued that the way people use either of these domains to address their food and identities is, once again, strategic and contextual, in ways that help them to make sense of the world in their daily lives.

When examining the consumption of food originating from Fula, Bolama, Muslim or Guinean land as a way for migrants to compensate for the threats to corporeal and spiritual wellbeing that the distance from that land generates, I applied the notion of ‘authenticity’. Yet I conceptualised it as an outsider’s desire more than the view of the people concerned (Spooner 1986), since it seems to ignore the fact that culture – of which food is a vehicle – is always changing (Abarca 2004). I have thus shown that there are several ways in which food preparation and consumption can be adapted or

negotiated by Guinean migrants, when the travel of these products is not possible or cost-effective, as is the case of fresh fish, yams or maize. When researching these adaptations I merged Appadurai's (1986a) argument that people are capable of reshaping the meanings of things, with the phenomenological perspective according to which they recreate their life-worlds by experiencing those reshaped meanings as a new reality (cf. Weiss 1996; West 2007).

Plants used as medicines (*mesinhu*) do not circulate as widely as vegetables and fruits, and were therefore examined more specifically as regards their special relation with the land, the specialised knowledge they require, their unethical commercialisation for individual profit and the practice of healers that use them. As several of my fieldwork examples have provided evidence for, *mesinhu* are a privileged material through which to examine the way Guineans combine their religious identity as Muslims or Christians with the spirits of the land that influence their lives, regardless of religion. This reconciliation endows some of that land's substance, like *mesinhu* (but also other foods, like the example of kola nuts illustrated in chapter 4), not just with material and healing qualities but also with 'spiritual-religious' properties. This was clear in the practice of Muslim healers like Infali and Seco, or clients like Dembó and Serifo.

Within the multifaceted food-related networks and relationships maintained across borders, the home-based Guineans' involvement in them is linked to their role of harvesting the land or locally selling the crops on the one hand, and of sending the food over to Portugal on the other. *Mesinhu*, on the other hand, are more often sent through closer kinship channels that involve less quantity and fewer risks. Whether related to food or *mesinhu*, however, the home-based kin's involvement deeply influences the way Guineans in Guinea-Bissau make sense of their life-world and even imagine new geographies. Projects and aspirations of migration that their participation in these networks from the Guinean side generates are examples of such impacts. In chapter 5 I analysed those projects in conjunction with migrants' projects of return, since the construction of both allows for the past, present and future of the Guinean life-world to be brought together. Inspired by Sutton's (2001) work on food as a provider of temporal rhythms, I have thus looked at the role Guinean food and plants play in influencing these projects. I concluded that whereas participating in the chain from the side of origin contributes to reinforce the desire to migrate, the risks of weakening one's body and mind with migration, due to the absence of familiar and healthy food and plants, is also

part of the home-based kin's fears. On the other hand, the arrival and consumption of Guinean food in Lisbon stimulates the desire amongst migrants to return, even if temporarily, to Guinea-Bissau.

During the course of fieldwork, I observed how the 'unseen' gained particular relevance within these projects. I have therefore included an analysis of how gossiping, jealousy and related threats of 'witchcraft' and 'sorcery' – which I analysed with reference to the local term *djanfa* – influence their concretisation. Usually associated with the display of wealth and cosmopolitanism amongst return migrants, jealousy, rumours and threats of 'witchcraft' entwine feelings of competition with a strong solidarity, as is customary in West African societies (cf. Riccio 2008). Just like 'modernity' and 'tradition', I argued that jealousy and solidarity are not seen as contradictions by Guineans, but rather as combined realms in their life experiences. Yet for some, as for Dála and Fatu, the first outweighs the second in the migratory context, where there is a tendency for self-centredness resulting from the desire for wealth accumulation. In this regard, one of the questions that came out of my research has to do with what exactly is entailed in the return of Guinean women, and how they are affected differently by rumours and sanctions related to embodied expressions of wealth amongst return migrants. Although such an investigation was outside the scope of this thesis, I suggest further research on the topic. The increase of returns that the economic crisis and job shortage in Portugal seem to have recently generated on the one hand, and evidence that the migration scene powerfully illustrates the way in which *djanfa* connects local experiences with global events, on the other, provide the basis for this suggestion.

Another example of the connections addressed in my research is that provided by memories and spaces. Drawing on a spatial and historical, as well as a sensuous and embodied approach to memory (cf. Boym 2001; Carsten 2007; Cole 2001; Connerton 1989; Stewart and Strathern 2003; Stoller 2009), I explored the creation of spaces of food exchange and consumption in Lisbon that recall tastes and smells of Guinean migrants' or their ancestors' regional and ethnic roots. I also drew on Sutton's (2001) work on the relationship between food practices, spaces and memory in Greece and on Law's (2001) use of the notion of 'olfactory geographies', and I merged these contributions with those related to people's historical consciousness and subjective perceptions of the past (cf. Appadurai 1996; Ben-Ze'ev 2004; Stoller 2009), as well as to future aspirations (Moore 2011). By putting these contributions together I was able to better understand the

ambiguities and apparent paradoxes that could be observed amongst Guineans in those spaces, of which Rossio and Damaia were the main settings in Lisbon. Part of these ambiguities was related to the fact that Guineans seemed to be strongly 'proud' of their land and culture as much as they longed either for a colonial past (cf. Bissell 2005; Cole 2001; Ferguson 2002; Stoller 1995; Werbner 1998) or for a future migration (Piot 2010). As my ethnography has shown, these temporal and spatial dichotomies, like the ones addressed above, have to be situated and deconstructed in order to be understood. They are, I argue, strategically interwoven in the lives of Guinean migrants and their home-based kin, while trying to make sense of their transnational life-worlds.

Gender, like ethnicity and religion, was an important dimension in my thesis which, although not analysed separately, has been examined in more detail where relevant. The importance of gender is first evident when looking at the patterns of migration to Portugal. The fact that men were initially over-represented in migration flows and that there is nowadays an equal distribution between men and women, has reshaped the gendered construction of spaces like Rossio and Damaia, where women have replaced men like Aliu in the food selling business, bringing these spaces closer to the Bissauan landscape. *Mesinhu* and food practices of exchange were an interesting vehicle through which to observe gender positions that separate sellers of different products in local market spaces in both countries. Although I focused on food more than on *mesinhu*, due to its wider and more regular circulation and consumption, the distinct physical positions that male *mesinhu* vendors and female food sellers occupy proved to be part of the more general mechanisms of organisation of such spaces and practices, which I examined in chapter 6. Yet unlike Fula men's control of the exchange of materials like *mesinhu*, an interpretation of what the gender balance is amongst those specialised in their application cannot be offered through the analysis of my data, since my ethnography involved only Muslim healers – usually men, to whom koranic education is compulsory – due to their prevalence in the migratory context. Non-Muslim healers (*djambakus*), however, who make use of similar materials in their practices, are known to be more commonly women (Saraiva 2008; Teixeira 2008). What is more, regular consumers seem to be women and men equally.

In both countries, I analysed performances of female solidarity and female networks of exchange in particular, since women are the primary agents involved in the production, exchange and preparation of the food that travels regularly from Bissau to

Lisbon. In Bissau, women's involvement in the transnational food trade offered the possibility of increased income earning for farmers, due to the new demand of Guinean food from abroad. Yet this is not to say that farmers and *bideiras* in Bissau saw their life conditions significantly improve. As feminist literature on Africa has shown and my participants' stories have confirmed, women's income from their crop production and exchange remains limited and mostly used in the household. However, there are other ways in which women use the transnational relationships they are involved in to their own benefit.

One such way, though difficult to tackle, has to do with a 'concealed' attempt to keep part of the money that is sent to them by the migrant trader for buying the produce. The secrecy involved in the actual distribution of money makes it difficult to draw a conclusion in this regard. Nevertheless, although often complaining that they are only doing it to help their migrant relatives, the way many women in Bissau who were already involved in local food production and trade are willing to extend their activity to a transnational level seems to indicate that they are, in fact, able to receive some compensation from it. This compensation might not come, however, in the form of money, but as a returned favour.

This brings me to the analysis of giving and reciprocating practices that were also part of my research questions. Who is helping who in the trade business, or who is giving and who is reciprocating from each side, was a difficult relationship to assert, and a definitive answer cannot be provided. The complexity of these relationships, which has not received the same attention in literature on the African context as it has in the Pacific region, was first explored by Bohannan (1955; 1959) and later by scholars like Piot (1991) in West African societies. To their approaches, I added the transnational element, as well as the focus on food and land, in order to offer a multi-sited understanding of how these relationships operate in what is nowadays a common configuration of West African societies, where the prevalence of geographically separated families has increased with migration. In this regard, my fieldwork has revealed that sending food to a migrant relative is not just part of the functioning of the transnational trade, but also of a complex system of obligations related to food sharing, which is linked to food's special qualities of bodily and spiritual protection. Although I did not focus explicitly on the generational dimension in my thesis, my material suggested that age plays an important

role in these relationships, since gifts of food are expected from younger relatives to their elders.

Alongside these obligations, a returned favour is, as I said above, often expected. This can be materialised in the support given in the accomplishment of the home-based kin's migratory projects. The economic value of financial and material remittances, however important and an essential part of Guineans' source of income in Guinea-Bissau, cannot therefore be compared to the value of food and plants from home, whose vital function, distinctiveness and capacity for 'creating' natives has already been explored in seminal works such as those of Sahlins (1985, 2004[1972]). In spite of the difficulty of interpreting the status of remittances and food as gifts or reciprocities, I suggested that the social value of food might outweigh the economic value of remittances, which challenges the commonly studied position of the migrants' kin as the only dependent within these relationships of exchange.

Food trade between Guinea-Bissau and Portugal, which started, with Aliu and his brother, in the early 1990s, was my first interest when I started this research. Although I extended that interest to other food-related experiences during the course of fieldwork, trade remained a key practice on which I focused in order to better understand the making of a Guinean life-world in a transnational context. It is, first, an important livelihood strategy for migrants and their families, which has to be understood in the broader context of the informal economy in the two countries.

Whereas street food selling amongst migrants is now mainly a women's activity, many men like Aliu, usually longer-term residents in Lisbon, have managed to open small shops or transnational agencies. Yet the establishment of these small businesses does not necessarily mean a more formal organisation of the business. Informality is, in fact, not merely a characteristic of the Guinean economy, but was also, under the designation of 'economic flexibility', the Portuguese economy's response to the growing labour demand in construction and public works of the early 1990s. In Portugal, as it has long been in Guinea, it is also part of people's strategies to cope with the more recent job shortage, resulting from the economic crisis of 2008. Curiously, though, the informality of street selling in Rossio or of unlicensed shops in the spontaneous squatter constructions of Damaia seems to have left this kind of trade outside most academic interest on transnationalism and migration, ethnic entrepreneurship or economic anthropology in Portugal. Hopefully contributing to fill this gap in the literature, my

ethnography has shown that within this informality that can be found on both sides, the exchange relationships created between migrants and their kin, both locally and across borders, are regulated by well defined mechanisms. These help people in the two countries to cope with the unpredictability of daily life and simultaneously uphold community obligations.

In addition to the way these mechanisms are put into practice in local spaces of food exchange in both countries, they are also part of the actual channel through which food travels from one country to the other. Guinean formal exports, with the exception of unprocessed cashew nuts which, being the country's major export, caters predominantly to the Indian market, have little significance in the global marketplace. This family-based informal way to circulate food between both countries is thus the primary channel used in Guinean transnational exchange practices. In 1993, a report by the US Agency for International Development identified a series of obstacles that justified the weak position of Guinean produce in the Portuguese market. Amongst those obstacles, poor packaging, labelling, refrigeration, transportation, skilled personnel and management were considered, by Portuguese importers, more critical than the actual quality of the produce, which was assessed as superior. The report concluded that there was a high level of tolerance by the authorities on both sides to let the produce be shipped, even if in far from what were considered ideal conditions. Although this was seen as a 'temporary advantage of informality', it was expected to change over time, following an increase of control patterns in Portugal (Miller 1993).

So far, things have not changed. The courier system that makes Guineans in both countries go to the airport of Bissau and Lisbon to have their packages of food sent and received is still the main channel used. I examine the relationships established at and between these two airports in more detail elsewhere (Abranches 2012). Yet bringing them as an example here offers interesting insights into the way formality and informality are entwined in the exchange. These relationships include senders, receivers, passengers, members of airport staff and customs authorities; and depend, especially in Bissau, on West African forms of solidarity and reciprocity, where most actors receive some sort of compensation.

The fact that community-level exchange forms are kept with the migration of traders and of the traded material challenges the Marxist tradition that sees money and commoditisation as a cause for the detriment of social solidarity and the promotion of

individualisation (cf. Meillassoux 1973). Whereas the influence of the rise of market economy in Africa and local economies' active ways of reshaping their organisation have more often been addressed (cf. Pottier 1999), the travel of those local economies to a capitalist socio-economic space, where new economic actors and new levels of intermediary trade are introduced with migration (of which Chinese migrants in Lisbon, in the case of Guinean transnational food trade, are an example), have not received the same attention in the literature. Yet my research has shown that this integration does not result in the loss of community-level forms of organisation. Hence, the juxtaposition of community and impersonal exchanges ethnographically described in chapter 6 is not only in harmony with Gudeman's (2001) model, which argues for the integration of the two realms in the economy, but extends the possibility of its use to the transnational context.

Moreover, my findings have also shown that new exchange relationships established are not always the outcome of the trade's penetration into larger-scale markets with migration, but can also result from people's preferred strategies to respond to conflicts that might occur within ethnic or kinship networks. In fact, systems of informal credit, which have been studied in African literature (cf. Evers 1994; Guérin 2006; van Binsbergen 1999), are not just part of people's inherent cooperativeness with each other, as Cornwall (2008) has observed in the context of women's rotating savings groups. Because conflicts and tensions occur and debts are 'perpetually' created as part of these relationships, some traders prefer the 'impersonal' to the 'community' form of exchange.

Finally, my data has revealed that distribution and consumption are not necessarily alienated from production, even when the chain is physically separated by migration. Production, with which I started the ethnographic chapters of this thesis, is intimately linked to the importance of the land in Guinea-Bissau, and this importance does not disappear when food is consumed in a distant country. Land is a central notion in this thesis, and one of the questions initially raised had to do with how it was perceived by Guineans, and how that perception influenced the making of their life-worlds. I have therefore started my empirical analysis with a description of three different yet entwined meanings of Guinean land that I identified during fieldwork. These three meanings together – resource-use, ethnicity and relationships between spirits and living things – combine to endow Guinean food and plants with a unique

value and to maintain the connection between production, consumption and exchange at a transnational level. The familiarity that Guinean consumers in Lisbon have with methods of production and, at times, with the actual land of origin of the produce (whether it is Mancanha or Fula land, Muslim or Christian, *Bolanhes* or, more generally, Guinean land) allows for the proximity between both ends of the chain to be maintained and for a sense of security to be kept in relation to their foods.

Wilson, Kadi and her aunt Quinta, the women food sellers in Rossio and *agensiadores* like Neusa and Jorge, alongside the farmers and *bideiras* of Bissau and many others who participated in my research, have demonstrated the complex ways in which processes of production, consumption, trade, gifts and reciprocities of Guinean food and plants across borders contribute to connect local experiences in a transnational context. Within these processes, adaptations of food-related meanings and practices, memories and projects of migration and return are directly linked to the way Guineans conceive their land as a powerful source of bodily and ‘spiritual-religious’ protection. The ‘travel’ of the land from Guinea-Bissau to Portugal, which is materialised in the circulation of its food and plants, is therefore an essential vehicle for migrants to keep that protection and for Guineans at home to enable it to be retained and to simultaneously benefit from their local participation in a system of relationships at a larger scale.

Bibliography

- Abarca, Meredith E. (2004). Authentic or not, it's original. *Food and Foodways* 12(1): 1-25.
- Abbots, Emma-Jayne (2008). *"It's the Modern Way of Life": Food, Mobility and Time Politics among Newly-Wealthy Campesinos in Highland Ecuador*. London: Goldsmiths College, University of London, Department of Anthropology. PhD Thesis.
- Abbots, Emma-Jayne (2011). "It doesn't taste as good from the pet shop". Guinea pig consumption and the performance of transnational kin and class relations in highland Ecuador and New York City. *Food, Culture & Society* 14(2): 205-223.
- Abranches, Maria (2012). When people stay and things make their way: airports, mobilities and materialities of a transnational landscape. *Mobilities*. (Article first published online: 30 Jul 2012).
- Abreu, Alexandre (2011). *Migration and Development in Contemporary Guinea-Bissau: a Political Economy Approach*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Department of Economics. PhD Thesis.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila (1993). *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Afonja, Simi (1981). Changing modes of production and the sexual division of labor among the Yoruba. *Signs* 7(2): 299-313.
- Aguilar, Renato, Huco Monteiro and Aquino Duarte (2001). *Bandim – Subsídios para uma Política de Apoio ao Pequeno Negócio*. Bissau: Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa.
- Ahmed, Iftikhar (ed.) (1985). *Technology and Rural Women: Conceptual and Empirical Issues*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Ahmed, Sara (1999). Home and away: narratives of migration and estrangement. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 2(3): 329-347.
- Al-Ali, Nadjé and Khalid Koser (2002). Transnationalism, international migration and home. In Nadjé Al-Ali and Khalid Koser (eds.) *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-14.
- Alvarez, Robert R. and George A. Collier (1994). The long haul in Mexican trucking: traversing the borderlands of the north and the south. *American Ethnologist* 21(3): 606-627.
- Amit, Vered (2000). Introduction. In Vered Amit (ed.) *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-18.

- Amselle, Jean-Loup and Elikia M'Bokolo (eds.) (1985). *Au Coeur de l'Ethnie: Ethnies, Tribalisme et État en Afrique*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Anderson, Benedict (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1986a). Introduction: commodities and the politics of value. In Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-63.
- Appadurai, Arjun (ed.) (1986b). *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1988a). How to make a national cuisine: cookbooks in contemporary India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30(1): 3-24.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1988b). Introduction: place and voice in anthropological theory. *Cultural Anthropology* 3(1): 16-20.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Applbaum, Kalman (2005). The anthropology of markets. In James G. Carrier (ed.) *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 275-289.
- Århem, Kaj (1996). The cosmic food web: human-nature relatedness in the Northwest Amazon. In Philippe Descola and Gísli Pálsson (eds.) *Nature and Society: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Routledge, pp. 185-204.
- Bâ, A. Hampaté (1981). The living tradition. In J. Ki-Zerbo (ed.) *General History of Africa I: Methodology and African Prehistory*. Oxford: Heinemann (UNESCO), pp. 166-203.
- Barrett, Giles A., Trevor P. Jones and David McEvoy (1996). Ethnic minority business: theoretical discourse in Britain and North America. *Urban Studies* 33(4-5): 783-809.
- Barth, Fredrik (ed.) (1969). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Basu, Paul and Simon Coleman (2008). Introduction: migrant worlds, material cultures. *Mobilities* 3(3): 313-330.
- Battaglia, Debora (1992). The body in the gift: memory and forgetting in Sabarl mortuary exchange. *American Ethnologist* 19(1): 3-18.
- Baudrillard, Jean (1996). *The System of Objects*. Translated by James Benedict. London: Verso.
- Bava, Sophie (2003). De la «baraka aux affaires»: ethos économique-religieux et transnationalité chez les migrants sénégalais mourides. *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 19(2): 69-84.

- Bell, Diane, Pat Caplan and Wazir Jahan Karim (eds.) (1993). *Gendered Fields: Women, Men & Ethnography*. London: Routledge.
- Bell, Vikki (1999). Performativity and belonging. *Theory, Culture & Society* 16(2): 1-10.
- Ben-Porath, Yoram (1980). The F-connection: families, friends, and firms and the organization of exchange. *Population and Development Review* 6(1): 1-30.
- Ben-Ze'ev, Efrat (2004). The politics of taste and smell: Palestinian rites of return. In Marianne Elizabeth Lien and Brigitte Nerlich (eds.) *The Politics of Food*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 141-160.
- Bercovitch, Eytan (1994). The agent in the gift: hidden exchange in inner New Guinea. *Cultural Anthropology* 9(4): 498-536.
- Bestor, Theodore C. (2003). Markets and places: Tokyo and the global tuna trade. In Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds.) *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 301-320.
- Bissell, William Cunningham (2005). Engaging colonial nostalgia. *Cultural Anthropology* 20(2): 215-248.
- Bloch, Maurice (1985). Almost eating the ancestors. *Man* 20(4): 631-646.
- Blok, Anders (2010). Mapping the super-whale: towards a mobile ethnography of situated globalities. *Mobilities* 5(4): 507-528.
- Blunt, Alison (2003). Collective memory and productive nostalgia: Anglo-Indian homemaking at McCluskieganj. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21(6): 717-738.
- Blunt, Alison (2005). Cultural geographies of home. *Progress in Human Geography* 29(4): 505-515.
- Bohannon, Paul (1955). Some principles of exchange and investment among the Tiv. *American Anthropologist* 57(1): 60-70.
- Bohannon, Paul (1959). The impact of money on an African subsistence economy. *The Journal of Economic History* 19(4): 491-503.
- Bohannon, Paul (1967). Africa's land. In George Dalton (ed.) *Tribal and Peasant Economies: Readings in Economic Anthropology*. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 51-60.
- Bordonaro, Lorenzo I. (2009). "Culture stops development!": Bijagó youth and the appropriation of developmentalist discourse in Guinea-Bissau. *African Studies Review* 52(2): 69-92.
- Boserup, Ester (1970). *Woman's Role in Economic Development*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Bourdieu, Pierre (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc J. D. Wacquant (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Boym, Svetlana (2001). *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bozzoli, Belinda (1983). Marxism, feminism and South African studies. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9(2): 139-171.
- Brah, Avtar (1996). *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge.
- Brain, James L. (1976). Less than second-class: women in rural settlement schemes in Tanzania. In Nancy J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay (eds.) *Women in Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 265-284.
- Brown, Linda Keller and Kay Mussell (eds.) (1984). *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: the Performance of Group Identity*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.
- Buggenhagen, Beth (2011). Are births just “women’s business”? Gift exchange, value, and global volatility in Muslim Senegal. *American Ethnologist* 38(4): 714-732.
- Burawoy, Michael *et al.* (2000). *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burkill, H. M. (1985). *The Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa*. Vol. 1-6. Royal Botanic Gardens: Kew Publishing.
- Burrell, Kathy (2008). Managing, learning and sending: the material lives and journeys of Polish women in Britain. *Journal of Material Culture* 13(1): 63-83.
- Butler, Judith (1993). *Bodies that Matter: on the Discursive Limits of “Sex”*. New York: Routledge.
- Buttimer, Anne (1976). Grasping the dynamism of lifeworld. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66(2): 277-292.
- Candea, Matei (2007). Arbitrary locations: in defence of the bounded field-site. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13(1): 167-184.
- Carreira, António (1960). Região dos Manjacos e dos Brameis (alguns aspectos da sua economia). *Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa* XV(60): 735-784.
- Carreira, António (1964). A etnomínia dos povos de entre o Gâmbia e o estuário do Geba. *Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa* XIX(75): 233-275.

- Carreira, António (1966). Aspectos históricos da evolução do Islamismo na Guiné Portuguesa (achegas para o seu estudo). *Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa* XXI(84): 405-455.
- Carreira, António and Artur Martins Meireles (1959). Notas sobre os movimentos migratórios da população natural da Guiné Portuguesa. *Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa* XIV(53): 7-19.
- Carreiro, Maria João (2011). *Arquitectos de um Espaço Transnacional Lusófono: a Diaspora Guineense em Portugal*. Lisboa: Fundação Portugal África.
- Carrier, James G. (1992). The gift in theory and practice in Melanesia: a note on the centrality of gift exchange. *Ethnology* 31(2): 185-193.
- Carsten, Janet (2007). Introduction: ghosts of memory. In Janet Carsten (ed.) *Ghosts of Memory: Essays on Remembrance and Relatedness*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 1-35.
- Carvalho, Clara (2002). Ambiguous representations: power and mimesis in colonial Guinea. *Etnográfica* 6(1): 93-111.
- Carvalho, Clara and João de Pina-Cabral (2004). *A Persistência da História: Passado e Contemporaneidade em África*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Cassarino, Jean-Pierre (2000). *Tunisian New Entrepreneurs and their Past Experiences of Migration in Europe: Resource Mobilization, Networks, and Hidden Disaffection*. London: Ashgate.
- Chabal, Patrick, Ulf Engel and Leo de Haan (2007). Introduction. In Patrick Chabal, Ulf Engel and Leo de Haan (eds.) *African Alternatives*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1-7.
- Chanock, Martin (1985). *Law, Custom and Social Order: the Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chanock, Martin (1991). Paradigms, policies and property: a review of the customary law of land tenure. In Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts (eds.) *Law in Colonial Africa*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, pp. 61-84.
- Chapman, Tony (2001). There's no place like home. *Theory, Culture & Society* 18(6): 135-146.
- Classen, Constance (1997). Foundations for an anthropology of the senses. *International Social Science Journal* 49(153): 401-412.
- Clifford, James (1986). Introduction: partial truths. In James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds.) *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-26.
- Clifford, James (1988). *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cliggett, Lisa (2005). Remitting the gift: Zambian mobility and anthropological insights for migration studies. *Population, Space and Place* 11(1): 35-48.

- Có, João Ribeiro (2004). *As Associações das Comunidades Migrantes em Portugal e a sua Participação no Desenvolvimento do País de Origem: o Caso Guineense*. SOCIUS Working Paper 12/2004. Lisboa: Centro de Investigação em Sociologia Económica e das Organizações.
- Cole, Jennifer (2001). *Forget Colonialism? Sacrifice and the Art of Memory in Madagascar*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Coleman, Simon and Peter Collins (2006). Introduction: 'being... where?' Performing fields on shifting grounds. In Simon Coleman and Peter Collins (eds.) *Locating the Field: Space, Place and Context in Anthropology*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 1-21.
- Coleman, Simon and Pauline von Hellermann (2011). *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Problems and Possibilities in the Translocation of Research Methods*. New York: Routledge.
- Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff (eds.) (1993). *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*. Chicago: The University of Chicago press.
- Conaway, Mary Ellen (1986). The pretense of the neutral researcher. In Tony Larry Whitehead and Mary Ellen Conaway (eds.) *Self, Sex and Gender in Cross-Cultural Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 52-63.
- Connerton, Paul (1989). *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Constable, Nicole (2004). Changing Filipina identities and ambivalent returns. In Lynellyn D. Long and Ellen Oxfeld (eds.) *Coming Home? Refugees, Migrants, and those who stayed Behind*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 104-124.
- Cook, Ian and Philip Crang (1996). The world on a plate: culinary culture, displacement and geographical knowledges. *Journal of Material Culture* 1(2): 131-153.
- Cook, Ian and Michelle Harrison (2007). Follow the thing: "West Indian hot pepper sauce". *Space and Culture* 10(1): 40-63.
- Cornwall, Andrea (2008). Myths to live by? Female solidarity and female autonomy reconsidered. In Andrea Cornwall, Elizabeth Harrison and Ann whitehead (eds.) *Gender Myths and Feminist Fables: The Struggle for Interpretive Power in Gender and Development*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 145-163.
- Cornwall, Andrea, Elizabeth Harrison and Ann whitehead (eds.) (2008). *Gender Myths and Feminist Fables: The Struggle for Interpretive Power in Gender and Development*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Counihan, Carole M. (1984). Bread as world: food habits and social relations in modernizing Sardinia. *Anthropological Quarterly* 57(2): 47-59.
- Dalakoglou, Dimitris (2010). Migrating-remitting-'building'-dwelling: house-making as 'proxy' presence in postsocialist Albania. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 16(4): 761-777.

- D'Alisera, Joann (2001). I love Islam: popular religious commodities, sites of inscription, and transnational Sierra Leonean identity. *Journal of Material Culture* 6(1): 91-110.
- D'Almada, André Alvares (1841[1594]). *Tratado Breve dos Rios de Guiné do Cabo-Verde: desde o Rio do Sanagá até aos Baixos de Sant'Anna*. Porto: Typographia Commercial Portuense (edited by Diogo Köpke).
- Davidson, Basil (1966). *A History of West Africa to the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Davidson, Joanna (2003). Native birth: identity and territory in postcolonial Guinea-Bissau, West Africa. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6(1): 37-54.
- De Boeck, Filip (1999). 'Dogs breaking their leash': globalization and shifting gender categories in the diamond traffic between Angola and DR Congo (1984-1997). In Danielle de Lame and Chantal Zabus (eds.) *Changements au Féminin en Afrique Noire. Anthropologie et Littérature*. Vol. 1. Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 87-114.
- De Bruijn, Mirjam, Rijk van Dijk and Jan-Barth Gewald (2007). Social and historical trajectories of agency in Africa. In Patrick Chabal, Ulf Engel and Leo de Haan (eds.) *African Alternatives*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 9-20.
- De Certeau, Michel (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- De Jong, Ferdinand (1999). The production of translocality: initiation in the sacred grove in southern Senegal. In Richard Fardon, Wim van Binsbergen and Rijk van Dijk (eds.) *Modernity on a Shoestring: Dimensions of Globalization, Consumption and Development in Africa and beyond*. Leiden: Eidos, pp. 315-340.
- De Souza, Ruth (2004). Motherhood, migration and methodology: giving voice to the "other". *The Qualitative Report* 9(3): 463-482.
- Desjarlais, Robert and C. Jason Throop (2011). Phenomenological approaches in anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40: 87-102.
- Dias, Eduardo Costa (1999). Protestantismo e proselitismo na Guiné-Bissau. *Lusotopie*: 309-318.
- Domingues, Maria Manuela (2000). *Estratégias Femininas entre as Bideiras de Bissau*. Lisboa: Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Departamento de Antropologia. PhD Thesis.
- Donham, Donald L. (1999). *History, Power, Ideology. Central Issues in Marxism and Anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dornelas, André (1977[1625]). *Descrição da Serra Leoa e dos Rios de Guiné e do Cabo Verde*. Lisboa: Junta de Investigação Científica do Ultramar.
- Douglas, Mary (1972). Deciphering a meal. *Daedalus* 101(1): 61-81.
- Douglas, Mary and Baron Isherwood (1996[1979]). *The World of Goods. Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*. New York: Routledge.

- Drucker-brown, Susan (1995). The court and the kola nut: wooing and witnessing in Northern Ghana. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1(1): 129-143.
- Dudley, Sandra H. (2010). *Materialising Exile: Material Culture and Embodied Experience among Karenni Refugees in Thailand*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Dunn, Kevin (2010). Guest editorial. Embodied transnationalism: bodies in transnational spaces. *Population, Space and Place* 16(1): 1-9.
- Edensor, Tim (2002). *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg.
- Embaló, Birgit (2012). Civil-military relations and political order in Guinea-Bissau. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 50(2): 253-281.
- England, Kim V. L. (1994). Getting personal: reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *The Professional Geographer* 46(1): 80-89.
- Epstein, A. L. (1958). *Politics in an Urban African Community*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland (2010). *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.
- Escobar, Arturo (1995). *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Escobar, Arturo (2001). Culture sits in places: reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization. *Political Geography* 20(2): 139-174.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. (1937). *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Evers, Hans-Dieter (1994). The traders' dilemma: a theory of the social transformation of markets and society. In Hans-Dieter Evers and Heiko Schrader (eds.) *The Moral Economy of Trade. Ethnicity and Developing Markets*. London: Routledge, pp. 7-14.
- Eves, Richard (1996). Remembrance of things passed: memory, body and the politics of feasting in New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. *Oceania* 66(4): 266-277.
- Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach (1994). Représentations culturelles africaines et gestion de l'environnement. *Politique Africaine* 53: 11-24.
- Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach (1996). *Misreading the African Landscape. Society and Ecology in a Forest-Savanna Mosaic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Faithorn, Elizabeth (1986). Gender bias and sex bias: removing our cultural blinders in the field. In Tony Larry Whitehead and Mary Ellen Conaway (eds.) *Self, Sex and Gender in Cross-Cultural Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 275-288.
- Falzon, Mark-Anthony (ed.) (2009). *Multi-sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research*. Farnham: Ashgate.

- Fardon, Richard (2008). Cosmopolitan nations, national cosmopolitans. In Pnina Werbner (ed.) *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 233-259.
- Featherstone, Mike, Mike Hepworth and Bryan S. Turner (eds.) (1991). *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*. London: Sage.
- Ferguson, James (1999). *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ferguson, James (2002). Of mimicry and membership: Africans and the "New World Society". *Cultural Anthropology* 17(4): 551-569.
- Fikes, Kesha (2008). Diasporic governmentality: on the gendered limits of migrant wage-labour in Portugal. *Feminist Review* 90: 48-67.
- Fikes, Kesha (2009). *Managing African Portugal: The Citizen-Migrant Distinction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Fonseca, Domingos (1997). *Os Mancanha*. Bissau: Ku Si Mon Editora.
- Fonseca, Maria Lucinda and Jorge Malheiros (2004). Immigration and globalisation from below: the case of ethnic restaurants in Lisbon. *Finisterra* XXXIV(77): 129-156.
- Forrest, Joshua (1992). *Guinea-Bissau. Power: Conflict and Renewal in a West African Nation*. Oxford: Westview Press.
- Forrest, Joshua (2002). Guinea-Bissau. In Patrick Chabal (ed.) *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*. London: Hurst & Company, pp. 236-263.
- Fortier, Anne-Marie (1999). Re-membering places and the performance of belonging(s). *Theory, culture & society* 16(2): 41-64.
- Fortier, Anne-Marie (2000). *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*. Oxford: Berg.
- Frankel, Stephen (1986). *The Huli Response to Illness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frazão-Moreira, Amélia (2009). *Plantas e "Pecadores". Percepções da Natureza em África*. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte.
- Friedman, Jonathan (2002). From roots to routes. *Anthropological Theory* 2(1): 21-36.
- Gable, Eric (1995). The decolonization of consciousness: local skeptics and the "will to be modern" in a West African village. *American Ethnologist* 22(2): 242-257.
- Gable, Eric (1998). Appropriate bodies: self through the other in Manjaco and Portuguese representation, 1946-1973. *Visual Anthropology Review* 14(1): 3-18.
- Gable, Eric (2002). An anthropologist's (new?) dress code: some brief comments on a comparative cosmopolitanism. *Cultural Anthropology* 17(4): 572-579.
- Gable, Eric (2003). Manjaco rulers after a revolution. *Africa* 73(1): 88-112.

- Gable, Eric (2006). The funeral and modernity in Manjaco. *Cultural Anthropology* 21(3): 385-415.
- Galli, Rosemary E. (1990). Liberalisation is not enough: structural adjustment and peasants in Guinea-Bissau. *Review of African Political Economy* 49: 52-68.
- Galli, Rosemary E. (1995). Capitalist agriculture and the colonial state in Portuguese Guinea, 1926-1974. *African Economic History* 23: 51-78.
- Galli, Rosemary E. and Jocelyn Jones (1987). *Guinea-Bissau: Politics, Economics and Society*. London: Frances Pinter.
- Gardner, Katy (1993). Desh-bidesh: Sylheti images of home and away. *Man* 28(1): 1-15.
- Gardner, Katy (2002). *Age, Narrative and Migration: the Life Course and Life Histories of Bengali Elders in London*. Oxford: Berg.
- Gardner, Katy (2008). Keeping connected: security, place, and social capital in a 'Londoni' village in Sylhet. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14(3): 477-495.
- Gardner, Katy (2009). Lives in motion: the life-course, movement and migration in Bangladesh. *Journal of South Asian Development* 4(2): 229-251.
- Gardner, Katy and Ralph Grillo (2002). Transnational households and ritual: an overview. *Global Networks* 2(3): 179-190.
- Geertz, Clifford (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gell, Alfred (1985). The landscape of the forest. Landscape and phonological iconism in Umeda. In Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon (eds.) *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 232-254.
- Geshiere, Peter (1997). *The Modernity of Witchcraft. Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia.
- Glick Schiller, Nina, Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc-Szanton (eds.) (1992). Towards a transnational perspective on migration: race, class, ethnicity, and nationalism reconsidered. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645.
- Godelier, Maurice (1999). *The Enigma of the Gift*. Translated by Nora Scott. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gomes, Elsa Teixeira et al. (2003). *Plantas Medicinais da Guiné-Bissau: Manual Prático*. Bissau: Acção para o Desenvolvimento (AD).
- Goody, Jack (1982). *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: a Study in Comparative Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gottlieb, Alma (1982). Sex, fertility and menstruation among the Beng of the Ivory Coast: a symbolic analysis. *Africa* 52(4): 34-47.

- Graeber, David (1996). Beads and money: notes toward a theory of wealth and power. *American Ethnologist* 23(1): 4-24.
- Granovetter, Mark (1985). Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology* 91(3): 481-510.
- Grassi, Marzia (2003). *Rabidantes: Comércio Espontâneo Transnacional em Cabo Verde*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Gregory, C. A. (1980). Gifts to men and gifts to God: gift exchange and capital accumulation in contemporary Papua. *Man* 15(4): 626-652.
- Grillo, Ralph (1997). Discourses of development: the view from anthropology. In R. D. Grillo and R. L. Stirrat (eds.) *Discourses of Development: Anthropological Perspectives*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 1-33.
- Grillo, Ralph and Valentina Mazzucato (eds.) (2008). Africa<>Europe: transnational linkages, multi-sited lives [special issue]. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34(2).
- Grillo, Ralph and Bruno Riccio (2004). Translocal development: Italy-Senegal. *Population, Space and Place* 10(2): 99-111.
- Gudeman, Stephen (2001). *The Anthropology of Economy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Guérin, Isabelle (2006). Women and money: lessons from Senegal. *Development and Change* 37(3): 549-570.
- Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson (1992). Beyond "culture": space, identity, and the politics of difference. *Cultural Anthropology* 7(1): 6-23.
- Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson (1997). Discipline and practice: "the field" as site, method, and location in anthropology. In Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds.) *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-46.
- Guyer, Jane I (1981). Household and community in African studies. *African Studies Review* 24(2/3): 87-137.
- Hage, Ghassan (1997). At home in the entrails of the west: multiculturalism, ethnic food and migrant home-building. In Helen Grace et al. (eds.) *Home/World: Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney's West*. Sydney: Pluto Press Australia, pp. 99-153.
- Hagen, James M. (1999). The good behind the gift: morality and exchange among the Maneo of Eastern Indonesia. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5(3): 361-376.
- Hall, Stuart (1996). Introduction: who needs 'identity'? In Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, pp. 1-17.

- Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Hannerz, Ulf (1996). *Transnational Connections. Culture, People, Places*. London: Routledge.
- Hannerz, Ulf (2003). Being there... and there... and there! Reflections on multi-site ethnography. *Ethnography* 4(2): 201-216.
- Havik, Philip J. (1995). Relações de género e comércio: estratégias inovadoras de mulheres na Guiné-Bissau. *Soronda: Revista de Estudos Guineenses* 19: 25-36.
- Heidegger, Martin (1962). *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Heimer, Franz-Wilhelm (2002). Fronteiras e identidades sociais em África. In António Custódio Gonçalves (ed.) *Multiculturalismo, Poderes e Etnicidades na África Subsariana*. Porto: Faculdade de Letras e Centro de Estudos Africanos da Universidade do Porto, pp. 23-27.
- Highmore, Ben (ed.) (2002). *The Everyday Life Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Holtzman, Jon D. (2006). Food and memory. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35: 361-378.
- Howes, David (1996). Introduction: commodities and cultural borders. In David Howes (ed.) *Cross-cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-16.
- Howes, David (ed.) (2004). *Empire of the Senses. The Sensual Culture Reader*. Oxford: Berg.
- Huntingdon, Suellen (1975). Issues in woman's role in economic development: critique and alternatives. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 37(4): 1001-1012.
- INE – Instituto Nacional de Estatística da Guiné-Bissau (2009). *3º Recenseamento Geral da População e Habitação: Resultados Preliminares*. Bissau: INE.
- INE – Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Portugal (2011). *Statistical Yearbook of Portugal 2010*. Lisboa: INE. Available from: http://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_publicacoes&PUBLICACOESpub_boui=133815390&PUBLICACOESTema=5414321&PUBLICACOESmodo=2 [Accessed 9 November 2012].
- Izzard, Wendy (1985). Migrants and mothers: case-studies from Botswana. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11(2): 258-280.
- Jackson, Michael (1989). *Paths towards a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Enquiry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Jackson, Peter, Philip Crang and Claire Dwyer (2004). Introduction: the spaces of transnationality. In Peter Jackson, Philip Crang and Claire Dwyer (eds.) *Transnational Spaces*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-23.

- Janowski, Monica (2007). Introduction: feeding the right food: the flow of life and the construction of kinship in Southeast Asia. In Monica Janowski and Fiona Kerlogue (eds.) *Kinship and Food in Southeast Asia*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, pp. 1-23.
- Jao, Mamadú (2003). Origem étnica e migração entre os Mancanha da Guiné-Bissau. *Soronda: Revista de Estudos Guineenses* 6(NS): 107-120.
- Jedrej, M. C. and Rosalind Shaw (1992). Introduction: dreaming, religion and society in Africa. In M. C. Jedrej and Rosalind Shaw (eds.) *Dreaming, Religion and Society in Africa*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1-20.
- Johnson, Michelle (2006). 'The proof is on my palm': debating ethnicity, Islam and ritual in a new African diaspora. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 36(1): 50-77.
- Johnson, Michelle (2009). Death and the left hand: Islam, gender, and "proper" Mandinga funerary custom in Guinea-Bissau and Portugal. *African Studies Review* 52(2): 93-117.
- Kapferer, Bruce (1997). *The Feast of the Sorcerer: Practices of Consciousness and Power*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Karner, Christian (2007). *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*. London: Routledge.
- Kearney, M. (1995). The local and the global: the anthropology of globalization and transnationalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 547-565.
- Kershen, Anne J. (ed.) (2002). *Food in the Migrant Experience*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Kivisto, Peter (2001). Theorizing transnational immigration: a critical review of current efforts. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24(4): 549-577.
- Kloosterman, Robert and Jan Rath (2001). Immigrant entrepreneurs in advanced economies: mixed embeddedness further explored. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27(2): 189-201.
- Kloosterman, Robert, Joanne van der Leun and Jan Rath (1998). Across the border: immigrants' economic opportunities, social capital and informal business activities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24(2): 249-268.
- Kloosterman, Robert, Joanne van der Leun and Jan Rath (1999). Mixed embeddedness: (in)formal economic activities and immigrant businesses in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 23(2): 252-266.
- Kopytoff, Igor (1986). The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process. In Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 64-91.
- Koser, Khalid (2002). From refugees to transnational communities. In Nadjé Al-Ali and Khalid Koser (eds.) *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*. London: Routledge, pp. 138-152.

- Kothari, Uma (2008). Global peddlers and local networks: migrant cosmopolitanisms. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26(3): 500-516.
- Lambek, Michael and Paul Antze (1996). Introduction: forecasting memory. In Michael Lambek and Paul Antze (eds.) *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York: Routledge, pp. xi-xxxviii.
- Latour, Bruno (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Law, Lisa (2001). Home cooking: Filipino women and geographies of the senses in Hong Kong. *Cultural Geographies* 8(3): 264-283.
- Leach, Melissa (1994). *Rainforest Relations: Gender and Resource Use among the Mende of Gola, Sierra Leone*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Lee, Sandra Soo-Jin (2000). Dys-appearing tongues and bodily memories: the aging of first-generation resident Koreans in Japan. *Ethos* 28(2): 198-223.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1991[1974]). *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Legg, Stephan (2007). Reviewing geographies of memory/forgetting. *Environment and Planning A* 39(2): 456-466.
- Lentz, Carola (2007). Land and the politics of belonging in Africa. In Patrick Chabal, Ulf Engel and Leo de Hann (eds.) *African Alternatives*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 37-58.
- Lepri, Jean Pierre (1986). Contribuição para a análise sociológica da Guiné-Bissau actual. *Soronda: Revista de Estudos Guineenses* 1: 143-168.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1968). *L'Origine des Manières de Table*. Paris: Plon.
- Levitt, Peggy (1998). Social remittances: migration driven local-level forms of cultural diffusion. *International Migration Review* 32(4): 926-948.
- Levitt, Peggy (2004). *The Transnational Villagers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Levitt, Peggy, Josh DeWind and Steven Vertovec (2003). International perspectives on international migration: an introduction. *International Migration Review* 37(3): 565-575.
- Levitt, Peggy and Mary C. Waters (eds.) (2002). *The Changing Face of Home: the Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Lewis, Barbara C. (1976). The limitations of group action among entrepreneurs: the market women of Abidjan, Ivory Coast. In Nancy J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay (eds.) *Women in Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 135-156.
- Ley, David (2004). Transnational spaces and everyday lives. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29(2): 151-164.

- Light, Ivan and Steven J. Gold (2000). *Ethnic Economies*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Lobban, Richard and Peter Karibe Mendy (1997). *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Long, Lynellyn D. and Ellen Oxfeld (2004). Introduction. An ethnography of return. In Lynellyn D. Long and Ellen Oxfeld (eds.) *Coming Home? Refugees, Migrants, and those who stayed Behind*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 1-15.
- Long, Norman (1996). Globalization and localization: new challenges to rural research. In Henrietta L. Moore (ed.) *The Future of Anthropological Knowledge*. London: Routledge, pp. 37-59.
- Long, Norman and Magdalena Villarreal (1998). Small product, big issues: value contestations and cultural identities in cross-border commodity networks. *Development and Change* 29(4): 725-750.
- Longhurst, Robyn (1997). (Dis)embodied geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* 21(4): 486-501.
- Lopes, Carlos (1982). *Etnia, Estado e Relações de Poder na Guiné-Bissau*. Lisboa: Edições 70.
- Lopes, Carlos (1987). *A Transição Histórica na Guiné-Bissau: do Movimento de Libertação Nacional ao Estado*. Bissau: Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa.
- Lopes, Carlos (2005). O Kaabu e os seus vizinhos: uma leitura espacial e histórica explicativa de conflitos. *Afro-Ásia* 32: 9-28.
- Lopes, Daniel Seabra (2006). Mercados encobertos: os ciganos de Lisboa e a venda ambulante. *Etnográfica* 10(2): 319-335.
- Loude, Jean-Yves (2003). *Lisbonne dans la Ville Noire*. Arles: Actes Sud.
- Lourenço-Lindell, Ilda (1995). The informal food economy in a peripheral urban district: the case of Bandim district, Bissau. *Habitat International* 19(2): 195-208.
- MacGaffey, Janet and Remy Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000). *Congo-Paris: Transnational Traders on the Margins of the Law*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Machado, Fernando Luís (2002). *Contrastes e Continuidades: Migração, Etnicidade e Integração dos Guineenses em Portugal*. Lisboa: Celta Editora.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw (2005[1922]). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: an Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. London: Routledge.
- Marcus, George E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: the emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 95-117.
- Marx, Karl (1992[1867]). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Vol. 1. London: Penguin Books.

- Massey, Doreen (2005). *For Space*. London: Sage.
- Massey, Douglas S. *et al.* (1993). Theories of international migration: a review and appraisal. *Population and development review* 19(3): 431-466.
- Mauss, Marcel (1990[1950]). *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Translated by Ian Cunnison. London: Routledge.
- May, Tim (1993). Feelings matter: inverting the hidden equation. In Dick Hobbs and Tim May (eds.) *Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 69-97.
- Mayer, Philip (1961). *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Mbembe, Achille (1985). *Les Jeunes et l'Ordre Politique en Afrique Noire*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Mbembe, Achille (1992). Provisional notes on the postcolony. *Africa* 62(1): 3-37.
- Meagher, Kate (2007). Introduction: special issue on 'informal institutions and development in Africa'. *Africa Spectrum* 42(3): 405-418.
- Meagher, Kate (2010). *Social Networks & the Informal Economy in Nigeria*. Woodbridge: James Currey.
- Meillassoux, Claude (1973). The social organisation of the peasantry: the economic basis of kinship. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 1(1): 81-90.
- Mendy, Peter Karibe (1990). A economia colonial da Guiné-Bissau: «nacionalização» e exploração, 1915-1959. *Soronda: Revista de Estudos Guineenses* 9: 23-51.
- Mendy, Peter Karibe (2003). Portugal's civilizing mission in colonial Guinea-Bissau: rhetoric and reality. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36(1): 35-58.
- MEPIR – Ministério da Economia, do Plano e Integração Regional (2011). *Segundo Documento de Estratégia Nacional de Redução da Pobreza (DENARP)*. Bissau: MEPIR. Available from: <http://www.imf.org/external/lang/Portuguese/pubs/ft/sct/2011/cr11353p.pdf> [Accessed 9 November 2012].
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1962[1945]). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith. London: Routledge.
- Miescher, Stephan M. (2007). Becoming an ɔpanyin: elders, gender, and masculinities in Ghana since the Nineteenth Century. In Catherine M. Cole, Takyiwa Manuh and Stephan F. Miescher (eds.) *Africa after Gender?* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 253-269.
- Miller, Daniel (ed.) (2001). *Home Possessions: Material Culture behind Closed Doors*. Oxford: Berg.
- Miller, Daniel (2008). *The Comfort of Things*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Miller, John (1993). *Portugal como Mercado para Produtos Frescos Agrícolas da Guiné-Bissau: Relatório Final*. Washington: USAID.
- Mills, David (1999). 'Progress' as discursive spectacle: but what comes after development? In Richard Fardon, Wim van Binsbergen and Rijk van Dijk (eds.) *Modernity on a Shoestring: Dimensions of Globalization, Consumption and Development in Africa and beyond*. Leiden: Eidos, pp. 91-116.
- Min, Pyong Gap and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (2000). Immigrant entrepreneurship and business patterns: a comparison of Koreans and Iranians in Los Angeles. *International Migration Review* 34(3): 707-738.
- Mintz, Sydney W. (1985). *Sweetness and Power: the Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin.
- Mitchell, J. Clyde (1956). *The Kalela Dance: Aspects of Social Relationships among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mitchell, Jon P. (2001). Introduction. In Jon P. Mitchell and Paul Clough (eds.) *Powers of Good and Evil: Social Transformation and Popular Belief*. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 1-16.
- Mitchell, Katharyne (1997). Transnational discourse: bringing geography back in. *Antipode* 29(2): 101-114.
- Mommersteeg, Geert (1988). "He has smitten her to the heart with love". The fabrication of an Islamic love-amulet in West Africa. *Anthropos* 83: 501-10.
- Monteiro, António Isaac (ed.) (1996). *O Programa de Ajustamento Estrutural na Guiné-Bissau: Análise dos Efeitos Socio-Económicos*. Bissau: Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa.
- Montenegro, Teresa (2009). *As Enxadas do Rei*. Bissau: Ku Si Mon Editora.
- Moore, Henrietta L. (1988). *Feminism and Anthropology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Moore, Henrietta L. (1994). *A Passion for Difference: Essays in Anthropology and Gender*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Moore, Henrietta L. (2011). *Still Life. Hopes, Desires and Satisfaction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Moore, Henrietta L. and Todd Sanders (2001). Magical interpretations and material realities: an introduction. In Henrietta L. Moore and Todd Sanders (eds.) *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities. Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-27.
- Moore, Henrietta L. and Megan Vaughan (1994). *Cutting down Trees: Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990*. London: James Currey.

- MOPCU-DGHU - Ministério das Obras Públicas, Construção e Urbanismo, Direcção Geral de Habitação e Urbanismo (2005). *Plano Geral Urbanístico de Bissau*. Bissau: MOPCU-DGHU.
- Morphy, Howard (1995). Landscape and the reproduction of the ancestral past. In Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon (eds.) *The anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 184-209.
- Mueller, Martha (1977). Women and men, power and powerlessness in Lesotho. In Wellesley Editorial Committee (eds.) *Women and National Development: The Complexities of Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 154-166.
- Munn, Nancy D. (1986). *The Fame of Gawa: a Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in Massim (Papua New Guinea) Society*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Munn, Nancy D. (1992). The cultural anthropology of time: a critical essay. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 93-123.
- Nash, Catherine (2000). Performativity in practice: some recent work in cultural geography. *Progress in Human geography* 24(4): 653-664.
- Ngubane, Harriet (1977). *Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine: an Ethnography of Health and Disease in Nyuswa-Zulu Thought and Practice*. London: Academic Press.
- Nora, Pierre (1984). *Les Lieux de Mémoire. Vol. 1: La République*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Oliveira, Catarina Reis and Jan Rath (eds.) (2008). Empreendedorismo Imigrante [special issue]. *Migrações* 3.
- Parkin, David (1969). *Neighbours and Nationals in an African City Ward*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Parkin, David (1999). Mementoes as transitional objects in human displacement. *Journal of Material Culture* 4(3): 303-320.
- Parry, Jonathan and Maurice Bloch (1989). Introduction: money and the morality of exchange. In Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch (eds.) *Money and the Morality of Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-32.
- Pécoud, Antoine (2001). The cultural dimension of entrepreneurship in Berlin's Turkish economy. *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 17(2): 153-168.
- Peixoto, João (2002). Strong market, weak state: the case of recent foreign immigration in Portugal. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28(3): 483-497.
- Pélissier, René (2001a). *História da Guiné: Portugueses e Africanos na Senegâmbia (1841-1936)*. Vol. 1. Lisboa: Editorial Estampa.
- Pélissier, René (2001b). *História da Guiné: Portugueses e Africanos na Senegâmbia (1841-1936)*. Vol. 2. Lisboa: Editorial Estampa.
- Petridou, Elia (2001). The taste of home. In Daniel Miller (ed.) *Home possessions: Material Culture behind Closed Doors*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 87-104.

- Pine, Frances (2007). Memories of movement and the stillness of place: kinship memory in the Polish highlands. In Janet Carsten (ed.) *Ghosts of Memory: Essays on Remembrance and Relatedness*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 104-125.
- Piot, Charles (1991). Of Persons and things: some reflections on African spheres of exchange. *Man* 26(3): 405-424.
- Piot, Charles (1999). *Remotely Global. Village Modernity in West Africa*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Piot, Charles (2010). *Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa after the Cold War*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- PNUD – Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (2006). *Rapport National sur le Développement Humain en Guinée-Bissau 2006*. Available from: <http://www.gw.undp.org/rapports/RapportDevHumainPNUDGUINEE-BISSAU%20Synth%C3%A8se.pdf> [Accessed 9 November 2012].
- Polanyi, Karl (1944). *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Portes, Alejandro (2003). Conclusion: theoretical convergencies and empirical evidence in the study of immigrant transnationalism. *International Migration Review* 37(3): 874-892.
- Portes, Alejandro, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo and William J. Haller (2002). Transnational entrepreneurs: an alternative form of immigrant economic adaptation. *American Sociological Review* 67(2): 278-298.
- Portes, Alejandro and Min Zhou (1992). Gaining the upper hand: economic mobility among immigrant and domestic minorities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15(4): 491-522.
- Pottier, Johan (1999). *Anthropology of Food. The Social Dynamics of Food Security*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Proust, Marcel (1981[1919]). *Remembrance of Things Past. Vol. 1. Swann's Way. Within a Budding Grove*. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin. New York: Random House.
- Quinn, Charlotte A. (1972). *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia: Traditionalism, Islam, and European Expansion*. London: Longman.
- Quintino, Maria Celeste R. (2004). *Migrações e Etnicidade em Terrenos Portugueses. Guineenses: Estratégias de Invenção de uma Comunidade*. Lisboa: Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa.
- Rabinow, Paul (1977). *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ranger, Terence (1983). The invention of tradition in colonial Africa. In Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 211-262.

- Rapport, Nigel and Andrew Dawson (1998). Home and movement: a polemic. In Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson (eds.) *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 19-38.
- Ray, Krishnendu (2004). *The Migrant's Table: Meals and Memories in Bengali-American Households*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Retsikas, Konstantinos (2007). The power of the senses: ethnicity, history and embodiment in East Java, Indonesia. *Indonesia and the Malay World* 35(102): 183-210.
- Riccio, Bruno (2008). West African transnationalisms compared: Ghanaians and Senegalese in Italy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34(2): 217-234.
- Richards, Audrey I. (1939). *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: an Economic Study of the Bemba Tribe*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Robertson, George *et al.* (1994). As the world turns: introduction. In George Robertson *et al.* (eds.) *Travellers' Tales. Narratives of Home and Displacement*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-6.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Z. (1994). Toward an anthropology of self and feeling. In Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. Levine (eds.) *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 137-157.
- Rose, Gillian (1999). Performing space. In Doreen Massey, John Allen and Philip Sarre (eds.) *Human Geography Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 247-259.
- Rose, Gillian (2004). Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. In Nigel Thrift and Sarah Whatmore (eds.) *Cultural Geography: Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*. London: Routledge, pp. 244-262.
- Rouse, Roger (1991). Mexican migration and the social space of postmodernism, *Diaspora* 1(1): 8-24.
- Sahlins, Marshall (1985). *Islands of History*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sahlins, Marshall (1999). Two or three things that I know about culture. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5(3): 399-421.
- Sahlins, Marshall (2004[1972]). *Stone Age Economics*. London: Routledge.
- Said, Edward W. (1989). Representing the colonized: anthropology's interlocutors. *Critical Inquiry* 15(2): 205-225.
- Salih, Ruba (2003). *Gender in Transnationalism: Home, Longing and Belonging among Moroccan Migrant Women*. London: Routledge.
- Sanders, Todd and Harry G. West (2003). Power revealed and concealed in the New World order. In Harry G. West and Todd Sanders (eds.) *Transparency and Conspiracy: Ethnographies of Suspicion in the New World Order*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 1-37.

- Saraiva, Clara (2008). Transnational migrants and transnational spirits: an African religion in Lisbon. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34(2): 253-269.
- Sarró, Ramon (2010). Map and territory: the politics of place and autochthony among Baga sitem (and their neighbours). In Jacqueline Knörr and Wilson Trajano Filho (eds.) *The Powerful Presence of the Past: Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 231-252.
- Scantamburlo, Luigi (2003). *Dicionário do Guineense*. Bissau: Edições FASPEBI.
- Seremetakis, C. Nadia (1994). The memory of the senses: Part 1. In C. Nadia Seremetakis (ed.) *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 1-18.
- Shaw, Rosalind (2002). *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Shipton, Parker and Mitzi Goheen (1992). Introduction. Understanding African land-holding: power, wealth, and meaning. *Africa* 62(3): 307-325.
- Silva, Artur Augusto (1953). Considerações sobre os direitos de família e propriedade entre os Fulas da Guiné Portuguesa e suas recentes transformações. *Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa* VIII(31): 405-415.
- Simmel, Georg (1978). *The Philosophy of Money*. Translated by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Smith, Michael Peter and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (eds.) (1998). *Transnationalism from Below*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Smith, Robert Courtney (2006). *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Spooner, Brian (1986). Weavers and dealers. The authenticity of an oriental carpet. In Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 195-235.
- Stewart, Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern (2003). Introduction. In Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern (eds.) *Landscape, Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 1-15.
- Stoller, Paul (1989). *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: the Senses in Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Stoller, Paul (1995). *Embodying Colonial Memories. Spirit Possession, Power and the Hauka in West Africa*. New York: Routledge.
- Stoller, Paul (1996). Spaces, places, and fields: the politics of West African trading in New York City's informal economy. *American Anthropologist* 98(4): 776-788.
- Stoller, Paul (2003). Marketing Afrocentricity: West African trade networks in North America. In Khalid Koser (ed.) *New African Diasporas*. London: Routledge, pp. 71-94.

- Stoller, Paul (2009). *The Power of the Between: an Anthropological Odyssey*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Stone, M. Priscilla, Angelique Haugerud and Peter D. Little (2000). Commodities and globalization: anthropological perspectives. In Angelique Haugerud, M. Priscilla Stone and Peter D. Little (eds.) *Commodities and Globalization: Anthropological Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 1-29.
- Strathern, Marilyn (1985). Kinship and economy: constitutive orders of a provisional kind. *American Ethnologist* 12(2): 191-209.
- Strathern, Marilyn (1988). *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sutton, David E. (2001). *Remembrance of Repasts: an Anthropology of Food and Memory*. Oxford: Berg.
- Taussig, Michael (1993). *Mimesis and Alterity: a Particular History of the Senses*. New York: Routledge.
- Teixeira, Maria (2008). Sorcellerie et contre-sorcellerie: un réajustement permanent au monde. Les Manjak de Guinée-Bissau et du Sénégal. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* XLVIII(1-2), n°189-190: 59-79.
- Teixeira da Mota, Avelino (1948). Classificação e evolução da casa e povoamento indígena, In Avelino Teixeira da Mota and Mário G. Ventim Neves (eds.) *A Habitação Indígena na Guiné Portuguesa*. Bissau: Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa, pp. 9-136.
- Teixeira da Mota, Avelino (1951). Notas sobre o povoamento e a agricultura indígena na Guiné Portuguesa. *Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa* VI(23): 657-680.
- Temudo, Marina P. (2008). From 'people's struggle' to 'this war of today': entanglements of peace and conflict in Guinea-Bissau. *Africa* 78(2): 245-263.
- Temudo, Marina P. (2009). A narrativa da degradação ambiental no sul da Guiné-Bissau: uma desconstrução etnográfica. *Etnográfica* 13(2): 237-264.
- Temudo, Marina P. (2011). Planting knowledge, harvesting agro-biodiversity: a case study of southern Guinea-Bissau rice farming. *Human Ecology* 39: 309-321.
- Temudo, Marina P. and Manuel B. Abrantes (2012). Changing policies, shifting livelihoods: the fate of agriculture in Guinea-Bissau. *Journal of Agrarian Change*. (Article first published online: 30 Oct 2012).
- Terray, Emmanuel (1972). *Marxism and "Primitive" Societies: Two Studies*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Thrift, Nigel (1996). *Spatial Formations*. London: Sage.
- Tilley, Christopher (2006). Introduction: identity, place, landscape and heritage. *Journal of Material Culture* 11(1-2): 7-32.

- Tolia-Kelly, Divya (2004). Locating processes of identification: studying the precipitates of re-memory through artefacts in the British Asian home. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29(3): 314-329.
- Tolia-Kelly, Divya (2010). *Landscape, Race and Memory: Material Ecologies of Citizenship*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Uzendoski, Michael A. (2004). Manioc beer and meat: value, reproduction and cosmic substance among the Napo Runa of the Ecuadorian Amazon. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10(4): 883-902.
- van Binsbergen, Wim (1988). The land as body: an essay on the interpretation of ritual among the Manjaks of Guinea-Bissau. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 2(4): 386-401.
- van Binsbergen, Wim (1999). Mary's room: a case study on becoming a consumer in Francistown, Botswana. In Richard Fardon, Wim van Binsbergen and Rijk van Dijk (eds.) *Modernity on a Shoestring: Dimensions of Globalization, Consumption and Development in Africa and beyond*. Leiden: Eidos, pp. 179-206.
- van Binsbergen, Wim (2005). Commodification: things, agency and identities: introduction. In Wim van Binsbergen and Peter Geschiere (eds.) *Commodification: Things, Agency and Identities (the Social Life of Things Revisited)*. Münster: Lit Verlag, pp. 9-51.
- van Maanen, John (1988). *Tales of the Field: on Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Vertovec, Steven (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22(2): 447-462.
- Vertovec, Steven (2009). *Transnationalism*. London: Routledge.
- Vigh, Henrik (2006). *Navigating Terrains of War: Youth and Soldiering in Guinea-Bissau*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Waldinger, Roger and David Fitzgerald (2004). Transnationalism in question. *American Journal of Sociology* 109(5): 1177-1195.
- Walsh, Katie (2006). British expatriate belongings: mobile homes and transnational homing. *Home Cultures* 3(2): 123-144.
- Watson, James L. (ed.) (1977). *Between Two Cultures: Migrants and Minorities in Britain*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Watson, James L. (1983). *Tairora Culture: Contingency and Pragmatism*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Weiner, Annette B. (1985). Inalienable wealth. *American Ethnologist* 12(2): 210-227.
- Weiss, Brad (1996). *The Making and Unmaking of the Haya Lived World: Consumption, Commoditization, and Everyday Practice*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Werbner, Richard (1998). *Memory and the Postcolony. African Anthropology and the Critique of Power*. London: Zed Books.
- Werbner, Richard (2002). Introduction – postcolonial subjectivities: the personal, the political and the moral. In Richard Werbner (ed.) *Postcolonial Subjectivities in Africa*. London: Zed Books, pp. 1-21.
- West, Harry G. (2005). *Kupilikula. Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- West, Harry G. (2007). *Ethnographic Sorcery*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- West, Harry G. (ed.) (2011). Food and migration [Special issue]. *Food, Culture & Society* 14(2).
- Whitehead, Ann (1981). 'I'm hungry, mum': the politics of domestic budgeting. In Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz and Roslyn McCullagh (eds.) *Of Marriage and the Market*. London: Routledge, pp. 88-111.
- Wilding, Raelene (2007). Transnational ethnographies and anthropological imaginings of migrancy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33(2): 331-348.
- Wilk, Richard R. (1999). "Real Belizean food": building local identity in the transnational Caribbean. *American Anthropologist* 101(2): 244-255.
- Williams, Raymond (1973). *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wimmer, Andreas (2008). The making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries: a multilevel process theory. *American Journal of Sociology* 113(4): 970-1022.
- Wright, Marcia (1983). Technology, marriage and women's work in the history of maize-growers in Mazabuka, Zambia: a reconnaissance. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 10(1): 71-85.
- Zhou, Min (2004). Revisiting ethnic entrepreneurship: convergencies, controversies, and conceptual advancements. *International Migration Review* 38(3): 1040-1074.