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*Foodways away from home.  
The symbolic value of food in the experience  
of refugees in Berlin*

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## **INTRODUCTION: Foodways Away From Home**

In recent years, millions of refugees have embarked on a desperate journey to reach Europe, crossing the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas in the attempt to escape from war and persecution. The situation has escalated between 2015 and 2016, as the number of asylum-seekers entering Europe has reached unprecedented heights, with the UNHCR reporting more than 1.3 million sea arrivals. Due to this so-called “refugee-crisis”, asylum has become a major political issue in Europe, and the public discourse has recurrently been shaped by the notion of emergency. Having become the focus of attention, refugees are often depicted as subjects lacking agency, and this idea is well epitomized by the notion of “forced migration”, which is a concept that implies passivity (Costantini, 2016, p.149-150).

While they might find themselves in a liminal position, this research will focus on the experience of refugees in Berlin by exploring the realities of their everyday lives through the lens of food, and in doing so emphasis will be placed on their agentive force in the creation of a new life in exile. Within conditions that are often restrictive they are trying to start a new life in a new unfamiliar environment, with all the difficulties it can entail: from learning the languages, to finding a job, and more generally to renewing their sense of home.

The purpose of this research is to explore the role that food and food practices play in this phase of their lives. In particular, the aim is to understand how their decisions regarding food can enable a creative force in the process of adjusting to a new context, empowering them in this way as active subjects. In order to answer this overarching question, drawing on previous research, two aspects in particular will be addressed: on the one hand, the symbolic value food has in providing a sense of continuity and in fostering a connection to home; on the other hand, the social dimension of food as a means to maintain and create social relationships. The ultimate goal is to understand if food can provide a sense of home, and facilitate the creation of a community.

### *An anthropological perspective*

An anthropological perspective was adopted in the exploration the aforementioned themes. By stretching between the concepts of Oneness and Otherness, anthropology provides a broad approach to exploring different aspects of what makes us human: what unites us and what separates us as human beings<sup>1</sup>. Thus, anthropologic reflection aims to comprehend different cultural phenomena and encounters between different visions of the world, and in doing so it highlights the differences between human societies as well as the commonalities of the human experience (Costantini, Massa, & Yazdani, 2016, p.12).

While acknowledging that our vision and understanding of the world is shaped through cultural and social norms, anthropology attempts to go beyond prejudices, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism: namely our predisposition to judge other forms of moral, religious and social systems conforming to one's own world view. By listening to different voices and points of view, the anthropological gaze can provide a critical reflection and show the cultural and social constructs behind what appears as an obvious reality (Costantini, Massa, & Yazdani, 2016, p.12).

A subfield of this discipline is the anthropology of food, which has become a prominent field of study with the acknowledgement of the importance of food as a cultural element. Foodways, can illuminate social and cultural dynamics that are essential in the creation of identity, relationships, and hierarchies; by focusing on the potential of food to reflect various facets of the human experience, food studies have become a useful means of exploring the dynamic nature of processes in political, economic and social settings (Mintz & Du Bois, 2002, p.99-100).

Recently, there has been an increasing interest in the study of food within the context of migration, and food has been recognized as being crucial in the migrant experience because of its role in identity construction, and in providing a sense of belonging in a situation characterized by alterity (Abbots, 2016, p.1-4).

In view of these considerations, an anthropological perspective was adopted in order to observe the role of food in the lives of refugees in Berlin, and in doing so acknowledging their differentiated social experience in the context of migration, which

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.americananthro.org/AdvanceYourCareer/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2150>

is due to the often dramatic nature of their mobility, their situation of liminality in the society, and the condition of uncertainty and volatility that characterizes their lives.

### *Food and migration: an overview*

Generally, in addition to spatial dislocation, the migratory experience entails an existential movement that causes a rupture in the lives of migrants, who find themselves transplanted into an unknown environment suffused with unfamiliar meanings (La Barbera, 2015, p.4). The lack of familiar reference points can result in a sense of loss and nostalgia, which can be exacerbated by difficulties in adjusting to the new setting, or by hostility from the new society (La Barbera, 2015, p.4). Consequently, migrants find themselves in an “in between situation” at the intersection of different worlds (Gronseth, 2013, p.9), often characterized by a feeling of exclusion, and a feeling of not belonging “here” but also no longer “there” (La Barbera, 2015, p.4).

The confrontation with a world that is configured differently is indeed a cause of distress; however, to some extent, the struggles faced by migrants are due to major structural constraints imposed by the receiving country. In fact, the social structures encountered in the new society have a great influence in shaping the experience of migrants. Although we live in a world increasingly characterized by movement, migrants often appear as a “humanity in excess”, as something that goes against the natural order of things (Costantini, Massa, & Yazdani, 2016, p.27). This view stems from a conceptualization of place as segmented into separate and distinct units, which is at the basis of the idea of nation states (Mallki, 1992, p.31).

This territorial framework affects the category of refugees to a great extent, as it follows a rhetoric that sees them as a deviation in an inflexible world of nation states (Essed, Frerks, & Schrijvers, 2004, p.6). While the distinction between voluntary and forced migration is blurred – there can be several reasons that lead to the decision to migrate – the way in which the category of refugees is conceptualized has significant implications, as it leads to the creation of a differentiated experience (Castles, 2003, p.4).

One of the greatest issues with the conceptualization of the category of refugees is the failure to ascribe any agency to them, thus reducing them to a constructed label.

Seeing them as passive victims unable to help themselves, and failing to see them as people with initiative and talent, is not representative of their experience and does not capture the complexities of this phenomenon (Essed, Frerks, & Schrijvers, 2004, p.6).

While we should be mindful of the structural limitations experienced by refugees, we should also recognize them as playing an active role – even if determined in contingency – and acknowledge their creative endeavors in starting a new life. While the situation of refugees may be characterized by uncertainty, our human predisposition to adjust gives life to an existential and agentive force, which allows them to create new beginnings, and envision alternative possibilities for the future with the power of imagination (Gronseth, 2013, p.19).

With these considerations in mind, the aim of this research, as mentioned above, is to highlight the role of refugees as active agents in the context of migration; by observing how, despite being pervaded by a sense of loss, through everyday practices they can create a new sense of self, adjusting to the contingent moment. Food can be an interesting lens of analysis because of its significance as a cultural element, as well as its considerable role in the process of identity creation and in the construction of a community.

Food is one of the most basic necessities; we need food to survive. Yet, food is not only nourishment for our bodies, but also for our cultural and social selves. As Montanari (2017) argued, food is culture when we produce it, as we create our own food manipulating nature; food is culture when we prepare it, as we transform our food through elaborated techniques; food is culture when we consume it, as we choose our food carefully amongst a wide range of possibilities (p.xi-xii). Since human beings are cultural beings, food becomes a crucial element of human identity.

The significance of food as a cultural element lies in the fact that it is a habitual and pervasive presence in our lives. Food practices represent a significant part of our daily activities: we spend time and energy in the choice and preparation of food, in addition to it being an element present in most occasions of sociality. Because food is an important aspect of culture, and because we are in contact with food everyday, food becomes central to our sense of identity, being a marker of similarities and differences amongst different groups of people. As Fischler (1988) argued, “the way any given human group eats helps



it assert at the same time both its oneness and the otherness of whoever eats differently” (p.275).

Since it is such a crucial element of our lives, researching food in the context of migration can raise interesting considerations. Migration does not only mean leaving a place, but also leaving the experience of that place. When migrating, people leave behind a sensorial world that they grew accustomed to, which is also part of their way of giving meaning to the world. Food can be a representation of this sensory world because of its sensual nature: the tastes, the smells, the colors, the way it feels to the touch; these are all things that result in the creation of a powerful sensescape (Holtzman, 2006, p.365). Thus, food assumes a central role in the lives of migrants by recreating a sensory landscape similar to the one they left behind.

Thanks to its sensual nature, food can be a powerful trigger of memories, which play an important role in the lives of migrants as a way to maintain a connection to the past, and to provide a sense of continuity that allows them to move forward (Abbots, 2016, p.3). The sensual experience of food can be a particularly significant in moments of uncertainty and struggle: by recalling the taste of home – as well as the experience of home – food can foster a connection to the homeland, and in doing so it alleviates the pain and fear caused by living in an unfamiliar world, satisfies an emotional need, and creates a sense of belonging in continuity with the past (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.368).

The familiarity of traditional food, which recreates a meaningful sensescape, is essential for migrants to maintain a sense of self because of the strong connection, both symbolic and cultural, that food has to their homeland. Thus, the immediate and embodied experience of food can help migrants in transcending place, and in evoking memories of their home that provide them with a sense of continuity in the disruptive context of migration.

In addition to the symbolic value of familiar food, another important aspect to highlight is the fact that food is almost always shared. Commensality is a significant act for migrants, as sharing food and eating together are powerful ways to make personal and collective bonds; it is a way to maintain and reinforce existing relationships within families or group of friends, as well as to allow the creation of new ones by facilitating the encounter with the Other (Coleman, 2013, p.1-16).

Taking these aspects into consideration, the ultimate purpose of this research is to understand how food can act as a means of community and home creation in the experience of refugees, and in doing so emphasize their agency, creativity, and imagination in this process.

*A qualitative approach: participant observation and in-depth interviews*

In order to answer the research question, a qualitative approach was adopted: participant observation and in-depth interviews. Qualitative research aims to provide a broad understanding of social phenomena within the natural context in which they take place. Focusing on the lived experience of individuals, it stresses their agentic power in the process of giving meaning to their everyday experience.

A qualitative approach resulted in the collection of detailed information and a deeper exploration into the selected issues to answer the research question. Moreover, by exploring different nuances related to their experience, it allowed to provide a narrative informed by the perspectives of the participants.

The empirical settings within which I conducted my research were three reception centers in Berlin, which I frequented regularly over a period of 5 months from November 2017 until April 2018. In doing so, I had the possibility opportunity to understand, and become more familiar with, the context, as well as having opportunities for a closer observation of the daily lives of the residents.

Participant observation led to the collection of data, which was reported in the form of field notes. This method enabled to learn more about their experience through the observation of, and participation in, some of their daily activities. Moreover, I developed familiarity with the context as well as with the participants.

The collection of interviews – recorded and then transcribed – was also an important part of the research. Using a semi-structured outline format, the objective was to give the participants an opportunity to express themselves freely, thus eliciting a more vivid picture of their experience so as to learn about their interpretation of the world. In addition to interviewing residents of the centers, interviews were also conducted with

some of the employees, which enabled a better understanding of the organization and functioning of the reception centers.

The combination of these two methods helped in providing a more comprehensive understanding of the context and the experience of refugees living there. .

### *Structure of the paper*

In the first two chapters some of the literature that defines the research's core concepts will be examined in more depth.

The first chapter will outline the recent developments of food studies, presenting some of the perspectives adopted in this field. In the second section of this chapter, the focus will be on the interpretation of food as a cultural element, by exploring the evolution of the nature-culture relationship with regard to food practices, and by putting emphasis on the symbolic value of food in the process of identity creation.

The second chapter combines the field of food and migration studies. The first section will explore some of the aforementioned themes in more depth, highlighting some features typical of the migratory experience with focus on the conceptualization of the category of refugees. In the second section of the chapter, a review of some of the literature on food in the context of migration will be presented. Some of the most relevant themes that will be explored are: food as a means of maintaining a connection to home and providing a sense of continuity; the gendered nature of food practices and the changes that migration can provoke with regard to gender roles; food as a sensual element and as a trigger of memories; and eating as a shared activity that can engender hospitality and reciprocity in the context of migration.

In the third chapter, an overview of the German reception system will be provided in order to have a better picture of the macro situation. After a brief excursus of the history of emigration policies in Germany and a discussion about the influence of the multilevel governance of asylum, the focus will be on the recent situation: addressing questions regarding the asylum procedure, the organization of accommodations, and integration measures.

A detailed description of the methodology will be the topic of the fourth chapter. This section will provide a detailed account of the methods adopted, and the steps followed for the collection of data and their analysis, as well as a description of the reception centers in which the research was conducted.

The final chapter will address some of the most relevant themes that emerged during the course of the research. In particular, emphasis will be placed on the role of food in the experience of refugees as a means for creating community.

# 1. THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF FOOD

Since the moment we are born, food is an ever-present element in our lives. As it is one of our primary needs, from a strictly biological point of view, eating is the natural response to our instinct of survival; a way to satisfy our hunger and get the nutrition we need to keep living. We cannot deprive ourselves of food, much in the same way as we cannot stop breathing. On an evolutionary level, eating has also been compared to the sex drive: a basic instinct that compels us to reproduce and maintain our species (Mintz, 2013, p.xxvi). While taking into account the biological and evolutionary perspectives, it is impossible not to notice some peculiar characteristics in how we satisfy this urge, which unlike sex, we must submit to every day, and unlike breathing, does not happen “naturally” (Mintz, 2013, p.xxvi).

Its pervasiveness and its common habitual use might lead us to consider food a banal element of our lives, but as much as it is a biological need, food also represents an essential system for communication of human identity (Lupton, 1996, p.1). Food practices and preferences are suffused with cultural meaning in all human societies; the way we choose our food, the way we eat and cook are all part of what characterizes the human experience, which establishes itself between the biological and the social dimensions. Thus, food is a significant part of what differentiates us, and binds us at the same time to the world of nature and the world of culture.

In this chapter, the focus will be the anthropological-social perspective on foodways. To begin with, there will be a brief account of the development of food studies, presenting some of the different perspectives adopted throughout the years. In the second section, the focus will be the importance of food as a cultural element: emphasizing the relevance of the symbolical value of food, and addressing its role in identity creation and social differentiation, as well as its association with emotions and memories.

## **Anthropological perspectives on food**

For a long time, the study of food was exclusively approached from a nutritional perspective, whereby food and eating were only considered with regard to the physiological need they have to fulfill in a determined ecological context (Lupton, 1996, p.6). While recognizing the importance of food as a biological need, and the influence of food's availability in the development of food practices, the field of food studies became more prominent with the acknowledgment of the importance of its cultural dimension, which stemmed from the realization that food related practices have not developed in a random and casual way.

Prior to the 1980s food was not considered a legitimate field of study on its own, as it was believed to be a mundane and unworthy topic (Mintz, 2013, p.xxvi). In addition to the pioneering studies of the 1970s, which opened the discussion about food practices, some changes in society have also had a significant influence in transforming food from a marginalized, to a mainstream topic. As Mintz (2013) explained, before the 1950s, the main preoccupation of people in Europe and the USA was to get enough food as people were living in fear of starvation, but after the end of the war and the restoration of the economy "adequate food became the norm" (p.xxvi).

While interest in food increased, it still remained marginalized, confined to the domestic science courses and not fit for the social sciences (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008, p.1). In altering this perspective, Counihan and Van Esterik (2008) emphasized the role of feminism and women's studies, which legitimated "a domain of human behavior so heavily associated with women over time" (p.2).

Other changes in the 1970s, such as an increased interest in migration and an incredible surge in travel, contributed to making interest in foods become more popular (Mintz, 2013, p. xxvi).

As the topic gained legitimacy, the potential of food studies was unleashed, revealing the richness of the meanings associated with food: a nourishment not only for our bodies, but also for our cultural and social selves. Nowadays, the wealth of literature on food is incredibly vast, addressing a broad variety of issues, and ranging from the fields of anthropology and sociology to economics and politics.

The first scholars to take an interest in the field of food studies adopted a structuralist approach, which saw food and eating habits as culturally and socially constructed. According to structuralists, our actions, thoughts, values, and identities are structured through social norms (Lupton, 1996, p.8); therefore, their primary interest was to understand the ways in which food is part of our social lives.

Claude Levi-Strauss is considered one of the pioneers in this field. Drawing from linguistic postulates, he focused on binary oppositions, which are able to convey meaning in language, and applied this concept to food practices (Lupton, 1996, p.9).

An interesting observation he made, is that food must be good to think before being good to eat; what he meant by this, is that in order to consider something as food, it must first be defined as such in a determined culture. (For instance, in most European countries we wouldn't consider insects as edible, despite having high nutritional values.) The moment we define what constitutes food, we also determine ourselves as cultural beings.

According to him, the distinction between nature and culture is the primary opposition, which creates meaning in the understanding of food (Lévi-Strauss, 2008, p.37). In his essay "The Culinary Triangle", he identified a "triangular semantic of the raw, the cooked, and the rotted", which together with the other significant opposition of elaborated/unelaborated, can create a system of meaning (Lévi-Strauss, 2008, p.37). Through the combination of these sets of oppositions, we create food and give meaning to it, so that cooking becomes "with language a truly universal form of human activity" (Lévi-Strauss, 2008, p.36).

Acknowledging the importance of food choice and food transformation as an expression of cultural values, Levi-Strauss raised considerations about the function of food as a means of symbolic communication and the relationship between nature and culture.

Roland Barthes also adopted a structuralist perspective and explored the symbolic value of food; focusing on its role and function in context. In his essay "Elements of Semiology", he drew on De Saussure's linguistic principles to identify different signifying systems, including food, which like language is highly structured (Barthes, 2008, p.30). In fact, in his view food is a sign, which, through rules of exclusions, signifying oppositions of units, and rules of associations, creates an essential system of

communication of human identity with its own rhetoric realized through rituals (Barthes, 1977, p.28). “Substances, techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification, and as soon as this happens, we have communication by way of food” (Barthes, 2008, p.30); acting as an agent of communication, what food can tell us is something about culture and society.

The metaphor of food as a linguistic system and the interpretation of food as a code was further explored by Mary Douglas. In her essay, “Deciphering a Meal”, analyzed the meals of her family and identified rules that determine the typical meal; according to her, what gives meaning to a meal is the repeated structure that creates a system of analogy, or in the case of festive days or special occasions, differentiates itself from those structures (Douglas, 2010, p.231). Thus, the message encoded by food “will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed” (Douglas, 2010, p.231).

These first studies have considerable value as they opened a discussion on the ability of food to convey meaning (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008, p.3). The above-mentioned attempts at understanding the “rules” behind food habits and practices gave importance to the symbolic nature of foodways in the context of a culture, and introduced some themes that are still relevant to this day. However, this approach has been criticized for not taking history into account, therefore neglecting the dynamic and continuous evolution of food practices and preferences; and for being “biologically reductive and ethnocentric” (Lupton, 1996, p.10). Lupton (1996) described structuralism as being “somewhat essentialist” (p.10) in its attempt to assign a univocal meaning to food practices as a linguistic text while neglecting the dynamic and contextual nature of foodways.

While the symbolic and metaphorical value of food still remains an area of interests, building on these considerations, the successive approaches aimed to be more sensitive to the historical and comparative dimension: taking into consideration the broader context in which meanings are produced, and emphasizing the dynamic nature of processes in political, economic and social settings (Lupton, 1996, p.10).

Perhaps the strongest opponent of the structural perspective is Marvin Harris, who openly rejected all the semiotic interpretations and assumed an extreme materialist position in stating that eating habits are a result of ecological and environmental



considerations regarding food. He believes that food symbolism is secondary and derives from ecological, nutritional or political and economic considerations. In his essay collection *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture*, he tried to find an explanation for some of the seemingly more bizarre food habits, starting from the assumption that “there are generally good and sufficient practical reasons for why people do what they do, and food is no exception” (Harris, 1985, p.14). He refused Levi-Strauss’s assertion that something has to be “good to think” before being considered as food, and tried to find an alternative way of explaining the great diversity of foodways around the world. Two challenges he undertook were trying to explain the food taboos of beef in Hinduism and pork in Islamic and Jewish culture.

Regarding the importance of the sacred cow in Hinduism, Harris reported that the tendency towards beef avoidance happened simultaneously with an intense growth in population, deforestation and the rise of intensive farming and dairying (Harris, 1985, p.52-53). According to him, meat consumption was becoming too costly given the rise in population, who could be fed more efficiently by focusing on dairying and food such as wheat, millets and lentils (Harris, 1985, p.53). However, cows still remained an incredible resource, because in addition to providing milk they are also the mothers of the most cost effective plows pullers, which are especially useful for intensive farming (Harris, 1985, p.56). Drawing on knowledge of history and economics, he rationalized this apparently inexplicable religious behavior considering it a reasonable cost effective decision, in which the “religious prescription contributed to the solution of this problem, preventing slaughter, and counteracting the temptation to eat meat” (Harris, 1985, p.63).

A very different fate befell the pig in Muslim and Hebrew communities: not only is it avoided, it is also considered an abominable, dirty, and impure creature. Contrary to ruminants, domesticated pigs were only useful for meat supply; therefore, when their husbandry became difficult due to ecological reasons, the return did not justify the investment that they required. In his account, Harris (1985) asserted that in the dry and hot regions of the Middle East it is far more costly to farm pigs in comparison to ruminants, as they need cool places, extra water and they consume foods that humans also eat; in addition, they provide no use other than for their meat (p.72-74). In his opinion, these were the reasons that the pig became “not only useless, but hurtful” (Harris, 1985, p.76): unfavorable conditions and “no alternative function which could redeem its

existence” (Harris, 1985, p.76). Thus, he refers to pig avoidance as being the correct decision from an ecological and economic perspective, which, overall was advantageous for the population. (Harris, 1985, p.87).

His belief is that “food must nourish the collective stomach before it can feed the collective mind” (Harris, 1985, p.15), which means that what we decide to eat is generally a result of cost and benefits in terms of nutrition, ecology, economy.

Mintz adopted a less extreme position: while placing importance on the materialistic aspects, he also acknowledged the relevance of food rituals as symbolic, bringing in this way the two extreme perspectives together.

In his essay “Time, Sugar, and Sweetness” (2008), he dealt with the mystery of sugar consumption and aimed to understand why there has been such a massive rise in consumption of sugar in Europe. Until the 17th century, people in northern Europe used honey as a source for sweetness. Europeans had been aware of the process of refining sugar cane into sugar since the 8th century; however, prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was an expensive luxury, mostly regarded as medicine (Mintz, 2008, p.96-97). It then became an exotic spice for the upper classes, and eventually became a “proletarian commonplace” (Mintz, 2008, p.94), being considered as a necessity by the majority of the population. The rise in demand happened simultaneously with a fall in price – sustainable only because of a system of forced labor – that rendered it attainable for lower classes (Mintz, 2008, p.98).

However, Mintz (2008) does not see the lower class consumption of sugar as simple imitation, as he inserts this change in habits into a broader discourse of class struggle; in fact, sugar proved to be especially useful in view of the changes in routines that originated with the industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism (p.94). He underlines the peculiar characteristics of sugar, as being a valuable “cheap source of quick energy” (Mintz, 2008, p.94); together with other the products of other plantations such as coffee, rum, and tobacco, sugar was part of a group of proletarian hunger killers (Mintz, 2008, p.94). The massive increase in consumption of these “drug foods” happened not only due to increasing overseas trade, but also because of the rise of industrial production and the introduction of new ingestible products (Mintz, 2008, p.100).

Approaching the subject from various perspectives, his account is particularly brilliant as it shows that the history of sugar can tell us much more about power, the economic influence on social change, and how food and culture acquire symbolic meaning.

## **Understanding food as a cultural element**

As Mintz (2013) argued, “we have had no natural food since we became fully human, except perhaps for mother’s milk” (p.ii). In fact, we have been creating and transforming our food from the earliest times, establishing powerful traditions through deep-rooted knowledge and values, while at the same time experiencing new realities, which brought changes and innovations. Suffused with history and meaning, food represents a crucial element of human identity (Montanari, 2017, p.xii).

Food has become such a significant element of culture through the evolution of the relationship between man and nature. One might argue that the simple definition of a foodstuff as edible transforms it into a cultural element, since we selectively choose our food. Humans are omnivores; however, we select our foods based on individual and collective preferences, connected with values, meanings and tastes. Undoubtedly there are environmental and historical aspects to take into consideration, but food choice is also an important marker of culture. All food behaviors go through a moment of choice, and there are different mechanism through which choice is made (Montanari, 2017, p.73). Since food is not good or bad in an absolute sense – we have been taught to recognize it as such – we can say that taste is constructed and thus it is a cultural product (Montanari, 2017, p.73). There is obviously a subjective side to taste as it is an individual sensation, but taste as part of our cultural heritage is also determined through our brains, which evaluate what is good or bad for us; in this sense taste becomes a collective and communicative product (Lupton, 1996, p.8).

Fischler (1988) raised an interesting point in the discussion of food preferences and avoidances in his essay “Food, Self and Identity”, that explores the implications of the omnivorous nature of man, which implies freedom but also constraints. In fact, we

are able to survive and find nutrition on a great variety of different foods and this enabled us to adjust to the various environments; however, simultaneously we need to diversify our diets, as we cannot get all the nutrition we need for survival from one source (Fischler, 1988, p.278-279). He described a tension between the fear of the unknown or resistance to change, and the need to explore and change, which create an intrinsic anxiety in our relationship to food (Fischler, 1988, p.278-279). In his view, in addition to our biological instincts, humans overcome this paradox by developing “highly sophisticated cognitive competences and culturally constructed practices and representations” (Fischler, 1988, p.278).

Humans started to impose their power over nature with the intention to control and manipulate it for their own benefits, and over time, we developed increasingly sophisticated techniques to artificially create our own food, thus distancing ourselves from nature (Montanari, 2017, p.5-9).

The establishment of agriculture and the domestication of animals marked a turning point in this sense, as they had major implications in other aspects of the human experience: they marked the passage from nomadic to sedentary societies, and enabled in this way the development of organized civilities (Montanari, 2017, p.5-9). Another emblematic example is the attempt to control time with the development of preservation techniques, which had incredible consequences in the history of food; in fact, most of these practices – desiccation, smoking, salting – change the taste of food drastically, so that it becomes a culturally determined aspect as well (Montanari, 2017, p.17-22). However, the most distinguishing feature of human food habits is probably fire. In the act of cooking, we radically transform the products of nature into something that is profoundly different, into constructed food; this it is the ultimate way of shaping natural resources (Montanari, 2017, p.35-40).<sup>2</sup>

As a constant and habitual element of our lives, food becomes central to our sense of identity. Our relationship with food is in the first instance a bodily one, but it assumes

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<sup>2</sup> While fire represents a fundamental moment of human civility, it must be recognized that fire and cuisine don't always coincide, and that even before this discovery humans had been transforming nature in other ways, modifying shapes, consistencies, colors through the adoption of techniques which distance us from nature

meanings that go beyond the biological and nutritional, and becomes a cultural fact with specific symbolic significance (Fischler, 1988, p.275). Eating then is laden with meanings and represents a daily reaffirmation of our identity. Being a powerful signifier of identity, it also automatically assumes significance as a marker of differentiation between different groups in terms of ethnic, religious and class belonging (among other kinds of identities). As Fischler (1988) put it, “the way any given human group eats helps it assert (..) at the same time both its oneness and the otherness of whoever eats differently” (p.275).

Being a powerful marker of difference, food can tell us about social differences as well; in fact, taste is not only a cultural product, but also a social one. As Montanari (2017) pointed out, the hunger of many and the abundance enjoyed by the few are unlikely to result in the same choices; as a consequence, eating habits can reflect social differences, expressed by both the quantity and the quality of what we eat (p.89-99).

Adopting a historical perspective, Montanari (2017) explained how during periods of fear of hunger and famine, quantity of food was a way for the dominant classes to show superiority (p.89). In medieval Europe, when the vast majority of people were preoccupied with finding enough food, powerful people were represented as great eaters; interestingly, this also had implications for aesthetic ideals, as being fat was an indicator of wealth and wellbeing (Montanari, 2017, p.89-93).

As eating a lot became a common practice, great quantities of food were not representative of power anymore. Therefore, as a way of differentiation, new ideals were developed among the wealthy, and the value of thinness, connected to that of rapidity, productivity and efficiency, became a new cultural model in the Western world in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Montanari, 2017, p.96-97).

Quality of food can also express social belonging. Bourdieu’s work has been crucial in establishing the importance of the influence of structural differentiation in determining food tastes. Bourdieu sees ‘habitus’ as being the central element in cultural and social reproduction, in that it establishes regular and expected behaviors due to objective conditions, which can influence the social life of individuals depending on their social class, and which have the tendency to persist even in if the conditions change (Sato, Gittelsohn, Unsain, Roble, & Scagliusi, 2016, p.175).

Eating practices and taste preference are also a result of ‘habitus’; he observed a distinction in eating practices among different social classes and identified two categories of taste: “the taste of luxury/freedom” and the “taste of necessity” (Sato et al., 2016, p.175). The first one spread among the dominant classes who had access to a broader variety of food and preferred food, which is light, delicate and refined, whereas the latter was more characteristic of the working class, who preferred heavier, cheaper and more filling food (Sato et al., 2016, p.175). In this way, the practice of eating adheres to a symbolic code, which leads to access to and appreciation of certain types of foods; in Bourdieu’s view, taste “is a virtue made of necessity which continuously transforms necessity into virtue by inducing choices which correspond to the condition of which it is the product” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.175).

He offered a valuable perspective by explaining how the quality of food can be an expression of social identity, stretching between social conditioning and intentionality. However, if in one respect, we can understand how food habits and preferences are influenced by the status of a group, simultaneously it is important to emphasize that it is one thing to eat, and be used to, certain kinds of foods, and another thing to appreciate them.

Montanari (2017) argued that the success of specific food items has often been determined by their status (p.86). He took as an example the evolution of the status of brown bread. In Medieval times, European peasants used to make brown bread with inferior cereals, yet they had always desired to eat white bread like the noble classes; as white bread became affordable for the lower classes, it was abandoned by the higher class who started to use brown bread as a symbol of distinction, retrieving rural food models in the idealization of a past they were never part of (Montanari, 2017, p.86-87). Spices have a similar history, as they became popular among the rich when they first arrived in Medieval Europe due to their rarity, but were abandoned once they became abundant (Montanari, 2017, p.87).

Whereas the rich might always like what they have because they can afford to eat what they want, this is not necessarily the case for the poorest parts of the population, which often do not have access to their desired foods, and therefore might not appreciate what they have.

As much as it is a signifier of differences, food also brings people together. As Fox (2014) stated, eating together is indeed typical of the human species and it is an extreme social urge (p.1). Commensality gains a significance that goes beyond its functional dimension, acquiring a communicative value as we surround every gesture with meanings. The way we eat is not casual but organized through conventions, which structure and give meaning to food practices. In this sense, the metaphor of food as language assumes importance, as it highlights the relevance of the modality in which we consume food every day, expressing symbolic values about our social selves. If we analyze a meal from this perspective, we do not see food as just a casual sum of products, but as system within which everything has a symbolic value (Montanari, 2017, p. 137).

Food practices are impregnated with cultural meaning, and they are bearers of traditions and group identities; but they are a medium of self-representation as much as they are a tool for cultural exchange, representing an easy way to enter in contact with other people (Montanari, 2017, p. 153-156). It is indeed through the continuous exchange and contact between different food cultures that our present food traditions are formed (Montanari, 2017, p. 153).

Food practices have obviously been influenced by habitat – as we first started to feed ourselves with what nature gave us in a specific place – and by changes in the environmental conditions. However, they are also the result of a history of contacts and exchanges, which resulted in different varied food system, which in every aspect – from acquisition to preparation to ritualistic consumption – is laden with cultural, historical and social meaning. These characteristics are not fixed in time and space, on the contrary “practices are dynamic, they have a trajectory or path of development, a history conditional upon the institutional arrangements characteristic of time, space and social context” (Holm, 2013, p. 326).

Identity and change are often thought as opposites, as if exchange was somehow a threat to the preservation of identity and to the cultural heritage of a society; this might lead to mistrust towards what is different in fear of contamination (Montanari, 2017, p.154). As Montanari (2017) argued, history shows us exactly the contrary: cultural identities are not a metaphysical reality inscribed in the genetic heritage of a society; they change and redefine themselves continuously (p.159-160). Food identities, and cultural

identities in general, are a product of a history of exchanges, only partially retraceable to geographical and environmental conditions.



## **2. FOOD AND MIGRATION**

One of the most important themes that emerged in the previous chapter is the importance of food as a cultural element for identity creation (in terms of ethnicity, social class, religion etc.) and how food practices, surrounded by a variety of symbolic meanings, represent a daily reaffirmation of our sense of self: individually and socially. Considerations about identity are relevant in the context of migration as well, especially since during this process some features of our sense of self become more prominent. While recognizing that identity is contingent to cultural and historical settings and therefore subject to change, shifts usually happen gradually maintaining a sense of continuity. As is the case with migration, what happens when our points of reference drastically change? And what role does food play in this process? These are the questions this chapter aims to address; firstly by briefly outlining some features typical of the migrant experience, and then by exploring some themes, which testify to the relevance of foodways in the context of migration.

### **The migrant experience**

From the earliest times, as our ancestors started spreading to different continents, migration has been a characterizing trait of human history, and it has had a great influence in creating the world as we know it. Despite being a recurring phenomenon, it keeps shifting in nature; the reasons that compel people to migrate have changed significantly throughout history. A concept metaphor that depicts the constant flux typical of our time is that of mobility – intended not as mere movement but as a meaningful experience that embraces all aspects of our lives (Salazar & Smart, 2011, p.ii) and entails expectations, aspirations, systems of values, political organizations and modalities of social and economic reproduction (Costantini, Massa, & Yazdani, 2016, p.29).

In a world increasingly characterized by movement, in which it has become obvious that societies and cultures are not separate entities, but overlap and change rapidly in time, the experience of migrants is representative of the human condition and

the challenges one undergoes when moving “between shifting social and cultural context” (Grønseth, 2013, p.1). Migrants become the embodiment of this condition: not only do they move geographically from one place to another, but they also experience existential movements generated by living at the intersection of different worlds (Grønseth, 2013, p.1).

People who leave their countries find themselves “without a history and without an image” (La Barbera, 2015, p. 4), surrounded by a new and unknown universe infused with unfamiliar meanings, often feeling lost and alone due to the lack of familiar reference points (La Barbera, 2015, p. 4). This is frequently referred to as cultural shock, which “is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, how we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life” (Oberg, 2006, p. 142).

Since culture is learned in everyday life, we might not necessarily be consciously aware of the practices that define us as cultural beings; however, these become apparent when we are surrounded by a new environment. In this situation, a reconceptualization of home might occur (La Barbera, 2015, p. 4). The migrants might begin to idealize their homes, which suddenly become tremendously important (Oberg, 2006, p.142) and consequently, they might be overwhelmed by a sense of nostalgia. The sense of loss can lead to frustration, which can be exacerbated due to difficulties in adjusting to the new setting, and by hostility from the new society. Ultimately, migrants can feel excluded by the receiving country that they’ve been idealizing, and find themselves in a condition of not belonging “here” but also no longer “there” (La Barbera, 2015, p. 3-4).

Living in this in-between situation not only brings a sense of loss and uncertainty but also provides “an existential and agentive force in creating new beginnings, selves and well-being” (Grønseth, 2013, p. 10). While engaging in cultural practices connected to their past, migrants also show an important aspect intrinsic to our humanity, namely, our disposition to change and adjust through the creation of, and involvement in, new contexts. (Grønseth, 2013, p. 1). With regard to identity – stretching between memories of the past and hopes for the future – the migrant experience is characterized by the attempt to construct a new sense of self through everyday practices that incorporates their

shifted perceptions of the world (Grønseth, 2013, p. 18). In this way, the fluid and multiple nature of identity – changing in time and space – becomes apparent (La Barbera, 2015, p. 3). The construction of identity in the migrant experience is a way of asserting their agency, as they try to negotiate a new sense of self “integrating different and conflicting life experiences into an evolving yet continuous narration that provides them with a sense of unity of their vital trajectories” (La Barbera, 2015, p. 7).

Identity, agency and creativity are key concepts for understanding the migrant experience. As mentioned above, we should not think of identity as an ‘accomplished fact’ (Hall, 1990, p. 222) but rather acknowledge the dynamic nature of identity and see it as a production, as a process that encompasses the past, the present and the future giving value to the act of becoming as well as the act of being (Hall, 1990, p.225). Thus, identity is not a transcendent, innate essence, but rather a positioning that undergoes changes as our points of reference shift, affecting our sense of self as well as our relation to the Other (Hall, 1990, p.227).

With respect to agency and creativity, Grønseth (2013) asserted that they are human capacities that in times of change – such as in the migratory experience – can adjust and create a shift in our sense of self (Grønseth, 2013, p.4). The understanding of agency proposed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) is particularly compatible with this perspective as they define agency as “a temporal embedded process of social engagement informed by the past, but also oriented toward the future and toward the present” (p.962). Recognizing the importance of the habitual aspect, with the power of imagination, people have the ability to envision alternative possibilities for the future; this is particularly relevant in the context of migration, as migrants stretch themselves between idealization and reproduction of past habits, and orientation towards an alternative future hoping for a better life. Thus, the present is lived through the harmonization of past habits and dreams of projects for the future, while responding interactively to issues that stem from changes in historical situations (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.963).

The migrant condition does indeed highlight some traits common to all humanity. However, their situation is very much shaped by the power structures that they find in their new countries (Grønseth, 2013, p.9-10), which create conditions unique to the migrants only, highly differentiated depending on the category of migrants, thus giving

them a particular experience. In fact, the labelling and the social structures encountered in the receiving country play a significant role in the lives of migrants. Thus, migrants struggle in everyday life, not only because of the so-called cultural shock, but also due, to some extent, to the structural restrictions imposed by the receiving country.

Some of the issues regarding structural constraints in the migratory experience stem from what Malkki (1992) defined as “sedentarist metaphysics”, which enables the “elaboration and consolidation of a national geography that reaffirms the segmentation of the world into prismatic, mutually exclusive units of world order” (Malkki, 1992, p.31) and leads us to think of mobility as the exception. It is this conception of place and territorialization that is the basis for the idea of nation states, as they are thought of as entities founded on the correspondence between culture, territory and population (Costantini, Massa, & Yazdani, 2016, p.27). Through this perspective, which dominates our world, migrants often appear as a “humanity in excess”, something that goes against the natural order of things (Costantini, Massa, & Yazdani, 2016, p.27).

An interesting approach to migration is the one proposed by Griffiths, Rogers, & Anderson (2013), who offered a conceptualization of the temporal dimension experienced by migrants; putting an emphasis on how this perspective can shed light on the struggles of migrants and on the differences among different categories of migrants.

The understanding of migration as “a process of becoming” – or more specifically as a way of “creating futures” – assumes particular importance in their view, as the imagined expectations which led to the decision to migrate might be counteracted by the actual situation that they find (Griffiths, Rogers, & Anderson, 2013, p.14). Moving from these assumptions, Griffiths et al. (2013) regarded “halting” and “futuring” as two especially significant facets of the migration experience: the first intended as a way of almost stopping time, and the second as imagining the future (p.15). In this respect, they highlighted how migration provokes a disruption of one’s routines and patterns, and often creates “uncertainty about temporariness and permanence” (Griffiths et al., 2013, p.16).

Moreover, they argued that social time is marked by emotion, and that depending on the situation migrants might find themselves in, they can have different perceptions of time. For instance, in the case of migrants without a regular status – when deportation is feared – an accelerated sense of time takes place (Griffiths et al., 2013, p.19). On the other

hand, sometimes due to restrictions by immigration policies, many migrants might have the opposite perception of time, experiencing little change in a long period of time (Griffiths et al., 2013, p.19). This leads to a sense of stasis, as if time is suspended while everything else is moving forward; in an era where the value of speed is highly prized, this situation is perceived as particularly detrimental (Griffiths et al., 2013, p.20). Moreover, having too much time can lead to feeling “socially abnormal, outside the rush of the rest of the society” (Griffiths et al., 2013, p.20). This sense of slowness is especially apparent for some categories of migration, such as asylum seekers, who have stricter bureaucratic limitations: having to wait for status recognition and at times being excluded from the labor market or education (Griffiths et al., 2013, p.20).

Adopting a temporal perspective as well, Andersson (2014) argued that time is a form of capital and put emphasis on the time migrants spend waiting, a situation that puts people in a condition of stasis where one can feel stuck and time can seem suspended (p.13). Drawing on Bourdieu’s idea that to make people wait is an intrinsic characteristic of the exercise of power, he goes as far as to ask if waiting might be a tactic employed by states – rather than just consequence of state institutions and bureaucracies – as they struggle in the maintenance of a sedentarist ideology (Andersson, 2014, p.3).

As previously mentioned, migration is not a rare phenomenon, but rather a reoccurring human behavior. However, despite not considering migration as being an exceptional process, it is also crucial to acknowledge that the pervasive control of states over this process creates great inequalities. In fact, whereas the circulation of goods and images has been increasingly facilitated by commercial agreements and electronic devices, the possibility to move across the globe through nation borders has been reduced, becoming one of the major aspects for the creation of inequalities (Costantini, Massa, & Yazdani, 2016, p. 32). As Bauman argued, “mobility has become the most powerful and most coveted stratifying factor” (as cited in Castles, 2003, p.3).

The politically and socially constructed nature of national narratives brings us to consider the borders of states as obvious and natural units of analysis (Costantini, Massa, & Yazdani, 2016, p. 35). Building on this belief, one of the preoccupations of modern states has been that of giving order and discipline to migrants; the increase in mobility is

undeniable, but at the same time, the efforts towards control and restriction of movement are also typical of our times (Salazar & Smart, 2011, p.iii).

The territorial conceptualization of nation-states affects one category of migrants in particular, namely refugees. Just like any other kind of migration, refugee movements are not exclusively a characteristic of our time. However, this phenomenon takes on new meanings in the era of globalization, which, as Castles (2003) insightfully argued:

“is not a system of equitable participation in a fairly structured global economy, society and politics, but rather a system of selective inclusion and exclusion of specific areas and groups, which maintains and exacerbates inequality” (p.4).

The category of refugee is socially constructed (Salazar & Smart, 2011, p.v): it is imposed by bureaucracies to feel in control over mobility (Castles, 2003, p.4). In reality, the distinction between voluntary and forced mobility is blurred, as the majority of migrants and asylum seekers might have several reasons that lead them to leave their home country (Castles, 2003, p.4). Nonetheless, borders, institutions and territories of nation states need to define the categories of migrants in order to deal with them, and in turn, this has influence on their experience; as Fontanari (2017) argued, “the asylum procedures and structures affect and construct the lives of refugees in the host society” (p.145).

Refugees share some commonalities with other migrants, in that generally migration represents a shift of existential measure, affecting every aspect of human life (Castles, 2003, p.9); however, due to their conceptualization there also major differences for this category of migrants. The most obvious difference may be the failure to ascribe any agency to them: the word “forced” clearly implies they have no choice over their decision to migrate. Not recognizing them as subjects with agency is not representative of their experience; conversely, however, views that only emphasize the conception of migration as a universal human experience are also not able to capture the complexities of this phenomenon. As Bakewell (2010) argued, we should be skeptical “of both atomistic theories that deny the importance of structural constraints on individual decisions and of structural theories that deny agency to individuals and family” (p. 1690). Not ascribing any agency to refugees leads to a homogeneous perception of these migrant subjects. Undoubtedly, we need to be mindful of the structural limitations to movement and to the realization of an individual project, yet migrants’ choices are, to some extent,

always choices and therefore reflect an active role played by the subject; even if determined and organized in contingency (Costantini, 2016, p. 149-150). One attempt to resolve this conundrum is proposed by Richmond, who suggested a view of a continuum between proactive and reactive migration (as cited in Bakewell, 2010, p.1699).

The aforementioned considerations are particularly important when talking about identity and social relationships; issues closely related to the notion of agency. Flight, like migration in general, brings about changes in the lives of migrants, affecting their perceptions and identities, as well as their life projects and future (Essed, Frerks, & Schrijvers, 2004, p.5). Reducing them to a label, failing to see them as people with initiative and talent and seeing them as unable to help themselves, does not empower their agentic ability; in addition to keeping alive the rhetoric that sees refugees as an abnormality that goes against the principle of nation states (Essed et al., 2004, p.6). As Grønseth (2013) suggested, we should look beyond the passive victims depicted by the media and politicians and try to recognize “their existential efforts towards resistance, resilience and creativity in reconstructing a new life in exile” (Grønseth, 2013, p.19).

## **Foodways in migration**

We have seen how migrants find themselves in an ‘in-between condition’ in which memories and nostalgia are mixed together with dreams and visions for the future. The relation between the past, the present and the future assumes new meanings in the experience of migrants, as “imagination and improvisation interact and offer zones of ambivalence and ambiguity between the remembrance of the past and hope for new beginnings” (Grønseth, 2013, p.3). It is in this dimension that “an opportunity for a complex and subtle agency appears in the mundane day-to-day negotiations and dealings” (Grønseth, 2013, p.3); stemming from vulnerability, pain, fantasy and hope this ‘everyday agency’ might have the power to allow them to transcend what they have left and create a new life for themselves. What is highlighted is the creativity, imagination, improvisation and humanity, “within often restrictive and oppressive circumstances”, which allow them to create a new life through the reiteration of familiar and traditional practices, while at the same time adjusting to a shifted context.

Food practices are emblematic in this sense because they are habitual and repetitive everyday activities, which can help in alleviating pain and fear in moments of struggle and uncertainty, as well as maintaining a connection to their homes. Observing the life of migrants through the lens of food can reveal many facets of their experience, going beyond the temporary relief food provides in stressful moments and reflecting the complexity of emotions, ideas, shifts and values typical of the migrant's experience.

### *Maintaining traditions through food*

Surrounded by an unfamiliar environment, the migrants' sense of being and belonging might be placed into a fluid state, for their everyday life is subject to change and they strive to reconstruct their identity and relations under new influences (Abbots, 2016, p.3). As previously mentioned, the power of every day practices assumes particular importance in the migrant's experience; this is especially true for food practices. Being such a powerful means of self-representation and expression, food has the ability to create a sense of belonging in continuity with the past; assuming a significant role in the social lives of migrant, "anchoring a migrant, while also enabling the creation of new subjectivities and orientations" (Abbots, 2016, p.3).

Amongst the difficulties that migrants find in the receiving country, is the fact that they are confronted with different culinary systems and practices and this can represent a challenge to their identity (Tuomainen, 2009, p.528). As stated before, the cultural shock experienced by migrants can lead to an idealization of home and consequently to a feeling of nostalgia; the confrontation with unknown foodways in a strange new land exemplifies this process. Interestingly, Belasco and Scranton noticed that the perception of migrant's traditional foods becomes more pronounced when they leave their home land, and that the adoption of a traditional food style represents an important means of self-expression (as cited in Tookes, 2015, p.67). Moreover, they become a signifier of ethnic identity and a marker of difference in the host community (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.256). In addition, the consumption of familiar food can satisfy an emotional need by acting as a vehicle connecting the migrants to home (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.368), stemming



loss and promoting continuity (Abbots, 2016, p.3), while at the same time it is used to create a renewed sense of belonging and develop a social network (Marte 181).

In their article “Consuming Food and Constructing Identities among Arabic and South Asian Immigrant Women”, Vallianatos and Raine (2015) observed some of these aspects while conducting research with Arabic and South Asian women living in a small Canadian city. Adopting a gendered perspective, they observed that despite changes in dietary habits, the importance of traditional food did not diminish and women used this practice as a way to foster a connection with home, which satisfied an emotional need. The researchers pointed out that the importance women placed on the ability to find and purchase foods needed for their cuisine, reinforces the idea of the function of food as a symbol of ethnic identity (Villianatos & Raine, 2015, p.365). In fact, the challenges they encountered at the beginning in finding the necessary ingredients for their cuisine, contributed to their anxieties in the settling process (Villianatos & Raine, 2015, p.356). In the conclusion, the authors highlighted the fact that the meanings conveyed by food were actively used by immigrant women to promote the construction of self, and that their choices reflected an adjustment process to a new life and “the course of their shifting subjectivities” (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.371).

The importance of food practices in the construction of identities also appeared in a study by Spivey and Lewis (2015) about resettlement and foodways of Karen refugees from Burma. They observed that most refugee families used food practices – gardening in particular – as a way of preserving their heritage, of manifesting familial closeness and of maintaining a connection to their homes (Spivey & Lewis, 2015, p.62-63). After having lived for years in Thai refugee camps – where they would receive rationed food – the possibility to go to international stores and cook their native dishes by themselves represented an incredibly meaningful change (Spivey & Lewis, 2015, p.63); food allowed them a path to maintaining their identity as well as family and community cohesion (Spivey & Lewis, 2015, p.79). As the researchers concluded, “although uprooted and transplanted in a nation a great geographical and cultural distance from their own, Karen families in this study have found a way to harvest positive aspects of life in the United States” (Spivey & Lewis, 2015, p.79).

### *A gendered perspective*

Foodways also offer insights on gender issues, which can emerge more clearly during the context of migration. When we talk about the reproduction of identities in a new environment, we should keep in mind that women are usually responsible for “upholding home” at least from the perspective of food (Abbots, 2016, p.9) for they are often in charge of provision, preparation and presentation of food in the domestic sphere (Villianatos & Raine, 2015, p.357). In this way, “they act as gatekeepers” (Villianatos & Raine, 2015, p.357) and pass on the values of tradition to their family and community (Villianatos & Raine, 2015, p.357). However, migrants’ gender roles are often subject to change and might undergo significant transformations influenced by external factors such as economic and social pressures (Abbots, 2016, p.9).

As mentioned above, Vallianatos and Raine (2015) adopted a gendered perspective in their research. They focused on the shared experience of Asian and Arabic women as mothers and wives in the migratory context (p.369), and recognized that gender roles and relations might undergo a transformation in migration. However, they reported only a few instances where a significant shift occurred (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.370). Providing and cooking food was a valued practice among immigrant women through which they communicated love for their family (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.361). In this practice however, they often made themselves subordinates, striving to meet the preferences of other family members before their own; this deference is a reflection of “cultural construction of gender and power” (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.362). Among a few families, gender roles in the domestic sphere were challenged; in fact, some women reported that men were more helpful and supportive than in their home country (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.364). In this respect, the researchers also noted how women who went from living in extended households to a nuclear family could have better chances for the incorporation of their own preferences (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.364). Their findings demonstrates that gender roles are fluid depending on family settings; consequently, the manifestation of household gastropolitics shifts in post-migration is strictly contextual (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.363).

Janowski (2012) adopted a different perspective on the matter, putting emphasis on the ways in which control over food can confer power and how this becomes apparent

in the context of migration (p.180). Espousing the importance of food to maintain identity, she explained that men might feel especially powerless in the migratory experience because, having always relied on women, they are not necessarily able to prepare the food they want (Janowski, 2012, p.181). As a result, this situation “makes visible what is less visible in the homeland, the reliance of men on women for cultural and social identity” (Janowski, 2012, p.180).

The considerations raised by both Vallianatos and Raine, and Janowski, appear in a study by Sabar and Posner (2013) about African asylum seekers in Tel Aviv and their self-established restaurants. Most participants were males and the majority of them acknowledged having not being involved in the kitchen in their homeland; after relying on mothers, wives and sisters for the purchase and preparation of food for their whole life, the new situation forced them to deal with it on their own (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.207). In the context of change, gender roles can be suddenly shattered, and it is, in part, through food practices that gender roles previously considered as inflexible may assume a new meaning: “because food is essential to life, the daily requirement forces one to change, and this change is incorporated into one’s identity” (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.211). What the researchers observed is that this aspect is experienced and described differently depending on the individual: while some took pride in cooking, others just saw it as a necessity; moreover, not all male migrants incorporated cooking in their lives, some maintained adherence to traditional gender roles (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.211). In this respect, the researchers noticed a contrast between single male immigrants, who showed more flexibility regarding change in kitchen gender roles, and immigrants living with their family, who were generally more resistant to change (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.212). The gendered division between domestic and professional cuisine was also very apparent: many asylum seekers found employment in hotels or restaurants, and working in this professional setting was seen as a “source of pride and status” in comparison to home cooking (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.210). Another aspect that emerged was that the way of cooking could also reflect gender differences. In fact, while male migrants went shopping and cooked, the preparation of certain foods seemed impossible to reproduce; this was especially the case when the preparation involves time-consuming techniques (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.211).

### *Food as a sensual trigger of memories*

Memory and nostalgia have an important role in migrants' communities; finding themselves in a context of change – at times traumatic – they draw on memories of the past to have a reference point for identity and provide a sense of continuity in their lives, which in turn can enable them to orient themselves towards the future. Food represents a potent instrument to “effectively transporting migrants back home” (Abbots, 2016, p.3), for eating can trigger memories that recall the taste of home as well as the experience of home. While the memories evoked through food might also be projected imaginations of the past – what Appadurai (1996) describes as ‘armchair nostalgia’ (p.78), characterized by “a longing for times and places that one has never experienced” (Holtzman, 2006, p.366) – the meanings we associate to them do not become less important, and the experience of eating can play a crucial role in stemming loss as well as reconstructing identity in continuity with the past.

The potential of food to recall memories of the past lies in its sensual nature, and the recollection evoked by the experience of food is not only a cognitive one but also an emotional and physical one (Holtzman, 2006, p.365). Sutton (2010) emphasized that this sensory experience goes beyond the five-sense western categorization but rather it encompasses a broader range of sensual cues, producing a synesthetic practice (p.219). As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1999) insightfully observed:

“From color, steam rising, gloss and texture, we infer taste smell and feel... Taste is something we anticipate and infer from how things look, feel to the hand, smell (outside the mouth), and sound... Our eyes let us ‘taste’ food at a distance by activating the sense memories of taste and smell” (p.3 as cited in Sutton, 2010, p. 218).

Focusing on the experience of African asylum seekers in Tel Aviv, Sabar and Posner (2013) examined their self-established restaurants showing that preparing and consuming familiar food was crucially important for asylum seekers “as part of their daily struggles for survival in a foreign land” (p.197). While observing the influence of foodways on the construction of identity, the researchers focused on the importance of the sensuality of food as a trigger of memory in the process (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.197). As many asylum seekers were living in small apartments shared with many people, the restaurants represented a space where they could relax and reminisce, where

they found a physical and symbolic familiarity, and where they found temporal relief from the continuous confrontation with an unfamiliar world. (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.202-208). Going to these restaurants enabled asylum seekers to have a holistic experience through powerful suggestions: the ritualistic nature of specific techniques and tools used by the cooks, the reproduction of home practices, the commensality among friends with automatic gestures, and most importantly the sensuality of food (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.208). The environments of the restaurant had the ability to stimulate all of the senses, constructing a powerful ‘sensescape’; defined by Ray as “a landscape that simulates home while enabling new perspectives on the past and the present” (as cited in Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.214), and termed by the researchers as “culinary safe havens” (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.217). As the researchers pointed out, while asylum seekers might have dreamed about their home countries, they did not consider those places as ideal homes; at the same time, the reproduction of cultural practices provided them with a sense of belonging and security (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.212). The realities of asylum seekers’ restaurants, with their sensual power, were a reference point for them, as “practices of asylum seekers around communal plates allow both embodied and social memories to shine through during a period that is challenging and volatile” (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.212).

The recollection of memories does not always have a positive connotation, and this can be reflected in the sensory experience of eating. Exploring the connection of food and eating to identity and religion amongst immigrants and refugees from Guinea-Bissau living in Lisbon, Johnson (2016) observed how different foods and eating styles are used as a signifier of distinctions between home and host country (p.234). An interesting aspect she focused on is the inability of migrants to taste food during the War of June 7<sup>th</sup><sup>3</sup>, which demonstrates the importance of emotional states in food practices. “Nothing is sweet in my mouth” was an expression often used by immigrants to express this state, which, according to Johnson, was a consequence of their guilt and experience of abundance, which was triggered by the act of eating among nostalgic Guineans (Johnson, 2016, p.252). Despite the negative emotional state connected to their inability to taste food, it

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<sup>3</sup> The war of June 7<sup>th</sup> was a civil war fought in Guinea-Bissau over the course of 11 months between 1998 and 1999 (Johnson, 2016)

was this common shared experience that provided an occasion to feel a unified connection to a struggling country (Johnson, 2016, p.252).

Foodways can induce a synesthetic experience, not only during the preparation and consumption of familiar foods, but also during the acquisition of said foods. In fact, specialty grocery stores can evoke a range of sensory cues, which trigger memories and sensations, as well as allowing the continuation of practices that validate our sense of identity (Holtzman, 2006, p.366). As Abbots (2016) argued, grocery stores – as well as restaurants – can be thought as “a place of migrant belonging” (p.3), as they have the ability to reproduce home: materially and discursively (Abbots, 2016, p.4). Mankekar researched Indian groceries stores in the area of San Francisco, which, as she explained, are not solely a place for purchasing Indian food, as they also act as “social spaces” where migrants “might forge identity and community” (as cited in Abbots, 2016, p.4). However, as Mankekar pointed out, the reproduction of home is not a univocal process, and the responses to the memory of home are not necessarily cohesive among a group community, which can also show ambivalence and division (as cited in Abbots, 2016, p.4).

In their research, Vallianatos and Raine (2015) observed how shops “provide not just needed ingredients, but also a holistic experience where the customer can enter a familiar physical and symbolic space” (p.366). Those places assumed great significance for immigrant women as they represented a cultural environment where they could connect with other people and recall home (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.366). However, they also recognized how the familiarity is not necessarily equivalent with feelings of security and comfort, for foodscapes can evoke a set of complex emotions (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.366).

### *Between continuity and change*

As it has repeatedly emerged, the familiarity of traditional foodways is essential for migrants to maintain a sense of self, which is rooted in their homeland (Janowski, 2012, p.179), because of the strong connection, both symbolic and cultural, that food has with the country of origin (Tuomainen, 2009, p.528). The ability to find the needed

ingredients and to cook traditional foods can facilitate the construction of group identities by means of inclusion, through the development of relations between migrants, and by means of exclusion in that their tastes are not shared by the host community (Abbots, 2016, p.1). It is indeed because of the powerful interrelation between food and identity that immigrants have the tendency to preserve their dietary habits (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.?). In fact, they are one of the last cultural features to change among migrant communities, with the main meal of the day, and festive and weekend meals, showing the greatest continuity to past traditions (Abbots, 2016, p.6). Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that the everyday practices of migrants are not produced isolated from those of the host community; on the contrary, they are strongly interwoven and therefore are subject to adjustment and change (Abbots, 2016, p.6). Food practices can reflect attachments to one's homeland, ethnicity, and gender roles; however, having refuted a static perspective on identity, the focus should not be on loss of identity through acculturation or retaining of identity through resistance, but rather on the complex and creative ways in which exchanges between the immigrant and the host community occur. This inevitably causes transformations and the creation of new hybridized food practices; as Abbots (2016) argued, food can assume different meanings when experience in a new context, capturing a shifting reality, which can reflect broader issues such as structure disparities and migrants' agency and creativity in identity production (p.6).

Returning to the aforementioned case study by Vallianatos and Raine (2015), their participants underlined the importance of having at least one traditional meal a day in order to feel satisfied, but complex and diversified processes of acculturation had also taken place (p.368). The integration of new foods often happened to satisfy the children's desires, which led women to incorporate new food items in their everyday diets through symbolic negotiations. In fact, often the new foods were subject to adjustments, which made them "more acceptable to immigrant's palates" (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.368); through modification, the food element assumes new symbolic meanings, becoming "more familiar and less threatening" before being incorporated (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.368).

Another interesting consideration regarding changes in habits in the migratory context emerged in a study by Schmidt, Palutan and Gaborin, in which they explored issues of food and agency in the experience of African refugees in Italy in two case

studies. The first one explored the themes that emerged during an interactive class about food and health organized by one of the researchers. One observation they made regards status symbol food, among which are carbohydrate drinks and french fries; being easily accessible in Italy, they were introduced into the daily diets of the refugees because of symbolic considerations. As the researchers pointed out, “it was imaginary food, known even before being tasted because already tasted in one’s own imagination” (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.198). The researchers interpreted this change as a symbolic behavior which creates a connection between young generations of African and European men (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.198). Generally, it became obvious that the definition of good and bad food in the minds of participants was not related to health issues. In addition to the significance of foods with a symbol status, the researchers pointed out that the definition of good and bad was also determined by familiarity; in fact, during convivial moments, the participants showed mistrust towards the dishes offered by the researcher whereas they had no issues with eating food prepared by a Maghreb cook (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.198). The refusal for the food stemmed from fear that they could be damaging for them (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.198).

In one of her studies, Tuomainen (2009) focused on the way in which colonialism has shaped foodways and identities of Ghanaians in London, addressing, among other themes, issues regarding status symbol foods. As the author pointed out, many people from Ghana considered English food and English food practices as being part of their food culture in their homeland; however, those items were accessible only to the higher classes or in restaurants. After their arrival, these foods were suddenly easily accessible and affordable; for many Ghanaian immigrants this represented an opportunity to imitate the higher classes of their country, and to “use the foods as a symbol of their hybrid identities” (Tuomainen, 2009, p.544). The fact that Ghanaians were at times resistant towards showing traditional foodways in public settings, and preferred blending in with the mainstream society, also appeared to be connected to the colonial history of Ghana (Tuomainen, 2009, p.548). Tuomainen identified colonialism as one important aspect that influenced the “diminished self-confidence regarding the public display of foodways” (Tuomainen, 2009, p.548) highlighting the importance of historical settings in the definition of shifting identities in migration.



Tradition and change represent important themes when talking about migration; Tookes (2015) offered an insight into these topics exploring Barbadian foodways in the diaspora. She emphasized the need for a dynamic definition of traditional especially in “a society that was created from English sailors, colonists and African slaves in the 17<sup>th</sup> century” (Tookes, 2015, p.70). Due to its history, Barbadian foodways have often been invented, borrowing from British practices or African foods, but this does not make their dishes less authentic (Tookes, 2015, p.70). So even in the migratory context, in spite of shifts in preparation or ingredients and the “caribbeanizing of American foods”, a new – though not less authentic – tradition was created. (Tookes, 2015, p.72). While using traditional foods to define their identities and maintain a connection to their homes, Tookes (2015) also interpreted these practices as a form of resistance, used consciously to mark themselves as different: defining them as Barbadian and distancing them from the rest of the African-American population (Tookes, 2015, p.72). In contrast with Ghanaians in London, despite their colonial history, Barbadians “consciously perform Barbadianness by electing to serve ‘traditional’ foods when eating with each other, or sharing with an American audience” (Tookes, 2015, p.72).

### *Commensality, hospitality, reciprocity*

As we have seen, food plays a crucial role in the everyday lives of migrants: the immediate and embodied experience of food can transcend place and evoke memories of their home, which provide them with a sense of continuity in the disruptive context of migration. Moreover, food practices enable them to reaffirm their identity, while helping them to construct a new life and a new sense of belonging (Abbots, 2016, p.21). At the same time, foodways facilitate the creation of new relationships in the host community, for “food is a concrete sensory vehicle of social relations and by sharing and eating it, personal and collective ties are made and remade” (Coleman, 2013, p.9).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, food is a social urge as it is almost always shared. Therefore, commensality assumes meanings that can have particular significance for migrants. On the one hand, it reinforces a feeling of ethnic affiliations by eating with

people of the same ethnic group; reaffirming people's identities in the struggles of a new environment. On the other hand, it offers a first chance for the encounter with the Other. As Montanari argued, because of its strong representative and communicative value, food can represent the first way to enter into contact with different cultures, being a more immediate tool than language (as cited in Pravettoni, n.d., p. 31). In this way, food becomes a vehicle for sociality, reciprocity and cultural exchange.

Some of these themes emerged in a research conducted by Pravettoni in the "scuola di Babele": a volunteer based association in the province of Milan that provides free language classes for foreigners, while also proposing different kinds of activities to promote integration. Among these activities, they organized events in which the participants would prepare dishes typical of their homeland in order to share the meal together. Through the exchange of food, their relationships were nurtured; mostly between people of the same background, but to some extent also between people of different ethnicities (Pravettoni, n.d., p. 47-48). The participants underwent an emotional experience by sharing their cultural values in a familiar setting; in this context, food represented a social adhesive that also helped people to become more open towards other cultures previously thought of as too distant (Pravettoni, n.d., p. 46). What he observed is the tendency to consume familiar foods, though this tendency was less marked among people who had better language skills and had been living in Italy for a longer time (Pravettoni, n.d. p.49). Nonetheless, these moments of exchange through food proved to be intense moments of sociality, which also promoted reciprocity between people with different backgrounds (Pravettoni, n.d. p.50).

An emblematic example, depicting how food can act as a medium for hospitality and reciprocity, is shown in the example of "The Baobab Experience" illustrated in the study by Schmidt, Palutan and Gaborin. The Baobab experience is an association created by a group of volunteers to help and support in-transit migrants through solidarity actions. This experience initially began in the Baobab center, where volunteers started "hospitality action" for migrants; providing shelter and other services with the help of the local community, which pitched in with the donation of food supplies, clothing, personal hygiene items and volunteers (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.200). Thanks to the abundance of food that was donated, they were able to prepare and distribute meals twice a day – cooked by two Eritrean cooks and distributed by volunteers – which they would

then share. It was an action that went beyond assisting the basic needs of migrants; for this reason, it was referred to “as a model of peaceful coexistence” (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.200). After being shut down, volunteers did not become disheartened and found alternative ways to continue with the same spirit: bringing food prepared at home, pitching up tents and assisting migrants in day-to-day life (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.200). As the researchers argued, the encounter with the Other happened “on the basis of the recognition of their common belonging to humanity” (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.202), which allowed them to create relationships through solidarity in the sociality of everyday life. This experience showed the possibility to find ways of coping with the restrictions imposed by power structures with the use of creativity and imagination (Schmidt, Palutan, & Gaborin, 2017, p.202).



### **3. ASYLUM IN GERMANY**

In recent years, millions of refugees have embarked on a desperate journey to reach Europe crossing the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas in the attempt to escape from war and persecution. The situation has escalated between 2015 and 2016, as the number of asylum-seekers entering Europe has reached unprecedented heights with more than 1.3 million sea arrivals, as reported by the UNHCR. Due to this so-called “refugee-crisis”, asylum has become a major political issue in Europe, and the public discourse has recurrently been shaped through the notion of emergency.<sup>4</sup>

In order to have a deeper understanding of the empirical context in which this research took place, this chapter will provide an overview of the refugee reception system in Germany. First, describing how immigration and asylum policies have developed in the past few decades; an outlook on the evolution of such policies can provide a clearer perspective on the current situation. In the second section the focus will be the multi-level governance of asylum: addressing the influence of the German Federal System in this field and mentioning the role of the EU as a supra national entity. Finally, attention will be focused on the current situation in Germany: describing the asylum procedure with reference to its legal framework, and then focusing on the distribution of asylum seekers and discussing some of the integration measures adopted in Germany.

#### **Evolution of migration policies in Germany**

Immigration is by no means a new phenomenon in Germany. In fact, it has been a characterizing trait of its history for hundreds of years, although recently it has become a more prominent issue; especially since the end of the Second World War. Throughout the years, migration patterns have been changing, and so have the policies related to this

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<sup>4</sup> Despite the increase of arrivals, the number of people seeking asylum in Europe still represents only a small part of the total refugee population. In fact, developing countries are actually the most affected by forced migration; according to UNCHR there are more than 65 million displaced people worldwide – of which 22.5 million refugees – most of which flee to neighboring countries.

phenomenon, which have often been strongly influenced by cultural and political factors (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.119).

As Bade described, after World War II Germany was faced with high labor demand, which it was able to manage on account of the German prisoners returning from war and a new wave of migrants; in particular refugees from Central Europe and immigrants from the German Democratic Republic (as cited in Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.95). Despite some hostility showed by the population, these migrants were able to integrate into the German system; an important step in this sense was the decision made by the government in 1955 to include labor migrants into the social security system, giving them the same rights as German citizens (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.96). Ten years later, in 1965, as the employment of labor migrants was becoming an important element of the German society, a new Foreigners Law was adopted, substituting the Foreigner's Police Decree, which had been operating since 1938 (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.96).

Following the oil crisis, however, in 1973 Germany enforced a halt on recruitment for non-European Economic Community nationals (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.96). In addition to the policy to stop labor migration, the government also promoted voluntary repatriation, as they were realizing that a vast majority of guest workers had started a settlement process and their stay was not temporary (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.97).<sup>5</sup>

A few years later, in 1978, the Government recognized the need for integration measures for migrants, with the establishment of a Commissioner for the Promotion of Integration of Foreign Employees and their Families (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.98). However, despite the activation of an integration policy, in 1983 the Law for Promoting the Repatriation of Foreigners came into force; emphasizing the restrictive position of Germany on immigration (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.98).

The 1990s brought significant changes for the migration discourse. As explained by Bosswick and Borkert (2011), the reunification of Germany and the dismantling of the Iron Curtain marked a turning point for Germany's migration policy as they "eliminated a major migration barrier to the country" (p.98); moreover, the country was faced with a

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<sup>5</sup> This period of restrictive migration management brought the migrant population from 2.6 million in 1973 to 1.6 million in 1984; during this time, the only way for regular immigration was through family reunion, which despite not receiving much attention by the public brought over 3 million migrants into Germany until 1980 (Bosswick and Borkert 98).

high influx of refugees escaping from the civil war in Yugoslavia (p.96). Other meaningful events were: the emission of a decree on exceptions from the halt on recruitment issued in 1990, which defined the groups of labor migrants permitted to enter (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.99); and the replacement of the 1965 Foreigners Law with a new Foreigners Law in 1990-1991, which was particularly innovative with regard to its naturalization provisions (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.99).<sup>6</sup> Overall though, this decade was characterized by general worries and skepticism about immigration; in fact, a recurring theme in the public discourse was that “Germany is not a country of immigration” (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.120). Consequently, this led to restrictive and deterrent migration policies, especially with regard to asylum.

The immigration of asylum-seekers had already started to gain public attention in the previous decade; since the end of the 80s, the conservative government had been pushing towards an amendment of the law on the regulation of asylum – Article 16 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz – GG) of 1949 – as a way to restrict access to Germany (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.101). Due to an abrupt rise in the number of applications for asylum at the beginning of the 1990s, and to an escalation of xenophobic violence, “the government and the media started to portray the state of an emergency” (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.111). In a tense political atmosphere, in 1992 the so-called asylum-compromise was reached: Article 16 of German Basic Law was amended, restricting the right to asylum by the “safe third country rule” (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.101).

Between 2001 and 2005, after the establishment of a new, less conservative government in 1998, there was a profound change in the migration discourse in Germany, with the government distancing itself from the restrictive policies and, as Bosswick and Borkert (2011) put it, starting to see “migration as a resource” (p.102) rather than an impediment. In 2001 a Federal Office for Immigration and Integration was established, with the purpose to “coordinate immigration and refugee protection” (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.102). In the same year, the idea for reform started to develop with the creation of a commission on immigration, whose task was to make proposal for a legislation reform regarding immigration; despite being unsuccessful due to strong

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<sup>6</sup> As explained by Bosswick and Borkert (2011), this new provision enabled foreign residents to obtain citizenship after 15 years of stay in Germany or 8 years for young migrants between the age of 16 and 23 (p.99).

opposition by conservative parties, this represented the first step towards change (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.102). Only in 2005, after years of discussions, conferences and negotiations, a new law on immigration was passed and came into force; the most innovative feature of this law was the implementation of integration measures (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.104). This law marks an important milestone, as Bosswick and Borkert (2011) emphasized, this was the first time in the history of Germany that “regulations for immigration, labor market access, the stay of foreigners and the integration of resident migrants were combined under an integrated legislative act, differentiated only according to purpose of residence” (p.104). The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) was put in charge of the administration and implementation of this new law, which also addressed the question of asylum, by introducing regulations on “humanitarian immigration” which established more inclusive criteria for granting political asylum (Bosswick & Borkert, 2011, p.103-104).

What emerges from this brief account is the tendency of Germany to control immigration through strong state intervention (Fontanari, 2017b, p 30). For many years, the political discourse revolved around labor migrants considered as guest-workers, a term that emphasized the temporality of their stay, and immigration policies were strongly influenced by this phenomenon. After the economic crisis, migration policies took a new turn, and as Fontanari (2017) pointed out:

“Since the 1980s this work of management and control has come to focus instead on the new social category of ‘refugees’, a shift influenced by other social changes such as decolonization processes, economic globalization and the building of the European Union” (p. 31)

## **Influence of federalism on asylum policies**

When talking about asylum policies in Germany, an important thing to consider is that Germany has a federal political system, thus characterized by multi-level governance. As Scharpf explains, joint-decision making is at the basis of the German system (as cited in Laubenthal, 2015, p.4); however, the Federal States have quite a strong



influence on the political system, having some degree of autonomy “both regarding their institutional structure and in some policy fields” (Laubenthal, 2015, p.4).

In order to understand how the asylum policies are put into effect in this Federal System, and to what extent the Laender – the German name for Federal States – play a role in asylum issues, it is first necessary to have a clear view of the division of tasks between the State, the Laender and the municipalities.

Migration policy is regulated at the Federal Level in accordance with the Asylum Procedure Law. It is the task of the State to overview the whole asylum procedure: all applications are processed exclusively by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Schammann, 2015, p.27). The provisions for access to social benefits are also regulated at the Federal level based on the Asylum Seeker Benefits Act, which determines what kind of benefits asylum-seekers are entitled to; the Federal Office for Work and Social Affairs is responsible for the general management of this Act (Schammann, 2015, p.27). The responsibility to manage issues regarding the right to asylum and the right to stay, as well as the supervision of the BAMF, are the responsibility of the Federal Office of Internal Affairs (Schammann, 2015, p.27). As Schammann (2015) pointed out, this first division of responsibilities creates some tension between a welfare state approach oriented towards integration on the one hand, and a regulatory one aiming at migration control on the other (p.27). Schammann (2015) also emphasized how this type of conflict, which shapes the refugee policy at the federal level, in turn makes it difficult to ensure coherence at the level of the Laender and municipalities (p.27).

Despite the regulatory jurisdiction of the Federal Government, Federal States can have a considerable influence, especially regarding social participation and the Residence Law (Schammann, 2015, p.27). The release of humanitarian residence permits and the organization of the accommodation of asylum seekers is the direct competence of the Laender authorities; in addition, they are also directly responsible for the deportation of rejected asylum-seekers, and the technical supervision of the immigration authorities of the municipalities (Laubenthal, 2015, p.18).

Not having their own legislation, municipalities are considered as part of the respective State and in some policy fields act as lower administrative authorities; on the other hand, they also have a self-governing right (Schammann, 2015, p.28). As Schammann (2015) put it, this creates a “hybrid identity”, whose traits can be noticed in

some aspects concerning refugee policy (p.28). A mandatory task of the municipalities is the implementation of the Residence Law during, and after, completion of the asylum procedure; in particular, if an application for asylum is rejected, municipal immigration authorities determine whether a person can be entitled to a tolerated right to stay due to humanitarian reasons, or if deportation must be enforced (Schammann, 2015, p.28). Moreover, they are in charge of implementing some tasks, which have been delegated by the Federal States. For instance, even if the Federal Government is responsible for the implementation of the Social Benefits Act, it often delegates this task to the Federal States, which in turn might delegate it at the municipal level (Schammann, 2015, p.27-28). In most cases, the Federal States have also transferred the task to organize the accommodation of asylum-seekers to the municipalities, which – despite having to follow some specific rules for minimum standards of living – have some autonomy in deciding which kind of housing to provide: shared-accommodation or decentralized accommodation (Schammann, 2015, p.28). In both cases, the Federal States provide some financial resources for carrying out these tasks (Schammann, 2015, p.28). The field in which municipalities have had the greatest influence, regards the integration measures for people with uncertain residence status, or people who are still waiting for a response from BAMF. Up until 2016, people with a tolerated right to stay were not entitled to integration courses funded by the federal government, however, municipalities often offered alternative courses for these people, as they had an interest in promoting an early integration into the society (Schammann, 2015, p.29). In the same way, while asylum-seekers are waiting for a response from BAMF, they are still not entitled to participate in integration courses unless they have good prospects of staying; nevertheless, they have the possibility to attend some German classes (Aumüller, 2016, p.69). The opportunities they get vary greatly from State to State: in 2015 some States offered up to 600 hours of classes (Brandenburg) and others only 200 (Stuttgart) or 300 (Bayern, Hamburg) (Schammann, 2015, p.29). As Schammann (2015) pointed out, these measures often depend on the financial resources of the State or municipality, as well as the political will to integrate refugees and asylum seekers in their jurisdiction (p.29-30).

Laubenthal (2015) also pointed out that the Federal structure might have indirect influence on asylum matters, as she notices that recognition rates vary greatly across the

country, and suggested that this could be due to different practices in the BAMF office branches (p.10).

It is apparent that the Federal System has a strong influence on asylum matters. In fact, it is due to the division of responsibility that the actual realization of asylum policies and the administration of asylum differs across the country. This has consequences as to the living conditions of asylum seeker and refugees, their chances at a successful integration and possibly even the outcome of their procedure.

Diverging political approaches across the country lead to differentiated outcomes, which means that depending on where an asylum seekers is settled, he or she might find better or worse conditions (Laubenthal, 2015, p.5). If in some cases it appears to be better to decentralize task at the local level, such as the organization of accommodation; in other cases, especially regarding integration measures, a lack of a homogenous approach among the Federal States can lead to great disparities (Schammann, 2015, p.30). The Federal system is not necessarily a cause for injustice and inequalities for asylum seekers, however, as Schammann (2015) pointed out, a harmonization between these level of governance is necessary to provide a fair system (p.30).

## **The European context**

In addition to the multi-level governance of Germany, asylum policies are also embedded in the European framework. The following paragraphs will describe some of the major traits of the Common European Asylum System, which establishes some guidelines for all Member States at a supranational level.<sup>7</sup>

In accordance with Article 18 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the right to asylum is guaranteed on the basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention<sup>8</sup> and its 1967

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<sup>7</sup> The following description of the CEAS is based on the information provided by the European Commission: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en)

<sup>8</sup> After the Second World War, the necessity for ensuring a fair treatment of refugees and protecting their human rights through the establishment of common laws and conventions has become of crucial importance. The most important milestone in this direction has been reached with the Convention on the Status of Refugees held by the United Nations in Geneva in 1951, and its 1967 Protocol. In addition to providing a definition of 'refugee', these documents clarify the kind of legal protection and social rights that refugees are entitled to, as well as their obligations, and the responsibility of the countries, which grant them protection. As of 2015, 148 States Parties have ratified to one or both of these treaties.

Protocol, as well as the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty On the Functioning of the European Union. Building on this legal framework, in 1999 the European Union developed the idea for a Common European Asylum System, or CEAS, with the objective of establishing a joint approach among the EU member states to ensure “high standards of protection for refugees” (EC).

The development of this system has three main objectives at its foundation: ensuring more harmonized standards of protection and reception through the adoption of common legislative measures by the EU States; supporting effective cooperation in practical ways; and increasing solidarity between Member States and non-EU countries.

For the implementation of the CEAS some instruments have been developed; one of them is the so-called Dublin System. The Dublin System establishes a common framework for determining the country responsible for an asylum application. It aims at ensuring a fair distribution of asylum seekers, and shared responsibility among the Member States, by making sure that each application is processed and examined by a single member state, and by ensuring a fast access to asylum procedures. This system consists of two main instruments: the Dublin Regulation and EURODAC.

Since the uneven distribution of asylum-seekers across the EU has been a major concern, the Dublin Regulation represents a valuable tool, as it establishes “the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national” (EC); in doing so, taking different aspects into consideration, such as family considerations, visa or residence permit possession, and regular or irregular arrival in the EU. In addition to all the Member States, it also applies to Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

The principles behind this regulation were first approved during the Dublin Convention of 1990, which was ratified and entered into force in 1997. Since then, there have been a few reforms of that system, with the third version of the Dublin Regulation having been in force since January 2014.

The other essential tool is EURODAC, an EU asylum fingerprint database, which was established in 2003. It is a key instrument for the enforcement of the Dublin Regulation, as it facilitates determining which country is responsible for the examination of an asylum application made in the EU through the comparison of the fingerprint datasets.

The other instruments which form the CEAS are the Reception Conditions Directive, the Asylum Procedure directive and the Qualification Directive.

Throughout the whole procedure, it is important that the fundamental rights of asylum seekers are respected, and that they are living in adequate conditions. The Reception Conditions Directive aims to ensure that they have access to some basic necessities, such as housing, food, clothing, health care, education for minors and access to the labor market; as well as aiming to ensure that the standards of reception conditions are harmonized and provided in the same quality in all the member states.

When dealing with the asylum applications, it is extremely important that there is a strong common and coherent system throughout the EU in order to grant a fair, quick and efficient management of asylum decisions. The Asylum Procedures Directive aims to ensure that all the asylum procedures are dealt with efficiently and fairly, and to provide asylum seekers with the necessary protection and safeguards throughout the whole process.

Equally important are the standards for the qualification as refugee, or as a person entitled to international protection, as this is a necessary step to be granted asylum. The Qualification Directive defines and implements the provisions for granting protections for “residence permits, travel documents, access to employment, access to education, social welfare, healthcare, access to accommodation, access to integration facilities” (EC).

The creation of the European Refugee Fund – to endorse financial solidarity – and the institution of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) – to improve practical cooperation – also represent an important step towards the creation of a united EU that can ensure a fair treatment and a standardized examination of the asylum seekers’ cases.

As the conditions have changed drastically since the beginning of the “migration and refugee crisis” in 2015, the CEAS has been put to the test, and some of its weaknesses have become apparent. Many countries were unprepared for such an uncontrolled rise in the number of asylum-seekers arriving, and the response has not been consistent throughout Europe.

In a recent report about the Dublin Regulation and onward Migration in Europe, Tackle and Seeberg (2015) made an evaluation of the Dublin System and the CEAS; addressing some of their weaknesses. What emerged from their analysis is a clear

divergence in the understanding and practice of the Dublin System and the CEAS among Member States of the EU (Tackle & Seeberg, 2015, 58-64). This means different standards of reception conditions and different application procedures for asylum seekers; and different standards for residence permits and different understandings of the refugee and subsidiary status, in fact, people who receive this kind of protection are entitled to different social and legal rights depending on the country (Tackle & Seeberg, 2015, p.58-64). Furthermore, they noticed that the recognition rates vary greatly across the EU States (Tackle & Seeberg, 2015, p.64). Another problem they addressed is the fact that asylum-seekers who enter the Dublin system – namely people who must be transferred to another EU State where they first registered – often find themselves in a more vulnerable position: having fewer rights and delayed access to the asylum procedure and therefore to protection (Tackle & Seeberg, 2015, p.59). As the authors pointed out, some of these differences among the Member states might be due to the different social conditions of the receiving states; however, they also indicate a deficiency in the CEAS, whose main objective was to provide an equal and fair treatment to all asylum seekers providing the same rights to all applicants, and producing similar outcomes regardless of the Member State that they are in (Tackle & Seeberg, 2015, p.64). These findings suggest how a reform of this system is necessary, not only to effectively employ the “burden-sharing” principle, but above all to provide an equal treatment of migrants, who ultimately are the ones suffering the most from an unfair system.

## **Reception of refugees: from arrival to integration**

### *The asylum procedure and its legal framework*

In addition to recognizing the right to political asylum as a fundamental right in accordance with the international legal framework that emerged from of the Geneva Refugee Convention of 1951, the current regulation on asylum in Germany is based on Article 16a of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz – GG). In order to better understand how the

asylum process takes place, the following paragraphs will outline the stages of the asylum procedure, which is regulated by the “Asylum Procedure Act” (Asylverfahrensgesetz).<sup>9</sup>

The first step after arriving in Germany is registration. After having reported to a state organization, asylum seekers are sent to an initial reception center where they usually receive the “Proof of Arrival” (Ankunftsnachweis). This is their first official document serving as entitlement to stay in Germany, to get benefits from the State, and as a registration certificate – all personal data, as well as a photograph and fingerprints, are centrally stored and available to all public agencies which might need them later in the procedure.

In addition to legal protection, during their stay asylum-seekers are entitled to some benefits to meet their basic needs. These are provided by the competent reception facility – later also by the follow-up accommodation – in accordance with the Asylum-Seekers’ Benefits Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz) and include:

“Basic benefits for food, housing, heating, clothing, healthcare and personal hygiene, as well as household durables and consumables; benefits to cover personal daily requirements (cash and "pocket money"); benefits in case of sickness, pregnancy and birth; as well as further benefits that depend on the individual case under special circumstances” (BAMF).

It is important to know that Germany differentiates between three categories of asylum seekers. Asylum seekers with an unclear prospect to stay; asylum-seekers with good prospects of staying – people from countries with higher recognition rates: Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran and Somalia – ; and asylum seekers from safe countries of origin – p Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia Ghana and Senegal. This distinction has implications regarding the asylum procedure. As a matter of fact, in accordance with the Asylum Procedure Acceleration Act of 2015, people from safe countries will undergo an “accelerated asylum procedure” since they have low chances of being granted protection, and they are denied access the labor market and integration measures (Aumüller, 2015, p.68).

Asylum seekers need to file a personal application either at a branch office of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), or at an arrival center with the help

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<sup>9</sup> The following description is mostly based on the information about the asylum procedure provided by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF): <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Fluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylv/ablauf-des-asylverfahrens-node.html>

of an interpreter, so that they can fully understand their rights and obligations during the whole procedure. On this occasion, personal data are recorded if it has not already been recorded with the issue of the proof of arrival; using EURODAC it is also verified if another State might be responsible for the examination of the asylum procedure in accordance with the Dublin Convention. If someone has already been granted protection in another State, it is not possible to proceed with the asylum application in Germany.

Once they have gone through the application procedure, the asylum seeker receives the permission to reside (Aufenthaltsgestattung): a certificate which substitutes the Proof of Arrival and allows them to remain in Germany until the asylum procedure has been finalized. This is a “territorially restricted” permission; therefore, at this time, they are obliged to stay in the district where their reception facility is located; they are authorized to leave the area temporarily only if the decision has been approved by the Federal Office. However, for persons with good prospects to remain, these obligations are only applied for the first three months, after which their residence permit will be extended to the whole country.

The most important step during the asylum procedure is the personal interview. Asylum seekers are provided help and advice in order to prepare for this appointment, which is crucial in determining the outcome of their asylum request; during the interview asylum seekers are asked to explain their personal reasons for fleeing their country of origin and as well as being asked to provide any detail or proof of their situation, their persecution, and their travel route. The interviews are held at the Federal Office and an interpreter is available.

Based on the personal interview and on a thorough analysis of the documents and items submitted as evidence, the Federal Office makes a decision on the asylum application. The law on asylum in Germany offers different types of protection for asylum seekers, which are contingent on the country of origin and the potential threat they would undergo if they returned. The Federal Office can determine whether the application of one of four forms of protection is possible: entitlement to asylum, refugees protection, subsidiary protection or a ban on deportation. In the case that none of these forms of protection is deemed applicable, the asylum application is then rejected.



Legal framework of reference for the four forms of asylum protection:

Acknowledgement of entitlement to asylum	Art. 16a of the Basic Law
Award of refugee protection	Section 3 of the Asylum Act (Geneva convention)
Award of subsidiary protection	Section 4 of the Asylum Act
Imposition of a ban on deportation	Section 60v + vii of the Residence Act

Entitlement to asylum is recognized on the basis of the Art. 16a of the Basic Law and it is granted to people who “are deemed to have been persecuted on political grounds because of their race, nationality, political opinion, fundamental religious conviction or membership of a particular social group” (BAMF) and “would be subject to a serious human violation should they return to their country of origin” (BAMF). With a few exceptions, this type of protection can be taken into consideration only in cases of persecution by the state.

Refugee protection on the other hand, is granted on the basis of the Geneva Refugee Convention according to which:

“A foreigner is a refugee if he:

1. Owing to well-founded fear of persecution in his country of origin on account of his race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group,
2. Resides outside the country (country of origin)
  - a. whose nationality he possesses and the protection of which he cannot, or, owing to such fear does not want to avail himself of, or
  - b. where he used to have his habitual residence as a stateless person and where he cannot, or, owing to said fear, does not want to return.” (UNHCR)

Although they have different legal basis, the legal consequences with the acknowledgement of these two forms of protection are the same: “residence permit for three years” (Aufenthaltserlaubnis); “settlement permit after three or five years if other preconditions are met”; “unrestricted access to the labour market”; and “entitlement to privileged family reunification” (BAMF).

If an asylumseeker cannot be granted asylum or refugee status, he might be eligible for subsidiary protection if he has demonstrated that returning to his country of

origin would result in the risk of being seriously harmed, by practices such as “death penalty or execution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict” (BAMF). In this case they would get a residence permit of one year, with the possibility of extension; unrestricted access to the labor market and the possibility to receive a settlement permit after 5 years.

In the aforementioned forms of protection cannot be applied, asylum seekers may be entitled to remain in Germany under specific conditions, for instance if they face a concrete danger to life, or extreme restrictions of liberty, in their country of origin or if deportation would violate the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In these cases they are entitled to a national ban on deportation, which grants them a one-year residence permit – with the possibility to extend it; the possibility to get a settlement permit after five years; and the possibility to access the labor market. The kind of resident permit they get in this case is known as “tolerated right to stay” (“Duldung” or “Bescheinigung fuer die Aussetzung einer Abschiebung”).

If the applicants are considered unsuitable for any of these forms of protection, they will be notified about the negative outcome and of intention to deport. However, even if they received a negative notice, applicants still have the possibility to file a formal appeal and “take court action against the decision of the Federal Office” (BAMF).

### *Distribution of asylum seekers and accommodations*

The distribution of asylum-seekers is regulated by the EASY quota system – Initial Distribution of Asylum Seekers (Erstverteilung von Asylbegehrenden), which aims at ensuring a fair distribution between the Federal States (BAMF). This system employs the so-called “Koenigstein Key” (Koenigsteiner Schluessel), which helps in determining the distribution quota taking into account population (1/3 of the quota) and tax revenues (2/3) of each Federal State calculated yearly by the Federation-Laender Commission (Laubenthal, 2015, p.6).

There are generally three types of accommodation for asylum-seekers: initial reception centers, collective accommodation and decentralized accommodation. As reported by BAMF, the initial reception centers are where asylum seekers are obliged to stay for a period from 3 to 6 months after their registration. The establishment and maintenance of the initial reception centers is the task of the Federal States. During their stay in these centers, asylum seekers are “subject to a certain amount of restrictions” (Laubenthal, 2015, p.10): they live in a shared room with restricted space, they have security controls at the entrance, and they are not allowed to cook. In 2015 and 2016 due to the high influx of asylum seekers, emergency shelters have also been increasingly used as first reception facilities (Berlin Online). After this initial period asylum-seekers are usually transferred to collective accommodation, often in the same state as the initial reception center. In comparison to the initial center, this type of accommodation provides better standards of living, as they have more privacy and kitchens are available. Moreover, after moving out of the first reception centers, asylum-seekers are entitled to “higher benefit payments as they do not receive food from the accommodation” (BAMF). The responsibility to manage this type of accommodation is often delegated from the States to the municipalities, which can decide whether to manage the center directly or to transfer this task to NGOs or to facility management companies. Decentralized accommodation, namely apartments, are also an alternative to collective accommodations. The decision on the type of accommodation is at discretion of the Federal States or the municipality.

The quota assigned to the Bundesland Berlin has been around 5% in recent years; the city has welcomed 55.001 asylum-seekers in 2015, 16.889 in 2016 and 8.285 in 2017 as reported by LAF. Lageso (Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales) and LKF (Landesweite Koordinierungsstab Flüchtlingsmanagement) are responsible for the organization of accommodation in Berlin (Berlin Online). Asylum-seekers are distributed in different districts depending on the availability of accommodation. At the beginning of 2016, there were a total of 149 accommodations for asylum-seekers, of which 95 were emergency shelters, 47 shared accommodations and 7 initial reception centers (Spiegel Online). With regard to emergency shelters, the situation was especially dramatic in Berlin; in fact, due to the increase in arrivals the city had set up barracks, office buildings, factories, the ex Tempelhofer airport, as well as 63 Sports halls, to be used as

accommodation (Tagesspiel). As reported by the Tagesspiegel, of the 20.000 asylum-seekers living in emergency shelters in Germany, 15.900 were in Berlin. In the past two years, however, new accommodations have been built and these shelters “are being closed down successively” (Berlin Online); moreover, in March 2017 all asylum-seekers living in Sports Halls were transferred into other accommodations (Tagesspiel). Laubenthal (2015) suggested that the differences among the Federal States on the choice of accommodation might “reflect to a certain extent the aims of the asylum policies of the Federal States” (p.12): more or less inclined to inclusion by providing decentralized options or shared accommodations. This, however, is not necessarily the case for every State. In the case of Berlin, collective accommodation often represent the only option, as there is a more general problem due to “a shortage of affordable housing” (Tagesspiel).

### *Integration measures*

Access to employment and good knowledge of the language are two of the most important elements for a successful integration in the society. Recognizing the importance of these aspects, in recent years, Germany has made improvements in its effort for a successful integration of asylum-seekers and refugees; especially regarding integration courses and access to the labor-market (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.9).

Integration courses are one of the most essential tools for integration; they are composed of 600 hours of German classes and 100 hours of civic orientation, and they have now been made mandatory with the adoption of the German Integration Act in 2016 (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.33). This act also entailed other relevant changes: originally these courses were accessible only to people with refugee or subsidiary protection, but now access to these courses has been extended to asylum seekers with good prospects of staying, as well as to people with a tolerated right to stay if places are still available (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.33). In addition, following the “early intervention” principle, the waiting time for accessing these courses has been shortened from 3 months to 6 weeks (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.33). Moreover, the issue of permanent resident permits now depends on the integration efforts showed by the individual, which means having reached an A2 level in German (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.33). People with a refugee status also have

facilitated access to a permanent permit, which they can receive after only 3 years if they have reached level C1; this does not apply for people with subsidiary protection (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.33).

As mentioned above, the other crucial element for integration is access to the labor market. If an asylum-seeker is granted refugee or subsidiary protection, that implies the emission of a residence permit, and therefore unlimited access to the labor-market (Aumüller, 2016, p.70). After being excluded from employment for years, the situation for asylum-seekers and people with a tolerated right to stay has also been improved thanks to some provisions regarding access to employment issued in 2014, which allow them access to the labor-market three months after their application (Aumüller, 2016, p.69). However, for the first 15 months they are subject to the so-called priority review, which sets the condition that they can only be employed if the job position cannot be taken by a German or EU-citizen (Aumüller, 2016, p.69). Another positive change for asylum seekers is that since 2016, in case of enrollment in an apprenticeship, they are entitled to a resident permit for the whole duration of the course, in addition to two extra years to allow them to gain some job experience; although this provision does not apply to asylum seekers from safe countries (Aumüller, 2016, p.70).

Despite having unlimited access to the labor market, migrants often face more difficulties in finding a job; this leads to high rates of unemployment and the necessity to accept low qualified jobs. For these reasons, there are some instruments provided at different levels of the Federal System, which as Aumüller (2016) explained, are aimed specifically at “compensating the employment disadvantages of immigrants” (p.71).

In collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, the Federal Government focuses on ensuring access to language classes; recognizing previously acquired qualifications; including refugees in the labor market with regular policy measures as other citizens (Aumüller, 2016, p.71). Another important actor in this field is the Federal Employment Office, which has “10 regional directorates, 156 employment agencies and 300 job centers across the country” (Aumüller, 2016, p.71) providing asylum seekers with job counseling after their application; special measures are applied to asylum seekers with good prospects to remain. Once they have been granted a residence permit they are entitled to use the same services of the job centers as German and EU citizens (Aumüller, 2016, p.71). In addition to this, the office has put into effect some projects that specifically

focus on asylum seekers, such as “Perspectives for Refugees”: a 12 week course to assess practical skills and train in job applications. (Aumüller, 2016, p.72). “Integration by Qualification” and “Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees” are two other important programs to promote the integration in the labor-market; their main objective is to ensure an effective communication and networking between different agencies, both at the national level and at the local level (Aumüller, 2016, p.72). Also at the Federal State level, some additional measures and programs have been implemented, such as language courses for people who have no access to the integration courses, and job coaches to assist asylum seekers in dealing with job agencies and in finding employment; in addition to providing support for employers who are interested in employing asylum seekers and refugees (Aumüller, 2016, p.74). Aumüller’s study also recognized that despite labor-market integration predominantly being dealt with at an administrative level:

“Additional initiatives by civil society and private actors may play an important supportive role in employment promotion as volunteers and mentors may help in delivering information about job realities in Germany or arranging internships, practical job training and so on” (p.74).

In recent years, regulations regarding labor-market access have become less restrictive and efforts have been made to create a comprehensive approach to labor market integration through a facilitated access to employment, an improvement of the labor market institutions, the development of professional networks, and the adoption of an early intervention strategy (Aumüller, 2016, p.73). However, there are still some problematic issues. As it has emerged in the previous paragraphs, access to integration measures varies depending on the actual legal status of the person. Before being granted protection, asylum seekers with good prospects to stay are the only ones who have facilitated access to integration measures. Moreover, even the type of protection influences the efforts for integration, with tolerated people being the most disadvantaged group. As Konle-Seidl (2018) explained, the uncertainty regarding the possibility to stay permanently “affects their incentives to integrate socially and contribute economically”; while at the same time, it dissuades potential employers, who might also “be discouraged by time consuming bureaucratic procedures” (p.10).

## Changes and trends in recent years

The number of asylum-seekers arriving to Germany has been increasing since 2008, with a steep rise in 2015<sup>10</sup>; in fact, Germany has been one of the foremost European destinations for asylum seekers from war-torn countries in 2015 and 2016. As a consequence of the high number of asylum seekers, migration and immigration has become a predominant element in public opinion and “the public debate has become more polarized” (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.24), which has also led to some policy reactions.

Despite tensions in society in August 2015, German Chancellor Merkel officially announced the open-door migrant policy suspending the application of the Dublin agreement for Syrian refugees (Zeit). This solidarity act, however, was in part counteracted as some changes in asylum policies have since been implemented to reduce unauthorized inflow of asylum seekers (i.e. strengthened border); this was in part due to the evolution of the political climate and the rise of anti-immigration parties such as the AfD (a right-wing populist party). Other restrictive measures have also been implemented for asylum seekers and refugees, such as the reduction of residence permits from 5 to 3 years and the temporary suspension of the right to family reunification for persons with subsidiary protection until March 2018 (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.28-29). However, some of the changes in asylum policies followed an integration-approach, such as the temporary suspension of the priority review for asylum applicants and tolerated persons, thus granting access to the labor market 3 months after registration, and entitlement to social assistance benefits for asylum-seekers and tolerated after 15 months instead of 48 (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.28-29).

Another important aspect to mention is the upsurge of volunteering initiatives directed at asylum seekers and refugees. In addition to donations, such as food or clothes, volunteers have proved to be a valuable resource with regards to integration: supporting refugees and asylum seekers with language, bureaucratic matters, access to employment and often being their only contact to civil society, as well as in promoting the ideals of a “welcoming culture” (Die Zeit).

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<sup>10</sup> The number of applications went from 28.018 in 2008 to 476.649 in 2015, reaching its highest in 2016 with 745.545 (BAMF). As the BAMF reports, in 2017 most asylum-seekers were from Syria (24,7%), Iraq (11,1%), Afghanistan (8,3%), Eritrea (5,2) and Iran (4,3%); there has also been a significant increase of people from Turkey (4%).

One of the most controversial issues is that there has been a substantial increase in the use of subsidiary protection and emission of ban on deportation (Konle-Seidl, 2018, p.10). In 2015 48,5% of asylum seekers received refugee protection, but in 2016 it was 36,8%, and in 2017 only 20,5%. (BAMF) Furthermore, while in 2015 only 0,6% and 0,7% received subsidiary protection or a tolerated right to stay respectively, these numbers increased in the following years: in 2016, 22,1% received subsidiary protection and 3,5% a ban on deportation, and in 2017, 16,3% and 6,6% respectively (BAMF). This trend has significant implications because, as discussed in the previous section, different types of protection entitle asylum seekers to different integration measures, as well as to different residence permits. The uncertainties regarding the possibility to stay and the impossibility to fully integrate into the society thus put them in a state of uncertainty “definitive temporariness” (Fontanari, 2013, p.10), where they find themselves stuck and unable to have full control of their lives.



## 4. A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Moving from the assumption that food is an important cultural element, whose pervasive presence in our lives plays a crucial role in determining our social and individual self, the purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the experience of refugees in Berlin through the lens of food; addressing questions of identity, agency and change. The everyday dimension of migration is often taken for granted; however, as the increasing literature on the topic is demonstrating, ordinary practices are central to the experience of migrants, who, oriented towards the future, strive to create a new life for themselves, which can allow for a sense of continuity with their past.

Despite the increased interest in these themes, refugees have rarely been the focus of recent studies in this field. There are undoubtedly some common aspects to all kinds of migration, which can be considered a universal human experience, yet we cannot ignore that there are major differences due to the conceptualization of the category of refugees, who often find themselves in a liminal position and are affected to a greater extent by structural constraints.

The number of asylum seekers arriving to Europe between 2015 and 2016 has increased dramatically; consequently, we should expect that our society will change in the coming years. However, in order to ensure integration and acceptance, allowing them to create a new life for themselves, they need to be able to have control over their decisions aimed at constructing a future. The slow process of the asylum procedure, the difficulty of finding a home and a job in Berlin, and the restrictions imposed to certain categories of asylum seekers and refugees, are all things that are likely to: demotivate people, make them exhausted, and lose interest in trying to be a part of the society. Something seemingly so insignificant or at least such a normal part of everyday life, such as cooking, can have a strong impact on the lives of those in this situation: it can allow them to maintain a connection with their homes and a sense of continuity in a stressful situation, as well as giving them room to exercise agency.

Drawing on the theoretical framework examined in the previous chapters – which was a testament to the relevance of this field of research – I decided to explore the food

dimension, in order observe how this practice can be a means of self-representation and agency for refugees.

My research is based on ethnographic fieldwork – participant observation and in-depth interviews – conducted in three refugee reception centers in Berlin over a period of five months, from November 2017 until April 2018. I adopted a qualitative research design, guided by methods described by Cardano (2011), as my objective was to explore a contingent phenomenon by providing a narrative informed by the participants' subjective perspectives, which allowed me to go deeper into issues of interest and explore different nuances related to their experience.

## **The setting**

In order to answer to my research question I considered reception centers as the most suitable empirical context, as they allowed for an understanding of how these structures work and can influence the lives of refugees, in addition to providing occasions to take part in their daily activities.

Access at these centers is restricted by security controls, and it is necessary to have an appointment to speak with the employees, consequently visiting in person did not prove to be fruitful. Therefore, I contacted directors of emergency shelters and shared accommodations via email (around 60), briefly describing the topic of my thesis, and asking permission to access the center to conduct my research. I received few answers, with only three centers providing positive feedback and inviting me to go there and discuss how to organize my visits.

The first center I visited was an emergency shelter in Alt-Tempelhof, a district in South Berlin, which hosted approximately 140 people in an old decaying factory. On my first visit, I spoke with the director about the possibility of visiting the canteen and talking with people about my study. He seemed somewhat reluctant at first, stating that he can tell me himself that the people despise the food there and emphasizing the fact that most of the people there do not speak German. After providing a more in depth explanation of the purpose of my research, he agreed to letting me visit the canteen on a few selected and agreed upon days. Since it was an emergency shelter, the residents didn't have a

kitchen and were not allowed to cook in their rooms for security reasons; the food came from a catering service and it was served in a dining hall three times a day: from 8.00 to 10.00 breakfast, from 11.00 to 15.00 lunch and from 16.00 to 19.00 dinner. They received two cold meals and one warm meal per day, with little variation in the menu. Despite having the possibility to eat in a common area, during my visits to the center I noticed that most of the people took their portioned food to their rooms. Apart from the dining hall and two rooms for children, there were no other communal spaces. In mid-March 2018 this center was closed, so unfortunately I was not able to go there for an extended period of time.

Two collective accommodations also responded to my request positively. One response came from a center in Buch, a deprived district on the outskirts of Berlin. A German association active in the social sector manages this facility, which opened in September 2017. This recently opened center hosts 420 people, who were transferred there from emergency shelters and shared accommodations that closed down. It is divided into six modular apartment buildings, and on the ground floor of each building there are apartments with two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen. The above floors are organized differently, more in the fashion of a dormitory, with eight rooms per floor (for a maximum of fifteen people per floor), a shared kitchen, a communal room and a shared bathroom. The entire complex includes four apartments for disabled people. Other facilities available to the residents include a garden, a room for children, and a room for meetings or events. The director showed interest in my research and invited me to go there so that he could introduce me to some of the residents, adding that they are all very proud of their food culture; the negotiation of access in this case was fairly informal. After my first visit, one employee was especially eager to help me, and as a result I primarily had contact with him. He organized several meetings between myself and families living in the center.

The third center in which I conducted my research is also managed by a social association from Berlin. The center is situated in Prenzlauer Berg, which is a central and well-connected location. This shared accommodation, opened in September 2016, hosts approximately 500 people. On each floor there are around 90 people living in shared rooms, and these rooms are grouped together as apartments, composed of a three-bed room, a two-bed room, and one bathroom. Each floor has two kitchens shared by all these nuclear apartments. One positive feature of this facility is the great number of communal

rooms available: on the ground floor, in addition to the offices and the area for children, there is a big “living room”, a smaller communal room, and a shared kitchen for parties or other events. An Italian educator working there replied to my request and after speaking with her and another social worker, they invited me to attend the “Frauencafe”: a weekly event for women where I could present my project. It is through this event that I made most of my contacts.

Having spent more time in the shared accommodation, and having interviewed some of the employees there, I was able to get a better understanding of their structure, their objectives, and their initiatives in comparison to the emergency shelter. Both facilities share the same goal, namely, helping and supporting the residents while at the same time trying to promote their autonomy through the development of social networks; following this line of action, both centers provide numerous services aimed at improving the quality of life of the residents. Social workers, oftentimes used as interpreters, provide support with regards to legal issues, medical problems, job seeking, house searching, as well as helping to find school places; at the same time, they try to promote participation in projects and initiatives to help the residents to create a support network. In both centers volunteers play a significant role with the donation of goods as well as providing practical help, whereas the center in Buch has less volunteer participation because of their position: far from the center and in a poor district.

## **Data collection and data analysis**

Adopting a qualitative approach allowed me to collect various forms of data using different research methods, namely participant observation and in-depth interviews. When I began designing my research I had intended to focus mostly on interviews, as I did not think I would have occasions to employ participant observation. However, ultimately, during the course of the research I was able to resort to both methods, which allowed for a more holistic integrated approach.

## *Participant observation*

Generally, the objective of participant observation is to learn about the different perspectives of the participants through observation, and when possible participate in their daily activities in their own environment. Participant observation can be overt or covert; deciding which method to adopt has implications as to the level of perturbation that will occur, as well as having ethical implications (Cardano 2011, p. 105-113). While conducting an overt observation entails a greater disturbance to the natural flow of things – people aware of your role could modify their behavior trying to conform to standards considered appropriate – it also allows for flexibility; the important thing is to create a trusting relationship and reassure the participants about the inoffensive nature of the research (Cardano 2011, p. 105-113). While covert observation may allow the production of more natural data, it raises ethical concerns (Cardano 2011, p. 105-113).

In addition to allowing a closer insight into the participants' subjective views, ideas, behavior, interactions and activities, it is also useful in order to have a broader understanding of the social, cultural and economic context in which the research takes place (Cardano 2011, p. 93-103). One of the greatest advantages of this method is that it allows the researcher to develop familiarity with the context and the participants, providing a more comprehensive view on the complex nature of the human experience (Cardano 2011, p. 105-113). Moreover, it can lead to the discovery of interesting aspects – not previously considered by the researcher – that might be relevant for the research. The data collected takes the form of detailed ethnographic notes, which report accounts and observations, as well as informal conversations and interactions with the participants. The disadvantages of this method is that it is time consuming – in fact traditional ethnographic research usually involves at least one year in the field – and the documentation of data might prove to be difficult: it relies on the memory of the researcher and ultimately it is a subjective exercise (Cardano 2011, p. 143-146).

Despite limitations due to restricted access to the centers, and a limited time in which this study could be conducted, the occasions in which I was allowed to use participant observation helped me to have a better understanding of the context, to create a relationship of trust with my informants and to explore some of the themes of my research. I always revealed my role as a researcher and explained briefly the topic of my

research; this might have had an influence on the interactions with the participants and the spontaneity of their actions or words. However, their reactions were always positive as most of them seemed excited to have someone to speak German with, and expand their network of connections. Moreover, I had the impression that as I am a foreigner myself some felt less threatened by my presence as a researcher. With some of them, I shared more experiences over time, which led to the creation of a relationship of trust and in some cases friendship, which in turn led to more natural and spontaneous interactions.

Due to the different organization of the centers, participant observation assumed different nuances depending on where I was. In the emergency shelter, I had access to the canteen only on specific days. During my visits, I approached some of the people who were frequenting the canteen to explain why I was there. I was able to talk with a few people, two of which subsequently invited me for lunch. The limitations in this case were greater than in the other centers: my presence was not mediated and might have been perceived as intrusive, moreover, most of the people there spoke very little German, making conversations difficult and interviews impossible. Over the course of three months, I was able to access the canteen on 10 occasions, and I was invited for lunch by a Syrian family twice.

The experience in the shared accommodation in Buch was different. The director was more informal, letting me decide when to go to the center. As I arrived to the center for first time, they were having a small party in the common room: some women had cooked typical dishes from their country with an open invitation to both residents and non-residents of the center. It was an interesting event for me, as it provided the opportunity to observe a form of self-organized event as well as making contacts. On this occasion, I also met all of the employees, one of whom was particularly interested in my research and offered to help me by arranging meetings with some families.

Over the course of the following weeks I had the opportunity to meet three families – two from Afghanistan and one from Iraq – with whom I shared a meal and spent an afternoon. These were fascinating occasions, as they allowed me to participate in and observe the preparation of traditional dishes, the experience of the meal, and the sociality enacted through eating while having informal conversations. The limitation in this case was the difficulty in having continuous or recurring contact with the residents,

in most cases, I only met them once; consequently, it was challenging to establish a relationship of trust and the perturbation due to my role as a researcher was more evident.

The setting that proved to be most fruitful for participant observation was the shared accommodation in Prenzlauer Berg. I first had contact with the residents at the Frauencafe: a woman-only event, which takes place every Friday afternoon from 16.00 to 18.00 in one of the communal rooms on the ground floor. In this safe space, women have the opportunity to discuss initiatives, projects and problems with a social worker, and it usually ends with a festive, informal moment with beverages, treats and music.

My first time there I presented my project and asked if anyone would be interested in taking part in the research; while at first I was focused on finding people for interviews, this turned out to be the perfect occasion to meet new people and develop a relationship with them. In addition to going almost every week to this event, I also started volunteering to help the children with their homework; due to my recurrent presence in the center, I became a familiar face and it seemed that people were feeling more comfortable around me. As these encounters became more frequent, people started to spontaneously invite me over for meals. Despite the extremely positive experience, due to the development of close relationships, at times it became overwhelming as some participants were expecting more from me than I could give them. Over the course of three months – from February to April – I frequented the Frauencafé almost every week, I shared meals with different families or groups of friends, I participated in two parties organized in the center, and I had the opportunity to go grocery shopping three times with some of the women I met.

As I mentioned above, when I began my research, my primary aim was finding people to interview; however, thanks to the flexible nature of qualitative research, I was able to employ participant observation as well. Although verbal communication was at times limited due to language barriers – German was mother tongue of neither party – the adoption of this research method gave me a broader and deeper perspective on their experience, expanding the fieldwork to their kitchens and their “homes”, where I could observe actions and behaviors related to the preparation of food and have informal conversations about it. Moreover, it helped to improve the design of my interview and make sense of other data.

### *In-depth interviews*

As the research was not long-term, and I did not have the possibility to live within the communities, the collection of data through semi-structured interviews facilitated open, in-depth conversations. In spite of higher perturbation, the advantage of this method is that it can elicit a vivid picture of the participant and the topic; giving them the opportunity to express themselves, and to be the protagonists (Cardano 2011, p. 147-169). It is a useful method to learn about their interpretation of the world – their perspectives, opinions and feelings – while also allowing sensitive topics to be addressed. The role of the interviewer is that of a neutral attentive listener, while the participants are the experts on which to focus the attention (Cardano 2011, p. 167-169). Usually interviews are recorded and transcribed; it is the duty of the interviewer to obtain informed consent, and to assure that what the participants reveal will be kept in confidence (Cardano 2011, p. 176-180). . Despite being provoked, the data produced can be more objective when compared to participant observation; using the two methods together is a good way to create a balance between naturalistic and more objective data.

I selected the participants for interviews from the personal contacts that I made during my visits to the centers, taking into consideration their language knowledge and their availability. During my visits to the centers I mostly spent time with women, therefore I tried to find a balance between male and female participants for the interviews in order to have access to both perspectives. A total of 7 interviews were conducted: 4 with women and 3 with men – two of which are here without their families. The participants were of different nationalities – Iraq, Afghanistan, Serbia, Syria – and different ages, ranging from 26 to 55 years old.

I conducted individual interviews in different places depending on the situation and the suggestion of the participants; some took place in communal rooms, others in their houses or in their kitchens. Before each interview, I provided the necessary information about my research, the conduction modality of the interview, and the use that would be made of it; all participants provided verbal consent and agreed to allow me to record their interviews using a digital recorder. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Sometimes other family members or friends were present, but since the additional participants in these cases did not speak German, we could not engage in a



collective conversation. Most of the participants had a good level of German, however, sometimes language was still a limitation.

I drafted an interview outline to provide me with a basis for conversation. The questions that I devised were meant to serve as initiators of discussion, as I tried to ask open questions, and follow the flow of the conversation taking advantage of any additional cues that occurred during the dialogue. The aim was to listen to their perspectives, as well as the means in which they tell their stories, and to let them be the protagonist in this type of interaction.

As I was designing the interview outline, I identified relevant themes with subcategories of questions, which could help me delve deeper into the topic. In order to put the participants at ease, I started with informal demographic questions, which allowed me to learn more about their backgrounds and their arrival to Germany. The rest of the interview was divided into two major categories. In the first part of the interview, I focused on foodways in their country of origin: asking about their traditions regarding food, how they experienced the event of the meal, and trying to understand the importance that food practices had in their families. In the second section of the interview, I aimed at understanding their experience with food in Germany, first in the emergency shelters and then in the shared accommodations: addressing questions of changes in the provision and preparation of food as well as in the sociality of commensality. In the final part, I asked questions that are more personal regarding their experience with the German reception system in general. The general principle I tried to follow was to move from casual topics to personal, deeper aspects, as they felt more comfortable towards the end.

As mentioned above, I also interviewed some of the employees: three from the Buch shared accommodation and two from Prenzlauer Berg. In this case, the aim was more informative than explorative. However, I also asked personal questions about their choice to work in that field, and their opinions about the center and the German reception system. In general, these interviews helped me to get a better understanding of how the centers are organized, and how the lives of the residents are supported through initiatives and projects.

The interview outline was structured as presented in the following table:

INITIAL QUESTIONS	General Information	<p>How long have you been in Germany?</p> <p>Where are you from?</p> <p>Did you come here alone?</p> <p>Did you get a form of protection (refugee status, subsidiary protection, ban on deportation)?</p>	
	FOOD/MEALS/COOKING IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Food Culture	<p>What is one of your favorite dishes?</p> <p>When you think about this dish...</p> <p>What did you typically eat in your country?</p>
		<p>Cooking</p> <p>The Experience Of The Meal</p>	<p>Who cooked? For whom?</p> <p>Did you cook too? Why not?</p> <p>Who did you eat with?</p> <p>Which were the most important meals of the day?</p> <p>In what way was the event of the meal, as you experienced it in your country, important for you?</p> <p>How would you describe a typical meal at home?</p>
FOOD/MEALS/COOKING IN GERMANY CURRENT CENTER	General Info	How long have you been living in this accommodation?	
	Cooking	<p>Do you have the possibility to cook here?</p> <p>Which facilities are available?</p> <p>Who prepares the meals? Do you cook?</p> <p>What do you normally cook?</p>	
	The Experience Of The Meal	<p>With whom do you eat?</p> <p>Can you have guests?</p>	
	Grocery Shopping	<p>Where do you find the ingredients?</p> <p>Can you find all the ingredients?</p> <p>Are there special places where you can find them?</p> <p>Where do you usually go shopping?</p> <p>Where do you prefer to go?</p> <p>What do you buy?</p> <p>If you don't buy all the products in the same place, what affects your decision? (quality, typical products, distance)</p> <p>Is there variety?</p> <p>Is it far from where you live?</p>	
	Sociality Moments	<p>Do you ever meet for a meal with other people from your country?</p> <p>What do you cook?</p> <p>Who cooks on these occasions?</p>	

		<p><b>Importance Of Cooking</b></p> <p>Is what you eat important to have a feeling of home? Do you miss the taste of home? Is it difficult to reproduce these flavors? What are the biggest difficulties in this sense?</p>
		<p><b>Comparison with home</b></p> <p>Was it hard to get used to the food here in Germany? What would you say is the biggest difference between a meal here and a meal at home?</p>
FOOD/MEALS/COOKING IN GERMANY	OTHER CENTERS	<p><b>Experiences In Other Accommodations</b></p> <p>Have you lived in other accommodations before? What kind of centers? In which kind of accommodation did you live when you arrived here?</p>
		<p><b>Canteen Organization And The Experience Of The Meal</b></p> <p>Did you have the possibility to cook there? Was there a canteen? What kind of meals were served there? Did you have more choices? Was the menu varied? Were the eating times flexible? Did you have the possibility to invite guests for meals? How was the experience of the meal? What did you miss most?</p>
		<p><b>Grocery Shopping</b></p> <p>Could you buy some food on your own? Where did you go shopping? What did you buy?</p>
		<p><b>Opinions About The Service</b></p> <p>What was your impression of the canteen? How could it have been improved?</p>
		<p><b>Comparison With Current Accommodation</b></p> <p>What were the biggest changes when you moved to the new accommodation? What do you think of the situation here? What would you like to change? Are the social workers helpful and attentive?</p>
		<p><b>Opinions</b></p> <p>What do you think of the reception system in Germany? What could be improved? What is important for you?</p>

### *Data analysis*

I began to analyze data during the process of data collection, as I organized and reviewed field notes and transcribed interviews<sup>11</sup>. Following Cardano's (2011) analysis framework, I divided my analysis into three steps: segmentation, segments' qualification and individuation of relations. Through methodical reading of my data, I was able to identify the most salient themes; focusing on the content and form of the texts. Then I started coding the text, dividing it into segments, which I labeled with key words and organized into topical groups. The objective was to individuate patterns and interconnections between codes, which were useful for the identification of the core meanings; the successive step was to relate these codes to my research question, and finally, relate them to the research literature.

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<sup>11</sup> Transcriptions of the interviews can be found in the appendix section.

## 5. THE WAYS OF FOOD IN CREATING COMMUNITY

I met Rajia<sup>12</sup> – an Iraqi woman in her mid 40s – during one of my first visits to at the Frauencafe. After spending some time together at that event, she invited me for lunch the following day; telling me that she was going to prepare one of the best Iraqi dishes. When I arrived at the center the next day, her husband came to meet me – I needed to be registered on a list by a resident in order to access the center as a guest – and then we went up to the shared kitchen on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor where Rajia had been cooking since the morning. The kitchen was spacious and equipped with two stoves, two ovens, two sinks, and two small tables, yet there was no place to eat. She greeted me quickly, checked on the food and then she proceeded to explain what she was cooking: Dolma, which is a rice-based dish with stuffed grape leaves; Shorba, which is an Iraqi soup; and roasted chicken with vegetables. As I showed surprise at the quantity of food she was preparing, she explained to me that she needed to make a lot of good food because it was the weekend and they had guests. In fact, the kids were not there that day as they were participating in some activities in the center, but she had invited me and another Iraqi friend.

When everything was under control, we went to her room, which she shares with the whole family. She later told me that they have another room on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, but it is not practical for them to live and sleep on separate floors, especially with children. She told me she is not very happy with her living situation: besides the room being too small, she also feels that they do not have any privacy, because “everyone knows everything about everyone”. However, they have arranged the space available in the best way they could in order to make it cozier. The beds are against the walls, with one on each side of the room; a big red carpet occupies the center of the room; in a corner, they have a fridge with some flatware on top of it; and in another corner there is a plastic table filled with food and other utensils.

Before eating, Rajia put some plastic sheet on the carpet and a big silver tray on top of it, she spread some thin Arabic bread on the tray, and when the food was ready, her husband turned the pot over and placed the Dolma onto the tray and dispensed other plates

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<sup>12</sup> All names in the following chapter have been changed to protect the parties' privacy.

around it. When everything was ready, we sat down around the tray and started to eat. While giving me some cutlery, Rajia told me that in Baghdad they usually eat with their hands, and pointed to her husband, who was taking a handful of Dolma from the tray – “it tastes better this way”, he told me.

Considering it to be the first serving of the meal, as is customary in my culture, I started eating some soup. Several minutes later, watching me, perplexed by my behavior, Rajia asked me why I wasn't eating. I realized that while I was enjoying the Shorba, everyone else was eating a little bit of everything; taking it from the trays in the middle. She encouraged me to eat, so I tasted some of everything, and then complimented her on her cooking. She seemed very satisfied and she told me with pride that Arabic food is really good – the best – not like the German food that her children have started to eat. As a matter of fact, when her children came back later that day, they would tell me about some delicious potato dishes that they had eaten at school, as well as confessing to having been at Mc Donald's a couple of times – a fact that I was asked to keep secret from their mother as they don't serve Halal meat there.

When everyone had finished eating, Rajia asked her husband to go and put on some water to boil for tea, and we concluded the meal by sipping some Iranian green tea. Before cleaning up, she prepared a plate with some food to bring to a friend in the center who was sick. We spent the rest of the afternoon in her room; sitting on the carpet, chatting, and preparing together some Baklava, a sweet dish that involves quite a long process to prepare. She told me that even if the place is not very practical to prepare this



kind of dish – she often gets back pain from sitting on the floor all the time – she enjoys preparing her traditional dishes for her family and friends.

Spending the day with Rajia and her family allowed me to see first-hand the “power of food” in action. Being able to prepare traditional dishes was a source of pride and satisfaction for her; she placed importance on eating traditional food – especially on the weekend –, but also on the ways in which the meal was experienced in all its aspects. The meal assumes powerful meanings through the reproduction of a habitual and familiar ritual: from the lengthy preparation and the arrangement of the plates, to the sharing of food from a communal plate and eating with their hands. These are all things that enable the creation of a familiar sensescape, in a way similar to home.

As much as it is a way to connect people to their homes and to their past, food is also a powerful means of connection to the people it is shared with in the present moment. The sociality of the meal is also an important element to consider; in fact, the meal can be a way to maintain and reinforce relationships with family members and friends – by inviting a friend over for a weekend meal, or by showing care for a sick friend by bringing her some homemade food – as well as to create new relationships. The bonds created and maintained through food practices might assume particular relevance in the lives of refugees, as they can provide a reference point in an uncertain period of their lives.

What is also worth noting is that there have been significant changes in how Rajia and her family experience the event of the meal. For instance, due to the different routines among family members, they are not able to eat together all the time, as shown by the fact that her children could not be there. In addition, the collaboration between Rajia and her husband also reflects a change in habits: while back home she was the only one responsible for the preparation and presentation of the meal, since they have moved here, her husband has started to be more helpful with food preparation.

Another aspect connected to theme of change is the difference between the parents, more attached to traditional foods, and the children, who are incorporating new tastes into their daily lives. These variations are not in contrast with the maintenance of a tradition, or a connection to the past, but rather they show the ability to adjust in shifting times, while also reflecting changes in subjectivities.

This experience allowed a brief glimpse into the different ways in which food plays a role in their lives: from the importance of purchasing and consuming traditional

foods; to the value of social relationships built around the act of eating, both within the family and with friends; and finally to the changes related to, or mirrored by, food practices. These are themes that will be addressed in more depth in the following sections, while also exploring the role of food in the creation of sense of community.

## **A sense of home, a sense of community**

During the course of the research I had the opportunity to meet many people who came to Berlin in search of asylum; the majority of whom have been in Germany for two to three years. However, not everybody has been granted refugee protection: some have been entitled to a ban on deportation and some are taking legal action against a negative response from BAMF. While this differentiation has obvious implications on their present experience, the “emergency” situation, typical of the first few months following their arrival, is now over for most of them. In this stage of their lives, they are trying to begin a new life in Berlin, with all the difficulties it can entail: from learning the language, to starting an education program, or finding a job; and on a more general level, the efforts in trying to build a home here.

The meaning of home goes beyond the simple definition of home as a place where one lives. Home is a place of familiarity that is connected with emotional values, created through social relationships, and strictly related to the notion of belongingness. Baumeister (1985) considers the human desire to belong to be a fundamental need; a motivation that drives human beings to forming and maintaining meaningful and positive relationships (p. 497-498). It stands to reason that refugees’ sense of belonging might be shattered, as they find themselves without reference points in an unfamiliar world, and as Baumeister (1985) pointed out, being such a strong and pervasive drive, variations in one’s status of belongingness will have an impact on their emotional state (p. 505). As mentioned above, the process of adjustment and integration involves, among other things, building a new home – an idea that is often linked with, but goes beyond, territorial associations. Massey and Jess (1995) referred to identities of places as being a result of social actions, and of the different ways in which the representations of particular places are constructed, thus connecting the idea of place to that of a local community (p. 134).



It is indeed through the development of a community that refugees might find a renewed sense of belonging and sense of home.

There are different conceptualizations of community: it can be interpreted as an actual form of social relations, or as a symbolic framework of the collective imagery (Amit, 2002, p. 12). As Amit (2002) argued, there has been a shift towards the conceptualization of community as collective identity, which exists beyond the social practice of its members and lies in the perception of an imagined commonality (p. 12-14). The importance of social imagination in the symbolic construction of community arose from the acknowledgment that people who are part of a community do not have actual relationships with all of its member, but still consider themselves as belonging to the same community (Amid, 2002, p. 13). In this respect, Cohen (1993) placed importance on the ways in which people think about a community rather than on the social behavior itself: community – and the meanings attached to it – can exist only in the mind of the people who belong to it (p. 60). However, as Amid (2002) contested, it is through social realization that the sense of community can be felt and claimed by its members, even if they do not have a relationship and familiarity with all the constituents (p.16).

Observing the experience of refugees in Berlin through the lens of food, important considerations about community emerged, intended both as an imagined and symbolic fact, as well as realized through social practices. Food can provide a fascinating insight into this matter, as it grounds the experience of community in everyday life thanks to the symbolic and emotional meanings attached to it, as well as the fact that food is a daily activity that is almost always shared.

The idea of home is often associated with a specific place; a place that refugees have left behind together with all its colors, smells, sounds, and tastes (Ahmed, 1999, p. 241). In addition to the unfamiliarity of the new environment, the actual places where most of them live, namely reception centers, might represent an additional obstacle to the development of a sense of home.

All participants reported that their present accommodation is significantly better when compared to the emergency shelters where they spent their first months. In fact, many of them described the situation in those first reception centers as terrible: sleeping on mattresses spread across the floor of a sports hall in unhygienic conditions, while

sharing this space with 100 to 200 people; depriving them of any privacy and often leading to conflicts. However, many participants still do not feel in place; despite improvements, living in a shared accommodation can, at times, be a stressful situation as well. There are many factors that contribute to that: sometimes they feel that their rooms are too small, as they have to share them with the whole family; sometimes they suffer because of the lack of privacy – especially single people who are sharing their rooms with strangers – ; in addition to the fact that they can have guests only in certain times. All of these things create restrictions to the course of their everyday lives, and in doing so prevent these places from becoming a reassuring home. Moreover, security controls – always present at the entrance and sometimes on the floors as well – are also perceived negatively; describing the accommodation, Zoran – a Serbian man in his mid-50s – jokingly said: “it is a little bit like prison”. As Fontanari (2013) argued, the perception of the accommodation as prison is a consequence of the spatial and material borders, but also of the borders that these places create and project towards the outside: in this way, isolation goes beyond the spatial connotation and becomes social isolation (p.6).

As Massey and Jess (1999) pointed out, through significant and shared experiences people – as individual and in groups – can create a sense of place by giving meaning to it, and thus gaining a sense of safety and familiarity (p. 134). Using food as a lens for analysis, it is possible to observe that, despite unfamiliar points of references and restrictive conditions, refugees live these places socially and symbolically; and how this, in turn, can help them in building a new sense of community.

## **A sensorial (re)creation of community**

All of the people I interviewed showed great excitement when talking about their traditional dishes; their eyes would brighten, as they would get carried away telling me about their cuisines and recalling with pride the deliciousness of their home flavors. Some emphasized the uniqueness of their food: Nadira told me about the great variety of fish in her city, “some you can’t even find in other cities in Iraq”; Shamsia, while serving me a cup of green tea with saffron, told me that it is a very treasured spice, which it is produced in great quantity in her city. Others put emphasis on the quality of food in their homeland,

by emphasizing the fact that they always had fresh vegetables, fruit, and meat. The confrontation with a new environment often brings to them a reconceptualization of home, and a realization of the powerful meanings associated with everyday practices. In fact, what appeared obvious in all cases, is that the description of their traditional foods came hand in hand with a comparison to German and European food, considered by many as “flavorless”, “full of chemicals”, or “always frozen”.

When describing their traditional foods, everybody showed a feeling of nostalgia, as they asserted that they really miss their home, as well as their food. While they might have conflicting feelings towards the country they left, and would not want to live there, the connection of their land to food that they treasure always seemed a positive one. With these words, Shamsia and Nadira expressed this ambivalent feeling towards their country:

“And where I lived, half of my heart is there.. I want to go back there, that’s my home and I also want to go there, but not now.. Maybe in the future.. But now I don’t want to, because we don’t have any safety there” (Shamsia)

“Sometimes I think I would like to go back to Iraq, but there is nothing nice there, just the food.. I told my husband ‘one time I’ll take you there just for the food, nothing else’.. But I wouldn’t live there, it’s not safe, many bad things happen, the situation is horrible and nobody feels safe” (Nadira)

While they don’t perceive their homeland as the ideal place to live, maintaining a connection to their homes through food practices is a valued activity amongst the participants, who emphasized the importance of eating traditional foods: “the tastes they grew up with”. Some cited a specific food, which is viewed as representative of their dietary habits and which is perceived as irreplaceable. For instance, Nadira told me: “Every day we eat rice.. We need rice everyday.. If I don’t eat rice every day I feel like I have a headache”. Like her, many participants mentioned a specific need to eat rice; the perception of eating a specific dish as a need is representative of the ways in which, in the course of our lives, we create a strong attachment to food, which is both a symbolic and a bodily experience.

Most of the people I met do not have problems finding traditional ingredients, as in Berlin there’s a great variety of ethnic specialty stores. However, on a several occasions, they drew my attention to the fact that here it is more difficult to find some

ingredients, such as fresh parsley for Razan or a specific kind of chive for Saber. These ingredients are not necessarily a special element of their cuisine; rather they were commonly used products, which in this situation assume new meanings: these items appear more important now because they are missed. As previously mentioned, some aspects of culture that we might usually take for granted, or that we might not even be aware of, become more visible in the migratory process. This applies to food as well, as is demonstrated by the importance assumed by the missing ingredients.

Even if, at times, it might prove challenging, all participants strive to reproduce those tastes. The continuation of their tradition is an important part of their lives in order to feel a connection to home and a sense of continuity in their lives. The sensual experience of food goes beyond the mere act of eating, and involves other aspects like the traditional preparation, the ritualistic consumption, and the sociality of eating. By trying to reproduce a sensescape similar to home, they promote a sense of continuity through elements that provide a sense of familiarity and security in different circumstances.

During the interviews, it appeared clear that they were trying to maintain this sense of continuity even in emergency shelters, where they spent the first months after arrival. As mentioned before, the situation was very different there; also with regards to food. In fact, they did not have the possibility to cook, but received portioned meals that were brought in by a catering service; not being able to cook and eat their traditional dishes was experienced negatively by everyone. Talking about that period, Saber told me he was shocked when he saw what they were serving:

“It was two times a day.. Two times it was a cold dish.. And one time warm food.. German.. And this cold food, what was it? A little bit of cheese, tomatoes, and this Arabic bread, the thin one.. And then.. Yeah that was it... And the first time that I saw it, I thought ‘No, I can’t live here’. And you know what I did? I wrote an email saying that I wanted to go back” (Saber)

Finding himself in an unfamiliar environment, after having undergone a traumatic experience, was not easy; therefore, the feeling of shock described by Saber was probably the result of a series of things. His reaction might go beyond the question of preferences; it is possible that, to some extent, the meanings associated with that food also had an influence in making it so terrible: that food represented his situation and a feeling of powerlessness, which triggered a sense of nostalgia towards the home and the sensescape that he left. Eating in that manner was not an experience that he could enjoy in the way

that he did while living in Afghanistan with his family. As previously mentioned, this sense of nostalgia can lead migrants to a reconceptualization of their home, in which common everyday practices assume extreme importance. While food can act as a means of bringing the migrant back home, and provide them with some comfort, at that time the meal just became an expression of a lack of home and lack of power.

In addition to this feeling – reported by all participants – another problem was the fact that that many participants were not certain whether the meat served in the canteen was halal: while some were told that the meat was halal, others reported not being told, while Saber asserted that “it is not about saying, it is about knowing”. Since the vast majority of refugees in Berlin are Muslim, this was represented an ulterior struggle in their already complicated lives.

What I wish to emphasize is not the difficulties they encountered, but rather the fact that even in a situation of distress – and although they received less money at the time – most of them found creative solutions to cope with the situation. Saber and his friends would put together some money to buy the food that they liked; Nadira had a WhatsApp group with her family, which they would use to organize meals outside of the canteen; Shamsia and her family had bought a small electric stove that they would use to cook in their rooms; and Zoran found relief in cooking initiatives organized by volunteer associations. In addition to these day-to-day solutions, some even tried to change things at a higher level. Valentina, an educator working in the accommodation in Prenzlauer Berg, mentioned that when she was volunteering in a sports hall two years ago, some of the people there sent a friend that they trusted to check the catering service to see if the meat was really Halal. Nadira, together with other women, asked the director if they could receive money instead of the catering service since most of the time they would not make use of that service. In one way or another they responded to the need of eating familiar foods in creative ways, and all of the abovementioned examples demonstrate the importance of finding familiar markers in an adverse situation.

Cooking and eating traditional foods can effectively transport the migrant back home by triggering powerful memories. As Lewis (2009) stated, food becomes a signifier of the home they left; providing a sense of continuity with past experiences, as well as providing a connection to an imagined community represented by their regional traditional cuisine.

## *Grocery stores as a place of belonging*

The first step for the preparation of a traditional dish is finding the ingredients needed. Berlin offers a great variety of options regarding grocery shops: in addition to German supermarkets, in the city there are also various Turkish supermarkets, and many specialty grocery shops.

“I can find everything because here.. Here in Berlin you can find everything because there are so many international.. International people, who live here, and everyone, every culture brings something to Berlin” (Thaminah)

Having lived in Berlin for over two years, all the participants have discovered places where they can find the same products that they have at home. However, while finding the necessary ingredients is not a problem for most of the refugees, it was not an effortless activity when they first arrived here. Thus, shopping for necessary ingredients is a significant act; they have all found local shops and markets, habitual places where they go shopping regularly, but the achievement of this familiarity is the result of months of searching.

“Yeah at the beginning we were so afraid, because we don’t want to eat pork but.. Slowly, slowly we learn German and then we can read on the packaging and.. You can know everything that you’re eating.. And what you must eat.. And eeh.. But at the beginning it was difficult, it’s difficult when.. Because we didn’t know where there are Turkish shops, where there are Arabic shops, or Afghanis or Iranian.. And.. And everything comes, one after the other.. And.. Now we know what we can do” (Thaminah)

As Thaminah explained, grocery shopping was a challenge in the beginning because they did not know where they could find specialty grocery stores, and they were afraid to buy “haram” products in German grocery stores. Given the initial difficulties – experienced by most – being able to go to familiar stores represented a great achievement for many of them: it represented the first step towards feeling less like strangers in a foreign land.

One day I accompanied Razan – a young woman from Syria – on a trip to the grocery shop near Hermannplatz where she usually goes shopping. She had invited me and some friends for dinner on the following day; she was going to prepare Tabbouleh: a parsley based salad with tomatoes, onion, mint and Bulgur – a type of wheat – seasoned with lemon, salt and olive oil. As we were walking down the main road, she told me that

this is her favorite place in the city – that road especially – because it is always very lively, there are many shops and restaurants, and so many people. We stopped at a small Arabic store. Outside there were two colorful tables filled with fresh fruit and vegetables, inside you could find everything and anything: from toilet paper and cigarettes to a great variety of Arabic products, displayed in a confused and colorful way, giving the impression of an almost artistic chaos. This is the place in which she finds Bulgur and the best fresh parsley; the main ingredients for Tabbouleh. After some negotiation with the cashier, Razan bought these ingredients and some tomatoes; then we left to buy some meat. We passed by a few Arabic butchers before arriving at her regular one; in the store in which they sell meat as well as some Syrian products. She mentioned that she does not like the big chain stores, but prefers these small familiar places, which she has carefully selected over the course of months. These habitual places where she goes regularly have a specific meaning to her; they convey a sense of familiarity that trigger a temporary feeling of home.

Many of the people I met spoke about going to Hermannplatz for groceries, an area considered to be one of the best places to go shopping. As previously mentioned, food stores can be an extremely significant place for migrants, because in addition to providing the ingredients, they also represent a familiar and symbolic space. The numerous Arabic and Turkish stores and restaurants on each side of the street often display both German and Arabic signs outside, which make them recognizable. The colorful shops, the recognizable smells, and the presence of many international people create a familiar and reassuring atmosphere for many asylum seekers and refugees. Through familiar signs, smells, and colors, these stores can produce a holistic experience for refugees, allowing them to be visible and find a place of belonging in a city where they might otherwise feel excluded. The foodscape represents a reference point where they can feel comfortable; they are places that can provide a sense of belonging through the creation of interactions that go beyond the sphere of the reception centers.

### *Something is missing*

The importance of eating traditional foods was stressed by all participants. In Berlin they are able to find all the necessary ingredients, thus allowing them to reproduce a familiar sensescape – during acquisition and preparation – that promotes a sense of continuity with the past, as well as reinforcing the feeling of belonging to a community. However, the experience of food is not always a positive one, especially at times when they feel like something is missing.

“It is important to say this is our food. But even if we make the same food, in the same ways, the taste is different,, Because of the ingredients maybe, or maybe because of the place.. Sometimes I think I would like to back to Iraq, there’s nothing nice, just the food.” (Nadira)

With these words Nadira expressed the importance of eating traditional foods, but at the same time she emphasized the fact that they cannot always reproduce the same tastes; this leads to a momentary desire to go back home, even if only for the food.

Thaminah expressed a similar feeling:

“It’s not the same taste, but you can come close to it.. Because sometimes the things are the same, but the place is not the same.. You can’t feel, you can’t feel like you felt there, you know? How can I explain.. The place is not the same, because the things are not enough, you know? Sometimes I feel, you can feel only in the same place you know.. Things alone can’t make everything.” (Thaminah)

“Sometimes I miss my food and.. when I miss my foo then I call my parents” (Thaminah)

Food can have a strong mnemonic power thanks to its sensual nature; consequently it creates a powerful bond with nostalgic feelings. However, eating traditional foods can trigger different kinds of nostalgia, which can be associated with conflicting emotional reactions. In the experience of refugees, the consumption of traditional dishes can trigger a positive sense of nostalgia, linking the individual to positive memories of the past that can provide some comfort in difficult times (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014, p.11-12). At the same time, food can also provoke negative or ambivalent nostalgia when its consumption recalls the lack of something (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014, p.11-12). Not being able to fully reproduce the same tastes of home, refugees are



reminded of something that is missing – people, objects, a place – and might be pervaded by a sense of negative nostalgia; in this way keeping a sense of loss alive.

## **Connected by the bond of food**

One day, as I was on the S-Bahn with Saber he exclaimed in an ironic tone: “It must be delicious!”, as he drew my attention to a girl standing near us who was eating a sandwich while looking at her phone. As we got off the train at the next stop, he told me that he just could not understand why people in Berlin are always eating like that – a small snack by themselves while they are on trains or walking. He then proceeded to explain that he would never do that, nor would his children, because he could not enjoy the food in that way.

As a matter of fact, most of the participants emphasized the importance of eating together with their families. “We cannot eat alone.. We don’t know how to eat alone”; told me Nadira – a young woman from Iraq – during her interview. During my research, it became evident that their new life in Berlin brought changes in their experience of commensality; however, the value of food is still very much connected with the people they share it with.

The conditions have changed compared to their lives in their home countries, and they are dealing with the struggles of carrying on this part of their lives in a restricted space. While the centers have communal areas – an eating hall in the emergency shelter, a dining room in the shared accommodation in Buch, and extra place in the shared kitchens of the accommodation in Prenzlauer Berg – they are not often used because the residents feel that they have “no privacy and no quietness”. Since they cannot enjoy the moment of the meal in relaxation in these areas, most of the people bring their food back to their rooms. However, the majority of people in the centers perceive these spaces as too small, especially for families, or as not providing enough privacy for people who are sharing it with “strangers”. Despite spatial limitations, they still find a way to reproduce an event of sociality that is important to them by finding creative solutions, such as trying

to make their rooms cozier, eating on the floor in their rooms, and creating a sort of mini-kitchen with a small stove.

While mentioning spatial limitations, the majority of people put more emphasis on the difficulties caused by the temporal dimension. Whereas back home they had a consolidated routine, their experience as refugees in Berlin provoked a rupture in the organization of their everyday life. They have to adjust to a different way of living, and, in many ways, they have to start anew. This entails a restructuring of their daily lives, as they are trying to integrate into the society by going to language classes, dealing with bureaucratic matters, and sending the children to school. As many participants pointed out, this results in fragmented routines among family members and in a reduction of time that they can spend together; this also includes time dedicated to eating together.

“In Iraq we have the man, he works outside and women, they do all, and the children they finish the school at 12 [...] Then they come back and they just sit waiting for the father, and he come to eat, and then to go continue his job.. So we are together.. The mother all the time in the house [...] So that’s why we meet all the time in the weekend to feel this feeling ‘okay, we’re still together’” (Nadira)

“My whole family is not here.. And.. Here we also try to eat all together.. It’s fun and we want to.. And, but sometimes it doesn’t work, because we have different schedules and.. And sometimes we have less time.. Yeah, because we have to try.. To learn something and start a new life with.. Variation.. And it makes things a bit different.” (Thaminah)

With these words, Nadira and Thaminah precisely expressed the feeling of fragmentation that stems from the difference in routines. Nadira also emphasized the fact that, while having less time with her family, they cherish those few moments they have; especially during the weekend when they eat with the whole family to “feel this feeling” of still being together.

“Because I’m not with them all the time and we separate a little bit, like someone is in the school, someone has Praktikum, someone have to work.. And we separate, so we don’t eat all the time together.. But when we eat together we have like.. We eat too much and with happiness, you know?” (Nadira)

Commensality is often an occasion for sociality, a way to keep social relationships alive, not only within the family but also with friends. Since eating together is not the is not an everyday reality anymore, these moments when the whole family is together are

much more treasured, as they provide a sense of familiarity in an insecure and volatile time of their lives.

Meeting with friends is also a key activity for some of them, and cooking is often involved in these events:

“Yeah for instance, we have so many friends and so.. So many friends.. And the friends sometimes tell to my mom, ‘yeah we re coming and we’re doing so and so’.. They call here and so.. The people from Afgahnistan do like this all the time.. All the time.. We sit all together and laugh and talk.. Always.. And sitting and eating together.” (Shamsia)

In a similar way to which it provides family cohesion, food is also an efficient medium to build social ties and maintain relationships outside of the family circle.

As mentioned before, the spaces of sociality are not always practical – in their homes they often don’t have enough space to host people – yet they try to adjust and maintain a model of hospitality. In doing so, sometimes they take advantage of the communal rooms available at the center, where they can organize parties and events. I had the opportunity to attend a few of these events during my research. For instance, the first time I went to the shared accommodation in Buch they were having a “Kochfest”: a few women had cooked typical dishes of their countries to share with both residents of the center and people from the neighborhood. This event, which takes place every couple of months, represents an occasion to foster sociality, which is promoted through food.

As having strong and significant relationships helps to develop a sense of belonging, eating with family and friends, and participating in these events, can become a crucial activity for refugees to build a sense of community.

The moments of commensality assume a great significance as they are often joyful occasions that help to maintain a sense of security; at the same time, the moments not spent together can be an equally intense experience, albeit with different connotations. Putting emphasis on the fact that in Iraq they never eat alone, Nadira told me that since she has arrived in Germany, she has lost a lot of weight due to the fact that she cannot eat with her family regularly. Her inability to eat by herself, even months after arrival, might reflect a feeling of discomfort; in fact, the act of eating alone might be a trigger of ambivalent nostalgic memories, by recalling a time when things were different, and therefore, the avoidance of this practice might reflect a negative emotional state. While

her example is not representative of everyone's experience, it can provide a window into understanding what these moments of commensality – or the lack thereof – can mean to a person in this situation, as well as highlighting their ability to reflect an emotional state.

## **Sharing a meal and making connections**

I was often surprised by the hospitality of the people I met; even if I had just met them once or twice, every time I was at the center they would always welcome me with a smile and a hug and invite me for tea or coffee. When I attended the Frauencafe on Fridays, which ended at about 18.00, I was always invited by someone for a meal; if I didn't have time and kindly refused the invite, they would insist that I go anyway because it's dinner time and we have to eat. Nadira clearly explained to me what hospitality means to her:

“Sometimes when the friends come. We kind of have tradition that if someone comes to visit us, he's not allowed to go in the dinner time or lunch time.. When the time of the dinner come, he's not allowed to say 'okay I have to go to my house'.. No it's a bit of shame.. So you have to eat first. Even if you're busy, even if you're late, we don't care.. I don't know sometimes it's like 'I have to go please'” (Nadira)

In addition to hospitality values, sharing and offering food also represent an easy way to enter in contact with new people. As Montanari argued, food is an immediate vehicle of communication, more so than language – this was especially true in my experience as most of the time we could not communicate effectively in German. Zoran explained this concept while talking about his relationship with his neighbors in the center:

“My wife makes bread and then she gives it to another woman and then.. We exchange you know.. We exchange our food.. [...] And simply.. So, so, so you can make bonds with the people... With the food, it is simply the first step.. And then you can see who is good, who has a heart, who is friendly, who is human.” (Zoran)

The bonds created through food go beyond the family circle, and they expand to friends, neighbors, and strangers – as mentioned above, the offering of food and drinks was one of the first ways in which people in the center tried to make a connection with me.

Zoran brought up another important point: the exchange of food. Exchanging food is a powerful means to build social connections, in fact, as Couhnihan and Kaplan (2013) argued, “food is an extremely important component of reciprocal exchanges more so than any other object of substance” (p. 3).

The idea of reciprocity can also become apparent in the simplicity of everyday actions. After hearing that I was from Italy, a woman from Libya at the Frauencafe asked me if I could teach her to make Italian pizza. The following Friday we met in the shared kitchen of the center, we prepared the dough and as we were waiting for it to raise, we spent a couple of hours going between the kitchen and the event at the Frauecafe. When they heard that we were making pizza, another four women joined us for the final stages of the pizza’s preparation. When everything was ready, we put the food in two big trays and went to eat in Narin’s room – a young Kurdish woman – and spent the evening eating, chatting and drinking coffee. Before my time as a guest ran out – guests are not allowed after 22.00 – as I was about to leave, Razan – whom I did not know at the time – stopped me and told me “next week you come and I cook for you”. This pattern repeated itself a couple of times: I went to Razan’s for dinner, and at the end of the meal her friend said she would cook for us the following week, on that occasion another friend of her proposed to cook something the following week. Undoubtedly, the desire to invite people for a meal had been motivated by hospitality values, but another aspect that appeared clear was the importance of giving back – not as an obligation but as a pleasure. This is only a simple example, yet it points to a pattern of reciprocity often involved in food practices.

As Mauss (1954) argued, it is easy to understand this model of reciprocity “if we realize that it is first and foremost a pattern of spiritual bonds between things which are to some extent parts of persons” (as cited in Sabar & Posner, 2013, p. 206). Applying this concept to food, Sutton (2001) stressed the peculiarity of food as a gift, which implies the material and symbolical incorporation of the gift into our body, thus generating an “internalized debt” (as cited in Sabar & Posner, 2013, p.206). This gift economy results in hospitality values, and functions as a powerful bond in constructing social relationships. Thus, hospitality can be interpreted as a way to create embodied bonds (Sabar & Posner, 2013, p. 206); bonds which are particularly important for refugees as they are trying to start a new life and create a home in a new environment.

In addition to promoting the construction of networks inside the centers, food represents a powerful bonding element towards (with? to? Depends on your meaning, but towards is not right) the outside world. Since 2015 there has been a booming of volunteer activities directed at refugees, many of which revolve around food.

One of these initiatives that people talked to me about is “Meet’n’Eat - Begegnungscafé”, which literally means café of encounter; an event that takes place every Wednesday in a building made available by the church. Since some people were going there regularly, one day I asked them if I could join. When we arrived there around 17.00 there were not many people: some were playing table football in the communal area; others were in the kitchen, where an Iranian refugee was cooking a rice-based dish with saffron, raisins and roasted nuts. As I was talking to one of the organizers, I learnt that this initiative started two years ago as an opportunity for refugees and people from Berlin to meet. It aims to be an inclusive project, where everybody can feel welcome, and can have the opportunity to get to know people with different backgrounds, providing an occasion for sociality and allowing them to expand their social networks.

Everybody is welcome to help. As a matter of fact, while the designated cook of the week was preparing the food, we helped by setting the tables and distributing the portions, as well as by staying after dinner to clean up. In this way, collaboration between the participants is promoted: nobody has the obligation to help, but there is always people who volunteer to do it.

In addition to sharing a meal, this event often offers the occasion to participate in other activities. For instance, the first time I went there, a German woman was running a conversational class for people who were learning the language – an activity that she did every week before dinner for a few months. At this event, I also had the opportunity to participate in an Arabic course for beginners that a young refugee from Syria organized.

In a warm and convivial atmosphere, encounters between people are enabled and food is used as a vehicle to promote sociality and integration, as well as creating a model that promotes reciprocity through the cooperation in the preparation of the meal, and through the activities proposed.

## **Rethinking gender roles?**

Food can also be an interesting lens of analysis to explore gender issues in the context of migration. Food practices and meanings have a great relevance in the creation of gender relations and identities, as the control over food production, provision and consumption can reflect the power and the social position of men and women (Couhihan, 1998, p.1). In fact, the way men and women manage their relation to food practices can, “facilitate gender complementary and mutual respect or produce gender hierarchy” (Couhihan, 1998, p.2).

Women might be considered as “gatekeepers of food” in the family; this concept suggests that they have power over food practices, and that their ability to prepare food for their family implies a “potential source of influence on husband and children” (Couhihan, 1998, p.4). Adopting this perspective, in the context of migration women can be considered the ones responsible for “upholding home” (Abbots, 2016, p.9), by making possible the reproduction of important cultural practices, thus rendering food practices valued. At the same time, however, the responsibility for food preparation does not automatically reflect a position of power, which is often held by men; in fact, women might subordinate themselves to the desires of men, following a need to satisfy others (Couhihan, 1998, p.1-4).

A gendered perspective, which takes into account these aspects, is particularly interesting in the experience of refugees. If on the one hand food can be a way to connect, it can also be a way of differentiation, which reflects disparities among gender. In fact, the changes brought about by living in a new environment might cause a rupture in traditional gender roles, and food can become a means of empowerment, or exacerbate already existing disparities.

All the people I interviewed reported that women were responsible for cooking at home. Saber pointed out that “normally it is the women who cook at home. Because they don’t have anything to do outside, so they cook at home and they care for the children”. In fact, in the description of their routines, many reported that women didn’t use to work, only the men in the family did; this means that the women were responsible for all domestic practices. Nadira told me that in her family she often had to cook for the whole family, an activity that with time she started to love and that made her proud. However,

she also pointed out that at the beginning she was very nervous that her family wouldn't like her cooking, and that would have been a source of shame for her. While cooking for the family might be a source of pride and give women a valued sense of self, at the same time a deference to others is almost always present. Moreover, not all the women saw cooking in a positive way, Razan stressed the fact that the woman has to take care of everything:

“I cook all the time.. Always always always the woman.. The woman cooks, the woman cleans, the woman cares for the children... Always always the woman.. The man no, he goes to work and to school and ‘woman a tea please, woman a coffee please’” (Razan)

During the course of my research, I didn't notice a heterogeneous tendency in the gendered way in which food practices are experienced, but rather varied individual experiences which reflect different meanings.

As mentioned above, the migration experience most of the times entails great changes in the routines of refugees, as they have to learn the language, go to school, find a job and generally create a new life for themselves. This change in routines has led some families to revisit gender roles. While in their homeland the woman mostly stayed at home and took care of all domestic practices, the mere fact of having to attend language classes implies a great variation in their lives: the woman is not always at home having the time to cook and prepare everything for the man. As a consequence, some women reported that men have started to be more supportive and helpful here: going grocery shopping, helping to set the table, and sometimes even cooking. Nadira, for instance, said that now that she is doing an internship, and her husband always cooks for her, so that when she comes home everything is ready and they can eat together. Similarly, Thaminah said that her husband often cooks here:

“Because we have a kitchen so far away and sometimes I don't want to cook so sometime Ali says ‘I can't take care of Taha [their youngest child] then I cook and you take care of Taha, and I accept that, it is easier.’” (Thaminah)

At times however, the woman remains the only one responsible for all domestic practices. For some this can represent an empowering activity. Thanks to their ability to cook, women assume an important role in carrying on a tradition that enables a connection to home, and provides a sense of security through the familiarity of traditional food, as



well as in constructing or maintaining relationships through food sharing. Thus, in this respect, having always relied on women and not being able to continue a traditional practice, men might feel powerless, especially if they find themselves alone in a new unfamiliar environment. Yet, the obligation to take care of this domestic practice is perceived by many women as an obstacle – as reported by Razan for instance – by creating a disadvantage for women in this situation.

Some women mentioned not being able to attend German classes as they have to take care of the children and cook for their husband; as a matter of fact, many young women that I met have a very limited knowledge of German compared to their male counterparts. This can be a problem, as language learning is the first step towards the integration into the new society; when denied this possibility, women often remain more isolated. When finding themselves in this situation, cooking has an ambivalent significance: it can still provide a sense of empowerment as they can reenact an important practice, but at the same time it can create a feeling of exclusion, by being perceived as an impediment towards the creation of a new social network that goes beyond the walls of the reception center.

Food practices can reveal two opposite reactions to the changes typical of their situation: on the one hand, differences in routines might lead refugees to cooperate and rethink gendered roles in the domestic spheres; on the other hand, an attachment to the traditional gender roles can exacerbate disparities and women might suffer having less opportunity to integrate.

These reflections have implications also with regards to the process of community creations. The symbolic value of food might assume negative connotations in these situations of exclusion, as a consequence the imagining of a community through food might be distorted because it reflects ambivalent emotions. Food can still represent a means for making connections, especially within the reception centers, but the inability to attend classes and learn the language makes it difficult to extend the network of social relationship beyond the walls of the center.

However, these observations are limited to family contexts and are not representative of the whole refugee population; indeed, exploring the situation of single men or women might lead to different considerations.

## **Final remarks**

Observing the experience of refugees in Berlin through the lens of food, important considerations about community emerged – intended both as an imagined and symbolic fact, as well as realized through social practices. Food can provide a fascinating insight in this matter, as it grounds the experience of community in the everyday life, thanks to the symbolic and emotional meanings attached to it, and to the fact that food is a daily activity that is almost always shared.

Being surrounded by an unfamiliar world, traditional foods have a central role in providing a form of continuity for refugees. Preparing and eating familiar dishes can create a powerful sensescape that triggers positive nostalgic memories, which create a temporary link to their home, and a sense of security in an otherwise strange world. Specialty grocery stores also contribute to the creation of a sense of familiarity: with their signs, colors and smells they become reference points for refugees. The symbolic value attached to food can provide a sense of belonging to an imagined community: a community connected with the people back home when preparing and eating traditional dishes, and a community connected with other international migrants in Berlin when grocery shopping in familiar stores.

Food is also central for the development of social relationships. For many refugees eating with family and friends represents a valued part of their lives because it's a way of maintaining strong bonds; at the same time, through values of hospitality and patterns of reciprocity food is often the first way to make new connections. The shared experience of food also provides a way to build a community through social practices in every-day life.

## CONCLUSION

Migrants struggle to exist in two worlds: while seeking a sense of continuity with the past, they are oriented towards the future and strive to build a new life. Since our lives are grounded in our everyday actions, ordinary practices are essential to the experience of migrants in order to provide a sense of familiarity and security in an unfamiliar environment. Thus, in the context of migration, food practices can potentially assume great significance. As it is a constant element in our lives, food – suffused with symbolic and cultural meanings – represents a decisive aspect of the human experience.

Building on these considerations, this research concentrated on the experience of a specific category of migrants, that is refugees in Berlin; using food as a focal point through which to explore questions of identity, agency, and change. The use of qualitative methods, such as participant observation and in-depth interviews, enabled the exploration of different facets of their experience; thanks to a close and intense encounter focusing on the micro dimension of everyday life. In particular, observing the role of food in their lives provided an insight into understanding their emotions and their interpretations of the world, as well as shedding light on broader issues such as the processes of community creation and gender issues.

What emerged from this research is that food plays a crucial role in the lives of refugees. One conclusion that could be drawn is that food often helps in the development of a sense of belonging to an imagined community: owing to its symbolic value and its strong association with territory, food is representative of a system of values connected to the participants' homeland and past experience. Cooking traditional foods enables the creation of a powerful sensescape, which can trigger positive nostalgia therefore providing refugees with comfort, while at the same time it can reinforce a feeling of belonging to an imagined community united by food.

Another important aspect that emerged is that grocery stores also play a crucial role in the lives of refugees, as they represent a point of reference in an unfamiliar world. The familiarity and visibility that these places provide enable refugees to create an imagining of a community grounded in the new environment: they are not alone, they are visible, they are part of a community.

While positive nostalgia connect refugees to positive memories that can provide comfort in difficult times, food can be a trigger of negative or ambivalent nostalgia as well. This type of nostalgia can reinforce a sense of loss, because it is triggered when the consumption of food recalls the lack of something. The inability to fully reproduce the tastes of home appeared to be a trigger of this negative emotion for some of the participants, as it evokes the feeling that something was missing.

Community assumes significant value also when it is realized through social relations. In this sense, food proved to be a perfect lens of analysis because eating is almost always a shared activity. Food appears to be an effective way in which social bonds are created and maintained. Among refugees, food acts as a powerful vehicle for maintaining cohesion among family members, as well as being a way to keep friendships alive and build new relationships. The sociality and reciprocity fostered through food practices provides a sense of social and emotional security, a sense of belonging to a group of people, thus helping in the creation of a community.

Looking at foodways from a gendered perspective provided an interesting insight. Since food can be considered an important element for continuing a tradition and maintaining a connection to home, women – usually responsible for food practices – can be regarded as having considerable power in the context of migration, in that they act as gatekeepers of a tradition. Conversely, men might feel powerless due to their inability to recreate a treasured sensescape.

One observation that could be made is that the sense of pride and empowerment that food practices can give to refugee women, is at times counteracted by feelings of exclusion. Migration provoked a rupture in their lives and a great change in routines: while in their homeland, most women would stay at home and take care of the domestic activities, in Berlin, in order to start a new life, they have to engage in new practices, such as going to language classes or going to school. These changes brought some families to reconsider traditional gender roles, thus ensuring collaboration in the domestic sphere. However, some families remained attached to traditional gender roles, and in many cases, this fact contributed to the exacerbation of inequalities. Having to stay at home to take care of cooking and children, some women could not attend language classes, which is the first step towards integration. In this situation, the position assumed by food is

ambivalent, if on the one hand it can be a source of pride, at the same time it is a reminder of their exclusion.

*Within the broader context*

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the study of food and migration, and studies in this field have raised some important considerations by drawing attention to the relevance of food practices in the context of migration. Yet, refugees have rarely been the focus of recent studies in this field. Undoubtedly, there are some commonalities between all kind of migrants, and some of the conclusions drawn from those studies can be extended to include the category of refugees; nonetheless, it must also be acknowledged that their experience is differentiated, as they often live in a condition of uncertainty and liminality due to structural constraints. With this in mind, one could argue that this specific area of study is under-researched, and as such, examining the everyday lives of refugees by focusing on food and food practices could provide a fascinating insight into their experience.

As previously mentioned, our need to belong is a significant contributing factor in human motivation. Thus, the role of food in the construction of community assumes particular relevance in the experience of refugees, as it can provide a sense of home and a sense of belongingness, which in turn, allows the imagination of a possible future and the facilitation of integration into a new environment.

What needs to be emphasized is their creativity and agentive force in this process. An overturning of the view that sees refugees as passive receptors of aid can have great relevance in the broader context. The arrival of refugees is often seen as an impediment and a problem to be dealt with. However, if we are accepting of change, and view refugees as human beings with initiative and talent, this could help to promote their integration and ensure a harmony.

### *Limitations and possibilities for future research*

Although interesting themes emerged, there were also some limitations to the study. Firstly, there was a time limit: while prolonged contact with the studied community is suggested in qualitative researches, this research was conducted over a period of only five months.

In addition, limited access to the centers prevented continuous contact with the residents, which could have allowed to explore in more depth the complexities of their experience.

Moreover, language often represented a barrier: I could not speak their language and many of them had difficulties with the German language. In general, speaking in German – neither mine nor their parties' mother tongue – made communication difficult at times.

Sample size and variety was also a limitation. Generally, the purpose of qualitative research is to focus on a small number of people in a specific context to provide a detailed insight; however, given the diversity of refugees, and the different meanings that an experience can have depending on an individual, making generalizations from a small sample is problematic.

Undoubtedly, this research only offers a brief glimpse into the explored issues. However, some of the considerations raised could lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive and integrated research study in the future. The majority of the people encountered during the research were women who were in Germany with their families, who have been in Germany for between two and three years, and whom I had met through social events. This means that they represent only a restricted part of the refugee population. Thus, a future comparative study could include a diversified sample, explore gender issues in more depth, try to include marginalized people, and observe the evolution of their experience including both people who have arrived more recently and people who have been here longer.

### *Final thoughts: An existential quest*

The reflections which arose in this research shed light on the human capacity to adjust and create new beginnings. Notwithstanding traumatic past experiences and uncertain present possibilities, people orient themselves towards the future showing a creative agentic force. An agency which defines itself in relation to social structures, which emphasizes the capacity of human beings to create and recreate new senses of self through creative actions, and in doing so asserting their freedom from external restriction (Rapport & Overing, 2000, p. 1-5). In this process, the most important resource is imagination, which allows us to go beyond restrictions and in search of freedom (Rapport & Overing, 2000, p. 1-5).

A final thought is introduced by an account by Thaminah, in which she recounts her journey to Europe and reflects on her current situation:

“[we left because] we didn’t have the possibility to do anything with our lives.. By foot one month on the way.. It was bad.. The worst experience of my life [...] In Greece on the water, in the sea, you could see people were afraid to die.. Terrible, but in the end it was really good [...] because people came to us and they helped us.. They came to us and said ‘we will help you’ and it was good.. We got off and the people from Greece came and it was.. In that moment we said ‘yes, there are people, there are good people who help others” (Thaminah)

“We are happy here, yes.. But we go forward, we always have movement.. and you need to live, what more can I do? We have all our activities and Yeah.. Especially we have.. Hope.. And we go forward with our lives” (Thaminah)

The overarching message from this research is that we need to go transcend the view that refugees are passive victims, and rather try to empower their ability to create a new beginning. What emerges from Thaminah’s account is exactly that: her resilience and resistance as an active subject, and her predisposition to adjust and change even in the most difficult and restrictive situation. What is highlighted is the creativity, the imagination, and the improvisation, that allow people to move forward; this is particularly visible in this research on the variable of food.

Going beyond the traumas, going beyond the restrictions, going beyond numbers that define people, we should be open for the encounter with the Other, and we should recognize our common humanity in our endless quest for freedom.





APPENDIX 1: Interview with Thaminah (22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018)

1. **Okay es funktioniert wieder.. Also erstmal ich wollte fragen ein bisschen über die Kultur in eure Heimat.. Wie man isst, zusammen mit der Familie oder alleine..**
2. Ehm.. In unsere Land alle essen zusammen, das ist wichtige Kultur für uns.. Man muss immer mit Familie essen, es passiert oft.. In jede Familie ist so.. Man muss pünktlich auf dem Tisch sein.. */leise/* auf dem Tisch, vor dem Tisch haha
3. **Haha ich bin nicht sicher..**
4. Ja und.. Das ist ein normale Kultur, jede Familie macht mit einander so viel zu tun haben.. Haben diskutieren zusammen auf dem Tisch.. Haha auf dem Tisch.. Und das ist wichtig, wir wir wir lieben das.. Essen und sprechen und so..
5. **Was meinst du mit der ganze Familie?**
6. Vater, Mutter, Kinder, auch Großeltern manchmal da.. Und das ist wichtig, wir lieben unser Großmutter.. Manche Familie sie wohnen zusammen mit Großeltern und sie sie haben sie.. Haben sie.. Eehh.. Sie haben sehr eehh.. Respekt?
7. **Respekt ja..**
8. Sie haben sehr Respekt für die großen Eltern in Familie
9. **Und bei dir auch? Immer mit deiner Mutter, deinem Vater..**
10. Ja ja bestimmt.. Aber meine Mutter sie haben eigene eigene.. Mmh.. Haus.. Wir sind nicht zusammen aber wir sind oft bei meine Eltern und danach wir kochen zusammen manchmal aber wenn wir kochen nicht zusammen, sicher nach dem Essen sind wir zusammen.. Danach, für Nachtsch.. Oder zum Tee trinken
11. **Mhm.. Und ehm.. Wer kocht normalerweise?**
12. Ehm.. Die Frauen von Haus.. Oft, vielleicht immer */Lulufa kommt rein/* In in.. In mein Mann's Familie oft wenn viele Menschen gibt, kochen Männer.. Bei Familie von Ali.. Aber, von meine Familie weil die Männer magen nicht.. Mogen nicht das Kochen eh oft die Frau
13. **Mhm.. Hat Ali dann auch gekocht?**
14. Ja Ali ist Chef-Koch und
15. **Ach so..**
16. Ja deswegen die Männer wollen kochen.. Mein mein mein Schwiege Bruder, Bruder von Ali, er ist auch Chef-Koch und Ali lernt das auch von Bruder und deswegen in seine Familie ist so.. Oft kochen die Männer, und.. Ali und seine Bruder.. Sein Bruder kann auch mit.. Mit Tiere arbeiten.. Zum Beispiel.. Backerei? Ne.. Mess, Messnererei?
17. **Fleischerei?**
18. Fleisch ja.. Er kann Tiere gestorben und dann diese machen mit Fleisch ja.. Messnererei?
19. **Mmh ich weiss nicht.. Fleischerei ist wo man Fleisch verkauft..**
20. Jaja */Lilufa isst gerade Tiramisu und spricht kurz mit ihrer Mutter*
21. **Und.. Denkst du ehm.. Es gibt eine Mahlzeit –**
22. Mahlzeit?
23. **Mahlzeit zum Beispiel Frühstück, Abendessen, Mittagessen.. Die wichtiger ist als die andere, für dich?**
24. Ehm.. Die wichtige ist Mittagessen
25. **Wieso?**
26. Weil die Männer oft in meine in meine.. Die Männer kommen aus Arbeit und das muss pünktlich und alles vorbereitet sein.. Weil die.. Die haben kurze Zeit für Pause, sie essen und dann muss alles vorbereitet sein, wenn man kommt aus Arbeit */das machte immer*

*meine Tante – sagt Lilufa/ Ja, und das ist wichtig weil kurze Zeit und.. Man muss zusammen essen und dann..*

- 27. Mhm.. Aber auch da immer zusammen essen mit der ganze Familie?**
28. Hier?
- 29. Ne ne ich meine in deiner Heimat**
30. Ja ist so.. Wenn wenn.. Wenn der Mann kommt in der Mittagessen nicht ist okay aber der Mann ist wichtig immer, weil er arbeitet ja.. Auch die Frauen manchmal arbeiten, zum Beispiel ich.. Wenn ich aus Arbeit zurück nach Hause gegangen, Ali hat alles vorbereitet für mich.. Und manchmal kommt in.. In meine Fabrike, wir essen zusammen
- 31. Mhm.. Aber die ganze Familie dann nur am Abend..**
32. Ja.. Ja die ganze Familie nur da.. Weil wir haben.. Freizeit
- 33. ..und Frühstück ist es..**
34. Frühstück eh.. Das ist ein bisschen schwierig, weil die Kinder zu spät machen.. Aber immer mein Mutter.. Isst Frühstück mit mein Vater, Kinder vielleicht später, aber immer.. Mein Mutter vorbereitet alles für mein Vater.. Meine Mutter macht das
- 35. Und was ist ein typisches Essen, dass ihr gehabt habt?**
36. Für Frühstück?
- 37. Also, im Allgemein**
38. Eh.. Die asiatisch Essen oft mit Reis.. Und Hauptsache im Tisch ist Brot, wenn etwas mit Reis ist man braucht nicht Brot, weil die Reis reicht für essen und etwas von Reis wie ein Eintopf.. Aber wenn wenn.. Wenn wir haben keine Reis, Brot etwas..
- 39. Und zum Beispiel Abendessen, wie.. Wie läuft das Abendessen normalerweise?**
40. ..
- 41. Also du hast gesagt, das Moment ist wichtig für dich..**
42. ..
- 43. Zusammen zu sein**
44. Ja zusammen ja.. Wenn wir.. Wenn gibt's Essen zusammen.. Wir sind zusammen auf dem Tisch, wenn nicht dann nach dem Essen etwas zum Trinken oder zum Dessert.. Wir.. Wir haben eeh.. Nicht gesunde wie hier in Europa als Dessert, wir haben oft etwas Süßigkeit anderes aber nicht wie diese, aber etwas Süßigkeit, mit Tee oder Obst oft.. Wir essen oft Obst.. Nach dem Essen
- a. Wie machst du diese Tiramisu? Ist echt lecker
  - b. **Ich gebe deiner Mutter die Rezepte, ist sehr einfach eigentlich..**
- 45. Und hier.. Wie ist es unterschiedlich für dich?**
46. Hier wie ich.. Unterschiedlich ist.. Meine... Meine ganze Familie nicht da.. Und.. Hier auch wir versuchen alle zusammen essen.. Das macht Spaß und wollen das.. Und aber manchmal geht's nicht, weil wir haben unterschiedliche Zeiten und.. Und haben manchmal weniger Zeit.. Ja, weil wir müssen versuchen.. Etwas zu lernen und eine neue Leben eeh.. Varianten.. Und.. Macht man bisschen unterschiedlich
- 47. Mhm.. Und kocht ihr beide hier auch?**
48. Ja hier.. Kocht auch oft Ali hahah
- 49. Haha**
50. In Iran oft ich auch gekocht.. Aber hier gibt Ali viel.. Weil, wir haben eine Küche so weit, drei Tür ist davor.. Und manchmal ich habe keine Lust haha und manchmal Ali sagt „Ich kann nicht Taha nehmen dann ich koche, du passt auf Taha auf“ und ich akzeptiere das, es ist einfacher..
- 51. Es ist gut, dass er kocht dann**
52. Haha ja weil Ali hat keine Lust von Taha und ich habe keine Lust von kochen deswegen.. Ich habe auch manchmal wirklich keine Zeit.

- 53. Mhm.. Und was kocht ihr, oder er, normalerweise?**
54. Wir kochen oft.. Eeh.. Gemüse und Fleisch, weil ich esse nicht mehr Reis.. Bisschen gesund haha
- 55. Aber immer nach.. Afghanischer Art?**
56. Afghanische ja.. Afghanische auch Iranische, weil die die.. Unsere Kultur.. Ist ein bisschen gemischt mit Kultur von Iran..
- 57. Mhm.. Ja und du hast auch für eine lange Zeit da gewohnt..**
58. Ja die ganze Leben, ich war nie in Afghanistan.. Ali vielleicht 4-5 Jahren.. Aber ich nicht.. Normalerweise ich muss Iraner sein aber.. Die iranische Pass habe ich nicht.. Wir haben 30 Jahren alt als mein Vater eine junger Mann war, aber die die.. Die bekommen nicht Dokumente von iranische Politik oder..
- 59. Weil du meinst.. Er war Flüchtlinge da oder?**
60. Jaja.. Er was Flüchtling und die Iran, die Land, gibt nicht.. Recht für Flüchtlinge.. Deswegen.. Ja wir haben eine ID-Card aber das zeigt das man afghanisch ist
- 61. Mhm**
62. ..keine Versicherung, keine so so so, keine Geld von Stadt wie hier in Deutschland aber.. Kann man alles machen zum Beispiel.. Wenn ich eeh.. Hier in Iran bin, kann ich einfach morgen zum Arbeit gehen..
- 63. Mhm.. Also nicht so viel Bürokratie..**
64. Ja
- 65. Und ehm.. Kannst du alle die Zutaten finden für das afghanisches Essen? Oder iranisches Essen..**
66. Ja aber.. Kann ich alles finden, weil die.. Hier.. Hier in Berlin man kann alles finden.. Weil hier gibt's so viele internationale.. Internationalität der Menschen, die wohnen hier und alle.. Jede Kultur bringt etwas in Berlin.. Und kann man einfach alles finden..
- 67. Und ist das Geschmack ist dasselbe oder anders?**
68. Eh.. Dieselbe nicht, aber kann man bisschen ernaehen
- 69. Ja ja.. Wieso denkst du nicht ist nicht dasselbe?**
70. Weil.. Manchmal die Sache.. Eh.. Ist gleich aber die Ort ist nicht gleich.. Man kann nicht, man fühlt nicht wie dort.. Weißt du? Wie kann ich erzählen.. Die Ort nicht selbe auch, weil die Sachen ist nicht genug, weißt du? Manchmal ich fühle nur, man gefühlt nur in den selten, selben Ort, weißt du? Und die Sachen kann nicht alles machen
- 71. Ja ja.. Und wo gehst du dann normalerweise einkaufen?**
72. Wir haben so viele verschiedene Laden.. Auch verschiedene Ort, eine iranische – iranisch/pakistanische Laden gibt es in Turmstrasse, da kann man alles aus Pakistan, manchmal aus Afrika.. Aus Iran, Afghanistan.. Weil die Länder sind sind.. Nachbarn zusammen.. Und kann man alles finden.. Auch richtige Produkt aus verschiedene Länder.. Die sind original von diese Länder und.. Auch.. Wir können auch in türkische Laden, arabische Laden so viel gibt's.. Kann man einfach alles..
- 73. Mhm.. Und normalerweise wo geht ihr?**
74. Normalerweise wenn wir etwas Besonderes brauchen, wir gehen zur Turmstrasse, weil da gibt's verschiedene Essen aus Iran, Pakistan und Afghanistan.. Pakistanisch brauchen wir nicht aber iranisch und afghanisch wir brauchen die Sachen wir kaufen dort, aber wir können auch Fleisch auf türkische Markt, arabische Markt kaufen
- 75. Und.. Gehst du oft da? In dieser Turmstrasse?**
76. Nicht oft.. Weil so weit ist auch.. Auch.. Wir kaufen immer ein bisschen mehr als wir brauchen, weil wir haben keine Zeit.. Und.. Wir gehen manchmal..
- 77. Und gibt es viele Sachen dort?**

78. Ja viele Sachen.. Auch Gesundbrunnen, türkische Markt wir kaufen auch, weil es ist näher als Turmstrasse.. Zum Beispiel es gibt Fleisch und alles.. Halal weil wir sollen halal sein..
- 79. Eh und.. Ehm.. Gibt es etwas was du nicht isst?**
80. In unsere Religion man darf nicht Schweinfleisch essen.. Weil die Religion sagt, und wir machen das.. Ich habe keine Information davon aber ich bin Muslim und ich esse nicht.. Aber ich habe gehört, dass Fleisch von Schwein ist nicht gesund.. Ja
- 81. Ja..**
82. Sie essen in Italien?
- 83. Ja**
84. Essen Schweinfleisch?
- 85. Ja.. Nicht so oft normalerweise aber manchmal schon**
86. Und.. Die schmeckt gut? Wie Lammfleisch oder Rindfleisch oder ganz anderes?
- 87. Aaah ein bisschen wie.. Rindfleisch.. Es ist ein bisschen mehr fett.. Also man kann auch diese mit Schweinfleisch machen aber ist nicht so..**
88. Ich frage weil ich habe nie gegessen
- 89. Jaja ich weiß nicht, wie man das erklären kann..**
90. Für uns ist haram, das bedeutet wir dürfen nicht essen.. Weil.. Ich weiß nicht, nicht gesund, nicht sauber habe gehört.. Aber mehrere Informationen habe ich nicht..
- 91. Ich erinnere mich noch das erste mal, als wir uns getroffen haben, du hast mir gesagt.. Dass ehmm.. Am Anfang es war schwierig in deutsche Supermarkte alle diese..**
92. Jaja am Anfang wir haben so viel Angst, weil wir wollen das Schweinefleisch nicht essen aber.. Langsam langsam wir lernen Deutsch danach wir können lesen auf dem Packung und.. Kann man alles wissen, was man isst.. Und was muss man essen.. Und eeh.. Aber am Anfang war es schwierig, ist schwierig wenn.. Weil wir haben eeh mmh.. Nicht gewussten wo gibt's türkische Laden, wo gibt's arabische Laden oder afghanisch oder iranisch.. Und.. Und alles kommt langsam langsam, eine nach der eine.. Und.. Jetzt wir wissen was machen können..
- 93. Ja nach 3 Jahren geht's schon besser.. Und geht ihr auch manchmal in deutsche Supermarkte?**
94. Ja wir.. Dort alles kennen, lesen wir können und... Kann man besser entscheiden.. Und die Produkte, wir haben schon kennengelernt..
- 95. Gibt's eine Supermarkt hier in der Nahe?**
96. Ja da Nahe von Heim gibt es ein Netto und bisschen weiter darüber von Netto eeh.. Gibt's Rewe, Aldi und Rossmann und auch 3 Station mit Tram, da gibt's auch Supermarket
- 97. Und ehmm.. Hier in Berlin.. Triffst du dich manchmal mit Leute von Afghanistan oder Iran zum Feiern, was zusammen zu kochen**
98. Ja. Wir haben so viele Afghanische und Iranische Freunde.. Und.. Wir treffen uns manchmal, und wir gehen zu.. Wir gehen zu meine Freunden ja.. Gibt's hier auch in dieser Unterkunft viele persische Leute aus Afghanistan, aus Iran und.. Wir können darüber so viel machen
- 99. Mhm.. Kocht ihr auch zusammen?**
100. Ja manche haben Freunde und mit Freunde kann man alles machen.. Besonders im Sommer zum Park haha wir gehen zum Park und etwas grillen
- 101. Ja im Sommer ist was anderes in Berlin**
102. Ja
- 103. Und.. Ist es wichtig für dich was du isst um.. Zu Hause zu fühlen so zu sagen?**
104. Ehm.. Wichtig wieso? Wichtig zum gesund ist oder?

- 105. Ne ne ne.. Ist das wichtig, dass du zum Beispiel afghanisches Essen isst, so dass du zu Hause fühlst?**
106. Ja, manchmal ich vermisse meine Essen und.. Und wenn ich vermisse mein Essen dann ruf ich mein Eltern.. Aber ich mag das Essen etwas von andere Länder auch.. Weil ich.. Ich bin.. Ich merk das probieren immer, weil ich kann die.. Ich kann wissen, wie die andere Leute essen.. Und.. Das mag ich..
- 107. Hast du auch deutsches Essen probiert?**
108. Ja ich habe schon.. Pute? Eine typisch deutsche Essen in.. Ehm Hause von mein Freundin gegessen.. Das war Weinachten, Weinachten essen mit Kartoffeln und rote rote Kohl gegessen.. Das war super ja, ein besonderes anderes Geschmack von mein Essen /*Ali und Taha sind reingekommen, er spricht kurz mit ihr zusammen*/ Und das war eine gute Erlebnis oder Erfahrung, weil die erste mal eine gute Essen von Deutschland, ich habe nie gegessen, das war erste
- 109. Und.. Und mit dem Kochen, oder mit der Kultur des Essens ich weiss nicht, hast du Schwierigkeiten gefunden?**
110. Nein, nur das Fleisch, Schweinfleisch, kann ich auch alles und ich habe keine gefunden..
- 111. Und wie lange wohnt ihr schon hier in diesem Heim?**
112. Fast 3 Jahre, wir haben in Dezember 2015 hier gekommen und.. Eh.. Ein Monat später es war Weinachten dann eeh..2 Jahren und vielleicht oder 6 Monate, also 2 und halb ja..
- 113. Und am Anfang wo habt ihr gewohnt?**
114. Am Anfang wir waren in Hamburg für.. Mmh 2 und halb Monate und danach wir transportieren nach Berlin eeh.. Wir.. Transfert nach Berlin.. Danach wir sind in Berlin in eine Turnhalle, in Camp
- 115. Sorry wo?**
116. In Camp, in ein Camp.. In Winsstrasse.. Und.. Das dort war eine Turnhalle.. /*tossisce*/ und da wohnen wir 7 Monate mit andere Familien auf dem.. Boden, mit.. Betten und so.. Ohne Zimmer oder..
- 117. Und wie war mit dem Essen dort?**
118. War nicht gut.. Ehh.. Ganz fremd und schmeckt gar nicht haha alles alles.. Alles war gepackt, manchmal gibt's Fleisch und bessere Geschmack aber oft gekochte Gemüse, ohne Öl, ohne Salz und.. Ohne Zutaten, zum Beispiel Gewürze oder so
- 119. Aber.. Zum Beispiel Fleisch war halal?**
120. Ich weiss nicht.. Die sagen die sind halal, die türkische Firma macht das.. Aber wir wissen nicht wieso hat das gekocht oder so..
- 121. Wenn du auf Klo gehen muss bitte..**
122. Ja ich muss meinen Nase putzten.. Eine ist offen, eine nicht.. Ich komme gleich
123. *Fünf Minuten später*/ **und.. Was sagten wir.. Ah ja, das Essen in der Turnhalle..**
124. Ja das gefällt uns nicht.. Aber..
- 125. Aber wir funktionierte das? Gab's eine Mensa oder..**
126. Mensa?
- 127. Gab es ein Raum wo man essen konnte?**
128. Ja wir haben eine kleine, nicht so klein aber nicht so groß.. Wir haben eine bestimmte Platz wo essen
- 129. Und gab es Varianten? Konnte man wählen zwischen verschiedene Sachen?**

130. Ja ehm.. Oft wir haben 3 verschiedene Modelle sind.. Und da gibt's auch vegetarisch, mit Fleisch ohne Fleisch.. Mit.. Manchmal Salat.. Und.. Und manchmal Fingerfood oder Süßigkeit oder Salat..
- 131. Waren die Zeiten flexibel, wann man essen konnte?**
132. Kann man ehmm oder zwischen 3 oder.. 2 Stunden kann man dort essen..
- 133. Für 3 Mahlzeiten..**
134. Ehm nein.. Für Frühstück wir haben 2 Stunden, zum Beispiel 7 bis 8 dann.. Wenn man um 8.30 da ist, gibt's keine mehr, weil die Menschen machen alle das essen.. Aber.. Mittagessen auch gibt's 3 Stunden, danach wenn man, wenn etwas eeh.. Gibt's etwas Rest dann bekommt man aber wenn nichts dann nein und.. Abendessen auch.. Oft war Jogurt, Salat und Tee.. Manchmal eeh.. Saft.. Ja..
- 135. Habt ihr immer dort gegessen oder seid ihr auch draußen gegangen?**
136. Wir haben immer dort gegessen, weil wir dürfen nicht unten.. Sie haben nicht Kuchen und oben war die Büro und eeh.. Und vorne gibt's auch ein Platz für essen aber.. Wir unten ganz unten in Turnhalle gewohnt und unsere Zimmer war dort.. Wir durften nicht unten gegessen, weil dort gibt's Boden aus Holz, auch die die.. Wir haben eine grosse Halle und grosse Halle hat ein Dach und.. Wenn wenn der Reste Mull von Essen bleibt so, und manche Leute machen nicht sauber und das riecht nicht so gut..
- 137. Aber ich meinte, habt ihr immer das Essen in diese Turnhalle oder auch ich weiss nicht in arabischen Laden, ein bisschen gekauft..**
138. Ah ja.. In Turnhalle war ich schon, Taha war in meinem Bauch.. Immer wenn ich schmeckt das Essen nicht.. Wir kaufen etwas für mich zum Beispiel.. Weil.. Ich mag immer Döner gegessen ja.. Weil eeh.. Eine, nur eine.. Sache habe ich, gefällt mir und geschmeckt habe.. Das war Döner, von eine Döner Laden.. Türkische Döner Laden.. War in der Nähe.. Und wir haben kein.. So viel Geld, und wir können nur das Döner kaufen.. Und.. Manchmal eeh.. Wie war das.. Eeh.. Kartoffel ist aber.. Pommes.. Oft Pommes und Döner
- 139. Also.. Hast du dann das afghanische Essen vermisst?**
140. Ja.. Viel, viel.. Wir haben Gewohnheit von Reis, Fleisch, Lammfleisch.. Und wir bekommen keine Lammfleisch, keine richtige Reis, sie kochen Reis ganz anderes als uns.. Und das schmeckt gar nicht wie so ist, danach ja.. Wir haben Gewohnheit und.. Weil wir haben seit 7 Monate gegessen haha man hat Hunger, und gibt's nichts zu essen, man muss essen haha
- 141. Haha jaja.. Und danach seid ihr hier gekommen?**
142. Ja ehm.. War die die.. Unsere Camp war, muss geschlossen wurden dann.. Unsere Chef macht alle schwangere Frauen weg zuerst danach langsam langsam alle Leute muss raus gehen.. Weil die Turnhalle, deutsche Leute brauchen die Turnhalle.. Sie haben gesagt „Wir brauchen und die Leute muss rausschicken“ aber.. Danach gehen wir für eine Monate eine Hotel eeh.. Weil ich war schwanger auch und.. Das war in Schonefeld, Schonefeld..
- 143. Mhm.. Und dort für essen, wie haben sie gemacht?**
144. Das war gleich mit das Camp
- 145. Okay..**
146. Wir bekommen essen von eine türkische.. Firma.. Und das war gleich.. Aber ein bisschen anderes dort.. Wir gehen auch Döner bisschen bisschen.. Mehrere.. Zu entscheiden, verschiedene Sachen.. Nicht nur drei Sachen, aber wir haben bisschen besser.. Wie ein Hotel.. Weil das war ein Hotel.. Aber wir dürfen nicht kochen.. Seit ein Monat ich war da, dann bin ich hier.. Endlich haha
- 147. Hehe.. Was waren die größte Veränderungen dann?**

148. Eh die größte Veränderungen war.. Veränderung ist?
149. **Ehm.. Etwas das anders wird..**
150. Ja ja.. Wir können da kochen, endlich.. Haha wir können alles von mein Heimat alles ich habe vermisst und.. Das war super.. Weil mein Kind kommt.. Ich bekomme mein Kind und ich bin da gegangen, gekommen bin.. Danach 5 Tagen dann kommt mein Baby haha ja Taha gehört hier haha
151. **Ooh okay**
152. Dann.. Ich habe ein bisschen geruht.. Ich habe so viel Schwierigkeit mit Umzug nach Schonefeld und immer das war im Sommer, und das war sehr warm für mich.. Und Lilufa hat Schule, und die Schule war in Prenzlauer Berg, in der Nahe von SBahn gibt's ein Park – Planetarium – danach gibt's eeh Lilufa Schule.. Und wir waren in Schonefeld jeden Morgen um 6 Uhr wir fahren mit S Bahn bis S Bahn Prenzlauer Allee und das dauert eine Stunde.. Schonefeld, eine Stunde Prenzlauer Allee das bedeutet wir können nicht in Hotel frühstücken.. Dann wir kommen nach Prenzlauer Allee.. Eh und wir machen alles.. Unser Arbeit.. Dann wir können auch im Camp.. Auch war in Marienburgerstrasse, Winsstrasse.. Und da können auch zum ehm.. Als ein Wochen wir können auch, wir dürfen nicht im Camp essen.. Eine Woche, wir essen mit unsere Geld.. Döner oder so, vielleicht Pommies.. Danach wir sprechen mit Chef und unsere Camp
153. **Aber in Hotel ihr konntet nicht essen?**
154. In Hotel.. Ja.. Weil wir so früh aus Hotel zu unterwegs gegangen und die Frühstück kommt um 7.. Wir müssen um 7 in S Bahn sein danach eine Stunde bis 7 in S Bahn sein weil Lilufa hat Deutsch Kurs.. Mein mein meine.. Ich war auch in Deutschkurs als ich schwanger war.. Und das war in Pankow.. Pankow und da gibt's noch 20 Minuten.. Eine Stunde 20 Minuten nach Pankow, Schule Strasse.. Dann kann ich nicht mehr zum Deutsch Kurs.. Ich habe A2.2 und dann ich gehe nicht mehr.. Weil die Weg ist so weit und Sommer, ich war schwanger, die letzte Monaten ich war ich war haha ja am Ende in der Nacht am Ende wir waren um 7 oder 8 das Essen von Hotel war 6 bis 7 und wenn wir in Hotel war, Essen ist alles und Tür ist geschlossen.. Deswegen wir haben gesprochen mit Chef von Camp und die sagt „ja, das ist schwierig“ und danach wir können danach eine Woche wir können auch in Camp eeh essen.. Das war nicht gut aber wir können etwas ausruhen, wir können da auch schlafen manchmal.. Nicht in der Nacht, aber am Tag zum Ausruhen oder.. Dann wir waren ein Monat so.. Danach wir kommen hier.. Es ist passiert, endlich und... Danach kam mein Baby und auch Schwierigkeit danach und danach danach danach
155. **Also.. Und wie findest du generell die Situation hier?**
156. Super.. Wir sind, wir haben beste am besten in Unterkunft.. Schöne Unterkunft, die alle Leute wohnen hier sagen so.. Wirklich wir sind gut.. Wir haben 2 Zimmer wie eine kleine Apartment, wir haben nicht nur.. Wir haben keine eigene Küche aber alles läuft gut.. Und das war super.. Nach dem so viele Schwierigkeiten, das etwas Gutes passiert..
157. **Mhm.. Gibt es etwas was du verändern mochtest?**
158. Verändern?
159. **Hier in diesem Heim..**
160. Mmh.. Veränderten ich habe nicht gut verstanden was bedeutet verändern
161. **Eeh so.. Zum Beispiel.. Etwas ist so und ich mache es so.. Ich mache das anders**
162. Verändern.. Ah verändern.. Change?
163. **Ja change**

164. Ah ja.. Da kann ich auch ein bisschen mehr lernen, ich habe eigene Zimmer, eigene Ruhe, und kann ich.. Kann ich einfach leben.. Und.. Mmh.. Kann ich mehr lernen, mit verschiedene Leute unterhalten, kennenzulernen.. Und ja, deutsch lernen und.. Einfach leben.. Ja..
- 165. Und.. Ehm.. Hier, weil es gibt's immer Security und Sozialarbeiter...**
166. Ja da gibt's ein bisschen bisschen Schwierig- kleine Schwierigkeiten aber.. Man muss so machen, weil sie.. So viele Leute dort man muss immer regeln sein..
- 167. Mhm aber ansonsten mit den Leute, die hier arbeiten..**
168. Ist nicht.. Schlecht.. Da gibt's auch viele nette Menschen und man muss immer Geduld haben.. Mit schlechte Menschen ja haha
- 169. Haha**
170. Haha ja..
- 171. Gut.. Letzte Frage.. Im Allgemein, also in deine Erfahrung.. Was denkst du über dieses Asylsystem in Deutschland?**
172. Asylsystem.. Ich finde gut, weil wir haben nicht gut erlebt in Iran.. Wir haben keine Rechte als Flüchtlinge..
- 173. Wieso seid ihr gekommen?**
174. Ehh in Deutschland?
- 175. Ja**
176. Wir haben keine Zukunft bekommen, viele Länder gesehen
- 177. Und warum?**
178. Weil wir haben keine Möglichkeit für anders machen, zu machen.. Ja zu Fuß, ein Monate unterwegs.. Das war sehr sehr unglaublich schwierig.. Ich erinnere mich wieso ich habe das gemacht.. Das war schlecht.. Schlechteste Erfahrung in ganze Leben.. In Iran habe ich auch so viele schlechte erlebt aber das war ein ganz anderes, ich bin mit das Leben hier.. Das ist wirklich so.. Ehm.. In Griechenland, auf dem Wasser im See, das war schlecht, das war wirklich.. Das war eine eeh.. Kann man einfach.. Gestorben wurden.. Mann muss Glück haben.. Weil wirklich.. In eine kleine Boot, Luft Boot.. Und 60 Personen auf eine.. kleine und große Menschen.. Auch Kinder.. Das ist eeh.. Sehr streng.. Furchtbar.. Sehr die Kinder, Frauen weint.. Riesen Angst.. Das war furchtbar.. Kann man sehen die Leute eine große Angst von sterben haben aber.. Furchtbar, sehr furchtbar.. Und.. Am Ende war es wirklich gut, weil die Leute kamen zu uns und hilfen und das war danach eine.. Kleine.. Mmh.. Mhh.. Hell kann man sagen, dass die Leute kommen zu uns und sie sagen „wir helfen dir“ und das war gut.. Wir steigen aus aus.. Und die Leute aus Griechenland kommen es war.. Dort kann, wir haben gesagt „ja die Menschen, gibt's gute Menschen, die hilfen die andere“.. Unterwegs eeh ich habe so viele Länder und habe ich nie gesehen früher, habe ich nie wie diese Leute gesehen.. Wie kann ein Mensch sehr nett sein.. Die helfen die andere Leute.. Das ist sehr, sehr super.. Sehr unglaublich.. Die Leute helfen die andere Leute.. Das war sehr interessant, fremd.. Weil wir haben in Iran so viel gelebt, und wir haben nie wie so Menschen gesehen.. Ja.. Man muss immer viele Länder kennenzulernen ja, weil das war super.. Das eine gute erlebt.. Und das ist nur gut, das ist gut, das war super.. Und.. Ich bin froh ich bin hier.. Weil ich wünsche immer andere Länder sehen, aber in Iran gibt's keine Regel davon.. Wir können, als Flüchtlinge wir können nicht reisen in andere Länder, wir können nicht etwas mehr als mehr reich sein.. Nicht reich mit Geld sondern so man kann immer mit lernen reich.. Und.. Ich kann.. Ich bin.. Mir reicht kennenzulernen, weil weißt du.. Wie kann man das sagen.. Man man man wird immer reicher, man sehe immer.. Mmh.. Schlechte auch, besonderes gute Sachen in Weld das ist so.. Man braucht wirklich.. Ich wusste das schon wenn man sieht die andere



Ländern, wie wie die andere Leute wie leben und wer sind nett und wer sind schlecht..  
Das macht man reich..

**179. Mhm.. Und hier also..**

180. Ja hier.. Es gefällt mir ja.. Ja.. Alle kleine Sachen hier, viel viel besser als Iran..

**181. Mhm**

182. Aber.. Das ich muss sagen, in Iran.. Wirklich wirklich, die Leute haben keine Recht.. Besonders Flüchtlinge.. Besonders Afghanische Flüchtlinge.. Als mein Vater ein jung Mann war, er lebt in Iran 30 Jahren, 35 Jahren wir waren in Iran aber wir haben.. Alle Kinder sind dort geboren aber sie kriegen keine Pass, iranische Pass, kein Dokument, afghanische Flüchtlinge kann nicht eeh.. Fuhrerschein haben, kann nicht Versicherung haben, man kann nicht.. Nur arbeiten dürfen aber schlechte Arbeit, wie eine.. Die Leute, Flüchtlinge Leute können nicht mehr studieren als ein Doktor oder ein Junior oder etwas weiter als ein Diploma, Abitur.. Das kommt viele Schwierigkeiten von die Leute.. Die können nicht mehr weiter machen.. Und das war schlecht..

**183. Also hier..**

184. Ist gut, besser.. Wenn mein Vater in Deutschland hier habt so viel als 30 Jahren da kommt vielleicht ein deutsch Pass, aber in Iran viele Leute 50 Jahre in Iran geleben, gelebt.. Und kommt nie etwas Veränderungen und weiter zu machen.. Etwas immer verbessern die Situation, kann nicht.. Und.. Wir sind froh wir sind hier.. Ja aber wir machen weiter, wir haben Bewegung immer.. Und.. Man muss leben.. Was kann ich mehrere machen? Wir haben unser Aktivität.. Und ja.. Besonders wir haben.. Hope und..

**185. Hoffnung**

186. Hoffnung.. Und machen wir weiter mit dem Leben



## APPENDIX 2: Interview with Zoran (13<sup>th</sup> March 2018)

### **1. Also du meinst ja immer frisch.. Frisches Essen**

2. Ja frische... Weil sie produzieren einfach die Obst und Gemüse selbst.. Und dann bringen sie in eine große Markt, Markt ist jede tag, ganze Woche, ganze Monat über ganze Jahr und.. Andere Geschmack normalerweise.. Meistens sind.. Naja hier in Deutschland kann sagen bio, bio Produkte.. Und Geschmack ist sehr sehr.. Stark.. Und das ist große unterschied

### **3. Mhm**

4. Dann wir haben auch Markt für für.. Tiere eeh Lamm, kleine Schweinchen, Rind und so weiter und wir kann kaufen das und einfach.. Eeh.. Naja das ist nicht so human aber.. Als Opfer und dann wir kann schneiden und so.. Und einfach einfach die Geschmack ist große Unterschied.. Weil wie ich es finde hier, ehm hier sind die meisten Produkte.. Schmacklos.. Weißt du, viel Chemie.. Weil normalerweise.. Markt ist groß und man muss voll sein und.. Naja deutsche, deutsche Leute.. Kann sagen, dass sie essen eeh.. Sie essen viel Obst, Gemüse auch, Rindfleisch.. Und viel Fleisch, wenig Brot und.. Naja es gibt viele gute gute.. Gute Mahlzeiten Rezept.. Aber ich kann sagen ich vermisse meine meine meine style

### **5. Was habt ihr normalerweise zum Essen gehabt?**

6. Bei uns.. Ist es meistens, meistens wir benutzen Fleisch.. Und normalerweise und mit mit Gemüse.. Aber Fleisch ist an der erste erste Stelle

### **7. Was ist eine deine Lieblingsessen?**

8. Meine Lieblings.. Naja.. Wir machen.. Eeh.. Eeh.. Wir machen das.. Paprika, wir trocken diese Paprika.. Das ist für uns Erbst Paprika.. Und wir lassen, dass die Paprika trocknt.. Dann wir, wir.. Weinenblatt und das füllen wir mit Fleisch... Mit ein bisschen Reis und danach kommt die.. Die.. Das kochen, und schmeckt sehr gut.. Und.. Danach Jogurt oder Sahne.. Mit Salat normalerweise.. Gurke und Sahne.. Bisschen scharf.. Schmeckt...

### **9. Und.. Normalerweise.. Mit wem.. Mit wem hast du gegessen?**

10. Familie, Nachbar.. Wenn wir feiern.. Naja Leben in Serbien ist ein bisschen besonders, ein bisschen mehr sozial.. Wir wir.. Bei uns ist wichtig diese Kontakt für diese dies Verbindungen wenn wir haben Mahlzeit oder wenn feiern.. Wenn wir feiern.. Wir feiern alle zusammen.. Und.. So.. Das ist.. Das ist ein ein.. Wie soll ich sagen.. Ein Sitte bei uns.. Und komm ein fremder Mann erstes mal, ich kann eingeladen bei uns, und wir zeigen.. So.. Aber ich finde hier ist nicht so.. Andere System normalerweise.. Arbeit Haus Arbeit Haus haha und so ist

### **11. Also da waren immer große Mahlzeiten**

12. Ja ja jaa.. Wenn ich zum Beispiel.. Wenn ich feiern.. Wir feiern Namenstag für mein Sohn.. Und ist 2. August.. Ich habe mindestens 15 Leute, 15 Gäste.. 15 bis 20 Gäste.. Aber ich mache das im Garten habe ich das gemacht. Im Garten von mein Haus und.. Ich mache speise in Speiseraum und wenn fertig eeh suppe von Lamm und diese.. Ausgefüllte Paprika, Weinblatt und.. Lamm.. Wir machen Lamm.. Aber ja.. Ich freue mich.. Ich freue mich weil dann ist.. Dann ist.. Die andere haben einfach die Freundschaft Liebe und so

### **13. Und hast du gekocht zu Hause?**

14. Ja ja wir vorbereiten, ich und meine Frau und meine Mutti.. Wir vorbereiten das alles... Salaten.. Weil vor essen wir, wir machen viel Salaten und ehmm.. Eee.. Viele Delikatesse von von gebackene Paprika in Öl, Essig.. Dann Salami mit ausgefüllte Käse.. Dann dann also vor essen dann kommt Hauptessen dann... Und vor essen kommt normalerweise wir

sagen... Vor Essen mit Schnaps ein bisschen warm und dann kommt auch langsam Musik und nach Essen kommt loss (?)

**15. Und denkst du dass eine Mahlzeit gibt, die wichtiger ist?**

16. Naja ich glaube dass.. Normalerweise ich glaube.. Frühstück ist am wichtigste Essen als Mahlzeit.. Aber für mich ist.. Für mich ist aber wie kann ich so schaffen jeden Tag das Mittagessen, Mittagessen.. Für mich ist sehr wichtig.. Ich habe gesehen eine Werbung, MacDonalds macht diese Werbung dass.. Wenn Familie ist zusammen das ist sehr wichtig.. Aber wenn wir schaffen nicht dann Abendessen.. Sehr oft wir sind zusammen.. Weil ich arbeite, mein Sohn macht Ausbildung, meine Frau hat auch mit der Arbeit begonnen und.. Wir sind niemals zusammen da, ganzen Tag.. Also für Abendessen.. Aber ich finde Mahlzeit das ist.. Eine sehr wichtige Sitte und sehr wichtig Moment für Familien.. Für Familien.. Und wir kann reden was passiert ist, was.. Wir kann planen und so

**17. Und.. Jetzt seit wann wohnen sie in diesem heim?**

18. Ah von Anfang, von 13. September.. Letztes Jahr

**19. Und hier können sie kochen oder?**

20. Naja.. Wir haben die Küche.. Naja und Grill ist auch bei uns.. Ist auch sehr sehr sehr wichtig, und wir benutzen das oft, aber leider können wir nicht grillen hier.. Über alles ist verboten.. Weil ich verstehe, verschiedene Leute und sie.. Einfach sie machen nicht was sie sollen machen.. Hast du gegrillt, dann sauber machen aber verschiedene Leute und verschiedene Kulturen und.. Geht nicht so..

**21. Und hier kocht immer du und deine Frau...**

22. Am meistens meine Frau

**23. Serbisches Essen?**

24. Jaja.. Meistens serbisch Essen.. Weil ich weiß nicht, ich habe versucht mit deutsche Rezepte, oder italienische Spaghetti hahah.. Dann aber meistens von Serbien von Serbien

**25. Und können sie alle die Zutaten finden?**

26. Ja ja es gibt laden, es gibt laden.. Wo kann ich kaufen.. Ich kaufe in türkisch Laden.. Verschiede Wurzeln.. Es gab zwei serbische Laden.. So.. Ist nicht so so große Problem.. Aber, aber die Frage ist Geschmack, weil ist nicht die gleich.. Das ist nicht gleich normalerweise.. Du kannst benutzen verschiedene Wurzeln aber.. Wie ist bei dieser Fleisch oder.. Gemüse sind nicht so.. Ich meine du kannst mit Augen essen, sie sehen wunderschön aus aber wenn du das probierst.. Mann! Wie wie wie Holz.. Naja aber.. Und wir haben keine Geld für bio, um bio Ernahrungen zu kaufen.. Sehr sehr teuer.. Und du weißt schon, du musst.. Sparen.. Naja.. Ich habe 5-6 Monaten alleine gearbeitet und ich musste auch meine Frau unterstützen weil wir kriegen jetzt.. Aber Gott sei Dank.. Gott sei Dank.. Ich habe nicht so viel Kontakte mit LageSo.. Also das ich muss Geld nehmen und Sozialhilfe warten.. Ich verdiene jetzt Geld mit meine Hände.. Jetzt meine Frau auch.. Und ich hoffe von diese Monat ich kann ein bisschen, leichter leben und.. Bisschen.. Naja.. Naja bessere Ernahrungen kaufen.. Qualität..

**27. Wo gehen sie normalerweise einkaufen?**

28. Türkische Laden.. Oder Gesundbrunnen.. Groß Laden.. Es ist ungefähr 20 Minuten.. Es gibt Fleischerei auch.. Türkische.. Manchmal ich kaufe Fleisch.. Aber ich finde es nicht so.. Nicht so gut.. Weil das ist alles frozen weißt du? ..und danach danach dass bleibt ein paar Monate dann sie.. Und ich habe gesehen deutsche Fleischerei... Fleisch ist Qualität aber teuer, sehr teuer.. Wir feiern auch 6. Mai.. Das ist bei uns eeh.. Zigoina.. Und wir feiern 6. Mai das ist.. Große feiern und jede Familie muss kaufen ein Lamm.. Und ??????.. Und wir backen das und machen alle.. Eeh.. Ein Spezialität.. Und ich habe versucht.. Eeh.. Ich wollte kaufen in deutsche Laden Fleischerei.. Ich habe gesehen aber ich habe

nicht gut gehört.. Habe nicht gesehen dass diese Etikette bio.. Und dann ich habe gesagt "dann ich nehme ganze Stück" und es war 2 Kilo und er hat mir der Preis gesagt ich war.. Gefreezed.. War 38euro pro Kilo.. Mann.. Aber.. Und naja das war eine kleine Anekdote und dann hat gesagt "gehen sie gegenüber, dort sind nicht bio Produkte und bisschen billiger" und ich war dort und sie haben gesagt da "das ist nicht bio“, „was kostet?“, „25euro Kilo" oohh haha mamma mia "okay okay danke dann ich gehe in türkische Laden" 11 Euro ich bezahle und ich bin froh hahaha naja.. So ist eeh.. Einfach Qualität hat sein Preis.. Aber bei uns ist.. Bei uns etwas anderes.. Du kannst kaufen.. Ich meine mit diese Preise hier in Deutschland und wenn ich sehe Preise in Serbien sehr große Unterschied, und Qualität auch..

**29. Mhm.. Gehen sie auch manchmal in deutsche Supermärkte?**

30. Jajaja ich kaufe Lebensmittel.. Ich kaufe in Kaufland, weil es hier in der Nähe ist.. Und ich war, ich habe gewohnt in Steglitz Zehlendorf.. Auch in der nahe war Kaufland, wir haben dort auch gekauft.. Es gibt es große Sortiment.. Gibt viele viele Sache und.. Kann sagen billig weißt du.. Qualität spielt nicht so große Rolle weil.. Man muss sparen.. Man muss sparen.. Normalerweise ich kenne, ich weiß für für.. Was bedeutet Qualität aber man hat wenig Geld dann ist schwierig.. Vielleicht einmal im Monat wir kann.. Wir kann kaufen nettes Qualität und ??? Und so ist..

**31. Und gibt es Momente wo sie.. Zum Beispiel mit andere serbische Leute treffen oder feiern..**

32. Nein.. Ich habe nur.. Nur eine Bekannte wir sind nur aber er ist aus Bosnien.. Und.. So Serbien wir sind selten haha wir sind selten wegen gesetzte und rechte weil.. Weil die Serben sie sie.. Haben keine recht hier zu bleiben, keine recht für Asyl.. Und.. Naja.. Ich bin.. Ich habe wenig Kontakt mit meine Leute.. Weil.. Weil so ist System.. So ist Tempo.. Arbeitstempo, Arbeit Hause Arbeit Hause und das ist.. Und ich habe in Pflegedienst ich habe nicht feste Tage, und Woche und das ganze Monat ich muss.. Und ich wünsche mir das ich mehr mehr mehr Tage arbeite dass ich ein bisschen mehr Geld verdiene.. Ist nicht so gut bezahlt.. In mein Beispiel.. 10euro 50.. Ist nicht so viel Geld und muss über 160 170 Stunden arbeiten.. In 22 23 Tage.. Ja dann.. Ich muss auch diese Wohnheim bezahlen... Und das ich habe ein bisschen Probleme weil wie viel ich verdiene mehr dann ich muss mehr Wohnheim bezahlen.. Für 16 Quadrat Meter und das ist das ist nicht so real.. Das ist nicht fair.. Und ich werde sehen diese Monat.. So hat mir die Frau gesagt dass endlich wir sollten fest Miete haben, wie viel sollten wir im Monat bezahlen.. 400 oder 500... Weil sie fordert nicht dass ich kann 740euro bezahlen.. Das ist nicht fair überhaupt.. Weil so ist Gesetz das sie darf 950 Euro behalten für mich und für meine Frau.. Und wo ist Gesetz das ich darf mein Geld behalten weil ich verdiene ich arbeite für diese Geld.. Und jede jede Burger, jede Mann Mensch hat Wohnung und Miete sind fest, nicht unterschiede jede Monat. Und ich wollte fest Miete haben... Okay ich bleibe hier ich kann nicht Wohnung haben weil wegen mein Status und wegen mein Ausweis.. Weil ich in 3 Monate in Auslande Behörde gehen muss und eine Verlängerung.. Und mit nur 3 Monate niemand will mir Wohnungen geben.. Und kein vermieten.. Ich muss mindesten ein Jahr Ausweis haben.. Und ich bleibe hier und ich wollte einfach soo.. Fest Miete haben, weil wir... Leute aus Serbien haben nicht nur Serbien sondern ganzen west Balkan geben sich viel viel Mühe.. Viel Mühe.. Es gab Leute sie machen gar nichts sie sind einfach als Beruf sie nehmen Flüchtling als Beruf.. Das ist nicht gut aber es gab Leute der will hier normal leben, selten aber es gab Leute.. Sie sollten auch ein bisschen Unterstützung haben aber Behörde haben keine keine.. Keine Verständnis für diese.. Aber wir kämpfen weiter.. So muss sein..

**33. Und.. Seit wann sind sie, bist du in Deutschland?**

34. Seit 3 Jahre.. 3 Jahre 2 Monate.. Genau so
- 35. Und.. Und sie meinten auch dass sie kein deutsches Essen oder..**
36. Naja es gab paar Rezepte ich mag.. Ja.. Habe probiert aber.. Einfach ich bleibe ich bleibe an meine an meine Küche haha
- 37. Gibt es etwas was sie.. Was du nicht isst?**
38. Eeh.. Naja.. Es gab paar Sachen.. Zum Beispiel.. Kochene Gemüse, nur Gemüse ohne Fleisch.. Das geht nicht für mich haha.. Gemüse mit Fleisch ja.. Aber nur Gemüse vegetarisch ich will nicht vegetarisch.. Nur Salat jaa aber.. Essen nein
- 39. Und was wurdest du sagen ist.. Der größte Unterschied zwischen eine Mahlzeit hier, wie du es jetzt machst.. Und zu Hause in Serbien?**
40. Ja ja ist große Unterschied. Ist große Unterschied.. Ich kann sagen.. Ich muss real sein.. In Serbien aber nicht so.. Nicht so groß Mahlzeit.. Also.. Manchmal nicht jede Tag.. Manchmal war sehr wenig.. Weil keine Arbeit kein Job kein Geld.. Du kannst kaufen aber es.. Das ist für eine richtige Mahlzeit was brauchst du.. Hier in Deutschland hast genug Geld für Ernährung.. Das kann ich sagen.. Aber Ernährung für essen.. Du kannst kaufen neue Sachen.. In Serbien nicht weil.. Es ist schwierig.. Es war schwierig.. Ich weiß nicht jetzt wie ist aber.. Es gibt Besserung aber nicht so große Besserung Kleinigkeiten ja aber Leute kann nicht Lebensmittel kaufen was sie mochten.. Nur was ist Not für... Wie gesagt das ist.. In Serbien Leute ich habe gesagt sie produzieren alleine und Produkte sind billig und.. Wenn kommt die Sonne von Frühling bis Herbst ist alles offen alles am Markt und.. Es ist billig und so.. Aber über Winter.. Eeh.. In Serbien ende Herbst Anfang Herbst sie machen sie machen eeh.. Sie sparen.. Sie machen eeh.. Salaten und Fleisch und sie machen das wie wiee.. Speiseraum.. Und über Winter wir nehmen das und essen.. So ist.. Andere Mentalität ein bisschen.. Balkanische Mentalität..
- 41. Und ehm.. Ich wollte fragen.. Bevor haben sie irgendwo anders gewohnt hier in Deutschland?**
42. Ja ich war in.. Erstmal ich war.. In Turmhalle 3 Monate dann ich hatte.. Hab das gewechselt.. War is Soll?Str 3 Monate.. Dann 2 Jahre ich war in Goerzallee in Steglitz Zehlendorf.. Es war okay weil wir waren dort 2 Jahren und.. Wir haben dort gearbeitet als Flüchtlingjob wir haben.. Bisschen Freundschaft wir hatten dort.. Paar Leute kennenzulernen und es war schwierig wenn wir mussten ausziehen also.. Ich weiß nicht was war.. War ein bisschen schlechte Geschichte zwischen Laf und Besitzer von diese Wohnheim und wir mussten.. Wir mussten hier kommen.. Aber..
- 43. Konnte man dort kochen?**
44. Ehm ja.. Küche auch wir hier.. Paar Familien teilen die Küche..
- 45. Und gab in der Küche auch Platz zum Essen zum Beispiel?**
46. Nein nein.. Wir haben gegessen gegessen in Zimmer.. Und.. Und.. Ich meine.. Es gibt unterschiedliche Flüchtling weisst du, weil.. Sie kommen zum Beispiel aus Syrien, Iran.. Von aus betroffene Area.. Krieg, dann sie waren nicht in Stadt sondern kleine Dörfer und so Haus war nicht so nicht so groß und wenig und klein.. Vielleicht das ist ein stark Wort, was ich sage aber.. Das ist wahr.. Viele viele Flüchtlinge sind ein bisschen primitiv weißt du.. Und sie haben nicht.. Sie sind nicht ausgebildet.. Sie wissen nicht was bedeutet Zivilisation, was bedeutet Technologie.. Und so weiter.. Und wenn sie kommen hier, und sie bleiben hier.. Das ist ein Apartment kann man sagen.. Also.. Beispiel.. Ich wollte dass ich jetzt.. Jetzt dass ich bin.. Das ich wollte sagen dass ich bin jetzt.. So große Mann so weiter.. Aber aber bei mir war alles was anderes und das ist klein für mich.. Weil ich hatte, das ist nicht meine Haus das ist Haus von meine Mutti aber.. ???Quadrat Meter Haus.. Und.. Wir wissen wo ist.. Zimmer für essen.. Für Schlafzimmer und so weiter und so weiter.. Und jetzt.. Wenn ich muss in 16quadrat Meter schlafen leben essen.. Das ist

für mich ein bisschen.. Ein bisschen.. Nicht ein bisschen Druck aber.. So ist Wahrheit.. Aber wir gehen weiter und wir hoffen das wir das wir sollten eine Wohnung haben.. Dann ist etwas anderes.. Dann ist es normal.. Jetzt noch nicht..

**47. Und auch hier es gibt kein Platz?**

48. Eh.. Ja es gab Platz aber wir teilen das Stock sind noch 3 Familie.. Und 8 Kinder.. Eine Familie hat 5 Kinder eine Familie 2 und das sind schon 7 8 Kinder und du hast keine ruhe hehe.. Immer immer leise immer unterwegs Kinder laufen und.. Ich wollte nicht so essen.. Und am besten im Zimmer essen so ist... Ich meine ich habe gar nichts gegen Kinder.. Kinder sind Kinder.. Kinder sind.. Werte.. Aber ich brauche Ruhe wenn ich esse.. Wenn ich esse und so..

**49. Und.. Ehm.. In die erste Monaten.. Du hast, du hast gesagt du hast in eine Turmhalle gewohnt..**

50. Mhm

**51. ..wie war da mit dem essen?**

52. Das war eine Katastrophe.. Wir haben eeh.. Essen bekommen die.. Brötchen Salami und so weiter..

**53. Wie funktionierte das?**

54. Naja.. Sie verteilen.. Wie in eine in eine.. Ehm.. Mense.. So.. Sie verteilen essen, Getränke auch..

**55. Aber es gab auch Raum für essen oder?**

56. Jajaja.. Tische und du kannst dort essen.. Aber wir haben gekauft etwas.. Etwas was wir kann.. Aber kochen.. Kochen wir konnten nicht.. Das war sehr sehr.. Streng.. Und sehr sehr stressig diese 3 Monate..

**57. Und ehm.. Wie viele Mahlzeiten habt ihr bekommen da?**

58. 3 Mahlzeiten

**59. Was für essen war das?**

60. Naja Brötchen und Salami.. Käse und.. Einmal.. Ich glaube Wochenende war ein warme Mahlzeit.. Ich glaube für Mittagessen aber.. Und das war.. So einmal..

**61. Also manchmal hast du auch versucht draußen zu essen?**

62. Naja gute Sache war das.. War ein Unterricht und sie hat sie hat organisiert für Flüchtlinge.. Küche und wir waren dort und wir konnten etwas machen vorbereiten unsere.. Und.. Einfach.. Das war Arbeit für diese Unterricht.. Arbeit für Flüchtlinge und so.. Manchmal.. Einmal in.. Jede Freitag wir konnten gehen.. Diese Einrichtung und benutzen die Küche.. Sie hat ein eeh.. Einfach.. Sie hatte uns gefragt was wir brauche für Lebensmittel.. Und sie hat das gekauft und wir haben das gekocht und war.. War gut.. War sehr sehr schon.. Und.. Naja..

**63. Also also.. Was denkst du.. Also in dieser Situation.. Was denkst du konnte besser sein.. Was hattest du gerne verändert?**

64. Eeh.. Wegen Küche und essen naja.. Hauptsache dass wenn du wohnst in ein Einrichtung, so gleich wie diese.. Hauptsache ist dass du hast gute Nachbarn.. Weißt du.. Wenn du hast schlechte Nachbarn und du kannst gar nichts ändern gar nicht wechseln gar nichts machen.. Und.. Jetzt unsere Beispiel ist.. Wir sind am ersten Stock und.. 3 Familie.. Wir haben Einigung mit eine Familie wir können überhaupt nicht reden.. Weil sie sind.. Sie haben so.. Einzige Prinzipe so primitiv.. Und streng.. Weiß nicht warum.. Und ich kann sagen zum Beispiel meine Frau mit eine junge Frau und mit andere Frau.. Meine Frau macht Brot dann sie gibt für diese frau und dann.. Wir tauschen weißt du.. Tauschen wir unsere Essen unsere kann nicht sagen Spezialität aber Mahlzeit.. So.. Rezepte.. Und einfach.. So so so du machst Verbindung mit den Leuten.. Mit dem Essen, einfach das ist erste Schritt.. Und so kann man sehen wer ist gut wer ist wer hat Herz wer ist gut wer ist

freundlich wer ist menschlich.. Und.. Kann sagen.. Wir sind die älteste Familie.. Ich und meine Frau.. Die sind alle junger von uns und... Sie haben Kinder und ich mag Kinder weißt du.. Und mit den Kinder das geht besser.. Und leicht und so..

**65. Also die Situation hier ist okay?**

66. Eehm ja.. Kann besser sein aber... Aber große Problem ist weil sie sind einfach sie die Leute sind einfach verschiedene und sie sind nicht so offen weißt du.. Bewohner.. Deutsche Kenntnisse ist auch Problem.. Ist die größte Problem weil keine deutsche Kenntnisse.. Aber trotzdem meine Frau.. Sie spricht auch nicht so gut deutsch.. Perfekt.. Und sie kann einfach.. Sie sprechen deutsch.. Und Frauen.. Ich weiß nicht wie Frauen funktionieren.. Aber sie funktioniert einfach.. Komm gehen gut und.. Das.. Mit Hände mit.. Mit grimasse? Und sie haben Einigung.. Das ist das ist sehr wichtig.. Wir Männer.. Eeh.. Wir wir sind anderes weißt du wir wollen nicht so.. So gucken Kleinigkeit .. Frauen sind ein bisschen besonderes.. Sie gucken Kleinigkeit wenn diese ?? Ist nicht meine du hast gelassen an meine Seite das geht nicht.. Aber.. Eeh.. Merke? ist mit der Einigung und das ist.. Das ist gut.. Weil du kannst.. Wir leben an ersten Stock und wir haben ein Schlüssel also diese Transporter.. Und die andere Leute können nicht rein kommen.. Bisschen wie Gefängnis.. Hahaha

**67. Haha..**

68. So kann sehen.. Wenn du rein kommst.. Haupteingang, Karte bit.. Komm rein und.. Naja..

**69. Und das ist die letzte Frage.. Was denken sie im allgemein über das deutsche System? Wie war deine Erfahrung? Was gut war.. Was nicht gut war..**

70. Naja.. Ich kenne Deutschland weil ich war hier vor 20 Jahren und Deutschland ist jetzt etwas anderes.. Das ist nicht die alte Deutschland.. Und die verstehen manche Sachen die verstehen nicht.. So viel Flüchtlinge so viel verrückte gesetzte.. Weil sie einfach.. Sie unterstützen die Leute wer nicht Arbeiten.. Wir kriegen Sozialhilfe.. Kann nichts machen.. Sie unterstützen kriminelle gruppe.. Gesetzte sind sehr sehr leicht.. Und sie nicht unterstützen erstmal einzige Volk.. So viele Leute kriegen viel? Sehr schwer leben.. Aber trotzdem ich sage.. Sie müssen weil Deutschland ist eine eine christliche Land.. Sie müssen christliche Werte haben und zeigen.. Sie müssen sortieren Leute wer ist in Deutschland wer will hier leben und gesetzt folgen und regeln folgen und einfach ist so.. Willst du hier bleiben und arbeiten und Steuern bezahlen und so weiter deine Versicherung bezahlen? Ja? Okay dann bleibst du. Willst du nicht? Nein okay dann kannst du ?? Rührigkeit bezahle Flugticket und zurück nach Hause.. So ist überall.. Weil.. Weil einfach Ausländer.. Sollten deutsche Gesetzte akzeptieren deutsche Kenntnisse haben und integrieren in Deutschland.. Das.. Ich muss machen auch in Amerika oder in Italien ich muss diese Sprache.. Weil ich kann nicht zigoinsche Sprache oder serbische Sprache sprechen in Deutschland.. Es geht nicht.. Undd.. Wie ich sage.. Leute aus Iran, ?? Und ich weiß nicht Syrien.. Einfach sie verstehen falsch diese Demokratie.. Was bedeutet Demokratie.. Sie haben sie falsch verstanden.. Und das ist Konflikt.. Und.. Und so aber.. Ich gucke ich gucke meine Sache und ich sehe mein Ziel und ich hoffe dass ich kann mit Gottes hilf schaffen.. Erste Phase ist schon da hehe

**71. Na das war alles..**

72. Okay..



APPENDIX 3: Interview with Shamsia (16<sup>th</sup> January 2018)

1. Ein Jahr.. Ein Jahr und 3 Monate
2. **In Deutschland?**
3. Ja
4. **Und vorher wart ihr in Schweden**
5. Ja.. Wir wollten einfach nach Schweden gehen.. Und danach haben wir zurückgekommen weil wir müssen zurück.. Weil.. Wir haben die Fingerdrücken erste Mal hier in ??.. Und die Deutschland sagt "du musst zurück nach Deutschland kommen, weil du warst das erste Mal in Deutschland gekommen und hast du die Finger.. Alles hier"
6. **Und naja.. Ich habe dir schon gesagt, es geht um das Essen.. Was ist eine deine Lieblingsessen aus Afghanistan?**
7. Okay.. Meine Lieblingsessen ist.. Kitchiri.. Das ist von mein Stadt
8. **Was ist dein Stadt?**
9. Herat.. Die Stadt ist so groß.. Und.. Alt auch.. Und hat so viele Geschichte auch.. Und.. Ist so schon auch.. Und.. Ja meine Lieblingsessen ist Kitchiri.. Und.. Andere schon auch.. Weil die afghanischen sie haben so viele Geschmack wirklich..
10. **Und.. Was habt ihr normalerweise, also für gewöhnlich, gekocht in Afghanistan?**
11. Eeh wir mmh.. Zweimal oder einmal in Woche.. Eeh.. Kitchiri machen.. Und Kitchiri ist Reis.. Mit Fleisch oder mit Hackfleisch und.. Wir machen das.. Und wir machen die Reis alleine und die Fleisch auch alleine und.. Dann zusammen.. Und.. Wir essen auch.. Eeh.. Bamie etwas ist grün und so.. Ich kann die Bild auch danach zeigen.. Und.. In Afghanistan so viele Reis essen und Fleisch.. Nicht so viele Gemüse aber..
12. **Danke schon.. /die Mutter gibt mir Tee/**
13. Das ist afghanische Tee.. Das ist auch aus Afghanistan.. Das ist grün Tee auch mit Safran..
14. **Safran?**
15. Safran weißt du Safran? Ist rot rot.. */Sie sprechen persisch und die Mutter bringt Safran/* Ja das ist Safran. Es gibt das in meine Stadt so viel.. Ja.. Und das ist auch so so teuer in Welt auch.. Wenn du willst.. Ein Gramm oder Gramm nicht Kilogramm weil das ist so teuer.. Und wie viel kostet und man kann nicht so viel kaufen immer und so..
16. **Und.. Trinkt ihr auch Kaffee?**
17. Kaffee in Afghanistan ne.. Ne. So wenig, so so wenig.. Aber die alle Leute mag.. Eeh.. Grün Tee */Sie sprechen persisch/*
18. **Und ich wollte fragen..**
19. */Sie sprechen persisch/* Meine Mutter sagt warum hast du letzte Party nicht gekommen? Wir haben noch ein Party vor Weihnachten.. Und hast du gesagt "ich gehe nach Italien"
20. **Nach Italien ja...**
21. Sie hat gesagt.. Wir haben so viele Essen gemacht.. Und wir haben eeh.. Mindestens iranisches Essen.. Gekocht
22. **Viele Leute haben zusammen gekocht?**
23. Ja ja.. Meine Mutter und andere Frauen.. */Sie sprechen persisch und dann zeigen mir Foto/* Das ist Reis und das ist.. Das gelbe Reis ist Reis mit Safran..
24. **Aah ja jetzt habe ich verstanden was das ist..**
25. 2 verschiedene Reis und eine ist mit Gemüse.. Und das ist mit andere.. Und.. Die Küche die Frauen.. Und das ist so wie Suppe, die heißt Hasch.. Aber das ist sehr lecker... Alles ist Gemüse.. Ja fertig
26. **Und das war ein Weihnachtsfeier oder so?**
27. Ja ja

- 28. Habt ihr das wieder in dem Raum da gemacht?**
29. Nein nein.. In diese andere Straße.. Nahe von hier..
- 30. Das nächste mal komme ich wieder.. Und dann ich wollte fragen auch wie.. Wie isst ihr in Afghanistan? Also wie ist die Mahlzeit..**
31. In Afghanistan ist.. Die Familie Mama Papa und Bruder und Schwester alle zusammen bleiben.. Und manchmal, Großmutter und.. Wenn sie sind.. Hier und nicht gestorben dann alle zusammen.. Aber jetzt manche.. Eeh.. Zum Beispiel.. Die junge verheiratet und macht.. Ja sie verheiraten und er macht die Wohnung, eine Wohnung alleine... Und wenn die Tochter auch mit einem Mann verheiratet geht aus.. Aber bevor.. Aber jetzt auch ist manchmal.. Wenn die junge von der Familie verheiratet auch noch mit diese.. Mit ihre.. Mmh.. Mit ihre Frau und.. Und eine hause mit ihre Mutter und ihre Vater alle zusammen.. Ist so..
- 32. Und.. Wer kocht normalerweise?**
33. Mmh.. Zum Beispiel.. In meine Familie mmh.. Mein Mutter.. Und wenn sie hat keine Zeit und so.. Ich oder mein Schwester aber.. Mehr mein Schwester, ich ein bisschen.. Ja.. Und wir haben Geist, oder Gast.. Besuch.. Wenn wir haben und so viele helfen alle zusammen wir kochen alle zusammen.. Aber in Afghanistan zum Beispiel.. Die Mutter von ihre Mann.. Wenn sie war alt und so sie kann nicht kochen und so.. Die Frau muss eeh kochen und so.. Ja */Sie gibt mir mehr Tee und dann sprechen sie persisch/* Das hilft für abnehmen und auch für Kopf ist gut.. Es macht ruhiger.. Und aber mindestens in Afghanistan.. Die Mädchen eeh.. In.. 15 Jahre alt oder 16 Jahre alt anfangen für die kochen lernen.. Weißt du.. Wir müssen..
- 34. Kochst du auch?**
35. Ja ja.. Ich mag das
- 36. Und kochen auch die Männer oder normalerweise nicht?**
37. Doch.. Mmh.. Die Männer auch.. Aber in Afghanistan nicht so viel.. Soo wenig..
- 38. Und.. Aah.. Gibt es.. Mahlzeiten die wichtiger sind in dem Tag?**
39. Ich habe nicht verstanden..
- 40. Mahlzeit also wenn man isst.. Mahlzeit zum Beispiel Frühstück.. Sind einige wichtiger?**
41. In Afghanistan.. Frühstück nicht wichtig.. Aber Mittagessen und Abendessen ist wichtig..
- 42. Und was habt ihr normalerweise für Frühstück oder..**
43. Für Frühstück Milch.. Mit Brot oder mit Jogurt oder.. Käse.. Oder Eier..
- 44. Aber.. Ihr versucht immer zusammen zu essen oder..**
45. Ja ja ja ja.. Natürlich.. */Ihre Mutter sagt etwas auf Persisch/* Ja meine Mutter sagt bitte schon das ist auch lecker..
- 46. Was ist das?**
47. In Afghanistan wir sagen das ist tut.. Tut.. Tute hosck.. Das ist.. Es gibt auch eine Obst so wie diese.. Ist schwarz so.. Weißt du was ich meinte.. So wie Erdbeere.. Aber nicht Erdbeere so wie Erdbeere.. Klein so.. Und ist schwarz..
- 48. Auf Deutsch weiß ich nicht aber ich kenne das.. Das ist gut.. Und das ist trockene**
49. Ja trocken und dann ja */Sie sprechen persisch/* Es gibt diese nur in.. Nur in ehmm.. Afghanische Supermarket
- 50. Und ehmm.. Ist das wichtig für dich.. Also die Mahlzeit.. Also wenn du mit deiner Familie isst.. Ist es einfach zum Essen oder ist es auch ein Moment gemeinsam zu sein und..**
51. Ja das ist wichtig für afghanische Leute.. Wir sitzen alle zusammen und essen.. Und.. Wir warten auf alle und.. Zusammen sprechen und essen.. Das ist wichtig für alle..

- 52. Mhm ja in Italien auch.. Ja und manchmal hier ist so komisch für mich weil ich sehe so viele Leute die essen nur ein Brötchen in der U-Bahn.. Und..**
53. Ja ja.. Bisschen komisch.. Warum ist so.. Weißt du.. Und immer habe ich gesehen das.. In U-Bahn und sbahn.. Ein Kaffee und Brötchen.. Kaffee Kaffee und Brötchen.. Und.. Oder ein der wichtigste oder besondere Essen von Deutschland.. Ist.. Wie heißt das.. Kartoffeln haha
- 54. Kartoffeln haah**
55. */Sie sprechen persisch/* Ja aber ich habe gedacht Italien auch so wie hier nicht.. Alleine essen und ein Kaffee und so tschüss ich habe keine Zeit */Sie sprechen persisch/* Ich erzähle die Worte alleine
- 56. Mhm aber ja.. In Italien essen wir auch immer zusammen aber ist.. Im Sud Italien mehr.. In Nord Italien ist ein bisschen wie Deutschland..**
57. *Sie sprechen persisch*
- 58. Und ehmm.. Ehmm.. Hier können sie hier kochen ne? Ihr habe eine Wohnung hier.. Und ihr seid hier in diesem Wohnheim seit.. 4 Monate?**
59. Ja 4 oder 5 Monate oder so..
- 60. Was meintest du so?**
61. Wir sind 4 Person hier.. Ja mein Schwester.. Ich mein Mutter und mein Vater
- 62. Also ihr seid alle zusammen hier gekommen.. Und vorher.. Wo habt ihr gewohnt hier hier in..**
63. In andere Heim
- 64. In Berlin?**
65. Ja..
- 66. Gab eh aah mmh.. Konntet ihr auch da kochen?**
67. Nicht.. Ne, das war auch eine Heim.. Aber nicht richtige Heim.. Nur für sechs Monate und so.. Aber wir waren da.. 10 Monate
- 68. 10 Monate**
69. Ja.. Und das war total schieße wirklich.. Wir haben keine.. Richtige Zimmer.. Wir haben keine Zimmer.. Weißt du.. Ist eine.. Eine Salon weißt du
- 70. Ja**
71. Ein ganz groß.. Ein Salon und oder.. Ein Zimmer.. Bisschen größer und 3 Familie oder 4 Familie alle zusammen in ein Zimmer leben.. Und wir haben mit so wie das.. Wir haben so gemacht und verteilen.. Die die.. Die Zimmer.. Verteilen und und.. Diese Familie hier wohnen mit ihre Kinder und Frau und Mann und so.. Diese Familie hier diese Familie hier und diese Familie hier.. Und wir haben eine.. Eine kleine eine kleine platz so wie diese.. Ja.. Für 4 Personen ja.. Das war total schwierig und wir mochten lernen deutsch und schreiben die Hausaufgabe.. Und so.. Die Kinder.. Andere Familie die Kinder machen so laut sprechen... Immer in Nacht.. In 1 Uhr oder 2.. Immer weinen weinen und.. Oh Mann.. Wir haben schlafen... Wir können nicht schlafen.. Und die Essen.. Wir können auch nicht richtig essen.. Wir haben keine wir haben keine gute Essen.. Wir immer.. Die Spaghetti ist nicht gut.. Die immer.. Kartoffel.. Oder.. Anderes.. War total schieße.. Ja wir haben mmh.. Kantine.. Und duschen das war draußen.. Wenn wir müssen duschen wir müssen draußen gehen in Sommer auch n Winter.. In Winter war so total schreck.. Die Wetter war kalt und wir mussten draußen gehen.. Dusch machen.. Und die Toilette war auch nicht so gut.. Aber jetzt ist wirklich gut.. Wirklich gut.. Gott sei Dank..
- 72. Und wie war das mit dem Essen? Haben sie vor.. Haben sie das da gekocht oder..**
73. Welche?
- 74. Das Essen in der Kantine**
75. Sie kommt aus.. Aus draußen..

- 76. Draußen.. Aber zum Beispiel.. Seid ihr.. Isst ihr Halal? Halal Fleisch?**
77. Ja Halali.. Das war Halali.. Weil alle sind Muslim und arabisch und.. Die Araber und afghanischer und kurdisch alles.. Muslim und wir essen nicht diese Fleisch.. Eh.. Schwein.. Und und.. Muslim von ?? Die keine Schwein Fleisch..
- 78. Aber es gab nur deutsches Essen?**
79. Mmh deutsches Essen und.. Türkische essen oder arabisch ich weiß nicht.. Aber es war wirklich nicht gut.. Und nicht geschmeckt
- 80. Habt ihr trotzdem da gegessen?**
81. Draußen Döner oder manchmal dieses Essen.. Und wir haben ein.. Mmh wie heißt das.. Ich Weiß nicht, wir kochen über das.. Eeh.. Weißt du das.. Mach Herde so und so.. Wir haben so wie diese aber klein.. Und wir können das im.. Und das war so elektronisch und.. Wir haben draußen gekauft.. Und wir haben manchmal.. Verboten nicht gesehen.. Kochen und so.. Weil die Essen, wir können nicht essen.. Schmeckt nicht gut.. Alle Leute sind so, alle Leute..
- 82. Ehm.. /Jemanden klopft auf der Tür. Es ist der Vater. Sie sprechen persisch./ Und hier habt ihr eine Wohnung, eine Küche.. Und dann gibt es auch eine Gemeinschaftsküche?**
83. Nein nein.. Das war nicht Gemeinschaftsküche.. Es gibt diese andere andere Straße ich habe gesagt.. Es gibt ein Platz von Party..
- a. **Halloo ich bin Maddy**
  - b. Halloo /*Sie sagen etwas auf Persisch/* Ich bin?? Haha
  - c. **Freut mich**
84. Ja und es gibt ein Platz für Party und so.. Eeh.. Wir haben da da gekocht.. Aber es gibt eine große Küche..
- 85. Gibt es auch Platz zum Essen da?**
86. Ja /*Sie sprechen persisch/*
- 87. Und ihr.. Könnt ihr Gäste einladen?**
88. Ja
- 89. Gibt es Zeiten**
90. Ja bis 22 Uhr.. Aber bevor wir können eeh.. Ein Tag früher sagen "ja ich habe besuch" und sie kommt bis übermorgen sie bleibt 2 Tage oder 3 Tage und so.. Und die sagen okay das ist okay.. Aber jetzt wir können das nicht.. Ich weiß nicht.. Die Büro hat gesagt eh.. Die LageSo.. Aus LageSo ein Brief bekommt und eeh.. Wir können nicht mehr.. Gäste gekommen und bleiben.. Man kann bis 22 bleiben aber nicht schlafen
- 91. Mhm.. Und ich wollte dann nochmal über das Essen fragen..**
92. Ja..
- 93. Mmh hier kocht ihr immer afghanisches Essen?**
94. Ja ja.. Afghanisch und iranisch..
- 95. Ah ja ihr habt in Iran gewohnt**
96. Jaja
- 97. Und.. Kein deutsches Essen kochen?**
98. Haha nein nein nein.. Aber ich esse manchmal Brötchen und so.. Ich habe eine Freundin gesagt was ist deutsches und so.. "Kartoffeln".. Aber Kartoffeln oder Paprika ich weiß nicht.. Aber ich mag nicht sehr.. Deutsch essen.. Ich mag Döner oder iranische oder und.. Afghanische.. Und.. /*Ihre Mutter sagt etwas auf Persisch/* Sie hat gesagt sie ist einmal in Restaurant.. Und das war deutsche Restaurant.. Und.. Wir haben Fisch gegessen, aber die Fisch war gut.. /*Sie sprechen persisch/* Es gab 3 Modelle.. Ein Modelle ist mit Öl ja.. Und eine andere ohne Öl.. Diese andere ohne Öl war nicht so gut.. /*Sie sprechen persisch/*
- 99. Und.. Könnt ihr alle die Zutaten hier finden?**

100. Was?
101. **Die Zutaten..**
102. Was bedeutet das?
103. **Also... Alle die.. Ehm.. Ich weiß nicht, gewurzte.. Wenn ihr einkaufen gehen.. kann man hier alles finden was ihr braucht?**
104. Nein nein nein.. Wir können das.. Aber nicht alles alles in Netto oder Kaufland.. Und so.. Deutsche Supermarket finden.. Wir können manche Sachen in afghanische und pakistanische oder iranische oder türkische Supermarket finden.. Zum Beispiel.. Das ist nicht n deutsche Supermarket.. Und die Tee auch.. Aber die Tee kommt aus Afghanistan.. Und diese Baklava.. Das ist türkisch.. Das gibt in in eeh.. Türkische.. Und wir haben manche Sachen in essen.. Und wir können das nicht in netto oder andere Firma finden.. Und müssen wir in Schönberg gibt es in Schönberg gibt es ein große eeh ein große Supermarket, wir gehen dort und kaufen
105. **Mhm.. Aber ihr geht auch zum Netto und Kaufland..**
106. Jaja mmh..
107. **Also normalerweise geht ihr dort?**
108. Wir gehen in die beide..
109. **Okay.. Ist das weit weg?**
110. Es gibt hier Norma und in nahe von S-Bahn Kaufland und Netto.. Ja.. Zum Beispiel.. Wir kaufen die Zwiebel, Kartoffeln, Eier und so.. Manche Obst oder so.. In netto und so.. Aber die Reis und Öl.. Weil es gibt ein große Öl nicht so teuer und.. Reis gute reis und andere Sachen wir können in iran-afgahnische Supermarket nehmen..
111. **Wo sind die?**
112. Afghanisch.. In Schönberg
113. **Und ehmm und andere Supermarket wo ihr geht?**
114. Iranisch.. Iranisch es gibt in Turmstrasse... Ja.. Kannst du in Wedding oder Westhafen..und mit U9.. Und die türkische ist in Gesundbrunnen und Wittenau.. Und so..
115. **Also es gibt viele Möglichkeiten?**
116. Ja.. Weil es gibt viel Araber und pakistanische und iranische und afghanische ja.. Und die türkische war vor 20 Jahre bevor hier
117. **Mhm ehmm.. Aber das ist ein bisschen weiter weg?**
118. Ja ja.. Aber wir gehen im Monat einmal.. Ja.. Wir gehen einmal aber wir kaufen alles..
119. **Mhm ehmm.. Und.. Also hier zum Beispiel habt ihr diese Party gemacht.. Und trifft ihr manchmal auch mit andere Leute aus Afghanistan oder aus Iran zum Kochen oder zum Feiern..**
120. Ja ja.. Zum Beispiel wir haben so viele.. Mmh.. Freunden und so.. Wir und /*sie gibt mir mehr Tee*/Und.. So viele Freunden.. Und die freunden sagen manchmal zu meine Mutti ja wir kommen und so und wir machen so.. Sie anrufen hier und so.. Die afghanische Leute macht so immer.. Immer.. Wir sitzen alle zusammen und lachen und reden.. Immer.. Alles.. Ja.. Und zusammen sitzen und essen und so..
121. **Hier in der Wohnung oder in der Gemeinschaftsraum?**
122. Ne, hier..
123. **Ehm.. Und.. Ist es wichtig für euch.. Also auch das Essen, das Feiern zusammen.. Ein bisschen zu Hause Gefühl zu haben?**
124. Ja jaja.. Zum Beispiel in weinachten oder besonderes Datum.. Wir sitzen ja.. Und wir haben im Jahr zwei Tage oder 2 Nacht und das ist wichtig und besondere Essen auch.. Kochen und wir essen das alle zusammen...
125. **Und denkst du dass.. Das Essen dasselbe ist als in Afghanistan?**

126. Wie bitte?
127. **Ist das Essen gleich wie in Afghanistan?**
128. Hier oder..?
129. **Wenn ihr kocht..**
130. Ja ja jajaja.. */Sie sprechen persisch/* Es gibt auch hier.. So viele so viele Restaurant iranisch und afghanisch..
131. **Mhm.. Und am.. Am Anfang es war schwierig hier an dem deutsches Essen sich zu gewöhnen?**
132. Ja.. Aber wir haben nicht immer deutsches Essen.. Wir haben mmh.. Manchmal wenn die Essen nicht gut Döner essen oder.. Falafel.. Oder wir haben alle.. */Die Mutter fragt sie etwas und sie sprechen persisch/*
133. **Und.. Gibt es etwas was du nicht isst?**
134. Kein Schwein.. Alkohol auch nicht.. Aber.. Die manche Männer trinken das aber wir können.. Das geht nicht.. Wir müssen das nicht benutzen oder trinken aber manche Männer sagen ich trinke oder ich mag und so..
135. **Und.. Was denkst du ist der größte Unterschied zwischen eine Mahlzeit hier und in Afghanistan?**
136. Ehm okay.. Die Frühstück hier und Afghanistan.. In Afghanistan die Frühstück ist auch gut und gesund.. Hier auch.. Ehm aber.. In Afghanistan ich glaube das es nicht so gut dass die alle Leute essen Reis.. Und Reis nicht so viel gut weil.. Weil die dick werden.. Und es gibt.. Es gibt.. Die Leute von Deutschland nicht so Reis essen und so.. Ehm.. Ehm.. Am erstens Gemüse, ich habe gesehen alle die deutsche Gemüse und so wenig essen.. Aber in Afghanistan nicht Gemüse, immer Fleisch, Fisch, kufte.. Kufte ist mit Hackfleisch.. Hackfleisch, reis, Fleisch und so.. Und wir essen nicht so Gemüse.. Manch-mal.. Spinat.. Weißt du das.. Spinat.. Manchmal Spinat.. Manchmal.. Oder Sup.. Suppe.. Manchmal.. Bevor essen.. Und andere unterschiedliche in Afghanistan und hier ist.. In Afghanistan auch das ist nicht gut ich glaube.. Das ist meine Meinung.. In Afghanistan Abendessen auch so isst so viele Leute Reis mit Hackfleisch essen aber wenn nach dem Essen vielleicht ein bisschen bisschen sitzen und danach gehst du schlafen.. Und.. Schalfen das ist nicht gut wenn du isst so viel und du bist schwer, kannst nicht so gut schlafen.. Das ist eine.. Zum Beispiel wir sagen wenn du willst gut schlafen und.. Leicht schlafen, du muss nicht so viele ehm.. Nachdem ehm bevor dem Schlafen essen.. Das ist auch nicht gut für den Körper.. Und.. Und.. Weil die Körper können nicht das so ehm behandeln oder eeh ich weiß nicht was..
137. **Ich verstehe was du meinst..**
138. Und eeh.. Aber hier ich habe gesehen morgen so wenig, Mittagessen auch.. Und Abendessen vielleicht Obst oder Salat.. Oder so wenig essen.. Das ist unterschiedlich.. Eine große unterschiedlich..
139. **Mhm.. Über die.. Also in der Unterkunft.. Vorher.. Also nicht hier.. Du hast gesagt es gab eine Kantine oder?**
140. Ja
141. **Und.. Konntet ihr.. Gab es mehrere Möglichkeiten oder gab's nur ein Wahl?**
142. Ja ja.. Manchmal..
143. **Und wie war es organisiert?**
144. Kannst du auch die beide nehmen oder eine nehmen und so aber.. Die Essen war nicht so gut..
145. **Und.. Gab es ein Zimmer wo man das essen konnte?**
146. Was?
147. **Ein Zimmer..**

148. Jajajajajaja es gibt aber wir sitzen nicht da weil da war kalt und nicht so sauber und.. Wir können nicht richtig sitzen.. Und Hand oder.. Was essen.. Und alle Leute sitzen und guckst du so? Wir gehen in Zimmer alle zusammen sitzen und..
- 149. Isst ihr mit der Hände normalerweise?**
150. Nein nein nein.. In Afghanistan ja aber manchmal.. Zum Beispiel die Kitchiri alle Leute mit Hand essen aber jetzt mit Löffel und so.. Aber ich auch mit Löffel und so.. Aber die Kitchiri manche ich esse mit Hände..
- 151. Und normalerweise wo sitzt ihr?**
152. Auf dem Boden.. In Afghanistan auf dem Boden..
- 153. Ehm.. Und da in der Unterkunft vorher konntest du auch da Gaste einladen?**
154. Ja.. Und das.. Nicht so viel Platz.. Und das war schwierig auch von ehm.. Teller waschen und so.. Weil wir haben keine Küche, wir haben eine Küche und diese Küche was manchmal zu manchmal offen und so.. Das war ??' Und wir müssen die Teller und Gläser und so in dusche waschen.. Ekelig oder?
- 155. Und ehm.. Also ihr als du da gewohnt hast, was hast du am meistens vermisst?**
156. Wo?
- 157. In dieser Unterkunft.. Bevor..**
158. Eeh... Wir haben mmh.. Manche Tag wir haben ehmm manche Tag war gut.. Ich vermisse diese diese Zeit.. Bin so viel.. Eh passierte gesehen..
- 159. Und was war nicht gut?**
160. Nein nicht so gut..
- 161. Dort, was konnte besser sein?**
162. Dort war ein Schule.. Das war ein Schule und wir waren da.. Die alte Schule, das war ein alte Schule ja und.. Aber wir waren zum Beispiel.. Wir waren in ein Klasse 4 Familie..
- 163. Und welche waren die größte Veränderungen mit diesem Wohnung?**
164. Wir haben keine richtige Dusche und Toilette und wir haben jetzt hier richtige... Und sauber und so.. Wir haben keinen richtige Küche und wir haben nicht selber essen und so.. Aber jetzt hier ist so gut.. Und Gott sei Dank.. Bevor es war nicht so gut.. Wirklich.. Nicht gut..
- 165. Und ehm.. Wie findest du die Situation hier?**
166. Ja gut
- 167. Und.. Die Arbeiter hier, wie sind sie?**
168. Ja die sind nett..
- 169. Und wurdest du etwas hier verändern?**
170. Was ist verändern?
- 171. Anders machen..**
172. Hier? Mmh.. Nein.. Aber ich mag nicht die Security.. Und so.. Die sind immer sauer.. Zum Beispiel wenn du hast 2mal knöpfen da und.. Klingel ja warum hast du 2mal klingelt einmal reicht und so.. Ich sag ich habe einmal gemacht und eeh.. Und ihr habt nicht geöffnet und ich habe.. Ich kann nicht 2 Stunden hier warten und.. Und die Security nicht so gut
- 173. Mhm.. Und habt ihr jetzt eine.. Schutz.. Also bekommen.. Ein Form von Schutz..**
174. Ah nein wir haben bekommen aber das war nicht gut.. Und.. Die LageSo hat gesagt du muss nach Afghanistan und so.. Aber wir haben ein Anwalt und die Anwalt macht.. Eh.. Nein die Familie hat so Probleme und so..
- 175. Wie ist es jetzt in Afghanistan?**

176. Nicht gut.. Und ich wo ich dahin lebe und wirklich halb mein Herz ich mochte noch dahin nochmal gehen das ist mein Land, ich mag mein Land und ich mochte auch da gehen aber nicht jetzt.. In Futur oder nach 5 Jahre oder so.. Aber jetzt ich möchte nicht, weil wir haben keine Sicherheit dahinten..
- 177. Warum seid ihr hier gekommen?**
178. Wir haben ein Problem..
- 179. Und generell, was denkst du über das Asyl System?**
180. Asylsystem?
- 181. Also für Flüchtlinge..**
182. Das ist nicht gut wirklich.. Das war schwierig und wir können das nicht verstehen wirklich zum Beispiel.. Mmh die LageSo sagt du kommst aus Herat und dahin ist sicher.. Aber ich weiß ich habe dahin gewohnt, ich weiß da ist nicht sicher. Und wir haben da Probleme und wir können da nicht zurückgehen und wir haben ein Freundin und sie kommt auch aus Herat.. Und ehm.. Ehm.. Die LageSo sagte nein du kannst nicht hier bleiben, du kommst aus Herat und Herat ist so du muss nochmal dahin gehen.. Aber von andere, mein Freundin sie kommt auch aus Herat sie hat ein Aufenthalt 3 Jahre warum? Sie kommt auch aus Herat was ist verschiedene.. Das weiß ich nicht.. Wieso.. Oder wir müssen alle Interview machen und danach warten auf Aufenthalt und so aber.. Wir haben gesehen eine Familie hat nur ein Interview aber die interview was so "wie heißt du woher kommst du wie alt bist du warum hast du ah ja woher kommst du und so nur diese und ?? Warum kommst du hier? Was hast du ?? Welche Probleme über was? Und okay gehe und du muss warten oder 2 interview und die Familie nach 6 Monate oder so eine Aufenthalt 3 Jahre.. Wieso? Man kann nicht mit eine Interview eine Aufenthalt bekommen.. Die Familie hat keine richtige ehmm treffen machen warum.. Asylsystem oder Sozial System in Deutschland ich weiß nicht wieso ist.. Ich glaube sie denken wissen besser als wir
- 183. Ich hoffe dass alles gut wird**
184. Entschalla



APPENDIX 4: Interview with Saber (12<sup>th</sup> March 2018)

1. **Okaay.. Saber.. also, erstmal wollte ich dich fragen ein bisschen über dein Essen Kultur in Afghanistan, also.. was man normalerweise isst.. und... wie sind die Mahlzeiten.. mmh.. wie lebt man.. was**
2. Ehmm... isst man alles... ehmm.. aber unterschiedlich bei kochen
3. **Mhm**
4. Ehmm... und.. ja es gibt nicht wie in Deutschland, zum Beispiel die Lebensmittel...
5. **Mhm**
6. Ehmmm... zum Beispiel Fleisch. Fleisch wie kaufen Fleisch von einer falschere der zum Beispiel hier immer die Männer machen so
7. **Mhm**
8. Und ehmmm... das Fleisch muss warm sein... weißt du.. was ich meine.. zum Beispiel heute früh morgen die haben diesen Schaf oder Rind oder Kuh oder so... und dann den ganzen Tag verkaufen... und... ehmm.. die Leute kaufen nicht von mmh... Kühlschrank weißt du? ist es so
9. **Mhm**
10. Und ehmm.. es gibt wie hier, wie in türkischen laden ehmm.. gibt's die Fleisch verschiedene, zum Beispiel Schaaf, Ziege und.. Kuh. und es gibt auch andere.. Kamel? wie heißt auf Deutsch?
11. **Mmh ich weiss es nicht, aber ich weiss was du meinst**
12. Ja und.. es gibt Fleisch von diesem Tier... aber... am meisten die Leuten essen nicht
13. **Mhm**
14. Manche Leute, weiss nicht welche aber manche Leute essen diese Fleisch eh.. soo... am meisten. in unserer Stadt am meisten die Leute essen.. Schaf Fleisch
15. **Schaf Fleisch**
16. Ja die mögen Schaf Fleisch und... wir essen normalerweise.. Bohnen, Gemüse.. zum Beispiel diese Schnittlauch ehm Lauch ja Schnittlauch und d alles wie in Deutschland hier.. aber mit ein bisschen verschiedene kochen ja das ist so und.. wir essen mit.. zum Beispiel Frühstück Brot, Mittagessen auch Brot mit reis auch Brot.. mit alles Brot. ehmm und das Brot ist auch anders.. nicht wie hier in Deutschland, anders.. also, normalerweise essen wie
17. **Und welche sind deine Lieblingsessen?**
18. Meine Lieblingsessen?
19. **Ja.. oder was du gerne gegessen hast..**
20. Ja aber.. normalerweise wir essen am meisten reis.. mit Fleisch.. und meine ist diese Kabulipalau, weißt du was das ist... das ist reis mit Karotten.. und Weintrauben und.. Fleisch
21. **Ah du hattest mir ein Foto davon geschickt ja**
22. Genau ja.. Und eehh... warum das heißt Kabulipalauuu.. weil ein Person die hat so viele Erfahrungen erste mal gemacht diese.. er ist ein Kabel.. Kabel ist ein Mann der.. großartig etwas
23. **Mhm**
24. So ehmm.. aber es gibt so viele verschiedene... schmeck.. wie heißt das auf Deutsch?
25. **Geschmäcke?**
26. Ja und... es gibt manche essen.. das alle Leute essen nicht zum Beispiel normalerweise.. aber die essen diese gerne einmal in Woche odeer einmal in zwei Wochen so.. zum Beispiel diesen Taschenteig..

27. **Mhm**
28. Das haben wir gegessen in diesem Restaurant
29. **Mhm**
30. Oder Bulani.. Bulani ist nicht immer.. weil es ist soo.. man muss viele arbeiten.. für das Essen machen.. deswegen machen wir zum Beispiel zweimal in eine Woche oder einmal in eine Woche oder manchmal einmal in zwei Wochen so
31. **Mhm**
32. Und auch es gibt.. diese Taschenteig mit Gemüse nicht Fleisch.. und das heißt Haschag
33. **Mhm**
34. So Spaghettiiii und diese normal vielleicht wir machen auch zu Hause aber... das ist anders.. das ist alles
35. **Und... wer kocht normalerweise?**
36. Frauen normalerweise Frauen kochen zu Hause.. eeh... weil.. die haben nichts zu tun draußen... und die kochen zu Hause und die kümmern um die Kindern... und so
37. **Mhm... und mit wem isst man?**
38. Mmh es gibt verschiedene Familie auch.. eeh.. zum Beispiel.. unsere Haus ist anders, wir essen zusammen den ganzen Familie.. meine Familieee.. mein Bruder Familieee.. eeh.. Geschwister.. mein Vater.. mein Mut.. meine Mutter.. alle zusammen. und.. wenn das Essen ist bereit, dann jemand zum Beispiel ruft alle "kommen das Essen ist bereit" und dann alle kommen zusammen und dann essen und ein bisschen quatschen und Tee trinken und so und.. dann später jeder lauft.. zum Zimmer.. einige Zimmer und so
39. **Also eine große Familie**
40. Ja
41. **Und dann nur eine Frau kocht oder...**
42. Ne ne das ist unterschiedlich auch... zum Beispiel in eine Familie eine Frau gibt zum Beispiel... muss sie alles machen eehm aber in unsere Familie ist anderes.. zum Beispiel meine Frau ist da, mein Bruder Frau ist da, meine Mutter ist da, meine Schwester da.. und dann wir machen zusammen.. odeer, manchmal machen so dass Frühstück macht jemand, Mittagessen andere und dann so abwaschen alle zusammen
43. **Mhm**
44. Es gibt keinee.. diese.. Spülmaschine haha
45. **Hehe mhm**
46. Und es gibt kein tisch kein Stuhl und so.. wir sitzen auf dem Boden
47. **Mhm immer?**
48. Immer ja.. wenn es gibt eine Party auch, alle sitzen auf dem Boden.. und gibt es aus Plastik eine große.. wir sagen Dasharkon.. und dann legen wir diese auf dem Boden und dann daraan eine Runde sitzen alle und dann essen und quatschen und.. ja
49. **Und ehmm.. also du hast nie gekocht in Afghanistan**
50. Jaaa, warum nicht?
51. **Ah okay, weil du sagtest nur Frauen...**
52. Ne.. ja manchmal.. am meisten die Frauen machen aber manchmal wenn jemanden mochte dann kann man machen warum nicht.
53. **Mhm**
54. Ja bei manche Familie ne.. sie denken anderes.. zum Beispiel.. wenn die Frauen sind da.. warum machen wir und so und so.. mache Leute ist so aber für mich ist egal ja
55. **Ja und hast auch für mich gekocht und das war... sehr lecker.. Bulani**
56. Bulani

- 57. Und.. was denkst du.. gibt es eine Mahlzeit, die wichtiger ist in dem Tag? also.. mhm ist Mittagessen wichtiger als Frühstück odeer Abendessen...**
58. Eeh.. am meisten bei Abendessen.. Frühstück.. eeh am meisten die Männer arbeiten draußen und machen Frühstück und dann gehen
- 59. Mhm**
60. Und.. Frühstück am meisten können wir nicht zusammen machen ja es gibt diese.. aus Plastik diese Tuch.. ehm aber jeder kommt und gefrühstückt und geht es ist so.. nicht gleichzeitig manchmal eeh.. Mittagessen am meistens die Männer ist nicht zu hause.. draußen.. Abendessen aber muss man zusammen sein
- 61. Mhm**
62. Und ehm.. alle schon zu Hause und dann essen zusammen und quatschen bis zehn oder elf oder so und dann gehen wir schlafen
- 63. Und was isst man normalerweise für Frühstück?**
64. Frühstück.. viele verschiedene.. trinkt man Milch.. wir machen nicht nur diese Milch.. warm machen und dann.. mit Zucker ein bisschen und dann.. Honig benutzen wir am meistens... eeh.. weiss ich nicht was ist das, aber es kommt aus diese milch wenn wir machen warm diese milch dann kommt oben etwas fett
- 65. Sahne? oder Butter vielleicht?**
66. Butter vielleicht.. und dann.. Käse benutzen wir und Marmelade... und manchmal manche.. ei.. und.. ja so.. am meistens so..
- 67. Kein Kaffee**
68. Kaffee ne.. Kaffee gibt's nicht.. Kaffee in meinem Leben vielleicht.. ich habe hier in Deutschland Kaffee getrunken, nicht in Afghanistan. es gibt kein Kaffee.. hier ja.. manche schwarze Tee und manche grüne Tee.. aber nur zwei verschiedene, grüne oder schwarze.. gibt's nicht diese Krauter Tee oder so... es gibt nicht
- 69. Und.. ehmm.. also in Afghanistan, wie wichtig war das Moment der Mahlzeit? war es wichtig für dich dieses Moment?**
70. Ja.. immer zusammen kommen und dann ja es ist sehr wichtig.. besonders für meinem Vater.. und er sagt immer dass ehmm müssen wir, müssen wir alle zusammen kommen in dieser Zeit, am Abend besonders.. und manchmal mein Vater sagte, zum Beispiel wenn jemand zum Beispiel nach 20 Uhr.. zu Hause kommen mochte.. dann er erlaubt nicht.. verboten haha
- 71. Haha**
72. Es ist über diese Sicherheit, weißt du.. draußen es ist ein bisschen.. nicht so.. ja deswegen sagte er.. muss jeder zu Hause sein.. ja zum Beispiel wenn jemand mochte zu einer Party gehen.. und so.. dann.. bevor muss sagen zu Hause dass ich komme nicht
- 73. Mhm aber auch für dich ist gefährlich?**
74. Ja.. also die Frauen gehen nicht draußen.. nur die Männer aber es ist gefährlich...
- 75. Und ehm... naja dann ich wollte dich fragen... die Unterschiede hier... jetzt wohnst du in einem Wohnheim oder?**
76. Mhm
- 77. Und da hast du eine Küche?**
78. Genau, jetzt ja
- 79. Wie lange wohnst du schon da?**
80. Seit 11. August bisher
- 81. Mhm.. und wie.. wie funktioniert es da mit den Kuchen? also..**
82. Ja... ehm.. es ist ab 6 geöffnet.. bis eh.. 22 Uhr und dann zu
- 83. Und viele Leute benutzen das oder es ist nur..**

84. Alle alle.. es gibt in unserem... Etage... es ist vier ich glaube.. vier Kuchen und dann.. weiß ich nicht, wie viele Zimmer gibt es.. vielleicht 40 Zimmer?
- 85. Mhm**
86. Und dann jede Zimmer hat 3 Personen aber manche.. Familien haben zwei Zimmer.. zum Beispiel wenn sie... 4 Personen sind oder 5 Personen sind.. aber die sind Familie deswegen sie haben zwei Zimmer
- 87. Mhm**
88. Und ja alle benutzen diese Kuchen ehmm... aber in unserer ist so.. ist.. was ist das.. diese.. diese kleine.. was heißt das.. Korridor
- 89. Ehmm ich weiß nicht auf Deutsch, aber ich weiß was du meinst...**
90. Ehmm es gibt eine Küche und die andere Seite ist auch eine Küche und.. vielleicht 10 Zimmer benutzen eine Küche
- 91. Mhm und kann man da essen? gibt es Platz?**
92. Nenene es gibt eine Platz aber.. kann man nicht in Ruhe essen weißt du.. alle kommen und..
- 93. Also jetzt im Moment, hier.. du kochst immer?**
94. Ja, jeder kocht selber
- 95. Und mit wem isst du?**
96. Alleine... zum Beispiel wir sind drei aber.. eine kocht nicht, eine draußen ist.. er arbeitet und die andere.. wir zwei kochen selber.. und dann essen selber alleine.. ja das ist soo zum Beispiel wenn ich komme um 14 Uhr und dann ich koche etwas und dann esse.. aber der andere kommt um 5 Uhr.. dann er kocht und isst.. so wir sind nicht immer gleichzeitig in diesem platz.. deswegen wir können nicht zusammen machen
- 97. Und.. was kochst du normalerweise hier?**
98. Mmh...
- 99. Also typisches essen von Afghanistan oder..**
100. Jaja.. alles.. was ich kann das machen.. zum Beispiel.. ich benutze meistens Bohnen..
- 101. Mhm**
102. Weil es gibt auch Proteine die die Fleisch sind und ehmm.. manchmal.. wenn ich nicht zu viel Zeit habe.. ich mache Ei..
- 103. Mhm**
104. Oder Pommes.. und dann.. manchmal ich mache Reis.. und es gibt auch eine andere Gemüse, was heißt das? mhm.. so.. alles.. alle afghanisches Essen
- 105. Mhm**
106. Alle machen so, Araber machen arabisches essen.. Iraner machen iraschisches essen und Afghane machen afghanisches essen
- 107. Mhm.. und.. kann man da Gaste einladen in dem heim?**
108. Ja.. kann man das machen.. ehmm.. zum Beispiel ehm.. nach 22 Uhr ist verboten aber.. aber zum Beispiel wenn jemand kommt zum mmh.. von anderer Stadt dann muss man bevor.. informieren diese Büro dass ich habe diese Person für 2 nachte.. ihr muss mit mir sein.. und dann kann man so machen
- 109. Mhm**
110. Aber.. das ist auch Probleme weil wir haben 3 Bette und dann 3 Personen sind wir.. und dann können wir nicht auf dem Boden und es gibt keine decke und so und so
- 111. Mhm.. und ich meine auch nur für ein Mittagessen oder...**
112. Jaja kann man das machen.. ist okay..

- 113. Und.. also, kannst du alle die Zutaten finden, die du brauchst für afghanisches Essen?**
114. Mmh.. jja manchmal ja manchmal nicht.. zum Beispiel die Schnittlauch es gibt nicht wie in Afghanistan es ist ganz anders hier.. ich habe nicht gefunden.. einmal wollte ich kaufen und dann diese Bulani machen bei Uli aber ich habe nicht gefunden.. dann habe ich diese.. Frühlingslauch, es ist Zwiebel.. aber grüne.. mit dieser habe ich gemacht.. aber Schnittlauch ist ganz anders
- 115. Und wo geht's du normalerweise einkaufen?**
116. In türkischer Laden.. es gibt so hier in Hermannplatz auch... mmh.. Boddinstrasse.. und.. in Turmstrasse auch..das ist ein bisschen weiter weg
- 117. Ah ja das hattest du mir gesagt.. und geht's du immer in den selben Laden?**
118. Mmh.. manchmal ja.. eh nicht immer.. es gibt afghanische Laden auch in Berlin.. zwei platze.. zum Beispiel in Schöneberg.. und eine in Wedding.. und dann kann man diese Lebensmittel.. von dort auch kaufen
- 119. Also vielleicht da gibt es mehrere Möglichkeiten**
120. Genau
- 121. Und ehmm.. was wollte ich sagen.. ehmm..ah ne ich wollte nur sagen ich denke hier in Berlin es gibt viele türkische Laden oder arabische.. auch in Hermannplatz oder Sonnenallee viele Leute gehen dort**
122. Ja genau
- 123. Und gehst du manchmal in deutsche Supermärkte oder nicht?**
124. Mmh jaaa.. ich kaufe zum Beispiel diese Getränke.. und.. diese.. manchmal ol und so.. von diese Rewe und manchmal von netto.. ja ich kaufe.. am meistens die Sachen ich brauche von die laden
- 125. Mhm**
126. Rewe ist ganz in der nahe hinten von unserem heim und auch netto es gibt dort.. andere Seite.. eeh.. ja wir kaufen milch zum Beispiel von dort... Pommies.. manchmal Brot.. manchmal diese deutsche Brot.. es gibt diese deutsche Brot auch lecker.. mhm
- 127. Und wie weit sind die andere laden?**
128. Welche?
- 129. Die arabische Laden oder türkische..**
130. Ja es ist weit weg von Lichtenberg.. Wedding zum Beispiel oder.. Schöneberg.. ja oder Hermannplatz auch ein bisschen weit
- 131. Wie oft geht's du da normalerweise?**
132. Ehm.. nicht so oft.. einmal in der Woche zum Beispiel.. oder einmal in zwei Wochen vielleicht.. und auch Obst wir kaufen von diese Rewe oder netto..
- 133. Mhm und wenn du kochst denkst du dass.. du kannst die selbe Geschmäcke machen wie in Afghanistan?**
134. Nee.. aber 60% oder 70% ja.. nicht 100%.. ja du weißt was die Mama macht.. das ist anders ja..
- 135. Ehm.. und gibt's es Momenten wo du mit anderen Leute von Afghanistan triffst und ein typisches afghanisches essen machen oder..**
136. Mmh.. nee.. manchmal ich besuche diese Meet n Eat aber manchmal nicht immer.. und.. nee.. ich habe keine Zeit für diese Dinge
- 137. Mhm**
138. Es gibt diese Leute das waren wir zusammen in alten Heim.. und jetzt haben die schon eine Wohnung.. und.. da war ich.. seit diese 3-4 Monate einmal vielleicht oder so..
- 139. Und wie war das?**

140. Ja machen wir zusammen etwas kochen und dann essen und dann sprechen quatschen oder fern gucken.. spaß macht
- 141. Und für dich ist es wichtig was du isst.. um ein zu Hause Gefühl zu haben?**
142. ...
- 143. Also ist es wichtig für dich dass du ein afghanisches Essen kochst?**
144. Ja.. ja es ist sehr wichtig.. wenn ich zum Beispiel heute.. heute.. ich habe gesehen dass es ist schon spat und.. ich wusste dass nicht dass ich habe keinen Termin heute für diese Job Couch.. und ich habe gedacht wenn ich fahre nach Hause und ich koche etwas und dann zurück fahren es ist schon spät.. und daran habe ich keine Zeit.. und deswegen ich habe ein Döner gekauft.. aber.. halb habe ich gegessen die andere halbe ist schon mit zu Hause gebracht und schon ist im Kühlschrank.. ich kann nicht so viel essen... die andere essen zum Beispiel diese türkische oder arabische oder deutsch... deutsche kann ich nicht essen.. schmeckt nicht für mich.. ist ganz anderes.. ehm aber arabisch auch und türkisch auch.. ich kann essen aber ein bisschen.. nicht so wie in afghanisches Essen
- 145. Und hast du Nostalgie von afghanisches Essen?**
146. Ehm.. vielleicht.. es ist ganz anderes.. zum Beispiel ich bin erwachsene.. mit diese.. Geschmack und ich kann es nicht ändern weiß du? es ist ganz anders.. aber vielleicht die anderen Leute machen so.. vielleicht zum Beispiel jemand kann alles essen.. es gibt die Leute auch Afghane auch Araber auch Türker dass... die können alles essen.. zum Beispiel waren wir erste mal in Berlin.. in dieser Sporthalle in Mockernbrücke.. da war zwei Mal in einem Tag.. zweimal kalt.. und einmal warm essen etwas.. deutsches.. und diese zweimal kalte was? ein bisschen Käse, Tomaten und eine arabische Brot diese sehr leichte.. und dann.. ja das war so alles.. und wenn ich habe das erstmal gesehen ich habe gedacht.. nein ich kann nicht hier leben..
- 147. Mhm**
148. Weißt du was ich habe gemacht? ich habe schon geschrieben dass ich mochte zurück
- 149. Mhm**
150. Aber aber die andere schon alles gegessen.. diese.. "was isst du? was ist das?" so.. es ist unterschiedlich zwischen die Menschen..
- 151. Mhm.. und was für deutsches Essen gab's da?**
152. Die Name ich weiß es nicht.. aber es gibt verschiedene zum Beispiel.. Fleisch mit.. nicht so viel Öl.. ein bisschen.. aber.. andere Soße und so.. dass.. wenn ich sehe ich sage "nein ich kann nicht das essen"
- 153. Und zum Beispiel.. normalerweise muslimische Leute essen normalerweise Halal Fleisch?**
154. Ja genau.. und Halal bedeutet, dass wenn jemand.. machen diese sterben.. mmh.. und dann sagen sie "hallah akbar".. und das bedeutet dass Gott ist gross
- 155. Mhm**
156. Ja.. und auch.. es gibt eine Regel beim toten diese Tiere.. und wenn.. ohne Regel.. ohne diese Regel jemand tötet.. das ist haram.. das ist verboten.. ja und sagen die Leute "nein, kann man nicht dieses essen".. und.. es ist so..
- 157. Und in diesem Heim.. Fleisch war halal oder?**
158. Mmh.. man weißt nicht.. dass halal oder haram..
- 159. Sie haben es nicht gesagt?**
160. Das ist nicht über sagen.. wenn jemand sagt das ist halal und das wäre halal sein.. das ist nicht so.. man muss wissen ob das halal oder haram ist.. weil wenn jemand von Türkei zum Beispiel.. das hat gemacht diese gestorben.. ist okay.. ein Türker ist

Muslim, wir glauben das ist halal. wenn ein Araber macht so, wenn Araber ist Muslim.. und dann wissen wir das ist halal, er macht halal. aber wenn ein deutscher sterben ein Tiere, dann es ist haram. wenn eine Schaf Fleisch ist oder Rindfleisch ist oder Ziege oder anderes.. oder diese Hannchen Fleisch

**161. Mhm**

162. Wir kaufen nicht Hannchen Fleisch von Kaufland zum Beispiel.. das ist haram für uns..

**163. Mhm also.. auch in diesem Heim, wo war das, in Mockernbrücke?**

164. Ja

**165. Also auch da hast du kein Fleisch gegessen?**

166. Ne.. niemand.. niemand.. Muslime niemand.. nur Kurde dass essen diese und die sind nicht Muslim, die glauben nichts

**167. Und.. dann.. dann es war ein bisschen schwierig dann an das deutsches Essen sich zu gewöhnen**

168. Genau ja ja.. zum Beispiel waren wir hier in der Kulistrasse auch.. und da war auch so dass wir bekommen das essen.. aber niemand diese Fleisch gegessen

**169. Mhm**

170. Und Fleisch essen aber zurück alle.. Araber, Türker, oder diese Afghane, Iraner.. Iraner am meistens, hier kommen und dann sie wechseln

**171. Mhm**

172. Am meistens sie wechseln diese Religion.. Iraner am meistens, nicht alle, am meistens.. und für sie ist egal.. was essen.. aber die Afghane und Araber die die ein bisschen eh.. denken nachdenken was sie essen

**173. Und gibt es etwas anderes was du nicht isst?**

174. ..mmh hier in Deutschland am meisten Muslime diese Schweine Fleisch

**175. Mhm**

176. Und auch.. die denken dass zum Beispiel manche essen oder ja.. es gibt nicht.. diese Schweinefleisch aber es gibt Öl oder fett von Schwein oder etwas anderes weißt du? und deswegen die essen das nicht.. manche Schokoladen, manche Schokolade.. geschrieben schon das das Schwein hat so.. ich weiss das immer gucken was drin ist und dann.. kaufen

**177. Aber ansonsten isst du..**

178. Ja ansonsten esse ich alles

**179. Und du trinkst haha**

180. Haha ja aber das ist nicht über halal und haram.. diese Schwein, ich mag nicht diese Schwein.. mmh englische Leute sagen pork und.. Amerikanische auch mögen nicht diese pork Fleisch.. das ist ganz anders aber die sind nicht Muslim.. es ist nicht über halal und haram, ich mag nicht das.. und das ist auch für mich haram, aber ich trinke trotzdem haha

**181. Haha ehm.. und du meinstest du hast auch in 2 anderen Heimen gewohnt**

182. Mhm.. und auch in Schweden auch

**183. Ja am Anfang und erstmal hast du in..**

184. Mockernbrücke, diese Sporthalle

**185. Und da gab's...**

186. Da war eine große Halle, große Halle für 200 Leute oder.. bisschen mehr vielleicht.. eeh.. ja.. das war so das ist ++ wenn 200 Leute in eine Zimmer.. und.. da gab so viele streiten.. und.. ja das war scheisse, ganz Katastrophe

**187. Mhm und dort gab's eine Kantine?**

188. Kantine?

- 189. Also wo man essen kann**
190. Ne nene.. es gab keine es gab keine, nur eine kleine platz das die verteilen von dort, für die andere Leute und dann die Leute sitzen einfach auf dem Boden oder irgendwo.. und essen..
- 191. Also keinen Essraum**
192. Nenene keinen Raum, das war eine große Sporthalle
- 193. Und da war es wo du drei Mahlzeiten hattest, zwei kalt und eins warm**
194. Ja.. hier auch.. in Kolestrasse war auch so aber am.. am meistens wir.. haben gekocht.. selber.. das war verboten aber haben wir gemacht, alle schon gemacht
- 195. Und in der zweite.. ehm wie lange warst du in Mockernbrücke?**
196. Ehm.. wie lange also.. waren wir 22 Tage in diesem Mockernbrücke heim und danach.. von 25 Mai 2016.. nach 22 tag dort waren wir und danach.. bis 11. August letzte Jahr waren wir hier in Kolzstrasse.. weiss ich nicht wie lange ist das
- 197. Aber in Kolzstrasse hattest du eine Zimmer?**
198. Hatte eine Zimmer mit 2 andere.. 12 andere Leute
- 199. 12**
200. 13 Personen in einem Zimmer ja
- 201. Und da gab's auch keine Küche oder..**
202. Ne ne keine Küche, keine Kantine.. sehr schmutzige Toiletten und Duschen.. das war sehr sehr Katastrophe..
- 203. Mhm und du hast gesagt, du hast gekocht**
204. Drin im Zimmer.. wir haben so eine kleine gekauft soo..
- 205. Herde**
206. Herde.. aber kleine so eheh und dann heimlich.. alle hatten so in dem Zimmer
- 207. Also du hast das essen nicht von draußen genommen**
208. Manchmal genommen aber weggeschmissen, genommen aber weggeschmissen
- 209. So du hast das nie gegessen**
210. Ne.. Brot ja.. Brot manchmal, wenn die arabische Brot gebracht haben dann.. wir haben bekommen
- 211. Mhm**
212. Aber diese arabische, türkische.. arabische am meisten die Afghane
- 213. Und dann in Mockernbrücke wie hast du das gemacht für das essen? was hast du gegessen?**
214. Aaah das war nicht so lang.. eeh... 22 tage.. aber.. manchmal habe ich schon gegessen.. das war.. hatten wir keine andere Möglichkeit.. und deswegen.. aber manchmal ein Tag zum Beispiel einmal im Tag.. haben wir schon draußen gegangen, zum Beispiel Döner gegessen oder etwas anderes
- 215. Das ist interessant, weil zum Beispiel ich finde es ein bisschen komisch dass sie wissen dass alle die Leute Muslim sind und die haben kein halal Fleisch..**
216. Das mmh.. wusste niemand was ist das, ist es halal oder nicht.. und Fleisch essen, essen mit Fleisch niemand gegessen.. besonders im Ramadan weißt du? es ist.. waren wir schon während der Ramadan in diese.. in diese.. Mockernbrücke.. so in Ramadan ist so wir essen 2mal, einmal früh, morgen früh, ganz früh um 4 oder 5 und dann.. eeh.. am abends um 9, 21uhr so.. und dazwischen man muss nichts trinken oder essen oder rauchen nichts.. gar nichts du darfst nicht.. eine Monat das dauert.. es kommt jetzt vielleicht in eine Monat oder ja es ist schon in der nahe..
- 217. Mhm und.. also.. wann wann ist das Essen gekommen? gab es bestimmte Uhrzeiten wo man essen konnte?**



218. Jaja man muss die machen wenn die die wissen schon, das es ist Ramadan und wir sind Muslim und wir müssen so machen.. aber jetzt sind wir in einer Unterkunft und wir haben Kuchen und wir müssen selber machen, das ist gut
- 219. Früher wenn man das essen von draußen bekommen hat, konnte man zwischen verschiedene Sachen wählen oder gab's nur eine Sache?**
220. Jaja das war so.. ja.. nicht verschiedene, nur ein Wahl.. keine varianten.. jajaj nur eine, diese ist das Essen für heute und du nimmst oder nicht..
- 221. Und haben die das verändert in der Woche, jeden Tag was anders oder..**
222. Nicht jeden Tag was anderes aber.. zum Beispiel, diese 3 verschiedene essen in einer Woche.. aber die gleiche kommt immer
- 223. Also die Essenszeiten waren nicht flexibel auch**
224. Nicht flexibel ne ne ne du musst in dieser richtige Zeit da sein ja
- 225. Und in dem zweiten Heim gab's raume?**
226. Es war auch so
- 227. Aber also es gab auch dort keinen Raum wo man essen konnte**
228. Ja es gab ein Raum, nicht so groß aber okay.. aber.. das war sehr schmutzige und.. so.. deswegen alle dieses essen mitgebracht zu Hause und sitzen im Zimmer und...
- 229. Und dann hast auch ein bisschen Essen selbst gekauft, hast du gesagt..**
230. Mhm.. ja in arabische oder türkische Laden oder afghanische..
- 231. Und also das Moment der Mahlzeit dort, wie war das? im Vergleich zu jetzt..**
232. Ne jetzt ist anders.. ist ganz anderes.. ist.. was ich mochte, ich esse es.. aber früher war nicht so.. eehm die Einkommen war auch.. nicht so gut.. zum Beispiel monatliche ehhh 135euro hatten wir.. aber jetzt bekommen wir zum Beispiel 416euro monatliche.. und das ist gut
- 233. Mhm**
234. Früher was es so.. damals hatten wir so gemacht dass eeh.. zum Beispiel 50 50 Euro zusammen gebracht mit alle von alle.. und dann machen wir zusammen.. und zusammen essen. aber jetzt ist schon anders
- 235. Mhm und wie lange warst du in dem zweiten Heim?**
236. Das muss ich zahlen
- 237. Also ungefähr**
238. Ungefähr.. schon über ein Jahr oder.. über ein Jahr
- 239. Mhm und im allgemein was war deinen Eindruck von diese Bedienung.. also von diese essen Bedienung und Behandlung.. was hattest du gedacht über diese essen**
240. In Deutschland meinst du?
- 241. In diesem Heim**
242. In diesem 2 erste.. das ist Katastrophe, das ist Katastrophe, das ist ganz anderes eeh.. sie sagen, sie sagte immer zum Beispiel.. die Küche.. eh.. Arbeiter oder Mitarbeiter so "das ist die deutsche essen die alle deutsche essen so und so".. aber wenn zum Beispiel ich sagte "kannst du das essen erstmal? dann esse ich" aber sie sagen "jaja ich habe kein eeh Lust mehr zum Beispiel ich bin satt ich kann jetzt nicht essen.. sie haben gelugt.. nur sagen "ja das ist normalerweise die deutsche essen ist so" aber das war Katastrophe ich war
- 243. Und was denkst du, also damals.. was konnte besser gewesen sein**
244. Das ist anderes.. das ist.. immer die private Firmen die.. leiten diese Wohnheim.. und die bekommen das ganze Geld von Regierung oder von Bamf aber die.. geben aus bisschen und machen Katastrophen und bringen.. und die wissen wenn zum Beispiel ein Team oder ein gruppe von Leute von Bamf kommt oder vom Lageso

kommt, sie wissen.. und in den Tag sie machen etwas Gutes weißt du? und dann sie sagen ja wir verteilen diese essen und so und so.. ja einmal.. einmal eeh.. haben wir schon bekommen eine türkische essen und das war sehr gut in diesem heim und.. in den Tag.. wir wussten nicht aber später.. eeh.. alle schon gesehen dass, "ah okay eine gruppe von Bamf ist da schon" und die die.. kontrollieren diese heim.. und in den tag es war alle schon sauber, die Toiletten alle... haha.. Küche und alles schon sauber und das essen war eine türkische Essen

**245. Mhm**

246. .. das ist.. die Leiter von diese Wohnheim oder Notunterkunft oder Unterkunft.. sind alle private Firmen und die machen alles selber, sie bekommen das ganzen Geld aber.. geben aus bisschen und.. so

**247. Mhm und..**

248. Es ist wie.. wie man sagt auf Deutsch.. ist schon.. */gesto con mano/*.. was ist das? wenn ich nehme alles Geld dadrin? eeh

**249. Ehm heimlich oder?**

250. Nicht heimlich.. ich nehme alle und ich sage ich bezahle ich gebe aus alles und dann von diese Leute aber.. ich gebe aus bisschen aber die andere kommt dadrin.. ehmm oder ich gebe unter Tisch ein bisschen Geld weißt du was?

**251. Schwarz?**

252. Schwarz? ne das ist anderes.. auf Deutsch anderes.. mmh

**253. Korruption?**

254. Korruption! einfach Korruption. es gibt Korruption auch in Deutschland..

**255. Und und.. mmh.. welche waren die größte Veränderungen mit der neuen Wohnung?**

256. Die Veränderungen?

**257. Also im allgemein mit der neuen Wohnung, wie ist das Leben im Vergleich..**

258. Ja es ist normal, zum Beispiel eeh.. wir haben Küche eeh.. wenn wir wollen etwas machen, zum Beispiel eeh.. alles was wir wollen, wir können kochen und eeh es gibt keine zeit.. bestimmte zeit, zum Beispiel ich komme um 12 oder 14uhr oder 15 Uhr dann ich koche bisschen und esse oder manchmal ich koche heute am Abend und dann halbe ich esse und halbe lasse ich im Kühlschrank und morgen essen

**259. Mhm**

260. Das kann ich machen.. undd.. wir sind ein bisschen selbständig kann man sagen, bei diese kochen und essen und so alles

**261. Mhm also wie findest du die Situation hier?**

262. Das ist ein bisschen gut undd.. in dem alten Heim war es ein bisschen anderes zum Beispiel wenn ich irgendwo fahren mochte.. und.. nach 3 Tagen zum Beispiel wenn ich komme wieder nach 3 tagen.. dann die heim sagte "ja du darfst nicht dahin kommen"

**263. Mhm**

264. Einfach weg, und man muss nach Lageso und Lageso dann sagte "okay wo warst du diese 3 tag?" und dann.. "okay wir versuchen ein anderer Platz für dich geben und dann eine andere heim" du darfst nicht nochmal in diesem heim kommen

**265. Also du musstest jeden Tag in dem Heim anmelden**

266. Ja schreiben, bin ich hier.. oder einchecken also nicht mehr als 3 Tag oder 3 Nacht.. das war ein bisschen so, aber jetzt zum Beispiel kann ich 10 Tage oder eine Monat irgendwo fahren oder fliegen oder so.. und dann komme zurück und da ist mein Wohnung

**267. Du hattest damals auch schon dein Aufenthalt oder?**

268. Mmh jaa aber das war so die Regel von dieser Heim.. unterschiedlich auch
- 269. Gibt es etwas was du.. verändern wurden wo du jetzt wohnst?**
270. Hier?
- 271. Ja also etwas dass besser sein konnte..**
272. ..mmh jetzt nein, ich brauche nichts hier.. eeh.. ich bin nicht so oft im heim nur.. komme ich schlafen oder ein bisschen essen und.. nein
- 273. Okay..**
274. Ja.. zum Beispiel ich brauche ein einzeln Zimmer aber.. es geht nicht, das geht nicht hier.. die die alle Zimmer muss mit diese 3.. zum Beispiel diee andere Mitbewohner beschwert sich dass ich schnarche.. was konnte ich machen? das ist ein.. meine Habit oder so.. aber das mache ich nicht.. zum Beispiel das mache ich nicht selber.. das ist so, ich schlafen und es ist da.. aber er kommt zum Beispiel in der Nacht und sagt "hallo hallo".. das ist ein Problem.. für mich auch, für ihn auch.. er konnte nicht schlafen und ich kann nicht auch schlafen manchmal weil er sagte "hallo hallo hallo" und zweimal und dreimal.. das ist ein bisschen Problem.. ja ich habe keine Privacy..
- 275. Mhm..**
276. Zum Beispiel.. du mochtest zu mir kommen aber ich will das nicht weil ich kenne die andere Leute was die denken was sie sagen und.. denken und sagen ist egal für mich, aber.. die machen etwas anderes dann ich mag nicht.. wenn ich denke dass andere Leute mit mir ist.. das finde ich nicht so gut
- 277. Und.. nicht über essen, in dem Heim gibt es immer Security und Sozialarbeiter?**
278. Ja genau.. wir haben in jede Etage Security.. ja es gibt zwei zwei Security in jede Etage.. und die kommen.. jede 5 5 10 Minuten und gucken und dann "alles gut?" "ja alles gut" und so... weiss ich nicht warum es gibt so viele Security dort haha
- 279. Haha und auch Sozialarbeiter auch oder?**
280. Sozialarbeiter es gibt hier.. aber manche sind nicht so nett, ein bisschen verrückte Leute ehm mit mir nicht.. eeh.. weil ich habe nicht so viel zu tun mit diese Leute.. aber die anderen eeh ich habe einmal gesehen eine frau.. es gibt eine frau mit eine Hund.. ihre Hund.. und sie ist ein bisschen verrückt und.. sie hat etwas falsches gesagt zu eine andere Afghane und ich habe gesagt "entschuldige sie bitte, können sie ein bisschen höflich sein?".. das ist so.. und sie hat gesagt "nein nein sie versteht nicht und so und so" sie will einfach so weggehen diese Sachen und ich habe gesagt "ja ich weiß dass sie versteht nicht aber wenn sie versteht aber alles denn ihr wollte nicht zu dir kommen und etwas fragen für helfen oder so" undd.. sie war ein bisschen.. ganz anderes und dann sie hat gesagt "Entschuldigung, es tut mir leid.. ja manchmal passiert, so viele Leute und so und so" und.. danach zweimal habe ich sie getroffen.. aber.. mmh.. sie war ein bisschen anderes mit mir..
- 281. Mhm.. und naja.. letzte Frage..**
282. Okay.. eheh
- 283. Im Allgemein in deiner Erfahrung seitdem du bist hier.. was denkst du über das deutsche System mit Asyl also.. der Asyl System.. was ist gut, was ist nicht gut.. was konnte besser sein.. oder..**
284. Jaaa.. mmh.. Asyl System ist ehmm.. ich weiss nicht manchmal ich denke dass, "jaaa.. mmh.. so viele Leute einfach einmal gekommen sind und sie haben nicht so viele Erfahrungen mit so viele Leute.. und deswegen ein bisschen dauert.. alles zum Beispiel nach.. über ein Jahr.. ne, nach 7 Monate oder nach 8 Monate bekomme ich diese Interview.. und.. das war schneller für mich.. und dann nach 2 Monate 17 Tage

bekomme ich Aufenthalt diese Bescheid.. eeh.. aber für manche Leute bis jetzt die haben keine anruf und.. die wissen nicht was was was.. passiert, vielleicht später.. und.. sie haben zum Beispiel die Regierung Laf oder weiss nicht welche amte.. eeh.. manche Leute.. wenn.. nach.. nach.. nach gekommen hier in Berlin oder in Deutschland, die bekommen eine Unterkunft.. oder ein Hotel, manche.. immer noch in Hotel leben.. es gibt eine Hotel in unsere neben, in der nahe von uns.. und.. da alle schon diese Flüchtlinge sind.. und.. manche immer noch leben in eine Notunterkunft.. immer noch.. und.. das ist ein bisschen.. unterschiedlich und manchmal.. unterschiedlich zwischen Araber und Afghane und Iraner und so.. zum Beispiel Iraner und Araber konnten Integration benutzen.. bevor.. Bescheid von Bamf bekommen.. Afghane nicht, durften nicht.. das war so.. ich weiss nicht warum.. eeh.. ich habe schon einen Brief geschrieben.. eeh.. zum Bamf.. dass ich brauche Integrationskurs.. und sie haben gesagt "nein. wenn sie ein Iraner bist oder wenn sie eine mmh eriterien oder so oder so Araber Iraker oder so dann schreiben sie nochmal, machen wir etwas.. wenn sie Afghane sind dann wir können nichts machen"

**285. Was waren eigentlich diese Integrationskurse?**

286. Bis b1 eeh Deutsch lernen.. normaler deutsch Kurs.. für Afghane es gab keine deutsch Kurs.. bis bis bis eine Bescheid von Bamf.. ohne Bescheid nicht..

**287. Also bis du keine Aufenthalt kannst du kein Integrationskurs machen?**

288. Jajaj keine ja.. nur dass du 400 stunden deutsch Kurs.. aber das heißt eine Flüchtlinge und man bekommt kein Zertifikat.. nur besuchen deutsch Kurs aber.. keine Zertifikat, keine Prüfung..

**289. Okay.. ich bin fertig.. wenn du noch etwas sagen mochtest über kochen essen und so weiter**

290. Bei kochen zum Beispiel.. deutsche Küche und afghanische Küche ist ganz anderes

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## RIASSUNTO

### *Domanda di ricerca*

Negli ultimi anni, milioni di persone hanno intrapreso un viaggio disperato per raggiungere l'Europa, attraversando il Mar Mediterraneo e il Mar Egeo, nel tentativo di sfuggire a guerre e persecuzioni. Questo fenomeno si è intensificato tra il 2015 e il 2016; infatti il numero di richiedenti asilo in Europa ha raggiunto livelli senza precedenti con oltre 1,3 milioni di arrivi via mare, come riportato dall'UNHCR. A causa di questa "crisi dei rifugiati", l'asilo è diventato una questione politica di grande rilevanza in Europa. Pur essendo al centro dell'attenzione, i rifugiati sono spesso rappresentati come soggetti privi di "agency", condizione ben supportata dalla nozione stessa di "migrazione forzata" che implica passività (Costantini, 2016, p.149-150).

Questa ricerca si concentra sulla situazione dei rifugiati a Berlino, esplorando la loro dimensione quotidiana attraverso la lente del cibo. Ciò al fine di capire quale ruolo svolgano le abitudini alimentari in questo momento della loro vita. In particolare, l'obiettivo è comprendere come le decisioni inerenti al cibo siano specchio di una forza creativa nel processo di adattamento ad un nuovo contesto, a conferma della loro forza agente nella realizzazione di una nuova vita in esilio.

Per rispondere a tale ipotesi di ricerca, sono stati presi in considerazione due aspetti in particolare: da un lato il valore simbolico del cibo nella sue peculiarità di continuità e connessione con la propria terra d'origine, dall'altro la dimensione sociale del cibo come mezzo per mantenere e creare relazioni sociali. L'obiettivo finale è capire in che modo il cibo può facilitare la creazione di una comunità.

### *Cibo e migrazione: una prospettiva teorica*

Oltre alla dislocazione spaziale, l'esperienza migratoria comporta un movimento esistenziale che causa un profondo senso di rottura nella vita dei migranti, i quali si

trovano catapultati in un ambiente nuovo, circondati di significati sconosciuti e non familiari (La Barbera, 2015, p.4).

La mancanza di punti di riferimento può provocare un profondo senso di perdita e di nostalgia, che può essere esacerbato dalle difficoltà di adattamento al nuovo ambiente o dalle ostilità mostrate dalla società (La Barbera, 2015, p.4). I migranti si trovano così all'intersezione di mondi diversi (Gronseth, 2013, p.9), in una situazione che spesso comporta un sentimento di esclusione e di non appartenenza (La Barbera, 2015, p.4).

Il confronto con un mondo diverso è causa di inquietudine e angoscia. Inoltre, le difficoltà affrontate dai migranti sono anche dovute ai vincoli strutturali imposti dal Paese di accoglienza. Sebbene viviamo in un mondo sempre più caratterizzato dal movimento, i migranti appaiono spesso come "un'umanità in eccesso", come un qualcosa che va contro l'ordine naturale delle cose (Costantini, Massa, e Yazdani, 2016, p.27). Questa accezione deriva da una interpretazione del luogo concepito in unità separate e distinte, alla base dell'idea di stati nazione (Mallki, 1992, p.31). Tale concezione territoriale si riversa maggiormente sulla categoria dei rifugiati, che vengono di conseguenza percepiti come una deviazione dalla norma, in un mondo inflessibile di stati nazionali (Essed, Frerks, & Schrijvers, 2004, p.6).

La concettualizzazione della categoria comporta implicazioni significative e si riflette in un'esperienza differenziata per i rifugiati (Castles, 2003, p.4). Uno dei principali problemi in questo senso deriva dalla mancata attribuzione di "agency" a questi soggetti, i quali vengono spesso ridotti ad un'etichetta. La visione dei rifugiati come vittime passive incapaci di aiutare se stesse, piuttosto che come persone con iniziativa e talento, non è rappresentativo della loro esperienza e non coglie la complessità di questo fenomeno (Essed, Frerks, & Schrijvers, 2004, p.6 )

Se da un lato è necessario essere consapevoli dei limiti strutturali affrontati dai rifugiati, dall'altro è di cruciale importanza riconoscerli come attori attivi e, anche se determinati in contingenza, riconoscere i loro sforzi creativi volti a iniziare una nuova vita.

Nonostante la situazione dei rifugiati sia spesso caratterizzata da uno stato di incertezza, la predisposizione umana al cambiamento e all'adattamento dà vita a una spinta esistenziale che consente di immaginare possibilità alternative per il futuro e in questo modo cominciare con una nuova vita (Gronseth , 2013, p.19).

Partendo da queste considerazioni lo scopo di questa ricerca è quello di evidenziare il ruolo attivo dei rifugiati nel contesto della migrazione, osservando come attraverso le pratiche quotidiane possano trovare una nuova percezione di sé.

Il cibo rappresenta un'interessante lente di analisi per il suo valore culturale, il suo ruolo nella costruzione d'identità e nella realizzazione di una comunità.

Il cibo è uno dei nostri bisogni primari: abbiamo bisogno di cibo per sopravvivere. Tuttavia, il cibo non è solo nutrimento per il nostro corpo, ma anche per il nostro sé culturale e sociale. Sostiene infatti Montanari (2017):

“Il cibo è cultura *quando si produce*, perché l'uomo non utilizza solo ciò che trova in natura, ma ambisce anche a *creare* il proprio cibo, sovrapponendo l'attività di produzione a quella di predazione. Il cibo è cultura *quando si prepara*, perché, una volta acquisiti i prodotti-base della sua alimentazione, l'uomo li *trasforma* mediante l'uso del fuoco e un'elaborata tecnologia che si esprime nelle pratiche di cucina. Il cibo è cultura *quando si consuma*, perché l'uomo, pur potendo mangiare di tutto, o forse proprio per questo, in realtà non mangia tutto bensì *sceglie* il proprio cibo, con criteri legati sia alle dimensioni economica e nutrizionale del gesto, sia a valori simbolici di cui il cibo stesso è investito.” (p. xii)

Poiché gli esseri umani sono esseri culturali, il cibo diventa un elemento cruciale dell'identità umana.

Le pratiche alimentari rappresentano una parte significativa delle nostre attività quotidiane: spendiamo tempo ed energia nella scelta e nella preparazione del cibo, considerando inoltre la sua presenza in molte occasioni di socialità. Date le sue caratteristiche di trasversalità tra culture e di pervasività nel quotidiano, il cibo diventa un elemento centrale per il senso di identità, in quanto indicatore di somiglianze e differenze tra gruppi di diversa estrazione. Come sostenne Fischler (1988), “the way any given human group eats helps it assert at the same time both its oneness and the otherness of whoever eats differently” (p.275).

Migrare non significa semplicemente lasciare un luogo, ma anche lasciare alle spalle l'esperienza di quel luogo, il quale rappresenta un mondo sensoriale familiare. Grazie alla sua natura sensoriale, il cibo può essere una rappresentazione di questo mondo: i sapori, i profumi, i colori, la consistenza, sono tutti elementi che conducono a un'intensa esperienza a livello dei sensi (Holtzman, 2006, p.365). Pertanto, il cibo assume un ruolo centrale nella vita dei migranti ricreando un paesaggio sensoriale simile a quello che hanno lasciato.

Proprio grazie a questa sua caratteristica, il cibo può essere un potente innesco di ricordi, i quali rappresentano una connessione con il passato e forniscono un senso di continuità che permette loro di andare avanti (Abbots, 2016, p.3). L'esperienza sensoriale del cibo può essere particolarmente significativa nei momenti di incertezza e di difficoltà: ricordando il gusto di casa il cibo può favorire un legame con la propria terra, alleviando così il dolore e la paura causato dal vivere in un mondo non familiare, soddisfacendo un bisogno emotivo e creando un senso di appartenenza in continuità con il passato (Vallianatos & Raine, 2015, p.368).

Oltre al valore simbolico del cibo familiare, un altro aspetto importante da sottolineare è il fattore di condivisione del cibo. La commensalità facilita l'instaurazione di legami personali e il senso di collettività, permettendo ai migranti di mantenere e rafforzare le relazioni pre-esistenti all'interno di famiglie o gruppi, come anche di agevolare l'incontro con l'Altro e consentire nuovi legami (Coleman 2013).

L'obiettivo è dunque capire come il cibo agisca a livello di creazione di comunità nell'esperienza dei rifugiati, allo scopo di mettere in luce la loro capacità di agency, la loro creatività e la loro immaginazione durante questo processo.

### *Metodo qualitativo*

Al fine di rispondere al quesito di ricerca, ho adottato un approccio qualitativo che consiste in osservazione partecipante e interviste discorsive.

Il contesto empirico della ricerca si è sviluppato in tre centri di accoglienza a Berlino, frequentati regolarmente per un periodo di 5 mesi - da novembre 2017 fino ad aprile 2018. Ho così avuto la possibilità di acquisire maggiore familiarità con il contesto, oltre ad avere l'opportunità di osservare in maniera ravvicinata la vita quotidiana dei residenti.

L'osservazione partecipante mi ha permesso di conoscere in profondità i rifugiati residenti nei centri e la loro esperienza attraverso il coinvolgimento attivo in alcune delle loro attività quotidiane.

La scelta di interviste a impronta semi-strutturale – registrate e poi trascritte – è stata fatta al fine di dare ai partecipanti l'opportunità di esprimersi liberamente, così da



ottenere un'immagine più vivida e conoscere la loro interpretazione del mondo. Oltre a intervistare i residenti dei centri, ho avuto anche l'opportunità di condurre interviste con alcuni operatori, che mi ha aiutato a comprendere meglio l'organizzazione e il funzionamento dei centri di accoglienza.

La combinazione di questi due metodi mi ha aiutato ad avere una visione più completa e integrata.

### *Il ruolo del cibo nell'esperienza dei rifugiati a Berlino*

Osservando l'esperienza dei rifugiati a Berlino attraverso la lente del cibo, sono emerse importanti considerazioni sulla comunità, intesa sia come fattore immaginario e simbolico, sia come realizzazione di pratiche sociali. Il cibo può fornire una visione affascinante poiché fonda l'esperienza della comunità nella vita di tutti i giorni, grazie ai significati simbolici ed emotivi ad esso connessi e al fatto che esso sia un'attività quotidiana quasi sempre condivisa.

Il processo di adattamento ed integrazione comporta, tra le altre cose, la costruzione di un nuovo ambiente familiare; è proprio attraverso lo sviluppo di una comunità che i rifugiati hanno la possibilità di ritrovare un senso di appartenenza.

Esistono diverse concettualizzazioni di comunità: può essere interpretata come una realizzazione concreta di relazioni sociali o come una forma simbolica dell'immaginario collettivo (Amit, 2002, p.12). Come sostenuto da Amit (2002), negli ultimi anni c'è stato uno spostamento verso la concettualizzazione di comunità come identità collettiva, che esiste al di là della pratica sociale dei suoi membri e risiede nella percezione di una appartenenza immaginaria (p.12-14). Tuttavia, è attraverso la realizzazione sociale che il senso di comunità può essere veramente sentito e reclamato dai suoi membri (Amit, 2002, p.16).

Questa ricerca ha messo in luce come il cibo familiare occupi un ruolo centrale nel fornire una forma di continuità ai rifugiati. Preparare e mangiare piatti tradizionali è un'esperienza sensoriale che innesca ricordi nostalgici positivi, i quali creano un legame temporaneo con la propria casa e un senso di sicurezza in un mondo altrimenti sconosciuto. Anche i negozi di alimentari specializzati contribuiscono alla creazione di

un senso di familiarità: con i loro segni, i loro colori e i loro odori diventano punti di riferimento per i rifugiati. Il valore simbolico attribuito al cibo, in questo modo, crea un senso di appartenenza a una comunità immaginaria: la preparazione ed il consumo del pasto rappresenta un contatto con la terra d'origine, mentre l'acquisto nei negozi alimentari li connette con altri migranti di Berlino.

Il cibo è fondamentale anche per lo sviluppo di relazioni sociali. Per molti rifugiati mangiare con la famiglia e gli amici rappresenta una parte fondamentale delle loro vite, in quanto permette di mantenere legami forti; allo stesso tempo, attraverso i valori dell'ospitalità e di reciprocità essi creano nuovi legami. L'esperienza condivisa del cibo, quindi, fornisce un modo per costruire una comunità attraverso pratiche sociali nella vita di tutti i giorni.

L'adozione di una prospettiva di genere ha fornito una visione interessante. Poiché il cibo garantisce la continuità di una tradizione, le donne - solitamente responsabili delle pratiche alimentari - possono assumere una posizione di potere nel contesto della migrazione, in quanto fungono da "gatekeepers". Al contrario, gli uomini potrebbero sentirsi impotenti a causa della loro incapacità di ricreare un'esperienza sensoriale di grande valore.

Un aspetto emerso durante la ricerca, è che il senso di orgoglio e di empowerment che le pratiche alimentari possono dare alle donne rifugiate, a volte è contrastato da sentimenti di esclusione. La migrazione ha provocato una rottura nelle loro vite e un grande cambiamento nella routine: mentre nella loro patria, la maggior parte delle donne restava a casa e si occupava delle attività domestiche, a Berlino devono impegnarsi in nuove pratiche, come andare alle lezioni di lingua o andare a scuola, per cominciare una nuova vita. Questi cambiamenti hanno portato alcune famiglie a riconsiderare i tradizionali ruoli di genere, promuovendo così la collaborazione nella sfera domestica. Tuttavia, alcune famiglie sono rimaste legate ai tradizionali ruoli di genere e in molti casi questo fatto ha contribuito a esacerbare le disuguaglianze. Dovendo stare a casa a occuparsi della preparazione dei pasti e dei bambini, alcune donne non riescono a frequentare corsi di lingua, i quali rappresentano il primo passo verso l'integrazione. In questa situazione, la posizione assunta dal cibo è ambivalente: se da un lato può essere una fonte di orgoglio ed empowerment, allo stesso tempo è un promemoria della loro

situazione di esclusione essendo percepito come un ostacolo verso la creazione di una rete sociale che va oltre le mura del centro di accoglienza.

### *Riflessioni conclusive*

Nonostante le esperienze traumatiche passate e le incertezze del presente, ciò che è emerso da questa ricerca è la tendenza di queste persone ad orientarsi verso il futuro, mostrando una forza agentiva che enfatizza la capacità degli esseri umani di creare e ricreare nuovi sensi di sé attraverso azioni creative (Rapport & Overing, 2000, p.1-5). In questo processo, una delle risorse più importanti è l'immaginazione, la quale ci consente di andare oltre le restrizioni e alla ricerca di un senso di libertà (Rapport & Overing, 2000, p. 1-5).

Dobbiamo superare la visione secondo cui i rifugiati sono vittime passive. Thamina con il suo racconto esprime bene come la sua capacità di agency sia stata, e sia tuttora, fondamentale nel suo percorso di vita:

"[Ce ne siamo andati perché] non avevamo la possibilità di fare nulla con le nostre vite .. a piedi un mese in viaggio.. Era brutto .. La peggiore esperienza della mia vita [...] In Grecia sull'acqua, nel mare, si vedeva che le persone avevano paura di morire .. Terribile, ma alla fine è stato davvero bello [...] perché la gente è venuta da noi e ci hanno aiutato. Sono venuti da noi e hanno detto 'noi vi aiutiamo' ed è stato bello .. Siamo scesi e la gente dalla Grecia è arrivata ed è stato .. In quel momento abbiamo detto "sì, ci sono persone, ci sono persone buone che aiutano gli altri" (Thaminah)

"Siamo felici qui, sì .. Ma andiamo avanti, abbiamo sempre movimento.. e bisogna vivere, cosa posso fare di più? Abbiamo tutte le nostre attività e sì.. Soprattutto abbiamo.. Speranza.. E andiamo avanti con le nostre vite " (Thaminah)

Ciò che emerge dal racconto di Thaminah è la sua capacità di resilienza e resistenza come soggetto attivo e la sua predisposizione all'adattamento e al cambiamento anche nelle situazioni più difficili e restrittive. Ciò che è evidenziato è la creatività, l'immaginazione e l'improvvisazione, che consentono alle persone di andare avanti.

Andando oltre i traumi, andando oltre le restrizioni, andando oltre i numeri che definiscono le persone, dovremmo essere aperti all'incontro con l'Altro, e dovremmo riconoscere la nostra comune umanità nella nostra infinita ricerca di libertà.