

'You can't be a Goan and not eat Goan food'

**THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER, FOOD AND IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF
GOAN WOMEN IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA**

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The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance a thesis entitled:

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Dated: September 24, 2009

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*For my sister, Marilyn,
whose death taught me how to live*

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Abstract

Food, perhaps because of its association with women's work, has often been overlooked as a signifier of identity. This qualitative study examined the role of Goan women in Toronto in creating and maintaining Goan identity through food. Catholic Goan identity, borne from Portuguese colonization, fosters a strong set of cultural values and is often seen as devoid of unique symbols and markers other than its cuisine. Food plays a crucial role in Goan identity. The thirteen first-generation Goan women interviewed maintained that being Goan is inextricably linked to Goan food. They saw their role in foodwork as having 'currency' within the family and community, a role that fosters and supports Goan identity. As a diasporic and racially marginalized group in Canada, often grouped with other South Asians, these Goan women lived within a 'Goancentric' world that supported and celebrated their Goanness; Goan food was central to that identity.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	3
<i>Research Statement</i>	3
The Origins of Catholic Goans	3
Rationale for Research	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review	9
<i>Identity</i>	10
Racism	15
Postcolonial theory	20
Culture and Values	23
Gender	27
Food	32
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	38
<i>Methodology</i>	38
Research Design	43
The Participants	44
The Interviews	45
Analysis of Interviews	46
Interview Experiences	46
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion: Identity and Values.....	50
<i>Identity – where do I belong?</i>	50
Indian or not Indian...where do Goans fit?	56
Racism – so where are you from...really?	68
Colonization – the legacy	78
Values – a Goan way of life	83
Catholicism – practicing a way of life	88
Summary	92
Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion: Gender and Food	95
<i>Gender – role of women in food preparation and decision making</i>	95
Men – connection to Goan food and identity	103
Children – passing on Goan culture	105
Food – key aspect of Goan identity	111
Summary	123
Chapter 6: Analysis and Conclusion.....	126
<i>Conclusion</i>	134
Works Cited.....	141
Appendix A Call for Participants.....	149

Appendix B	Screening Form for Participants.....	150
Appendix C	Interview Guide.....	151
Appendix D	Consent Form.....	154

Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Statement

This research explores Goan women's gendered roles in foodwork and how those roles relate to the Goan diasporic identity. The large body of work on identity, particularly in a diaspora, neglects to examine fully the intersection of gender and food that may foster the creation and maintenance of a diasporic identity. My research question for this study is: How do Catholic Goan women in Toronto understand their food practices in relation to (re)creating, maintaining, perpetuating, and possibly resisting, individual and group identity? I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with Goan women in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to determine their involvement in food practices and how those practices may connect to individual identity and a sense of community within a numerically small, racially marginalized group.

The Origins of Catholic Goans

Goa is a small state on the west coast of India that was colonized by the Portuguese for 451 years, from 1510 until liberation by the Indian army in 1961. The effects of this colonization are still felt by the Catholic Goan population. Because of the Portuguese influence, this particular Goan population is distinct

by religion from other Goans, a distinction that was accomplished through religious conversion rather than marriage.

The converted Hindus were given Portuguese surnames and Christian first names and access to a Western lifestyle, which included Western dress, Portuguese language and a meat based diet (Mascarenhas-Keyes 1977). Goans today are primarily English speaking, wear Western dress and eat a diet that includes beef and pork. The inclusion of these meats in their diet is a key marker that differentiates them from Hindu and Muslim Goans who, respectively, avoid beef and pork for religious reasons. Although Catholic Goans are distinct from other Goans because of religion, there are also broader cultural differences that set them apart.

Catholic Goans, having embraced Western culture, were valuable employees for the British Empire in India and elsewhere, and migrated outward from Goa in large numbers. Migration from Goa began under Portuguese rule to parts of the British Empire and continues to this day. Lured by high wages, Catholic Goans have migrated to countries in the Middle East and countries of the North. Today, the Catholic Goan diaspora is found in all Western English speaking countries, with large settlements in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. Catholic Goans came to Canada from India and Pakistan in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Canadian immigration laws were relaxed to allow

entry for racialized persons. Catholic Goans also migrated to Canada later in the 1970s when eastern African countries were gaining their independence. This research focuses on the Catholic Goan community in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and examines the intersections among gender, food and identity among Goan women.

Rationale for Research

My family immigrated to Canada from Pakistan in 1970, shortly after Canada's immigration laws were changed in 1967, to allow migration by people of colour. I grew up in Karachi, Pakistan and later in Toronto, Ontario, identifying strongly as a Goan. My maternal grandparents influenced this identity, as neither of my parents was born in Goa, and it was reinforced by the reality of my mother and grandmother routinely cooking Goan food, which is distinct from Pakistani food. Pakistani food shares a similarity with North Indian cuisine, as there is a common history prior to Partition in 1947. As a teenager in Canada, I was torn between two cultures, a hybridity that I did not fully appreciate and often resented. I wanted to be Canadian born; I did not want to be 'from away.' However, as I age, I have come to acknowledge and celebrate my hybridity, my ability to straddle cultures and the unique situation in which it places me. At the same time, it also raises the question of my identity and how I

define it. What actually makes me Goan? Not my birthplace (Karachi), native tongue (English), or religion at birth (Roman Catholic). One strong, and perhaps the only, manifestation of my Goan identity is the food that I eat. Goan food is a byproduct of Portuguese colonization and the necessity that Catholic Goans differentiate themselves from Hindu and Muslim neighbours, in order to enjoy colonial privileges. It is a cuisine that is unique amongst regions of India and includes dishes such as sorpotel, a pork and beef dish; caldene, a fish curry; and vindaloo, a pork dish.

Recognizing the centrality of food in my own experience of my Goan identity, and the significant role of my maternal grandmother and mother in passing on this culinary legacy to me, I became interested in the role that food and gender play in the identity formation and maintenance of other Goans in the diaspora. In addition, I wanted to examine the broader context of the role of women in cultural transmission in a diaspora and how this applies within a Canadian context. What is the role of women in giving meaning to food – meaning that is imbued with a significance linked to one's ethnic and cultural identity? This study will allow for a better understanding of the value of women's role in foodwork, especially in diasporic communities.

To explore this question, I conducted my research in the GTA, one of the largest populations of Goans outside Goa. Social, cultural and sports groups, as

well as organizations created around the village of origin in Goa, are indicative of a thriving Goan community in the area. My research question for this study is: How do Goan women in the Greater Toronto Area understand their food practices in relation to (re) creating, maintaining, perpetuating, and possibly resisting, individual and group identity?

The thesis is organized into six chapters. The next chapter, Chapter 2, reviews the literature related to identity, gender and food, the main concepts of this thesis. The chapter specifically looks at these concepts within a diasporic, postcolonial context, which speaks to the history of Goans. Chapter 3 discusses the research design for this study as well as methodological issues related to being an insider within the community. The research was, given my area of study, viewed through a feminist perspective.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the findings of the research, using the participants' voices to highlight the concepts as related to my research questions. In Chapter 4, I focus on the concept of identity and its complex correlation with racism and colonization for Goans in Canada. In addition, I discuss the values that are important for the Goan participants. In Chapter 5, I concentrate on the intersection between gender and food and how it relates to identity for the Goan women interviewed.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I provide an analysis of the findings and draw links among gender, food and identity for these Goan women, highlighting the inextricable connection between these three lived realities in this diasporic community. I conclude my thesis by suggesting areas for future research and showing the implications for a better understanding of the pluralistic society that is Canada.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I will review literature that outlines and theorizes the following concepts relevant to my research questions. The concepts include: identity, racism, postcolonialism, culture and the values within it, diasporas and transmigrants, gender and its relation to food, and of course food itself in various guises as a signifier of identity, a symbol of material culture and, in its most basic form, as something that nourishes. In synthesizing this literature, I will focus on how, despite a large body of work on all these topics individually, and much literature on some of these topics combined, there is scant work on the role of women in a diaspora using food to (re)create, maintain or resist individual and group identity. This critical synthesis of current literature provides a starting point for my research.

This research is on the Goan diaspora and relates to Goan immigrants in Canada. Despite common usage, these terms, diaspora and immigrants, necessitate definition, to clarify why I am using them. Although the language to describe the movement of peoples has grown substantially in our globalized world, and words such as transnational migration (movement across borders) and transmigrants (people who move across borders, claiming attachment to two nation-states) (Glick Schiller, 1999:96) are more commonly used, they do not apply to Goans. Although Goans did move across borders to settle in Canada,

they are immigrants (people moving permanently to a new country) not transmigrants, as there is no nation-state to which they belong. The Goa of their ancestry no longer exists. That is why it is the Goan diaspora I discuss, where diaspora is understood to be a 'common heritage not linked to a contemporary state' (Glick Schiller, 1999:96).

The notion of a common heritage suggests that Goans in the diaspora share an identity, although there may be no connection to a contemporary state. Thus, it is only apt we begin with the literature on identity, a complex, often convoluted, yet commonly used term. The very term conjures up boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. It is also a term that is very personal on an individual level, but that may have negative (and positive) ramifications on a collective level. Regardless, there is much literature on this subject, especially for those in a diaspora.

Identity

As a Pakistani lesbian feminist of Goan ancestry, I identify myself in many ways. As I write the above in that particular order, it may be assumed that my Pakistani birth is of primary importance. For me, there is no one identity that is overarching. My identity is fluid and flows according to the situation in which I find myself. With my family, declaring I am Pakistani of Goan ancestry is

irrelevant for obvious reasons, but that declaration has a very different meaning when I am in a group of white Canadians, as often happens in Halifax. My identity is both given and constructed, yet there are aspects of it that are ascribed to me by the dominant group. In predominantly white Halifax, I am seen as a visible minority, 'vis min' in Canadian government language, and as a middle-aged woman. Although I would not challenge these descriptors, their application is very contextual and based on the visible signifiers of my identity (which have different meaning depending on context) – an aspect of identity that can be very problematic for racially marginalized groups such as Goans. But I am getting ahead of myself here. I want to discuss identity before I discuss racial marginalization. So that is where I will start.

James Clifford (1994) offers a definition of diaspora as one that '...is a signifier not simply of ...movement but of ...struggles to define the local...in historical contexts of displacement...' (308). Although Goans were not displaced from their homeland, for them diaspora has come to mean drawing upon a shared identification that is not linked to a particular nation state. Thus, identity is 'reconstituted' by those in a diaspora, for often they find themselves in a situation where the dominant group in the settling country is of a different racial or ethnic background, as it is for Goans in Canada. This may mean race or ethnicity is foregrounded in new ways. Such reconstitution does not result in a

fixed identity but one that is fluid and relational. The importance or significance of specific aspects of identity ebb and flow depending on circumstances – those circumstances are relational. Iris Marion Young (2000) describes the relational aspect of identity in the following way: 'Members of groups...stand in determinate relations both to one another and to non-members...the group...consists in both individuals and their relationships' (89-90), in other words, identities arise from the way people interact. This flexibility in identity allows for multiple identities with different groups and an identity that refuses to be essentialized. This fluid identity permits multiple alliances depending on the relations one has with members of a particular group. In one situation, class background seems pertinent; in another situation, irrelevant. It creates situations when a particular identity has more resonance – for example, moments, places or situations, when Goans might feel 'most Goan.'

Nira Yuval-Davis and her colleagues (2006) also raise the relational nature of identity and describe it as taking place 'within intersubjective contexts' (20). The context of identity is highlighted by many authors who espouse the fluidity and changing nature of identity (Abarca 2004, Hall 1990, Gove and Watt 2004, Zevallos 2003). This contextual nature of identity adds fluidity to the process that Richard Jenkins (2004) notes as a positive aspect of identity. Although Jenkins is speaking of collective identities here, the same can be held true for individual

identities, which he describes as: '...flexible, situational and negotiable...' (2004:107).

Nilufar Ahmed (2005), in contrast, views identity as consisting of a core centre that is fixed, with a fluid outside. Ahmed argues there are aspects of self that do not change, a fixed core, which becomes the nucleus for a fluid exterior. Although Ahmed's position on identity has merit, as we do prefer to consider our identity as stable, the advantage of viewing all aspects of identity as fluid allows for change depending on experience, circumstance and choice.

Understanding identity as an entirely fluid process, a process of self and social definition always involving change, allows us to grasp its shifting nature over time, as well as space. If, in fact, identity is relational, the Self can only ever be understood in relation to the Other, and the social, which means identity is always socially constructed, and thus mutable.

Change may be what Claude Fischler (1988) is referring to when he discusses the notion of identity being more salient when 'disturbed' (288). In other words, my Goan identity is more salient in white Halifax than in Goan Toronto, which is a more multicultural city (Statistics Canada 2006). However, it is interesting to consider, the length of 'disturbance.' Goans in Canada have been here for longer than a generation and are not going through an active process of

change, or disturbance. Why, then, would Goan identity be salient, many years after migration? What does disturbed identity mean in such a context?

Ann Swidler (1986), attempts to answer just such a question with her discussion of 'settled' and 'unsettled' lives (278-281). Swidler argues that in unsettled lives, new immigrants are creating and questioning patterns of existence as they encounter new ways of being; in settled lives, immigrants with a longer history in the receiving country or region have established ways of playing out their culture and its traditions – not everything is open to question. Thus, what is conscious and deliberate in unsettled lives becomes common sense and automatic in settled lives. This does not seem to help us to make sense of why ethnic identity may remain highly salient in the Canadian Goan community, and may even strengthen over time. Implicit in Swidler's conceptualization is the notion that over time, all cultural groups become 'settled.' We need to know why Goans, after years of presumably settled lives, are still attaching themselves to an imagined homeland or common heritage, both on an individual and community level.

Goan identity in Canada is a fluid concept, negotiated not only with the dominant group, but also with other marginalized groups that include immigrants as well as the indigenous and colonizing populations. Identity is always political in nature, negotiated as it is around the concepts of class, race,

sexuality and gender, all of which attach to structured power relations. Uma Narayan (1997) discusses 'political subjects' and the 'contexts' that characterize who and what we are (152). There is no aspect of one's identity that can be seen in isolation from another, and the relational aspect of identity creates the scenario where we cannot and do not identify ourselves in isolation from others. We identify ourselves, but *not* under conditions we *choose* (Young 2000). Under what conditions are Goans in Canada identified? The obvious answer appears to be the socially constructed condition of race. The politics of identity (Jenkins 2004, Mohanty 2004, Gove and Watt 2004) are played out in many different ways in our society. For a racially marginalized group such as Goans, race is one way that the politics of identity become an everyday reality. This may help to explain why time alone is insufficient to create Goan Canadians as a 'settled' group in society (Swidler 1986).

Racism

To understand racism in Canada today, I present a brief history of South Asians in Canada to provide a context. South Asians are documented as having first entered Canada in the early 20th century (Singh 1994). Despite being British citizens (from British India), the early years were marked by discrimination. Chinese and Japanese labourers who were also part of the migrant workers at this time, were also discriminated against. Canadian authorities limited the

number of migrants and refused entry to all but a handful of women and children (Ralston 1994).

Racist ideologies in Canada at that time, disenfranchised South Asians by denying them the vote, barring them from certain professions and preventing them from owning land in Canada (Singh 1994). Immigration into Canada was increasingly fraught with challenges for racialized groups and in 1914 all immigration for South Asians was stopped (Buchigani et al. 1985).

The barrier to immigration was partially lifted in the 1950s, in a postwar Canada that required human capital, through a quota system for people from South Asia (Buchigani et al. 1985). However, it was not until the 1960s that all explicit reference to race was removed from Canadian immigration policies and the newly evolved point system allowed South Asians to enter Canada in large numbers (Ralston 1994).

This influx of peoples from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan during this time set the stage for the essentialized term of South Asian. As Vijay Agnew (2005) states, 'ethnic groups have conveniently been constructed in ways that homogenize their experiences' (29). Although the term South Asian is used frequently within Canadian society, it has no currency in the home countries of those so called. Discrimination was rampant during this influx of South Asians

and the derogatory term 'Paki' was often hurled at any brown skin, regardless of origin (Rajiva 2006:172-173).

The term Indian in contemporary Canada has taken on new meaning, as all things Indian are suddenly sought after, such as bhangra music and of course the ubiquitous Indian food (Handa 2003). Being Indian is now the flavour of the month in Canada. However, what this creates is not an absence of racism, but rather a more subtle and insidious racism that is hard to define.

The colour of our skin is often a primary identifying factor, especially when living as a visible minority in a white dominant culture, as Goans do in Canada. Although race is a social construction, the effects of such a construction are tangible (Brah et al. 1999, Feldman 2006, Jenkins 2004). The racialization of Goans and how this may have an impact on their strong ethnic identity cannot be overlooked. As 'visible minorities', Goans are always among the 'outsiders' in Canada, and perhaps it is this very experience of not belonging, that strengthens a Goan identity. Himani Bannerji (2000) refers to the 'complex relationship' that non-whites have with the dominant group in Canada; the inability to 'vanish' in a white landscape may be the very reason that Goans need to belong somewhere, and thus forge strong Goan identities linked to a diasporic common heritage.

This awareness of difference in skin colour may be attributed to the notion that Canada came into being as a white settler society and whites still hold the

weight of social power and dominate the social imaginary. For visible minorities, the constant questioning of whether they are Canadian (Where are you really from?) reinforces that feeling – although they may be citizens, they do not *belong* to a white Canada. Mythili Rajiva (2006) in her work on second generation South Asian girls and women in Canada discusses the lack of acceptance of her participants as Canadians because of the colour of their skin, despite their assimilation into Canadian culture (170). Amita Handa (2003) also analyzes the discourse that revolves around the notion that being Canadian is being white (5).

Such notions of essentialism are not specific to Canada. Zuleyka Zevallos (2003) discusses the concept of belonging in her work with Australian women of South and Central American origin. Zevallos' research shows that the 'real Australian' is seen as 'blond haired and blue-eyed' (2003:85) and her research participants '...do not see themselves as 'Australian' because they perceive that *others are not seeing them* as Australian (her emphasis)' (2003:94).

Citizenship for a diasporic group may signify a belonging, an attachment to a nation-state, an alternative to 'home.' However, for racially marginalized groups, this attachment can be fraught with tension. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2004) speaks to this tension within an American context by remarking that '...carrying an American passport is no insurance against racism and unequal and unjust treatment...' (130). What is possibly happening here is the

essentializing of all peoples that we think of as American, Canadian or Australian around the signifier of race – if you are white you can belong to any of the previously mentioned countries. If not white, then a passport alone from the aforementioned countries will not prevent a questioning of whether you belong to any of them.

Physical and cultural differences are tolerated under the banner of multiculturalism in Canada and create a false sense of acceptance created in part by internalizing '...the norms and values of the dominant group' (Handa 2003:74). Racism then, becomes a context within which Goans in Canada may construct, maintain, or resist a Goan identity. How does everyday racism (Essed 1991), in its subtle and insidious forms, shape an identity for a visibly marginalized group such as Goans in Canada? Carl James (2005) underlines the reality of everyday racism in his work on Caribbean Canadian youth in Toronto. James (2005) found the constant questioning of where they were from, possibly because of their accents, prompted them to question their belonging.

Sarnia Pearson and Shuchi Kothari (2007) in their discussion of multiculturalism in New Zealand raise similar issues. For them, belonging for racially marginalized groups is further complicated when such groups are '...all but invisible in the public sphere...' (50) (see also Dwyer 2000). This is no different in Canada, especially in the GTA, where the majority of our public face

is white in business and politics (Conference Board of Canada 2008, DiverseCity 2009). So non-white Canadians can 'belong,' however, rarely in positions where they may have any influence. If Goans do not see themselves in Canadian society around them, how can they say and truly feel they belong?

The issue of belonging needs to be discussed as part of a dialectic on postcolonialism and its effects on Goans. As a culture colonized by the Portuguese, and for those Goans from Africa who felt the effect of British colonization, it would be impossible to discuss identity without bringing a postcolonial framework into the discussion to provide a perspective on why Goans may or may not identify themselves in a particular way.

Postcolonial theory

Leela Gandhi (1998) defines postcolonialism as a '...theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath...of revisiting, remembering...interrogating the colonial past' (4). Simply put, postcolonial theory deals with the lives of those who were colonized; who ousted their colonizers and gained independence; and who now struggle to come to terms with who they think they are. For Goans, the ousting of the Portuguese was done by the Indian army, which paved the way for Goa to join the Republic of India as a state, although the latter did not happen immediately. What did happen is that

a previously colonized people who conducted their lives, especially in the public sphere, in a Portuguese world were thrown into a world of Indian laws and language that was completely foreign to them. Although this may appear to be a move in a positive direction, away from colonization, it was more like a new occupation, which created turmoil in identity that resonates to this day.

The creation of a Portuguese colony on the West coast of India resulted in substantial changes for Goans. Portuguese was the *lingua franca* of the day, with Portuguese laws, schools and – the lasting remnant of colonization to this day – the religion of the colonizers, Roman Catholicism (Desai 2000, Mascarehnas-Keyes 1993). This method of colonial rule was not unique to the Portuguese; it was the way of ruling for all colonizers. Mohanty (2004) uses Dorothy Smith's phrase, 'relations of ruling,' to describe colonization (56). Colonization results in 'multiple intersections of structures of power' that create a spider web of restrictions for the colonized to shepherd their way of life into one that was often unrecognizable from its original form (Mohanty 2004:56).

The effects of colonization, the relations of ruling, are long term and a postcolonial identity is complex (Appardurai 1996, Bhabha 2004, Narayan 1997). For Goans, the complexity of identity is heightened by their unusual position among colonized peoples. Although the literature on postcolonialism speaks of the colonized gaining independence, repossessing their land and rebuilding their

culture (Gandhi 1998:112), there is very little literature about peoples such as Goans who do not have a physical space to reclaim, as in the postcolonial era they became Indian subjects from the state of Goa. How do a colonized people who are so markedly affected by colonization, once liberated by another country, come to terms with a colonial era identity that has negative connotations, yet is the only one that they know? Identity for them is a complex and contested reality.

For those who were colonized, the legacy of institutionalized racism contributes to an identity built on the exclusion of others because these others are perceived as 'lesser' (Mohanty 2004, Narayan 1997). For Goans, colonization set up distinctions among Catholic Goans and other South Asians. Othering means the construction of self through the symbolic construction of Other as lesser, and thus Self – and those like you – as superior. This 'Othering' is ingrained in most Goans. Stuart Hall (1999) speaks of this 'Othering' for what it is – 'power as a constitutive element in our own identities' (233). This notion of 'lesser' is played out in contemporary Catholic Goan identity in Canada, where Catholic Goans consider themselves *not* to be Indians, despite shared roots. What we do not know about this constitutive element of 'power' is why Catholic Goans still need to make a distinction between Indians and themselves, although many of them

have never lived in or been to India. Why is this colonial legacy in play, generations and oceans away? And how does it operate?

One way that some Catholic Goans may quickly differentiate themselves from Indians is by declaring their religious beliefs. Catholics in India, although present in other regions besides Goa, are in the minority. To be identified as a Catholic raises a point of difference that acts as a boundary marker. Religion is just one aspect of culture that serves as such. Culture is an integral part of a group identity, and for Goans in Canada their culture and its values are a key facet of what makes them Goan.

Culture and Values

Culture is a common word with complex influences. It is collective in its origins, but often individual in its enactment. It is composed of values that may be universal in their understanding, but feel unique to a particular group. It is by these values that the actions of an individual are deciphered to indicate membership within a specific group – or not. Goans in Canada enact such a culture.

Culture is typically defined as a set of values and behaviours that determine attachment to a particular group (Swidler 1986, Woodward 2004). These values and behaviours allow members of a particular group to have a sense of shared belonging, a belonging that is both inclusionary and exclusionary

in its nature. For Swidler (1986), culture is more than just values; more importantly it consists of a repertoire of familiar, skilled and available actions and reactions through which it shapes and directs behaviour by means of a kind of cultural 'tool kit' available to members of a group (273). This 'tool kit' also contains the symbols and practices of a group's culture, and food is one of the components. For Goans, as with all cultures, food is a very crucial component of the group's tool kit.

The components of a group's tool kit give meaning to their daily actions and create a way of being in the world (Zevallos 2003). Hall (1990) makes explicit that culture, including such ways of being in the world, is constructed and because this construction is not fixed in its content or meaning (226) – the contents of the tool kit can and do change over time. Purnima Mankekar (2002) argues that construction of culture is based on 'fear of loss,' the requirement to hold on to the past and create a cultural base that remembers and edifies it (81). This fear is bound up in the inability to belong if there is nothing to distinguish one group from another. Catholic Goans do not consider themselves Indians and require one or more components of their tool kit, such as food, to validate that division.

People of a diaspora, such as Goans in Canada, are encumbered with a 'fear of loss,' and preservation of their culture, even when this preservation

accommodates creativity and change, is essential to their (cultural) survival.

Colonization often creates a cultural identity for the colonized that is far removed from what was construed as their culture in the past. For Goans, their religion and because of it their diet, changed with Portuguese colonization. So, when Goans 'do' culture, what or whose culture are they remembering?

Formerly colonized peoples who have been decolonized have a physical space within which to reenact or create a cultural repertoire that is theirs. Goans have no contemporary claim to a physical space that is a *Goan* space, which begs the question: Whose culture is it anyway?

This question is especially pertinent when discussing the religiosity of Goans. As Catholics, they are drawing on a cultural belief that was conferred upon them, without consent, by their Portuguese colonizers – as Narayan (1997) ironically describes it, a 'benefit of Western civilization' (15). This cultural institution then becomes a key cultural symbol that differentiates them from other colonized groups with different historical relationships to colonizers. Yet, it is not a belief they created, asked for, or negotiated. Does culture lose its meaning if conferred and not accepted or negotiated? When does it become an intrinsic part of the collective? This is a challenge for Catholic Goans as they come to terms with their colonial past.

The role of religion in culture, especially in diasporic groups, may be fundamental to their well-being and sense of belonging (Jonsson et al. 2002, Kurien 1999, Yuval-Davis et al. 2006). This is heightened even more so for Goans, as their religion is a boundary marker to differentiate from other Indians. Religion becomes a salve for the inequities of not belonging for a racially marginalized group – they may be dark skinned but at least they are Christian. What we do not know is the importance of religion for immigrants, generations after settling in the receiving country. Does the Catholic religion lose its significance for Goans over time, since it never was theirs to begin with? To what extent is Catholicism part of a signifying behaviour used by Goans to demarcate the boundaries between cultural groups?

The significance of culture in any group is crucial to their sense of identity and takes on even more meaning in diasporic groups where a sense of belonging is fragile (Bhambra 2006, Jenkins 2004, Yuval-Davis et al. 2006). The purveyors of cultures, especially in diasporic groups, are often the women of the community (Beoku-Betts 1995, Kurien 1999, Mankekar 2002). Women are perceived to be keepers of tradition and sowers of culture in their families and in the larger community. This is the next section that I explore, the role of gender in (re)creating, maintaining or even resisting identity through the use of a symbol of material culture – food.

Gender

Women are traditionally linked to foodwork, which includes all aspects of work with food from shopping to preparation to clean up. In many cultures, these roles for women are socially created and reinforced, as women are believed to have the caring and nurturing nature required for foodwork for their families (Devasahayam 2005, Fürst 1992). In diasporic cultures, this ability to care for their families through food has even more resonance, as food becomes a vital link to 'home' (Harbottle 1996). In women's roles as caretaker and caregiver for their families, they are tasked with the primary role in foodwork, to create food for their families that draws a tangible link to an intangible home. I turn to the literature now to illuminate why this gendered role still exists and what agency, women have within its boundaries. Foodwork, like all of women's work within the home, is invisible (Beoku-Betts 1995, Fürst 1997, Mohanty 2004) and, therefore, seen to have little value within familial relationships. This diminishing of women's skills and abilities is in direct contrast to their crucial role as transmitters of culture within the family unit (Das Gupta 1997, Devasahayam 2005, Kallivayalil 2004, Srinivas 2006,).

Devaluing women's work in the home, yet according them the role of transmitters of culture, especially with food, may appear to be a contradiction. Narayan (1997) surmises that it is because of the very mundane nature of food

and its connection to women, that this area of women's work is devalued and often overlooked (161). Food is part of everyday life for all people, and it is because of this everydayness that it appears to be taken for granted; its association with women's work reinforces the low stature of foodwork.

Women are linked to food and, with caring for their families through food, there is an added dimension that involves what Tulasi Srinivas (2006) calls the 'gustatory link between mother and family' (211). Note the use of the term 'mother.' No longer are *women* cooking for their families it is the 'mother' (as in mother tongue, mother nation), who is doing the cooking. Narayan (1997) also speaks of the role of mother in culture, with the use of the term 'mother-culture' as a way of acknowledging one's culture of birth (8). For diasporic groups, this 'mothering' of food provides an essential link to home, playing a vital role in creating or maintaining identity in the family.

In describing the role of women in cooking and, therefore, transmitting their culture through food, there is very little analysis in the literature of the significance of women's roles within their families and their larger ethnic group. Kurien (1999) describes women's roles as 'ethnic architects' and as 'largely informal,' the important and formal designations being attributed to males within the community (665). The designation of women's roles as minor influences, if even that, reiterates the invisible nature of a woman's work and

confirms the lack of status that foodwork has not only within her family, but also in her community.

Devasahayam (2005) appears to argue both for and against the significance of women's role in foodwork. At one point, Devasahayam describes women's work as a 'pivotal force' in foodwork (8) and then appears to contradict herself by saying that women 'cannot be seen as agents in their own right' (4). What appears to be occurring here is an underlying acknowledgement that women do have a key role within their family units for preparing food, but the implication is that this role is not their own to create or resist.

Mankekar (2002) speaks of food as having a 'gendered valence' in diasporic communities, in her research on Indian families in the United States. This 'gendered valence' is similar to what Jonsson and her colleagues (2002) discovered in their work with Somalian women in Sweden. We know that women are responsible for foodwork; the literature abounds with such references. What needs further explication is how women use this foodwork to (re)create and maintain their individual and group identity in diasporic contexts, and the extent to which this use is purposeful, as opposed to incidental.

Beoku-Betts (1995) hints at the identity work of women when she speaks of the 'sense of collective memory' fostered through 'eating traditional foods' (551). Although Beoku-Betts does elaborate on how this fostering occurs –

through cooking and conversation – there is no discussion of how women assume this role and what occurs if there is any resistance to this fostering. We know women cook, we know women talk about their cooking, and we know their families eat home cooked culturally traditional foods. What we do not know is how these interconnected actions produce, maintain and strengthen identity, especially in diasporic communities, as there is limited literature on this linkage.

Srinivas (2006) in his discussion on food consumption refers to the construction of identity through food. His argument makes reference to the role of women in this process *only* in terms of their role in foodwork – there is no discussion of the role of women as agents in the formation of identity. Again, there is silence on the active role of women in constructing identity through food. We do know that food is linked to identity; we do know that women play a critical role in food preparation in most families. We do not know enough about the extent to which the construction of identity through food is active or passive, and the extent to which women have a choice in this construction. To what extent do women resist taking part in identity construction through food?

In her writing on identity, Narayan (1997) refers to the crucial role that women play in identity processes, especially in immigrant communities.

Narayan also makes the point that food is linked to identity, but this link is often

overlooked as food is considered women's work (1997:161-162). What Narayan does not expand upon is how women construct identity through food. Food, on its own, does not create or maintain identity. Food requires a shepherding for family and the larger community to allow for linkages to be created, recognized and maintained. Women provide the shepherding, but the silence in the literature on this subject conceals the vital role of women in this process.

The literature reinforces the fact that women are key players in any aspect of foodwork, acknowledges that this work is often invisible because of its gendered dimension and confirms the role of women in transmitting culture. However, the connection between women and their role in (re)creating, maintaining and perhaps resisting identity through foodwork is not discussed. The literature is curiously silent on this role of women, especially in diasporic communities.

Goan women are not immune to the erasing of their role as agents of identity in foodwork, or the suppressing of its importance. When identity is complex and challenged by distance from 'home,' the importance of (re)creating, maintaining and even resisting a particular identity through food may be even more salient. That Goan women are tasked with, and take on this role, is seemingly vital to a strong Goan identity. Food becomes a cultural vessel and

women the purveyors of this material culture to permit Goan identity to resonate in the diaspora.

Food

Food is a mundane, everyday aspect of our world. We view it as essential to nourishing our physical bodies, but are slow to recognize that it does the same for nourishing our sense of belonging, especially for those in a diaspora. When 'home' is far away, when daily life is rife with accommodation of others who do not understand your language, appreciate your culture or support your values, then food in the privacy of your home has the ability to confirm the familiar, reinforce belonging and strengthen ties to a distant past (Jonsson et al. 2002, Zevallos 2003). Zevallos, in her discussion of food as an emblem of ethnic identity, speaks to the need of ethnic groups to use such emblems to convey who they are (2003:91). For Goans in Canada, food is an emblem of ethnic identity that differentiates them from Indians and serves also to maintain a connection with a colonized past, a past that set them apart.

Food is recognized as a key aspect of material culture for the meaning it conveys. Think of Christmas and turkey, Easter and ham – Christian holidays with links to particular foods. These links confirm cultural identity and the traditions associated with it – neither is questioned.

The link between food and identity has been discussed by many authors (Avieli 2005, Choo 2004, Narayan 1997, Valentine 1999) – we truly are what we eat. Thomas (2004) describes food as the ‘prime mechanism’ through which we remember our past, but also create our future (54). Food is the link, between the past, present and future for immigrant communities. This does not mean that the link is unchanging; it does mean that there is continuity in food as a boundary marker that is not there in other group descriptors such as language and dress. Food practices may have a sustainability that is not present in other boundary markers.

As consumption patterns play a vital role in determining class, food consumption patterns play a vital role in determining identity, especially in immigrant groups (Valentine 1999). We need to know more about the link between food and identity and how the process of consumption is created and maintained. We know gender plays a vital role in what a family (and sometimes the larger community) consumes, yet we do not know the ramifications if this role were to no longer exist. We would still eat, but what would we eat? And what would happen to identity?

Food evokes a sense of place, and not just on a sensory level (Lockie 2001). Food serves as a reminder of somewhere; home, a trip, a personal connection. This recreation of a sense of place is the responsibility of women in diasporic

communities. By recreating place, women are also recreating home. Home is not just about food, it is about who we are and how we define ourselves. Yet, we know very little about the active role women of in foodwork to (re)create and maintain family and group identity.

In invoking the sensory pleasure of food, Choo (2004) refers often to the cooking of his mother and the cookbook of a Mrs. Lee (2005). Choo speaks of the role of food in personal experiences and identity, yet does not unpack the role of women in this process. We know relatively little of the influences of his mother and Mrs. Lee in maintaining identity, although we know much about their role in preserving recipes. Choo does not examine how these two acts, maintaining identity and preserving recipes, are linked to the larger identity of both individuals and groups. The link between gender and food as a strong connection in the process of creating and maintaining identity is left unaddressed.

Fischler (1988) discusses the relationship of food to identity and describes it as a 'central component of the sense of collective belonging' (280). Fischler continues his argument about the centrality of food to identity by quoting Manuel Calvo regarding the loss of a group's language before the loss of its food (280). What Fischler is saying is that food is central to group identity, so much so that a group's language in diasporic settings will disappear over time, but food

that identifies that group still prevails. Language does not have the same ability as food to nourish both the body and the soul, and, therefore, is jettisoned as a marker of individual or group identity long before food (Avieli 2005, Valentine 1999). The sustainability of food practices, as mentioned earlier, may be related to the fact they are often carried out in the privacy of one's home and, therefore, possibly immune to outside influences of assimilation.

What these authors who describe the loss of language before the loss of traditional food do not address, is who ensures that food remains vital, especially in diasporic communities? We know that women are responsible for forging the link between past and present with an eye to the future through their children. We know that women are primarily responsible for foodwork. What we do not know is how women understand their relationship to food in (re)creating and maintaining cultural identity.

To understand why food is perceived to be so important that it is the last boundary marker left standing in a collective identity, I turn to Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and his concept of *habitus*. Bourdieu explains *habitus* as a structure in individual lives, which in turn provides a framework for all they do – food is one example of this. Particular ways of being in the world, which are attached to class, gender, region, race or other social location – become internalized, embodied, written on the body in a sense. Any other way of being becomes

almost unimaginable. Food is an everyday part of the lives of all people – it is a daily habit. When we eat structures our day, what we eat structures our bodies and our sense of self. Our identity is simultaneously structured by what we eat. The very action of eating is both habitual and embodied (Adams 2006:514) – we often eat unconsciously, at particular times, out of habit. When immigrants eat food from ‘home,’ they are defining who they are by the classification of their food.

The embodiment of food is often discussed when describing food in diasporic and immigrant communities (Bardenstein 2002, Choo 2004, Thomas 2004). The smells of food cooking, the taste of the food, all this transports us ‘home’ and confirms the position of food as an important signifier of place. This sensory nature of food is one way we remember home and through the consumption of traditional foods, we are choosing not to forget. We remember what we eat, and who we are, by taste, touch, smell – the embodied aspect of food. Goans in Canada are transported back ‘home’ when eating Goan food.

The literature shows food as being central to identity, the last material culture to change and an embodied habit of our daily lives. What it does not show is who bestows and perpetuates this meaning, who transforms food from the mundane to a signifier of identity. We know that women are still primarily responsible for foodwork in their families and communities, yet there is scant

literature on how women understand their role in using food to (re)create, maintain or possibly resist individual or group identity.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The research question explored in this study was: How do Goan women in the Greater Toronto Area understand their food practices in relation to (re) creating, maintaining, perpetuating, and possibly resisting, individual and group identity? It was pursued using qualitative in-depth interviewing in the ethnographic tradition. I consciously employed a feminist standpoint in my research, as well as the use of reflexivity. These methodological considerations as well as the actual design and methods will be discussed in this chapter.

Methodology

Feminist research is conducted with a heightened awareness of what the consequences are for the researcher and the researched (Reinharz 1993), and strives to create social change through theory and praxis (Joyappa 1996). The methods employed in feminist research are varied, as are the types of research. The process through which this research is conducted does not make it immune to the same flaws found in non-feminist research. However, most feminist researchers strive to be more aware of biases, acknowledge all research is value-laden research and recognize that objectivity is not possible. Knowing all this, feminist researchers deal with these challenges instead of denying their existence.

As I claim the same ancestry as those I researched, one question that arises is how my biases, acknowledged and unacknowledged, influenced my research. As a feminist researcher, I am aware that complete objectivity is not possible, that researchers will always bring their personal and social values to their research (Greenbank 2003). Like other critical researchers, feminist researchers take an approach that acknowledges their social position, and, therefore, differentiates and defines the type of research being conducted.

As a member of the Goan community that I researched, the conundrum of insider/outsider does not initially appear to apply. This dilemma refers to those from within the community to be researched, the insider, and those from outside the community conducting the research, as outsiders. As I have interviewed Goans who live in the GTA, and contacted them through their social and cultural groups (I am a member of one group), does that make me an insider? Or does it make me an 'outsider within' (Rose 2001)? As an insider (a Goan woman) I bring to my research the ability to develop an initial rapport. This is the 'shared reality' of an 'insider' researching within your own community (Bhopal 2001:284). As an outsider (a feminist researcher) conducting my research, I provide a platform from which to discuss critically the role of Goan women in identity creation and maintenance. As a feminist researcher aware of these challenges, Janet Shope

(2006) argues this does not 'resolve the tensions' innate in the research but brings these issues out in the open to be discussed and continually interrogated (176).

Knight (2000) clearly articulates the need for the researcher to identify self and describes how this identification helps those within the research process and those reading the research to understand the location of the researcher. As a woman of Goan ancestry interested in knowing my heritage and the colonial history of my ancestors; and curious in knowing the role that food may play in cultural maintenance, I described myself in important ways to research participants. As a feminist researcher engaged in reflexive analyses of the impact of biases throughout the research process, I engaged in continual self-examination and discussion with my supervisor to explore how my own preconceptions may be influencing the study. On the one hand, my insider status clearly enhanced my ability to ask informed questions. At the same time it may have predisposed me to particular interpretations.

Letherby (2003) raises the question of involving men in feminist research and acknowledges men's experience as important to feminist research. Goan men's views are likely to be very different from Goan women's views, given the centrality of women's role in foodwork. However, as I was limited by the sample size for a Master's thesis, I narrowed my focus to interview only Goan women to

attempt to reach theoretical saturation with a relatively small group of participants.

As a feminist researcher, I situate my interest in conducting this research, as my 'social location' is vital to my research interest and therefore essential to sharing it with participants and readers (Knight 2000). Negotiating and claiming my identity was of interest to some of the participants and opened a dialogue that I had not considered or encountered previously. In a world where transnationals are common, where it is possible to belong to two different nation-states at one time, where identities are fluid, how I lay claim to my identity may resonate with others. I had a responsibility to myself and to the participants of my research to be honest with them as to my interests and goals, to share with them what I hoped to achieve. There was also a concern in this situation of disclosure, where my social location may differ from those who are participating and there may have been expectations that could not be met, resulting in tensions, acknowledged and unacknowledged, between the researcher and the researched (Knight 2000). Knowing such concerns exists, but not knowing how to resolve them is part of the challenge of conducting research.

The use of reflexivity as a methodological tool is vital to feminist research. Reflexivity is not simply a reflection on the process one is undertaking in research, but rather an awareness of the process that involves 'insight on how

this knowledge is produced' (Pillow 2003). The knowledge produced through this insight is relevant not only to the researcher but to the researched as well. Reflexivity is not a smooth process but an often discomfiting journey in which the researcher and the researched may be in opposition to each other. I do not want to portray Goan women as patriarchal pawns in identity formation and maintenance. The agency of these women has to be acknowledged.

Pillow (2003) outlines components of reflexivity which move back and forth between the researched and the researcher, and comments on how these key points may result in a more exact telling of the research, although not necessarily so. The components Pillow refers to that resonate with this research are reflexivity around recognition of self and recognition of other. Did I disclose my reasons for this research to seek the sympathy of participants and readers? Or did I disclose for reasons of power? By disclosing self, did I create a situation where participants felt compelled to participate? Although there was no offer of compensation, participants may have benefited from what they may come to realize and understand about their own identity. However, if their identity is not tied to my own struggle, will I dismiss it or worse misrepresent it?

The challenge in including reflexivity in one's research is not that its inclusion answers many questions – it does not. Reflexivity as a methodological approach is a multi-faceted application that may result in blurring of lines, when

definition is longed for. As a feminist researcher being aware of such challenges, knowing that research, good research, may raise more questions than it answers, is all part of the process. How such questions are dealt with is what sets research and researchers apart. I worked closely with my supervisor to continually ask myself how who I am, and how I am engaging with participants and the data, may be shaping my research. I continually questioned how I may be reinscribing inequality, how I may be privileging some voices and silencing others, and how I may be imposing preconceived interpretations of the data.

This research is the product of such questioning of both my own interpretation of the data and the method in which it was obtained. There were often times I had to draw back on a quote I wanted to use for reasons of confidentiality, or rephrase what may have come across as an overly harsh assessment of another quote. When I connected with participants on a personal level, it was a challenge to balance their voices with those who were perhaps less articulate or less open during the interview. But enough about me. Let me tell you what actually happened.

Research Design

For this study, I employed qualitative methods to allow for the women's voices and stories to be heard. The constraints of a Masters thesis set the parameters of the research. Only women were chosen as participants and only a

single interview was conducted with each woman using a semi-structured interview guide. The number of interviews scheduled, 14, was established to allow for saturation of the data.

The Participants

The research was conducted in the Goan community in the GTA over a two week period in the winter of 2009. I spoke at a conference on Goan Identity and Networking in Toronto in July, 2008, on my planned research study, and used the contacts made at the conference to recruit participants. I sent out an email describing the study and the criteria for, and requirements of, possible participants to my contacts (See Call for Participants Appendix A). I contacted one major Goan organization in Toronto, of which I am a member, to request use of their electronic newsletter to recruit participants. However, I had recruited all the participants I required by the time the organization responded.

I received numerous replies to my Call for Participants, and vetted possible participants through a telephone call, using a screening form to confirm they met the criteria of being first generation Goan women, 18 years of age or older, having lived in Canada for at least five years (See Screening Form Appendix B). Having been involved in the often tedious task of recruiting for other research projects, I was surprised when I reached my participant quota within two weeks of conducting a Call for Participants.

When contacting possible participants, I made the request for additional participants and received several responses through this snowball method. I recruited the first 14 women that met the criteria outlined. I made all interview arrangements from Halifax allowing for no more than two interviews per day, with most days having just one interview. Due to a scheduling conflict, there were only 13 interviews conducted.

The Interviews

When booking the interviews I requested they be conducted in a private place due to issues of confidentiality, and most participants were interviewed in their own homes. The two interviews conducted in public places were done with regard to privacy and confidentiality. The interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. The interview numbers in Chapters 4 and 5 have been changed from the actual number to further maintain the confidentiality of participants.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide (See Appendix C). The interviews were very informal and started with the participant signing the Consent Form (See Appendix D). The majority of interviews were approximately 60 minutes in length with some running over 90 minutes. In asking the interview questions, I would share my

personal reasons for conducting this research, and our conversations were often filled with much laughter and reminiscing about similar experiences.

Analysis of Interviews

Once the interviews were transcribed, I listened to them again while reading the transcript to ensure the different terminology and accents did not deter the transcriber. Using my research questions as a guide, I read and re-read through each transcript pulling out data that spoke to the questions. Using this pulled data, I created several documents based on headings such as Identity, Racism, Food, Gender and so forth. In writing from the data I used these documents, as well as field notes written after each interview, to ensure that I could contextualize these women's voices. As with any research project, there is more data than I could possibly use in this thesis.

Interview Experiences

In conducting this research, I expected that participants would ask me questions about my background and life experiences. I was surprised when this did not occur. There was only one participant who asked me whether I had any children, otherwise there were no personal questions directed towards me. As a lesbian, I was fully prepared in answering the question about my marital status, should it have arisen. There were occasions when some participants were

discussing their relationship to the Catholic Church and their disapproval on its stand on homosexual rights. I felt awkward during these discussions, not knowing whether to disclose my sexuality or allow the participant to continue. I never did reveal my sexuality, for I was never asked about my marital status and did not feel it necessary to disclose it unasked. I am not a practicing Catholic and was fully prepared to mention that aspect of myself, however, that did not come up either, except with one participant. This lack of questioning from the participants could be related to the power that a researcher is perceived to hold over the researched, although I considered myself an insider in their community (Lee 2000).

The majority of interviews, especially the ones conducted in individual's homes, ended with sharing food and drink with participants. On two occasions, I shared a meal with participants, neither of which was planned. The reception I received during these interviews was so different from other research interviews I have conducted (also on food and with Caucasian participants), that I can only attribute it to cultural differences. Helen Ralston (2001), who conducted much research on South Asian women, had a similar experience (226). It speaks to the centrality of food customs in Goan hospitality and to South Asian hospitality more generally. Perhaps also it was a way of sharing food that participants, knowing my research topic, assumed (rightfully so) that I would appreciate and

enjoy. There were also two participants who spontaneously hugged me, taking me by surprise, at the start and end of our interviews respectively. Despite interviewing over 70 participants previously for other research projects, this was the first time I was met with such warmth and enthusiasm.

Of the Goan women approached for the research, there was only one woman in over 20 responses that declined an interview as she felt she would not be a good candidate to speak on the subject. However, she was very active in recruiting participants. The women recruited were very enthusiastic about participating and it was with regret I turned away five women, having reached a total of 14, which my supervisor and I had agreed would likely be sufficient to saturate the major themes.

The enthusiasm with which participants volunteered for the research study was probably based on a few different factors. By presenting my proposed research at the Goan conference the previous summer, I had proven my credibility with the community. There were a few men who I had met at the conference who assisted in recruitment, despite being unable to participate. I was not an anonymous researcher to those who met me at the conference.

Another possible factor was the opportunity for these women to speak of their experiences. As the only research conducted to date on Goans in Canada, participants were eager to share their lived experiences as Goans. As an insider

in the community, I feel the interviews were more relaxed and informal than if an outsider to the community had conducted the interviews. I could understand the nuances of what was said and share my own experiences that resonated with theirs (Kallivayalil 2000).

There were some participants who indicated an interest in keeping in touch and I found that an awkward position to be in. Can a researcher cross the boundary and befriend a participant after the study? Although I have not had any contact with any of the participants to date (I did send each one a hand written thank you note), I wonder if that will be the case in the near future. Family obligations take me to Toronto on a regular basis and it would be feasible to meet with the women who requested future contact. There were also a few women who requested a copy of my thesis, and I will comply with their request.

The next two chapters present the results of my interviews with these women. Chapter 4 focuses on issues of identity in a diaspora for these Goan women, while Chapter 5 addresses the central themes of the thesis, exploring food, gender and identity.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion: Identity and Values

The next two chapters of the thesis focus on presenting and discussing the findings of the research. This chapter examines the themes of identity and its intersection with racism, postcolonialism and cultural values for the participants. In the discussion, I will analyze how these issues have had an often profound effect on what it means to be a Goan woman in Canada today. In the next chapter, Chapter 5, the themes of gender and food and their meanings for Goan women are discussed. Now, I turn my attention to the issue of identity for Goan women in the GTA.

Identity – where do I belong?

Movement and interaction in an increasingly globalized world may result in hyphenated and multiple identities. In Canadian society with its embrace of multiculturalism, this is often a reality for its citizens from far-flung places. The technological changes of the last decade have resulted in connections with these far-flung places being fostered and maintained (Appardurai 1996), in ways that in previous generations were impossible – leaving home meant just that. Now, immigrants can and do maintain ties that allow them to straddle two cultures.

This straddling does not always result in confusion as to how immigrants identify themselves in terms of their ethnicity. The straddling provides an

opportunity to keep in touch with the sending and receiving states. The term transnational describes just such an individual – one who keeps ties to two nation-states (Glick- Schiller 1999). In such instances, the straddling of cultures can result in a better knowing of self. Although Goans do not have a contemporary nation state with which to identify, they do straddle cultures and maintain links to an imagined home. This knowing of self was very evident among the participants in this research, an assuredness of knowing ‘who I am’ and ‘where I come from.’ Although many of the participants were sometimes generations removed from Goa (some having come from India, Pakistan, and other countries), the connection appeared as strong as if they had been born and bred there. This strength in connection relates to what James Clifford (2000) calls a ‘productive game of identities’ in a globalized world (100). Connection is encouraged.

One participant although not born in Goa, had this to say: *“I definitely think of myself as a Goan. There’s no two ways about it. Because my roots are Goan...I am Canadian, [but] I know my roots are in Goa”* [#8]. Other participants also reflected this certainty about identity: *“[I’m] Goan because of the foods we eat...the traditions we celebrate, our religion”* [#12], while another said: *“Our identity has always been Goan... that is how we were brought up”* [#10].

For some participants there was an additional aspect to their identity, recognition of where they were born in addition to being Goan: “...*I would say Goan ethnically and then born in Pakistan...*” [#13] and “*I mean I am born Pakistani, yes, I can’t deny that...now I’m Canadian...but my ancestry and my lifestyle or my ways are Goan*” [#11]. What the participants are saying is that they are ultimately Goan, regardless of their birthplace or citizenship. For these participants, being Goan superseded in importance the more accepted forms of identification such as birthplace and citizenship.

When discussing identity with those from outside the community, the ability to identify one’s self in a manner which was easily understood, was often a challenge. As one participant recalled, very few people know where Goa is:

Generally if people ask me where are you from, I say I am from the Indian subcontinent or I am South Asian. It depends on the context. I don’t see too much point in saying I am Goan unless I am with other Indians because people don’t know where Goa is. Goa is quite a small place, and it’s not really part of their consciousness. [#10]

Being from Goa, although of importance to Goans, may have very little significance to others, who often may not be aware of where Goa is. India however, is more of a known entity and easier to place within a world context.

The lack of consciousness about Goa had also resulted in some uncalled for humour about the place. A few participants recalled jokes about the name

Goa in this manner: *““Where are you ‘goan’? Where are you ‘goan’?” People joke over and over and over again”* [#12]. For some, this results in identity monikers such as South Asian or Indian to, at the very least, provide a context for their ancestral ties and to avoid jokes such as the one above:

Because not everybody knows what Goa is. And I try to explain that. But to most people if you say South [Asian] or East Indian then they know you are not a West Indian or they know which part of the world you come from. [#3]

The challenge of defining their identity was voiced by some participants, an inability to know ‘exactly’ what they were. For many, their journey to Canada included living in several different countries, each with its own influence on their identity. This inability to know their ‘true’ identity is what Clifford (1994) refers to as the ‘multiple attachments’ and ‘accommodation’ of identity for diasporic groups (307). Being Goan was often, as one woman put it, ‘inherited’ from previous generations. This inheritance came with its own questioning of what a Goan is: *“To say that you are Portuguese, you are not. To say that you are English, you are not. ... And I had no idea what a Goan... what does it mean? I eat sorpotel and I go to church”* [#6]. This questioning of who and what a Goan is, is something that I can identify very strongly with. I often felt I was raised ‘white’ in a brown skin, to make sure that I could be viewed as different from ‘them’— other Pakistanis or Indians. For those who were colonized, and who feel the effects of two separate

colonizations, the challenge to unravel one's identity is often not easy. This participant continued on to say:

...it[her identity] was just that continuity which I needed at that time in my life. And maybe that is another reason I sort of started gravitating back towards the Goans. It was like where else are you going to go?... let me finally figure out who the hell I am. I've been fighting it for so long that I was lost...I've got different influences from different countries but who am I? I am a Goan. What the heck does that mean? [#6]

For this participant, the influence of countries and colonizers although strong was not as strong as her ancestral ties to Goa. The call of an ancestral land or people was stronger, although not always clear in what exactly being Goan meant.

What being Goan means to these participants connects to the notion of being part of a group, which can give one a sense of belonging, a sense that one is not alone; there are others out there who share the same ancestry, roots (Yuval-Davis et al. 2006). One participant voiced it in just this manner:

Well, it sort of makes me feel like I belong to a group. Because I can't say I belong to Canada although I've spent a lot of time here...I think the belonging maybe. Because I am not sure where I belong. And maybe a lot of people think like me... I don't know, I just feel like where do I belong? [#7]

Belonging is often why we define ourselves in a particular way and why it matters. As individual as we want to be, we may still want to belong, to have a

place and people we can identify with. And for those on the racial margins, as Goans are in Canada, belonging can take on even more importance.

Identity can also be discussed in terms of what one is not, and these participants are no different. A few, such as the participant above, voiced their feelings of not belonging to Canada. As one woman said, coming to Canada as a young adult she does not have “...*the frame of reference that Canadians have...I don't have that [Canadian] background*” [#5], which is why she identifies as Goan. For some participants the connection to Pakistan as a place of birth was problematic, for it resulted in the automatic assumption that they were Muslim. For Goans, whose Catholicism is often a vital part of their identity, this mislabelling was prevented by choosing to self-identify differently: “*I say I am from the Indian subcontinent or I am South Asian. I don't usually identify myself as a Pakistani because Pakistanis are generally Muslim and I am not from a Muslim background*” [#10]. One woman, hesitant about revealing her Pakistani birthplace had this to say: “*I feel really sad about, a little bit guilty ... I do not want to be identified as a Pakistani because that means they immediately think Muslim*” [#5]. This conscious choice to avoid misidentification because of another's ignorance, speaks to the shaping of one's identity by social others and to the relationality of identity as discussed earlier (Young 2000).

As problematic as this denial may be for some participants, the denial that is far more complex is the question of whether Goans are Indians. This area of tension clearly revealed itself in the data, dividing participants' responses and in some cases even families. Although Goa has not always been part of India, it has been an Indian state for over a generation. And yet, there is this strong feeling that Goans are *not* Indians.

Indian or not Indian...where do Goans fit?

The topic of whether Goans are Indian or not, was not part of any interview question, yet was raised repeatedly in the discussion on identity. For those outside the Goan community, this is a difficult concept to grasp. Goa is part of the landmass of India. It has always been part of the Indian subcontinent; it is the government that changed. And, that is where the tension lies. Goans embrace their centuries of Portuguese colonization as it made them 'different' from other Indians and despite being part of India for over 40 years that feeling of difference still persists to this day.

One participant spoke of her interpretation of this difference and how it manifests itself in the Goan community:

...personally I think it is a more complex relationship between Goans and 'Indian'... I find that a lot of Goans don't want to be identified as Indian... I think it's a bit of snobbery... [they] think they are better than Indians, and they want that distinction to be made. Like, "Please don't call me that." And like Italians, "No, I'm not from Calabria. No, I'm from

the north.” Don’t associate me with that...I would say Goans identify themselves through their food, and to the fact that they are not Indian. [#1]

This ‘snobbery’ the participant speaks of is something I can identify with, although I was raised in Pakistan. It was inherent in my upbringing that we were *not* Pakistani, that we were different because of our Goanness. Our Goanness was manifested through the English language we spoke, our Western dress and our Catholic religion. These markers not only made us different, they made us *better*. It is this same difference with a twist that creates the tension for Goans as to whether they are Indian or not.

The belief that Goans are not Indian was reiterated by several participants with different explanations for why this was so. One woman stressed Goans’ common Portuguese heritage:

You are not strictly Indian in that you don’t... The dress is different... the language is different. But I like the Catholic, Western, European ... Portuguese influence. I think it is a nice balance. It is something unique. We don’t identify with India, at least not having been in India ...I don’t identify with Portugal. I identify with Goa. [#5]

This participant focused on the differences between Goans and Indians and stressed the colonial influence in that difference as a positive aspect of her identity. Another focused on her childhood and the difference between Goans and Indians:

Growing up, there were always Goans and Indians... It's you are Goan or you are Indian. If you were a Hindu, you were Indian. You were not Goan... And in Africa... the Indians had... their own friends. And even though we went to the same class... I don't remember having birthday parties with the Indian children in my class ...we were neighbours and we went to school together and things like that... But I don't ever remember having Indian friends. [#6]

This 'snobbery' spoken of earlier, in differentiating between Goans and Indians, was in evidence even at a young age, accepted as part of life, and a feeling that is still in existence within the Goan community in Canada today. This 'Othering,' establishing a hierarchical sense of Us and Them, is a direct legacy of colonization that will be discussed later in this chapter.

The lack of connection with India was not true for all the participants. As mentioned earlier, there were some women who called themselves Indian to identify which part of the world they came from for those who may not know where Goa is located. For others, it was more a recognition that as they 'look Indian' they might as well identify with it. One woman had this to say:

*My face is not a Portuguese face ... [I have] a very English name, and a Portuguese last name. And nobody who met me ever thought I was white. So what am I doing with a white name? And my face proclaimed my race and my identity. So you might as well embrace **that** [her emphasis] culture. So that is where the Indian-ness came out very strongly. [#10]*

The negotiation between self-identity and imposed identity is apparent here.

What this participant has to say is also a direct result of colonization. Our names

were a legacy of our colonizers and not a reflection of where we were born or raised. The 'Othering' was a marker given at birth and stressed throughout our lives – we were different.

The 'Indian-ness' referred to above, was understood by those participants who had more than a passing knowledge and understanding of Goan history, prior to Portuguese colonization, when it was a Muslim state in the Indian subcontinent. As one woman said: *"... I am more comfortable with my identity. And I will sit and argue with any one of them if they tell me they are not Indian" [#6].*

Another participant who said, *"...we were Indians before we were converted..."* also acknowledged her children, born and raised in Canada, would *"say they are Canadians"*

... because this is the only place they've known ... But if you dig any deeper, they would say they are Goans. They will not say they are Indians at this point because they have no connection to being Indian as such. [#3]

Identifying as Goan and not Indian crosses generations, the ongoing legacy of colonization, still in evidence in the Goan diaspora in Canada.

The connection to a birthplace rings true for this woman's children, but it is not necessarily true for other participants who choose their Goan ancestry as their identity and not their birthplace. One participant from Africa spoke of her relationship to her birthplace:

*When I want to not explain it [her Goan identity] to anyone... I just say I'm Indian background. My parents are Indian. I guess I'm Indian. I've **never** [her emphasis] said I am African. I was born in Africa. I've never said I'm African. [#7]*

This concept of defining oneself by what one is not speaks to the relational aspect of identity (Young 2000). We draw on who we are by aligning with those like us, but also by clearly stating who we are *not*. This was very noticeable when one participant said she does identify as Indian but quickly adds she is Catholic.

When asked why, this is what she said:

...that is sort of my way of being on the defensive. Because I want people to know I am Catholic... I need to educate them that there are populations of Indians who aren't Punjabi or Gujarati or whatever. It's I'm Catholic and this is where I am coming from. So there is sort of that need to get that in there, to make sure that they know. [#1]

And just what is that they need to know? Identity is often, for a racially marginalized group, a contentious and dynamic concept. The identities one can and does choose, in addition to those one is assigned, speaks volumes about what one is and is not and both sides have significance. However, for colonized populations, what they are not is not as clearly chosen but more handed down as part of a generational legacy (Hall 1990). The Goan women I spoke with have little or no lived experience of the Portuguese colonization of Goa, yet are still using the precepts of that time to identify themselves.

Identifying as Goan is an integral part of who and what these women are, on both an individual and community level. And it is this very identity that

fosters the establishment of organizations and a circle of people that cultivates this Goanness. These structures support the idea of belonging and provide an environment where being Goan is understood, accepted, reinforced, and celebrated. This is what Hall (1990) refers to as 'shared cultural codes' that provide a framework for identity (223).

When do you feel most Goan?

This question often took participants by surprise as it was clearly not something they had ever thought about. As with any routine in our lives, we do not question what we do and may not even be able to fully explain how the routine was established. Such was the case for these Goan women. Many of them revelled in activities and events that celebrated and reinforced their Goan identity, but actually talking about it was another matter.

Several women spoke of organizations and social clubs in the GTA that catered to Goans, often based on where they migrated from or which ancestral village they identified with. There were also organizations catering specifically to Goan seniors. The presence and diversity of these organizations speaks to the strength of the Goan community in the area.

One participant clearly articulated what she obtained by participating in a Goan social club:

The [name of club] is more a comfort, like a blanket. It has always been like a blanket. You can go and express your memories of how you were growing up in [name] and somebody would relate to that... But the flip side of all that too is ... you can also talk about the changes in Canadian society from your own perspective. Your identity is changing along with the members of the same community. And that is a comfort. Whereas when you go out of that community and you are explaining identity to another group, they don't know what your baseline data was. And they don't know what you mean by some things have changed. But these members do. So that helps with your identity. [#13]

For this woman, the familiarity of being with others like herself, and who like her are undergoing change, the comfort she draws from this contact, reinforces who she is and gives meaning to both her past and present.

The comfort of being with like-minded people was an overarching reason for socializing in Goan organizations. One woman had this to say:

I think what they [Goan social clubs] do is they allow me to express it [her Goan identity] in a comfortable, familiar environment. So when I am with people who aren't Goan, I feel like I am always explaining myself or, sort of informing them... I mean we always have a joke with our friends. I'll say, "Oh, you know, this one called,"... And they get it, and they laugh, and you don't have to explain it... of course when you are with people who aren't Goan, you always have that extra sort of situation where you may have to explain terminology that you use. [#1]

This participant speaks to the need to belong, where explanations are not required and understanding is obtained often through minimal interactions. These are the intangibles of belonging, the lack of extra work just to fit in smoothly.

This comfort level that was experienced by being with other Goans in social organizations was reflected in personal lives as well, as many of these women had mostly Goan friends: *"I've got more Goan friends than I do Canadian"* [#6], *"My friends are basically Goans"* [#4], and *"Most of our friends are Goan"* [#1]. This comfort was naturally part of family gatherings, as most extended family members identified as Goan too. *"Family occasions"* [#11], was how one participant described what reinforced her Goan identity. The requirement of this level of comfort by being with other Goans, also translated into two very different situational experiences, as described by participants. One participant spoke of the comfort of marrying within the Goan community:

I knew I would prefer to marry someone Goan but that didn't necessarily preclude anyone else ... Because it goes back to that whole comfort thing. And also sort of a comfort within the whole family. Like my parents would feel more comfortable...it would be harder if I married someone that wasn't Goan ... So that was always there in the back of my mind. But not to the exclusion of anyone. I dated people who weren't Goan. [#1]

The comfort of associating with others who identified as Goan was important; not only on an individual basis, but also on a community level. Taking into consideration collective needs, in addition to individual needs, speaks to the necessity to preserve and promote one's identity. The comfort of being with one's own was also discussed within the realm of conducting business transactions: *"...if I know of a Goan doing something, a service I can use, I would rather go to them. So if it was a choice between [non-Goan/Goan] I would go for the Goan"* [#5].

This feeling of comfort is very obvious when immigrants first arrive in their receiving countries; they often seek people like themselves. As one woman said about having Goan friends and socializing in Goan organizations: “...*that was a conscious choice because when we first came out, you looked for people of your own ethnicity*” [#3]. What was evident from the data is this need to be with people from your own ethnicity even many years after migration. The average length of time in Canada for the participants was 31 years, not exactly newcomers. And yet, the strong desire to be with their own was often paramount in their socializing (Young 2000).

I see this reflected in my own family. We have been in Canada for 39 years and although my parents have friends from different ethnic backgrounds, it is their ‘friends from home,’ whom they socialize with and call on when needed, especially as their world shrinks with aging. The requirement of not having to ‘explain it’ is very important and creates an atmosphere of trust and acceptance that does not change over time; in fact, this requirement may even strengthen.

Although the majority of women voiced their support for, and participation in, Goan-centric circles to reinforce their Goan identity, there were some who did not require such activity for themselves. This did not preclude them from taking part, but it was not central to who they were as Goans. As one woman said, when asked when she felt most Goan: “*All the time*” [#3]. Another

said she felt most Goan because of her “... *living style. ... your entire living is Goan*” [#2]. Another responded that: “...*being Goan doesn't cross my mind... I am happy being that*” [#8]. One woman said that her ‘character’ was set and did not require reinforcement of any kind.

For all these women, whether they sought out other Goans to reinforce their identity, or not, being Goan was still a key part of who they were. As the first-generation women interviewed had an average residency in Canada of at least a generation, 30 years, the question of whether time played a role in their identity was a place for discussion. Knowing who we are is not always clear or apparent in our lives – identity is dynamic and relational. Factors such as who we associate with and where we live may influence how we identify ourselves.

Has your identity changed over time?

The majority of these participants immigrated to Canada at an early age, travelling with parents and siblings. The connection to being Goan may have been a source of comfort for some and possibly discomfort for others in their youth, especially in a white society such as Canada. The need to fit in with your peer group is paramount, especially at an early age. On a personal note, having come to Canada at the age of 14, not until I was in my 40s did issues regarding my ethnic identity begin to resonate with me.

For some participants, discovering the road to a Goan identity was similar. One woman, when asked about her Goan identity said:

I think it has evolved quite a bit in the past couple of years... when I was younger, identifying with a certain culture set me apart from all my friends and colleagues growing up ... When you are young, you don't really want to stand out because you are trying to fit in. You are trying to find your place. And once you've sort of established a personality and a place that is when you start to explore who you are. And slowly become proud of it. And I think that also happens because the people around you become aware of different cultures and more accepting of them. And you become proud of things because other people deem them to be good. I would say in the different stages of my life, as I grew older, I became more and more proud of who I was and where I came from. [#12]

For this participant, belonging has always been important; what changes for her with age is where she seeks that sense of belonging. Her Goan identity became the conduit that provided that sense of belonging.

For other participants it was a realization of what they always had:

Eventually as you age, as you grow older and... that part of me [her Goan identity] has always been there. I think it was a matter of me realizing its value...It's always there so you take it for granted and you go on find your own life ...I've always said I was a Goan, I just never practiced what I preached... it is more comfortable. And I don't feel associating with Indians or Goans makes me stand out. [#6]

When this participant described her life, there were two distinct and separate parts to it; Goan and non-Goan. In the interview, she spoke of never mixing the two groups, until recently. The passage of time provided her with an opportunity to appreciate her roots and 'practice what she

preached' by mixing her two sets of friends, 'being' Goan in settings that are not exclusively Goan.

The necessity to foreground their Goan identity as they aged, as described by the participants above, appeared to be a natural progression. Participants may have 'inherited' an identity but the choice to foreground it was theirs and, it is this choice that changes with life stage. Identity is one aspect of self that can and, with these participants, does change.

Participants, whose identity was more firmly anchored, despite age, were articulate about whether time played any factor in how they identified themselves. Being Goan was a vital part who they were and nothing was going to change that. This is what a few participants had to say about the immutability of their identity: *"You can't lose it [your identity]. Once you have been brought up, how are you going to lose it?"* [#11] and *"...I would think I am just as staunch a Goan as I was when I first came. Because nothing has changed except the fact that I have grown and matured ...but my beliefs and ideals are still Goan"* [#3]. Another participant spoke to 'becoming Canadian' but still being Goan: *"So for us to ... be Canadian and not be Goan... there is just no room for that"* [#2]. The last quote refers to the changes one undergoes; however, the core – being Goan – stays the same. That there is a fixed aspect of one's identity was also voiced by another participant. Time was of no consequence to this woman's identity: *"Change is*

good. Change is not always bad. Because change doesn't make you forget who you are but it lets you become aware of another dimension...I will die a Goan" [#3]. The 'other dimension' could refer to becoming Canadian, but being Goan does not change because of it.

This sense of permanence to one's identity is what some authors describe as the core aspect of identity — a part that does not shift, despite change in other areas of one's life (Ahmed 2005). This anchoring of self, in what can be a sea of change for immigrants, is not how identity is viewed by all authors. Some authors speak to the dynamic nature of identity, the fluidity of that which we choose (Appardurai 1996). Yet, there are aspects of identity about which one has no choice (Jenkins 1996). As visible minorities in a white dominant society, participants spoke openly about racism, or the lack of it, in their lives.

Racism — so where are you from...really?

In a white dominant society, such as Canada, racially marginalized persons are given the bureaucratic moniker of visible minorities. Being a visible minority in the GTA, which is a very multicultural area (Statistics Canada 2006), may not be as much of an issue compared to predominantly white Nova Scotia. However, the notion that racism does not exist in the GTA is akin to claiming that the power structures of this country are no longer white-dominated.

The majority of the women when asked directly about racism in their lives said they had not felt any discrimination: *"I can honestly say [being a visible minority] hasn't [affected me]"* [#6], and *"I've never faced any discrimination"* [#2]. There may be many different factors playing out here, the most obvious being that these women truly did not suffer discrimination of any kind. However, another participant had this to say about racism and visible minorities: *"One of the things I found really interesting about it, not only Goans but with Indians and visible minorities in general, they don't want to see the racism. They don't want to acknowledge it"* [#5].

Racism can be so subtle and insidious that when asked about their lives, participants are more likely to think of very blatant acts of racism such as being called 'Paki.' Canadian society has changed during the time these women have been living in Canada, and with the presence of many different cultures, especially in the GTA, visible minorities are now almost in equal number to whites (Statistics Canada 2006). Some of these participants acknowledged the change over time by remarking that they now live in heavily populated Asian areas, where whites are in the minority.

Some participants commented on the fact it is their ability, and not their skin colour, that determines unfair practices directed toward them, a perception

possibly fueled by the growth of a visible minority population. One participant had this to say about her skin colour:

I've never looked at my colour as a problem... if I've ever been unfairly treated at a workplace or at school it would be more for my ability, not because of my colour.... I've never seen myself as brown or different. [#9]

This woman strongly feels 'unfair' treatment is related to her ability and not her skin colour. As she does not see her skin colour as a barrier, the assumption is made that others do not as well. Not being seen as a visible minority is different from not seeing oneself as one. To deny the colour of one's skin is to deny the experiences, good or bad, that go along with it. This participant spoke of the latter experience and when speaking further appears to contradict herself in what she said: *"I don't even think of myself as a minority ... When I look at somebody else, I don't think of them being of a different colour. It doesn't occur to me."* However, when talking about being Canadian this is what she says: *"...Canadian. Yes, Canadian **citizenship** [her emphasis]" [#7]*. By making a distinction between being Canadian and having Canadian citizenship, there appears to be a subtle and unspoken acknowledgement that yes, difference does matter — this difference could be related to the colour of one's skin or aspects of one's culture. Canadians are largely viewed as being 'white' and, therefore, visible minorities are perceived to be less than 'true' Canadians.

A visible minority may never be fully accepted as Canadian, despite Canadian citizenship; a participant who had just such an experience spoke of it in this way:

... here is a [person] who will tell you what you are, and you have to accept it because that is what you look like to them...you have to identify with... how people perceive you to be...if today for instance, I had to ask a white person on the street, "Where are you from" and that person said, "From Canada," I would accept it. Because I think the perception is that Canada is white. [#4]

The assumption that Canadians are white resonates with those who are not and some participants spoke of the challenge of raising youth in such a society. The difficulty with changing this perception was felt by some of the women; one woman had this to say about the youth in her life rejecting their racialized identities: *"...they actually don't even say that they are coloured, they are white. They don't even sit in the sun" [#7]*. Being white has privileges that youth recognize and try to emulate, hence the refusal to tan. For one woman, the recognition that avoidance of identity associated with skin colour was playing out for a young man in her life, prompted this response: *"I think it is sad for him because you are not identifying with something that you will eventually be identified with because of the colour of your skin" [#5]*.

From what the women say, it appears that these youth recognize innately that being white has privileges that are not accorded people of colour, an issue that all visible minorities struggle with. One participant described how her

children, who identify as South Asian, recognize the power dynamics in their school:

... their identity is South Asian. And nobody at that age bothers to ask them if they are Pakistani, Indians or this or that. They are just South Asians and that is it. They aren't values placed yet on them that they are aware of. But they do come and tell us about who is privileged and who is not already. They already know who is privileged but they haven't started understanding why yet ... In their school, believe it or not, they have 90% visible minority ... And they perceive that the white Canadian children in their school have more privileges... their teachers are very representative of Toronto. But they are talking about a power structure. They are not talking about representation ... the kids have understood it is a power issue, not a colour issue. Whereas when we were growing up, it was always a colour issue. [#13]

This participant's children have an understanding of power that is tied to skin colour, although they may be unable to fully articulate the connection, they are aware it exists.

It is not only the youth in this community that recognize the importance of skin colour and the automatic privilege associated with whiteness. The Goan community is familiar with the phrase 'coconut – brown on the outside and white on the inside' to identify those Goans who have become 'more Canadian than the Canadians.' Just how this resonates in the community was voiced by one participant: *"... for me it has never been an issue that I want to become a white person... because I already felt that what I had was good enough."* However, this same participant also acknowledges that the *shade* of skin colour makes a difference. *"It's not like if you are fair, you can wake up and do nothing and go out there" [#2].*

What this participant is implying is that the darker the skin the harder a person has to try to get ahead. Skin colour becomes an issue within a visible minority community, when systemic white-skinned privilege advantages some and disadvantages others based on proximity to whiteness.

There are perceived benefits to being brown, as all things Indian take a leap onto the world stage and consciousness. One woman spoke of the benefits she enjoys at work in being South Asian and speaking English grammatically well without an accent:

It's all because I am South Asian, I am a woman, and I am a visible minority...I speak like a Canadian. My English is perfect in that I have no accent or it's not difficult to understand what I am saying. But it's really funny how much opportunity can be given... It's just a matter of seizing it and taking it and running with it... [#12]

The key to what this participant is saying is about her non-accented English; it is her ability to 'speak like a Canadian' that is of importance — Indian looking, but Canadian sounding. Earlier when participants implied that being Canadian meant being white, here, speaking like a Canadian refers to English without an accent — accented English speakers, especially from Africa and Asia need not apply. The ability of this participant to capitalize on this opportunity and yet realize how it manifests itself was not lost on her: "... I don't know if it's actually a hindrance but I think I have been pegged ...because I am a visible minority... and you become the ethnic person"[#12]. The 'ethnic' person becomes the poster child for

multiculturalism in Canada: brown but no accent; this is what being Canadian means – almost.

The issue of ‘race’ is not one to disappear from a Canadian context, despite a sea change in the ethnic diversity of Canadian society. What appears to be changing are perceptions of how one sees ‘race.’ One woman commented on what her children mean when they say: *““We don’t see race,” maybe they are in fact creating a new society. They are. Their parents and grandparents have been left behind in the old society”* [#10]. The majority of the women lived in very multicultural areas, and therefore, the issue of race for their children was not as critical as it had been for their parents. One participant described her introduction to a very white Toronto in the 1960s in this way: *“We did confuse people because people saw black people before but they’ve never really seen brown people. So it’s just white and black”* [#9]. Now in the GTA, the opportunity to see ‘white’ is far more limited than ever before. However, the manner in which racism is manifested changes, but it does not disappear. This perception of a different Canada was also voiced by this woman:

When you run up against this racism, it’s just plain ignorance not having that experience...that was a very different Canada that I lived in. And my generation, people I mix around with, and my kids ...we tend to wear our race like armour. And that is what you see coming forward. And I don’t like that. That is what puts the barriers up on their side of the border. These problems should ease with the next generation...The next generation of Goans, hyphenated Goans are going to be different. [#5]

The next generation will grow up in a more multicultural Canada, possibly with a greater acceptance of difference, in a very different world from their parents who were often defined by the colour of their skin. However, how difference will play itself out in the next generation remains to be seen especially with the significant move away from support of multiculturalism by present power structures.

This challenge of seeing racism even in its most subtle and insidious forms is, for Paul Gilroy, a current challenge for society. Gilroy (2002) discusses what he calls the 'coat of paint' approach to racism that is intended to forever dispel racism, but is unable to do so. Gilroy (2002) argues, 'race' cannot be seen in isolation, it operates in conjunction with other structures in our society that foster inequality such as economic and social issues and that by applying a 'coat of paint' to race does not change the other inequities that are present (253). In Canada, multiculturalism and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the 'coats of paint,' were meant to dispel any inequalities between individuals or groups based on race, sex, class and age. However, the structures of power that create these inequalities are still in place. Lasting change will not occur unless the power structures in which individuals and groups operate change on a fundamental level.

Perhaps the way that visible minorities are viewed will change and colour will be less of an issue. However, as one participant sees it, the colour barrier may be substituted with a culture barrier:

... I first of all made a lot of overtures to various people. I invited them to my home... I did not find a lot of return invitations. And again, we come from a culture where you've got to socialize with people. So you invite them to your home, they invite you to theirs. There is a sharing of who you are with each other. You don't find that here. I find that people are willing to have you on the outside of their lives but not in the inside.

I: And do you think that is a colour barrier?

R: It's a culture barrier. [#5]

With this quote the participant is implying that racism is not a factor in the inability of her neighbours to socialize with her, rather there are strong cultural differences at play. The difference in the manner in which people socialize may very well be cultural; however, there may be a racial aspect to it that cannot be ignored.

Racism is a volatile discussion topic, even within a community that is marginalized because of its skin colour. Discrimination is often perceived to be the responsibility of those who receive it, and not the responsibility of the perpetrators. One participant said just that: *"...I know there's discrimination in Canada but let the people who are discriminated against sometimes take responsibility for that" [#8]*. What exactly are we taking responsibility for? The colour of our skin or the accent of our English? What it comes down to is that there is a far more subtle racism that is prevalent in Canada today that continually raises the bar for

who can and cannot belong. People may be granted rights, but never granted the privilege of feeling that they fully belong. And if discrimination based on colour or creed is no longer legally tolerated, that opens up the possibility for discrimination against the accented English, the dress, the family structure and other criteria that are far more subjective and harder to challenge.

There was only one participant who spoke of skin colour within the community, although the issue may well be far more widespread. This woman spoke about her children as being 'dark' and 'light' and the 'uphill task' the dark child has in Canada. Growing up in Pakistan, I was used to hearing my grandmother asking about the 'fairness' of a new born child. Only as an adult in a white society, do I understand the question and its implications. The implication is that white is better, for it is the whites who have the power. This power is not numerical, it is about power that manifests itself through policy and ideology and is insidious in its reach. Colonizers understood this power and flaunted it to instill a hierarchy within those who were colonized. For Goans, the power of the Portuguese colonizers was insidious and served to create divisions within Goa that exist to this day. It is not by chance that Goans do not consider themselves Indians; it is the result of colonization.

Colonization – the legacy

Discussion about the legacy of colonizers varied amongst participants. For those from India and Pakistan, the influence of the Portuguese and British colonizers was a reality. For those from Africa, it was more the influence of the British, for they were the colonizers in the East African countries that participants hailed from.

Colonization for Goans is a difficult topic to discuss, for without colonization this group of South Asians, (Catholic with Portuguese last names and a very different diet from other Indians) would not exist, and the very foundation of their identity would be dismantled. It may be for this reason many of the participants did not ponder colonization by the Portuguese – they accepted it as part of who they were: *“... from reading history and from hearing about it, I know it was a problem for my forefathers. But in my lifetime, I did not feel that”* [#3]. The connection with Catholicism was identified as one positive outcome of Portuguese colonization:

...I think that is where our connection with the Portuguese is. The Portuguese converted the Hindu people living there. And that is how our culture formed, from the Catholic missionary. And as we go to Old Goa, like the stories there and the churches and the monuments ... it's all there. [#9]

By describing the architectural legacy of the Portuguese, especially through their churches, as to what makes Goa distinct, the colonization of Goa by the Portuguese is accepted and even glorified.

This connection to the Portuguese and the cost Goans paid for it is not unpacked further; one woman suggested this reason why: *"... I respect being a Catholic even though knowing what we were before, our forefathers were Hindus and we were converted... I don't think too much about it. I respect my religion and I would never change it" [#11]*. We are who we are and we accept and move on.

It appears that participants viewed colonization, and colonizers, on a continuum. The Portuguese were at one end and the British on another: *"... I think we were better off than most [regarding Portuguese colonization] when you think about it. We got the houses, we got the culture..." [#6]*. For this participant who had lived and travelled in many different countries that had also been colonized, the colonization of Goa by the Portuguese was relatively tame with few, if any, enduring horrors. And Goans were left with the lasting legacy of their colonizers, a legacy that is celebrated to this day– that of being a Catholic. One participant even thought it was a 'great thing' that the Portuguese colonized Goa, until she read the history: *"And it [Portuguese colonization] is so much a part of us and who we are, and our value system... I don't think you can really separate it. It is really sad that it happened that way" [#5]*. The reality of colonization was not lost on most of the

women interviewed; however, there was a definite ambivalence in analyzing its impact on their current identity. The underlying feeling was an acceptance of the past, and the requirement to move forward. Ambivalence is a key concept in postcolonial theory (Gandhi 1998) and one that was reflected in many of the interviews.

In colonizing the East African territory in the area of what are now the countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, the British employed Goans, which resulted in large Goan communities in this part of Africa. The Goan community was heavily influenced by the British, as previous generations had worked directly for them. One participant described the British influence in East Africa:

There weren't any Portuguese there that I know. It was mostly ... British ...in my time, I never even saw the British. But the British influence was already set in your living...the schools... English is the core subject. ... the style of living was the porridge...[#2]

The British colonizers left their imprint even on those who were not part of the indigenous African populations.

For the Goans in Africa, the legacy of the British was far less palpable than that of the Portuguese. One participant who grew up in Africa compared the Portuguese colonization in Goa with the British colonization of Africa:

There was conversion...people were forced...women converted because they wanted the liberties that Portuguese were giving them ... The Portuguese afforded the women that...if you convert, you get equal rights... there were things that they did good for us ... Do I resent them? No... I think I resent the British more ...because British became divide and

conquer. I blame them for the split [of the subcontinent] ... [what] is going on with India and Pakistan, between the Hindus and the Muslims. Africa, they were part of the same thing – draw a line. It's them and all the Europeans here. It doesn't matter if the family got split up because you happened to be on that side of the line that day. Portugal took us and tried to make us [the Goans] ... Catholic. They educated them. But they didn't divide the country. They didn't divide families. They did not draw that line and split families up ... [#6]

This participant's perception of the two colonizers, the Portuguese and the British, is very different, with the Portuguese being seen as having a more compassionate way of ruling. The British were resented for their abuse of power in recklessly dividing countries and as a result, families.

The more negative aspect of colonization as it relates to the Portuguese was discussed by a few participants as the legacy of seeing 'white' as superior:

... you still see it whether you are Goan or Indian ... There is still that deference they pay to white people... they still look up to them ... If a white man says something, they will not dare argue. Very few will argue. Our generation, the younger generation will say, "In your face, pal" ... we don't care because we didn't have to grow up with that [colonization]. [#6]

This legacy of white superiority left by the colonizers still has an effect on the older generation of Goans, the ones who grew up under colonial rule. For the younger generation the colonial baggage may be limited as they are not required to pay deference to anyone.

Acceptance of 'white' being superior had enormous ramifications for the Goans in East Africa:

... the Portuguese influence has caused people to think, oh, we are a superior race. And also there was this big thing if you spoke Portuguese in the family, you thought you were upper crust... And that is why Goans will say oh, you know, we are Portuguese. Because in East Africa, we were the only ones who were allowed to go to the white hospitals. We were not sent to the black hospitals. Because we were Goan and so we were different. The Asians, the Indians were sent to the black hospitals, to the coloured hospital. [#8]

The colonial influence was felt by Goans in Africa, where they were given preferential treatment by the British colonizers there, treatment that again proved they were different and better than other Indians – this time dividing peoples rather than lands. This sense of superiority is related to what Bhabha (1984) calls mimicry; the ‘desire of colonial mimicry’ is described as the colonized attempting to achieve the sense of ‘almost the same but not white’ (130).

This is the colonial legacy of superiority that is still very much a part of the Goan community in Canada. Goans see themselves as superior to other South Asians, and despite being part of India are often reluctant to call themselves Indian. The colonial legacy of Us and Them, whether from the Indian subcontinent or East Africa is still played out in the GTA. For my parents, despite hailing from Pakistan, being ‘different’ was worn as a badge of honour. Our English language, our Western dress and our Catholic religion identified us as non-Pakistanis and therefore ‘better’ than those who were. In many ways we continue the ways of the colonizers; we divide our ethnic group and often our own community, into Us and Them.

Values – a Goan way of life

In discussion with participants about what makes them Goan, I had expected responses such as the food, celebrations of feast days and religion. What I did not anticipate was extensive discussion of Goan values, and the commonality amongst *all* the participants. This was one area where participants spoke as if with one voice.

The discussion of values raises different points of view – whose and how were they obtained. For Goans who come from countries with many different influences, these origins are difficult to define. What was remarkable in my discussion with participants is how similar the declared values are despite their country of origin. Values do change to accommodate a change in thinking, but for these women core values remain – not unlike what many saw as a Goan core identity. What this set of values does is connect these Goan women to their past, a past that does not resonate with their perception of Canadian culture (Zevallos 2003).

When talking about their values, participants used many different phrases to define them, phrases such as ‘Goan thinking,’ ‘Goan Catholic values,’ ‘Goan flavour,’ ‘Goanness’ and ‘Goan beliefs and ideals.’ The close correlation with Catholicism was evident in the value set that participants referred to. And,

although many said that these values may have a universal application, to them they were Goan values.

This participant summed up many of the key Goan values in her comments about what makes someone truly Goan: *"They must know what is right and must think beyond themselves, beyond their actions. Because it has repercussions on everything else...that is what Goan values are for me"* [#5]. This thinking beyond self was perhaps part of the reason that a 'connection with family' or some aspect of it was voiced as the foundational value by many participants:

... being Goan is also... The sense of family. We are a tight-knit family. We are a very close family. We argue, we fight but damn it all, if something happens to one of us, everybody just congregates together. [#7]

This sense of family was also key for another woman:

*A lot of it has to do with creating a sense of family... That is the most important thing that is coming out of Asian culture. I believe **the** [her emphasis] most important thing. I mean not every woman is a good cook. You can still create a sense of family. [#10]*

A sense of family, however defined, was central to the lives of these participants. Many of them spoke of living in close proximity to, or with, extended family. Close proximity to family meant regular gatherings, a sharing of food and of being involved with the next generation on a regular basis. These participants appeared to live by the values they espoused.

Family was not always defined in the narrow meaning of the nuclear family but was larger than that:

...it's not just your nuclear family, it's the extended family that is very important... being with cousins and aunts and uncles... And is it African? I think it's more Goan... they have very strong ties with family... definitely is a Goan thing. [#9]

Regard and respect for family translated into respect and regard for elders as well and some participants made that point specifically, when describing what makes then Goan: “...respect for the family or respect for your elders” [#6]. Although this value was not considered only Goan, it was an essential Goan value:

...the general philosophies that Eastern people have in terms of respect for elders, shared with the Chinese community or Far Eastern community. So respect for elders would be something that I think I do on a fairly regular basis. [#13]

For this participant the grouping of Goans with other cultures from the East is similar to the manner in which countries are grouped together under the banner of South Asia. There is some similarity in one area (the colour of our skin for South Asians) so there is an assumption there must be some other similarities as well. What this respect for family and elders also relates to is a sense of community and the interactions within that community. For Goans, the ability to socialize, have fun with music and dance with the ubiquitous presence of food were described as important manifestations of Goan values: “... the Goans are very much into food, music, dancing...as long as you know how to jive ...you are good to go.... And food is a common thing... when you socialize...” [#11]. Dancing was part of the “Goan flavour” this participant described:

I think our flavour is a mixture of our socialness, our music. I love the music. I love the food. I love the dance. Whenever I have to go and book a hall, I have to make sure that I have enough dance floor because I always tell them the Goans are not the kind of people that stand up in one place and dance. We like to do ballroom dancing ... So that all tends to add to the flavour of making up the Goan culture. [#4]

One key aspect of Goan values is the relationship to food, both as one who gives and one who is the recipient. Sharing food was described as critical:

...sharing of food, I think is a global pattern...When I go to someone's home...I always take something which is a food item if it's a Goan person. If it is not a Goan person, I've come to realize that it is not perceived as a gift, as something special, and it could be perceived that you are going to someone's house and they don't have enough food.[#13]

This sharing of food was a perceived as part of the Goan culture:

How many times have you gone to a Goan person's house, and whether you want to or not, they are offering you food. And you have to eat, you can't say no... I think that is a big part of our culture...when you get sick, somebody comes over with food. If somebody is in the hospital, they come over with food ... I remember that even as a kid. [#6]

And it was not just sharing of food, but sharing the right quantity and type of food that was important:

Somebody had called us over, and they just had tea and cookies. And it was weird... you don't go to someone's house and just eat that. But people do that. Not us Goans. We have to have the whole 4 course, 5 course meal. [#9]

The sharing of self over food is considered a Goan value, the time to recognize a common culture and to feast on food from 'home.' As illustrated above, food was considered central to many different interactions among people

within the Goan community. Food was proffered as a gift, used to mark certain occasions and always shared with others. And it was not just any food, but food that was significant in quantity and acted as a signifier for the occasion.

Some participants referred to the making of food at certain times of year, such as Christmas, as also being part of Goan values. Bonding over the making of Christmas sweets was considered an important family ritual: “... *food preparation is always family time, especially Christmas sweets. And when you are all there all rolling and doing all this, you are all chatting... it’s all a bonding ritual*” [#10].

The centrality of food to Goan identity will be the central theme of the next chapter.

As indicated above, family is key to how Goan values are defined, whether it is spending time with them or caring for them as they age. What is also important is how family values can have an impact on individual lives. One woman referred to her preference to marry a Goan, so as to allow her family to be comfortable with him, and he with them. What is not said here, but implied, is that marrying a Goan would automatically imply a set of Goan values and a ‘Goanness’ about them, which would not require explanation or translation. This refers back to where participants said they felt most comfortable and it was with other Goans. This choice of a Goan partner starts with dating; one woman

commented on her mother's concern: *"I even dated one of the white guys [at work]...My mom was... not happy... not a Goan, not of our culture ..."* [#5].

This concern about marrying outside the community was not a shared value throughout the participant group, for some participants felt Goans had the ability to adapt and mix with other cultures, but 'still hold onto their own.' This 'own' part of their self is what one participant called her Goanness and what she considered a vital part of her self and the foundation of her life:

... what I perceive to be my Goanness has helped me through all of these changes that have come into my life... as I moved from one country to another, because of the base of all of it, the food, the religion, the family...if you had these values, you can integrate them with any situation or anything that comes along your way and still be able to make your choices.
[#3]

The religion the participant above mentions is the Catholic religion, a by-product of Portuguese colonization and now firmly entrenched within the Goan community – in fact a key definer of Goanness. Not all participants were practicing Catholics, but for the majority, their religion was very much a way in which they identified themselves and one that provided a value system by which they lived.

Catholicism – practicing a way of life

The interviews within the Goan community took place over a period of time that included the days before and after the start of Lent, the period of

fasting and abstinence which precedes Easter – the day Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ. For participants who were being interviewed during this time there was reference to church activities and abstinence that is expected of practicing Catholics. The depth of dedication some participants had to their faith and their ability to base their lives in Catholic teachings was unexpected.

As one woman explained, many aspects of Goan culture are based in religion: “... [They] stem from religion... many of our traditions like Easter celebrations, feasts where we celebrate with other Goans at big halls... You have a mass and then a party ... That is what I mean by cultural celebrations”[#12]. For all of the participants, the Catholic faith was an integral part of growing up Goan and as the quote above illustrates, most things Goan stem from religion. One participant described growing up Catholic as ‘living in a bubble’:

We had all the Catholic traditions that they have in Goa... the feasts that they used to have ... they would celebrate it ... [My mother] was so much a part of it, so much a part of the church parish life. And she grew us into it. We had a very strong Catholic tradition. We lived in a bubble around the parish. [#5]

A Catholic tradition involved frequent visits to church and prayer on every occasion:

The way our parents brought us up – as Catholics and Goan Catholics going to church, saying prayers. On Sundays, of course the family gets together and has lunch after mass... say your rosary and things like that. Or in the evenings... You are going somewhere, and you say your prayers. ... Before you sleep, you get together and you say your prayers. That is how I would identify. [#11]

This type of childhood, where religion was a huge presence in her life, was similar for another participant:

We were brought up in a convent... around nuns. So the Catholic upbringing was very prominent in our growing up. And our parents, every Sunday, we were at church together. We went to mass in the morning, and then we went for benediction in the evening. Every procession and every feast day, we were in church. [#3]

Catholicism became, for these women, not just a religion but a way of life, a structure that other aspects of their life were built on and around. Sunday Mass, feast days, Lenten practices were all mentioned during the interviews as examples of practices that reflected their Goanness.

The adherence to Catholicism had weakened for some participants, as they were exposed to other ways of living in Canada:

I think Goans are very staunch Catholics. By that, I mean the ritual of being Catholic. So it's the ritual. You can't miss mass on a Sunday but you would come right back and cut up everybody around you...I go to Buddhist teachings... they've got lots of stuff that leaves Catholicism hollow. [#8]

Part of the ritual aspect of Catholicism referred to above, is reference to what we find comfortable, familiar, not unlike what was said earlier about being with other Goans. We partake in that which we know, regardless of whether we still draw any meaning from it. Another woman had a similar experience, calling herself a 'cultural Catholic':

I was raised Catholic and I still have all the Catholic values... having done this excursion into the outer world, I realize I like being in their world. So I am not a practicing Catholic but I am a cultural Catholic... [#10]

For this woman, Catholic values were still very central to her value set, although she was no longer a practicing Catholic.

There is something about being raised Catholic that stays in ones blood and like any core value it is difficult to fully discard (Kurien 1999). This participant's views on Catholicism have changed since coming to Canada; however, she would still want to have her children raised in that faith, despite some misgivings about church teachings:

My whole thing about Catholicism has changed since coming to Canada. I do not agree with the Pope... I am very strong on culture if it does not exclude people...I do not agree with that part [referring to the stand on homosexuality] ... [but] that is what I identify with. That is what I have grown up with. That is what I would like my kids to have some base in that. It's stability. And a lot of our values we have drawn from that. [#5]

This woman saw Catholicism as embedded in Goan cultural values.

This adherence to Catholicism was very strong in the majority of participants and many of the next generation were being raised in the same faith by parents who were either practicing or skeptical, as the woman above. This participant speaks for many when relating a story about her contact with Jehovah's Witnesses who were trying to offer her some literature: "Look, you can do what you want but I was born a Catholic, and I will die a Catholic" [#11].

Summary

In closing, this chapter summarizes how these Goan women thought about their identity and the effects of racism and colonization on it, as well as the value system that their identity is based on. What was surprising was the consistency within the comments. This is not to say there were not those who had different views, but what was remarkable was the uniformity given the varied countries of origin.

For these women being Goan and identifying as such was central to their being. Although some women identified as being from a particular region (South Asia) or a country (India), their Goan identity was never obscured or resisted. Many of these women found that the passage of time heightened their appreciation of who they were and claiming their Goan identity was viewed as a coming home, a reclaiming of self.

The challenge of being a racially marginalized group in a predominantly white Canada was not a central focus for these women. The more pertinent and ongoing challenge was being mistaken for an Indian! However, that being said, many of the women commonly identified as Indian or South Asian. What is important to remember here is the context in which this identification takes place. At the very core of their identity these women identify as Goan. However, for the sake of others not familiar with the geography of India, or for the

acceptance of categories imposed on them by government bureaucracy they are Indian or South Asian respectively.

The importance of being different from, and in an unspoken way better than, Indians, is a direct result of colonization. The colonization of Goa by the Portuguese, and that of the subcontinent of India and the countries of East Africa by the British, has left an enduring legacy for these women. Their names, religion and often their dietary habits are a result of influences during these periods of colonial rule. That former colonization was accepted and not questioned was unexpected, but not a surprise. The need to move forward and build a vibrant community, as Goans have done in the GTA, was more pressing than discussing legacies of colonization.

What was surprising was the ‘Goan values’ that came up repeatedly in *all* the interviews. Although the values mentioned, such as the importance of family, caring for elders, and the strength of community, could be universal in their application, for these women, they were the Goan values they based their lives on. Seeking others with similar values was often the reason proffered when mention was made about their circle of Goan friends, the Goan associations and even Goan businesses they frequented. Seeking others of similar values was also reflected in the choosing of life partners – the comfort of being with others where

one's behaviour and language required no explanation was a key factor in creating and maintaining Goan-centred lives.

In the following chapter, I will discuss participants' views on gender and its relationship to food. Drawing on the interview data, I will demonstrate how these women pass on culture, the importance of food in their lives and what role men play in the daily ritual of foodwork. Through it all I will illustrate how the concept of identity is woven through these concerns.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion: Gender and Food

In this chapter, I will focus on the intersection of gender and food and how that plays out in the lived experiences of the Goan women that I interviewed. Although these are multilayered concepts, I will focus on the role of women in using food to maintain and strengthen their identity. Identity looms large when raising children in a diasporic community, as some of these Goan women in Canada are doing or have done. What the participants view as important aspects of their culture to pass on, and how they accomplish this, will also be discussed. I start first with the concept of gender and how women are often automatically linked to foodwork in all its forms.

Gender – role of women in food preparation and decision making

In discussing the area of foodwork in the Goan community, who does it and why, there were varied responses among participants. It was not completely surprising to discover that most women did the majority of foodwork in their households, although there were some exceptions. What was also not surprising is that women were involved with the preparation of Goan food for special occasions. The majority of the women were responsible for the cooking of daily meals and decisions around what was cooked. Men did not have a primary role

in foodwork in most households; it was limited to special occasions or specific ways of cooking such as barbequing.

Women gave different reasons for being involved as the primary person in foodwork. For one woman, the raising of children was an important factor in how roles were divided:

It has always been my role. And I never asked him to cook... I took control over the kids. I made them my responsibility. And there was never such a thing of we've got to share anything. So it has not been easy because I've had to do it single-handed. But now they've grown so now it's okay. [#2]

The decision to be the primary person for foodwork and childcare is not questioned by this participant, nor was it an option to ask her husband to participate, although she did not find sole responsibility in foodwork and child rearing easy. Although children were a factor for the participant above, other women offered reasons such as 'I'm home,' 'I'm faster,' and 'I don't find it a chore.' When pressed as to why women did the bulk of the foodwork, this participant said:

My husband does cook... has learned how to cook... initially it was just me doing all the cooking. And I think those roles were kind of defined by culture. That the woman did the cooking, and the men did whatever. But in Canada, it was different for me. Because when I had the kids, I needed a little bit more help because I also worked. So that is when my husband came in and helped me with the chores. But the cooking was basically left up to me. [#3]

Although this participant suggests women's roles are 'defined by culture,' she also states that her husband did pick up household chores when asked, but she retained the cooking. Food appears to be a woman's domain (Harbottle 1996).

It is difficult to know just what is meant by 'defined by culture' and if and when those definitions may change. That change is occurring within this group of women was evident by the number of husbands and fathers who cooked, not always out of choice but out of necessity. For men, migrating to Canada meant leaving the servants behind and taking on the chore of cooking. Foodwork, in all its aspects, remained the responsibility of the wives and mothers. One participant, whose father has learned to cook, had this to say:

I think he realizes that she [her mother] doesn't have to be the only one cooking. Because that used to be the thinking then. But it was funny because a lot of Goan men haven't changed ... there are some that are really stuck in their ways ... They are both working. And they were working in Africa but then you had servants. That was different ... Well, it's equality. Why does my mom have to do it all? So he helped out. And he still does it now. [#7]

In this family, the male participated in a helping role, leaving the responsibility for foodwork to his wife. Another participant had a similar comment about the roles of her parents, suggesting gender roles were more entrenched in her country of origin:

I am absolutely certain had we been in [name of country], my father would have never learned how to cook because of the gender roles ... coming here with no servants to pick up the slack or help out, they had to learn how to share housework, cooking. [#12]

The move to Canada prompted the changes in these families, where men began to participate in cooking; more out of necessity than choice. Women's roles are not inscribed in stone and life in Canada without servants prompted more women to ask for, and men to agree to, change in prescribed gendered roles.

Although the role of women in foodwork is changing for some participants, it was intriguing to discover that women made most of the decisions around the choice of food and the cooking for guests. This is how one participant spoke of her role in this decision making: *"When we are having company over, I usually tend to do the cooking. I will do up the menu for the meal"* [#4]. Another stated, *"I know a lot of my friends ... look forward to my cooking"* [#3]. One woman included consultation with her husband: *"I decide the menu on most parties. But I generally do it in consultation with my husband"* [#10]. What these women are saying is that regardless of who does the cooking, they control what is presented to guests in both menu and preparation. And, they have an opportunity to display their culinary skills.

Why women do the cooking for company may be closely tied to what one woman had to say about why she liked to cook – it was related to the 'appreciation' given her for the food. It is this very appreciation for service rendered, an acknowledgement of skill, which may help to keep women in their roles as cooks (Devasahayam 2005, Fürst 1997). There may also be an

appreciation of fulfillment of gender roles that is conveyed when friends or family communicate an appreciation of the cooking. For example, a man who cooks well, in contradiction of gender role expectations, is looked upon either as masterful, or somewhat dubious in terms of masculinity – or both. When a woman cooks well, it is both expected and admired, an appropriate demonstration of femininity.

The issue of gender, and gender roles in particular, was difficult to unpack with some participants. Gender roles are often taken for granted and rarely questioned which made it difficult to talk about them, not unlike asking about racism in the lives of these women. When you live with something that you may not have direct control over, yet is commonplace and surrounds you, regardless of its negative implications, it may be accepted and not questioned.

In further questioning participants on prescribed gender roles in foodwork and the way these roles play out within the Goan community, some women were able to clearly articulate their interpretation of these roles. For these participants, foodwork was not seen as a burden to women, rather it was seen as a symbol of the power that women held:

I have discovered that food is culture but it's also power. If you for instance have the only recipe for sorpotel, you know that when you are offering sorpotel, everybody is showing up ...[female relative] has not yielded up her secrets until almost to the point where she's dying. Because, if I can produce the beautiful food, you will come to my house to eat it. If

you can produce it, you don't have to come to my house to eat it. So food is power. [#10]

In emphasizing what she had to say about food and power, the participant also spoke of how her grandmother used to dole out treats for good behaviour. Food, or lack of it, was used to acknowledge behaviour: “...if you are very good, I'll do this for you ... if you are not good, you are not going to get this. So food is absolute power” [#10].

This participant's use of the word 'power' changes how the role of women in foodwork may be viewed. No longer is it one they assume only because of cultural practices, but rather one that they remake into a platform for demonstrating the power – or at least influence – they have within the family and larger community. Food becomes the conduit through which these women flaunt the control they have and cement their indispensable role as keepers of family recipes and cultural ways.

Using the lens of power to view women's role in foodwork adds a different dimension to that role. The primary role in foodwork may provide women with more agency and autonomy within the household than otherwise assumed. This view, having power in foodwork, was challenged by another participant, who found the use of the term 'power' to have a very negative implication, preferring the term 'draw':

I think Goan women in particular show their kids love by food... food is used to comfort. Food is used to... communicate. Food is used as a draw... my mom will say, "Oh, come see me. Come by and visit. I'll make you lunch." ... there's always that bait of come visit and I'll do... And it's a big part of the family experience... if I go to my mom's, she'll basically force me to eat something. "Have something to eat." "No, no." "No, have something."... It's a staple of the connection of what we do as a family... not necessarily Goan but I've noticed it in a lot of Goan families ...You have to eat something. Something. You can't get away with not. So I think it is part of the socialization...[power]is the flip side of what I am saying...It's the same thing but it's just more of a negative. [#1]

The participant went on to say that Goan women were 'preoccupied' with food and used food as a 'currency' within their families, both nuclear and extended:

A lot of the women ... think it [their cooking] is what they have to offer. A lot of the men in our family were the ones with the careers, and the moms are the ones who stayed at home or had jobs to supplement – not necessarily careers. And so food was the currency. That is what they brought to the family. It was their contribution because that is what they are good at and proud of. And so they are going to showcase it whenever they can... the way I look at it is Goans are very proud... proud of their accomplishments. And in a lot of cases, the generation of our parents, it was the male who worked and did well in his career. And the mom stayed at home with the kids and didn't necessarily have a career as such... so her accomplishment is her home, and what she can bring to her family, which is the food... that is her sense of accomplishment... that is why they [the women in the family] compete amongst each other as far as who is the better cook. It's kind of like a corporate ladder but at home... [#1]

In these two lengthy quotes, this participant summarizes what to her is the essence of why women retain the role of foodwork within the family. Food is used as a 'draw' to bring people in and to keep them coming back. Food becomes for these women, representative of the role they have within the family – one of showcasing their skills in cooking. The byproduct of cooking, food is used to

demonstrate their love and in return obtain an appreciation for their labour. It is, as this woman said, a form of currency.

In listening to this participant speak, I could not help but think of my mother. As befits her generation, she did not work outside the home in Pakistan. That changed when we came to Canada where she worked out of financial necessity. Yet, she still draws her identity through foodwork. She is well known in our community for her cooking and a visit to my parents' home automatically generates an array of food, regardless of the time of day.

That Goan women use food as a 'draw' and wield 'power' through food was underscored when asking participants who taught them how to cook. The majority of participants learned how to cook from their mothers, because '*nobody cooks like your mother*' [#7]. And it was not that mothers had recipes to pass on, the learning was done by watching. Again, the use of control is implemented in the learning, as it is done on the mother's schedule.

This is how some participants described the learning by watching: "...I will cook it the way I used to see my mother cook it..." [#4], "...she cooks, I watch her, and I write [down the recipe]" [#7] and "...if she made it, we looked on..." [#11].

This watching was not restricted only to mothers' kitchens. This is what one woman said about her grandmother's kitchen: "*Food is considered almost a sacred experience in my grandmother's kitchen...She is a very good cook. But she wouldn't*

teach you by a recipe. You had to sit and watch her" [#10]. The process of learning by watching means other social and cultural lessons – perhaps less tangible than a recipe – can be passed on at the same time. Watching how food is prepared creates a sense of importance about the task; it is an embodied learning. By creating the persona of ‘good cook,’ one who knows how to prepare the family recipes, the cook is elevated to a special status within the family. Girls learn this in their mothers’ and grandmothers’ kitchens and in turn replicate it for future generations.

Through watching, women of the next generation absorbed the art of cooking and in turn, subconsciously, understood the power and currency that food held. This may be one reason it is still the women who prepare food for guests and celebrations. And why it is women who are primarily responsible for foodwork. The relationship of men to food was very different.

Men – connection to Goan food and identity

Participants were asked for their opinions on whether men and women viewed food in the same manner when it came to their Goan identity. This conversation often led to a discussion of the manner in which men cook: men were described as less health conscious as compared to women, and wanting food to be like their mothers made. The men in these women’s lives did

participate in foodwork, but there were differences in what they did compared to their female partners.

One participant commented that all Goan men were good cooks: *“On the ships in Goa, in Bombay, all the top cooks are Goan men. If you think of chefs all over the world, they are men. And Goan men are good cooks”* [#11]. There is no disputing what this woman is saying. However, most of the Goan women interviewed were primarily responsible for cooking in their homes. And as demonstrated above, it is not only that most men do not cook (Beoku-Betts 1995), it is the women who are justifying why they continue to hold primary responsibility for doing foodwork (Beagan et al. 2008).

For the few men who did cook, one participant had this to say about the difference between the way men and women approaching cooking, as she reflected on her parents:

... cooking is something that my mom takes pride in, she likes it, she is known for her cooking, and continues to do it because of that. My father... sees it as a comfort. It's something of who he is. It is something that people like him eat. Whereas it's not something that he takes pride in. So I don't think they view food in the same way. [#12]

This comment reiterates what other participants had to say about Goan women and cooking. The pride they take to prepare the food, and the accolades they get for doing so, resonate more with women than with men. Goan men may be more inclined to be concerned with the functionality of food, to nourish, and

take pride in what they accomplish in other areas of their life – their identity is not linked to food, as it is for most women. Most men have work in the public arena and do not expend energy or interest in what they see as ‘women’s work’ – foodwork.

Many of the participants did acknowledge that men and women had the same attachment to the consumption of Goan food, which was related to their identity: “...*food is very important to both males and females...*” [#9], and “...*they are about the same*” [#3]. Goan food, regardless of how produced, was seen as a vital part of how Goan men identified themselves.

For the women interviewed, the distinction between Goan men and women was the indifference that men expressed to their role as transmitters of culture. For the women, passing on culture is crucial to fostering an identity in a diaspora and for these Goan women, their children were the Goan future that they were trying to create. Food was one crucial tool they had to foster a Goan identity.

Children – passing on Goan culture

Passing culture on from one generation to the next is one way for immigrant groups to keep their culture and traditions alive in the receiving country. In a family setting it is often understood that women, in their role as mothers, are responsible for doing just that. Although culture and traditions may

change over time to accommodate changes in context and environment, it is still assumed that women bear the responsibility for informing and educating the next generation about their ancestry, and have the cultural knowledge they need to carry into the future (Kallivayalil 2004, Narayan 1997, Yuval-Davis 1993).

For one participant, passing on culture was a woman's role, because, for her, culture *was* food:

It is more the women who try to do that. They try to pass the cultures on, to pass their cooking on. Because their cooking is nice or tasty, that others want to follow recipes or learn how to do a certain something... [#3]

This relates back to the pride that most Goan women take in knowing how to prepare Goan food. It is this same pride that ensures subsequent generations are familiar with Goan food and the traditions that revolve around it, such as the making of Christmas sweets.

This participant felt that it was distinctively mothers, not just women, who passed on culture to their children: "*Mothers are the people who pass on culture...*

[remember] the word mother tongue?" Emphasizing that it was 'mothers' who passed on culture, this is what the participant answered when asked why:

Mothers are there all the time. In every culture on the face of the planet Earth, mothers tend to pass on culture because they are there... they are feeding you. Your language is coming with the food. Your culture, your values, everything is coming with the food. Your fathers generally are not there. They are working. Working very hard for their families but they are generally not there. [#10]

That it is mothers who pass on culture was emphasized by other participants who recalled their own lives: *"That is just my mother that has passed that [her culture] on to me"* [#7]. Food was the main aspect of culture passed on: *"It just comes from my mom because she always made things..."* [#11], and what women 'made' was to ensure their children were grounded in their Goan culture. This participant took the position that as gender roles changed, the role of women in passing on culture through food would change as well: *"Proper Goan cooking has been passed on through women from generation to generation because of the gender roles. Now those are changing"* [#12].

Despite changing gender roles, it is still primarily women who are involved with foodwork (Bardenstein 2002, Mankekar 2002). And in immigrant communities, it is women who are responsible for ensuring that culture and traditions of the home country are maintained (Harbottle 1996, Srinivas 2006). This reliance on women to instruct the next generation about their culture is closely linked to food. Food becomes a vessel for transmission and the offering for remembering (Bardenstein 2002).

When women are tasked with such an enormous responsibility, as transmitters of culture, they need to find ways to cope with their children's acceptance or rejection of their act of giving, as the children make their own cultural choices. The majority of women were accepting of their children's

choices, even if they were in a different vein than what was proffered. This woman recognized that offering what she could was more important than what the children took away from it: *“What you offer your kids is one thing. What they do with it is different. So we’ve offered them everything that we can”* [#13]. Another woman had very similar thoughts, recognizing her children were capable of making their own choices:

You try to do the best...take the best of your culture and pass it on – pass it on to your kids and hopefully you are doing the best you can. I will not, let me put it that way, force my kids to do what I want to... I will not try to force my beliefs or my ethnicity...they are intelligent young people and I think they are capable of making their own choices. [3]

So, whether concerning ethnic identity, religion or food choices, most of these women had a commitment to allowing their children to decide for themselves.

Although many women were accepting of what choices their children made, there were some who acknowledged that there would be some challenges if children chose differently from what was culturally offered: *“I [would] feel a little hurt by it...”* [#10] is how one woman described her hypothetical response to what if her children made different choices as they aged from what she had offered. *“I think it would be quite upsetting”* [#2] is how another woman described the possibility of her children no longer eating Goan food. What these women are describing is a rejection of not only aspects of Goan culture, but in some ways

rejection of themselves. This rejection may also be gendered for the connection between women and food is often unspoken. These participants are the generation that identifies and lives as Goan, and a rejection of all that is integral to them may open up a void in how communication between generations takes place.

Rejection of Goan culture was mentioned by some participants in a different vein. They spoke of it as a 'dying' or 'weakening' of Goan culture, often linking this explicitly to food. One woman said this about the art of Goan cooking: *"It's dying. People are not showing their kids how to do such and such...it's tiring [cooking]...just for a break, they also order in"* [#7]. Another woman had accepted a generational shift away from Goan food and culture:

It [Goan culture] seems to be something that is going to die out with the next generation. It is important to me and to my generation. I have a lot of Goan friends, and they love Goan food ... But their kids, I think without exception, are like mine... very Canadian. They don't like the curry thing... all these traditions that we bring along with us will probably die out with our generation. Or weaken at least. And that is okay. [#5]

This acceptance of what may happen with the next generation was understood, even by those participants who may feel hurt by the anticipated changes. Women from the first generation appeared to understand, perhaps even on a subconscious level, that each generation is different and when the factor of moving to the receiving country is added in, that change is magnified (Clifford 2000). This is what one participant had to say about the next generation: *"They are*

not the same as the generation that came before them. We are not the same as the generation that came before us" [#10]. Another participant couched the change in a Canadian context: *"I would say already in their [her children's] generation that Goanness is going away. I think their kids will be very different. They will be Canadian. Canadian in the really true sense of it. Like a blended thing"* [#5]. This 'blended thing' is what Brah (1996) calls the 'diasporic space,' where both those in the diaspora and those in the receiving country are changed, creating something completely new, blended. As all the participants interviewed were first generation Goans, this blending may become apparent in future generations.

The change in Goanness for future generations was voiced by another participant who felt that Goan youth were making choices based on knowledge of Western food choices, and not cultural tradition: *"...now with the younger generation, they are changing... they are eating whatever they think is good for them without the value of what it used to be [considering] what I should be eating for the future"* [#13]. This thinking may drastically change how and what Goan food is valued in the community in the next generation, as dominant discourses of healthy eating possibly displace discourses of cultural eating (Ristovski-Slijepcevic et al 2008). However, for the first generation participants that were interviewed, Goan food was key to their Goan identity.

Food – key aspect of Goan identity

The interview questions on Goan food and its relation to their identity provoked much conversation and laughter, as participants shared memories of food and how it did, or did not, resonate with their Goan identity. These conversations often left both the participant and I sharing our own favourite food stories, while our mouths watered, and often culminated in sharing food with the participant in their homes.

Goan food is different from what is more commonly recognized as Indian food in countries of the North, and has a distinctive taste that differs from other regions of India. This is not to say there are no regional variations in Indian food, there are. However, most participants were firm in their description of Goan spices being markedly different, especially the use of a Goan vinegar, than what is commonly used in a variety of Indian foods. Indian food served in North America is typically of the North Indian variety.

When discussing Goan food, the most commonly mentioned dishes were sorpotel and sannas, a pork and beef dish eaten with rice and coconut pancakes, and vindaloo, a pork curry. Both dishes are made with a particular type of vinegar, the flavour of which adds to the distinctive taste of the food. Other Goan foods mentioned were a fish or shrimp curry and a particular fish dish called caldene. Xacuti was also mentioned, which is a type of chicken curry.

The distinctive flavour of Goan food was what one participant stressed:

“Goan food are the curries that have that Goan flavour. So the xacuti and the sorpotel. I mean I’ve had other curries... the ones from the North, ones from the South. But Goan cooking is distinct to me” [#1]. It is this distinctive taste of the food that participants spoke so fondly of, and yearned for when unable to obtain it.

When asking participants about Goan food and how closely tied it is to their Goan identity, most of the women expressed extremely strong connections. One participant had this to say: *“No, you can’t be a Goan and not eat Goan food. You have to eat Goan food. Whether it’s the curries or it’s the sweets, you have to eat. No, everything revolves around food for Goans”* [#7]. This sentiment was echoed by other participants as well: *“This whole thing about food, I think that is so much a part of me. I could never give it [Goan food] up totally and be happy”* [#5], and *“[food is] very important I think because one cannot exist without the other. You cannot be Goan and not eat Goan food. So I think they co-exist”* [#3]. What these women were referring to is what holds true for them; they are Goan because they eat Goan food and they eat Goan food because they are Goan. The two are inextricably linked for them.

For some women, the connection between food and identity was all about the memories evoked through the sensory engagement with Goan food. One participant said:

I think it's more memories for me. Because my grandmother used to cook certain dishes. And I think that is why I like the caldene, the coconut taste... But it's just memories of her. And I think that was my identity.
[#9]

This remembering through food is a common occurrence, especially for first generation immigrants (Choo 2004, Thomas 2004). It is both the ritual of food and its daily occurrence that fosters an intergenerational memory. For Goans, it is not necessarily the connection to their birth country, but to their ancestral country, one they identify with and call home. It is, as Andersen (1991) termed it, an 'imagined community,' but one that is still very real for these Goans, often generations removed from Goa.

For all the connections one can have to ancestral homelands, why does food take on such importance? One participant suggested food can be 'transcendent.' She discussed the importance of Goan food to her and how it would be one aspect of her culture she would want to retain:

Moving forward, I want to keep this aspect of my Goan culture because I think something like food transcends all cultures. I read an interesting article about...how every culture has something they deem to be soul food – which is something comforting and reminiscent of good times. And that is why I want to learn how to cook properly and learn how to create those flavour combinations... [#12]

So for her, Goan food is a symbol of something more – of 'soul food.' This connection to food is one she wants to continue and strives to be skilled in this particular way of cooking as a means of retaining her link to the past.

For Goans in particular, food takes on more meaning when other aspects of culture, such as dress, language and religion are not particular to their group. This is what one participant had to say about why food has such significance in the Goan community – it was the lack of other cultural signifiers: *“I kept saying there is no such thing as a ... Goan culture... sure, we make sweets and we eat sorpotel... and we go to church. Other than that, our dress is Western. We speak English”* [#6]. In identifying ourselves, we do so by choosing what is different about us in comparison to other ethnic groups, and for Goans, it is mainly our food that is seen as a boundary marker. Being Catholic, although important to Goans, does not differentiate them from other Canadians. Our dress, while distinct in parts of India, is not distinct in Canada. It is our food that differentiates us not only from other Canadians, but also from other Indians – the latter of which is the most crucial difference for our identity.

The lack of cultural signifiers was also mentioned by one woman who felt that food was the one unifying aspect of being Goan:

At the GOA [Goan Overseas Association]. We are all Goans. There's no Goan music ...no Goan dances ...no Goan dress. So it's the food and the fact that they are all Goan. But we are not going to talk about the fact that we are all Goan, we are going to talk about the food. [#1]

One way to unify, and foster, the Goan community, given that those who identify as Goans in Canada come from a variety of birth countries, is through food. Although there may be regional differences in the preparation of Goan

food, there is a commonality that acts as a boundary marker that is inclusive. It strengthens the culture that may otherwise be diluted over time:

...sometimes I wish we had the strong cultures that say the Punjabis or the Jews do. The only way I could think to create it was with food. So if you are eating Goan food on a daily basis that is something that is comforting to you...and it becomes our soul food...this is something that matters to me and I want to carry it forward. [#12]

The absence of other strong cultural markers, then, grants Goan food a particular power.

Although the majority of participants voiced their opinion affirmatively on the strong connection Goan food has with their identity, there were some who did not feel the same way. For one participant, Goan food was related more to the memories of her childhood, and not a crucial link to her identity. For another, food was not what identified her as being Goan; that was who she was regardless of what she ate: *"The food doesn't identify me... I think if I am 90 years old and living on Boost or Ensure, I would still think of myself as Goan" [#8].*

However, the response above was more the exception than the rule, (and in some ways Goan food would simply add to an already entrenched Goan identity for this woman). Most participants felt that Goan food was inextricably linked to their Goan identity. This was both on an individual basis as well as within the larger community. When asked about the connection between Goan food and the Goan community this is what one participant had to say: *"It is very*

important to the community. They always make sure there is some Goan food there [at social events]" [#11]. Another woman noted: "At Goan get-togethers, there's always food, whether it's snacks or whatever. But it's still Goan food. You will always get food" [#6]. Finally, one participant argued having food at community events was: "... the magnet that draws everybody together" [#1].

It is this magnetic attraction of food that brings Goans from varied backgrounds together for religious holidays or social functions, one that fosters Goan pride – and always centres on food:

When they have their socials or St. Francis Xavier feasts ...you should see the [food] stalls. They are depicting every possible Goan food out there...You won't see lasagna...I think the people are proud of their heritage, of the Goan food." [#2]

Eating Goan food – more than just special occasions

Whether it is the pride one takes in being Goan or partaking of the comfort food does provide, many of the participants spoke of the regularity with which they ate Goan food. Yes, there was definitely Goan food on special occasions, but it was equally important in the more mundane day-to-day eating. As food was described as integral to the Goan identity of many of the participants, eating it on a regular basis was an affirmation of their identity – an identity that had very few, if any, other cultural markers. Food became for these

women a symbol of where they had come from and a declaration of who they were.

The routine of eating was about more than nourishment for one participant; it was about eating food that spoke to who she was and invoked memories of home. One participant described her need for Goan food in this way: *"It feels like I haven't eaten food. And yet every day we were eating. But what I meant was I hadn't had the Goan food. When I came home, I made pilau and I made ... sausages. I was just dying to eat some food... what I call food"* [#2]. The frequency with which some participants ate Goan food confirmed what this participant stated – food is not food, unless it is *Goan* food. To clarify, many of these women spoke of food that may be associated with Indian food, foods such as curry and pilau. However, it was in the preparation of these dishes that the uniqueness of Goan cuisine was personified.

The presence of Goan food in participants' homes varied. For one woman eating Goan food was a daily event: *"There's no hard and fast rules as to when we have Goan food. There is Goan food every day"* [#3]. Other participants had similar responses: *"...almost all my food is Goan"* [#10] and *"...that [Goan food] is what we eat on a day-to-day basis"* [#4]. There were some participants who spoke of eating more Goan food at this time in their lives, as they had more time to cook, fewer demands from children or for the sheer enjoyment of doing so. This participant

could not physically tolerate Goan food growing up, but finds now that is not the case:

It's only in the last maybe 2 - 3 years, I've been starting to handle it. I still have to watch how much I eat because it really bothers me. But I am starting to cook it now. And I quite enjoy it. [#9]

When discussing the consumption of Goan foods in their families, those participants with children commented on the challenge of providing food for their children's palates. However, this did not deter the parents from eating Goan food on their own. One woman accommodated her children's tastes, but also needed to cook for herself: *"Burgers, are not just a meal for us. I have to have chapattis or rice" [#5]*. What constitutes a 'meal' is very specific for these Goans, which often resulted in food being prepared separately for children and parents: *"My husband and I always ate Goan food. But with the kids, we would give them less... or very little of the spices we would use..." [#3]*. Another participant echoed this: *"My husband and I had sorpotel. I made baked chicken for [children]" [#7]*. There were even a few women who spoke of 'washing' the food of spices before feeding their children. By cooking separately for their children, these women were actively trying to decrease tension in their households in order to entertain the tastes of all family members, yet still maintain a 'taste of home' through food (Harbottle 1996).

For some women, eating Goan food was so important to them, they would create meals only for themselves, if necessary. Eating became more than a required task for nourishment; it took on the responsibility of feeding one's identity as well: *"If I felt like a curry, I would make myself a rice and curry ... [for other family members] 'Well, there's bread and cheese. Help yourself' [#6].* This relationship to the eating of Goan food occurred particularly when children or partners chose not to eat Goan food. So in those instances, women subjugated the Goan values that put primacy on family, to their own need to eat Goan food.

The occasion when all participants appeared to partake in cooking Goan food was Christmas. Discussions of Christmas drew out many memories of making holiday sweets, a tradition that encompassed the Goan values of family with a link to food and identity. This is how one participant described it:

...we get together at Christmas time and we make Christmas sweets. And we make all the Goan sweets like the nankatis and... the neuries and the whole kulkuls, the works. And we have all the kids together and they have their own little cutters or whatever. And we sing carols. And that is what I thought was Goan because when I went to Goa, that is what would happen. They all come together. It's a big community thing. [#9]

Another participant spoke of her memories of Christmas and how that strengthened her Goan identity: *"Christmas [makes me feel Goan]...I love that whole thing about the sweet making and the sorpotel making... my mother made Christmas very special. She loved all that sweet making" [#5].* What the participants are drawing on here are memories of home and the sense of belonging. Food conjures up just

such memories, and for a culture so steeped in religion, Christmas becomes the focal point for such a demonstration of the links between food and identity (Highmore 2008, Lockie 2001).

Christmas was not only a time for Christmas sweets, but also a variety of Goan dishes: *“At Christmas time, the sorpotel. I don’t make the sannas but I’ll make the vindaloo, the sorpotel, the xacuti...”* [#4]. One woman included Easter in her holiday food connections: *“Especially at Christmas time or Easter or whatever, you make Goan food”* [#11]. And some women combined Goan and Western food at such times: *“It’s [special occasions] usually a combination of Goan food and ‘Canadian’ food like turkey or ham or whatever”* [#1].

What was interesting about the latter point, the addition of ‘Canadian’ food, is that it was done to usually accommodate the younger generation, who were described as not having as much interest in Goan food as their parents. For the first generation however, no celebration was complete without Goan food.

One participant described trying to ‘do Christmas’ without Goan food:

You have to have [Goan food]... I did that once – I did just roast. And my brother kept saying, “Where is the main course? I said this is it.” When we have Christmas at our place, its roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, and then I have the rice and curry. [#9]

This comment was reiterated by another participant who said:

Every year, we try and organize Christmas parties ...and everybody wants to make sure there’s pilau and sorpotel. Like if you have those two

dishes, yes, you can do all the other add-ons of meatballs and stuff but the pilau and the sorpotel has to be there. [#2]

This insistence on Goan food, although extremely important for special celebrations, was waning somewhat within the first generation participants on a regular basis, and health was the main reason provided. The regular eating of rice and curries, or even meat, was seen as not conducive to a healthy lifestyle:

There was a time where I could not do without rice and curry. It was every night. And then weight became an issue too so I cut out carbs. So I eat less rice ... I eat more vegetables ... but they are all curried anyway. [#6]

Health and time were key factors in the decrease in Goan food consumption for this participant:

Goan food usually is very labour intensive. And that is why I don't do it. I'll sooner do a stir fry which is much faster and healthier, both things, rather than a... meal which is generally not so healthy... I mean talk about xacuti. Look at all the coconut going into that. [#8]

The labour intensive aspect of Goan cooking did not result in the purchase of prepared Goan foods. Prepared Goan food is a rare find in GTA and the one restaurant that serves Goan food once a week was mentioned by most of the participants. There were however, other women who catered, on a small scale, to those who did not have the time to cook. It is possible to buy sorpotel, Goa sausages and Goan Christmas sweets.

The adaptation of food for health, or other, reasons, frequently starts the almost inevitable changes for immigrant communities in how food is prepared

(Ristovski-Slijepcevic et al. 2008). This is how one participant characterized the changes she sees in her cooking:

Now we are a little bit more health conscious... because of things like cholesterol... there is not as much butter or not as much oil in it ... That is another way cooking evolves because as we become more and more aware of health issues, we adapt our cooking. And then it becomes the norm how to make that dish. [#12]

This adaptation of food in immigrant communities raises the question of what is authentic and what is traditional. Authenticity brings to mind the 'true' nature of a dish as it was once prepared and traditional more often refers to food prepared in a certain way within a certain group, most often a family setting (Bhabha 1994). Traditions are often of much shorter duration than commonly thought, they are not always generational in how they are carried out. Each generation puts its mark on a cultural custom, be it cooking or otherwise, to make it truly theirs (Abarca 2004). For Goans in Canada, they bring with them their Goan customs; Goan customs that have been flavoured and influenced by living in countries other than Goa before immigrating to Canada. There are Goan customs that have been heavily influenced by life in Africa or Pakistan and then further adapted to life in Canada.

So, what is authentically Goan food in Canada is questionable. One participant felt that her mother's cooking was not always authentic in its flavour, with the exception of one dish: *"My mom knows how to make caldene...I would say*

her caldene is the best. And it's authentic. That one is authentic" [#13]. When questioning the authenticity of her mother's cooking this participant is drawing on an historical knowledge of what constitutes Goan cuisine. However, as Goa has had a history of Hindu and Muslim rulers before the Portuguese colonization, and now has a diminishing Catholic Goan population under Indian rule, just what is 'authentic Goan cuisine'? The definition of Goan cuisine is far more subjective. One participant, the one who said Goan food did not ground her identity, felt there was no real Goan cuisine:

There are bastardizations of Portuguese and Indian cooking... a sorpotel was originally a Brazilian stew, and then we use the Indian spices to make it into the sorpotel, the Goan sorpotel. There's nothing uniquely Goan. It's either very Portuguese and then we mixed it with Indian spices, spiced it up here and there, and come up with our own things.[#8]

There may be no food that can be 'accurately' described as 'authentic' Goan food, but for those who link their Goan identity to food, it would matter little. The notion of authentic and traditional within a diaspora is highly complicated, as food practices transform over time in the receiving and sending countries. It is for those within a diaspora to interpret what is authentic.

Summary

In closing, this chapter illustrated the role of Goan women in foodwork and how this role can be viewed as a 'power' they wield and a 'currency' they use within their family units and to some extent the larger community. This

power allows them to showcase their cooking skills and be seen as keepers of important information – family recipes. Goan men may share in foodwork but do so with a different attitude and are not as invested in cooking as the women in the family; for them there are other more important tasks than cooking, although eating Goan food is also essential.

These women also believed they played an important role in passing on Goan culture to their children, whether it was through food or the values they lived by. Mothers were viewed as key to passing on culture, for so much learning is done through and around food. What was surprising was the equanimity with which these women talked about the possibility of their children rejecting all that is Goan, despite all their efforts in retaining some Goanness in the next generation. There were some children who did not eat Goan food and some participants saw it as the beginning of the end of Goan culture for the next generation.

The discussion of food and its relation to these women's Goan identity produced an overwhelming response confirming the two are inextricably linked. Although this was not a unanimous sentiment, it was abundantly clear that it was not just food most of these women longed to eat, it was *Goan* food. Goan food was part of every special occasion and in some families on a more routine

basis as well. However, to cater to the younger generation, special occasions also had Western food.

Despite the enjoyment of Goan food, there was a realization that change might need to occur in diets especially for reasons of health. Women adapted recipes, decreased the frequency with which they ate Goan food and ate more with an eye towards health rather than culture. This did not create change in their identity; rather it changed the food they ate. These changes in recipes led some to question the authenticity of Goan food and whether it was true representation of the 'Goan-ness.' Clearly the ongoing fluctuations in cultural markers that occur in any ethnic group are also present in food patterns.

For these women, food, and the consumption of it either individually or in a group setting, served to recreate bonds to home, bring back memories of childhood and mother's cooking, and most importantly provide a sense of belonging and comfort. In a white dominant society, where visible minorities are grouped together as Other, for these women Goan food provided a tangible boundary marker that both includes and excludes. Food is that inextricable link to Goan identity that can be recreated and consumed in both private and public settings – it defines and celebrates Goanness for these women.

Chapter 6: Analysis and Conclusion

In this, the final chapter of the thesis, I will discuss the findings illustrated in the past two chapters. I will draw upon existing literature to show how participant responses confirm current thought or create new possibilities for understanding diasporic colonized populations. I will draw some conclusions from the research and turn back to my original research question to examine the relevance of this project. Finally, I will raise questions for future research and discussion that may add to a better understanding of the peoples that comprise the Canadian mosaic, and the relationships among identity, gender and food.

Identity is a much debated and politicized arena, especially for diasporic populations (Brah 1996, Jenkins 2004, Mohanty 2004). This is no different for the Goan women I interviewed in the GTA. For many migrants, there are struggles in self-identifying in a new country. For the women in this study, what adds to the difficulty of naming oneself is the fact that the Goa of their ancestry does not exist. Appadurai (1996) speaks of 'deterritorialization' in terms of globalization, and the corporations and groups that do not work within any existing state boundaries as contributing to a sense of identities unlinked to geographic place (49). From the perspectives of the participants, the same can be applied to Goans – they are 'deterritorialized' and cannot lay claim to any physical piece of land, unlike other colonized peoples. This does not mean that Goans are without an

identity; rather it creates a much stronger sense of self and a resilience of identity grounded in things other than place (Kallivayalil 2004).

In discussing their Goan identity, questions of racism and colonization were raised to unpack the intersection between these two concepts. Although many of the women did not report any direct racism in their lives, there were those who spoke of more subtle forms of racism. There were some women who raised the idea that they were only 'Canadian citizens,' implying they were not true Canadians, the latter being thought of as white.

This notion of not belonging based on skin colour is documented by other researchers when interviewing non-whites in a pre-dominantly white society, such as Handa (2003) interviewing Canadian South Asians, Dwyer (2000) interviewing British Muslims and Zevallos (2003) interviewing Australians of Latin American backgrounds. In all instances participants in the research found their skin colour precluded their being called Canadian, British or Australian. Brah (1996) raises a compelling argument when discussing the positionality of non-whites in a white society as a 'decentring' of what it means to be, in the case of Goans, Canadian (210). There is no longer a white centre in multicultural societies such as Canada, the centre has shifted, and being white is just one more cultural group (Brah 1996:210). However, although this decentring may be an ideal of multiculturalism, it is not the lived experience for some of these

participants. Being white may not have as much currency or as central a position as it previously did in society however, it still holds considerable power (Conference Board of Canada 2008, DiverseCity Toronto 2009).

In discussing the effects of colonization on their Goan identity, the discussion was more muted than that about racism. That colonization was responsible for their Catholic Goan identity was not disputed, it was just not challenged in any way and was accepted as part of life – the colonial ambivalence. Goans cannot go back to a pre-Portuguese Goa that does not exist – in the words of Hall (1990), ‘history is irreversible’ (231). In moving forward, these women spoke of the benefits of colonization and gave examples of their religion and the Western influences, and little, if any, of the negative aspects. In the context of colonization, taking on attributes of the colonizers elevated the status of Goans relative to others in their ethnic group. Gandhi (1998) describes colonization by referring to it as a ‘transaction’ between the colonizers and the colonized (125).

The transactional aspect of colonization holds true for Goans, for in farming the Goan lands for their Portuguese colonizers, they were converted to Catholicism and introduced to a Western lifestyle. The same would be true for those colonized by the British in East Africa. Gandhi (1998) quotes Vikram Seth from *A Suitable Boy*, by referring to the transaction between the Indians and the

British: 'All the Indians wanted was a safe job. Bloody pen pushers, the whole lot of them'(12). Many of these Indians were Goans, who moved for work to what was then British East Africa, for they were exemplary employees who had no restrictions in their diet and were Christian. This exemplary nature of Goans resonates with what Bhabha (1984) terms the 'recognizable Other' in his discussion on mimicry of the colonizers (126). This mimicry created opportunities for Catholic Goans that were not available to others in British India or Portuguese Goa.

The Portuguese colonizers had agricultural income from the land that the Goans farmed, and the British had Goan employees that they could depend on. What these encounters create is a space in which both the colonizer and the colonized have a complex relationship (Gandhi 1998:130-131), not unlike the diaporic space as described by Brah (1996) in an earlier chapter. This complex relationship has negative and positive aspects and both sides undergo some transformation.

Transactions between colonizers and colonized often resulted in different levels of hierarchy among the locals, creating another set of Self and Other, differing from that of the colonizer and colonized. In the case of the Portuguese, influences were deliberately wielded to create animosity between Catholic Goans and other Goans. One example is the change in the diet of Catholic Goans to

incorporate pork and beef, meats that were forbidden by the religions of their Muslim and Hindu neighbours respectively. Creating animosity through food, by inclusion and exclusion, was not uncommon among colonized peoples or between ethnic groups (Avieli 2005, Narayan 1997).

Tension between Catholic Goans and Indians exists to this day and was an unintended topic of much discussion in this study. This needs to be understood as a legacy of colonization. When this occurs it is the essentializing of all Catholic Goans as primarily *not* Indian. To be clear, some women did speak of themselves as 'Indian', depending on context. Although Goa shares the same land mass and other aspects of Indian life such as laws and systems of ruling, Catholic Goans see themselves as set apart – they see themselves as superior to Indians. Hall (1990) calls this the 'doubleness of similarity and difference' (227); a direct result of colonial influence which had the 'power to make us see and experience ourselves as Other' (225).

Bhabha's (1994) explanation of 'social survival,' although in a cultural context, would apply as an explanation for what is occurring between Catholic Goans and Indians (172). 'Social survival' refers to those who have suffered subjugation yet survived. For Catholic Goans, it was out of necessity they had to be and see themselves as different from other Goans. They had to acquiesce to the Portuguese to continue to benefit from colonization and in doing so created –

or at least participated in – divisions between members of the same ethnic group (Narayan 1997, Young 2000).

Differences between members of the same ethnic group were clearly articulated when the Goan women interviewed spoke of having a Goan value set. Although the values discussed, such as the importance of family, caring for elders, the strength of the community, could be true of many ethnic groups, for these women they were strongly Goan. These cultural values were important for the meaning they provided, meaning that was not always apparent within a Canadian context (Zevallos 2003). This meaning provided a sense of belonging in a society that often left them feeling like they did not belong (Yuval-Davis et al. 2006). Using John Armstrong's term of 'border-guards,' Yuval-Davis (1993:627) describes how groups include and exclude members using cultural values such as these.

For Portuguese colonizers of Goa, one use of a 'border-guard' was the conversion of some Goans to Catholicism. Despite their religion being a direct result of colonization, many of these Goan women still partook in the rituals of the religion. It became for them what Gandhi (1998) terms a 'cultural priority,' taking on the religion of the colonizers (15-16). Kurien (1999), discussing Hindu identity amongst Indians in the United States, states that religion took on a greater role in their lives after migration, and in future generations as a way of

keeping their identity strong (649-653). This appears to be true for some of the Goan women interviewed as they spoke of wanting their children to follow their religion despite having some misgivings themselves about the tenets of the faith.

The task of passing on their culture to their children appears to be the responsibility of women in immigrant communities (Kallivayalil 2004, Narayan 1997, Yuval-Davis 1993). This is an accurate description of some of the Goan women interviewed, who spoke of passing on their Goan values and their love of Goan food to their children. According to participants, it is women as mothers who are tasked with what Beoku-Betts (1995) refers to as perpetuating a 'sense of collective memory' (551).

Part of this collective memory entails remembering and reconstituting recollections of food that serve to remind of 'home.' Foodwork, as with passing on culture, is also regarded as a gendered task (Bardenstein 2002, Harbottle 1996, Mankekar 2002). This connection to women's work may be related to the everydayness and 'mundane' nature of food (Avieli 2005, Jonsson et al. 2002). Despite the devalued nature of foodwork, there were some participants who spoke of the 'power' women wielded in the Goan community through their primary involvement in foodwork.

For women who are involved in foodwork, the power exerted within the family is in part an attempt to forge their own identity in the heat of the kitchen

(Devasahayam 2005, Fürst 1992, Jonsson et. al. 2002). This identity is what one of the Goan woman interviewed referred to, when she spoke of the 'corporate ladder at home' as a possible reason Goan women wielded influence through foodwork. For these women, it was their way of asserting their identity within a family structure that pays homage to good cooks and a community that identifies itself through the food it eats.

Why food holds such value for the Goan community could be associated with what Choo (2004) refers to as the capacity of food to take us to places we 'have come from but never been' (211). The majority of the participants had never been to Goa, but still had a very strong connection to a place that exists only in their imaginations. And for them, Goan food was inextricably linked to their Goan identity. Food creates meaning and serves to nourish more than the physical self (Avieli 2005, Fischler 1988, Jonsson et al. 2002). Food serves to fill what Srinivas (2006) refers to as 'gastro nostalgia' – a 'utopian ideal of a lost time' (210). Food fills the need to belong to a group; it nourishes the physical self and feeds the soul. For these Goan women, Goan food was a link to a place and time that no longer exists, as well as a real connection with others like them – it allowed them to belong. Goan food provides the structure on which to construct an identity largely in the absence of other distinctive cultural symbols (Highmore 2008, Lockie 2001, Valentine 1999). Food becomes part of the nostalgia these

Goan women have for 'home' and its sensory nature allows them to taste Goa with each mouthful (Bardenstein 2002, Jonsson et al.2002, Zevallos 2003). The taste of food becomes the crucial test of its authenticity.

In discussing 'real' Goan food the women interviewed spoke of the taste of food and its difference from Indian food. Some participants questioned the authenticity of certain dishes, and of Goan food itself. Abarca (2004) discusses authenticity in cooking and speaks to each dish as authentic, for it is the creation of the cook, their own 'chiste' or twist that has made it unique (4). This twist for Abarca is the ability of each cook to add a part of them to what they cook. This twist gave cooks the power to create recipes that are truly their own (Abarca 2004:20). For Goan food that is borne out of colonization, adaptation to the colonizers ways and then to the country of settlement, does not indicate a loss, rather as Choo (2004) suggests, it indicates vitality in the culture (209). It cannot be inferred that the Goan community is anything but vital after listening to the voices of these Goan women.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

My research question for this study was: How do Goan women in the Greater Toronto Area understand their food practices in relation to

(re)creating, maintaining, perpetuating, and possibly resisting, individual and group identity? The participants' responses were both surprising and expected. The majority of Goan women interviewed overwhelmingly stated that Goan food was fundamental to their Goan identity. For those women who felt that their identity was not linked to Goan food, they still partook in eating and enjoying Goan food. What was surprising was that none of the 13 participants resisted their Goan identity; in fact, they cultivated it, especially as they aged. This cultivation came through having a circle of Goan friends and business relationships, as well as Goan social organizations.

The research points to the very close link between food and identity, especially in diasporic populations. The research also confirms the gendered nature of foodwork and the power that women wield – as well as the responsibility they carry – in feeding their families. Although not all the women interviewed were primarily responsible for foodwork in their families, they were part of the decision making that resulted in Goan food being served on more than an occasional basis.

Those women, who were primarily responsible for foodwork, adapted their recipes and accommodated them to the tastes and health concerns of their families and themselves. Goan food was always present on special occasions, often with Western food as part of accommodating other tastes, and for most

families on a regular, although not always on a daily basis, during the week.

Christmas was one special occasion that was mentioned by many of the participants as a time for particular Goan food and sweets. Goan sweets were often made as a family effort and this process was considered a family tradition.

Many of the women interviewed spoke of passing on their culture to their children, well aware that generational change could occur — change that could result in the end of Goanness as they perceived it. Surprisingly, this was stated in a matter of fact way, an acceptance of change rather than a challenging of it. This acceptance could be a result of the many changes some of these women themselves have experienced, the passage to Canada often involving life in more than one country. This stance seems to imply an acceptance of the inevitability, and perhaps desirability, of a new blended or hybrid identity (Das Gupta 1997, Dwyer 2000).

One question that surprised participants was on what makes them feel most Goan. Their Goan identity was not something they questioned or unpacked, they were Goans, period. However, on further discussion, their Goanness was entrenched in what they termed Goan values. This was one section of the interview that was not directly raised, but was vocalized by *all* participants. Goan values such as the importance of family, caring for elders and the strength of their community, to name a few, were the foundation on what

their Goanness was built. These cultural values were as integrated into their Goan identity as food.

The importance of family was reiterated by many of the participants as many of them lived with, or in very close proximity to, extended family. Goan food was a staple at any family gathering and the sharing of food and recipes was a family pastime. In fact, eating food appeared to be a family pastime as some participants mentioned the nature of some Goan women to offer food, often in large quantities, at every occasion even when not called for. This trait is related to what some women called the 'draw' or enticement of the interaction, especially with older Goan women.

One cultural value that was prominent amongst most of the Goan women participants was the attachment to and the practice of Catholicism. Many of these women still practiced their religion, although there were those who spoke of it in the terms of being a 'ritual' or 'cultural' practice. This marker of Portuguese colonization was not questioned by most, but accepted as an outcome of their colonized past. It was one aspect of being Goan that made them different from other Indians — this difference was often a contentious issue among participants.

Many of these Goan women did not see themselves as Indians, despite evidence suggesting the contrary. They retained the differentiation of Us and Them; a more enduring and divisive legacy of colonization. And, they often saw

themselves as being not only different, but better than other Indians. Portuguese, and indirectly British, colonization served to divide ethnic groups, divisions that are still in place today amongst the Goans in the GTA. Colonization and its effect on Goans is a perfect segue for the areas of this research that are not reflected in the literature.

Unanswered questions

The section above refers to areas of the research that confirm existing literature. In this next section I want to raise issues that are not covered in the literature and raise questions for future discussion and research. These questions are framed within the context of a diasporic, racially marginalized group.

For the Goan women interviewed, their passage to Canada was often a culmination of living in countries that had undergone colonization, such as India and East Africa. Pakistan was created out of the partitioning of India and still carries traces of British colonization. Postcolonial literature often refers to a people who have thrown off the yoke of colonization and reclaimed their country. Such was not the case for Goans, for them there was no going back to a land before Portuguese colonization. Goans have been affected by both Portuguese and British colonization, although the former had a much greater impact. How does 'double' colonization affect identity? How can the history of

colonization experienced by Goans help us to better understand processes of colonialism and the construction of cultural identity?

In the discussion on food, there were some participants who spoke of cooking only for themselves, to feed their Goan souls, leaving other family members to fend for themselves. There is no literature that supports this assertion, as most food literature focuses on women catering to their families. In the context of a group where family is given such priority as a cultural value, how can we understand the stance these women take? Is this resistance to a gendered role in identity maintenance through food, if the key aspect of that identity maintenance concerns cultural transmission to children? Further research needs to explore the construction of femininity and notions of 'good mother' in this context. Similarly, how do we make sense of the food practices of women who cook Goan food for themselves but cater to the non-Goan food practices of partners (who may not be Goan) and children? Are they resisting cultural transmission? Violating it? Or is cultural maintenance enacted simply through feeding the self? Further research with families of differing lifestyles and compositions could illuminate some of this.

Limitations of the Research

I have noted above areas of the research that had no underpinning in existing literature, however there were also areas that were left uncovered. This

research was limited in its scope as a Masters thesis — it is but a snapshot of the Goan community in the GTA. The study raises several directions for further research; as with all research, what is uncovered is only the beginning.

Participants recruited for this study were only first generation women. Research that involves second generation Goans, research that involves Goan men and research that involves Goans living in homosexual families and as individuals, both straight and gay, as well as those living in smaller Goan communities across Canada, would add a breadth and depth to the portrait of Goans in Canada, that this research does not provide.

In this research I have attempted to show, through the voices of 13 Goan women in the GTA, what it means to be Goan in Canada today in terms of gender and food practices. I have illustrated the link between food and identity for this group and the gendered role that forges and maintains that link. In closing, I draw on a conversation with a child after completing an interview with the mother. When the mother was describing her interview with me as related to Goan food, the child raised a fist in the air and said “Sorpotel rocks!” (fieldnotes 2009). There is no more fitting note to end on than this.

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Appendix A Call for Participants

Andrea D'Sylva, a graduate student at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, is conducting research for her Masters thesis on Goan women. She is exploring how Goan women relate to food and Goan identity in Canada.

- Do you cook Goan food? Sometimes? Never? Only on holidays?
- What exactly IS Goan food to you? Why? Has this changed since you've been in Canada?
- Do you feel "more Goan" when you eat/cook Goan food?
- How important is Goan food to the Goan community?

Explore questions like these in a one-on-one interview with Andrea. She is looking for first generation Goan women, aged 18 or older, who have lived in Canada for at least five years. Interviews will be held at a location of your choice. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Please contact Andrea at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] Andrea will be in Toronto for the last two weeks of February to conduct the interviews.

Appendix B Screening Form for Participants

THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER, FOOD AND IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF GOAN WOMEN IN TORONTO, ONTARIO

Note: This form will be filled out by the researcher and is only for her use

Name: _____

Contact information: H _____ W _____

C _____ Email _____

Self-identifies as: _____

Age: _____

Migrated to Canada in: _____

Family Structure:

Partnered Y/N Divorced/Widowed/Separated

Children in household Y/N

Availability for interview:

Weekdays Y/N

Weekends Y/N Only on weekends Y/N

Daytime Y/N Specify time period _____

Evening Y/N Specify time period _____

Location of interview _____

Appendix C Interview Guide

1. I would like to start the interview by having you tell me a bit about yourself, like where you were born, when you came to Canada and so on. (use the following as probes if needed)
 - Where were you born?
 - How long have you lived in Canada?
 - Did you move to Canada directly from [birthplace]?
 - Who did you move with? Probe: parents/partner/children/siblings
2. How do you identify yourself, in terms of culture or ethnicity? And how does that change in different situations or circumstances?
 - When do you feel 'most Goan'?
3. What aspects of your life reinforce or challenge your identity(ies)?
 - Probe: social groups/language/food/dress/cultural activities (How frequent are such activities? Alone? With others? With whom and why?)
 - How important are social/community groups to your identity?
4. How has your identity as Goan (or Goan Canadian) changed over time?
 - Probe: more distinct/stronger/weaker/not relevant
 - Why has it changed? Probe relation to years lived in Canada
 - Do you think it will (continue to) change in the future? Probe: family/ social connections/existence or lack of cultural organizations
5. How do your immediate family (partner/children) and extended family (parents/siblings) identify themselves in terms of culture/ethnicity?
 - How does this affect you? How important is it to you to share an ethnic identity with your family? With friends? Probe: if they belong to a social group, how that links to personal friendships
6. How do you think being a visible minority affects your identity as Goan (Goan Canadian, South Asian – use her words)?
 - Probe: do you think immigrant communities who are white-skinned relate to their cultural identities in the same ways Goan communities may? In what ways do you find you fit in or do not fit in easily in Toronto?

- When, if ever, do you feel your being dark skinned has an effect on your day to day life? How does that affect the way you identify yourself, or the way you identify as being Goan?
7. Catholic Goans have a complex history of connection to the Portuguese and for that matter to Catholicism through the Portuguese. How do you relate to that history? Probe: does this influence your identity in any way?
 8. In this study I am looking at the connection between food and identity for Goan women. Can you tell me who is primarily responsible for preparing the meals that you eat at home? Why?
 - How would you describe the cultural background of the food you eat on a daily basis?
 - What about on special occasions [holidays/birthdays/other celebrations]?
 9. What does the phrase *Goan food* mean to you? (Probe specific dishes)
 - How often do you eat Goan food? With whom? Why?
 - Who prepares these meals?
 - Who decides what to cook and when? (Probe what types of Goan dishes/only on special occasions)
 - Where would you eat Goan food? (Probe own home/ friends /extended family/social clubs/restaurants)
 - Has the frequency of how often you eat Goan food changed over time? (Probe relation of frequency to migration history)
 10. **For those who cook Goan food:** How did you learn to cook Goan food?
 - From whom? (Probe female relatives) When? Why? (Probe at an early age/only after migration/to eat it more regularly)
 - How important is it for you to pass on your knowledge of Goan cooking? Why? (Probe teaching daughters and sons?)
 11. Do you think men and women relate similarly or differently to food, and particularly to Goan food? How and why?
 12. Earlier in the interview we talked about how you identify yourself and food was discussed as one aspect of that identity. A lot of people believe that eating culturally specific food is important to maintaining cultural identity. How important is eating Goan food for you? Why?

- How important is Goan food to Goan identity for you? For the larger community? (Probe if food not significant, what other factors/aspects make them self-identify as Goan)
 - How do/would you react if your immediate/extended family members refused to eat Goan food?
 - How/when/why do you refuse to eat/cook Goan food?
13. As we come to the close of the interview, I want to sum up that my aim has been to talk about your identity as a Goan woman and the relationship between your identity and food. [Recap with main points from interview] Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion?

Appendix D Consent Form

Consent Form for Study Participants [on letter head]

THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER, FOOD AND IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF GOAN WOMEN IN TORONTO, CANADA

Researcher

Andrea D'Sylva
Graduate Student
Women and Gender Studies
Mount Saint Vincent University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
[REDACTED]

Introduction and Invitation

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Andrea D'Sylva, a Graduate Student in Women and Gender Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University, as part of her Master's thesis. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is described below. This description tells you about the risks, inconvenience, or discomfort that you might experience. Participating in the study will not likely benefit you, but we might learn things that will benefit others. You should discuss any questions you have about this study with Andrea, who will be interviewing you if you agree to participate.

People who have cultural roots outside of Canada often have an attachment to the food of their home/ancestral country. We know that it is often the women in the family and community who prepare that food. What we do not know is what role women have in using food as a means of creating, reinforcing and even resisting a particular identity. There is no existing research on food and identity among Goan Canadians.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which Goan women, through the use of food, play a role in the formation, maintenance or resistance of Goan identity in their families and the larger community.

Researcher Identity

You are welcome to ask any questions, at any time, regarding any aspect of this study. You may ask questions of the researcher who is interviewing you, Andrea D'Sylva at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or her thesis supervisor, Dr. Brenda Beagan, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, at [REDACTED].

Who can Participate

You must be female, at least 18 years of age, first generation and self-identify as Catholic Goan. You must have lived in Canada at least five years.

Tasks Outlined and Time Commitment

Your involvement in this study will involve one interview with Andrea. You will be asked to talk about your connection to Goa, the factors that make you Goan, the cultural background of the food you eat, the practices that promote or inhibit your Goan identity. The interview will last about 1 - 1.5 hours, will be audio-recorded and be at a location of your choice that will offer privacy.

Harms and Benefits

The only potential risks for participation in this research study is that other people, especially people from the Toronto Goan community, may be able to figure out from things you have said that you participated in the study. Whenever the researcher suspects this may be the case, she will contact you for permission to use the quote. Every effort possible will be made to make sure your comments are not identifiable, as there will be no identifying aspects to any quotes used.

There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. Indirectly, through talking about it you may gain insight into the kinds of things that influence your identity. Your participation in this study may also benefit the Canadian Goan community by helping them understand what makes people identify as Goans, and how food may or may not play a role.

Decline Participation/ Withdrawal Anytime

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may simply choose not to participate if you don't want to. You may choose to skip any questions or parts of questions, at any time during the interview. You may also choose to withdraw from the study at any time, even after starting the interview, without any consequences. Any information you have already provided will be destroyed unless you state that you do not mind it being used for the study.

Once a draft of the analysis has been completed for the Masters thesis, it will no longer be possible to withdraw your information.

Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential throughout the study and whenever I report the findings of the study. Any tapes, notes and interview transcripts will be labelled with a code number and/or false name, and stored in a locked drawer. Your name will be recorded only on this consent form and on one master list that links your name to your code number and/or false name. The consent form and master list will be stored in a separate locked drawer, accessible only to Andrea. They will be destroyed after the completion of the thesis. When Andrea reports the findings of this study, she will not report details about you that would allow others to identify you.

Contact if you have Concerns

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact someone who is not directly involved in this study: Chair, Research Ethics Board, Mount Saint Vincent University, for assistance at 902.457.6350 or research@msvu.ca

Obtaining Consent and Signature

Your signature below indicates that:

1. You have received a copy of this consent form for your own records
2. You consent to participate in this study.
3. You consent to the use of quotations from your interviews, in reports from this study.

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Participant signing above

Special Consent for Audio Recording

You consent to have your interviews audio-recorded.

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Participant signing above

Study findings:

✿ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study findings. Please send the summary to this address (either an email or postal address):
