A comparative study of conviviality and family mealtime experiences in Spain and the UK

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Abstract

This study explores experiences of conviviality and family mealtimes in 10 Spanish families and 10 families in the UK. Although there has been sociological interest in the concepts of commensality (the act of eating together) and the family meal, there is a paucity of literature that investigates the concept of conviviality (the act of *enjoying* eating together) in the context of domestic dining. Mealtimes are examined in Spain because rhetoric on regional food culture implies that sociable, enjoyable meals are embedded in family life. The practices of Spanish families are compared with those in the UK where paeans to Mediterranean ways of eating are disseminated through public health models and popular discourse.

An ethnographic approach, using multiple methods, is adopted in order to investigate the complexities and contradictions in narratives on mealtimes, whilst creating opportunities for all family members, including children, to voice their ideas. The theoretical framework of the study employs Bourdieu's conceptual tools of social distinction, habitus and forms of capital.

This is the first known empirical study that compares familial conviviality in two cultural settings. The original research contribution lies in a number of key areas. For the first time, conviviality is conceptualised as a symbol of cultural capital and a marker of social distinction. The study emphasizes that social divergence is less apparent in Spain and devises the term *cultural habitus* to explicate collective, uniform practices. It outlines the tensions involved in creating a convivial meal and identifies the features of a habitus that facilitate this process. It also highlights how cross-cultural differences in children's mealtime socialisation influence enjoyment for all family members. The study establishes, that in both countries, challenges to conviviality are perpetuated by ideals that are not always culturally accessible or do not reflect the multifaceted nature of family life. These findings make a significant contribution to the sociology of food but are also useful in the development of public health models that promote ways of eating.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

In recent years public health experts in the UK have placed increasing emphasis on the socio-cultural aspects of nutrition, looking beyond the biological or even psychological aspects of eating, to recognise the implicit ideologies that shape food habits in society (Warde, Martens 2000, Murcott 2002, Caraher, Coveney 2004, Lang 2005). Understanding the socio-cultural nature of eating behaviours has been recognised as fundamental to developing successful health promotion strategies (Sanjur 1982, Nielsen et al. 2008) and policy makers have stressed the importance of socio-cultural context in addressing diet-related disease (Banwell et al. 2005, Lang, Rayner 2007, Schubert et al. 2012). Families with children have, for some time, been the focus of such policies (Caraher, Coveney 2004, Moestue, Huttly 2008, Tagtow 2011, Moreira et al. 2015, Bacon 2018) and recently, experts at the interface between social science and public health have begun to evaluate the *social* consequences of food inequalities. Shared mealtimes are valued, not only as opportunities for nourishment, but also for social cohesion, the establishment of networks and hierarchies or even expressions of identity (Valentine 1999, Backett-Milburn et al. 2010a, Wills, O'Connell 2018). It has become increasingly clear that everyday food practices within families are shaped by socio-economic determinants and the way families eat reinforces their position in society (Wills et al. 2011).

Attributing importance to the way families eat together is not new. The family meal has been the subject of considerable academic inquiry (Murcott 1982, Murcott, Gamarnikow 1983, Warde, Hetherington 1994, Murcott, Henry 1996, Murcott 1997, Grieshaber 1997, Valentine 1999). Seminal studies in the UK and US have indicated some degree of consensus over what constitutes a 'traditional' or 'proper' family meal. The event typically involves members of the same (usually nuclear) family members eating a cooked meal around a dining table together, a model of eating that has changed very little over the last 40 years (Murcott 1982, Charles, Kerr 1988, De Vault 1994, Jackson et al. 2009, Brannen et al. 2013). Whilst this *ideal* of the family meal has assumed normative status in the UK (Wilk 2010), there is little evidence that establishes *if* and *how often* families actually eat in this way. In fact, the iconic family

meal is often viewed as a combination of ideology and prescription that bears very little resemblance to families' everyday experiences (Murcott 1997, Wilk 2010). Critics have disparaged the idealization of the event, which they claim, has never existed in its ideological form. The concept of family itself is viewed as deceptively monolithic and fails to account for diversity of family structure (De Vault 1994, Jackson et al. 2009). Normative assumptions regarding the structure and prevalence of family mealtimes are, for the most part, not the result of sociological inquiry but ideas perpetuated by the popular media, health campaigns and advertising (Murcott 1997, Jackson et al. 2007, Jackson et al. 2009).

These idealistic notions continue to pervade the popular media in the UK (The Independent 2006, The Telegraph 2014), reinforced in part by biomedical research that demonstrates the value of shared mealtimes for child and adolescent health (Sen 2006, Neumark-Sztainer et al. 2010, Kim et al. 2013, Skafida 2013, Oncini, Guetto 2017). Whether the traditional family meal is a mythical ideal or a lived reality, seminal studies have illustrated that the proper family meal is something that UK families have traditionally aspired to create (Murcott, Gamarnikow 1983, Charles, Kerr 1988) and continue to regard as an opportunity for achieving 'togetherness' (Brannen et al. 2013, O'Connell, Brannen 2016). Eating together as a family is a social aspiration, esteemed as a marker of health, cohesion and wellbeing.

The notion of the traditional family mealtime appears to be particularly pervasive in the UK (Jackson et al. 2009). Yet, in Spain these ideals are paralleled with the equally ubiquitous idea of familial *conviviality*; the idea that families (often including extended family) join together to enjoy convivial meals on a regular, if not daily basis (Medina 2004, Morin 2010). Very much like the UK, the ideals around family dining are not based on empirical evidence (Méndez 2006). Instead, these ideas are disseminated through a plethora of lifestyle publications, cookery books and newspapers (Jenkins 1994, Nestle 1995, Bonaccio et al. 2012b, Daily Mail 2017) as well as prominent food advertisers (Cannon 2005, Poole, Blades 2013), all of which promoted the ideal of extended, convivial mealtimes as festive events. While the source of these beliefs is invariably complex, they derive in part from the Mediterranean diet model, a cultural prototype for healthy eating, disseminated by public health bodies both in the UK and

Spain (Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, NHS 2018). The diet incorporates family meals into its framework and is revered as a symbol of cultural heritage (UNESCO 2013) and an authentic way of life (Crotty, Dietet 1998, Willett 2006).

The model does not simply suggest that families should simply eat *together* but also emulate a 'Mediterranean' way of eating and embrace the shared experience of food. The model explicitly promotes the concept of conviviality, professing that families living in the region derive pleasure from shared meals and those following the diet should endeavour to do the same (Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, Serra-Majem et al. 2012). However, this endorsement of food, family and pleasure carries an important implication. In the UK, the Mediterranean diet is framed within the context of a different or 'other' culture. The suggestion is that families in the Mediterranean basin – a large geographical area – are not only adept at creating pleasurable mealtimes but *more* adept than families in the UK who are encouraged to learn from their Southern European counterparts. Implicit in the paeans offered to Mediterranean ways of eating, is cultural inadequacy elsewhere.

This gives rise to a number of questions regarding definitions and actual experiences of conviviality. In order to address these issues, it is important to set the concept of conviviality and the Mediterranean diet in socio-historical context.

1.2 History and scientific context of the Mediterranean diet

Biomedical literature suggests that the Mediterranean diet is an authentic cultural representation of traditional eating patterns in the region (Trichopoulos 2002, Bach-Faig et al. 2011a). Critics in the field of anthropology and social science contest that this type of model is the outcome of perpetuating discourses, which have created normalised standards and acted as a culinary socio-cultural compass for citizens (Doherty 2007, Xavier Medina 2009). A fundamental question when promoting convivial mealtimes in this culturally specific context then, is whether this practice is reflective of a social reality or the result of an externally imposed ideal. The authenticity of the Mediterranean diet has been an area of some discussion; superficially it appears to demonstrate a divide between academic schools of thought,

however there are contradictions, inconsistencies and a fundamental lack of empirical evidence on both sides of the theoretical debate.

The term 'Mediterranean diet' was coined by US physiologist Ancel Keys in the late 1950's as a result of an epidemiological study that associated longevity in specific countries within the region to common aspects of their diets (Keys et al. 1986, Keys 1995). From the outset, Keys viewed the concept as more than just a 'diet' and extolled the virtues of Mediterranean lifestyles and family values (Keys, Keys 1975). The concept of a health-promoting Mediterranean diet began to receive international recognition in 1993, following the creation of the Mediterranean diet pyramid, a graphic representation that claimed to represent the dietary patterns of the region (Willett et al. 1995, Haber 1997, Bach-Faig et al. 2011a). The model was a result of collaboration between Harvard School of Public Health and Oldways, a preservation trust, founded with the aim of conserving traditional food systems (Crotty, Dietet 1998). The Mediterranean diet was, therefore, first conceived by US scientists, not inhabitants of the region. However, the model was officially embraced within the Mediterranean, when in 2013, UNESCO recognised the Mediterranean diet as an *intangible cultural heritage* of Italy, Spain, Greece and Morocco (Willett et al. 1995, Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, da Vico et al. 2012, UNESCO 2013). Inhabitants of the listed countries were recognised for attributing particular value to convivial dining and the intergenerational transmission of food culture (Alexandratos 2006). This emphasis is said to derive from a longstanding way of eating, centred on family connections (Morin 2010, Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, UNESCO 2013).

In spite of this more recent cultural stamp of approval, social scientists have heavily criticised the overarching concept of the Mediterranean diet, suggesting it is a biomedical construct conveniently aligned with the restrictive morals of nutrition (Fischler 1996, Medina 2004, Medina 2005) and that it devalues the rich culinary diversity of the region (Contaldo et al. 2003). The few socio-cultural studies of the Mediterranean diet have largely focused on the geographical complexities in defining a diet as Mediterranean (de Lorgeril et al. 2002, Xavier Medina 2009) the regional differences in dietary patterns (Fischler 1996, Medina 2004, Xavier Medina et al. 2004,

Medina 2005) and issues of sustainability when promoting a regional diet on a global level (Burlingame, Dernini 2011, Medina 2011, Mallia 2012, Serra-Majem 2017).

While criticisms focus largely on the nutritional aspects of the model, the idealistic image of conviviality appears to remain untarnished and unquestioned. In fact, the very critics that have doubted the nutritional and geographical legitimacy of the diet have concurred that the region boasts a unique attachment to food, family and that the enjoyment of mealtimes is what distinguishes inhabitants of the Mediterranean basin from their northern European neighbours (Fischler 1996, Haber 1997, Medina 2004). This notion is propagated by a number of academic commentators. Fischler (1996: 374) states categorically that in matters of food and sociability there are two 'Europes'. The first is a Mediterranean South where populations possess a greater affiliation to food traditions, family and conviviality and the second is Northern Europe, where ideals of discipline, morality and health govern ways of eating.

Implicit in the literature, is the notion that there is something uniquely 'Mediterranean' in the way that families and groups join together and experience convivial mealtimes (Baldini et al. 2009, Xavier Medina 2009, Vernaglione 2009, Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, UNESCO 2013). Yet, in spite of the frequent allusions to family and conviviality, there is no reference to empirical evidence in this literature. There has been some anthropological interest in the idea of Mediterranean cultures and eating habits (de Garine 1996, Gracia Arnaiz 2010, Giammanco 2013), but there are no known studies that evidence how conviviality is experienced in Mediterranean families, or research that suggests shared dining is less pleasurable outside this area of Europe. So, while the nutritional aspects of the Mediterranean diet have been subject to rigorous academic scrutiny (Serra-Majem et al. 2004, Alvarez Leon et al. 2006, Mariscal-Arcas et al. 2009, Pelucchi et al. 2010, Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, Bonaccio et al. 2013, Hoffman, Gerber 2013), the unique cultural attachment to conviviality appears to be a universally accepted aspect of the diet and the region (Reguant-Aleix 2012, Phull et al. 2015a)[1].

[1] The paper cited by Phull, Wills et al. is a publication based on my initial investigation for the doctoral research proposal.

In Spain, for example, academic study of the sociology of food, is very much in its infancy and does not extend much beyond the sociology of consumption, relying on French sociological theory to socially contextualise contemporary eating patterns in the region (Méndez 2006, Sánchez, Flores 2015, Díaz-Méndez 2016, Poulain 2017). The Spanish academic perspective is important given that Spain is the epicentre of Mediterranean diet research. It is where the latest version of the Mediterranean diet model has been conceptualised (Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, Bach-Faig et al. 2011b) and heavily promoted through prominent public health campaigns (Serra Majem et al. 2004, Medina 2005). Furthermore, UNESCO's recognition of the Mediterranean diet (UNESCO 2013) was substantiated by Spanish academic research. However, the evidence that supported this cultural acknowledgement was either in the form of biomedical study or historical reflection. There was, and still remains, an absence of social science research to support the socio-cultural claims regarding families and conviviality in the region. This cultural way of eating and of being is taken as a given.

1.3 Conviviality: From Spain to the UK

The attention of this study is not so much as to whether the notion of the Mediterranean diet is a biomedical construction or a cultural reality, but how conviviality, a cultural concept at its core, is experienced by families within a country that promotes it. The focus on Spain, therefore, is not because it is a country seen to epitomize Mediterranean food culture, but rather that it is a nation where ideas about conviviality are being generated and promoted without clear empirical support.

This research compares experiences of conviviality in Spain - where pleasurable meals are considered to be part of the fabric of everyday life - with the UK, where conviviality is not explicitly associated with food culture (Fischler 1996, Coveney, Bunton 2003, Medina 2005). The study is set in a context where UK populations are encouraged to 'learn' Mediterranean style conviviality through health promotion strategies without due consideration of how families within and outside the region really experience shared meals. (Papadaki, Scott 2005, Jallinoja et al. 2010, Dunlap 2012). This raises questions regarding what conviviality means to different populations, how it is experienced, conceptualised, performed and fundamentally, whether enjoying meals together is a realistic aspiration.

1.4 Aim and objectives

Aim

The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of whether and how families in two distinct cultural settings, experience conviviality as part of their practices and representations of everyday meals.

Objectives

1. To examine the ways in which families conceptualize and experience conviviality in a Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean country.
2. To identify the factors that facilitate or hinder convivial dining in Spain and the UK
3. To explore whether and how families take account of conviviality in their construction of family meals.
4. To compare definitions, representations and practices of family dining and conviviality in order to identity potential differences in participants' practices and accounts as well as the perspectives of different family members.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

This introductory chapter has underscored the socio-cultural relevance of familial dining and the ubiquity of this subject in academic and popular discourse. It has drawn attention to the pervasive notion of conviviality within the context of the Mediterranean diet and the manner in which this concept is both associated with this region and promoted outside of it. Having highlighted the origins and context of the research, Chapter Two, the literature review, presents a critical examination of sociological concepts which are fundamental to it. The review of the literature examines the topics of commensal and convivial dining, the definition of family, and approaches to childhood. It also outlines the theoretical framework which underpins the study and the conceptual tools used to examine socio-cultural divisions in food consumption. The chapter concludes with an explanation of how cross-cultural comparison is addressed in this research.

The philosophical position and theoretical underpinnings of the research design and methodology are established in Chapter Three, together with a presentation of the

research processes undertaken. Next, Chapter Four bridges theory with findings by presenting an overview of the participants and positioning them in a socio-cultural context in line with the proposed theoretical framework. This chapter also introduces an overview of the structural conditions related to family dining in Spain and the UK. Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the key research findings and begin to contextualise them in theory. Finally, Chapter Eight consolidates the key points of discussion and highlights the significant and original contribution this study has made to sociological knowledge. It emphasizes the strengths and potential limitations of the study and draws attention to further areas of research in the fields of the sociology of food and public health.

Chapter Two: Review of the literature

2.1 Scope and aims of the literature review

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate literature relevant to the areas of conviviality, family and shared meals in the UK and Spain, as well as theoretical frameworks that offer insight into these concepts. A preliminary literature review was conducted at the outset of the research with the purpose of putting the study in historical context, delimiting the research questions, identifying gaps in the existing body of literature and exploring appropriate theoretical tools to address them. Some theorists suggest that researchers should not engage in the research process with preconceived ideas from the literature (Charmaz 2014). However, this was necessary to develop the research proposal and proved to be a valuable exercise; it illustrated that the concept of conviviality had been associated with Mediterranean populations with little empirical evidence to support this link. The initial literature review formed the framework of the research and a number of relevant points from this stage of the review were explored in Chapter One.

A narrative literature review was then carried out to critique and interpret the relevant body of knowledge (Greenhalgh et al. 2018, Hart 2018). This more extensive review was conducted after the process of data collection with a view to limiting the influence of theoretical ideas on the findings of the study (Dey 2004). At this stage I developed the concepts identified from the initial appraisal of the literature, as well as research that pertained to the emergent themes such as young people and children's agency. Early database searches revealed that the majority of the relevant empirical research papers were after 1980. There are a number of reasons why this may have been the case. In Spain, the academic landscape was heavily influenced by the ruling political dictatorship which governed until the late 1970s (Encarnación 2008) and in the UK, the emergence of the sociology of food as an academic subfield only began in the early 1980s (Murcott 1983). This knowledge was useful when selecting relevant papers and understanding the context in which they were published. However, date restrictions were not used to limit searches within the databases that were employed, as broader theoretical texts and relevant anthropological studies fell outside of this time frame.

The databases used in the literature search are listed in Appendix One together with a list of the search terms employed. The key themes arising from the review of literature are explored in the remainder of this chapter.

2.2 From commensality to conviviality

Eating together has gained sociological interest, particularly in its capacity to solidify social groups and reinforce cultural identities (Murcott 1983, Mennell et al. 1993, Beutler, Lai 1996, Mestdag 2004, Blake et al. 2008). Commensality is a widely used term in the literature and can be defined as the act of eating with other people (Sobal 2000) or in a more literal sense eating at the same table (Fischler 2011). Commensal dining encompasses any form of collective eating from a formal dinner, or festive gathering to an ordinary family meal (Sobal, Nelson 2003) and is, arguably, one of the most significant articulations of social activity (Kerner et al. 2015). Commensality shapes and underpins social relations (Bourdieu 1984) and commensal acts are continually reinforced through practice, symbolizing and strengthening social communities. Fischler (2011: 4) describes the most salient expression of the commensal meal being its 'daily social occurrence'.

Commensality in its many forms has been widely studied (Sobal, Nelson 2003, Fischler 2011, Brannen et al. 2013, Kerner et al. 2015). Although the terms commensality and conviviality are used interchangeably, the latter with its implicit notions of pleasure, has been given less attention in regards to food (Grignon 2001, Phull et al. 2015b)[2]. Conviviality takes a step beyond the act of eating together to the *enjoyment* of eating collectively. Theoretically, the pleasure of convivial dining goes beyond the hedonistic, sensory pleasure of eating, to a joy gained from sociability (Symons 1994, Simmel 1997, Sobal 2000). Simmel (1997) defines an idealistic model of mealtime conviviality where an individual's pleasure is contingent on the joy of others and interactions between those present are democratic, 'playful associations'. Such interactions require a group of interdependent individuals to associate with each other with no, single personality dominating (Symons 1994). By this definition, for meals to be convivial, those present are motivated by a collective desire for enjoyment. This is

[2] The cited paper by Phull, Wills et al. was published after conducting the preliminary literature review for this PhD.

consistent with the idea that conviviality is directly dependent on who eats together (Grignon 2001). For a meal to be convivial, a group needs to be willing to 'play by the rules' and be committed to the construction of an enjoyable eating event.

Grignon (2001) suggests conviviality is associated with the visible, positive ideals of shared eating, whereas commensality, although serving many positive functions, can often be a marker of hierarchy, inequality and social division. He suggests that the idealised images of convivial dining can mask the serious social implications of commensality. Eating together is the result and the manifestation of a pre-existing social group, which may discriminate or exclude certain individuals. The social functions of commensality include segregation and social division and eating events can serve to distinguish those we are intimate with to those who are distant or marginalised (Douglas 1972). The way we eat and whom we eat with are therefore symbolic of the way society divides itself through class, kinship, age or occupation, and may result in social exclusion for those not part of commensal circles. Fischler (2011) describes the gradient from intimate familiar, convivial occasions to etiquette-driven commensality. Meals at the formal end of the gradient can be manifestations of *symmetrical reciprocity*, a term used to describe the social exchange of goods, where a reciprocal event is expected. At the other end of the scale domestic, convivial meals can be examples of *generalised reciprocity*, an altruistic offering, where no immediate reciprocation is required (Peterson 1993).

There appears to be academic consensus that commensality does not necessarily generate conviviality (Grignon 2001, Fischler 2011, Wise, Velayutham 2014, Wise, Noble 2016) but beyond theoretical conjecture there is a paucity of research that demarcates the features of conviviality. Studies *have* alluded to aspects of conviviality through the examination of communal eating in adults (Danesi 2012, Yiengprugsawan et al. 2015, Giacoman 2016, Takeda 2016) and the material, spatial features and atmospheric features that foster convivial dining in communal food spaces (Marovelli 2019). However, there remains a lack of empirical research that examines how conviviality is conceptualised, constructed and experienced in a domestic mealtime setting. Additionally, although authors have emphasized that the characteristics of commensality change according to national contexts (Fischler, Masson 2008, Gately

et al. 2014, Poulain 2017) there is little known empirical analysis of this phenomenon, in particular how definitions and experiences of shared mealtime pleasure change in different cultural settings.

Whilst the study aims for participants to delineate their own nuanced experiences of pleasurable dining, a broad working definition of the term was drawn from the outset. Two characterising features of conviviality were outlined. Firstly, as suggested by Simmel (1997), conviviality is contingent on a group of interdependent individuals engaged in democratic associations and motivated to create collective enjoyment. Secondly, the study borrows from the idea that convivial dining evokes a sense of cohesion or 'becoming with' through the ritual order of meals (Wise, Velayutham 2014).

2.3 Conviviality and mealtime hierarchies

There are immediate obstacles to framing conviviality within the context of the family meal. Although domestic commensality encompasses some of the most basic forms of generalised reciprocity (Kerner et al. 2015), ethnographic research reveals varied expectations of the family meal in terms of inclusivity and hierarches of gender and age (Counihan, Van Esterik 2012). The hierarchal dimensions of the family meal may not correspond with the ideals of equality and sociability associated with convivial dining and this domestic reunion can be symbolic of power struggles and conflict (Hartmann 1981, Lupton 1994, Wilk 2010, Warde 2016). The extent to which participants fulfil their expectations to the group can influence whether mealtime harmony can truly be achieved (Aronsson, Gottzén 2011). Focusing on conviviality as a central tenet of the family meal imposes a specific ideology on individuals and may neglect the challenging aspects of mealtimes (Wilk 2010).

Seminal studies of domestic meals have revealed the power relations manifest in the act of feeding the family. Historically, familial harmony has been intrinsically linked to meeting male food preferences and expectations. In Charles & Kerr's study of *Women, Food and Families* (Charles, Kerr 1988), family communal dining events were shown to reproduce the structure of the patriarchal family, characterised by the authority of the father and the subordination of both the mother and children. The meal was

cooked by the mother, with all other family members present at the meal. Other research at the time painted a similar picture of family dining dynamics (Murcott 1982, DeVault 1994). Historically, husbands have had a potent role in family mealtime decision-making. (Charles, Kerr 1988, Mennell et al. 1993, DeVault 1994, Whitehead et al. 1995).

More current research has documented increased variability in power relations from family to family and suggests that in recent years children have assumed a more elevated status in mealtime events, exhibiting unprecedented influence over the construction of the family meal, particularly in terms of food choice (Dixon, Banwell 2004, O'Connell, Brannen 2014, O'Connell, Brannen 2016). In a study of children's food, power and negotiations, O'Connell & Brannen (2014) note considerable variation between families in terms of mealtime negotiations; their findings also indicated a fluidity to family structures, suggesting that mealtimes reflect the manner in which family relations are currently negotiated at everyday levels (Solberg 2015).

The concept of negotiated family structure (James et al. 2009a) as symbolised through the contemporary mealtime, suggests a more level playing field at the dinner table and therefore more opportunities for an equitable construction of the meal. However, there is still a strong suggestion that parent-child relations remain essentially hierarchal (Brannen et al. 1994, Jamieson 1998). Parental influence over the construction of family mealtimes may not simply be ideological but may be borne out of practical or budgetary needs and hierarchies may be necessary for the effective execution of regular meals (DeVault 1994, Wenrich et al. 2010, O'Connell, Brannen 2014). While individuals negotiate their place at the table, food providers may still be required to set the mealtime agenda and exert control over the event (Grieshaber 1997, Romani 2005). For some, meeting the basic needs of the family may take priority over pleasure and conviviality (DeVault 1994, Wills et al. 2011, Wills, O'Connell 2018).

2.4 Do families make mealtimes or do mealtimes make a family?

The promotion of mealtime ideologies encourages families to construct meals that meet a social agenda (Moisio et al. 2004, Bacon 2018). Yet a broader definition of family structures suggest that families are *created* through practices such as eating

together. These practices are an arena for the moulding of identities (Valentine 1999, Wills et al. 2008) as well as presenting opportunities for individuals to develop their agency and negotiate their generational position within the family unit (Curtis et al. 2010, Curtis et al. 2011).

De Vault (1994:31) makes a distinction between family as a lived reality and family as a social institution. The latter, she claims, is 'a construct rooted in discourse as much as immediate experience'. In a similar vein, Morgan (Morgan 1996, Morgan 2011) puts forward a definition of family constructed through everyday practices, the emphasis being on the action of 'doing family' (Morgan 2011) rather than the more passive idea of 'being' a family. Morgan asserts that families are best understood in terms of the rituals they adopt, the series of encounters that constitute family life. Families are increasingly conceptualised as fluid entities defined discursively through relationships of kinship work, exchange and domestic food provision (DeVault 1994, Backett-Milburn et al. 2010b, Julier 2012). These structures mean that the contours of family life may be blurred, allowing 'family' to be formed of any relationships that work effectively in a 'family-like way'. This dynamic approach demonstrates increased recognition of the complex, adaptable nature of family life.

However, the divide between the social institution and lived reality is not clear-cut. The notion of family as a singular experience, comprising a dual parent household with children, may be outmoded but it is still the fabric of popular discourses about mealtimes (Gibbs 2006, Cinotto 2006, Villares, Segovia 2006). Such discourses are perpetuated by dietary models, advertising and ideological portrayals, forming ideals, not only of how a mealtime should be constructed, but also what a family should look like. The iconic family meal reflects recognised norms and families may strive to create these ideals (Wilk 2010, Brannen et al. 2013). Mealtime ideologies are powerful symbols in the shaping of family life, dictating positions and to some degree, institutionalising the group (Kaufmann 2010). Ideas are embedded into the expectations of households and the degree to which notions such as conviviality are embraced may be dependent on cultural and social context.

Where Morgan (1996) suggests that family is defined by the act of doing, Finch (Finch 2007) adds to the conceptual analysis of family by introducing the notion of family displays. Finch underlines the essentially social nature of family practices and recognises that, as well as 'doing' family everyday practices must also be 'displayed' so they are understood by relevant others to constitute wider systems of meaning. Others have underlined the link between personal relations and social processes (Beck 1992, Giddens 2013). In this sense, families are not only defined by their practices but also by ideologies (Donovan et al. 2003). The family meal is an opportunity for the members of the group to display to each other and to observers that they 'do family' in a way that meets social expectations or transmits heritage and cultural meaning (Muir, Mason 2012). The concept of 'display' is important, as families do not stand-alone but are part of a cultural framework; how families conceptualise, experience and construct conviviality may be dependent on cultural context.

2.5 Food work, gender roles and the family meal

The issue of gender is central to the discussion of family meals both in terms of hierarchies and cultural context. Beyond the ideological construction of the meal are the practicalities of making mealtimes happen. Evidence indicates that the traditional ideas about female domesticity prevail and women are still deemed responsible for the nutritional welfare of their families and the execution of shared mealtimes (Short 2006, Szabo 2011). It has been suggested that the only significant change in the role of women as homemakers and food providers is one of ideologies; and that the subordinate status associated with activities such as food work has changed (Cairns, Johnston 2015).

There is, nonetheless, evidence that men are making more significant contributions to food work (Bove et al. 2003, O'Connell, Brannen 2016). Yet, as Short (2006) points out, men are rarely discussed as everyday domestic cooks who adopt the same nurturing roles as women. Instead they are either presented as inept helpers, hobby cooks or even amateur chefs. Studies from numerous countries demonstrate that, although men may be doing more in the kitchen, the responsibility for food labour is still very much in the female domain (Charles, Kerr 1988, Murcott 2000, Bugge, Almås 2006, Sydner et al. 2007, Warde et al. 2007, Bava et al. 2008, O'Connell, Brannen 2016). In

Spain a large-scale study revealed the significant health consequences of balancing paid work and domestic demands on the female population. The impact of domestic responsibility on men, on the other hand, appeared to be negligible (Artazcoz et al. 2004). In the UK, the issue of balancing paid and domestic labour has also been identified as a predominantly female concern (Cousins, Tang 2004, Lewis 2009). Expectations of male roles in the kitchen may be changing (Meah, Jackson 2013, Meah 2014) and men's contributions may be increasing, but gender ideologies persist and ultimately, cooking is still largely considered to be woman's work (Segal 2006).

The creation of mealtimes, then, is still largely dependent on women who also play a pivotal role in the transmission of food culture (Meah, Watson 2011, Bowen, Devine 2011, De Backer 2013, Knight et al. 2014). Being at the hub of mealtime creation may be synonymous with conviviality. There is evidence that women derive enjoyment from their role as family meal providers. Some women view the tasks involved in feeding their families as gratifying, creative parts of their work (Murcott, Gamarnikow 1983, Kaufmann 2010, Johnson et al. 2011, Beagan et al. 2014). Mealtime provision is still an important site for women to literally and metaphorically care for their children (O'Connell 2010, Knight et al. 2014) and express devotion to their whole family (Moisio et al. 2004). It appears that family food provision represents a complex part of many women's identity and is a significant aspect of the realization of an ideal family. However, the literature suggests that family dining is often rooted in a contradictory framework of pleasure and struggle (Julier 2012). As De Vault (1994) points out, the family itself can be a site of affection, care and respect but also an arena of social conflict where power relations are reproduced. In Spain, women are often presented as a collective, bound together by shared food knowledge and a need to nourish and care for others (Jones 1997, Medina 2005, UNESCO 2013). Yet as Short (2006:69) underlines, women may equally be a 'reluctant, recalcitrant' group of cooks. Many women see mealtimes as a struggle to meet competing needs. Families need to negotiate individual preferences, finances and expectations for variety and taste (Banwell et al. 2012).

There is very little available literature that explicitly explores the domestic experiences of women in Spain. Spanish feminist literature examining the post-dictatorship role of

women in the food system has focused on agriculture and economic issues rather than the position of women as food providers in a domestic setting (Rey Torrijos 2013, Iniesta-Arandia et al. 2014). Cultural idealism regarding food provision and traditional ways of eating and cooking are still rooted in the ideals of the 1950's and 1960's (Vernaglione 2009, Morin 2010, UNESCO 2013), a time when the ruling dictatorship, promoted the role of women as sovereigns of the kitchen. However, it was only after the introduction of democracy in 1975 that women were allowed in the public sphere of life. So, in Spain, the conditions that facilitated traditional food provision were restrictive for women to say the least (Enders, Radcliff 1999). In more recent years, significant numbers of women have left the domestic realm, entered the labour force and dual income households have been commonplace (Jones 1997, Manrique, Jensen 1998, Enders, Radcliff 1999, Garci´a-Ramo´,Maria Dolors et al. 2003) yet this has not had a significant impact on the division of domestic labour (Artazcoz et al. 2004). This is unsurprising given that even in the UK where women's participation in the paid labour force has been more significant and for a longer period in history (Buckley et al. 2005), this not been mirrored with a parallel shift in the gender distribution of food work (Kan, Gershuny 2010, Kan et al. 2011).

Moreover, the absence of women in the home has been associated with detrimental consequences on the health and wellbeing of the family (Cinotto 2006, Burgess-Champoux et al. 2009). Studies across Europe have linked women's working hours with the nutritional status of their children (Hawkins et al. 2008) and the dissolution of the family meal (CIDIL 1998, Mestdag 2004, Campisi 2013). Critics in the UK have highlighted that such hegemonic discourses incriminate mothers for negative dietary outcomes (Garey, Arendell 2001, Henderson et al. 2016), but in Spain, anthropological and popular literature continues to celebrate the role of women as transmitters of cultural heritage through the execution of family meals, and there is no suggestion that this role represents any sort of mythologised past (Xavier Medina 2009, Baldini et al. 2009, Ciezadilo 2011).

There is little doubt that food provision is associated with female domesticity and women's roles are intricately linked with family cohesion. Yet in Spain, due to the absence of research that explores the genuine experiences of food provision, there

remain questions about the experiences of those who construct conviviality. Evidence from the UK and elsewhere suggests that the role of food provider elicits mixed feelings, some of which are not necessarily consistent with the idealistic notions of convivial dining.

2.6 Children and young people's agency in the family mealtime

Pivotal to the discussion of mealtime hierarchies, is the role of children and young people. Theoretical perspectives on childhood have led to novel understandings of childhood which question traditional assumptions of children's dependency, recognising them as social individuals in their own right (Christensen, Prout 2002, James, Prout 2015). For a number of contemporary theorists the understanding of children and childhood is generational and rests on child-adult relationships from which children construct their own social lives and continuously negotiate and define their position (Alanen, Mayall 2001, Qvortrup et al. 2009). Central to this paradigm is the idea of children as social actors, with their own subjective experiences.

This view of childhood provides a useful perspective for the analysis of hierarchies and children's roles within the shared mealtimes. Historically, research has given limited consideration to children as autonomous participants in everyday practices such as mealtimes (Qvortrup et al. 2009). There has been a tendency to view young people as 'objects' of an experience, particularly in research that highlights the benefits of family meals. Young people are often considered either as recipients of these benefits (Fiese et al. 2006, Utter et al. 2017, Bacon 2018) or as vulnerable to detrimental consequences when optimum mealtime conditions are not provided (Birch, Davison 2001, Villares, Segovia 2006, Gonzalez Jimenez et al. 2012, Christian et al. 2013, Elgar et al. 2013). Critics have highlighted the issues with hegemonic discourses that regard children as individuals to be acted upon, reflecting a simplistic understanding of the complexities of childhood, family and the mealtime experience (James et al. 2009a, O'Connell, Brannen 2014).

Growing recognition of children's agency has led to widening methodological discussion and novel approaches in empirical research (Punch 2002, Kellett 2003) driving inquiry that uses young people's experiences as a means of foregrounding their

agency (Christensen, James 2008, James et al. 2009b). In terms of mealtimes, children are increasingly portrayed as participants rather than recipients of family meals (Grieshaber 1997, James et al. 2009a, Wilk 2010). For the most part, young people's agency at mealtimes is explored through negotiations over food where younger children may assert their choice (O'Connell, Brannen 2014) and older children proclaim their autonomy (Olsen, Ruiz 2008, Backett-Milburn et al. 2010b). Beyond the discussion of food, mealtimes are sites for the construction of identities (Valentine 1999, Kaufmann 2010) and research has begun to explore how young people contribute to the social construction of the family meal (Ochs, Shohet 2006, Curtis et al. 2011). Such studies have questioned the unidirectional approach to mealtimes, which emphasise parental responsibility and control over children's eating, suggesting that children may take on different roles at the dinner table. Through the processes of socialisation, children may adopt a variety of generational positions from the irresponsible child to guardians of food morality (Ochs, Shohet 2006, Aronsson, Gottzén 2011).

Yet children's agency is often framed in terms of struggles, reflecting how children are standing their ground in negotiations of power within the family (Grieshaber 1997, Kaufmann 2010, O'Connell, Brannen 2014). What is less explicitly explored, is whether this flattening of hierarchal structures might positively contribute to the mealtime experience and if children might be key players in the construction of convivial meals. The egalitarian ideals of conviviality are compatible with those of a less pronounced hierarchal structure within the family unit. Conviviality suggests that all participants take ownership in a meal and are complicit in the process of creating an amicable event (Grignon 2001). Whether this is idealism or a feasible reality is difficult to decipher from the existing literature.

Of course, in practical terms it is adults that make mealtimes happen especially when children are young (Blake et al. 2008). Older children may make contributions to mealtimes through domestic food preparation (Brannen 1995, Short 2006), yet a more significant influence appears to be their impact on food providers. The arrival of children into a household has been shown to significantly change eating habits more than any other factor, revised eating scenarios often reflect memories of the adults'

childhood mealtime practices (Warde, Hetherington 1994). Research from both the UK and Spain suggests that adult food providers may use the family mealtime as an opportunity to transmit family traditions and cultural heritage to their children, often attempting to recreate their own childhood meals (Méndez 2006, Knight et al. 2014). Bourdieu conceptualises this idea of intergenerational transmission through his ideas on habitus (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 2018b), a cultural blueprint that is transmitted from early childhood onwards.

Intergenerational transmission relates to the manner in which children are changed by the social world they live in, whereas the increasing recognition of children with autonomous conceptual status suggests that children might change the social world they inhabit (Eder, Corsaro 1999, Christensen, James 2008). Children's agency can actively shape their cultural framework in the home and this may be influenced by their position in other social arenas. For example, it has been suggested that the growing freedom and power afforded to children within the family home (as reflected in their mealtime status) is a way of compensating for greater parental control and surveillance outside of the home environment (Zeiher 2001). Children are less often 'out of sight' of adults which reduces opportunities for forming an autonomous identity (Valentine, McKendrck 1997, Valentine 1999). This may affect them in different ways. Alanen (Alanen 2002) differentiates between two types of children; those who self-identify with 'family' and home as central to their lives and therefore make positive associations with practices that reinforce 'childness'. Other children draw more associations with their peers and external institutions both to meet their needs and as a means of self-identification. The latter group may be more likely to challenge any imposed ideals of family dining. Experience of food and mealtimes are not necessarily passed down in a linear fashion (Meah, Watson 2011) and young people may impose their own ideals on cultural frameworks.

2.7 Theoretical framework of the study

In order to understand whether conviviality can be embraced as an ideal it is necessary to explore if this way of eating is accessible to all sectors of society. In the UK, large scale studies have revealed associations between health, nutrition and social position (Rennie, Jebb 2005, Marmot 2005, Zaninotto et al. 2009) and a similar pattern has

been noted in Spain (Bonaccio et al. 2012a). Qualitative research shows that families of lower socio-economic status experience particular constraints in family food practices (Backett-Milburn et al. 2010b). De Vault (2014) suggests that commensal meals have different meanings according to the socio-cultural status of the families. For families in higher social positions, eating together may be an opportunity for pleasure and self-expression, very much in line with the premise of conviviality, but those with less socio-economic standing, meals may be perceived as a simple necessity. In this light, does socio-economic status put constraints on conviviality?

The role of social class in food consumption has given rise to a number of sociological theories, one of the most developed being the idea of *Distinction*, proposed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In his studies of 1970's France, Bourdieu maintained that food consumption was an expression of class position and that eating behaviours were imbued with social meaning. The practice of eating particular foods in specific ways is a reflection of class formation and more importantly of class reproduction. In this respect food and 'taste' can be seen as cultural capital (value attached to culturally authorised tastes often more accessible to higher social classes). However, the everyday practices of eating are driven not by conscious decision-making or free choice but as a result of habitus, a way of engaging in practice that is 'internalised and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices' (Bourdieu 1984 p. 170). In other words people develop an automatic, unconscious capacity to act in a way that is meaningful in their social context and with the cultural capital that they possess (Bourdieu 2018b). Individuals see the world according to their social position prescribed in early life (Bourdieu 1990b). The unified habitus of different social classes is coherent with specific lifestyle practices that are transmitted (via the habitus) from one generation to the next. Bourdieu identifies a hierarchy of practices in which the dominant classes express distinction through exclusive patterns of cultural activity, including eating. The way people eat is therefore embodied through values, which are learnt through repeated observations.

Although the work of Bourdieu was based on a particular historical time point, his theory of social reproduction would suggest the patterns of distinction are continually present and being reproduced. Yet critics have argued that theories of social

distinction through food may be exclusively applicable to France, where, historically, the conventions of gastronomic cuisine were an obvious means of distinguishing the dominant classes (Ferguson 1998, Trubek 2000). Contemporary studies of consumption present a shift away from social distinction and normative food behaviours and a move towards individualised eating patterns (Poulain 2017). French sociologist Fischler, expressed this phenomenon through the concept of gastro-anomie (Fischler 1980), the idea that a decline in commensal eating patterns has led to an increase in eating outside of any established boundaries. This concept of gastro-anomie may be particularly evident in France, which has a strong gastronomic tradition marked with formalized norms of eating. Yet academics have also postulated that patterns of individualisation noted in France may also be relevant to the Spanish population (Méndez 2006). However, this has not been empirically tested and to date, there is an absence of sociological research exploring eating experiences in Spain (Díaz-Méndez, García-Espejo 2014, Díaz-Méndez 2016).

Some critics have asserted that the picture of de-structuration and individualisation of eating, underestimates the role of prevailing social divisions in eating habits, (Darmon, Warde 2014). Although the boundaries of eating practices may be less well defined, there remains evidence of social distinction in food consumption practices (Johnston, Baumann 2007). Individual consumerism does not necessarily reflect changes in ideology or status but may exhibit the logistical challenges of commensality in contemporary societies. Increasing numbers of Europeans live alone and so solitary dining is their only option (Méndez 2014, Tani et al. 2015). It may also be the case that in contemporary societies with multiple, organised ways of eating, social differentiation is more complex to decipher.

Nonetheless, a body of empirical evidence (including studies from the UK) suggests Bourdieu's theories of habitus and distinction are still a useful framework of analysis for eating practices in a range of socio-cultural settings (Martens 1997, Meinert 2004, Bava et al. 2008, Wills et al. 2011, Skuland 2015, de Morais Sato et al. 2016, Oncini, Guetto 2017). In Spain, although there has been no application of Bourdieu's theoretical framework to eating practices, his theories have been examined in regard

to social distinction in other spheres of social life (García 2002, Alonso et al. 2004, Langa Rosado, David 2006).

2.8 Habitus and critical reflection

Bourdieu's social theories have been subject to criticism for underplaying the role of critical reflection (Archer 2010), individual choice and conscious decision-making (Jenkins 2014), therefore limiting the possibilities for human agency (Williams 2003) or social change (King 2000). In some respects, Bourdieu echoes the ideas of German philosopher Habermas, who describes normatively regulated social action (Habermas 1994, Barry et al. 2001, Kemmis 2001, Bourdieu 2018b) or acting in accordance with the norms of a particular society. Habermas employs the term *lifeworld* to convey the domain in which society reproduces itself through everyday practices. However, Bourdieu puts greater emphasis on the unconscious logic of these behaviours, the fact that social actors act according to an inherent knowing without cognitive intent (Bourdieu 1990b, Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992). The idea of habitus is also reflected in the work of Giddens (Giddens 1984:189) who states that much of daily life is carried out 'unthinkingly and routinely'. Yet again Giddens puts greater emphasis on the idea of reflexivity, a dual process by which individuals in society are affected by their social conditions, but also able to change them in the light of new information. According to Archer (2010) reflexivity is an emergent power that humans possess to scrutinize themselves through internal conversations. She concedes that there are social influences that constrain our behaviours but rejects Bourdieu's idea that social position determines behaviour and believes that behaviours can develop very differently with individuals from the same social background (Archer 2003, Archer 2010). Equally, it has been argued that Bourdieu sees all action as social action and does not account for other elements of human behaviour (Elder-Vass 2007).

The tensions between habitus and reflexivity are critical in the examination of conviviality in this study. If we interpret the ideas of *habitus* in the most literal sense, social change would be impossible. Certainly, various critics have maintained that Bourdieu's theories favour continuity over change (King 2000, Archer 2010). Also, in the absence of reflexive control, promoting conviviality or any cultural ideal would be futile for certain sectors of the population; individuals would be limited by the

boundaries of their habitus, and would be unable to act beyond this. In this sense, if conviviality were a uniquely Mediterranean disposition, then trying to promote this ideal outside of the cultural context would be of no use. Of course, this is a rigid interpretation of the idea. Bourdieu does not, in fact, rule out the idea of conscious deliberation as a means of social action; rather, he views this kind of rational decision-making as constrained by the influence of habitus. In other words, if there is any kind of disruption between the habitus and the *field* (the site of cultural practice) rational choice may take over (Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992, Warde 2005, Elder-Vass 2007).

Bourdieu recognises that the habitus is not a static disposition but may change in different *fields* or cultural sites (i.e. when displaying different social roles such as employee, parent or student). These roles may also provide moments of conflict. As Bava et al. (2008) suggest, for a busy working woman, making a home-made casserole for the family may be compatible with her habitus and her cultural ideals about family meals but incompatible with time constraints, actual food provisioning practices then may compromise the habitus. Over the long-term then, conflicts in the *field* may alter the habitus. In this way the execution and experience of a family meal may change and an altered habitus may emerge. Although the theoretical framework suggests our dispositions are long-lasting, it also concedes they may be changed through intention and using pedagogic devices (Hillier, Rooksby 2005). Populations could, over time, construct a certain type of family meal because it fits with their social expectations (Blake et al. 2008) and these expectations could theoretically be influenced by a model of convivial dining that becomes a dominant discourse in society.

Perhaps a more appropriate way of looking at Bourdieu's theory is not by ruling out the idea of change but by accepting that there is a close relationship between social positions and human dispositions (Bourdieu 1984). Social position unconsciously influences lifestyles, which have symbolic value (Williams 1995, Shilling 2012). If we apply Bourdieu's theories to contemporary health and diet theory, there is certainly evidence that his ideas may be relevant. Prominent research in the UK suggests that social position dictates health behaviours (Marmot 2005). Although this is often explained through factors such as economics and access to food, values attached to body image and body weight may be linked to social class and expressed through

mundane everyday behaviours that form the habitus (Fallon 1990, Williams 1995, Pocock et al. 2010, Smith, Holm 2010, Shilling 2012). In a similar vein, socially-driven ideas about sociability, family and food may impact the ability to construct convivial mealtimes.

2.9 Bourdieu: Conviviality and social class

In Bourdieu's study of French eating habits, conviviality was associated with the industrial working classes who, according to Bourdieu (1984), exhibited an ethic of convivial indulgence. Bourdieu associates conviviality with being in the present, which is affirmed in a readiness to take advantage of the good times, an affirmation of solidarity with others (Wood 1995). In this sense the working classes approached food in a less ritualistic way than the bourgeoisie who adopted sophisticated codes of behaviour as a means of distinction. So, while instant gratification and abundant dishes were the norm for the working classes, restraint and sobriety 'for the sake of slimness' was a behaviour exercised by the dominant classes (Bourdieu 1984, Wood 1995). Bourdieu (1984) uses the term 'bodily hexis' to convey the idea that taste is literally manifested in the body, in ways of eating, drinking, gestures, manners and ways of sitting. While the foods and table manners adopted by the working classes were perceived as vulgar, the ritualised behaviour of the dominant classes was viewed as pretentious. If we refer to Fischer's concept of convivial meals as being intimate, informal gatherings rather than etiquette driven occasions (Fischler 2011), conviviality was in the domain of the working classes.

In contemporary societies there appears to be have been a shift in this pattern and conviviality no longer seems to be the preserve of this social group. Studies still reflect the idea that working class families prioritize functionality over aesthetics (Calnan, Cant 1990, Wills et al. 2011) but pleasure or the 'living for the moment' is not implicit in this. Poorer families are often perceived as lacking the economic means and time to even contemplate the luxury of pleasure, viewing mealtimes as a simple necessity (DeVault 1994, Bugge, Almås 2006).

While pleasure and conviviality were associated with immediate gratification for the French working classes, enjoyable dining now appears to affirm a dominant social

position. There is evidence that, over the last 30 years, new discourses on food are emerging in the UK. The idea of pleasure in mealtimes is part of this phenomenon with the promotion of cookbooks, speciality food and wine magazines and TV cooking shows. For previous generations food was viewed more pragmatically, focusing on cost and satiety, but increased economic freedom has allowed for greater focus on the taste and enjoyment of food (Adema 2000, Sassatelli, Davolio 2010, Banwell et al. 2012). The emergent focus on the pleasures of food has been examined extensively in regard to eating out (Warde, Martens 2000). In his study on the subject, Warde (1992) describes the hazy distinction between satisfaction and pleasure, the latter being associated with consumption of food outside the home. The ideal of pleasurable eating appears to be increasingly linked to economic liberty and class aspirations (Bava et al. 2008, Banwell et al. 2012). Wealthier families may act according to their habitus through their choice of foods. Discourses surrounding the enjoyment of exotic or cosmopolitan foods may be based on social distinction (Beagan et al. 2014).

2.10 Bourdieu and families

For Bourdieu the interest in family lies in its role as a reproductive mechanism, which facilitates the perpetuation of social inequalities (Bourdieu 1984). The notion of family can be conceptualized in various ways within Bourdieu's theoretical models. It is integral to the habitus as a site for the socialisation process that occurs in childhood; family may be a source of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 2011), or can be seen as a *field*, a setting where agents are located according to their social position. Family as a *field* has its own set of specific rules and regulations of which individuals have an innate understanding (Bourdieu 1990b, Jenkins 2014). The family meal can be analysed within these theoretical contexts.

In many ways Bourdieu's concept of family is not dissimilar to the dynamic relational concept of family already highlighted in this discussion. Yet for Bourdieu family is theorised beyond the result of everyday interactions and domestic practices such as mealtimes; family functions as a *field* like any other where members are competing for resources and symbolic power (Bourdieu 1977). This standpoint challenges instinctive assumptions that view family as being part of a socially protected private sphere of existence where the solidarity and emotional closeness of the members act

as a counterweight to the aggressive environment of public life. Viewing family as a site of competition and struggle contradicts most conventional thinking and certainly goes against ideas of an idealised family unit (Büchner, Brake 2006).

For Bourdieu, family is a social invention or category, which through the processes of social reproduction, we have come to view as natural. The social endurance of family is, for Bourdieu, the result of the symbolic power that a being part of a cohesive family offers. Families engage in both practical and symbolic activities within family units (the family meal being a prime example) and with other agents within the *field* of family. Through this work they generate dispositions that engender devotion to family and these dispositions are reproduced via the habitus (Bourdieu 1998).

What constitutes a family is representative of power relations in society; it is those in positions of privilege who define what family is and have this definition legitimised. The social construction of family may depend on cultural, economic and social capital, which, are not accessible, or affordable to all members of society. Yet these symbolic institutions of family life together with the accepted definition of family are susceptible to change. The nuclear family for example, a widely accepted social prescription for family in many societies, is a result of struggles and negotiations within the *field* of family. Most importantly, whatever the current, legitimate form of family may be, it will always have symbolic power ascribed to it.

2.11 Bourdieu and childhood

Bourdieu does not give explicit attention to the sociology of childhood in his most prominent works. In his work on distinction, the importance of childhood lies mostly in the manner in which the social world is internalised from a young age in order to guide a specific trajectory into adulthood. Early childhood is important for the acquisition of dispositions, but the primary focus for Bourdieu is on *how* those dispositions are transmitted and reproduced in future generations and the social divisions they perpetuate. In a superficial sense, children are viewed as vehicles for social reproduction (Bourdieu 1984), which is contrary to contemporary scholarship on the sociology of childhood.

However Bourdieu's broader understanding of our social worlds is more consistent with recent understandings of childhood (Alanen et al. 2015). For Bourdieu social reality lies within processes and relations rather than static characteristics or substances. Relations within and between social spaces or *fields* take precedence over structures or entities (Christensen, Prout 2002). This relational view of the social world fits with the notion of generational order; childhood is a particular social status that can only be understood in relation to adulthood. Bourdieu's relationist epistemology is congruent with the approach to childhood taken by a number of contemporary theorists. The study of childhood is a study of relationships and the generational structuring of everyday experience (Prout, James 2003, Alanen et al. 2015, Solberg 2015).

Bourdieu elucidates the wider implications of these experiences through his exploration of *field*, proposing that individuals are constantly navigating their social position through everyday negotiations in marked social spaces (Jenkins 2014, Alanen et al. 2015). This is particularly pertinent for children whose interactions with adults either affirm or challenge their social status. Children, like adults, inhabit different *fields* or social spaces, such as education or family, all positioned within a wider hierarchal dimension. Bourdieu does not distinguish experiences of family life as separate to those in other spheres of social life, so activities such as mealtimes may be viewed as sites for acquiring resources that guide their social position. Children who '*have a feel for the game'* of family dining may transfer this innate knowledge into other *fields*. The earliest life experiences in the *field* of family may reinforce and legitimise social positions, power and dominance in wider social domains. Bourdieu's theoretical framework bridges the concept of family and childhood as a lived reality on a micro-scale, with the implications of family on a wider societal level, as an institution or way of structuring society (Bourdieu 1990b, Bourdieu 2018b). It supports a relational approach to childhood, to family and the concept of childhood as a generational concept.

2.12 Cross cultural comparison & experiences of conviviality

This study will compare experiences of conviviality in Spain and the UK. A number of social scientists believe that there is a clear cultural divide in experiences of shared

eating; sociability and food between northern and southern Europe (Fischler 1996, Medina 2004, Medina 2005, Coveney 2006). This cultural difference in eating behaviours is perceived to be religious as opposed to geographic and draws a clear divide between Catholic and Protestant nations, the former favouring ideological worship and the latter focusing on personal responsibility for oneself. Coveney (2006) describes the role of Protestantism in facilitating the emergence of nutrition. Historically, Catholic countries possess an aesthetic that promotes extravagance and ostentation whereas protestant pedagogy subsumes pleasure to knowledge and self-development, seeing the visceral enjoyment of eating as detraction from spirituality (Fischler 1996, Coveney 2006). This relatively abstract ideal is supported by recent empirical evidence comparing experiences of food in the UK and Northern Europe with the Mediterranean. Studies on food choice indicate that individuals in Spain and Italy give greater importance to sociability, cooking and enjoying food with others, whereas those in the UK prioritize convenience, choice and health (Pettinger et al. 2004, Pettinger et al. 2006, Rozin et al. 2006, Gately et al. 2014). Across Europe, individuals believe that health and convenience are barriers to traditional food consumption (Pieniak et al. 2009).

However, there are several issues with acquiescing to this perceived cultural divide. Comparative research has been criticized for decontextualizing social practices or customs that are considered to be advantageous or challenging from a health perspective (Darmon, Warde 2014). Cross-national comparisons in particular may obscure the diversity and depth of experience in specific settings. This is particularly true of comparative studies in food and health as diverse dietary behaviours have come under increasing scrutiny (Januszewska et al. 2011, Rozin et al. 2011). Such studies also risk objectifying particular characteristics of a group without considering variety within populations or the temporal dimensions of behaviours. Social science may claim to take a broader view, by examining the meaning of eating practices within a framework of social organisation, however research may still be guided by an interest in what Darmon & Warde (2014:1) term the *dichotomy of divergence and convergence,* failing to account for changes over time and internal differentiation. Anthropological studies, in particular, have been criticized for implementing

asymmetric perspectives of culture (Stam, Shohat 2009), leading to debate over the preconceptions of social realities in this type of research (Trask 1991, Kuwayama 2004).

Central to the integrity of this study, therefore, is ensuring that the study takes a critical approach to the concept of comparison. This study aims to stretch the boundaries of conviviality based on a framework of comparison, which focuses on the trajectory of a concept in different temporal or contextual locations (Harvey 2014). In this case the concept is conviviality, which is examined in two distinct cultural settings; the research recognises the importance of structural conditions in each nation but focuses on the lived experiences of participants at a micro-level, focusing on relationships, patterns and developments. It aims to deconstruct the experience of conviviality through the analysis of experience, not with an immediate view to making cultural generalisations, but with the aim of broadening the idea of a concept in a manner that may be useful for wider populations in social science endeavour and possibly, public health developments.

2.13 Summary

The introduction and literature review have drawn attention to a number of gaps in the current knowledge base. Firstly, the paucity of empirical literature examining definitions and experience of convivial dining, particularly in a domestic setting. The study addresses this gap by examining how factors such as the hierarchal dimensions of mealtimes, gendered experiences of food work and the agency of children, influence mealtime pleasure. Secondly, the review has highlighted the relative absence of research studies exploring the elusive notion of convivial dining in the Mediterranean, where circulating discourses suggest that families enjoy a unique attachment to pleasure and food. The study will therefore consider this opening in the literature by exploring and comparing the concept of domestic conviviality in a Mediterranean and a non-Mediterranean country.

Chapter Three: Methodology and research methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections; the first section explores the methodology of the study, outlining theoretical and philosophical assumptions and how these relate to the research aim. The second section will provide more detail on the specific research methods used to address the aim and objectives.

SECTION ONE: METHODOLOGY

3.2. Research approach

This study was conducted to address a current gap in the sociological literature on conviviality and family meals in two cultural settings (Phull et al. 2015b). In line with the research aim and objectives, the methodological approach needed to allow all family members, including children, to share their accounts of mealtimes, whilst also providing the researcher with insight into their everyday practices. It was important to observe, understand and explore routine behaviours, yet also create opportunities for participants to tell their stories (Wills et al. 2016) and articulate the way they experience the mealtimes they construct. The aim was to explore both the discursive and the tacit aspects of mealtime practices (Reckwitz 2002) and possibly the differences between them. Fundamental to the methodological approach, was taking a step back from familiar, preconceived cultural associations regarding conviviality, family and mealtimes and - by reconsidering familiar associations with these concepts - make a meaningful contribution to the sociology of food (Mannay 2010).

A qualitative ethnographic methodology was deemed most appropriate to meet the aim and objectives of the study, due to its focus on shared cultural practices (Morse, Field 1995), the routine features of life (Silverman 2013) and the centrality of taken-for-granted aspects of behaviour (Fetterman 2009, Barbour 2010). An ethnographic approach (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007) supports the exploration of individual and collective practices in everyday social contexts through immersion in the field (Ritchie et al. 2013, Savin-Baden, Major 2013). In this case the 'everyday context' was the domestic mealtime, a practice recognised for its daily social occurrence (Fischler 2011).

The habitual nature of mealtimes carries its own set of methodological challenges. The tacit, mundane routines associated with food and eating are embedded in every day social processes, making them challenging to access (O'Connell 2013, Wills et al. 2016). The study draws on the idea of *practical logic* (Bourdieu 1990b), the idea that our way of being is not under conscious control. In research terms this highlights the difficulty for participants to explain the mundane aspects of *what* they do and for observers to extrapolate *why* they do it. Through a range of methods, ethnography offers an opportunity to discern the unspoken logic of everyday practice (Harker et al. 2016) but also engage in discourse on habituated routines. An ethnographic approach, allowed me, both to render the familiar unfamiliar (Mannay 2010, Linderson 2010) and the tacit, explicit (Stadler 2013).

3.3 Research methodology and theoretical framework

Acknowledging theoretical and philosophical assumptions is a fundamental starting point for research (Creswell 2009). The theoretical framework of this research is inextricably linked to the methodological approach, in particular the concepts of habitus, capital and theories of practice (Bourdieu 1990b, Bourdieu 2011, Bourdieu 2018b). Ethnographic inquiry is inseparable from the theoretical underpinnings of this study in two fundamental ways. Firstly, Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus derived *from* and are perpetuated *by* ethnographic research. Bourdieu's own prominent theories on social distinction (Bourdieu 1984) and the logic of practice (Bourdieu 1990b) were based on ethnographic inquiry. These theoretical innovations were driven by questions that arose in ethnographic fieldwork and led Bourdieu to move away from structuralist paradigms (Wacquant 2004). Ethnography, for Bourdieu, acted as a buttress for novel sociological perspectives (Mahar et al. 1990).

Secondly, these theoretical concepts invite ethnographic study, through the tacit nature of social dispositions they describe (Dant 2004). The individual and collective practices that shape and form the habitus, for example, are so deep-seated that they cannot be easily articulated and are only apparent through careful examination (Webb et al. 2002, Sweetman 2009, Barta 2017). Through its emphasis on observation (Atkinson 2001, Hammersley, Atkinson 2007), ethnography can help reveal how dispositions lead individuals to become 'themselves' and how this, in turn, impacts on

the way they engage in practice. Wills et al. (2016) emphasize how research focus on *practices* in ethnographic studies can help disentangle the complex interplay of people, context and structures within everyday events. For Bourdieu, practice signifies a complex interplay of habitus, capital and *field* (Brubaker 1993, Bourdieu 2018a) and in this study, these concepts acted as a backdrop for the ethnographic approaches employed (Webb et al. 2002, Wacquant 2004, Meinert 2004).

3.4 Ethnography as epistemology

For the purposes of this study, ethnography moves beyond a descriptive, methodological tool to an epistemological standpoint (Aamodt 1991, Becker 1996), with concepts such as habitus at its core (Blommaert 2005). At the level of practice, habitus can be considered a site for the construction of subjective knowledge that, when contextualised, is valid for building theory (Brubaker 1993). In this sense habitus manifests an aspect of 'structure' within an individual's agency, a window into the way institutional structures are converted into embodied routines (Blommaert 2005). Everyday practices related to mealtimes are possible junctures where patterns of inequality are present and social knowledge is constructed. The exploration of habitus provides some insight into the way objective structures and institutions may orientate social practices. Habitual behaviours observed through ethnographic study can provide a lens into normative practices in society (Lofland 1995, Blommaert 2005).

Other approaches might have been considered useful for this study. Namely, the study aim and objectives could be more closely aligned with a constructivist approach. The concern with how individuals construct and attribute meaning to concepts such as conviviality and family is in line with the philosophical tenets of constructivism (Bryant, Charmaz 2007, Creswell 2009). Epistemologically, constructivism views knowledge as a collaborative creation between researcher and participants and puts great emphasis on reflexivity, which is in line with the aim and objectives of the study (Guzzini 2000, Berg, Lune 2012).

However, while many of these features are consistent with this research, an ethnographic approach was deemed more fitting. Firstly ethnography, better addresses the research emphasis on the taken-for-granted aspects of practice

(Barbour 2010) as opposed to a constructivist slant towards interaction or discourse (Silverman 2013). Secondly, although Bourdieu's post-structuralist standpoint may be in line with constructivist theory (Guzzini 2000), the theoretical framework of the study, only proposes a partial theory of agency (Lau 2004). In fact, the study's focus on everyday practice takes a step towards bridging the structure-agency dichotomy (King 2000). Through focus on collective social practices, Bourdieu's ethnographic approach (and that of this study) downplays the emphasis of individual agency (Sewell Jr 1992) but at the same time, by using experiences and beliefs as a starting point for analysis, it does not over-accentuate the role of social structure (Jenkins 2014). This approach has occasionally been termed *constructivist structuralism* (Gouanvic 2014), which underlines the emphasis on the individual construction of meaning but also the objective structures that unconsciously direct social practice (Mahar et al. 1990).

3.5 Reflexivity

Bourdieu's work may be seen as a prelude to the reflexive shift in ethnographic work (Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992, Foley 2002, Blommaert 2005). Both the application of ethnographic data to wider society and interdependence of theory and methodology are characteristic of what are interchangeably termed critical ethnography and reflexive sociology (Thomas 1993, Madison 2011). Sociological reflexivity, however, has come under some criticism for holding hegemonic value but no coherent, agreed meaning (Lynch 2000, Atkinson et al. 2001, Archer 2009). Bourdieu's account of reflexivity, in particular, has been criticised for providing an epistemological stance in which the focus is skewed towards the author's relation to knowledge rather than the participant's (McNay 1999, Maton 2003). This highlights wider criticisms of theory emerging from ethnographic inquiry (Savin-Baden, Major 2013), in particular the legitimacy of knowledge constructed through the worldview of the researcher (Clifford, Marcus 1986) or the ability of ethnographers, to produce a valid picture of the individuals they are researching (Geertz 1988).

Given then, the contentious nature of reflexivity, I will outline how I approach the concept in this study. Reflexivity is firstly addressed through personal recognition that by actively participating in the research I have an impact on the objects being studied (Coffey 1999). Secondly, that the *field*, in turn, has an effect on myself as a researcher

(Pellatt 2003) and finally that the object of study is perceived through an interpretative lens that reflects my own theoretical perspective and socio-cultural position (Hammersley 2018b). An important point in this regard is awareness of my *academic habitus*, which not only impacts my way of organising the world (Sweetman 2009) but also drives me to maximise my potential or capital in the academic *field* (Maton 2003). The study is constructed, therefore, with an underlying recognition that researchers make sense of the participants' reality (Hogan, Pink 2012) and therefore it does not claim to represent participants (Geertz 1988), but to co-create knowledge about practices, based in part on my own experience.

Beyond *individualistic* reflexivity (Maton 2003), the study also encourages reflexivity in the participants. Sweetman (2009) discusses the concept of a reflexive habitus; the result of a series of cultural, social and economic shifts that have increased the demand for reflexivity in numerous spheres of social life (Mouzelis 2008). As such, conflicts in the *field* may result in the foregrounding of pre-reflexive dispositions (Crossley 2001). The research process itself may instigate a reflexive habitus through examination of ritual practices (Bourdieu 1990a, Sweetman 2003); a phenomena Bourdieu terms socio-analysis (Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992, Wacquant 2011). In terms of this study therefore, it is important that ideas of habitus are described and framed in a specific context with an understanding that there is potential for change. The idea of 'framing' supposes the construction of potentially subjective but historically *contextualized* social meaning and allows for exploration of how collective dispositions may be manifest in particular socio-cultural and historical settings (Blommaert 2005). Although this reflexive approach does not ensure accurate self-representation or exclude subjectivity, it *does* widen the possibilities for participants to express their voice (Koch, Harrington 1998, Blommaert 2005) and possibly reconfigure their own perceptions of practice (Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992).

3.6 Ethnographic approach: Features and application

The table below illustrates how the features of the ethnographic approach were compatible with the research conducted in this study. It summarizes a number of the features outlined in the preceding sections and links them directly to the processes of

this research. It bridges the methodology with methods, which will be explored in the following section.

Table 3.1 Ethnographic Methods: Features and Application

Contemporary Ethnographic Study	This Study
Focus on everyday life in a natural context. (Savin-Baden, Major 2013).	Study examined mealtimes in private homes, an everyday ritual.
Engagement in the setting for an extended period of time, understanding limitations within the remit of a particular study (Silverman 2013).	Fieldwork took place over a 6-month period in each country. In Spain this involved two three-week visits and two one-week visits and in the UK one three week and three two-week visits to the cities.
Immersion of the researcher in a particular field or setting (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007, Ritchie et al. 2013).	Fieldwork involved participating in and observing a minimum of two mealtimes per family in addition to interviews with all family members.
Use of participant observation as a primary method (Ritchie et al. 2013).	Participant observation was one of the key methods used in the study.
In depth and unstructured data collection (Reeves et al. 2008).	Field notes to develop thick description were used as one data collection method.
Presentation of findings from participant's point of view (Reeves et al. 2008, Ritchie et al. 2013).	As well as participant observation participatory visual methods were used to allow participants to represent their own perspectives.
A strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon, rather than setting out to test hypotheses about it (Reeves et al. 2008).	The study looked at the nature of mealtime experiences but there was no hypothesis at the outset of the study.
A tendency to work primarily with unstructured data (Reeves et al. 2008).	The data was analyzed inductively and there was no codes or categories formed prior to the collection of data.
Investigation of small number of cases in detail (Reeves et al. 2008).	10 families were observed in each country using multiple methods.

The validity of conjecture emerging from ethnographic study is often put under question. Critics have questioned the legitimacy of theories based on the worldview of a researcher and the rigour of a methodology that relies upon unexplicated common sense knowledge (Geertz 1988, Hammersley 2013, Hammersley 2018a).

These issues are largely addressed through the reflexive sociological approach (Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992) highlighted in section 3.5. It is, however, useful to clarify another issue in relation this methodology. In this study, participant experiences were observed and compared in two distinct cultural settings. A constant feature of ethnography is that it is informed by an underlying concept of culture, learned and shared by particular groups (Morse 1992). Culture can have diverse and complex meanings and is a phenomenon that has received much academic scrutiny (Longhurst et al. 2014). In line with the methodological approach of this study, I have viewed culture as a tacit form of acquired knowledge (Spradley 2016) that symbolises the features of a particular way of life (Williams 1981). These symbolic features set the context for, but importantly, are not the object of comparison.

SECTION TWO: METHODS

3.7 Study design

3.7.1 Overview of data collection methods

The study used a range of qualitative methods. It has been argued that in ethnographic studies, academic legitimacy is best achieved when there is a range of data collection tools (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007, Stadler 2013, Hammersley 2018b). Using more than one qualitative method broadens the scope of what participants are able to reveal about everyday eating practices and arms the researcher with a diverse toolkit to explore different facets of experience (Wills 2012, Ritchie et al. 2013). When working with children and young people, in particular, a choice of methods may increase opportunities for engagement (Highet 2003, O'Connell 2013).

One objective of the study was to explore possible differences in accounts and practices of family dining. A plurality of methods is potentially valuable for investigating complexities and contradictions in peoples' narratives on food, which may be otherwise challenging to disentangle (Brannen 2005, Wills 2012). Multiple methods enabled me to identify connections and contradictions in data generated from each method (Wills 2012). However, this approach presents its own set of challenges, in particular, establishing an integrated analysis, which does not lose the

characteristics of each set of data (Coxon 2005, Moran-Ellis et al. 2006). This issue is addressed in section 3.9.

The methods used in this study were: interviews, participant observation and participatory visual methods. The way the methods were integrated into a coherent data collection process is reviewed in more detail in section 3.7.6. Data were collected from 10 households in the UK and 10 households in Spain. Interviews were conducted at the outset of data collection with the food provider/s in each household. Participant observation took the form of two mealtime observations including some mealtime preparation where possible. In each household, participatory visual data were generated by families between research visits. A final interview was conducted with each entire family and involved photo elicitation techniques, based on visual data participants had collected.

Critics have stressed that increasing the methods employed, does not necessarily equate with increased insight (Darbyshire et al. 2005, O'Connell 2013). Therefore, a clear reasoning for the use of each chosen method is outlined in the following sections.

3.7.2 Participant observation

The proliferation of studies that describe themselves as ethnographic has led to questions about what really defines ethnography (Atkinson 2001). There is, however, consensus that participant observation is the defining feature of this type of research (Holloway, Wheeler 1995, Hammersley, Atkinson 2007, Berg, Lune 2012). This method was employed in the study, with the aim of gaining insight about mealtimes through the immediacy of participation (Creswell 2009, Savin-Baden, Major 2013). Two mealtime observations took place in each family and field notes were produced for each visit using detailed, thick description (Geertz 2008).

Although participant observation is a valuable method for exploring the complex thoughts, feelings and actions of individuals, it also presents numerous philosophical and logistical challenges (Labaree 2002, Jorgensen 2015, Spradley 2016). In this study, the first of these challenges was adhering to the ethnographic tenet of observing practices in a natural context (Atkinson 2001). Whilst acknowledging this methodological objective, I recognised that the mealtime scenarios were shaped, to

varying extents, by my presence (Ritchie et al. 2013). Participant observation then, was regarded, not only as a means of observing what people do, but also what they chose to display (Finch 2007). Differentiating between presented and habitual behaviours added a further layer of complexity to this task. However, employing multiple methods highlighted contradictions in what was 'seen' and what was 'said' as well as providing opportunities to compare different accounts of situations from various family members (Barbour 2001, Reeves et al. 2008, Wills 2012).

The second significant challenge was my level of participation in the mealtime event. The decision as to whether I chose to sit and eat with families during observations was particularly pertinent in this regard and was a catalyst for the wider debate on the insider outsider approach in ethnographic research (Allen 2004). Proponents of the insider ideology maintain that it is only those who are fully immersed in the field of study, who can provide an authentic insider account. Conversely, those in favour of adopting the outsider position argue that in doing so they reduce the potential of bias through affiliation with the research subjects (Sherif 2001, Bonner, Tolhurst 2002, Allen 2004, Gregory, Ruby 2011). However the polarisation of this debate does not reflect the nuanced reality of everyday scenarios (Bryman, Burgess 2002, Cole 2005). The families and situations encountered in the study sat on a continuum of familiarity as did my insider-outsider status, which altered between families and in specific contexts.

Often, my level of participation was dictated, not my philosophical stance, but by the preferences of the families. As Charmaz (2014) points out, the degree to which ethnographers participate in the field depends on the objectives of a study, agreements about access and emergent relationships with participants. It was invariably these factors that affected where I situated myself on the spectrum from participant to observer (Moore, Savage 2002, Ritchie et al. 2013). Some families insisted that I ate with them and felt uncomfortable with the idea of being 'watched' while they dined. Others, a minority of families, preferred me to sit away from the table and observe with more distance. I did not prioritize any of the observational positions, presenting each as a valid stance in this type of research. The dialogues with families regarding these preferences, gave me important insights into participants'

attitudes towards the family mealtime, in particular whether they were accustomed to having guests at the dinner table.

3.7.3 Interviews and photo elicitation

Two types of interview were conducted in this study. The first interview that took place in each family was with the named family food provider/s. The second interview took the form of a photo/video elicitation exercise with the entire family. Rather than seeing interviews as direct access to experience, they were viewed as actively constructed narratives (Silverman 2013) or accounts. The term 'accounts', describes the way that people interpret and give meaning to their social world (Orbuch 1997). Accounts have a firm history in sociological research as a tool for exploring culturally embedded experiences (Scott, Lyman 1968) and in terms of mealtime practices, they proved to be a particularly useful tool in understanding culturally or socially valued aspects of these events. In the initial interviews with food providers a topic guide (Appendix Ten) was employed as a flexible tool to guide the dialogue (Ritchie et al. 2013). Interviews took the form of directed conversations, which allowed for exploration of specific topic areas, whilst allowing for the participants' own narratives to emerge (Ritchie et al. 2013).

The second interview in each family took the format of a group interview. This was chosen for a number of reasons. Group dynamics ensured that no individual was put under the spotlight, an aspect of interviewing which may be challenging for children (Mauthner 1997, Thomas, O'Kane 1998, Harden et al. 2000). Some authors have illustrated however, that, in group dialogues, the voice of children may be overshadowed by that of adults (Thomas, O'Kane 1998) and others have shown that separate interviews with young people and parents are a useful means of mapping different perspectives (Wills et al. 2008, Backett-Milburn et al. 2010b). However, in this study, group conversations offered the possibility of examining dynamics between family members and for exploring multiple and alternative perspectives on an issue (Wills 2012). The group meetings allowed family members to openly question each other's practices and narratives (Mauthner 1997).

The focus of discussion in the majority of these interviews was the visual materials participants had produced, through a form of photo elicitation. This describes the method of inserting a photograph into a research interview (Harper 2002, Clark-Ibáñez 2004, Banks, Zeitlyn 2015). Photo elicitation has been employed in various disciplines, with the aim of addressing status or power imbalances by, decentring the authority of the researcher (Power 2003) and empowering the participant (Richard, Lahman 2015). Although the method usually refers to the use of static images, in this study I broadened the concept to also include video materials.

Photo elicitation opens opportunities for all participants to 'break the frame' (Harper 2002, Harper 2012) and explore new perspectives of their existence and everyday practices. This idea resonates with Bourdieu's concept of socio-analysis, an opportunity to consider the habitus (Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992, Sweetman 2003). The practice of producing photographic or video materials stimulated a natural process of reflection. Prior to the final interview, all of the participants were asked to reflect on the visual data their family had produced and note any points they wished to discuss. For example Flo (UK2)[3] considered how she was '*constantly getting up and down'* to attend to various demands during mealtimes, having previously imagined she was more relaxed. James (UK3) highlights how '*hectic*' mealtimes are and Nina (SP1) is surprised that a cooking gadget, photographed several times by her son, carries such significance for him.

I also reviewed the family's visual data in advance of the interview and prepared questions about specific photographs or sections of video data I considered pertinent. Both my questions and the participants' reflections were stimuli for discussion. Static photographs were viewed and discussed during the recorded interview but relevant video data were viewed prior to recording. A reported benefit of photo-elicitation techniques is that they can put children at ease in interviews (Clark-Ibáñez 2004, Cappello 2005, Epstein et al. 2006, Mandleco 2013). This study revealed that this benefit was not limited to young people and photo elicitation techniques appeared to guide and stimulate discussion for all family members (Power 2003).

[3] These figures refer to identification codes for each family as listed in Chapter Four Section 4.1.

3.7.4 Participatory visual methods

Visual research methods are increasingly valued and employed in sociological research (Knowles, Sweetman 2004, Harper 2012, Emmison et al. 2012, Pink 2013, Banks, Zeitlyn 2015) whilst equally being the subject of concern over token usage and fetishization (Sweetman 2009). In order to address this concern this section will underline the reasons why visual methods were considered particularly appropriate for this study. These can be outlined as follows: their compatibility with the theoretical framework and epistemological stance of the study (Power 2003), the specific usefulness of these methods in relation to eating activities (Wills et al. 2013, Justesen et al. 2014) and their relevance when dealing with families (James et al. 2009b, O'Connell 2013).

Numerous authors have highlighted the difficulty in operationalizing habitus (Reay 2004, Shilling 2012, Maton 2014) due to its embedded, unconscious nature (Sweetman 2003, Wainwright et al. 2006, Sweetman 2009). Visual data were valuable in this regard because repeated viewing allowed me to note details that may otherwise have been missed (Dant 2004) and examine below the surface of everyday experience (Hockey, Collinson 2006, Sweetman 2009). Whilst participant observation presented similar opportunities for examination (Wacquant 2011, Jorgensen 2015), the multiplicity of actors and interactions in mealtime scenarios made it challenging to capture diverse, narratives and interactions (Galman 2009, Wills et al. 2016). Numerous viewings of recorded visual data facilitated exploration of tacit dispositions and the nuanced aspects of routine practices (Banks, Zeitlyn 2015).

The visual research activities in this study can be categorised as collaborations with participants to produce images (Pink 2013) although *my* input was minimal and simply involved guidance and prompts on what to record. All of the visual data was produced independently by the participants, often children. Participants were given the option of producing static photographs and/or video material using their own electronic devices such as smart phones or tablets or a using a digital video camera provided by the researcher. This format was informed by Wills et al. study on kitchen life (Wills et al. 2013), where participants used video equipment between research visits to record their practices despite this not being part of the research remit. Encouraging active

involvement in the data collection process supported the study's theoretical assumption that participants are those most knowledgeable about their world (Power 2003, Galman 2009) and addresses the issue of representation in visual research (Wiles et al. 2008, Rose 2016).

A number of authors highlight the exceptional value of visual research methods in exploring food and eating practices (Power 2003, O'Connell 2013, Wills et al. 2016). Power (2003: 10) describes our incapacity to articulate food related practices due to *linguistic incongruence,* the idea that we cannot find the 'right words' to express the mundane aspects of eating in narrative form (Wills et al. 2016). O'Connell (2013) reaffirms the value of visual methods for capturing the multisensory aspects of food and eating. She also underlines that traditional interview methods encourage normative discourses about dietary practices and underreporting of behaviours that are considered socially undesirable. Arguably, the use of visual methods did not exclude normative discourse in this study; participants may always be inclined to represent a particular image to the camera (Muir, Mason 2012). Yet, as the purpose of visual methods is not to provide a neutral representation of events (Wills et al. 2016), performed aspects of visual materials were regarded as valuable data. As researchers have highlighted, images are not data until after the point of analysis (Meah, Jackson 2013).

Visual methods were chosen as one means of encouraging the participation of children in the study. The increased prevalence of visual methods in studies involving this group (Young, Barrett 2001, Thomson 2009, Zartler, Richter 2014) reflects the perception that younger participants [those aged 5-16 in this study] respond well to these approaches. Critics have pointed out, however, that children are not one homogenous group and that it is simplistic to suggest that a 'one size fits all' approach is effective (Harden et al. 2000, Punch 2002). Whilst acknowledging this viewpoint, there were indications that visual methods were a preferred means of expression for many of the children and young people in this study. In the pilot studies, (see section 3.8.1) children were often the family members most eager to generate visual data and were the most conversant at using visual media, an idea that is supported by the literature (Kabali et al. 2015).

This idea was reinforced by the main study. In both countries children and young people were actively involved in the creation of visual data. In the UK, a number of children produced video diaries expressing their view of shared meals and some filmed mealtime events. In both countries, children took photographs of objects that were meaningful in relation to their everyday practices and experiences (Christensen, James 2008, Livingstone, Bovill 2013) such as favourite foods or treats, family members they ate with, or foods they had prepared themselves. Allowing children to take a lead role addressed the issue of representing of children in social research (Thomas, O'Kane 1998, Eder, Corsaro 1999); in particular the difficulty in eliciting young peoples' opinions (Morrow, Richards 1996) and the danger of their voices being obscured (Thomas, O'Kane 1998, Warin 2007). There were, however, some marked cross-country differences in the way children and families engaged with the participatory methods and these are reviewed below.

3.7.5 Methodological issues with participatory data

The data collection process revealed a distinct cross-country difference in the nature and quantity of visual data produced. In the UK, eight of the households produced audio-visual data and in each of these families some of the data were produced independently by children. One family (UK2) filmed three entire meals of between approximately 15 and 35 minutes in length and another household (UK8) filmed a 12-minute segment of a meal. The remaining audio-visual data were 20 short videos (under four minutes long) produced by six families. In addition, all of the families produced between two and eleven static photographs per household.

In Spain, no audio-visual data was created by any of the families. Eight of the Spanish families produced between 3 and 15 static photos and two produced no visual data at all. In most cases the photos were images taken by children independently and in a small number of cases (SP1, SP3, SP10) the children revealed, either in interview or conversation, that they were guided through this process by their parents. For ethical reasons it was difficult to probe families as to why they had eschewed audio-visual methods as this might suggest that the material they produced was inadequate (Thomas, O'Kane 1998, Wiles et al. 2008). However, the main food provider in family SP2 did reveal that she was cautious about providing any data in which her family

members might be identifiable, despite assurances regarding how the data would be treated. The two families who did not provide any visual data also explained that, on reflection, they were not comfortable sharing this kind of personal data with a researcher.

The majority of images provided by all of the families comprised of dishes of food, cooked meals, cookery books and kitchen gadgets. Photographs included neatly laid tables and well-presented dishes of food. There was noticeable homogeneity and sense of presentation in the images produced by the Spanish households. The nature of the visual data produced suggested a reluctance to share video data that offered an unmasked view of life within the home. Previous studies using participatory visual methods with young people in Spain did not reveal similar issues but no published research was found that used this methodological tool within the home (Boni, Millán 2016, Susinos-Rada et al. 2019). This difference was not highlighted in the pilot studies, possibly as the data produced was not used for research purposes. The degree of caution in using participatory methods might be viewed as a shortcoming of this data collection tool. However, what families chose *not* to display provided valuable material for analysis and interpretation.

3.7.6 Reflexive account of fieldwork

Data collection involved spending time within the intimate setting of family homes, asking participants about personal aspects of their lives and observing interpersonal dynamics within families. I was not outside of these dynamics but involved in emotional exchanges and interactions with participants; at times these exchanges triggered feelings of discomfort in me.

Down et al. (2006) discuss how the emotions and identity of a researcher influence the collection and interpretation of data and give important context to a qualitative study. In spite of this, emotive reactions and responses experienced by a researcher are rarely documented beyond field notes and are therefore not visible to others (Down et al. 2006, Geertz 2008). Reviewing the field notes from this study, it became clear that it was predominantly during mealtime observations that emotional challenges arose for me.

It was during these observations that I experienced emotional dissonance, a disparity between the emotions I experienced and the expectations of myself as an academic (Hubbard et al. 2001, Down et al. 2006, Brannan 2014). My role often felt blurred between that of a student researcher and of a polite house guest. At the pilot stage, it became clear that giving families more control in the process of observation (e.g. letting them decide whether or not I ate with them) helped redress the balance of power and eased my awkwardness in their homes. However, this became less relevant in the main study, where, for me, the most important factor was undoubtedly, how comfortable household members appeared to be in their displays to an outsider.

Some families were very adept at the process of family display (Finch 2007) both to an outsider and to each other. For example, in UK2, single parent Flo regularly invites dinner guests to the home to help '*socialize*' her foster children. There were formulaic aspects to their meal (such as asking each other about their day or clearing the table) that the children had previously displayed to each other in the presence of outsiders. Likewise, in families UK1 and UK3 it was clear that guests at the dinner table were habitual (as confirmed by the interview data) and my presence appeared to have only minimal impact on their routines and practices.

Observations were invariably most challenging for me when they were also challenging for the participants. For example, in UK7 and UK10 the families were eager to eat meals around a dining table during observations and extolled the virtues of this practice. However, the children, although professing to enjoy this experience, appeared unrelaxed; interview data revealed the children enjoyed eating in front of the television. Similarly, in SP9, whilst the parents cajoled their children to express their taste for the traditional foods at the dinner table, the children ate with very little enthusiasm. In my role as a 'good dinner guest' I felt a need to be complicit in these displays, praising the food or filling silences in the conversation. Perhaps the greatest challenge for me was in SP4, when an older sibling tried to talk over his brother's temper tantrum, explaining how unusual this was and how much the family usually enjoyed mealtimes. This attempt to obscure perceived 'flaws' in their mealtime displays revealed a desire to impress me and ultimately highlighted my position of power at the dinner table.

Given that conviviality was the central object of my inquiry, any feelings of unease were particularly relevant. In situations where I enjoyed a mealtime experience, I was, of course, more likely to get an initial impression of conviviality and undeniably this influenced my perceptions of a family. However, reviewing the data after the passage of time, I was able to create a degree of distance from these initial feelings and at times, understand the conflicts underlying these displays as well as the versions of conviviality that might exist outside of them.

3.7.7 Integration of data collection methods

The integration of methods aimed to increase the richness of the data through innovative data-gathering approaches (Charmaz 2014). The interconnectedness of the data collection techniques served as a way of complementing and corroborating information (Mason 2006). So, for example, a photograph might complement the description of an individual's favourite dish or confirm the 'messiness' involved in children's cooking. Equally, the process highlighted contradictions and incongruities such as differences between parent's and children's portrayals of enjoyable meals. When combined, the multiple sources of data enhanced the picture of expectations, ideals and actual practices in families. This is not to say that data were combined to form a complete picture, but that the plurality of the methods allowed for a richer image of the complex dynamics within each household (O'Cathain et al. 2010).

The diverse methods used, presented opportunities for different perspectives to be voiced and compared (Moran, Butler 2001) but were not viewed as a means of triangulation, which some critics present as problematic (Moran-Ellis et al. 2006). I have favoured the term integrated methods in this study (Chamberlain et al. 2011). This is not synonymous with the concept of triangulation, which carries the epistemological assumption that different methodologies act as forms of cross-validation (Brannen 2005, Moran-Ellis et al. 2006, Savin-Baden, Major 2013). The purpose of the methods was not to ensure accuracy but to *know more* (Moran-Ellis et al. 2006) and gain deeper insight into practices. Integration in mixed-methods research involves a tangible relationship between the methods and the data. Many studies that employ multiple methods defer integration to the point of analysis (Coxon 2005). However, in this study, methods were integrated at the point of data collection.

Ideas and perspectives expressed in the initial stages of the research were stimuli for discussion in the final interview. This type of integration, sometimes termed synthesis, (Pawson 1995) allows individual methods to interface with each other (Moran-Ellis et al. 2006) and initiates the exploration of convergence and divergence in data prior to analysis and interpretation.

Table 3.2 Overview of data collection methods

Method	Description
Stage One: Semi-structured interviews with family meal providers	Family food providers were interviewed to understand their ideals, values and expectations regarding family dining. Interviews were conducted in the family homes and any family member who considered her/himself be a food provider was invited to join. Interviews lasted between 40 and 75 minutes in each household.
Stage Two: Visual methods and participant observation	Participant observation: The researcher was present for two family meals, spending between 60 and 150 minutes with families on each visit. Field notes were taken on the spatial, temporal and conversational elements of mealtimes. Participatory research: Families used digital cameras, smartphones or tablets to film or photograph any aspect of the family meal that was important to them.
Stage Three: Interviews with all family members	Participants were asked to reflect on the visual materials from Stage Two and discuss the ways the mealtimes observed related to their mealtime ideals.

3.8 The data collection process

3.8.1 Pilot studies

Pilot studies are considered valuable in ethnographic studies in order to; refine research instruments, to highlight logistical issues in the research procedure and to ensure that the methods are suited to addressing the research objectives (Van Teijlingen, Hundley 2002, Sampson 2004). The data collection methods in this study were informally piloted on a total of six UK and two Spanish families. The first stage of piloting centred on the usability of the data collection tools. Each method was piloted on four UK families and one Spanish family. Family members, including children, were asked to comment on their experiences. The key feedback was that children and young people were more inclined to produce visual data than adults. A number of food

providers also suggested that younger children (five to seven-year olds) needed additional guidance as to what to film or photograph.

In the next stage of piloting, the whole data collection process was piloted on one Spanish and two UK families. At this stage, in addition to the usability of methods, I was also interested in the nature of the data produced. The children in these pilot families (aged between 8 and 12) were, as the literature suggested, competent in using audio-visual equipment (Kabali et al. 2015). A number of the young people produced video and photographic material, using their own tablets or smartphones rather than the equipment provided. Children using their own devices tended to produce more video and photographic material than those using equipment borrowed from the researcher. Feedback from participants was generally positive but two adults expressed difficulty in scheduling numerous research visits.

Overall the piloting process resulted in the following alterations to the data collection methods. Firstly, I decided to offer participants specific prompts as to the nature of visual data they might produce; this included: photos or videos of mealtimes or any aspect of food work, video diaries on their view of any facet of mealtimes and photos or videos of any objects or people related to family meals. Secondly, participants were also given the choice to use their own digital media devices as an alternative to equipment provided by the researcher. Finally, families were given the option of scheduling the initial interview and the first mealtime observation on the same day in order to reduce the number of research visits.

3.8.2 Location of the study

The fieldwork took place in one university town in Spain and one in the UK. The Spanish town was selected as the university there is partnered with my higher education institution via an Erasmus scheme. The UK city was chosen as an appropriate match due to a number of similarities. Both towns are in proximity of the coast and are reliant on a mix of tourism and local commerce for employment. Similar proportions of the population are economically active in the two locations and both experience low levels of immigration (ONS 2011, Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado 2015). The population of the Spanish city is significantly higher at around

300,000 (Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado 2015) compared to about 130,300 in the UK city (ONS 2013). However, in Spain the statistics include significant numbers of people who live in rural villages located at some distance from the urban conurbation. These broad similarities in the locations reduce the possibility of findings being skewed by divergent social environments. Nevertheless, differences in structural conditions related to family dining are explored in Chapter Four (section 4.3).

3.8.3 Recruitment

In total, 10 families were recruited in Spain and 10 in the UK. Qualitative research has been subject to criticism for a failure to be explicit in recruitment procedures or to illustrate measures taken to control sample bias (Arcury, Quandt 1999). Therefore, the steps taken in the recruitment process are clearly outlined in this section. In line with an ethnographic approach, the study set out to purposefully recruit families able to act as examples of a specific occurrence, in this case, shared family meals (Patton 1990). The recruitment process was underpinned by the ethnographic tenet of *excellent informants*. These were categorised as individuals who had been through the experience under investigation, were willing to participate in the research process and had the time and capacity to do so (Charmaz 2014, Spradley 2016). The final criterion was particularly relevant in this study given the intensive nature of the data collection process. Although it was crucial to be transparent in the recruitment procedure, it was equally imperative not to erroneously employ quantitative assumptions in the pursuit of academic rigour. Demographic data therefore, were far less important than the conceptual needs of the study (Morse 2006, Mayan 2016).

The recruitment in Spain was via a community health centre, which worked collaboratively with the city university. Academic health professionals at the university supported me with recruiting participants but had no further involvement in the research. Community nurses distributed information to potential participants who met the eligibility criteria (see Appendices Six to Nine for Spanish language information sheets and consent forms). All the written information had been approved by my higher education institution as well as the Spanish university's ethics committee (see section 3.10). I was given details of potential participants and

contacted them by email or telephone to give them a brief outline of the study. At this stage, they were also sent another copy of the information sheet and consent forms either via post or email. To avoid undue pressure they were given a week to consider if they wished to participate. Three families withdrew at this stage and further families were recruited. Those taking part, provided me with names, addresses and a list of household members participating in the study. Consent forms were completed during our initial meeting in Spain.

In the UK, recruitment was via a community project organiser working in a primary school in the chosen city. She distributed information to families who met the selection criteria (see Appendices Two to Five for English language information sheets and consent forms). The recruitment of the first four families in the UK occurred through snowball sampling (Noy 2008). The other six families were recruited individually with the support of the gatekeeper. The same process of contacting the families was employed as in Spain. After expressing initial interest, none of the UK families withdrew from the study. Again, consent forms were emailed to participants prior to our initial meeting to ensure they received an opportunity to reflect on the terms of the study and to consider their preferences regarding the data produced.

3.8.4 Participants

The eligibility criteria for the study were as follows:

- Participants defined themselves as a 'family'. Family was seen as a fluid entity created through activities such as eating together rather than being a naturally occurring group or a social institution (DeVault 1994, Backett-Milburn et al. 2010a, Julier 2012).
- Families included at least one child aged 5-16 years. Early childhood is considered to be the stage in life where habitus first develops (Bourdieu 1984) and therefore the inclusion of young children was important to the study. However, on the basis of the pilot and previous studies, it was determined that children below the age of five might have struggled to engage with the research methods (Morgan et al. 2002, Darbyshire et al. 2005, O'Connell 2013). The upper age limit was set at 16 on the basis that young people display increasing autonomy in their eating patterns and children above this age might be less likely to eat with the family (Backett-Milburn et al. 2010b).
- In order to be eligible for the study, families had to eat together as a family at least three times as a week; this ensured patterns of regular, shared mealtimes. However, the definition of what 'eating together' signifies has raised terminological and conceptual questions in sociology (Short 2006). Therefore, the families defined what a shared family meal signified to *them*. This included occasions where not all of the household members were present or a family member was only present for part of the event.
- Defining race, culture and ethnicity are the subject of significant discussion in social research (Upton 1996, Josselson, Harway 2012). For the purposes of this research, it was necessary that participants self-identified as either British or Spanish and identified with the culture of these countries.
- Factors such as social class and education and were not used to purposively sample participants at the outset of the study but these factors later became relevant and theoretical sampling was used to address gaps in the data relating to emerging categories. This is addressed in more detail in section 3.8.5. An overview of participants' sociocultural backgrounds can be found in Chapter Four.

3.8.5 Theoretical sampling and saturation

The process of sampling in this study developed dynamically as the data collection progressed (Charmaz 2014). At the outset, families were purposefully sampled to meet specific criteria. However, after data had been collected and analysed from four families in each country, it was clear that a broader socio-cultural sample was required to expand emerging theoretical concepts. The first set of participants was from a narrow socio demographic group and this raised concerns about the inherent bias of the sampling process (Biernacki, Waldorf 1981, Morse 2006, Noy 2008). All but one set of the initial adult participants was university educated and several were keen for their children to be involved in academic research. Although the data from this group was valuable, I felt a wider socio-economic sample was necessary to explore emergent themes in line with the theoretical framework of the study.

At this point in the recruitment process, theoretical sampling was employed. Theoretical sampling serves the purpose of expanding and clarifying themes and categories. It is not concerned with representing a specific population or producing data that is generalizable (Bryant, Charmaz 2007, Charmaz 2014). Subsequent families were recruited (via the gatekeepers in each country) with the additional criteria that the food providers did not have a university education, using this marker of institutionalised cultural capital as a means of diversifying the sample (Bourdieu 1984, Ball et al. 1996, Savage et al. 2013).

An additional six families were recruited in each country through the process of theoretical sampling. After recruiting a total of 10 families in each country it was considered that theoretical saturation had been achieved (Morse, Field 1995, Charmaz 2014). The concept of theoretical saturation can be a contentious issue in qualitative research (O'Reilly, Parker 2013). Although its origins are in grounded theory (Strauss, Corbin 1997) it is applied widely in many studies. Yet its broad application has led to it being expected, sometimes without clear guidelines as to what it signifies (O'Reilly, Parker 2013). To be clear, saturation in this study did not relate to number of occurrences of an event or the amount of times something was said (Bowen 2008). Instead, it conveyed the idea that there was sufficient rich, varied data to support theoretical categories. A weakness in the concept of saturation is that emergent

themes are potentially limitless in some cases (Green, Thorogood 2004) and therefore rather than saturation, the idea of theoretical sufficiency (Dey 2004) might be considered more appropriate. The term implies that through the process of coding and theoretical sampling, enough data emerged to support salient themes and possible variations within them.

3.8.6 Data collection: Logistics

Data were collected over a three to four-week period with each family and required three visits to Spain and seven shorter visits to the UK town. Data collection took place as follows: On the initial visit I requested that all participating family members were present. We reviewed the information sheets and consent forms which had been distributed during the recruitment stage (see section 3.8.3) and all family members present were given an opportunity to clarify any points regarding the research procedures. Adult consent forms were completed by at least one food provider in each household and junior consent forms were filled out by those children deemed able (see section 3.10.2). I retained one copy of each completed consent form and left one copy with the family. Participatory visual methods were discussed at this stage and a digital video camera was provided for those who required it. The initial interview was then conducted with the main food provider/s in each household. In some families, the first mealtime observation also took place on this occasion.

For the remaining families, the second and third visits to the households took the form of mealtime observations. Visits were scheduled with families to allow some time to view mealtime preparation and post-prandial activities. Following the observations, participants were also given the opportunity to discuss any queries they had regarding the visual data collection. In a small number of cases, family members gave me audio-visual data they had produced. Otherwise, visual materials were collected at least two days prior to final interview. On the final visit the visual materials were reviewed with the families and the final interview with all family members was conducted. All of the consent forms were reviewed to see if preferences had changed in view of the data collected.

The data collection methods presented a number of challenges. One issue was confirming who constituted 'family' in the study. Although participating household members were listed and confirmed at the point of recruitment (see section 3.8.3) this was occasionally subject to change. For example, in family SP6 the father was not present at the initial meeting or observation and a discussion with other family members revealed that this was habitually the case. The family felt it was most appropriate to exclude the father from the data collection process and it was decided to include the grandmother instead as she regularly took part in mealtimes. Similarly, in SP2 it was decided to include the grandmother in the data collection procedure despite not being listed as a household member at the outset. These alterations reinforce the idea that families are entities defined by practices such as eating together (DeVault 1994) and supports the study remit that family is self-defined (see section 3.8.4).

On a small number of occasions, a family member or members were unable to attend a scheduled mealtime observation. For example, on arrival at a scheduled lunchtime observation in UK4, two of the three teenage children announced that they would not be attending the meal. Likewise, in SP5 the father did not attend mealtime observations due to work commitments. In both of these cases the absence of these family members was considered unexceptional in the households and observations continued as planned.

3.8.7 Transcription and translation of data

There are a number of potential challenges in data transcription (Easton et al. 2000). The main concern is capturing the true essence of what is said. In group interviews, in particular, concurrent dialogues may be difficult to understand by an individual not present during the recording. One method of mitigating errors of misinterpretation, is for the interviewer to transcribe audio data and this was the procedure followed in this study (Bailey 2008). In order to recall as much detail as possible, transcription took place immediately after each interview and detailed field notes were written to contextualise conversations. Transcripts included details such as tone of voice, laughter, pauses and occasionally body language (Easton et al. 2000). To this end,

transcription was regarded as an interpretive process as well as a technical one (Bailey 2008). Conversations that were part of the audio-visual materials were not transcribed. Transcription of video data into text may be useful when employing discourse or conversation analysis (Smith et al. 2016). However, the theoretical focus on tacit practices favoured an approach that examined the entirety of the images. In addition, recent approaches to visual data analysis have suggested that isolating the spoken component of audio-visual materials can de-contextualise the meaning of the data and obscure the multi-dimensional aspects of this method (Gibbs 2008, Pink 2013, Banks 2018).

Translation in cross-cultural research studies brings its own set of methodological and epistemological issues, which may impact on the validity of research findings. For this reason, there is increasing demand for researchers to be explicit in their translation-related decisions (Birbili 2000). Key practical considerations when deciding on procedures are the linguistic competence of the translator and his or her knowledge and understanding of the participants' circumstances and culture (Phillips 1960). In this study, I conducted all of the interviews in Spain in Spanish and then translated them to English myself at the point of transcription and included contextual detail such as tone of voice or emphasis. I am a fluent Spanish speaker, lived in Spain for several years and have previously worked as a professional translator and interpreter, so I felt well equipped for this role. However, I was still faced with an inherent challenge of cross-cultural research; conveying and retaining the meaning, values and assumptions attached to the source language (Temple, Young 2004, Lopez et al. 2008).

From an ethnographic perspective, this goes beyond the translation of language to the translation of culture (Bradby 2002). Therefore, my previous ideas on high-quality translation (text which reads smoothly in the target language) were at odds with the ideals of ethnographic translation where the aim is to disclose underlying differences in assumptions, however clumsily this might read (Phillips 1960). Translation involved a careful balance between semantics and communication (Al Amer et al. 2015). To this end, translation was conducted word for word where linguistically viable in the first instance. However, when words, phrases or sentences did not have direct lexical

matches, these were altered in an attempt to achieve conceptual equivalence (Temple 1997).

For example the word 'bueno' in Spanish is often directly translated as 'good'. However, the word can also signify 'healthy', an abbreviation of 'good for you' and, to further complicate the issue often appeared to, carry both of these meanings. Often, context helped unravel the intended meaning but in cases where the word seemed to carry dual meaning or there was ambiguity, it was translated directly as 'good' and was reviewed with a native speaker. Similarly, the phrase 'en casa' directly translated as 'at home' was frequently employed by participants in the context of 'eating at home'. For the majority of Spanish families (as was the case in the UK), this signified the place where the participant lived. However, in two instances this term was used to describe the home of an extended family member where a child ate on a frequent basis, illustrating an intimate connection between family and food. In Spain, the definition of eating 'at home' included eating with any close or extended family member. This stood in contrast to eating in school, at work or eating out.

Translation then was an interpretative process and a preliminary step in the analysis of the data (Jones, Pullen 1992). Nevertheless, to reduce the possibility of linguistic misinterpretation, a bilingual native Spanish speaker back translated sections from a sample of transcripts (from English back to Spanish) and reviewed areas where I had issues with comprehension or queries regarding meaning. As Phillips (1960) asserts there are unresolvable issues in ethnographic translation, given the simple fact that communication in any language may be laden with assumptions that are not explicit to the researcher. However, clear descriptions of the position of the translator and issues that arose contributed to a systematic approach to the interpretation of language and culture.

3.9 Data analysis

3.9.1 Overview of approach

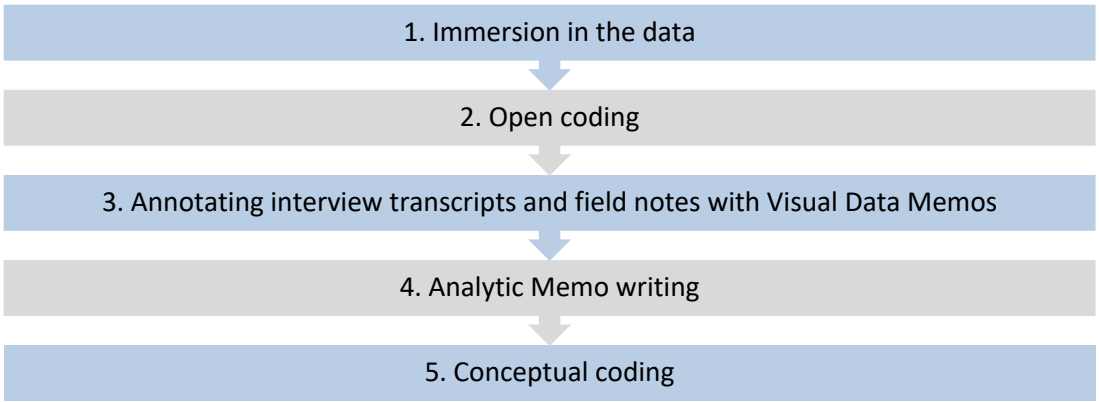
The approach to data analysis in this study was pragmatic as opposed to prescriptive (Dey 2003). The analytic process was broadly informed by the constant comparative method, an analytic style, which generates theoretical concepts through inductive

processes of coding and comparing data. (Bryant, Charmaz 2007, Fram 2013). The approach, however, could not be considered wholly data-led as it was guided by both a literature review and the parameters of the theoretical framework (Dey 2004). Constant comparison then, was employed as a set flexible set of guidelines to examine the way the findings shed light on the key concepts of the study. The analysis was focused on what the data signified in terms of the research questions and the existing literature (Charmaz 2014) but I endeavoured, nevertheless, to remain open to the emergence of unforeseen themes. The cross-cultural comparison was developed by firstly examining patterns within families then exploring links across households and finally across countries (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007).

3.9.2 Process of data analysis

The key procedural steps of analysis are outlined in Figure 3.1. The diagram is presented in a linear fashion. However, the examination of the data was, in reality, a circular, iterative procedure, which involved continually making connections with the materials, writing analytic memos and returning to the source data to review emerging threads (Dey 2003). The five pivotal stages outlined are explained in more depth in this section.

Figure 3.1 Data analysis overview



1. Immersion in the data: The first stage of the data analysis involved familiarisation with the data: repeated viewing, listening to and reading of the visual, audio and written material for each family. Once data had been comprehensively reviewed all field notes and interview transcripts were imported into the data management programme NVivo version 11 (Morison, Moir 1998). This proved to be a useful tool for

accessing and organising written materials. Next, Visual Data Memos, summaries of what I observed in each piece of visual data were written. This helped to signpost these data to other relevant sources during the analysis but was not an attempt to transform visual materials into the written word (Banks, Zeitlyn 2015, Banks 2018). Further details on how Visual Data Memos were employed in the analytic process are outlined in stage 3.

2. Open coding: The subsequent stage in the analysis was the coding of the interview transcripts and field notes. Coding was employed with the purpose of deconstructing the data and establishing connections between emerging codes. This first stage of coding the data was undertaken based on an open coding approach. The purpose of open coding is to establish what the data are about (Charmaz 2014). Data were coded according to particular or recurring incidents and accounts and these were used to identify properties for the emerging themes. The use of the topic guide in interviews (Appendix Ten) meant that some themes inevitably emerged as a result of similar lines of inquiry with each family during data collection. During the coding process, however, I tried to remain as close to the data from each specific family as possible, by asking relatively open questions (Benaquisto, Given 2008) such as: What happens before/during/after mealtimes? What steps are taken to make mealtimes happen? Who takes these steps? What are the goals of the individuals? What are they saying about what they do and what do they like to do? I focused increasingly on the research objectives, whilst still exploring all possible avenues in the data. For example, discussions about children's school life and homework, while not directly related to the research objectives, were still considered relevant as they offered insights into children's mealtime preferences.

The coding procedure was employed to reduce the scope of the data by establishing basic themes. Groups of sub-codes were grouped under thematic headings or parent codes. At the outset, many sub-codes were placed under multiple parent codes. Organisation of codes was then refined through the use of memo writing (see stage 4) which determined the relevance of sub-codes under particular parent-codes according to their relevance to the research question. The organisation of codes

through open coding is presented in Figure 3.2. Each cell of the table shows a parent code in bold and associated sub-codes in non-bold text.

Figure 3.2 Parent codes and associated sub-codes

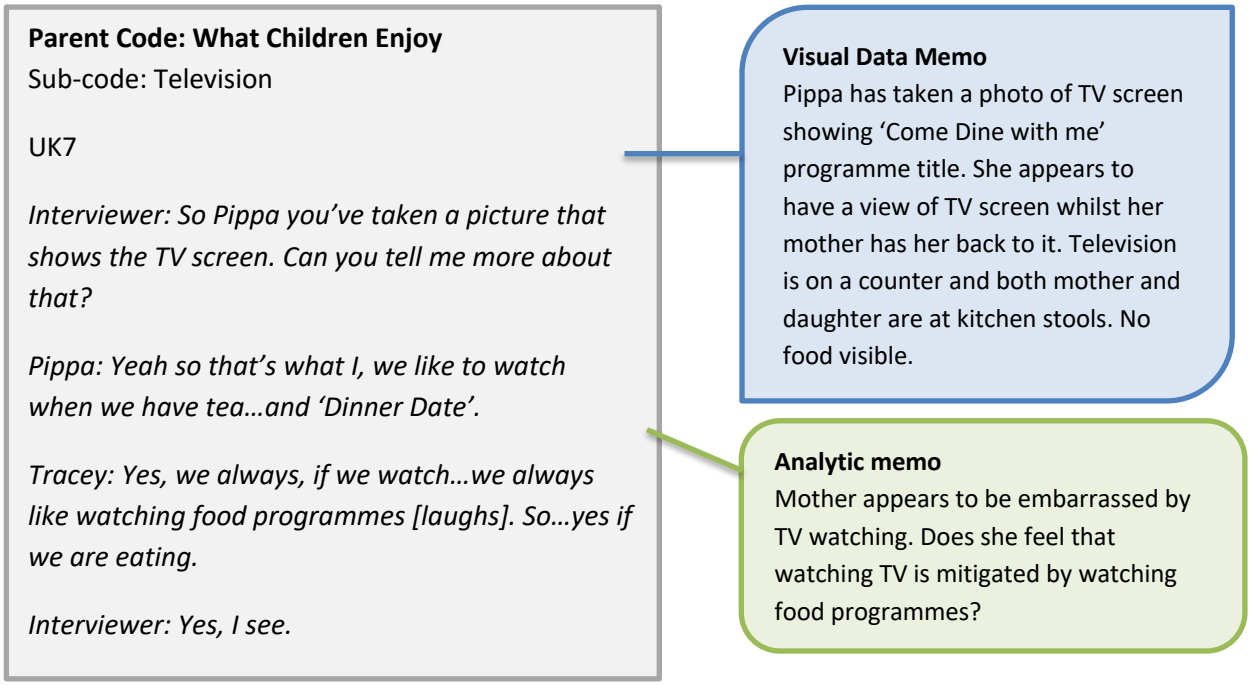
What Children enjoy	**Foods Consumed**	**Technology**
Television Fun food Eating out Being together 'Making it ourselves'	Choices and negotiations Enjoyment of food Nutrition versus health Fun food & Snacks Food as expression of care	TV at mealtimes Computers, Tablets & Telephones at the table Kitchen Gadgets
Defining the family	**Mealtime Expectations**	**Routines & Schedules**
Who needs to be present at meals? Who wants to be present at meals? Family Activities Mealtimes as identity Adults childhood meals	Eating at the table Conversation Food rules Table manners Maintaining traditions Gadgets & Convenience	Parent's jobs Children's activities Synchronizing schedules School & homework
Food Work	**Mealtime Atmosphere**	**Convenience**
Who makes it happen? Accommodating different needs Thinking and planning Being organized A need for help. Taking a break Kitchen Gadgets	Hierarchy at the table Fussy eating Time constraints Entertainment & Games TV watching	Fast food Takeaways Convenience cooking Taking shortcuts Convenience v tradition

3. Annotating interview transcripts and field notes with Visual Data Memos: Visual Data Memos were reviewed and those relevant to the analysis were annotated to related sections of interview transcripts and field notes. At this stage Visual Data Memos were also elaborated with information pertinent to the analysis including information peripheral to what could be seen [what was going on in the background, who wasn't present, how did a photograph sit in the context of others taken in the household] as well as notes on the gestures, movements, facial expressions that constitute what Bourdieu terms the bodily hexis (Williams 1995, Webb et al. 2002). Figure 3.3 illustrates how an extract of interview transcript is annotated with a Visual Data Memo.

This method is suited to the aims, objectives and methodological approach of the research (Ball, Smith 1992, Rose 2007). A key objective of the study was to identify potential differences in participants' practices and accounts. The system of annotation was an opportunity to map and verify information from different data sources, elaborate on ideas and demonstrate incongruities in narratives and practices (Brannen 2005, O'Connell 2013, Wills et al. 2013).

4. Analytic memo writing: Analytic memos were employed continuously throughout the research process. However memo writing was most notably, a critical intermediate stage between in the process of developing the codes (as highlighted in Figure 3.2) into conceptual themes (Charmaz 2014). Writing memos in this way has been considered constructive for researchers and it prompts continual analysis and the development of refined codes early in the research process (Bryant, Charmaz 2007). Writing successive memos is also a means of maintaining a level of abstraction in the emerging ideas. See Figure 3.3 for an example of how analytic memos were used in an extract from an interview transcript.

Figure 3.3 Using Visual Data Memos and Analytic Memos



5. Conceptual coding: There were several aspects to the process of conceptual coding. The first was to revisit all of the codes listed in Figure 3.2 to assess their relevance to the research aim and objectives. This helped to identify three key conceptual themes drawn from all of the data sources. The second aspect was to create household summaries in order to verify the relevance of these conceptual themes in each household. For each family a summary was compiled which drew on all data related to the three conceptual themes. Analytic memos were used to link data from one household to that of other families. An extract from one household summary with analytic memos is shown in Figure 3.4. Compiling and comparing summaries for each household was a time-consuming process but an effective means of corroborating and comparing the key conceptual themes. In the third stage, household summaries and source data were further reviewed to further explicate the three conceptual themes and how they related to the families. This led to the creation of conceptual strands. The three conceptual themes, their relationship with the parent codes and the conceptual strands are highlighted in figure 3.5.

Figure 3.4: Household summary extract

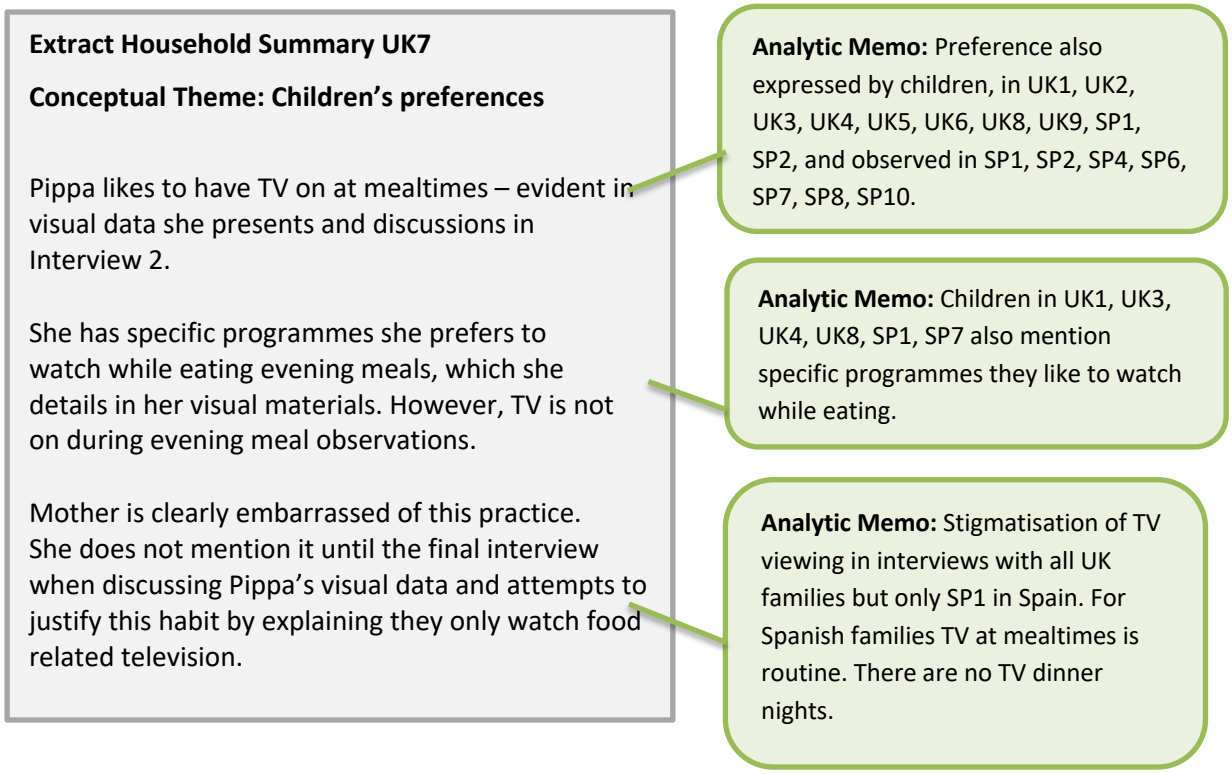
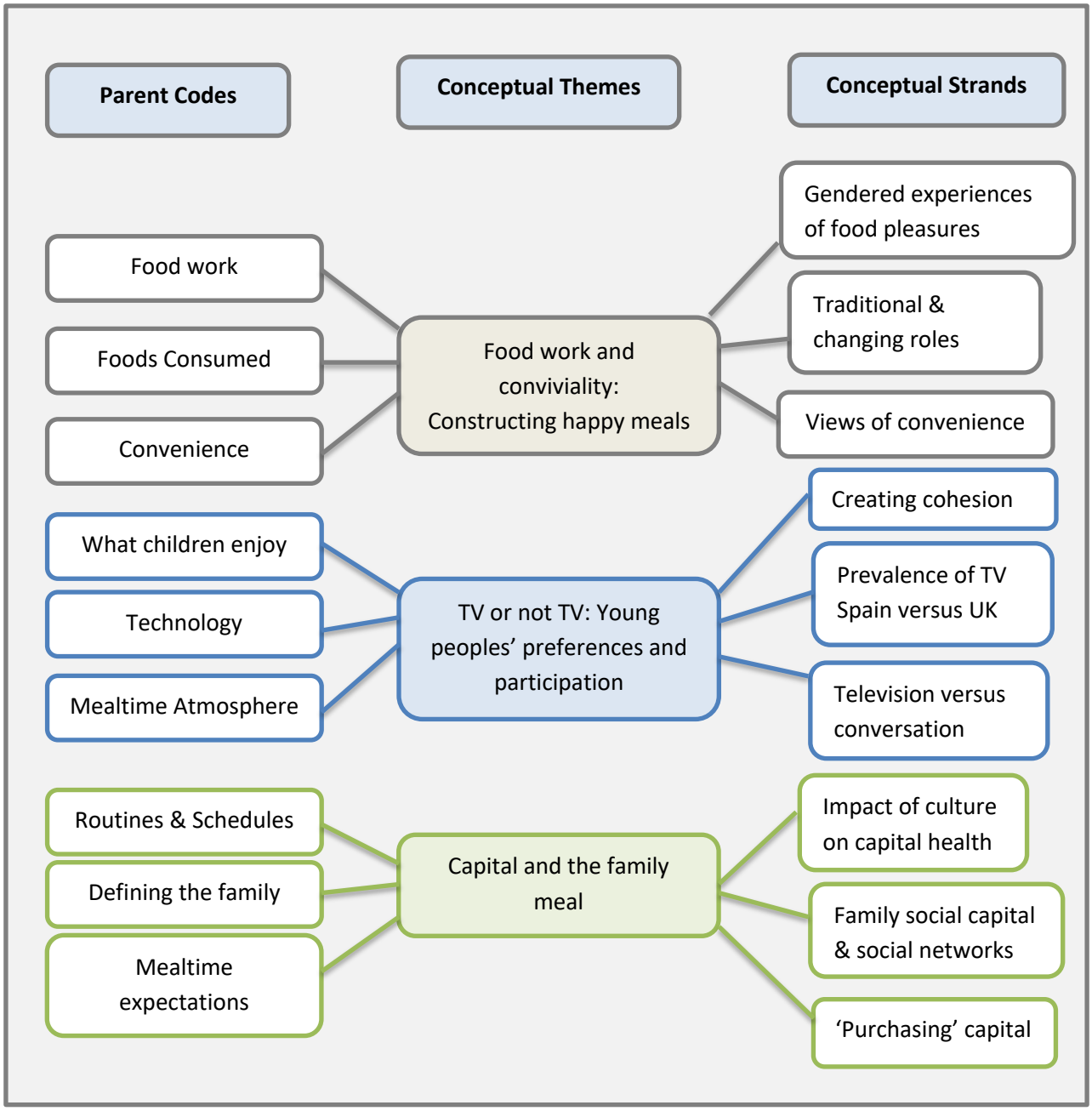


Figure 3.5 Parent codes, Conceptual Themes and Conceptual Strands



3.10 Ethics and data protection

Ethics Approval was obtained from the University of Hertfordshire (Protocol number: HSK/PG/UH/00327) and the University in Spain (CEI -2014). A number of ethical issues relevant to the research processes used are listed below. Ethical dilemmas were continuously reflected upon, taking a dynamic approach to any specific issues that arose (Creswell 2009, Ritchie et al. 2013, Silverman 2013).

3.10.1 Demands on families

Avoiding coercion

Participants for this study were either recruited via a gatekeeper or using snowball sampling (Noy 2008). Two key ethical questions arise when collaborating with gatekeepers. Firstly, might they influence individuals' decisions to take part in research (Crowhurst, Kennedy-Macfoy 2013) and secondly, are they able to impart all of the relevant information to potential participants (Creswell 2009)? In this study, the role of gatekeepers was limited to acquiring contact details of families who met the inclusion criteria. The information they provided regarding the study was in written form (see Appendices Two to Nine) and decisions to take part took place following discussion with myself. A constant dialogue was maintained with gatekeepers in both countries during the recruitment phase to ensure best practice. No financial or other reward was offered for participation in the study, in view of the possibility of skewing the sample by offering such incentives (Wiles et al. 2005).

Avoiding undue intrusion

The very nature of the research, observing families in their home, had the potential to be unduly intrusive for both adults (Ritchie et al. 2013) and children (Alderson, Morrow 2011). It was imperative, therefore, that participants were very clear about what taking part in the study involved. Equally important were assurances that they could withdraw from the study, without any adverse consequences. This was made clear to all participants and explicitly stated on the consent form and study information sheets (see Appendices Four to Five and Eight to Nine).

3.10.2 Informed consent

Due to the in-depth nature of the research, it was critical that consent was re-established at frequent points in the research process. I took a staged approach to informed consent (Webster et al. 2013) using the following steps:

- Speaking to one adult participant in each family before data collection and reiterating the main points of the conversation in a follow up email.

- Checking all family members had read the information leaflet and signed the consent form.
- Briefings before each stage of the research process as to what the subsequent stage entailed.

The consent forms were completed in two stages. The first part of the form, signed at the outset of the research, outlined what the research involved. The second part of the form, signed at the end of the data collection process, stipulated agreements regarding the use of data from each household. See Appendices Three and Four.

Gaining consent from children

The issue of capacity to consent is an elusive issue for young people but it is clear that ability to consent cannot be on the basis of age alone (Kirk 2007, Wills et al. 2008, Wills 2012). Capacity is decision and context specific (Shaw et al. 2011), in other words children may have capacity to consent to some research procedures and not others. For example, children may easily be able to consent to using visual methods but not necessarily understand the implications of disseminating these images in academic publications. Given these factors, a family decision-making model was used in this study, engaging children in the process alongside their parents (Gibson et al. 2011).

A specific junior consent form was designed for children in the study (see Appendix Five). This form was completed by children in cases where both I and the parent or caregiver deemed the child capable of understanding the concepts and language presented. I discussed the form with the child in the presence of the caregiver to confirm their comprehension. On-going verbal consent was obtained from all the children in the presence of their caregivers.

3.10.3 Ethical issues specific to the use of visual methods

There has been a professional consensus that the use of visual methodologies presents its own set of ethical issues (Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth 1999, BSA 2002, BSA 2006). These professional bodies have published guidelines on the key ethical areas which are driven by: legal regulations, professional guidelines and the research community.

Informed consent in the context of visual research applies both to the permission to take photographic or video material and consent on how and where it is used (Wiles et al. 2008). In this study, all of the visual materials were provided by the participants so the main concern was how the materials would be utilised. Prior to the final interview, all family members were asked to review all of the data produced by the household members. At the conclusion of the study, participants completed a written consent form specifying permitted usage of this data (see Appendices Four and Five). This is a common method of working and provided clarity for both the participants and the researcher (Holliday 2004, Wiles et al. 2008, Clark 2012).

3.10.4 Safety

Although the research environment for this study was not considered high risk, I was in the home of unknown persons, which did pose potential dangers. A lone researcher policy established by my academic School at the University of Hertfordshire, was adhered to during all visits. This required that a member of the supervisory team was informed of my arrival to and departure from a visit and was given instructions on what actions to take if I failed to make contact by an agreed time. These details were also given to one of my own family members. In Spain, my details were also given to a contact at the Spanish university. A formal record of all research visits was compiled, as well all details of travel arrangements.

3.10.5 Data protection

At the outset of the study, data protection procedures were informed by the *The Data Protection Act* (HMSO 1998) and by academic research guidelines (Strobl et al. 2000, Ritchie et al. 2013). In 2018 the GDPR was introduced and all data protection measures were verified against changes in legislation (Politou et al. 2018).

The following measures were taken to ensure data protection:

- Access to research materials was limited to the research team. All paper copies of documents, audio and visual data were stored in a locked filing cabinet.
- Electronic copies, transcripts, photos, audio and video data were stored on a secure, password-protected university hard drive.

- All personal information such as names and contact information of the participants (including consent forms) were locked in a separate filing cabinet apart from the transcripts, video, audio and photographic data.
- Where data needed to be reviewed by the research team, this was either accessed via the secure university file sharing system or viewed directly from a transcript or hard disc. No research materials were shared via email.
- Explicit consent was given for all the data that was stored. No data was kept that was not relevant to the study.
- Personal information will be kept for a maximum of two years and other information relevant to the study will be kept for a maximum of ten years from the end of the study.

3.11 Overview

This chapter has illustrated the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the methodological approach as well as the details of the research processes undertaken. The next chapter adds more contextual detail on the families in the study. This is followed by three chapters on the findings, which elaborate on the three conceptual themes derived from the data analysis.

Chapter Four: Introduction to findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to bridge the theoretical and methodological concepts of the study with the findings that follow in Chapters Five to Seven. Firstly, it provides a backdrop of the participating households by positioning the families in a socio-cultural framework. Secondly, it examines the structural conditions in Spain and the UK in order to contextualise practices according to organisational settings in each country. The final part of this section introduces the themes of the subsequent chapters and places them in theoretical context. The aim is to reconcile theory developed in the preceding chapters with the 'real life' families in the study.

4.2 Families and Social Distinction

It was not the intention of the study to represent the experiences of the whole socio-cultural spectrum in either country, but indicators of social position were necessary to contextualise practices within the theoretical framework. Bourdieu identifies three types of capital, which, according to his theories on distinction, influence the habitus and thereby perpetuate social divisions (Bourdieu 2011). These are economic capital (wealth and income), social capital (networks and social cohesion) and cultural capital. Cultural capital is then further distinguished into three categories; institutionalized (educational credentials), embodied (a tacit understanding of legitimate knowledge and taste) and objectified (possession of goods with symbolic meaning).

Given this theoretical perspective, it was considered useful to classify families in a way that was aligned with the conceptual tool of capital. The analysis of social stratification is notoriously complex (Borrell et al. 2001, Marmot 2005, Marmot et al. 2008, Pickett, Wilkinson 2015). Both in Spain and the UK, social divisions have traditionally been defined in terms of occupation (Alonso et al. 1997, Savage et al. 2013) but this demarcation does not take account of cultural and social assets. More recently in the UK, a new model of social organisation has been established, which identifies seven social groups based on levels of each form of capital. In line with the theoretical framework of this study, this model recognises the importance of cultural assets alongside social and economic capital as indicators of social position (Savage et al.

2013). The model is summarised in Table 4.3. The elite, at one end of the spectrum have greater economic capital, high numbers of social contacts and highbrow cultural interests. Moving down the scale all forms of capital decrease progressively with the precariat being very low on each criterion.

In terms of cultural indicators the model acknowledges that, as well as highbrow forms of capital such as visiting theatres and museums, emerging forms of cultural capital now exist such as use of social media, sport, use of the internet and going to the gym (Prieur, Savage 2013). This system of classification is based on UK data but is also applicable in Spain where the disintegration of the rural working class population (Paniagua 2002) has prompted discussion over appropriate modes of social stratification (Perales, Herrera-Usagre 2010, Domingo-Salvany et al. 2013). Recent understanding of social division in Spain acknowledges the role of existing and emerging forms of cultural capital (Fernández 2012, Bayón 2013).

The participants were not questioned directly on markers of capital, apart from their level of education and home ownership, but further information became evident through observations and interviews. Indicators of economic cultural capital were disclosed through discussions of parents' professions, shared family activities and children's extracurricular interests. Social capital was more problematic to disentangle but became apparent through discussions of guests invited to share family meals and of social eating occasions outside of the home (Alvarez et al. 2017). On the basis of this information, families were broadly classified according to levels of capital as illustrated in tables 4.4 and 4.5. Although this stratification is limited by certain gaps in data and cannot claim to be definitive, it provides invaluable structure to the analysis.

Table 4.1: The new model of social class (Savage et al. 2013)

Social Class	Description	Examples of over-represented professions
Elite	Very high economic capital (especially savings), high social capital, very high highbrow cultural capital	CEOs, judges, public relations directors
Established Middle Class	High economic capital, high status contacts, high highbrow and emerging cultural capital	Senior health professionals, Teaching professionals
Technical Middle Class	High economic capital, high number of social contacts, moderate level of cultural interests	Higher education teachers, business, research positions.
New Affluent Workers	Moderate level of economic capital, moderate levels of social contacts, moderate highbrow cultural capital but good levels of emerging cultural capital	Housing officers, retail, catering assistants
Traditional Working Class	Moderately poor economic capital, few social contacts, low highbrow and emerging cultural capital	Secretaries, care workers, drivers, cleaners
Emergent Service workers	Moderately poor economic capital, though with reasonable household income, moderate social contacts, high emerging (but low highbrow) cultural capital	Bar staff, care workers, musicians
Precariat	Poor economic capital, and low on every other form of capital	Cleaners, van drivers, care workers

Table 4.2: UK families and social stratification

Family* (Age of child)	**Indicators of cultural/social capital**	**Indicators of Economic Capital**	**Social Position****
UK1: Rose, Neil, Lizzy (7), Tom (9)	Parents: Graduates, work as teachers. Children participate in orchestra, gymnastics, interest in social media, theatre.	Own home. Own car. Children have own room.	Established Middle Class
UK2: Flo, Milo (5), Sam (8), Maddy (16)	Mother is graduate. Works as full-time foster parent. Mother in book club, likes classical music. Children in horse riding club.	Own home. Own car.	Established /Technical Middle Class
UK3: Natasha, John, Amy (5) Arthur (7), Ben (15), Lucy (16)	Both parents are graduates. Father works as a nurse. Mother works part time for theatre company. Interest in arts, music, and social media.	Own house. Own car. Younger children share room.	Established /Technical Middle Class
UK4: Alice, Paul, Rob (15), Frank & Karen (13)	Both parents are graduates and are employed social workers. Father works full time. Mother works part-time. Visit art galleries.	Own home. Children have own rooms. Employ cleaner.	Established Middle Class
UK5: Sally, Peter, Millie (5), Ava (7)	Neither parents have higher education. Mother works in flower shop. Father drives and cooks for catering firm. Interest in sport, cinema.	Live in social housing, Children share room.	Traditional Working Class
UK6: Louise, James, Rory (10), Patty (12)	Neither parents have higher education. Father works in sales. Mother is housing assistant. Interest in fitness, exercise classes.	Own home. Children have own rooms.	New affluent workers
UK7: Tracey, Pippa (10)	Mother has no higher education. Mother works as care assistant.	Rent two-bedroom house.	Traditional Working Class
UK8: Sylvie, Alan, Leah (8), Bea (10)	Both parents are graduates. Mother gymnastics teacher. Father, civil servant	Own home. Children have own room.	Technical Middle Class
UK9: Hayley, Tim (9) Indigo (11)	Mother is English teacher. Theatre-goers, mother is in a book and has taken part in cookery clubs.	Rents 3-bedroom house.	Established middle class
UK10: Melanie, Poppy (14), Anthony (16)	Mother has no higher education. Works as secretary.	Owns home. Children have own rooms.	Traditional Working Class

*All names given are pseudonyms **Based on The New Model of Social Class (Savage et al. 2013)

Table 4.3: Spanish families and social stratification

Family* (Age of child)	**Indicators of cultural/social capital**	**Indicators of Economic Capital**	**Social Position****
SP1: Nina, Juan, Martha (6), Jose (9)	Both parents are graduates. Work as medical doctors.	Live in gated block with swimming pool. Own home. Own car. Children have own rooms. Employ cleaner.	Established Middle Class
SP2: Maria, Alejandro, Frieda (6), Alec (9)	Neither parents have higher education. Mother is office administrator. Father is car salesman.	Live in gated apartment block. Own home. Own car. Children have own rooms.	New affluent workers
SP3: Claudia, Jose Antonio, Mercedes (13), Pablo (16)	Both parents are graduates and secondary school teachers. Interested in organic movement, world music,	Live in gated block. Own home & car. Children have own rooms.	Established Middle Class
SP4: Ines, Francisco, Alfonso (5) Georgiou (9)	Both parents are graduates. Father works at geneticist at University. Mother is scientific researcher.	Live in town house in wealthy area. Own home. Own electric car. Children have own room. Employ cleaner.	Established middle class
SP5: Ella, Marco, Natalia (9), Maya (13)	Mother works as midwife. Father works in commerce. Children have private music and language classes.	Live in apartment block in fairly deprived area. Rent home. Own car. Children have own room.	Established middle class
SP6: Leticia, Antonio, Isabella (8), Rufo (12)	Both parents are graduates. Mother is housewife. Father is sales executive.	Flat in central area. Own home. Own car. Children have own rooms.	Established middle class
SP7: Ima, Felix, Mateo (8), Pepe (11), David (16)	Neither parents have higher education. Mother works in clothes shop. Father sells building merchandise.	Rent flat in area of social housing. Share car with family member. Two children share room.	Traditional Working class
SP8: Maria Jose, Franco, Nuria (9), Nancy (11)	Neither parents have higher education. Mother works in fast food restaurant and father paints cars.	Rent flat. Own car. Children have own room	Emergent service sector
SP9: Larissa, Felipe, Kiko (15), Alicia (13)	Neither parents have higher education. Mother is a cleaner and father is a caretaker.	Rent flat. Children have own room.	Precariat
SP10: Paca, Juan Pablo, Guillermo (6)	Mother is a housewife. Father runs a tea shop.	Rent flat. Own car. Only child shares room with parents.	Traditional working class

*All names given are pseudonyms *Based on The New Model of Social Class (Savage et al. 2013)

4.3 Overview of structural conditions

The study was conducted in one city in Spain and one in the UK. Cross-country variations in the structural conditions relating to food, eating and shopping are outlined in the following sections. The findings are based on the fieldwork conducted in each country, in particular when observing surrounding neighbourhoods on visits to each household.

In the UK, all of the families lived in houses, with more than one storey. Two of these were in rural areas on the outskirts of the city (UK1, UK2) and the remaining households in residential areas closer to the city centre. In Spain, 9 of the 10 families lived in flats within apartment blocks, varying in size and style. One family (SP4) lived in a terraced townhouse. All the homes were within 5km of the city centre. Families SP1 and SP2 lived in a quiet, residential gated block with a communal swimming pool and the other families in lived in apartment blocks on busier urban streets.

4.3.1 Shopping and food prices in Spain and the UK

With the exception of SP7 and SP10 all of the Spanish families' homes were within short walking distance of a medium sized supermarket where the families did the majority of their shopping, several times during the week. The two other families shopped in similar outlets situated a within a five-minute car ride from their homes. This pattern of shopping is common in Spain, whereas in the UK, as confirmed in this study, there is greater tendency to use larger supermarkets often located on the periphery of towns and cities (Colomé, Serra 2000). All of the families in the UK used supermarkets either in the outskirts of the city or in the town centre to do their main food shop for the week. None of the families had a supermarket within walking distance of their homes but all lived in walking distance of a small convenience shop. The supermarkets mentioned by food providers were chosen for price (UK3, UK7, UK10) and for convenience of location (UK2, UK5, UK6, UK7).

In Spain, families across the social spectrum discussed the additional use of specialist shops (bakeries, fishmongers, butchers) to purchase specific foods, in some cases for the pursuit of better quality (SP2, SP3,SP4, SP9) and sometimes for reasons of economy (SP6, SP7, SP10). Shopping for food outside of the supermarket was only

discussed by the families with higher cultural and economic capital in the UK; one used a butcher's regularly (UK1) one used a health food shop (UK4) and two received a weekly vegetable box delivery (UK2, UK8). This reflects the idea that such schemes are predominantly adopted by affluent professionals in the UK (Brown et al. 2009) despite an extensive review highlighting the growth of a broader consumer base for alternative food networks such as these (Venn et al. 2006).

4.3.2 Schedules

School and work schedules were different in each country and this influenced when families consumed the main meal of the day. Spanish children all started school at approximately 8.30am and had lunch at around 1.30-2pm. In the case of some of the younger children this was the end of the school day. There was school lunch provision in all of the schools attended by the Spanish children but only one family (SP4), whose children were in private education, took this option. All of the other children ate with family at lunchtime. After lunch, older children then returned to school for approximately two hours until approximately 4.30-5pm.

Many of the parents in Spain had working schedules that were compatible with their children's school days, allowing them to eat lunch, (generally considered the main meal of the day) as a family. In two families, where parents were unable to synchronise their schedules with their offspring, children ate with grandparents at lunchtime (SP2, SP8). The evening meal in Spain was always after 8pm, which reduced the possibility of mealtimes conflicting with children's extracurricular activities.

In the UK, all of the children followed a similar schedule, starting school between 8.30 and 9am and finishing between 3 and 3.30pm. All of the children ate lunch at school and all of the families ate their main meal in the evening on weekdays. After-school activities were often scheduled in the early evening and in some cases caused disruption to mealtime schedules. Shared family meals in the evening generally took place between 5.30 pm and 7pm. Parents' working schedules appeared to be more varied in the UK and food providers explained that on some days it was logistically challenging for the family to eat together.

4.3.3 Mealtime social networks

A number of the Spanish families (SP2, SP6, SP8) lived in close proximity to extended family, mainly grandparents, who were able to help with food provision. Two families regularly included siblings (of parents) and their children in shared mealtimes (SP8, SP10). Extended family was also discussed in relation to larger celebratory meals and special occasions (SP1, SP2, SP3, SP7). In the UK, extended family were also often discussed in this context (UK1, UK3, UK6, UK9, UK10) but rarely in relation to everyday meals. However, in the UK, there was much greater reference to non-kin social networks at mealtimes: families discussed how school friends might join them for mealtimes, or that they might invite other families to eat with them. The inclusion of friends at mealtimes within the home was not discussed or observed in any of the Spanish families. However, a number of families discussed joining friends or other families to eat outside of the home. Eating out was not included in defined as a family meal by any participants in either country.

4.4 Overview of findings

This following three chapters in this dissertation categorise the findings according to the key conceptual themes identified in Chapter Three. Chapter Five examines the role of food work in the social construction of conviviality from the conceptualization and crafting of a meal to the practical endeavours to ensure mealtime harmony. It questions if and how food labour can be reconciled with convivial experiences. Ideals are studied from an alternative perspective in Chapter Six, which delineates children and young peoples' lived experience of mealtime pleasure. Their preferences are examined through their ubiquitous predilection for TV viewing at mealtimes and the associations they draw with this practice. Chapter Seven revisits Bourdieu's idea of capital and employs this conceptual tool to highlight how social divisions influence convivial dining. The chapters are sequenced in this way to enable the reader to develop an understanding of the tacit and explicit ways food providers consider conviviality in their meal time design, how their ideals corroborate and contradict with young people's accounts and finally how, the practices of all family members are shaped by socio-cultural determinants.

Chapter Five: Who makes the 'happy meal'? Food work and conviviality

5.1 Introduction

A key objective at the outset of this study was to examine *how* families take account of conviviality in their construction of meals. The data quickly revealed a pertinent question in this regard was '*Who* constructs conviviality?'. Meal times do not just occur spontaneously, they are carefully crafted events that require somebody to co-ordinate schedules and anticipate divergent needs, in addition to purchasing and preparing foods. This chapter is concerned with the manner in which enjoyment is embedded into these processes. It explores how food providers conceptualise enjoyable meals and what steps, if any, they take to achieve them. The chapter also questions how the practical and emotional work entailed in mealtime construction impacts on food providers' enjoyment.

The study did not set out to look at gender differences in the division of food labour, a subject that has been previously explored in the literature (Charles, Kerr 1988, DeVault 1994, Artazcoz et al. 2004, Cairns, Johnston 2015). Nevertheless, this emerged as relevant in both countries. In the ten dual parent households in Spain, only three men made any significant contributions to food work. In the six partnered families in the UK - despite evidence that male input was greater - women still undertook greater responsibility for this aspect of domestic labour. In this regard, it should be noted that of the six dual parent households in the UK, only two men participated in the initial interview designated for the main food providers; in the ten Spanish dual parent households, three men took part. A major consequence of this, were fewer opportunities for men to directly articulate their experience of food provision. The manner in which men negotiated pleasure and food labour was often conveyed through the lens and voice of women.

The focus in this chapter is not so much on how food work is divided, but how individuals experience and negotiate the pleasures of cooking in a context where women undertake an inequitable share of the food work. While there may be an historical association between women and feeding families, there has been more emphasis on the gendered experience of nurturing through food rather than the

pleasurable elements of this role (DeVault 1994, Cairns, Johnston 2015). This chapter examines how, in addition to gender, factors such as country and social class are interwoven into the complex way family food pleasures are experienced and articulated.

Most food providers across the study shared a desire to create family mealtimes that were a positive experience and made attempts to embed enjoyment into their framework of mealtime construction. However, this chapter is not based on an underlying assumption that families endeavour to 'create conviviality' or find the crafting or execution of mealtimes pleasurable. From a Bourdieusian standpoint, constructing the idea of food work as enjoyable, is a manifestation of class-specific privilege (Bourdieu 1984). This chapter also highlights cases where conviviality was not a priority for food providers.

5.2 Constructing meals in the UK: Planning for harmony

There were marked cross-cultural differences in the aspects of the meal food providers esteemed and prioritised in each country. In the UK, families recurrently alluded to enjoying the opportunity to inhabit the same physical space and the idea of the meal being a time for familial cohesion. For some, a major step in achieving these objectives was ensuring that individual food requirements were catered for. Natasha, a UK mother who works freelance in the theatre industry, exemplifies the range of considerations involved in organizing a meal that brings the family together amicably. She cooks for her two biological children (Arthur and Amy aged six and eight) and her two teenage stepchildren (Ben and Lucy aged 15 and 16) every weekday evening:

Natasha: It's an important time for everyone to enjoy and be together… so… and it makes me feel old… I spend the weekend… it's just…I have to plan what I'm going to cook or eat what we're going to eat throughout the whole of the week because… I've got to work and that's always different, so I need to know how much I've got to spend on it, so I have to do a meal plan for the whole of the week, but my eldest daughters just become vegetarian. She's really, really, weight conscious. …. So, I have, I 'm now cooking really healthy nutritional beans and rice and blah…. At the same time trying to cook for the little two that won't eat that kind of stuff …so I have to have kind of a

set menu and I try and cook something new every week. [Laughs] because otherwise it just becomes the same, the same, the same. Ah I can't bear. I can't bear it.

Natasha believes that accommodating individual tastes at the dinner table pre-empts possible tensions over food and impacts on the enjoyment of the meal. On a limited and variable budget, she provides meals (both vegetarian and meat options) that meet the taste requirements of her husband and her children aged 5 to 16. Observations reveal that everyone serves themselves at the dinner table and the younger children (aged five and eight) have their own designated serving bowls with foods that cater to their needs. Yet in spite of these special efforts, the children were not obliged to eat anything they did not wish to. For Natasha, giving the children this freedom, is conducive to the convivial atmosphere she endeavours to create. Natasha owns a variety of recipe books and uses them for inspiration. Varying recipes alleviates potential monotony in her role. She gains pleasure in the creative tasks of food provision (thinking, planning and preparation, '*bringing it all together*') but demonstrates less enthusiasm for the practical aspects of the role and, notably, she does not consider herself to be a good cook. The pleasure she derives from these occasions is not from the 'doing' cooking but from 'doing family'. Her description of mealtimes centre on interactions and connections as opposed to food:

Natasha: I love it. I love making lots of food, putting it on the table and then everybody just knowing how to make the other person laugh…and also and spending that time when you're all together you know that you're all sitting down together and everyone's going to communicate with each other.

John, Natasha's husband reiterates the same mealtime values as Natasha, he acknowledges the agency of children at the dinner table, the importance of them choosing their own food and making mealtimes playful occasions:

John: I was very much a post war, stiff upper lip family who… where children were seen and not heard. I've completely not got that and I don't like that attitude…the mealtime is for everyone and we make an effort for it to be relaxed…

The ‘we’ he mentions in terms of this effort is predominantly Natasha, who, both parents agree, does ‘*eighty per-cent*’ of the food work. However, John, according to Natasha and the children, is the accomplished cook of the family. He cooks for special occasions, parties at weekends and on holidays. John is equally committed to providing food that everyone enjoys and to promoting their family values at the dinner table, but as Natasha laments, he is less able to reconcile these ideals with other factors such as nutrition and budget.

Natasha: Yeah because if my husband goes [shopping], as he does sometimes, we don’t have enough food for the week and he brings back loads of cake. They’ll be doughnuts and things in there that I would go. WE DON’T NEED THAT! [Laughs]. And then yeah he is the cake man. Everyone knows him. All of our friends know him as… He loves making cake. He loves buying cake. He loves going out for cake. He’s thin as anything…Yeah, he really enjoys food. I mean all aspects of food.

John, according to his wife is able to ‘*enjoy all aspects of food*’ but for Natasha this is with some disregard for wider the needs of the family. The difference he illustrates may be one of responsibility. Natasha like many of the women in the study, considers herself to be responsible for the food work whereas John is a contributor. Both family members engage in practical tasks designed to make mealtimes ‘fun’ but John plays a supporting role and is dependent on Natasha attending to the other practical considerations necessary for food provision. John is able to experience a more unadulterated pleasure from food and the task of food work. He describes in detail the foods he likes to cook and eat with the family including cakes, cooked breakfasts, barbeques and ‘camping food’. For John, food work is about food, for Natasha it is about family.

A similar dynamic is evident in other families. Rose and Neil are both teachers in a further education college and parents to two children Tom and Lizzy aged eight and eleven. They are also great believers in the family meal as an arena for communication and like Natasha and John they describe a pleasure derived from the family cohesion that mealtimes facilitate.

Rose: Oh Yes I really enjoy eating together, being together like that. What is it? A family that eats together stays together.

Interviewer: Oh right, do you really believe that?

Rose: Yes I do. I dunno there's something, yeah erm I don't know but we always ate together as a family when I was a child and (a bit like us) there were days when dad wouldn't be home from work but we always sat at a table to eat and talk about our days. I liked, I like that time together…it was only when I went to university that I actually met somebody who had an issue about food and it was a real shock to me and I was 22…

What Rose implies here, is that eating together not only serves to keep a family together by opening up lines of communication but also fosters a healthy relationship with food. Yet food itself is not a great focus of the mealtime for her. Rose concedes that her cooking is a '*bit slap dash*'. She is ambivalent about this domestic role, which she shares with her husband:

Rose: Yeah, I don't mind. I don't mind doing it. Absolutely if I've got the ingredients and I know what I'm gonna cook and I think if we had more time, if I had more time, I would go I'm going to get a recipe book out and make something… but I start chopping green stuff and…*Err but I cook one pot wonders…I'm not a very good…I don't think I'm a very good cook…whereas you [indicates husband] you cook really fancy stuff.*

Although Rose may not gain great enjoyment from cooking, this does not appear to impact her enjoyment or pride in shared mealtimes. Rose derives pleasure from the unity of the occasion. Neil reiterates Rose's values, he claims that they are '*a real, family, family*'; he explains that he and his wife had similar upbringings and share the same understanding of mealtimes. However, Neil's experience of food work is quite different to that of Rose:

Neil: For me I can use cooking as switching off. Does that make sense?

Interviewer: Yes

Neil: Whereas you [indicates his wife] can see it as more of a chore sometimes

Rose: Sometimes but…but um when Neil cooks…

Neil: This is…

Rose: Neil cooks beautiful food. He's a much better cook than me but he's a dirty, dirty cook so he will use every pan in the house and he doesn't clear up along the way. (Laughs) so…

Neil: That…that's a myth

Rose: It's not a myth

Neil: It's an absolute myth

Rose: Neil will cook, whatever he cooks …but I think that's why I tend to cook one-pot meals. Less washing up…we have got a dishwasher now but Neil will cook and I'll look and I'll go it's like Armageddon.

Neil: So, it doesn't actually matter about the food, what she sees is the pans.

For Neil, cooking is a pleasure, an escape. Neil, unlike his wife, is a confident cook and likes experimenting with food, yet he is less inclined to participate in the aspects of the food work he does not find enjoyable (as confirmed by the children and mealtime observations) such as the washing up. Neil berates Rose for not appreciating his culinary efforts and she highlights his lack of domestic diligence. Neil takes on a significant (if not equitable) share of the cooking but he approaches the role differently to his wife. He cooks the food he enjoys (beans, meat and '*man food'*) and when time is limited, the family reveal, it is Neil who will prepare convenience food such as, pizza or chicken nuggets and chips. He creates conviviality by choosing foods everyone enjoys, but observations reveal that he does not demonstrate the same commitment to the wider aspects of food work such as working around schedules, nutrition, or enforcing food rules.

For many of the food providers, particularly the male participants, food work was synonymous with cooking rather than any of the other tasks related to feeding a family. It is predominantly cooking that many participants discussed in regard to their

enjoyment of food work. Louise a housing assistant, married to James a salesman and mother of two children (Rory and Patty aged 10 and 12) concedes that she is not the cook of the family and her husband James does most of the cooking, '*not to help her out exactly*' but because '*he's the better cook'* and also because he enjoys it more than she does. Observations reveal that James' efforts are significant. In two observations, James has pre-prepared meals for the family and left them in pots ready to heat. He is not always present for shared meals due to an unpredictable work schedule, but his contribution allows Louise the freedom to focus on the aspect of the meal she enjoys, '*being with the family*'. This mirrors ideals expressed in many of the UK households:

Louise: *But it's nice that we are all together…that's what I… I really want, when we got this house, I thought…although its small… it was really good to have a kitchen diner cos I couldn't imagine going from one room to another. It's nice that we're all in the same room…*

Louise explains that James attaches the same importance to family mealtimes as she does; if he is late or cannot attend a meal, he contributes care and attention through the food he produces in advance. However, the children bring a different perspective to the discussion. They point out the different ways their parents approach cooking:

Patty: Well normally when dad's home he takes charge of the cooking but obviously mum would just do it when dad's away. So…

Interviewer: Who do you think enjoys cooking more? Do you think…or is it the same?

Rory: Dad enjoys it… making curries and…but he gets stressed out if…

Patty: Yeah…he like, if we're in the way. He makes us shut the doors and get out of the way.

[Laughter]

Louise: Yes, he does like a clear kitchen if he's cooking…so daddy likes to cook but he likes his own space to do it.

Patty: I think mummy might be better at cooking with people around and doing other things.

The children are able to appreciate their mother's ability to multi-task. Although their father may enjoy cooking and produce more elaborate food it is at the expense of the physical togetherness their mother values. For James cooking is a solitary experience, rather like the '*escape*' Neil describes, whereas for Louise the food and the cooking are secondary to her family; she involves the children and appreciates the way that preparing meals brings them together. These examples demonstrate how men seemed better able to derive an untainted enjoyment from the experience of cooking and eating. However, it appears that this is a more private, self-contained experience, rather than the pleasure of provision. For John this comes in the form of cakes, for Neil it is '*man food'* and for James it is solitude and escape. The women, on the other hand, appear to be comfortable in being less than accomplished cooks. The pleasure of mealtimes for these women and their families, they claim, comes from this, often single, daily opportunity to all be together and operate as a family unit.

Despite these gender differences, observations demonstrated that in the UK, both men and children had a greater role in food work compared to their Spanish counterparts. Even in (dual partnered) families where women claimed sole charge of cooking there was evidence of distribution of food labour. Alice, a social worker with three teenage children and Sylvie, a gymnastics teacher and mother of two girls aged eight and ten; both claim to enjoy the role of family cook but appreciate help from their partners with the more mundane aspects of food work. Paul, Alice's husband is the '*dishwasher*' and Alan, Sylvie's partner claims he cleans up '*the mess'* after a meal. Lone parent Hayley, encourages her children Tim and Indigo, (aged nine and eleven), to take an active part in mealtime preparation. Video diaries (made by the children) confirm their proficiency at stuffing baked potatoes with their own '*creative fillings'*, at making bread rolls and making drinks by mixing juices from the fridge. Hayley claims her children's role in the kitchen is partly educational (she would like her children to enjoy cooking) and in part necessity (she works full time and appreciates the help in the kitchen). Melanie, a secretary and lone parent of Poppy and Anthony (aged 14 and 16) shows how necessity has obliged *her* children to take an active role in food work:

Melanie: You know because there isn't another person...they have to. I'm not saying dads do that much [laughs] but she knows, she sees things that need to be done. She doesn't do it all the time but she will see things that need to be done and then when the mood takes her she'll do it. Ant does it but he needs a note left. I could have a sink full of dishes but if I don't leave a post it to say 'can you do the dishes', he doesn't see them...Yeah, yeah they both help me… its' good, some of their friends don't have a clue.

The value of children young and people's participation in food work was evident in a number of UK families. Children were observed engaging in various tasks related to the mealtime including setting and clearing the table, washing up and chopping vegetables. Although food providers expressed frustration at aspects of food provision, any form of co-production appeared to engender the cohesion that many families aimed to create. Sharing food work appeared to place fewer pressures on food providers to be purveyors of perfect meals and is consistent with the convivial ideal of the table as an equal playing field (Simmel 1997). However continued fieldwork revealed the focus on family cohesion came with its own set of pressures.

While the distribution of food work meant food providers were under less pressure to create the perfect meal, there *was* greater onus to create the perfect family. When constructing shared meals, many food providers in the UK took steps to create an arena for family cohesion such as sitting around a table and ensuring noise was reduced (TV and radios switched off) as well as specific routines to encourage all family members to talk about their day. Melanie, for example, explains that although she is often unable to provide some aspects of a proper meal, such as home-cooked food, one thing she can ensure is that she and her children '*sit up at the table*' and eat together. The idea of sharing some part of your day at the dinner table was frequently mentioned or observed and a number of food providers claimed that that they valued this opportunity to learn about their children's daily lives. However, this was inconsistent with the observations, where inquiries in some families appeared to halt discussions and responses seemed contrived or were monosyllabic.

Some food providers are fully aware of the challenge of mealtime communication. Alice and Paul are parents of three teenage children; Rob, Frank and Karen (aged 15, 13 and 13), only one of whom participated in any mealtime conversation during the observations, despite Alice's efforts to '*make mealtimes a time to chat'*. On most weekdays, Alice gets up early and '*sits at the breakfast table'* in order to coerce her teenagers to talk, sometimes, she laments, with limited success. Likewise Sally a florist and Peter a caterer, admit that their children (Millie and Ava aged five and seven) are often too tired to engage with their parents during evening meals, and these are sometimes perceived as functional feeding events. Others express frustration at their inability to create the mealtime harmony they wish for. Such disillusionment is commonplace for Sylvie, mother of two children Leah and Bea (aged 8 and 10), who in their videos claim to '*hate*' family dinners.

Sylvie: So sometimes they can be quite challenging mealtimes, quite stressful, so. Probably the same in other families…

Sylvie subscribes to the ideal of the family meal; she sets the dining table for evening meals, turns off the radio and takes care and attention over the food she prepares. She endeavours to create an environment where the family can converse and enjoy food. In observations, she expresses disappointment at her failure to achieve her ideals. Her comment illustrates how families measure themselves against a perceived norm; Sylvie probes the researcher several times in the interview for reassurance that her experience is not atypical.

Even in the most ostensibly convivial environments, tensions became apparent. In Natasha's household the initial interview and observations suggest she regularly achieves her mealtime objectives. Mealtimes observed and filmed by the younger children are playful, relaxed, filled with chatter and there was little conflict over food. However, the final interview revealed that in spite of the appearance of conviviality there were underlying tensions. Ben, Natasha's teenage stepson (aged 15) admitted that he found mealtimes '*stressful*'.

Interviewer: Why do you find mealtimes stressful?

Ben: Because they are really noisy…

Natasha: But you wouldn't want it to be boring and everyone just sitting and eating calmly?

Ben: That would be nice. Really nice

[General Laughter]

Although there is some humour in this confession, it is followed by a similar statement by his sister Lucy (aged 16) who admits that mealtime experiences can be overwhelming. Both teenagers enjoy eating at their friends' houses where there are no younger siblings. The two younger children in this family are less articulate in their accounts but reveal in the video data that '*pasta night in front of the TV*' is their favourite type of meal, an event that is only scheduled once a week. On hearing these comments in the final interview, John, Natasha's husband who previously prided himself on their relaxed, playful mealtimes, presented a new perspective:

John: It's just like … sitting around the table and just nattering and sometimes that is easier to do when these guys [younger children] are out. In the summertime they can just go and play out on the trampoline and stuff as well. I quite often breathe a sigh of relief when they've finished and they say can we get down from the table and then I can actually concentrate on eating my food in a peaceful environment.

Although the mealtime environment certainly brings the family together it may not be the arena for communication and conviviality that Natasha aspires to. With such a wide range of ages, tastes and needs to cater for, the idea of this being an arena for open communication for everyone may be unrealistic. Other families are more realistic in their expectations of mealtimes and of food work. For example, Tracey, a lone parent, mother of Pippa aged 10, also adheres to the notion of the family meal as an important moment to be '*together as a family'* but does not express the idea that any particular aspect of the event needs to be enjoyable. In observations, meals are short and fairly functional, and Tracey explains they usually just eat and '*get on with stuff*'.

Tracey: We don't actually eat the same things all the time, um, which is a bit tricky but no I suppose its [cooking] not something I love. I prefer either going to my mum's, eating out or somebody cooking for us really.

There was one UK family who do did seem to regularly achieve the ideal of togetherness that other UK parents aspired to. Flo is a UK lone, long-term foster parent of two boys aged five and eight and her biological daughter Maddy aged 16. As a foster parent, Flo sees the mealtime as an important focus for the social development of the children under her long-term care, who came from what she describes as '*difficult backgrounds'*. The mealtime is carefully manufactured and contains prescriptive elements that Flo has implemented to create what she feels is an enjoyable meal. At first, she admits, this felt a little contrived but now she believes the mealtime routine is second nature.

Flo: We do a lot...well you'll see we share our day at the dinner table, the highlights of our day, the low lights. You know. Maybe something funny that's happened. You know we share everything like that and then quite often after dinner we will clear away and then we'll play a game together. I think it's a really nice time to bring the family together. I just think there is something about sharing food isn't there and taking time over sharing food and bringing people together to share.

There is little doubt that the family adheres to these mealtime rituals. During observations, the family members all enquire about each other's days seamlessly as part of the mealtime conversation; the boys give articulate replies and mention that this is a part of the mealtime they really enjoy. They spend some time discussing mealtime options (the boys have two choices at mealtimes; a vegetarian and a meat-based meal). Food choice can sometimes be a source of tension, but otherwise meals appear to be harmonious. The family end every evening meal with an educational board game.

Flo: Yeah, I get pleasure out of us all being together and eating all together and I think especially with the little boys because they were neglected so badly when they were little, d'y know that food was such a big deal to them when they came, d'y know and it really brought home how important it is…

However, what becomes clear through multiple visits is that although Flo may enjoy this task, it comes with significant sacrifices for her. Flo has rarely been absent from a mealtime with the children. Preparing and being present for every evening meal, means she cannot participate in other activities such as an evening class she was interested in, or the local cinema club. On the final mealtime observation, Flo did in fact attempt an evening out, leaving her eldest daughter in charge. Although Flo was actually present for the meal, her distraction from the process and imminent departure caused the mealtime structure to disintegrate:

Flo put spaghetti on four plates but there were only a couple of mouthfuls on her plate, it was really just a token amount just to join in. Maddy grated cheese on top of one plate of spaghetti bolognaise and shouted to the next room to see if the boys wanted cheese too. I sensed her rush at just getting the boys fed. …The meal was fast, functional and pretty much silent... The boys were much quieter than usual and wanted Flo to stay and play a game…It really struck me how things changed when Flo was not totally focused on feeding the family and had other commitments. (Field notes: April 2015).

Flo's care and attention to the meal preparation, her commitment to the conversation and post prandial activities are all vital components of the meal and without them, or without her co-ordinating them, there is a feeling of unease. On the evening of this observation, she admitted that the mealtime schedule could be challenging. Due to the importance she placed on sharing food with the boys, she never ate at times she was actually hungry (the evening meal took place between 4.30 and 5pm to fit with the children's schedule) and was never available to eat meals with other adults at a more conventional time. Her role as the meal organiser comes at a price, but for Flo this is acceptable. As a foster parent, this type of task is an element of both her professional and home life and as a lone parent she takes sole responsibility for the task. However, for other working mothers, the struggle between pleasure and labour is more apparent. Food providers worked hard to construct a particular type of meal, but there was evidence that devoting excessive time to the task impeded on their ability to enjoy the pleasurable meal they were creating.

5.3 Constructing meals in Spain: The pleasure of preserving tradition

In both countries, families revealed normative mealtime values through the aspects of the event they esteemed. Whereas in the UK, the focal point of mealtime construction was family cohesion, in Spain there was greater emphasis on wider food traditions, adherence to local culinary rituals and broader references to regional and local ways of eating. This interest in conviviality in this study arose from circulating discourses on the Mediterranean diet and a number of families appeared to contextualise mealtime pleasures within this framework. The concept of regional food traditions was often discussed by food providers in terms of the ideologies that underpinned their mealtimes. 'Spanish' and 'Mediterranean' foods appeared to be synonymous concepts and participants used the terms interchangeably. Food heritage, seasonal foods, rituals and quality were key components in the crafting of mealtime. The importance of family unity was also apparent in discussions but this often took a secondary role to the food and the way it was presented and prepared.

Paca is a Spanish housewife, living in the deprived outskirts of the city, with her husband Juan Pablo and their six-year-old son Guillermo. She exemplifies the ideology of tradition. Paca explains, '*the most important thing for your family is food…I make traditional food because it's what I like and I like to be the one who does it'.* Paca associates traditional food with her traditional role. She has made the decision to stay at home so she can take on this position of cook and makes meals not only for her immediate family but prepares dishes to take to her elderly parents in law, who live in the flat above. Observations and visual data from this household were certainly consistent with the ideology of Mediterranean food culture: beautifully presented regional dishes, the presence of extended family and lively conversation and laughter.

Paca claims her pleasure on these occasions is derived from preparing home cooked foods, using local ingredients and preserving what she perceives as dying customs. She echoes circulating ideas about the importance of preserving regional food practices and she takes pleasure in reviving them. She makes several references to going back to cooking like her grandmother, who cooked '*in the traditional way*'. Her grandmother did not work and cooked for a large extended family so Paca is not only

reproducing her recipes but also emulating her role in the family. The two appear to be inextricably linked.

The idea of pleasure in preserving tradition is echoed by another Spanish mother who was very keen to participate in the study. Nina is a GP, who has done research on the Mediterranean diet and is well versed on the nutritional aspects of this way of eating. She is mother of two children Martha and José aged seven and ten and lives in a purpose-built apartment in a gated block. Nina, who puts on an apron as soon as she comes in from her morning surgery, takes full care of all the meal provision in her home. Her husband, Juan, also a doctor, works similar hours but, according to his wife, has no interest in cooking. She claims, however, that he supports *her* endeavours '*to nourish the children and create family life'*. In practical terms his help does not extend beyond a '*quick trip to the supermarket'* or clearing a few dishes from the dinner table. Nina refers with pride to her '*Mediterranean cooking'*, and says she enjoys this aspect of housework. Like Paca, she produces carefully presented, home cooked dishes for the mealtime observations, which all of her family appear to appreciate. She claims she is happy to take full responsibility for meals. '*I do everything…I do everything because I like it*' she says with a smile. '*Cooking… I like to take charge of it. … I used to like it even more because I had more time but yes it's the bit of housework I like the most*'. Again, there is an association with the traditional foods and her role in the family. She has a demanding career but she feels that cooking for her family is her remit and claims to enjoy this aspect of family life.

Like Nina, Ines, a full-time scientist and mother of two boys aged five and eight has taken on the role of family cook. She explains that her husband Francisco, also a scientific researcher, doesn't enjoy cooking but '*helps by doing the shopping'*. In observations, it is clear that Ines takes sole charge of preparing and serving foods as well as supervising what the children eat. Francisco does, however, contribute to practical tasks such as clearing dishes from the table and loading the dishwasher. Ines says she '*likes cooking for the family'* and again makes reference to the Mediterranean diet, which she interprets as cooking the way '*her mother instilled in her*'. *Her* mother, however, did not work outside the home and so re-enacting her childhood mealtimes may be an unattainable goal. She also remembers her father was rarely present at

mealtimes but insists that *her* own family, including her husband, eat together. The possibility that this might be driven by external ideologies, rather than personal experience is reinforced by her well-thumbed recipe book *Culinaria Spain,* a large, hardback about Spanish and Mediterranean culinary traditions, written in English. The book is peppered with images of rural food scenes including images of Spanish women serving home cooked foods. Ines says a great deal of the food she cooks come from this book that she bought on a trip to London.

Above: Photographs from family SP4 show Ines' favourite cookery book. Photos were taken by her son to represent the foods the family cook.

Ines, like Paca and Nina, demonstrate an adherence to Mediterranean tradition both in the food they present and the role they embrace. Continued fieldwork and subsequent interviews reveal that the pleasure derived from this role also comes with challenges and sacrifice.

Nina: I like it (cooking) but…I have to plan a lot in advance because I work, so sometimes as soon as I've finished eating one meal, I'm making the next. Or at night I'll be making the meal for the next day ….I like it but… day to day to cooking, because at times you run out of ideas, or you don't have the time or the ingredients or you're tired and you don't feel like cooking…that's day to day cooking. Generally I like to cook myself so I can season things the way I like, I can use the ingredients that I like and above all because I like it. At times I'm a bit short for time but I do like cooking.

It is noticeable how often Nina reiterates that she 'likes' cooking as a prelude to discussing the challenges of this task. It is important to her that her enjoyment is explicit to the interviewer. Yet, it becomes clear through the observations that meal preparation is exhausting for her. After their evening meal, she often cooks until 11pm to have food prepared for the next day. Her reasoning for this commitment does not always lack coherence and appears to be idealistic rather than pragmatic. Nina mentions she has a '*home help*' who supports her with a number of domestic tasks and is capable of making lunchtime meals but prefers to cook the way '*she likes'*, which she reveals is synonymous with '*what her family likes'* and needs. It becomes evident that the underlying reasoning for her practices is complex and goes beyond meeting nutritional and taste requirements. In the final interview, Nina concedes that on rare occasions she resorts to giving the children a shop-bought pizza but admits this makes her feel uncomfortable, as she prefers to make her own pizza from scratch. Her discomfort and guilt appear to arise, not from providing a meal that is nutritionally inadequate (the two versions of pizza appear to be comprised of similar ingredients), but from not engaging in the act of cooking for her family. Food work is not, as Nina first describes, just about the attainment of pleasure but also the avoidance of guilt.

Paca's attachment to home cooked food and her avoidance of '*modern fast food*' trends reveal a similar layer of complexity:

Paca: We won't eat…I make hamburgers myself. I don't like Burger King. I don't like it because its junk food. So I buy my own hamburgers. I buy bread [shows me a packet of white hamburger baps in branded packet and economy minced beef from supermarket] and I make homemade hamburgers. I do it myself.

Although Paca claims that health underpins her reasoning for eschewing fast food in favour of home cooked meals, there is little evidence to suggest her home-made burgers will be vastly superior from a nutritional perspective. Moreover, although her zeal for home cooked food is '*for the family',* her devotion is perceived as antiquated by her husband who would readily consume fast food:

Juan Pablo: Everyone…Lots of people like to go to MacDonald's. The thing is because she cooks, I don't have a choice but I love junk food.

Interviewer: Yes? [Laughter]

Juan Pablo: That's the truth but the thing is I make myself because I know that it's healthier. But not her, it's in her blood. She likes it.

Paca: It's my grandmother.

Juan Pablo: She likes it when we tell her it tastes good.

Paca: That's right

As Juan Pablo suggests, part of her motivation in cooking for the family is to satisfy a personal need, to accomplish her role in the family and in society. She expresses gratification that she, unlike others, has not succumbed to using convenience foods and continues to perpetuate local heritage and culture. However, this devotion to the provision of '*real food*' can be exhausting for Paca. Cooking using traditional methods and recipes can be time-consuming. She is enthusiastic about her cooking when being recorded in interviews but in casual conversation her tone is different:

I went into the kitchen to talk to Paca. She was washing plates and I soon as I came in, her tone changed from before. She complained that her work was never ending. Maybe the knowledge she was no longer being recorded allowed for this revelation. She told me that it was just one meal and then the next, it never stopped. I agreed that she had to feed a lot of people. The cooking was fine she told me but then cleaning too and everything else. It was too much (Field notes. June 2014).

Tiredness is something Ines also discusses. For this mother of two, the commitment to home cooking can be particularly gruelling. As well as working full time, she suffers with a chronic illness that can leave her feeling debilitated:

Ines: I cook yes I like it. It's tiring sometimes but I've taken on the role so it's my responsibility... I like cooking but I like to have the time, calm and there are times when you have no time at all and you are like 'god I only have ten minutes to make the food'…and I've learnt to cook and change my cooking habits

In spite of the efforts she makes to schedule and prepare for evening meals, Ines admits that family meals are often fraught. Synchronising family mealtimes is challenging in this household as both parents and children have busy schedules. Given the time required to cook, evening meals do not generally take place until 9 or 9.30 pm. By this point, as Ines explains, her children, especially the youngest, are often exhausted. The late meal results in late bedtimes, further perpetuating the fatigue. However, in spite of these challenges, *not* eating as a family would be unacceptable for Ines (her husband is more ambivalent). She demonstrates tremendous personal sacrifice to ensure the whole family eat traditional food together. Both mealtime observations in this household were in the evening and revealed that her youngest child Georgiou (aged five) was tearful and unable to sit still at the table. During one observation she was forced to send him to bed with just a glass of milk because he was too tired to eat. Mealtimes together delayed bedtimes, leading to tiredness and disharmony at the dinner table. Ines admitted this was a problem they faced but the alternative was no meals together which seemed inconceivable to her. Her devotion to the family meal does not appear to be rational or compatible with the notion of conviviality.

Paca's husband identifies a critical aspect of the pleasure of food provision when he notes his wife's need to be appreciated and it is something that is noted in other families. Ella, a midwife and mother of two children Natalia and Maya aged 13 and 16, reveals that cooking can feel like an obligation but relishes hearing the phrase '*mum that is so delicious*'. Other Spanish women discussed the satisfaction of seeing empty plates or knowing they had produced food to the taste of a particular family member.

These gestures act as validation for her home cooking skills and recognition of food provider's achievements. In this sense, food work can be seen as a form of gendered labour that recruits women into mothering discourses related to nurturing the family. Family food provision is enmeshed in emotional ties, congruent with the habitus of these women. There is a tacit understanding that cooking (and often a specific type of cooking) is simply 'what they do' for their families and articulating why they do it and why they enjoy it can be challenging.

These women go beyond demonstrating an unquestioned acceptance of their role to a desire to present it as pleasurable, despite the challenges it presents. For Ines, the struggle is her health, which can be compromised by the stress of food provision; Nina complains of sleep deprivation caused by late night cooking and Paca accepts financial insecurity in order to cook for her family. Yet all of the women justify this sacrifice as being for the good of their families. Nina endeavours to feed her family in a way that is best for them '*both physically and psychologically*'. Paca also aims to provide her children with nutritionally balanced meals and maintains a belief that they are preserving a wider cultural tradition by eating home-cooked Mediterranean foods together. Ines, similarly, aims to perpetuate traditional ways of eating together, despite these not being reflective of her direct experience. Overall, although there was evidence that these women did experience gratification from achieving their personal role, their practices did not appear entirely rational or indeed necessary to fulfil the needs of their families or the ideal of conviviality.

5.4 Conviviality and adapting traditions in Spain

Some Spanish families adapted the cultural model that places women at the centre of food work. Claudia and Jose Antonio are both secondary school teachers and parents of children of Mercedes and Pablo (aged 13 and 16). Juan, a science teacher, has recently taken an interest in nutrition and '*experimenting with food*'. He speaks extensively about the health benefits of the Mediterranean diet but also how he has adapted dishes to be healthier (less bread, whole grain rice, using organic food). Their modernisation of the diet is mirrored in their approach to domestic labour. They were the only Spanish family in which the father voluntarily made a significant contribution

to everyday food provision (mainly cooking). Juan concedes, however, that his position is unique compared to other men he knows.

The findings confirmed that other families, who adapt the traditional model of food provision did so out of obligation rather than inclination. Felipe and Larissa, parents of teenage children Kiko and Alicia aged 15 and 13, are an example of food providers who did not conform to traditional roles. Felipe is a caretaker for the local council in Spain. He claims to undertake the majority of cooking for the family. His working hours (mornings only) are compatible with making lunch, the main meal of the day. His wife, a cleaner, works erratic hours all over the city and can only be present for some of the meal. Felipe does not enjoy his role as a food provider but is resigned to it:

Felipe: I don't like it much. No, I don't enjoy it.

Interviewer: So, you do it out of necessity?

Felipe: Yes. I do it out of necessity – I wasn't used to it because I never had to in my time.

Interviewer: Times are changing?

Felipe: Yes, in my time, only men worked. Not like nowadays, where women have to work out of necessity too.

Felipe articulates what appears to be an archaic picture of gender roles, but it is one that is displayed in a more tacit manner in a number of Spanish families. In interviews and observations men often deferred to their wives to answer questions regarding food work. Maria, an administrative worker and mother of two children (Frieda and Alec aged six and nine), explains how she often appeals to her mother for help at lunchtimes because her husband Alejandro, a car salesman, can '*barely fry an egg*'. Maria claims that she '*loves cooking*' and is just happy that her husband makes the effort to join the family at lunch. In a similar vein, Leticia mother of two children Isabella and Rufo (aged 8 and 12), claims that help from her mother is invaluable and had not even her considered her husband or her children as potential sources of help at mealtimes. In some households, food work (particularly domestic cooking) falls

squarely in the female domain. In these cases, food work is not something women do but some believe, something only women can enjoy. Felipe takes no pleasure in providing food for his family and unlike many of the women in the study he expresses no reason why he should. For Felipe undertaking what he perceives to be a woman's job is not supposed to be pleasurable. Whilst he executes the majority of the practical tasks related to cooking, his wife Larissa still takes responsibility for what is eaten in the household

Larissa: Yes, I'm the boss. Me, yes. If he does anything in the kitchen he prefers me to tell him exactly what to do.

Larissa is still the 'queen of the kitchen', the work they carry out may have changed but conceptually, their roles have not. Felipe cooks the meals, does the shopping and contributes to the washing up, but as observations revealed, the meals they consumed had been chosen, planned for and prepared by Larissa. In fact, sometimes Felipe's cooking merely entails reheating food that Larissa explains she spends '*until midnight preparing'*. She is very concerned with feeding her children '*the right food'* which involves the preparation of complex dishes her husband is unable to do. For Larissa this task is stressful due to time pressures. Larissa is keen to convey that the family eat food of high quality and local provenance; both parents are eager to share olive oil from their village and local artisanal cheese with the researcher. The teenage children, when prompted by their parents, claim to appreciate these foods too. However, they make no attempt to overtly display any other aspect of the meal as enjoyable; there is little interaction between family members at mealtimes, food is consumed relatively quickly, and conversation is limited to a quiet appreciation of foods. The importance of these occasions centres on *what* is eaten, and for this family '*putting good food on the table*' satisfies social expectations.

This pattern is also apparent in other households. Ima is a clothes shop assistant, married to Felix who sells building supplies. They are parents of three boys Mateo, Pepe and David (aged 8, 11, 16), living in a deprived area of the city. Like Felipe and Larissa, Ima does not claim to get any gratification from her role as food provider. Due to Ima's working schedule her husband has to sometimes make simple dishes in the

evening and weekends, something she describes as atypical in Spanish households. However, she comments jokingly that he seems to enjoy it more than she does and Felix agrees. Ima presents a less polished display of the family meal than in other Spanish households. Although the food she produces at observations includes a series of local home-cooked dishes, presented neatly in bowls, she readily admits that she had made more elaborate dishes '*for the visit'* and she does not disguise that the fact that she is harried during mealtime observations. Ima and her family eat food at the coffee table in front of the television (there is no dining table) during both mealtime observations. Conversation is minimal as is interaction with the researcher. Like Larissa, Ima is keen to display that she feeds her family correctly but she shows little need to convey her enjoyment of her domestic role or to present a version of conviviality that meets with social ideals.

Other food providers suggest that mealtimes are constructed differently to the way they would like due to the pressures of work. Maria Jose and Franco are parents of two girls Nuria and Nancy aged nine and eleven. Franco is a car painter with a regular work schedule, but Maria Jose has recently been promoted to a managerial position in a fast food outlet and deals with a complicated and varying rota each week. As a result, they have had to seek help from grandparents (where the children eat at lunchtime) and, in the evenings, Franco sometimes has to prepare simple dishes such as salads and grilled meat. They attempt to make the mealtimes they *do* share together as enjoyable as possible and observations confirmed the whole family's enthusiasm for these gatherings. However, both parents admitted that, although they valued the occasions when the whole family could eat together, food work had sometimes become onerous, especially for Maria Jose who had been working with food all day.

It was clear that the Spanish families were creating meals in an environment where powerful cultural norms dictated both the foods they consumed and who should provide them. For some families, work and time pressures forced adaptions to these ideals, and in these circumstances, enjoying food provision was not always a realistic aspiration.

5.5 Summary

All of the households made efforts to create mealtimes that met cultural ideals and for many, creating a meal that was enjoyable was fundamental to their aim. It was apparent that some food providers operated against a social backdrop where food provision and consumption *should* be enjoyable, whereas for others, meeting the immediate needs of their families took higher priority than the 'aesthetic dispositions' of pleasure (Bourdieu 1984). Social distinction was evident in the way families articulated their enjoyment of food provision and the importance they attributed to enjoying food work.

There was evidence that a social imperative to make a meal enjoyable might result in conviviality but equally, the pressure to create convivial meals might result in disappointment and frustration. Paradoxically, in some cases, conviviality came at the expense of the food provider's time, health and their enjoyment. In the Spanish households, the cultural imperative to produce traditional meals, put women across the social spectrum, under pressure. Different demands were evident in the construction of meals in the UK, and these were namely to meet ideals of communication and togetherness, revealing the challenge of catering for multiple needs. Although there was evidence of men's practical contributions across households and across countries, it was invariably women who carried the emotional responsibility of food work. For most, the enjoyment of the shared meal was dependent on achieving cultural norms, so food providers were not only emotionally attached to pleasing their families but also to meeting social objectives.

Chapter Six: TV or not TV. Young people's preferences and participation in the family meal

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted that keeping children content was a primary concern for food providers when crafting conviviality. Constructing a meal that meets the needs of young people can be a complex, multifaceted act. In addition to preparing for what different children might eat, food providers must take into account other members of the family, budgets, nutrition and schedules. Adults in this study only attributed the title 'family meal' to occasions where children were present, highlighting the centrality of young people to these events. Children shape the process of mealtime construction, but this is not a simple act of food providers creating these events *for* them, family meals are also created *by* them.

This chapter examines children's participation in shared meals, the currency and challenges of their requests and the impact of their participation on conviviality. The methodological framework of this research was designed to explore the dynamics between family members, and manifest in the findings, were examples of children questioning parental ideals. The chapter looks at children's influence on the mealtime process, exploring what young people enjoy and what they do not. The negotiation of food work has been discussed in the previous chapter so this will not be explored here. Instead, the focus will be on an aspect of the meal that all of the children either discussed, filmed or were observed taking part in; watching television while they ate. The literal and metaphorical lens of television allows insight into the conditions that make mealtimes pleasurable for children. The associations young people draw with meals in front of the television reveal a rich picture of children's ideals and expectations of the shared meal and how adults in each country adapt mealtimes to meet them. To close, the chapter will also explore how using television as a strategy to keep children happy, serves numerous objectives for adults.

6.2 Cultural and social distinctions: TV dinner or dinner in front of the TV?

Data from both countries revealed that children liked to eat in front of the television. This was true of young people across the age range in both countries and included

children who did not necessarily cite television as one of their preferred leisure time activities. This preference became evident through interviews, observations, photo elicitation and participatory visual data. The multiple data sources helped disentangle how television was integrated into mealtimes in ways that either reflected or contradicted food providers' mealtime ideologies. What rapidly became clear through this process, were marked differences in the cultural significance of this activity.

An initial indicator of this cross-country difference was the positioning of the television in different households. How and where meals were eaten in the home was dependent on the configuration of the domestic space. In all of the Spanish families a television set was visible from the dining table (or in one case coffee table) where the families ate the majority of their meals. In the UK, a television set was only visible from the preferred dining location in one of the UK households. For the majority of UK families then, eating a meal in front of the television meant eating in a communal living area, usually on the sofa with plates of food on their laps or on trays. This change of location signified that families had to make an active choice, before a meal, as to whether they were going to have a 'TV Dinner' and this was the term frequently employed to describe this event. It became increasingly clear that this phrase was imbued with cultural significance. A TV dinner denoted much more than simply having the television on while eating. TV dinners were a cultural institution with their own set of norms. The research revealed that participants possessed a collective, tacit knowledge of the rules of a TV dinner in the UK, including; where the meal should be consumed, the type of food eaten, appropriate programmes to watch and an inherent understanding that this type of meal should be eaten only occasionally.

Whilst for many adults, the iconic meal around the table was the ultimate symbol of familial unity, a number of young people in the UK considered *TV dinners* to be the optimum way of achieving togetherness. Young people enjoyed the change in environment when they relocated for these occasions. For example, 11-year-old Indigo, discusses her pleasure in snuggling up on the sofa with her nine-year-old brother Tim and mother Hayley. For Indigo, like other children, the physical proximity of being together on a sofa, enhanced feelings of intimacy. Eleven-year-old Tom (son of Rose and Neil) talks about '*cosying up with his family'* to eat together and eight-

year-old Sam, Flo's eldest foster child describes '*all siting together*.' A number of children described watching a favourite TV programme with parents and the prospect of this shared activity intensified feelings of cohesion.

Despite these sentiments, in the UK, there was an unstated understanding that television was not a socially legitimate component of a proper meal. The distinction of the TV dinner allowed families to demarcate this event from normal mealtime practices. Both adults and children showed awareness of this difference. Poppy aged 14 and daughter of lone parent Melanie, explains:

Poppy: Some days we have it…[a meal] like on a Sunday we have a roast so it's kind of like we all have it here [indicates kitchen table where we are sitting] and then sometimes we just like have a TV dinner so that's like kind of like less, you know, so… not a proper dinner at the table…

Eating in front of the television carried social significance and regardless of their actual practices, families in the UK, across the social spectrum, were keen to distinguish themselves from 'others' who might routinely watch television at mealtimes. The social distinction in taste (Bourdieu 1984, Warde 1997, Bourdieu 2005) went beyond what was eaten to *how* it was eaten. It was important for families to distinguish TV dinners from everyday meals and convey that proper meals (at the table, not in front of the TV) featured prominently in their weekly routines. Peter, father of Millie and Ava, aged five and seven, views meals in front of the television as a deviation from 'doing family':

Peter: Yeah well if we were sat here [indicates sofa] normally the telly would be on so if you're at the table there's no telly, no distraction, it's just us, the family together which is quite nice.

For Peter, sitting at the table is consistent with the norms of proper family meals; eating in front of the television is not. Similarly, social worker Alice suggests that watching TV is at odds with the conventions of proper mealtimes. She limits the TV dinner in her household to a weekly event. She is keen to convey that her family only watches television at mealtimes by appointment, rather than it being a casual habit or

for '*the sake of it'.* Her 14-year-old son Frank appears to have assimilated her views and mirrors this idea, '*I wouldn't be like; I'm just going to eat in front of the telly and just watch it'.* Implicit in these comments, is a level of restriction and morality related to television, particularly at mealtimes. TV dinners are considered regulated events, which can only be sanctioned if more formal meals are the household norm. A number of children in the UK make a distinction between TV dinners and what is deemed to be '*proper*' or '*normal*' mealtimes, associating a TV dinner with a particular programme, a specific time of the week (often a Friday or Saturday night 'treat') or a meal eaten after a particular activity such as swimming.

The idea of television being separate from the normal family meal was not apparent in Spain. Families routinely watched television at mealtimes and the concept of the TV dinner as experienced and described by the UK families was non-existent. Families were less reflective of this practice and therefore less able to discuss the specific way they watched television at mealtimes. Maya, a 13-year-old with a younger sister aged nine, demonstrates this in her comments:

Interviewer: And do you have the TV on at mealtimes?

Maya: Yes…no, sometimes. Sometimes my dad…I'm not sure. At dinner we sometimes have music on because there are more of us, but yes I think at lunchtime the TV is always on… Well for me it's just background, yes my sister likes it but I prefer to talk. I'm not really focused on the TV to tell the truth.

Pablo, aged 16 and Mercedes aged 13, son and daughter of two teachers, echo this ambiguity and vagueness about television:

Interviewer: So, there is a TV in this photo. What is the role of television in your meals?

Pablo: Well the TV is sometimes on at lunchtime…

Interviewer: And do you like to have the TV on when you eat?

Mercedes: I don't mind.

Mercedes: Yeah, I don't know…when I feel like it I put it on and when I don't I don't. I like talking but sometimes we talk about what's on TV.

In line with Bourdieu's ideas on habitus the Spanish families use the television in a way that feels right for them but are unable to articulate what is essentially a collective *feel for the game* (Bourdieu 1984). They show less clarity about when or how much the television is actually used in comparison to their UK counterparts. What is also characteristic of their responses is that both parents and children show no embarrassment about watching TV with meals; there is no sense that it would be viewed disapprovingly by the researcher. Most of the Spanish families do not allude to the television in moral terms; on the surface they have little to say about it. The inability to articulate television use at mealtimes revealed the tacit way in which television was culturally embedded into the mealtime scenario. During numerous mealtime observations the television was on and visual data produced by the families showed that television (with programmes being screened) was included in photographs of, formal-looking dinnertime scenes, suggesting it was a legitimate component of the family meal. In the UK, conversely, the inclusion of television at family mealtimes stood in opposition to social ideals. Although TV dinners were accepted as a way of 'doing' family (Morgan 1996) they were not a legitimate element of proper meals.

In this context the question that arises is why these events take place at all? The answer, it appears, is that television watching at mealtimes is the result of both explicit and implicit negotiations between parents and children. Data from both countries revealed that television (whether as part of a TV dinner or a 'normal meal') was often a concession to children's wants and needs. The following sections will explore these needs and explore the value television holds for young people, but also how it serves a purpose for adults, both for their personal enjoyment and construction of conviviality.

6.3 Negotiating food rules

Whilst mealtime television viewing was often integrated unobtrusively into Spanish family meals, in the UK, it was approached with a combination of celebration and

stigma. In UK households, the integration of TV into mealtimes challenged prescriptive norms and presented an opportunity for children to negotiate the family's food consumption practices. Mealtimes are an arena for the children's socialisation, where young people may, both assimilate and accept desired practices and challenge the existing order (Harman et al. 2018). The findings revealed that television was representative of this process, acting as a means for negotiation. Television, and its impact on mealtimes, was symbolic of children's co-construction of family food decisions and reaching compromise and collaboration on this issue was necessary to achieve conviviality. TV dinners represented an example of a carefully negotiated agreement, offering children a reconceptualization of the family meal from a serious rule-bound event to a fun informal occasion.

Paradoxically, TV dinners were bound by their own set of rules, albeit ones preferred or negotiated by young people. In the UK, when the TV was introduced into the meal it was an event that caused other aspects of the family meal to change. The most striking alteration was the food consumed. Conventions around '*proper food'*, '*good food'* and what constituted a family dinner were seamlessly modified when families ate in front of the television. In conversation, the term TV dinner was used interchangeably to refer both to the food consumed and the practice of eating in front of the television. This food tended to be convenient, easy to prepare and was generally viewed favourably by the children. Seven-year old Ava offers a succinct explanation as to why she enjoys TV dinners:

Ava: You get to eat pizza and watch TV, so I can do two things I like…and…at the same time.

Patty and Rory also reveal that their father James occasionally indulges them with chips in front of the TV, something that their mother Louise would not allow. Rose comments humorously at a similar practice in her household:

Rose: Let me show you… [Laughs] I'll show you …Neil, only Neil. Neil bought these, which are little plastic, chicken in the basket bowls so the kids can have, and you know a TV tea when I'm away. He thinks I don't know where they are…So they can have their chicken in the basket in front of the telly…I have never used these.

Rose feigns disbelief over the chicken baskets but she is complicit in this activity; her amusement suggests that she accepts this lapse in standards within the context of an occasional TV dinner. However, both parents are clear that they do not eat this kind of food at the table or when they eat their usual or 'proper' meals. Their habitual meals are composed of what the parents describe as '*fresh unprocessed*' and '*traditional British food*'. Observations and visual data corroborated this idea and showed the family eating roasts, home cooked breakfasts and stews, nothing that resembled chicken in a basket. Neil explains that eating convenience food is unusual and their mother suggests that they have little genuine interest in this type of eating. However, the children are clear that both the food and the television are integral parts of the TV dinner:

Interviewer: So what's your favourite part of the TV dinner?

Tom: Chicken in a basket.

Lizzy: In front of the TV.

Tom: Yeah, In front of the TV.

Lizzy: Chicken in a basket in front of the TV…the whole thing.

It is the symbiosis of convenience food and television, which is integral to the experience children enjoy. Other children referred to this connection between television and food. Leah and Bea protest vehemently about the constrictions of dinnertime '*at the table*,' the usual practice for evening meals in their household. Both girls express complete disdain at every aspect of '*usual*' mealtimes: the home cooked food, the hard chairs, and the boredom of waiting for everyone to finish. In her video diary Leah protests: '*We only like TV dinners. We hate pasta and sauces and bakes*'. For these girls, eating at the table is linked with a certain type of food (pasta, sauces, and bakes) and by implication TV meals are a respite from this. In the UK households, sophisticated foods such as fish, pies, meat and vegetables, curries and stew were eschewed when eating in front of the television, in favour of pizza, chicken nuggets and chips. Television became a medium for children to negotiate, not just what they did but what they ate and how they ate it.

Leah: *Yeah pizza, it's just easy you can sit on the sofa and eat it. We aren't allowed messy food on the sofa.*

The informality of this process appeals to children. For many families eating 'proper food' and 'eating properly' are concepts which were inextricably linked; a change in menu also resulted in a change in the way food was consumed. The conventional rules and guidelines associated with family meals were relaxed for the TV dinners. Children claimed to enjoy eating food with their fingers, out of boxes, packets or baskets and enjoyed sitting comfortably on the sofa whilst they ate. Observations of more formal or proper mealtimes in these households revealed that young people often became bored with the task of feeding themselves correctly; some struggled to use cutlery and others became frustrated if there was parental pressure to conform to specific mealtime regulations such as using cutlery correctly, sitting up straight, not using fingers, or waiting for others to finish their meal.

In Spain, there appeared to be fewer negotiations at mealtimes and children were outwardly accepting of how they 'did' family meals. Children and young people generally reported eating and liking the same foods as their parents and negotiations were more often related to 'not eating' rather than 'eating' specific foods, particularly sweets and biscuits outside of mealtimes. During meals however, children presented very little overt opposition to the collective mealtime identity represented both in terms of the foods consumed and where they were eaten. Sitting at the table was also less problematic; any discomfort might conceivably be mitigated by the unobstructed view of a TV screen. In observations, there was some evidence of young people bargaining, either for more television after the meal or disputes over which programme to watch, but overall as television was seamlessly integrated into mealtimes, there was less requirement for children to discuss this issue.

For Spanish children, watching television did not instigate a change in menu so young people did not use this as a means of navigating different food choices. Children demonstrated a tacit acceptance of the sanctity of the family meal and there was no evidence of children consuming or demanding foods that were outside of the usual repertoire their parents prepared. However, their favourite dishes were not

necessarily the ones they ate on a daily basis. Consequently, children sought other avenues to demarcate their autonomous consumption choices; these were generally outside of the home. Numerous Spanish food providers discussed eating out as means of conceding to their children's desires to eat particular foods such as hamburgers (SP1, SP5, SP6, SP8) fried fish (SP5) and pizza (SP1, SP4, SP7). In most of these cases these foods were not consumed within the home. Ella, a midwife and mother of two, discusses how food choices are negotiated differently when eating out:

Ella: Oh yes at the weekends it's totally different…they can choose… but we rarely go to places like McDonalds or fast food places... Maybe we might go once with one of their little friends to keep them happy… But no, normally you know we choose a place… where they have other things they like fried whitebait, ice cream…the usual.

Leticia mother of Isabella and Rufo (aged eight and twelve) expresses a strikingly similar picture of eating out scenarios:

Leticia: Well we go to places that are child friendly. [Laughs] We try…well because we don't like Burger King or McDonalds that much here but it's their time…so…but usually we go to places in the neighbourhood, tapas bars or fish places…In McDonalds they eat everything they are given because they love it and sometimes I think they should have what they want but in any restaurant…you can say right squid rings…or chicken kebabs, they like chicken…

These two women illustrate the complex food negotiation that occurs outside of the home. Both express a reluctance to frequent fast food outlets, but both make references to eating out in terms of an opportunity for children to make independent food choices that they do not make at home. In this sense, these food providers create conviviality *within* the family meal by allowing more freedom *outside* of it.

Food providers in both countries employed methods to ensure their desired feeding practices and proper food choices were adhered to but also expressed the need to keep children happy. Children asserted their own consumption preferences demonstrating the way in which young people and adults shape each other's practices. In the UK, food negotiations often fell under the umbrella of TV dinners,

which relax the rules about what foods are eaten and how they are consumed. In Spain the routine integration of television into the family meal reduces the need to create a special occasion, but children seek other avenues to express their agency as food consumers.

6.4 TV versus table talk

Children's preference for watching television at mealtimes was not only symbolic of what they wanted to do, for some it was indicative of what they *did not* enjoy. The dinner table is not only an arena for socialisation through food but also an opportunity for socialisation through talk. However, the nature of mealtime dialogue was not appealing to everyone. As highlighted in the previous chapter, many food providers made efforts to construct mealtimes that were conducive to communication, which in the UK invariably involved abstaining from television viewing. Young people had varying views on this practice. A small number of young people readily embraced this ideology and bought into the idea of mealtime conversation as an important aspect of family life. Charlie looks forward to telling his mother Flo about his day and in observations, he eloquently asks about hers in return. Similarly, Maya daughter of Ella and Marco, values this daily opportunity to relay the events of her morning. In some cases, children echoed parental views on the importance of eating away from a screen. Poppy, daughter of Melanie, aged 14 discusses this:

Poppy: I kind of...we prefer when we're like all at the table talking to each other because then we feel, I feel it's kind of less anti-social because sometimes when we're eating in front of the TV, no-one really talks to each other. We just watch the TV. So things like that… we can have a catch up and stuff so it's kind of better.

However, observations and interviews in this family revealed that meals around the dining table were not necessarily the norm. The children suggest that they often resort to eating in front of the television due to incompatible schedules, resulting in each family member consuming different foods on their arrival home. Poppy's comments appear to be less a reflection of her daily practices and more an acquisition of mother's mealtime standards. Her mother, Melanie, expresses the view that television at *proper* mealtimes is an unacceptable intrusion on family conversation. Poppy's preference

for conversing at the table, albeit genuine, appears to reflect her understanding of normative ideals rather than her everyday reality.

In households where meals around the table did appear to be a more frequent occurrence, young people often articulated the experience of table talk differently. A number of UK parents suggest that TV dinners are only enjoyable because they are an exception to the norm and children would tire of them if they were more habitual events. A number of children protested otherwise. Two conversations below illustrate the disparity between parent and children's perceptions of mealtime conversation.

Rose: It's interesting that they say they prefer eating in front of the telly but I think it's probably because it's a treat but I don't think if you did it every day you would…[directs question to children]

Lizzy: I'd love it

Tom: Yeah

A similar contrast can be seen in children's and adult perspectives in Natasha and John's family. Natasha describes how she relishes the moment the family join together and talk to each other:

Natasha: I really love it… spending that time… to communicate with each other…We do try to get everyone to talk about their day…

A later interview with Natasha's seven-year-old daughter Amy revealed a slightly different picture:

Interviewer: And in the video you showed me you were eating somewhere different, in front of the TV. Tell me about that.

Amy: Kind of…a bit more fun.

Interviewer: More fun. Why's that?

Amy: Because instead of eating…just eating you can...I've forgotten what I was saying… You're listening to the telly instead of just talking and talking.

Above: Visual Data from UK3. The mother described the meal [left] as a really fun meal from the previous week. The children said the screenshot from video [right] of a TV dinner was their preferred meal of the week.

Similar contradictions were evident in a number of families. Teenagers, Kiko and Alicia, claim that they would rather not discuss schoolwork, as does Natasha's teenage son Ben. Leah and Bea profess their boredom at the table, and a number of Spanish children postpone answering questions at the dinner table to watch a particular segment of a programme.

Inquiring about their children's lives was a fundamental part of the meal for many of the food providers but children were often ambivalent or disapproving of this practice. In the presence of the researcher, families questioned their children about school, homework and friendships or generally encouraged them to discuss their day. In many households, dialogues were directed by parents, who were driving the agenda of table talk. This tendency was apparent in both countries, but where the cultural division *did* sit, however, was in parental expectations of children to participate.

In all but one of the UK families there was an expectation that the television would not feature during regular family meals and that children would take part in conversation. In some families conversation was overtly manufactured by parents. Such was the case with Natasha's '*finger of truth*', a ritual whereby each family member presses an imaginary buzzer and reveals a fact about their day during every evening meal. Similarly, Flo begins meals with the obligatory '*highlights and lowlights*

of the day'. These routines reflect, quite literally, the concept of mealtime scripts, conventions that families subscribe to as part of the family meal. Other families engaged in similar dialogues in a less formal manner. Whichever mode of inquiry was used, there was evidence of the conversation becoming directional and parents simply questioning children about their lives. 10-year-old Lizzy, reflects how arduous this might feel, in a humorous section of a family interview:

Interviewer: So, do you think if you could eat your dinner in front of the TV every night, all four of you. Do you think that would be fun?

Lizzy: Yeah.

Rose: [mother]: You wouldn't talk as much though would you?

Lizzy: I'd just say hang on I'm eating my tea, I can't be bothered to answer all your questions now.

Rose: [mother]: Ok [laughs].

Lizzy reveals, not only her disinclination to talk but also how television offers a valid way to escape this. Unlike discussions over food, where children have more room to negotiate (refusal to eat gives them the ultimate bargaining power), conversation appeared more challenging for young people to control. Television offered a non-confrontational means of directing the conversation towards less serious matters. 12-year-old Pippa elucidates on this idea. She and mother Tracey are the only UK family who confess that television is an integral part of their evening meal. Pippa explains that she and her mother '*have fun choosing the best dishes*' on their favourite TV competition show '*Come Dine with me*'. Her mother is keen to stress that they only watch food-related shows at mealtimes, possibly, as she believes this legitimises the practice. She explains that the light entertainment helps them to '*wind down'* at the end of their busy days at school and at work.

Likewise, 16-year-old Anthony mentions that television can sometimes be a break from the '*serious chat'* his lone parent Melanie and sister 14-year-old Poppy engage in, allowing him to find his own mode of relaxation. In a conversation with her mother,

seven-year-old Ava explains that that watching his favourite TV shows at mealtimes does not impede conversation, it just allows her to talk about the programme as opposed to '*other*' stuff. Observations in Spanish households revealed a number of examples of children interspersing television watching with conversation during a meal.

The conversations in the Spanish households operated along similar lines of parental inquiry as in the UK, however the Spanish parents demonstrated different expectations in terms of young people's participation. There were indications that food providers had a tacit understanding of their children's preferences and that coercing them to sit at a dinner table was not conducive to convivial dining. Maria, mother of Alec and Isabel explains:

Maria: He watches it [TV] a bit and if he's bored, we usually let him go. We're not the kind of family that say; 'No until the last person has finished you have to sit at the table'. When he's eaten, we let him get up …I don't think forcing them to stay there is good, you know…

This acceptance and flexibility regarding mealtime conversation and table etiquette does not necessarily suggest that Spanish adults had less interest in the process of socializing their children. In some cases, this acceptance reflected the idea that children would acquire their parents' mealtime preferences as they matured. Watching television at mealtimes then, was often viewed as usual practice for children on their trajectory to adulthood, a means of 'keeping them happy' at this stage of life. For example, Juan Pablo father of five-year-old Guillermo, explains that watching TV is just '*what you do when you are young'* but evidently *not* what adults in his family do. He humorously describes young people '*as masters of the television'* and explains that he engaged in the same practice when he was younger. Older children in the study expressed a similar view. Thirteen-year-old Maya explains that if the TV is on at lunchtime it is cartoons for her younger sister as she does not really do that '*any more'*, implying she had progressed to a more adult phase of her mealtime behaviour. In mealtime observations she discussed school, friends and music while her sister mainly watched television. Similarly, Franco a car mechanic describes how he and his wife

have the television on, mainly as entertainment for their youngest daughter Nuria aged nine, while their older daughter aged 11 converses with the rest of the family.

There is evidence from both countries to suggest that commitment to the ideal of mealtime conversation (and hence preference to watch television) develops along the age range of children. In both countries younger children were more likely to express unequivocal preference for watching television and a disregard for table talk, whereas adolescents, expressed mixed views on the practice. However, in the UK particularly, disinclination to view television at mealtimes appeared to reflect the social illegitimacy of this habit. A number of adolescents demonstrated a tacit understanding of how family talk (without television) should be 'done' but this was not necessarily what they 'did'. Ideals were not necessarily reflective of actual practices and whilst some children enjoyed engaging in conversation, many valued the disengagement that television offered. In the UK, this detachment was often perceived as a threat to the family meal and television viewing was heavily regulated. In Spain, there was greater confidence that children would naturally grow out of this practice and learn to become the same as adults in the family.

6.5 TV as a tool for conviviality

The previous section of this chapter has highlighted the role of television in allowing children to demarcate their consumption choices and preferred practices, focusing on the ways food providers have used television at mealtimes to keep children happy and facilitate conviviality. However, these concessions to children's tastes are sanctioned and approved by parents, who only agree to solutions that are consistent with their habitus. The family meal is not only an important site to nourish, care for or even entertain children, but also to control and govern them. Television, therefore, is not simply a tool that children use to negotiate their mealtime preferences but can also be used by food providers to facilitate desired eating practices or to secure their own enjoyment of a meal. The following section highlights that television is not simply a trade-off to children in in the mealtime negotiation but that television at mealtimes can be also a strategy actively used by parents to direct mealtimes.

Above: [left] photograph from SP4 of a dinner table, including remote control, showing seamless integration of television into the mealtime. Photograph [right] taken by mother Nina (SP1) to illustrate the foods children eat at afternoon snack time. The television is inconsequential for her in this picture.

In Spain, television was used to maintain conviviality whilst ensuring that required feeding practices were achieved. Ines, a Spanish scientist and mother of two boys, aged five and nine, openly explains the manner in which she employs television to '*calm'* her children. Due to pressured work and school schedules, mealtimes in the household take place late in the evening, a time when the children are often exhausted. For Ines, eating home cooked food as a family is imperative and evenings are the only opportunity to achieve this; television does not only placate her children, it also facilitates her goal:

Ines: They need a screen or music to help them relax and eat. That's what we try to do here. We always…always try to have a routine. Normally we stay seated for a little while and they watch TV while we all finish.

She is so convinced of the positive effect of the TV at mealtimes, she claims that her children would eat better at school if they had television in the communal dining hall. She maintains her boys are less '*agitated*' if they watch TV at mealtimes. Ines goes beyond a passive, unstated acceptance of the television to extolling its virtues for her children's wellbeing. Even those parents more reluctant for television to be incorporated into mealtimes, used it to their benefit. Nina is the only Spanish parent in the study who expresses any problem with watching television during family meals.

She is well versed on health discourses that discourage this practice and would prefer mealtimes not to be dominated by a screen. However, observations in the household, show that children's television programmes are always screened at mealtimes. Her children Martha and Jose (aged six and nine), state a preference for this practice: '*We like to watch cartoons sometimes but we talk too, it depends*'. Nina, explains, how in spite of her knowledge and ideals, she still makes the pragmatic choice to allow routine TV watching at mealtimes:

Nina: They want to eat in front of the TV. It's really easy to let them eat in front of the telly because they leave you in peace and don't protest…Oh so if I don't let them have the TV with dinner…what tends to happen is they rush their food so that they can go and watch it. And I suppose I could be stricter and say no TV until we have all eaten but I don't think I would create a great atmosphere for conversation if I did this because they would just be thinking about TV.

Nina uses television as a strategy for achieving her desired feeding practices whilst ensuring minimal conflict. She wants her children to take time over the food she has prepared, spend time with the family at the dinner table and she believes that prohibiting television may hinder this. Television is also employed more directly as a means of incentivizing children to eat. Alec's grandmother explains how she uses television to ensure her grandson eats the *'good, home cooked food'* she prepares:

Abuela Gomez: He eats more of it [her food]… in the sense that if he won't eat …we argue and if he doesn't eat the TV goes off no cartoons and we watch my show so then he eats well…But now we don't watch cartoons so we watch the cookery show, while I do the food and he watches that… [Laughs].

Spanish food providers employed television at mealtimes as means of entertaining children, to allow for adult conversation, or as a strategy to encourage children to eat more of a certain food. For example, Paca and Juan Pablo share family meals with extended family, who live in the adjacent flat. Mealtimes are dominated by adults and by adult conversation. Guillermo is the only child present. When he becomes bored with adult conversation his parents use the television to entertain him, enabling them to engage with the other adults present and ensuring that Guillermo remains seated

and eats his meal. Paca's priority is that her son eats '*good food'* and she is proud of his diverse tastes; he enjoys clams, rice, fruit, soups and local ham. She, like a number of Spanish participants, is keen to educate the researcher on traditional ways of eating, and television poses no threat to this portrayal, in fact she demonstrates how television, facilitates the convivial meal she aims to create.

For adults in both countries, television offered a break from 'doing' proper family meals. Families in this study continued to eat together in spite of the demands of work and time pressures. As highlighted in Chapter Five, constructing meals that meet normative ideals and values can be labour intensive. Television, whether in the form of a special event or integrated into an everyday meal, serves to alleviate some of this strain. TV dinners in particular, represent a socially legitimate escape from the physical and emotional work involved in more formal mealtimes. Television may fulfil an important role in parents' enjoyment of mealtimes.

In the UK, Alice and her husband Paul explain how this practice is useful for them. Both parents mention the challenges of encouraging their children to participate in regular meals. Mealtime observations reflected their concerns. Their three teenage children made only fleeting appearances at mealtimes, generally with the sole purpose of consuming food, often rushing to other activities such as meeting friends or doing homework. Only one of their teenage child Frank, a cooking enthusiast, actively participated in the visual data collection or final interview. Television, the parents have discovered, is a means of dealing with this issue. It is one of most effective means of encouraging the whole family to concurrently inhabit the same physical space for any length of time. The TV dinner therefore is an important appointment in their weekly schedule. At the time of the research visits, the family had synchronized the dinner with a comedy show, which they all enjoyed. All family members were almost guaranteed to be present as a result. Alice appears to enjoy the informality of '*throwing some food together'* and the opportunity to '*sit together and just have a laugh'.* Yet, although this ritual facilitates family cohesion and stimulates conversation, Alice still limits it to once a week and pursues her ideal of the family around the table.

Sylvie and Alan, parents of Leah and Bea, find family meals '*challenging*'. Sylvie is clear that although mealtimes are not necessarily enjoyable, she views them as long-term investments. Despite her children's complaints, she hopes that they will learn to assimilate her values and enjoy home-cooked food and conversation in the absence of a screen. However, both she and her husband recognise that the everyday task of coercing their children to eat and adhere to table manners can be tiring and that the TV dinner offers a repose from this. Alan explains, on Fridays they might enjoy a slice of pizza with the children and then sit down to a 'nice meal', when the children are in bed. This weekly routine is an opportunity for him to enjoy time with the family as well as have a break from the trials of shared meals.

Watching television at mealtimes is not a practice that only appeals to children. One Spanish parent quite openly expressed that she shared her children's requirement for television at mealtimes. Ima a shopkeeper, works long hours and lunchtimes take place within a tight schedule. After a long working morning followed by rushed cooking, she describes her need to sit down, relax and watch something that '*makes everybody laugh'*. The family routinely watch a sitcom at lunchtime. During observations, laughter was frequent and conversation (mainly about the programme) was lively albeit limited. In the UK, Louise relates a similar pleasure from this practice. However, social imperatives regarding family dining do not allow her to yield to this pleasure. As she explains:

Louise: Oh yes, yes I like dinner in front of the TV sometimes, like… come home and put the kids to bed and then eat, we might have a nice dinner in in the living room on our laps.

Interviewer: But you wouldn't do this with your children?

Louise: No I think it's important we all sit, eat and talk together,

When Louise is liberated from her parental role she chooses a meal in front of the television. Family meals are not simply a time to enjoy being 'together' the way she can with her partner, but rather a time to be 'together as a family', which carries social and moral significance. James and Sally also describe how they enjoy the practice of

TV dinners outside of family mealtimes. These adults demonstrate that the enjoyment of family occasions is bound by a set of social restrictions. For some, mealtime conviviality can only be achieved within an accepted moral and social framework.

6.6 Summary

Television viewing was a topic that arose spontaneously for most of the children in this study, whether in interviews, observations or the visual data they produced. Although participants in the UK were undoubtedly more articulate about their use of television than their Spanish counterparts, it was clear that television played a role in the way all of the families in the study constructed their mealtime ideologies; whether that was the tacit, everyday use of television or the more formalized concept of the TV dinner. Within these different cultural contexts, children universally recognized the role of television as a form of entertainment and relaxation at mealtimes. In the UK, the need for this recreation, was sometimes restricted by normative family dining practices. Spanish families, less bound by these rules, were more open to harnessing the potential of television to create harmonious mealtimes. In Spain television was seamlessly integrated into everyday meals and therefore young people had a less overt need to assert their agency.

This chapter has highlighted the marked cultural difference in the integration of television into mealtimes, yet in many respects, television served the same purpose across the families: to ensure that children's requirements were synchronized with those of their parents. The ubiquitous desire to watch television while eating is a window into children's needs, an insight into what makes meals enjoyable for them. Children and young people are not simply mirrors of their parent's consumption patterns, social education or social status. Family meals, and by definition families themselves, are creatively crafted by all of the members, ensuring that they voice their own ideas of pleasure and enjoyment. The TV dinner is a creative solution that allows this voice to be a heard in a way that is acceptable to all family members. Habitus is not necessarily a static, directional process; *if* their voices are heard, children might influence how, where and when families eat. While it is clear that parents still create the mould for the convivial family meal, children certainly possess the potential to shape its edges.

Chapter Seven: Capital and the family meal

7.1. Introduction

The previous two chapters have examined the ways in which food providers embed conviviality into their creation of family meals and how these events are negotiated and remodelled by young people. The findings have highlighted that this co-construction of mealtime events is directed by cultural norms and social imperatives, manifest in both the accounts and tacit behaviours of the participants. This final findings chapter explores the motives behind these socially driven practices through the conceptual framework of capital, the assets and resources that shape habitus and influence the way individuals negotiate the social world (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 1990b).

Dominance in different social spheres is determined by the amount of capital individuals possess and increased power allows particular groups to define what authentic capital is. It is in this way that control of capital can be maintained by specific sectors of society. The first section of this chapter will examine the social value of pleasure and health at family mealtimes and how cultural capital influences the ability to reconcile these ideas. The second section examines the role of family social capital at mealtimes and the final part of this chapter examines whether economic capital also plays a role in the process of creating conviviality.

7.2 Being healthy or being happy? Cultural capital in approaches to health in the UK

Pleasure and health were socially valued aspects of the family meal and in a number of cases these values appeared to be counterweights in the mealtime experience Achieving equilibrium between these two factors was, for some, key to creating mealtime harmony and conviviality. For participants in both countries, discussions of healthy eating were ubiquitous in interviews and mealtime observations. For most food providers, providing a nutritionally balanced meal was a consideration when making food choices. Health, particularly related to feeding children, was universally valued but was conceptualized and prioritised differently according to the cultural capital individuals possessed.

Young people had their own set of priorities in terms of food. Some older children were beginning to embrace ideas such as vegetarianism, dairy alternatives and low-fat foods. However, for the majority of young people in the study the focus was on taste and enjoyment. In families where the food providers' ideals on health and children's tastes were compatible, few tensions were apparent and overall this contributed to a more convivial atmosphere. On the other hand, when families struggled to reach a compromise, this had a negative impact on both the mealtime atmosphere and the experience of food work. Almost all of the families in both countries were concerned with concepts of healthy eating regardless of their social position. Nevertheless, what did become clear, was that cultural capital influenced approaches to nutrition and consequently the ability to reconcile pleasure and health.

A distinct pattern emerged in the way a sub-group of UK participants, with high cultural capital, engaged with ideas about nutrition. Definitions of healthy eating arose through spontaneous comments in interviews and observations. Health was rarely discussed in terms of the nutritional properties of foods, instead the focus was on broader concepts such as 'homemade', 'real', 'proper' and unprocessed food as well as traditional meal patterns. Participants were less concerned with the components of a meal and more with overall taste and aesthetics. Concepts of health derived from personal experience or patterns of eating in childhood. Some food providers such as Natasha, recall the trauma of being forced to eat particular foods for their health properties and so ensure their children are never coerced into eating particular foods. Other parents expressed a more positive view of their food histories and attempted to emulate them. Rose and Neil, for example, explain how they are still influenced by their parent's way of eating.

Rose: They're not, they didn't eat much processed food really…I mean my dad's got an allotment and always has done.

Neil: And so has my dad hasn't he?

Rose: Yeah and your dad. And so, as a child we always ate what my dad grew.

Rose: So, it was very…I would call it very traditional plain English food really. Right but it was always cooked fresh and it was always…but then when we were kids

convenience food didn't really exist. I remember a Findus crispy pancake coming home for the first time. It was exotic [laughs].

Observations and visual material from Rose's household demonstrated that the family adhered to these ideals. Rose and Neil consider themselves fortunate that their children are not fussy eaters and enjoy the foods they cook for them. The family's ideas of health are based on the unprocessed food Rose ate as a child and the importance her parents attached to table manners, moderation and '*eating just sufficient*'. However, the meals the family generally eat do not resemble those she ate as a child but are based on recipes from recipe books, magazines and from broadsheet newspaper supplements. Rose claims not to obsess about health but has developed her own nutritional guidelines based on her personal beliefs. For example, she discusses the issue of her son eating chocolate and sweets at his gymnastics club:

Rose: And that's fine I don't mind him a bit of rubbish but I don't want him eating…chucking like sweet carbohydrates in his face three nights a week and then getting home and not eating healthy food, proper food.

Other food providers convey a similar belief system. Social worker Alice is a food provider who, like Rose, creates her own nutritional paradigms based on the way she ate as a child. For Alice, food is not a meal unless it is eaten at the table; she claims to be committed to traditional meal patterns:

Alice: Yes even if I've been snacking all day…I don't feel right unless…I get home from work and I'll have what I call a conversation with the fridge…I'll always try to rustle up a balanced meal.

Alice has the confidence to prepare what she describes as '*real food'* with whatever is available. Since becoming a vegetarian, Alice still cooks meat for the family but has started to '*invent*' her own meat-free dishes and purchase novel ingredients from a health food shop to create them. She prepares a variety of foods, including homemade falafel, vegetable curries, steaks and salads but all meals contain fresh produce including vegetables, which fits with Alice's idea of a proper meal. The idea that a

cooked meal is important for the health and welfare of a family still permeates health discourses in these households.

For these families, ideas of pleasure and health were often compatible. These attitudes were conducive to pleasurable mealtimes as the emphasis centred on the positive aspects of food rather than regulation or dietary restriction. Families took a seemingly inclusive attitude to foods; as long as there was enough 'good food' in the diet, sweets, treats and pudding were permissible. Prohibited foods were allowed in specific contexts such as the TV dinner, as illustrated in the previous chapter. Two food providers, Sylvie and Flo, equated health with seasonal produce and based their menus on the foods available in their organic vegetable delivery boxes. Overall, the households appeared to share a *nutritional* habitus (Oncini, Guetto 2017) that integrated health and enjoyment. Neil takes pride in his nutritious *'man food'*, Alice describes herself as being '*a solid meal person'* and Flo takes a '*non nonsense'* approach to food and cooking.

However, following these broad ideas on healthy eating did not necessarily equate with a reconciliation of pleasure and health. One family in particular, struggled to achieve their ideals. Sylvie epitomises the way cultural capital can dictate mealtime choices. She is resolute that her family should eat fresh seasonal produce. She has done a cookery course at a local farm shop (institutionalised capital) receives an organic vegetable box (objectified capital) and regularly tries to make healthy seasonal recipes, which are often rejected by her children. As she explains:

Sylvie: …We had a really nice meal yesterday. Everyone really enjoyed their food and it was all quite pleasant but sometimes it can be quite fraught and you think why do I bother?

Observations confirmed that mealtimes were fraught in Sylvie's household, one of the main issues being the children's dislike of the food she cooks. As explored in the previous chapters, her children Leah and Bea complain consistently about the dinnertime menu. Given these sentiments Sylvie was asked in her final interview to elucidate in more depth why she did, in fact '*bother*' to make these meals. In response,

she eloquently articulated her long-term commitment to her children's wellbeing and education:

Sylvie: My husband and I really enjoy food and eating yes… it's good to enjoy together, we hope that one day the kids will enjoy it too. I want to ensure that the kids understand that's it's important to make time for meals… plus you know, the health aspects of preparing and eating fresh food, so that they are healthy as growing children and they…yes… take these values forward into adulthood.

Sylvie's comments reveal the manner in which she believes culturally valued tastes are transmitted and acquired. Yet she accepts that this transmission of taste is not seamless and fussy eating is a potential hurdle. She demonstrates social distinction both through her culturally legitimate tastes and her resolve to maintain them. However, the dynamic in this household demonstrates how the primary habitus may be challenged. Conviviality, in this family is not an immediate goal but a long-term one. Faced with what Bourdieu would term 'a struggle in the *field*' Sylvie reflects on the dispositions of her habitus and makes a conscious choice to prioritise ways of eating that have social value. For Sylvie's children, pleasure and health are often demarcated as separate entities and Sylvie is also forced to make a choice between the two.

This separation between pleasure and health was clear in a number of other UK families in the study. These, however, tended to be participants with lower cultural capital. Lone parent Tracey makes several references to her approach to healthy eating. In observations she is seen to be using reduced-calorie processed foods such as meat alternatives and foods labelled low-fat such as yoghurts and low-fat spreads, which she perceives to be healthier. She also encourages her daughter to eat fruit, as she is reluctant to eat other fresh foods:

Tracey: Yes, she doesn't eat vegetables and so I try to get her to have fruit after a meal, and… or we have yoghurts…She'll eat the Quorn I have, which is low fat.

Conversations on health were instigated by Tracey and she was keen to display the concessions she made to healthy eating. Tracey is one of a number of UK food providers who makes reference to ideas related to public health campaigns and talks

about the nutritional components of food. Her nutrition knowledge appears to be based on health guidelines as conveyed on food packaging. In observations, she shows the researcher nutrition labels she has scrutinised. Fat intake is clearly a priority and healthy eating is aligned with restricting calorie intake. However, both Tracey and her daughter express most enjoyment about meals where restrictive health rules are relaxed. For her daughter Pippa, this is fish and chips at her grandmothers, for Tracey it is a Friday night at the pub, where she eats whatever she wants (presumably as opposed to what she 'should'). There is clear dichotomy between enjoyment and health and for this family they appear largely, to exist on different plains. Lone parent Melanie explains a similar conflict between enjoyment and healthy eating when she explains the reason she does not pressurize her children to eat healthy foods:

Melanie: We don't eat enough vegetables. We'll have like a roast once a week and we will get …but other than that…I eat fruit during the week. Anthony doesn't. Poppy does. He doesn't really like fruit and I'd rather, you know... relax, have a nice meal but…

Melanie suggests that coercing her son to eat a particular food (in this case fruit) would be make mealtimes less relaxing. Melanie's discussion of health is skewed towards her failings to meet standards rather than her achievements. In a similar vein, florist and mother of two Sally expresses concerns about what she 'should be doing' in terms of health and nutrition:

Sally: Yes… and they give them fruit at playtime and so that's one of their bits of fruit and veg for the day…and I should… have porridge at breakfast... But they make a fuss and it's our time… at the start of the day so we have other stuff, you know…it's not as healthy...

Sally makes an explicit reference to government guidelines in their consumption practices. She mentions the government '*five a day*' campaign (promoted at the children's primary school) which encourages daily fruit and vegetable consumption: Both Melanie and Sally show awareness of external ideas or recommendations regarding healthy eating, but both also make choices that disregard health recommendations in order to reduce conflict. In Sally's case the fruit eaten at school appears to offer her some leeway at home. These mothers make pragmatic choices,

taking into account preferences and attempting to reduce mealtime tensions; they appear to prioritise pleasure (or absence of displeasure) over health.

Other parents demonstrate how their heath priorities have shifted. Administrative worker Louise is proud that her children *do* eat a range of foods including vegetables but credits her husband for their healthy diet. James exercises regularly and reads books on nutrition. She regrets that '*fish fingers and oven chips'* were more prevalent on the menu before her husband's change of shift patterns allowed him to do more cooking. Similarly, Sally suggests that *her* husband's job in catering has prompted the family to be more adventurous and subsequently improve their diet. Louise appreciates the health benefits of eating the foods her husband prepares (particularly his ability to disguise large amounts of vegetables in a meal) and laments that she chose '*the easy option'* when her children were younger. Melanie, in her final interview, expresses a similar sense of disappointment that she failed to instil healthy habits in her children at an early age. The current enjoyment (or lack of conflict) she experiences is tinged with regret:

Melanie: The food isn't the greatest...I just sort of give them what they want and I never used to worry about it before but now as I'm getting older and I can't just…I'm a bit more aware of my health and I think wow, I should have really got them into these [healthy eating] habits a long time ago. Probably too late now [Laughs].

The research process revealed that that what initially appeared to be functional, yet amicable family meals, elicited complex feelings for Melanie. She demonstrates a tacit understanding that harmony, togetherness and health are all valued parts of the family meal. However, the demands she faces has led her to compromise the latter, leaving her with a sense of concern about her role as food provider. Tracy also reveals the complexity and contradictory nature of her ideas regarding pleasure and health. She expresses inadequacy that she does not provide the proper meals that her daughter enjoys at her grandmother's (fish and chips, roast potatoes, home-made puddings) but also shows concern about the nutritional value of these same foods.

For a number of food providers, conviviality was not consistent with restrictive discourses on healthy eating and they struggled to reconcile the two. Circulating public

health and nutrition discourses were conveyed as remote concepts, which they struggled to unite with pleasure. This stood in contrast to the group of families who possessed an internalised mealtime ideology. These participants, generally in possession of high cultural capital, embodied ideas on health and reinforced their ideas with examples of cultural capital such as food magazines, organic produce and recipe books which bolstered the legitimacy of their practices.

Where ideas could not be reconciled, choices were made between pleasure and health. Those with higher levels of capital were more likely to pursue avenues for making meals healthy, sometimes at the expense of enjoyment. Families with less cultural resources were more likely to prioritise immediate needs but reflected on the shortcomings of doing so. In the context of Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the former operated according to a *taste for luxury and the latter a taste for the necessary* (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 2005). There were examples however, of families who altered their nutritional habitus as a result of influence from other social *fields* such as the workplace and in doing so illustrated that the relationship between pleasure, health and social position is not static. However, the findings suggest that cultural capital allows participants to define 'authentic' versions of healthy eating that are consistent with their ideals of conviviality.

7.3 Spain: Pleasure, health and cultural capital

It is more challenging to examine how ideas about health and pleasure were reconciled in Spanish families as this makes the fundamental presumption that these are two paradigms that require reconciliation. Within the cohort of Spanish families this rarely seemed to be the case; health and pleasure seemed to be regarded as synonymous. There was less evidence of social divisions in consumption patterns and cultural capital played a less obvious role. Families articulated and displayed uniform ideas about food and meal patterns.

All of the Spanish families adhered to traditional ideas on healthy eating, similar to those embraced by families with higher cultural resources in the UK. Food providers demonstrated homogeneity in their discourses on food, nutrition and mealtimes and this was apparent in the foods they consumed. In mealtime observations in the

summertime, the majority of families consumed gazpacho (cold tomato-based soup), paella and olives, fried fish and salads and in the wintertime, lentils and ham were ubiquitous. Serving local, seasonal foods or typical regional dishes may have been for the benefit of the researcher, yet notwithstanding this possibility, the uniformity of meals observed indicated that families had a unified idea of what they *should* be eating and how to produce it. When accommodating children's tastes, this was achieved by adapting these customary dishes rather than cooking child-friendly alternatives.

Regional dishes were adapted to meet taste and nutrition requirements. Both Nina and Maria describe ways in which they disguise the vegetables in '*pisto*' a tomato-based sauce and regional speciality. Stay-at-home mothers Leticia and Paca also explain how they might favour particular cooking styles or recipes to make foods more appetising for children, such as frying fish or eating lentils with chorizo. Any concessions made for pleasure, taste or health were within the parameters of traditional food norms. Local or traditional foods did not seem to require any official nutritional stamp of approval to be considered healthy for families. Foods that were local or traditional were automatically perceived as '*good for you'*. In mealtime observations, Larissa a full time cleaner and mother of two teenagers, enthuses about their diet:

Larissa: Fish is from the fishmongers….Oh yes and we always use plenty of olive oil….it's important…from our village. And the wine is from [name of village] too. You must try it…. and the bread….the ham is Serrano ham, it's very good.

For Larissa, artisanal foods from the village she grew up in are considered healthy. Bread, ham, cheese and wine; foods that are not necessarily considered healthy in mainstream nutrition discourses are valued for their 'goodness'. Larissa describes many of the foods as 'bueno' literally translated as 'good', but the word is used colloquially to describe food that tastes good as well as being 'good for you'. This nuance in language demonstrates how the dichotomy between pleasure and health is not as marked in Spanish families.

Above: Pictures taken by Spanish children of their preferred lentil dishes: SP 6 [left] SP10 [right].

Above: Pictures of fried whitebait taken by two Spanish children as examples of their favourite fish dishes. SP1 [left] SP6 [right].

In Spain, social distinction initially appeared to be subsumed by a shared cultural understanding unrelated to any form of capital. Families ate the foods in a way that they believed to be normal for everyone. However, the intensive fieldwork in this study revealed that the families were aware of a food transition away from the current norms, with more convenience and fast foods becoming available, posing a threat to the established food culture. There was suggestion that the way families negotiated this change might differ according to their levels of capital. Nina, a doctor and mother of two is very aware of this change.

Nina: I think, maybe because of my job, I am a health-conscious person and when it comes to food if you're not health conscious you're going to end up taking your children to a fast food place because they will eat without fuss, have a great time there and you can speak to your husband without your children climbing all over you...

Throughout the research process Nina shows a determination to preserve the sanctity of the family meal and the values of Mediterranean food culture. Yet she also is a full-time working mother who appreciates the hard work involved in implementing her ideals. Nina believes her professional experience (as a GP) and personal interest in nutrition have fuelled this resolve. However, this extract illustrates the appeal of meals that do not adhere to rigid cultural norms. It is her direct experience of the struggles faced by working parents that increases Nina's awareness of this threat. In a later interview Nina confesses that she, herself has taken her children to McDonalds on a few occasions and is embarrassed of this. Paca a housewife in a very different socio-economic position echoes Nina's concerns. Paca and her husband Juan Pablo rent a house in a deprived area of the city and made a decision to give up work in order to feed the family:

Paca: Yes, I cook the old-fashioned way…but my generation doesn't have time for the type of cooking I do here…They like Burger King and that new stuff… Puchero (chickpea soup with vegetables), Fideos (a type of pasta used in casseroles). They don't do it. They *don't have time, so they spend money on that stuff…*

Paca was keen to participate in the research and promote the taste and health benefits of traditional ways of eating. She takes pride in the fact that unlike others, she has made an active choice not to work and dedicate herself to family food provision. Paca is keen to illustrate that '*her way'* of shopping and cooking, is not only healthier but more economical than relying on convenience food. She looks beyond the supermarket and uses local markets to buy cheap-cuts of meat, inexpensive fish, fruit and vegetables. However, her husband Juan Pablo points out that these savings do not compensate for her loss of earnings. He refers to '*the economic crisis'* and recognises that for most couples in their neighbourhood, it is imperative for both partners to work. Novel, convenience foods, he explains, offer a solution to the

challenge faced by the families in their community and that not everyone has '*time to be healthy*'. The emphasis on the novelty of fast food is reiterated by a number of participants, illustrating current transitions in ways of eating, instigated in part by different patterns of working amongst the population.

Ima, another parent living in a similar neighbourhood, reinforces this point. Ima and her partner work full-time in retail and live in rented accommodation in a deprived area of the city. In mealtime observations she produces lentil and vegetable- based dishes, similar to those seen in families across the social spectrum. However, she describes why she sometimes chooses take-away, convenience foods:

Ima: Well usually on Fridays I buy a chicken from the rotisserie place. For ten euros you can get chicken, chips and drinks and salad for everyone so I get some time…my chips are better but it is good food, healthy enough and we like it. It's my day off cooking and I can relax and enjoy eating. But as you [the researcher] were coming I made something more, you know...something better.

The chicken and chips is described as a pragmatic solution to food provision on a busy working today. She sees this as '*healthy enough'* for the family but not, it seems, good enough to display to the researcher. Ima possesses the tacit understanding that takeaway chicken is not a culturally valued practice and that traditional cooked food is nutritionally and culturally superior but accepts that the demands of her schedule justify this break from normative food pressures. Ima exhibits a taste for the necessary, a choice that Juan Pablo suggests others may also be making. She chooses immediate enjoyment over health and tradition rather than attempting to consolidate the two.

The findings indicate that food customs, currently adopted by Spanish families across the social spectrum in this study, are gaining capital value and may act as a means of social differentiation. Whereas food providers such as Ima discuss the appeal of convenience food, families with higher levels of cultural capital demonstrated strong attachments to regional foods and ways of adding further value to them. For example, Claudia and Jose Antonio take a unique approach to Mediterranean eating. The couple discuss how they experiment with traditional Spanish foods to create novel, healthier

dishes; they omit bread from recipes and source their olive oil and coffee from specialist shops. In a similar vein, Ines shows how she legitimises regional food culture:

Ines: Yes I like to maintain food traditions

Interviewer: What do you mean by traditions?

Ines: You know the way of eating, like my parents, our traditional foods…sometimes I think we don't have the right conditions to maintain these traditions and it can be hard work but I love that food. I have a book [points out book on traditional Spanish cuisine].

Ines demonstrates her commitment through a large, glossy book on the Spanish Diet. Paradoxically, the book that she uses to guide her eating is written in English and was a purchase she made on a trip to London. She demonstrates that the traditional diet she refers to has become a valued product; her ideas on tradition are presented in a form of objectified cultural capital. The ways of eating she describes have been repackaged and sold to those who have the socio-cultural means to consume it. Yet Ines also points out that the traditions outlined in the book are difficult to uphold and her personal experience corroborates this. The demanding schedules and divergent needs of her family make the pairing of conviviality and tradition challenging. Outwardly, her opinions are illogical but they demonstrate the capital value of a traditional Mediterranean diet and her tacit 'practical sense' (Bourdieu 1990b) of how to prioritise practices with capital value.

In the *Spanish* households there was less evidence of a gulf between health and pleasure and fewer signs of social divisions in food consumption. However, there was suggestion that cultural capital may impact on the way families may currently be approaching traditional food practices. For some, enjoying food was inextricably linked to acquiring and maintaining legitimate tastes and acquiring capital, sometimes regardless of whether immediate enjoyment was achieved. Concepts of pleasure and health were intertwined with traditional ways of eating for Spanish families across the social spectrum. Nevertheless, there was evidence that during the current period of food transition, the pursuit of cultural capital might reinforce attachment to a perceived cultural heritage.

7.4 Social capital: Facilitating the convivial meal

The family meal is a potential site for the acquisition and display of social capital, allowing family members access to resources, through individual connections with each other, by fostering networks of trust and reciprocity and by acquiring social credentials for membership and participation in the event. More specifically, as has been illustrated in the previous chapters, families construct mealtime events that reinforce *family social capital*; parents and caregivers create opportunities to make their human capital available to children and to nurture supportive interactions (Alvarez et al. 2017). The findings demonstrated that there were two distinct approaches to the way families cultivated capital and these were sometimes shaped by socio-cultural determinants. The first approach was creating a closed event, where participation at mealtimes was restricted to household family members. The objective here was to create exclusive family time, a secure environment to support each other and for adults to interact with their children. The second approach was to open the mealtime to individuals outside the family unit, an 'open door' approach which often served to socialise the children and create wider social networks.

In the UK, social divisions were apparent in these approaches. It was almost exclusively families with higher cultural capital who encouraged the participation of non-kin guests at family mealtimes. Food providers such as foster parent Flo reflected on this practice. She made contrived attempts to increase social capital at mealtimes for her foster children who came from '*difficult circumstances*'. She discusses her reasons for inviting friends to the family dinner table:

Flo: Yes, well it started as a socializing process for the boys but now it happens naturally. It's only a few people we know and they know our rules and even when it's guests with children, even if they behave differently I show the boys they need to stick to our ways of doing things. It's part of how they learn.

Only families with high cultural capital in the UK, discussed open house arrangements, inviting guests to share meals in their homes. Teachers Rose and Neil, take pride in the fact that '*anyone who's at the table*' (referring mainly to their children's friends) at dinnertime is welcome to eat with them. They also eat with their friends and families

at the weekend. Theatre manager Natasha, also regularly invites her children's classmates for dinner and social worker Alice routinely feeds her teenage children's friends. One food provider conceptualises the act of including guests in mealtimes differently. Rather than seeing this practice as inviting outsiders to join the family meal, lone parent and teacher Hayley has broadened her definition of 'family' to encompass her close network of friends:

Hayley: We eat with friends quite a lot. What I was saying before… that a family isn't necessarily family. We have a lot of close friends, who have children maybe similar ages or I've got a friend who has just had a baby who is on her own. So, we spend a lot of time together …We, our friends, eat, probably more so than our family [referring to her parents and sibling]. But like I said, I consider them my family. On a Sunday, you know we'll have a Sunday roast together or something so…

The Sunday roast, an iconic family meal is shared with Hayley's network of friends, not her blood relations. Hayley has developed a wider definition of 'the family' that has enabled her to widen the social capital available at mealtimes. She explains that this support network offers her the possibility to pool resources for childcare and food work but most importantly makes mealtimes more enjoyable. Eating in a larger group offers all family members opportunities for supportive interactions. She describes this way of eating as '*taking the pressure off her'* as a lone parent, as well as offering her children the opportunity to develop close relationships with other adults and children in the group.

There is another of potential benefit of diversifying the mealtime guests for children and young people. The concept of *family social capital* suggests that children are passive receptors of the capital endowed to them by parents (Alvarez et al. 2017). However, as illustrated in previous chapters, children and young people can also resist parental attempts to direct mealtimes or to 'share' their capital. The presence of additional guests at the dinner table appeared to reduce overt parental control of the event. For example, visual data from Flo's household revealed, that in the presence of friends, the family did not engage in their customary discussion of the highlights and lowlights of the day. Lizzy also alludes to her mother Rose, being more relaxed about

'*the rules'* when her friends were present and Amy suggests that having '*having friends for tea is really fun'*. Overall children suggested that mealtimes were more relaxed and involved less interrogation when non-household members were present.

Photograph of family UK3 [left] and screenshot from video recording UK9 [right] both present interactions with siblings at mealtimes. Children display and discuss the social aspects of meals.

Families with fewer cultural resources made little reference to guests in their habitual family meals. Melanie and Sally both discuss eating with extended family occasionally and Louise feeds her sister's children when she is working. However, other than this, any reference to eating with friends was in relation to eating outside of the home. Poppy and Anthony might eat snacks with their friends at home but mealtimes were exclusively for the family; Sally explains that whilst her children '*play out with friends'* it would unusual for their playmates to join them for a meal. A number of the food providers' value this time spent exclusively with family members. Food providers used the phrases '*quality time'* and '*family time'* and free of '*distractions*' suggesting that the exclusion of outsiders is an opportunity to nurture relationships within the family network. Louise explains:

Louise: Yeah I guess so, yeah, it's a time where we'll all sit down and we're all just sat down not doing anything…So it's just nice when we're all here and its quite relaxed and

its two adults…the children and actually the children can look after themselves now so we can just, relax, talk to each other, be together, it's not like I'm up and down getting stuff for them anymore.

For Louise, exclusivity is positive. However, lone parent Tracey, appears to view the private nature of her family meals differently. During mealtime observations, Tracey admitted to being unsure as to whether a family of two was valid for the research process, insinuating that she felt meals in her household lacked social legitimacy. Yet, she also recognised the importance of this daily opportunity to dedicate '*just to her and Pippa*' and would not consider inviting friends or even family (her parents live close by) to join them. Both Tracey and her daughter, however, enthuse about meals with friends outside the home. Tracey nurtures 'family social capital' by making herself exclusively available to her daughter but in doing so does not necessarily prioritise enjoyment.

In Spain, family meals were universally private, closed events that were open only to kin relations, most often those living in the same household. The collective shared understanding of *what* families should eat at mealtimes extended to *who* they should with or more importantly, should *not* eat with. Inviting guests to a shared meal in the home did not occur, nor was it discussed in any of the mealtime observations with Spanish families. Children did not discuss or request the inclusion of friends in their family meals. With only one exception, all of the children in the study came home to eat with family at lunchtime, even though lunch provision was available (but seldom used) in the schools. Food providers demonstrated strong commitment to their ideals. To ensure children could eat with family members at lunchtime, mothers gave up work, cooked in advance to allow sufficient time to eat with her children and negotiated busy schedules. Families articulated pervasive ideas about the link between food and family and this was often contextualised in the idea of tradition. However, as a number of food providers explained, *traditionally* extended family members, usually grandmothers had helped with food provision, but due to dispersion of families this was often unfeasible. Those who did have access to this human capital valued it highly.

Leticia's mother shares lunchtime with her daughter and her two children. Her husband often works antisocial hours and is unable to eat with them. Leticia explains the importance of the additional social capital her mother brings to the dinner table. In observations, they worked as an extremely efficient team, cooking, cleaning and sorting school kit while still being able to interact with the children in a relaxed way. Leticia explains how the extra support allows her to construct the mealtime she wants:

Leticia: Yes of course it's a great help. It's important that she comes. And it's something that we are losing in Spain. It's important that they sit and spend time with them [grandparents] and its good because we, parents, you know we are so busy. It used to be the case that there were more grandparents in the home. Now there are not as many. Oh but also there is the other side of the story and that's the economic crisis, many couples are having to live with the grandparents because they are stuck financially.

For Leticia the economic crisis in Spain is potentially positive if furthers family social capital, which she clearly values above economic assets. In fact, Leticia is one of two Spanish mothers in the study who gave up working (and therefore sacrificed economic capital) in order to prioritise being with her family. The additional presence of her mother increases the resources available to family at mealtimes and enables Leticia to produce a meal that she feels is culturally adequate, both in terms of the food she is able to provide and the interactions with her children. In a similar way, Maria discusses the importance of help from grandparents:

Maria: I have so much help from my mother from Monday to Friday. So, I have time to eat with them [her children] properly, cook proper food…

Interviewer: Yes, yes. That's true. And your mother, she helps you out, does that happen much over here, grandparents helping…

Maria: Yes, here it's very common…well was very common here if you work…if both the mother and father work…

Maria's son Alec reiterates the value of his grandmother's presence at the table. He explains that there was period when she was unable to help his mother and he was

obliged to eat at school. He found mealtimes there noisy and stressful and values the intimacy of being with close relations. His grandmother, he explains, has time to talk, make jokes or just watch TV with him at lunchtime.

The social value of extended family in these eating events was manifest, but only three of the ten families had this social resource available to them and others openly lamented this absence. Felipe attributes his unconventional role as family cook to the absence of extended family and Paca wishes her grandmother were available to cook with her. Many of the Spanish participants commented on the challenge of food provision when both parents were working and reminisced about childhoods where parents were less busy or extended family shared meals together. While this may or not have been an accurate depiction of events, families across the social spectrum expressed the need for additional social support to create convivial meals that met their ideals and expectations.

7.5 Economic capital: Purchasing power for social and cultural resources

This chapter has highlighted how both cultural and social capital can shape the habitus and act as an internal roadmap to mealtime construction. The findings suggest that economic capital, however, acts differently and financial assets, rather than having a direct influence on practice, may be an indirect way of acquiring other forms of capital. Bourdieu's theories underline the interrelationship between capital and how one form of capital can be converted to another (Bourdieu 2011). This was evident in the findings. In both countries, economic advantage allowed a small number of families to employ domestic help (see Table 4.4) for other household chores, liberating more human capital for food provision. In the same vein, financial security allowed some participants to reduce working hours in order to be present at mealtimes. Economic capital allowed for the purchase of books, magazines, cookery courses and ingredients, which increased the cultural capital of meals.

There was one particularly striking example of this transfiguration of capital. Faced with the constraints of restricted social and human capital highlighted in the previous section, a number of Spanish families used their economic assets to facilitate conviviality in a manner that was consistent with their habitus. They achieved this

through the means of a high-tech kitchen gadget, The Thermomix[4], which appeared to have symbolic value for families. Essentially a top-of-the-range food blender and slow cooker, this expensive gadget was marketed as a tool for 'cooking the way your grandmother used to' (Thermomix 2018) and appeared to take the role of an additional family member in the kitchen. This first became apparent in an interview with nine-year-old Jose.

Interviewer: Right this photo you've taken of the Thermomix, which you talk about a lot in this house, from what I have seen. Tell me what the Thermomix is?

Jose: The Thermomix is a machine that means that mum doesn't need to work.

Interviewer: Mum doesn't need to work? How…?

Jose: Because it mixes...it mixes….it mixes...and it's got a timer and you tell it how many seconds you want to do it in…and it does it.

Interviewer: So it cooks on its own?

Jose: Yes.

And your mum doesn't have to do anything?

Jose: Just add the ingredients.

[Nina laughs]

So do you think you could cook with it?

Jose: Yes.

What appeared to be a humorous anecdote gained increasing significance as fieldwork progressed. It transpired that five of the ten families in Spain owned a Thermomix and discussed it without prompting from the researcher. The machine cost the equivalent

[4] The Thermomix is marketed in Spain as an intelligent food processor that carries out numerous practical tasks such as chopping, blending, whisking and steaming and displays digital recipes to guide the cooking process. The product is sold internationally but in Spain it is sold with a recipe guide called 'Grandmothers Recipes'. Purchase of the Thermomix includes a visit from a representative who shows participants how to make traditional dishes and links owners to a closed online forum to share recipe ideas.

of around £1000, so even for the wealthier families this was a significant cost. It was certainly not an option for less economically advantaged families in the study. When families discussed the machine, they bestowed it with an elevated, status. Ella, a midwife with two daughters, describes the role of the gadget in their family. This narrative resonates with Maria's and Leticia's descriptions of the help they receive from their mothers:

Ella: It's really important in our kitchen. We use it practically every day. I make lentils, gazpacho, dough, make cake mix, the pizza dough that I was telling you about – that I like to make them on Sundays, sauces everything. And yes, it's true as I was saying, that I think the food in my family would be very different if it weren't for the Thermomix. It helps so much. It's so useful. So, it might be doing some lentils while I'm doing stuff on the computer. The machine beeps when it's done and that's that. I don't have to be standing over it. I can do other stuff.

Photographs taken of Thermomix by children in SP3 [left] and Ella in SP5 [right].

Similarly, Maria appears to personify the machine:

Maria: Right well what the Thermomix does is it means that you don't have to be standing over the food, worrying about it, stirring it and…no, it's more than just a cooker… you put in all the ingredients you need, set it at the prescribed temperature and speed and just while you are not even thinking about it your meal is cooked…and you don't have to worry about it at all, you can just get on with the other things you have to do too and you know it's going to turn out delicious. I mean it's a great thing.

Other participants in possession of this gadget exuded similar enthusiasm. Conversations with food providers revealed that this increasingly popular purchase included membership to a closed online forum and a visit from a representative who demonstrated how to use the machine for everyday cooking (Thermomix 2018). Households appeared to be buying an extra family member. The machine not only offered them 'the grandmother in the kitchen', stirring the pot and keeping an eye on the food but also a forum that emulated perceived traditional food networks. It was a strategy that allowed for normative food provision patterns when other demands were being placed on food providers. However, although the Thermomix might have acquired social status, it was economics that made it available to some and not to others. This gadget showed how one form of capital, literally, allowed individuals to buy another.

7.6 Summary

The lines between forms of capital were intricately connected in these families. Cultural capital shaped mealtime aspirations, social capital facilitated the execution of these meals and economic capital allowed families to 'purchase' both social and cultural assets. Cross-country divisions were evident. The power of cultural capital in reconciling the ideals of health and pleasure was evident in the UK but social divisions were less apparent in Spain. On the other hand, the family social capital that is intrinsic to the family meal in Spain was more readily recreated with friendship networks in the UK. Examining forms of capital allowed for a deeper understanding of why individuals construct the meals the way they do. The family meal does not happen by chance, it reflects a complex interplay of social, economic and cultural resources that can both

enhance and compete with conviviality. Individuals employed ‘practical logic’ to negotiate how they constructed and experienced shared meals. Although enjoyment was often an objective for families, internal dispositions determined the extent to which this could be achieved.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This study makes a number of significant contributions to scholarship within the sociology of food. It is the first known empirical study to examine the way families experience conviviality in two distinct cultural settings. The study considers experiences of mealtime enjoyment in Spain where rhetoric on Mediterranean food culture implies that familial convivial dining is deeply embedded in regional ways of eating (Medina 2004, Morin 2010, Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, UNESCO 2013). Spain is a country at the epicentre of Mediterranean diet promotion, yet also, paradoxically, a nation where interest in the sociology of food is in its infancy (Méndez 2014, Méndez et al. 2015, Díaz-Méndez 2016). The experience of Spanish families was compared with those in the UK, a non-Mediterranean country, where the ideal of conviviality is circulated both through public health models and popular discourses on food, health and lifestyle in the region (Alexandratos 2006, Daily Mail 2017, NHS 2018).

This research makes a meaningful contribution to knowledge by being one of the few empirical studies to examine the notion of mealtime conviviality within a sociological context. The discussion examines how the findings examined in the preceding chapters can be understood within the theoretical framework of the study and employs this schema to illustrate how the research has addressed its aim and objectives. The first section takes an overview of all the findings chapters in order to further address the first research objective, how families conceptualise and experience conviviality in both countries. The original research contribution here lies in the understanding of conviviality as a symbol of cultural capital and a marker of social distinction. Next, the discussion concentrates on the second research objective; the factors that facilitate and hinder convivial dining, primarily drawing from the findings on capital in Chapter Seven. The findings demonstrate that social distinctions in the experience of conviviality are less defined in Spain and the study proposes the concept of *cultural habitus* to explain the uniform, cultural practices observed. The subsequent two sections address the third research objective; the measures taken by food providers to construct convivial meals. The predominant focus here is on approaches to food work as outlined in Chapter Five, but also the relevance of health

perspectives when constructing conviviality. Here, the key contribution to knowledge is through the identification of ideological approaches to food work that facilitate enjoyable meals and an understanding of how these relate to habitus and capital. The two concluding sections explore the final research objective, the multiple perspectives of family members, focusing on the sometimes, divergent needs and ideals of children and adults. It sheds new light on current theory by illustrating how cross-cultural divergence in approaches to mealtime socialisation and children's agency influence enjoyment for different family members.

8.2 How families conceptualise and experience conviviality

Participants' concepts and experiences of conviviality were contextualised through use of Bourdieu's of model of social distinction, using the concepts of habitus and capital (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 2011). This section outlines the way in which the findings on conviviality resonate with Bourdieu's conceptual tools and equally how they depart from them.

Pleasure from shared mealtimes revealed itself to be a marker of social division, symbolic of what Bourdieu terms a distance from necessity and a taste for luxury (Bourdieu 2005). A number of participants revealed an 'aesthetic disposition' towards mealtime enjoyment and described family mealtimes in a way that prioritised a refined interest in food, open communication and connectedness (Bourdieu 1984, Sassatelli, Davolio 2010, Beagan et al. 2014). Families in in the UK employed cultural capital to demarcate their representations of conviviality. As illustrated in Chapter Five, Natasha enjoys the creative process of browsing through recipe books for family meal ideas; Sylvie cooks for the household with recipes acquired from an organic cookery course; Flo uses her vegetable delivery box for cooking inspiration and Rose and Neil take pleasure in reviving '*traditional English food*' through recipes from broadsheet supplements. Social distinction is also apparent in the mealtime scripts that food providers employ (Aukrust, Snow 1998, Herot 2002, Mortlock 2015). Flo's values the daily ritual of each family member discussing their '*highs and lows'* and Natasha delights in the '*finger of truth'*, a unique family ritual of pressing an imaginary buzzer before each family member reveals an aspect of their day. Furthermore, as will

be explored later in this chapter, social distinction in the UK is determined through a taste for healthy eating in some families.

In Spain, there was less evidence of social division in food practices, although a number of families still authenticated and distinguished their regional ways of eating through their use of books, specialist ingredients, gadgets and experimentation. Claudia and Jose Antonio are enthusiasts of the Mediterranean diet and source specialist and organic ingredients to augment the dietary value of this esteemed regional cuisine. Likewise, Ines' everyday recipe book, is a glossy, English language guide to authentic Spanish food culture, which does not illustrate her adherence to family tradition (she re-enacts meals different to those she experienced as child) but to culturally valued ideals. Most strikingly, as Chapter Seven conveyed, half of the Spanish households extolled the virtues of the Thermomix, the highly expensive kitchen aid that makes claims about modernising traditional food work in Spain.

For Bourdieu, however, aesthetic dispositions of pleasure are not the only social manifestations of mealtime conviviality. In his work on social distinction, Bourdieu describes a different experience of mealtime enjoyment manifested by those in lower class positions. He suggests that individuals less concerned with the aestheticism of food, those closer to necessity, are better positioned to derive immediate, spontaneous gratification from convivial dining (Bourdieu 1984, Wood 1995). If tastes of freedom in higher social groups are symbolic of sophisticated codes, rituals and norms; for those in less advantaged social positions, freedom is experienced through liberation from these codes (Bourdieu 2005). What Bourdieu implies are two distinct pleasures from eating together, experienced differently according to social position.

Whilst there was some evidence of this divide, the social and cultural divisions of conviviality in this study, were more blurred. There *were* examples of a conviviality characterised by a taste for necessity. A number of participants with lower levels of cultural capital, explained how they forgo normative mealtime customs in favour of immediate gratification. Ima enjoys the break that she gets from feeding her family a rotisserie chicken once a week even although she believes home cooked food would be '*better*'; Melanie has never imposed healthy eating habits on her children in an

effort to maintain mealtime harmony but has begun to question her choices; Tracey permits routine television watching at mealtimes despite her embarrassment at this habit. Although families enjoyed these practices, they distanced themselves from them in their displays of family dining. Familial conviviality was marked through both affiliation with socially legitimate norms and distancing from practices that were inappropriate. In both countries and across the social spectrum, mealtime boundaries were marked in terms of differentiation from stigmatised practices or 'othering' (Jensen 2011, Dervin 2015). In the UK, the stigmatization of routine television viewing at mealtimes was perhaps the most prominent example of this. Similarly, in Spain there appeared to be a general consensus that fast or convenience food consumption could only be an *enjoyable* practice outside of the home. Some food providers marked their detachment from unfavourable practices by prioritising other valued norms. For example, Melanie admits that the food she provides is not '*the greatest*' but reiterates her preference to sit at the table and communicate with the children; Tracey focuses on the measures she takes to ensure healthy eating even if it occurs in front of the television. There was, little evidence then, of participants being liberated from culturally legitimised codes of eating as Bourdieu suggests.

In this way, the findings make a subtle departure from Bourdieu's theories of mealtime pleasure. Whatever their social position, families discussed and represented a form of conviviality that met consistent cultural and social norms. Drawing on more contemporary work, I would suggest that habitus is not only constituted in moments of practice (Harker, May 1993, Barta 2017, Bourdieu 2018b) but also in moments of display (Finch 2007). In displays to the researcher and to each other, families were keen to confirm their practices were consistent with hegemonic models of family dining. Enjoyable experiences outside of these codes, such as Tracey's meals with her daughter at the pub, or Leticia's family trips to fast food restaurants, were not described as *family* meals by participants. Equally, events considered to be family meals, but which did not meet social ideals, invoked feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Families across the social spectrum shared an understanding of how conviviality *should* be experienced and this shaped their mealtime aspirations.

Conviviality was conceptualised differently in the two countries. In Spain, there was less evidence of social division than in the UK and Bourdieu's theory of distinction seemed less ostensibly relevant to shared mealtime pleasure. This appeared to be, partly, due to the fact that the cultural and informational resources (i.e. the capital) related to mealtime enjoyment were framed in a regional or national context (Arnaiz 2005, Anderson 2017). Food providers such as Paca describe themselves as a traditional Spanish cooks; Ines and Leticia evoke their associations with regional food culture and Nina and Jose Antonio both demonstrate affiliation to the Mediterranean diet. As highlighted in the case of Ines, these idealizations are not always representative of their lived experience. Elusive notions of tradition and regionality may be the result of public health disseminations (Neira, de Onis 2006, Bach-Faig et al. 2011b), which have filtered into circulating discourses in society (Xavier Medina 2009, Serra-Majem et al. 2012). The non-specific nature of the Mediterranean diet has been one of the greatest criticisms of this cultural model (Medina 2004, Xavier Medina 2009, de Lorgeril, Salen 2011), however this vagueness allowed families to valorise whatever foods and customs they enjoyed under the broad umbrella of Mediterranean-ness. Leticia, Paca and Nina all imply that a sense of belonging to their region is a fundamental part of their ways of eating. In other words, Spanish families were better placed to incorporate conviviality into their mealtime construction, not because they were more adept at doing family, or necessarily because enjoyment was deeply embedded their cultural heritage (Graham 2002), but because there was accessible cultural capital associated with established, everyday ways of eating.

8.3 Conviviality as capital: Factors that facilitate or hinder convivial dining

An important part of the research contribution then, lies in the understanding that in *both* countries, conviviality can be a symbol of cultural capital (Prieur, Savage 2013). *Enjoying* food with family rather than simply *eating* food with family goes beyond a necessary activity to a socially valued pastime. A distinction can be made between those families who simply eat together and those who endeavour to *enjoy* eating together.

The study developed a nuanced understanding of the interplay of conviviality with other forms of capital, illustrating the social and cultural determinants that might

facilitate or hinder convivial dining. Chapter Seven illustrated how cultural capital enhanced participants' ability to reconcile pleasure and health; it also demonstrated how social capital increased possibilities for enjoyment by fostering friendship and extended family networks as well as enabling food providers to share the practical tasks of mealtime construction. Similarly, economic capital, as symbolised through the Thermomix, facilitated food work, reducing the potential burden of labour. These findings resonate with Bourdieu's idea of a feel for the game (Bourdieu 1984, de Morais Sato et al. 2016); the idea that increased capital in a particular *social field* (in this case the domestic domain) offers individuals innate knowledge to take the most valuable course of action and further their resources.

However, the findings revealed that the interplay of capital was more complex than this and increased capital did not always equate with conviviality. Family mealtimes revealed themselves to be a site for the acquisition of capital (Bourdieu 2011, Fernández 2012, Alvarez et al. 2017) and using the dinner table to further social and educational assets was detrimental to some aspects of conviviality. For example, parent-directed conversation or table-talk (Ochs et al. 1996, Cheal 2002, Ochs, Shohet 2006) was at often odds with convivial dining, at least for a number of young people who felt they were subjected to excessive questioning at mealtimes. Participants with high levels of institutionalised cultural capital such as Rose, Natasha and Nina valued practices such as mealtime conversation as a means of family cohesion despite ambivalence and even protests from other household members. Likewise, UK mother of two, Sylvie endures *unenjoyable* mealtimes in order to educate her children to *enjoy* eating well.

The dichotomy between Sylvie's pursuit of pleasurable mealtimes and the disharmonious events her family experiences, reflect a conflict between conviviality and capital. Although such practices appear irrational, they are the result 'logic of practice', a way of being that makes practical sense in a specific social environment (Bourdieu 1990b, Bourdieu 2018b). In the same way, food providers such as Melanie, Tracey or Ima, forgo culturally valued ideals of health, conversation or tradition in order to meet immediate needs and preferences, in keeping with their social dispositions. Previous studies on food consumption have highlighted how practical

logic (Bourdieu 1990b) guides choices as determined by levels of capital (Wills et al. 2011, Barta 2017). Food providers develop a habitus that shapes how they negotiate their assets, using their innate sense of the social world to decide where and how to invest and balance their resources (Holt 1998, Beagan et al. 2015, Alvarez et al. 2017). There are many ways in which capital, particularly cultural capital, enables conviviality but the findings also outline the way in which the pursuit of capital resources can also hinder enjoyable meals.

8.4 Constructing conviviality: Food work and the *good enough* habitus

Having illustrated the capital value of conviviality, this section refers to the third research objective through exploration of the often, tacit manner in which food providers embed pleasure into mealtime constructions. Drawing principally from the findings in Chapter Five, it concentrates on ideological approaches to food provision and identifies a disposition that facilitates the balance between enjoyment and food work. It highlights the manner in which this approach is associated with the concepts of habitus and capital.

The findings from Chapter Five were consistent with seminal works that document both the gratification and struggle domestic cooks experience through feeding families (Murcott, Gamarnikow 1983, Charles, Kerr 1988, DeVault 1994) and reinforce the idea that food provision is gendered (Cairns et al. 2010, Kan et al. 2011, Counihan, Kaplan 2013). However, the findings also underscored differences in attitudes, ideologies and gender distribution of food labour across countries and social groups. Chapter Five highlighted the onus on women in Spain to cook according to normative ideals regarding tradition; examples of significant sacrifice to fulfil these ideals and an inclination to convey feeding the family as a pleasurable task. In the UK, while there was more demonstration of men's contribution to practical tasks such as cooking, the emotional responsibility of food work was still largely undertaken by women (Cairns, Johnston 2015). However, the study identified differences in the construction of conviviality amongst the UK families. A sub-group of predominantly female food providers, with high levels of cultural capital, exhibited dispositions that enabled them to balance the demands of mealtimes with the pursuit of enjoyment. This outlook was

also evident, to a lesser extent, in the practices of some socially and economically advantaged food providers in Spain.

This set of dispositions, which I have termed a *good enough* habitus allowed food providers to produce food that met their ideals of family meals in a way that did not require excessive labour and impact the experience of enjoyment. The emphasis was on the *approach* to food work rather than the *ability* to cook, the latter having been the subject of significant academic discourse (Caraher et al. 1999, Rees 2012, España et al. 2014, Al-Ali, Arriaga Arrizabalaga 2016, McGowan et al. 2016). Previous literature has highlighted that domestic food labour entails numerous perceptual and conceptual tasks beyond the practical tasks of food preparation (Short 2003b, Short 2006, Meah, Watson 2011, Gately et al. 2014). The findings from this study further this idea by asserting that domestic cooking goes beyond a broad set of abilities (planning, preparation, time management, multi-tasking) to an ideological mind-set that is embedded in the habitus. For example, in the UK, food providers, with a *good enough* habitus, were satisfied with adopting the status of *less than perfect* cook. A number of participants articulated this directly. Both Rose and Natasha, the main food providers in their households, for example, do not consider themselves to be '*good cooks'* and see their husbands as more accomplished chefs. However they recognise they are more proficient than their partners at balancing cooking with other domestic tasks such as washing up and budgeting and therefore valorise their *good enough* approach to cooking. Similarly, Hayley, Flo and Alice focus on sociability and family cohesion in their interviews and mealtime displays rather than the realization of culinary perfection or the creation of a particular type of meal. They do, nevertheless appear satisfied that their food is *good enough* to meet requirements of palatability, health and enjoyment for their families. By producing meals that were *good enough* they were creating capacity to engage in other valued pursuits. For Hayley this is socialising with friends; for Flo it is the time for educational board games with her children and for Rose and Neil it is the synchronisation of meals with their son's gymnastics club and daughter's music lessons. By spending *just enough* time to engage in *just enough* food work these families were creating space for enjoyment, and sometimes acquisition of further capital in other areas of social life.

Food providers with a *good enough* habitus displayed more confidence in *giving mealtimes a go* and less concern about getting meals *right*. Alice '*has a conversation with the fridge'* in order to invent recipes for evening meals whilst Rose initiates mealtime creation by '*chopping green stuff*'. Hayley permits her children to design meals alongside her and Flo makes whatever she is able to with her vegetable delivery box. These food providers were not strictly limited to rigid definitions of a proper meal (Murcott, Gamarnikow 1983, Marshall, Anderson 2002, Bugge, Almås 2006) and were able craft their own version of 'proper' or even 'traditional' foods. Whether that be Neil's '*man food*', Rose's '*one pot wonders'* , Alice's fridge creations or Hayley's baked potatoes with her children's' '*creative fillings'*.

This approach stands in contrast to the stance of UK food providers with less capital, who demonstrated less flexibility in their practices. Food providers such as Melanie, Louise and Tracey also allude to not being proficient cooks and struggling with the ubiquitous challenge of busyness but this did not always lead to adaptions they felt were *good enough* to meet mealtime ideals. Louise regrets her previous reliance on fish fingers; Melanie laments her cooking is '*not the greatest'* and that meals are devoid of vegetables and Tracey prefers the proper meals her mother can cook. Occasionally they adhere to the prescriptive norms of the family meal. Melanie makes a roast once a week; Tracey constructs proper meals using convenience short cuts such as pre-prepared potatoes with meat or Quorn fillets. Yet these meals can be challenging given time constraints. Consequently, more often than they appear to wish, they consume meals such as pizza, ready-meals and snack foods, which satisfy the immediate needs of their families but which they do not equate with familial conviviality. Short notes the valorisation of traditional over convenience approaches (Short 2003a, Short 2007) and for these families the absence of a clear middle ground presented a significant challenge.

In Spain, a lack of flexibility in food provision practices was manifest in families across the spectrum and food providers adhered to strict norms of established cooking methods. In a seemingly *illogical* logic of practice (Bourdieu 1990b, Lau 2004) working mothers Ines and Nina feel compelled to cook traditional foods for their families in spite of the significant emotional and physical burden it engenders; Larissa prepares

meals for the following day's lunch even though her husband Felipe supposedly 'does' the cooking while she is at work and Paca undergoes significant economic sacrifice in order to maintain food traditions. There was evidence nonetheless, of emerging *good enough* practices. In particular, this was evident in the numerous families employing the Thermomix to do grandmother's cooking.

Good enough practices then, were often related to levels of capital. Participant's creativity or *feel for the game* in the domestic sphere was a result of resources at their disposition (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 2018b). Some families possessed a cultural repertoire that was replete with examples of objectified cultural capital (recipe books, organic food boxes, the Thermomix) but more importantly, socially *legitimate* knowledge (Oncini, Guetto 2017) in the domain of family dining. Participants with greater assets were better able to draw from their cultural toolkit (Swidler 1986) to create meals that balanced requirements of health, palatability, time and budget. When faced with challenges in the domestic *field*, levels of cultural capital influenced how choices were framed (Sullivan 2002, Bourdieu 2011, Bourdieu 2018a). For example, UK families with higher cultural capital authenticated practices such as convenience food and television through the label of TV dinners. There was an, albeit subtle, difference in the descriptions of these scheduled events and the more casual dinner in front of the television, discussed by those with less cultural advantage.

These findings advance research on the multiple ways in which individuals may employ shortcuts and adaptions to enhance mealtime enjoyment. They both confirm and contradict the assertion that convenience food may play a positive part in the family meal experience (Carrigan et al. 2006, Short 2007). Theoretically, by facilitating the 'doing' of food work, convenience options leave more space for the 'doing' of family (Beck 2007) but in practice this was influenced by social distinctions. Some families were able to authenticate convenience with *good enough* approaches and enjoyed this alleviation from domestic burden. However, others struggled to legitimise the use of the short cuts they employed in the context of family meals, thus impacting their enjoyment. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the prevalence of discourses associating traditional cooking with family health, wellbeing and cohesion (Caraher, Lang 1999, Engler-Stringer 2010).

Cooking properly has been deeply embedded into discourses regarding health literacy and the family meal, taking on a moral dimension (Jackson et al. 2009, Coveney et al. 2012). Food providers relied on an internalisation of legitimate knowledge to employ shortcuts within normative practices. Drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the study suggests that limitations in cooking are most often linked to culturally driven ideologies and social position (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 1990b, Williams 1995). The findings suggest that the ability to negotiate and define 'authentic capital' in domestic food provision can facilitate the construction of conviviality.

8.5 Embodying health in mealtime construction

A key finding from the study, is that the ability to unite concepts of food and health facilitated conviviality. Chapter Seven illustrated how, in the UK, reconciling these ideals was associated with higher cultural capital. In Spain, there was less evidence of social distinction; health and enjoyment were generally regarded as synonymous by participants. In both countries, the ability to develop and embody a 'taste for healthiness' (Bourdieu 2005, Beagan et al. 2014) appeared to facilitate conviviality. Conversely, the perception of health as an external imperative, divorced from pleasure, created tensions that hindered mealtime harmony.

Conflict between pleasure and health was not immediately ostensible in Spain and there was little divergence in food 'tastes' across the families. This supports the notion that social distinctions in food may not be transferable to all consumer societies (King 2000, Coulangeon, Lemel 2007, Johnston, Baumann 2007). In Spain, health was synonymous with a pleasurable gustatory experience (i.e. healthy food was also food that tasted good) and embodiment of healthy eating spanned the social spectrum. A taste for good (i.e. healthy) food was fundamental to the cultural identity of many of the participants. Families quite literally ingested concepts of tradition and regionalism through their dietary practices. Paca is a traditional cook, who cooks traditional foods for the wellbeing of her family. Larissa and Felipe valorise the bread, oil and ham from their village over other foods and Nina, Jose Antonio and Ines all express affinity with the Mediterranean diet.

The dinner table was a site for implicit, embodied learning about the pleasure of food. Socialising children and young people through taste for food was prioritised over socialising them through talk. As seen in a number of households, unlimited television viewing at mealtimes was considered a useful way of distracting children reluctant to eat a particular food that was valued by their parents. Ines, Juan Pablo and Paca all demonstrate how television plays a positive role in this respect. Food was infused with value-laden meaning about cultural identity, delineated through place. It was not just good food it was 'good Spanish' or 'good traditional' food. As well as affiliation with regional food culture, families expressed the 'otherness' of socially prohibited foods (Jensen 2011, Dervin 2012, Dervin 2015), originating from outside the region. Paca and Nina both describe the fast food in terms of a perceived threat to health and local culture.

Subtle social distinctions were, nevertheless, apparent and families with greater levels of cultural capital displayed greater tendency to embody ideas that had cultural value. Food providers with high levels of institutionalised cultural capital such as Ines, Nina, Claudia and Jose Antonio used the term 'Mediterranean' rather than 'Spanish' in their descriptions of their diets, a subtle but significant difference in terms of cultural value. Faced with the multiple demands of food provision, families with elevated cultural and economic status distinguished means of maintaining perceived traditions, finding solutions in gadgets and novel recipes and in the case of Ines, redefining her family food heritage. It was those food providers at the lower end of the social spectrum such as Ima and Paca who discussed the precarity of current mealtime practices and new tastes for unhealthy fast foods, not necessarily in their own households, but within their social environment. The findings suggest that, although cultural resilience was apparent, ideas regarding pleasure and health were susceptible to social division.

Social divides were more apparent in the UK. For the majority of families in the study, eating properly was associated with notions of nutrition and healthy eating. Previous research in the UK has suggested that the pressure to provide nutritious meals is largely assumed by the middle classes. Working class families have appeared less trusting of dominant health discourses, preoccupied instead with the practicalities of satiation (Wills et al. 2011, Wright et al. 2015). The findings from this study were not

entirely consistent with this. The desire to conform to healthy eating guidelines was expressed by families across the social spectrum. In the UK, dominant health discourses (Coveney 2006, Beagan et al. 2014) were, in fact, discussed more frequently by those in less advantaged social positions. Tracey, Sally and Melanie were in fact the only food providers to make direct reference to government health guidelines. The findings revealed it was not the only the importance attributed to healthy eating that differentiated groups, as the literature habitually suggests (Gonzalez et al. 2002, Skuland 2015, Beagan et al. 2015), but also the ability to embody a taste for healthiness.

For some, the health attributes of foods were discussed in terms of the ways they made individuals feel. Alice expressed not feeling '*right*' unless she (and by association her family) had eaten a proper meal; Natasha only felt comfortable if the mealtime menu was varied. Healthiness was also gendered. The concept of '*Man Food*' illustrates how Neil embodies the dietary value of hearty, wholesome dishes. Tacit, embodied learning took place at the dinner table where adults transmitted these values to their children. Rose, for example, does not permit her son to chuck '*sweet carbohydrates'* into his body, demonstrating the tacit understanding of what can legitimately be ingested. Food providers formulated legitimate nutritional ideals and internalised concepts of healthy eating, which were compatible with their habitus.

Families with high cultural capital articulated their approach to nutrition through, what has been termed, traditional discourses on healthy eating (Beagan et al. 2014). This flexible approach to nutrition, works on the broad principles rather than strict rules. For these food providers, using tradition as a starting point, enabled them to embody ideas based on their personal food histories and current food ideologies. Rose and Neil explained how eating well was integral to their upbringings and remained part of their on-going food provision practices. Alice's nutritional paradigms are also based on the way she ate as a child. Health was also associated with variety. Natasha and Rose both take pride in the fact that their children have acquired cosmopolitan food tastes (Warde 1997, Bourdieu 2005). Eating a diversity of foods, particularly those that reflected adult tastes, appeared to be synonymous with healthy eating. Adults expressed satisfaction when these tastes were inculcated by their children and

frustration when they were opposed. The transmission of taste was not seamless, however, and although capital may have facilitated the process of uniting pleasure and health, it certainly did not offer guarantees. For some, like Sylvie, instilling healthy habits in children was an active pursuit and she explained her, sometimes fruitless, efforts to impress enjoyment of good (i.e. healthy) practices on to her children. However, challenges to the primary habitus were often perceived as developmental limitations that would be ironed out in the long-term.

A commitment to health was also apparent in UK families with lower cultural capital. Families ascribed value to the rules, regulations and norms of healthy eating as dictated by dominant discourses on nutrition (Inghilleri 2003, Coveney 2006). Yet, these dietary protocols were articulated as a set of external values rather than internalised as embodied ideals. Whilst ideas of proper meals (roasts, home-cooked dinners, fish and chips, puddings) were cemented in internalised dispositions, framing these proper meals as 'healthy' became more challenging. For Tracey, ideas regarding healthy eating were related to low-fat and low-calorie foods. Her health ideals were embedded in slimness and restriction, often associated with privilege (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 2005) and gendered ways of eating (Conner et al. 2004, Counihan, Kaplan 2013). For Melanie and Sally, eating well was linked with the consumption of foods their children did not enjoy. These associations widened the gulf between pleasure and health. Conceptions of healthy eating that focused on self-denial and restriction were less compatible with conviviality. Participants manifested what Bourdieu might term a struggle in the *field* (Bourdieu 1998, McNay 1999, Inghilleri 2003) a difficulty in reconciling dominant discourses on health with internalised dispositions about family, food and pleasure.

8.6 Contrasting perspectives of conviviality: Becoming the same or becoming other

This section pursues the theme of mealtime construction through the sometimes, differing perspectives of children and adults, thus addressing the third and fourth research objectives. There is little doubt, both in the existing literature and the findings from this study that shared meals are a site for socialisation (Dotson, Hyatt 2005, Kerrane, Hogg 2013) and that the mealtime constitutes an important means of integration into the family unit (Grieshaber 1997, Ochs, Shohet 2006, Anving,

Sellerberg 2010). This section reviews how, through the process of socialisation, the primary habitus was both negotiated with and transmitted to children and young people in endeavours to co-construct convivial meals. It sheds new light on current theory by illustrating cross-cultural differences in the ways adults and children navigate this process and how this influences transmission of the habitus and the experience of conviviality.

The view of socialisation in Bourdieu's theories of habitus (Bourdieu 1984, Lau 2004, Bourdieu 2018b) supports a classic view of children as incomplete beings, lacking competence and agency (James et al. 1998, Qvortrup et al. 2009) and whose implicit learning in childhood, permits them to function as adults within the parameters of their social worlds. There is however, in contemporary social theory, an alternative perspective which views children as resourceful, competent agents able to navigate social boundaries with varying degrees of freedom from parental control. There is, in particular, growing acknowledgment of children and young people as autonomous social actors and participants in the family meal (Prout, James 2003, James et al. 2009a). Changing hierarchies in domestic dining suggest that children are adopting a dominant position at the dinner table (Dixon, Banwell 2004) and gaining command through food negotiations (O'Connell, Brannen 2014).

These findings are replete with examples of both of these phenomena. In both Spain and the UK, there was evidence of children enacting food ideals (Moiso 2004); enjoying proper dinners, meals at the table, or celebrating mealtime togetherness (Brannen et al. 2013). Teenager Poppy professes to enjoy proper meals such as Sunday roasts; Alec expresses his preference for eating with family and refers to the feelings of closeness this engenders; Flo's children seamlessly execute the ritual of asking each other about their day. In interviews, children such as Maya, Mercedes and Frank emulated parental perspectives on TV watching at mealtimes. This resonates with the socialisation theory Bourdieu proposes in his concept of habitus, the notion that through implicit learning, children will adopt adult consumption patterns (Dotson, Hyatt 2005) and that children are adult consumers in the making (Johansson 2012). Yet in the UK, there were also clear examples of children asserting their agency with overt opposition to parental ideals and resistance towards particular practices

(Grieshaber 1997, Wilk 2010), thus reinforcing a relational view of childhood (Alanen 2002). Leah and Bea claim to '*hate*' the family dinners their mother Sylvie carefully constructs; Lizzy is bored by mealtime conversation in spite of her mother's belief that this family practice keeps them '*together*'; Ben would rather have a quiet dinner than the playful events his mother Natasha enthuses over. It has been suggested that these ostensibly oppositional states of becoming 'the same', or becoming 'other', are not necessarily divergent but part of a process of socialisation whereby children negotiate sanctioned lines of flight, demarcations from some aspects of mealtimes whilst readily accepting others (Johansson 2012, Johansson 2014, Harman et al. 2018). The findings from this study corroborate with this theory. However they illustrate greater evidence of 'becoming other' in the UK than in Spain. This may be linked to cross-country differences in the way adults perceived and managed children's 'becomings' (Prout, James 2003) through concessions and restrictions at mealtimes. The apparent choices and freedoms offered to children and young people in UK were not always as conducive to conviviality as food providers might perceive. These cross-country differences will be explored in the following sections.

8.7 Conviviality and the problem of choice in the UK

In the UK, there was more ostensible concession to children being 'other'. A greater level of individualisation was evident in foods consumed. Natasha, Flo, Tracey, Melanie and Sally all mention foods they prepare to accommodate the needs of their children. There were examples of reverse socialization (Ayadi, Bree 2010, Kerrane et al. 2012) with parents such as Flo eating at schedules that suited her children's needs, rather than her own. TV dinners were a marked line of flight for young people (Johansson 2014) and provided them with a release from the prescriptive rule-bound nature of the family meal. The findings corroborated research on the elevated position of children at the dinner table in modern consumer societies (Dixon, Banwell 2004). For a number of families, the key to conviviality was creating mealtimes that allowed children the freedom and choices to become themselves, an idea epitomised in Natasha and James' child centred mealtimes. However, the findings revealed two key reasons why the promotion of choice at mealtimes might be problematic in terms of the co-construction of conviviality. The first is that the choices children and young

people were offered at mealtimes were constrained by habitus of their parents'; the second is that choice at mealtimes was often a manifestation of socially legitimate parenting rather than an authentic response to young people's needs.

Within the cohort of UK families, those with higher cultural capital were keen to display the options they offered children and young people at mealtimes. Choice can be viewed as a luxury afforded to those with sufficient capital to engage in practices distanced from necessity (Bourdieu 1984, Lawler 2005) . Flo offered her children one meat and one vegetarian option for every evening meal; Natasha's younger children chose components of a meal they enjoyed from small serving bowls and Hayley allowed her children to choose and prepare their own fillings for baked potatoes. Preferences extended beyond *what* to eat to *who* to eat with. Rose, Natasha and Alice all demonstrate an open-door policy at mealtimes allowing children to invite friends of their choosing to meals. In families with adolescent children, such as Alice and Paul, young people were also given a choice as to whether they wished to include friends in family meals but also whether they wished to *exclude* themselves from these events. The way these choices were framed, however, revealed complex layers of social distinction.

In families with high cultural capital, the foods offered under the guise of choice were often elements of culturally legitimate meals (Bourdieu 1984, Beagan et al. 2014). The food Natasha provides in bowls for her younger children (for example salmon pieces, olives, vegetable sticks) were often simply a deconstructed version of the meal consumed by other family members (pies, salads, fish). In a number of middle-class families, children were sometimes offered a choice of meal. Yet in Flo and Sylvie's families, this choice came with the caveat that the meal must be produced from their organic vegetable delivery boxes, offering in fact, a very limited selection of foods. Similarly, as Flo explains in her interview, invitations to outside guests were part of a contrived socialisation process rather than a real choice for children. Ironically, while offering choice was ostensibly important to parents, so was restricting it. On the one hand this supports the concept of the ongoing supervision of middle-class children in order to ensure cosmopolitan and adult tastes (Backett-Milburn et al. 2010a), yet on the other it reveals efforts to mask this control. The middle-class parents in the UK

demonstrated a struggle between parenting culture that promotes choice and their habitus which constraints it. The solution was then the illusion of choice.

Rather than simply being an understanding of children's needs, choice manifested as an opportunity for parents to display socially legitimate parenting ideologies. Social scientists have documented a contemporary shift in child-rearing, adopted by middle class families. Termed both *intensive* and *ideal* parenting, this trend is based on the widely-held belief that children and young people's lives are causally determined by the quality of parenting they receive. (Romagnoli, Wall 2012, Shirani et al. 2012). Feeding is arguably, the most moralized aspect of this style of parenthood (Faircloth 2010, Lee et al. 2014) and whilst fostering children's preferences is key to this parenting style, ensuring they are consuming nutritionally optimum foods is also crucial. (Zeinstra et al. 2009, de Wild et al. 2015). Practices such as Flo's mealtime options, Natasha's encouragement of her children to serve themselves, Sylvie's insistence on organic produce and Hayley supporting her children to learn through experimentation are all encouraged within this parenting dogma. However, the broader cultural logic around this style of parenting, is an intention to control and shape outcomes for children (Faircloth 2014). Paradoxically, offering choice is part of a parenting philosophy in which parents are trying to have greater influence on the social direction of children's lives. Moreover, these methods of feeding children require parents to possess the time and financial resources to buy a variety of foods and accept that some will be wasted. Such practices are only conceivable in households where there is sufficient economic capital to sustain them. Choice then, in many respects, becomes symbolic of capital resources rather an endeavour to foster children's enjoyment.

In more working-class families the choices the children were offered appeared to be more genuine and beneficial for enjoyment. Children such as Pippa, Poppy, Anthony, Millie and Ava were more likely to be offered meals they requested, rather than being constrained by the health or aesthetic properties of foods. Yet these were often a manifestation of a taste for the necessary rather than genuine freedom of choice. Adolescents such as Poppy and Anthony for example, consumed foods they could

easily prepare themselves and Pippa ate foods her mother Hayley could produce within the constraints of her busy working life. Furthermore, the social organisation of mealtimes was constrained by parental habitus (Bourdieu 2005). Expanding on findings on the closed nature of mealtimes in working-class families (Wills et al. 2011), the inclusion of extended family and friends at mealtimes was not an option for Pippa, Tracey or Poppy. However, all of these young people claimed to enjoy the sociality of meals in wider social networks outside of the home. The options parents were able to offer were reflections of their family habitus (Atkinson 2011). Young people were making decisions within a deeply embedded system of dispositions. Children, just like their parents, were not able to make purely personal choices. Instead they were making practical responses to a shared social environment (Warde 1994) and thus establishing the boundaries of their position within it.

8.8 *Cultural habitus* as an alternative to choice

There were marked differences in the Spanish households where there appeared to be greater emphasis on children becoming the 'same'. Neither young people nor their parents reported requirements for special foods at main mealtimes. However, parents such as Leticia, Ella and Nina did make concessions to their children's tastes when eating outside of the home and a number of families described after school snacks and treats chosen especially for children. Within the confines of the family meal however, there appeared to be a more tacit acceptance of the traditional foods that constituted proper meals. Spanish children also manifested an implicit understanding that mealtimes were closed events and there were no discussions or observations of children requesting friends to join them for meals or to eat at other family homes. These apparent constraints and restrictions of choice, however, appeared to be advantageous in the pursuit of mealtime harmony.

Whilst the findings suggest that the illusion of options may not be conducive to conviviality, this does not imply that mealtimes would be more enjoyable if genuine freedom of choice were offered to children and young people. It has been suggested that consumption would be an unrewarding practice if it were open to unbounded choice and it is restrictions that help form social identities (Warde et al. 1999, Warde 2005). The findings suggest that in Spanish families, the absence of excessive choice

was conducive to conviviality. Families did not measure children's enjoyment or make concessions to their agency by offering them options. In fact, there was a tendency to equate conviviality with strict boundaries regarding food, traditions and family as epitomised through the uniformity of foods, schedules and customs observed. A continuous thread throughout the findings has been a shared cultural understanding on how 'to do' family meals in Spain. Unquestioned hegemonic values were deeply anchored in the practices of families and not subject to the same level of social division evident in the UK households.

I have employed the term *cultural habitus* to describe the powerful collective practices that shape mealtime socialisation in Spain. The concept of *cultural habitus* reflects the innate shared understanding of how, where and when to eat, visible across the social spectrum of Spanish families, the shared dispositions regarding food and mealtimes that are deeply embedded into the participants' knowledge. The term borrows from the idea of habitus, as it conveys how ways of eating are implicitly transmitted, but also resonates with Bourdieu's concept of doxa, a core set of principles, within a specific *field*, which are viewed as inherently true (Bourdieu, Eagleton 1992, Myles 2004, Deer 2008). The term suggests tacit submission to these conditions both by children and adults in the domestic sphere of life. Mealtimes are a site for the formation of identities, but in Spain individual family identities were more difficult to distinguish from collective ones.

This is not to say that young people did not influence mealtime practice. Concessions *were* made to children and young people's needs; Leticia and Nina made references to altering traditional recipes for the whole family in order to suit their children's needs; Maria describes how she does not force her son to sit at the table once he has eaten and Juan Pablo designates his son the position of '*master of the television*' at mealtimes. However all of these practices were part of a tacit, behind-the-scenes understanding, rather than an overt display of choices. Perhaps the most pertinent example of children's voice being considered at mealtimes is the way that television was integrated into mealtimes. The screening of child-friendly programmes did not simply allow children to be entertained, it gave them permission to disengage from

table talk. However, it also offered parents the opportunity to assert their preferred feeding practices sometimes by using television as a distraction.

Cultural habitus appeared to act as a defence against practices that may be considered untoward such as divergence from food traditions. The collective, unquestioned nature of mealtimes meant that children were likely to accept assumed shared food narratives (Bissell et al. 2018) such as the narrow repertoire of seasonal dishes eaten at mealtimes. Essentially, children did not demand choices about foods, friends or other mealtime rituals because their parents did not *know* there were choices to offer them. Parents acted on a collective understanding of children's needs rather than a response to their wants.

Rigidity in mealtime structure might represent a strong sense of cultural belonging by exhibiting preferences for food symbolically associated a country or region. (Xavier Medina et al. 2004, Medina 2005). It has been suggested that some societies possess deep food cultures with longstanding rules and rituals about health (Coveney et al. 2012, Gately et al. 2014). This anchoring in cultural and agricultural roots makes such cultures resilient to the change rather than acting on the whim of nutritional science or popular discourse (Pollan 2010, Pollan 2014). There was certainly evidence of this, as outlined in the allusions to regional and national identity outlined in this discussion. The findings further this notion, by suggesting this identity is perpetuated through tacit, everyday practices. For example, the study revealed the routine use of television at mealtimes and the consumption of fast food outside the home formed part of an implicit understanding of how to do family meals. Practices such as these are not generally associated with idealizations of Mediterranean food culture (Medina 2005, Gracia Arnaiz 2010) despite being embedded into collective mealtime constructions.

Whilst recognizing the paradoxical liberation that the constraints of *cultural habitus* create, the findings also illustrate the restrictions it can impose, namely for women. As the findings indicate, the rigidity of the *cultural habitus* impose a very definite onus on women to create conviviality. The Spanish men and women in this study echoed discourses that position women at the centre of family meal provision and as lynchpins in culinary heritage and traditional family life (Jones 1997, Enders, Radcliff 1999).

However, food providers such as Larissa, Felipe, Ima and Juan Pablo were beginning to question domestic roles in their households. A number of Spanish women in the study were struggling to meet the strenuous demands of paid employment and domestic labour. This is an increasingly pertinent issue in Spain, given the increased female presence in the workplace (Sánchez, Flores 2015, Antelo et al. 2017). Women such as Ines and Nina, Ima discussed tiredness, stress and the difficulty of managing home cooking with paid jobs, and childcare. Equally, participants who took pride in their regional cooking such as Nina and Paca were clearly working against a backdrop of anxiety about the potential loss of home cooking and culinary tradition (Duruz 2001) fuelled by popular discourse (Norte Navarro 2017). The challenge of preserving tradition was a common theme in the study. Interviews with Juan Pablo, Paca, Ima and Nina suggested Spain is a country in culinary transition (Díaz-Méndez, Gómez-Benito 2017). Yet paradoxically, at the current time, the burden of preserving food tradition was impacting on the conviviality that is integral to it, highlighting the challenges behind convivial ideals.

8.9 Cultural and Structural Compatibility

This differences between choice and cultural habitus resonate, to an extent, with the concept of contractual versus communal eating proposed by French sociologist Claude Fischler. He suggests that mealtimes in the UK (and the US) are constructed in a contract-based model, involving a series of negotiations in order to meet individual needs. In contrast, shared meals in Southern Europe are a collective concern and divergence from the cultural norms, (whether that be foods consumed or how and when meals are eaten) is neither common, nor socially acceptable (Fischler 2013). The UK model of food consumption is symptomatic of what a number of authors view as a modern, de-structured, individualized form of consumption that is at odds with the tenets of conviviality and poses drawbacks to the social organisation of societies (Poulain 2017, Fischler 2013, Fischler 2011, Coveney 2006).

The findings from this study depart from this idea. As highlighted in the previous sections, whilst cultural habitus can help families navigate mealtimes, the tacit behaviours and norms implicit in this way of being are not always consistent with the idealistic notions of conviviality. Particular difficulties appear to arise when culturally

prescriptive ways of eating are incompatible with the structural conditions of society. In Spain, for example, as outlined in Chapter Four, the main meal of the day is eaten at lunchtime, a meal generally consisting of at least two courses (Díaz-Méndez, García-Espejo 2014). This practice of eating a leisurely home cooked meal at lunchtime was feasible 30 years ago, when traditional gender roles were common and female household members provided home cooked meals for husbands and children in their scheduled lunch breaks (Carrasco 2001). However, changes in working patterns and the increased presence of women in the workplace has not been paralleled with a change in eating schedules (Díaz-Méndez 2016) nor has it led to institutional or organizational change to facilitate the lives of contemporary working families (Méndez 2014). Provision for eating at school is still limited; work and school schedules are often incompatible and financial aid for childcare provision is limited in Spain (Carrasco 2001).

These difficulties are exemplified by the struggles experienced by the food providers in this study who sought various solutions to this issue. For example Paca concedes that she is making economic sacrifices to stay at home and uphold traditions; other food providers such as Nina and Ima struggle to balance professional and domestic roles and finally Ines and Kiko adapt their weekday timetable and eat the main meal of the day in the evening. This change to the timetable, however, is facilitated by their children's private school that provides lunch for children and offers after school childcare provision. Time use surveys suggest that time spent eating in the home is longer in Spain than in the UK and that mealtime duration has been stable over the last 20 years (Díaz-Méndez 2014). Sociologists such as Fischler (1996), view such data as testament to a deeply rooted, convivial food culture but the more nuanced findings from this study illustrate that the adaptations and sacrifices necessary to maintain these eating patterns are not necessarily compatible with conviviality.

In the UK, working parents are faced with similar challenges regarding maintaining a work life balance and research suggests that the UK compares unfavourably to other European countries in terms of facilitating the dual earner model of family life (Crompton, Lyonette 2006, Strandh, Nordenmark 2006). However, in this study there was evidence of structures and institutions that facilitated the lives of working parents

in the UK. Alice, Louise and Natasha were able to adopt flexible working schedules to fit around feeding their families; in three families children attended after school clubs to synchronise with their parents working schedules. However, a major structural obstacle to mealtime synchronicity were long working hours. Neil, James and John and Melanie demonstrated the long working hours experienced by many British parents compared to their European counterparts (Cousins, Tang 2004).

In UK families with lower social and economic capital, there was greater evidence of older children purchasing and preparing food autonomously, often in the period after school, before their parent/s returned from work. Such individual eating patterns are portrayed as a part of a culture of individualised eating that conveys a divide in attitude between Northern and European countries (Coveney 2006) but are deeply intertwined with societal structure. Cultural habitus exists only within the structural context that enables it.

8.10 Overview: Strengths, limitations and future directions

The strength of this study lies in a number of areas. The findings have demonstrated that conviviality can be symbolic of cultural capital and act as a marker of social distinction. These findings make a novel contribution to the sociology of food by exploring an aspect of the family meal, that to date, has received relatively little attention in empirical studies. Through use of fine-grained qualitative research methods, this study has explored the concept of shared mealtime pleasure through multiple family perspectives. Conviviality has been contextualised through Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital and the findings have revealed the manner in which individuals and groups are socialised to enjoy meals according to socio-cultural determinants.

A further strength of the investigation is the comparison of family meals in two cultural settings. It has highlighted that social distinction in experiences of conviviality were more marked in the UK, where aesthetic dispositions of pleasure perpetuated social divisions. Conversely, in Spain social divergence was less apparent and families demonstrated collective, unquestioned beliefs regarding family, food and conviviality, a phenomenon I have termed *cultural habitus*.

The comparative element of the study added further value to the findings by highlighting that mealtime enjoyment across the social spectrum, appeared to be linked to the accessibility of cultural capital regarding conviviality. Circulating cultural and informational resources related to familial convivial meals were set in a regional context. Spanish families across the social spectrum were able to identify with socially valued notions regarding the Mediterranean diet, Spanish cuisine and regional food heritage. These concepts appeared to boost their esteem regarding everyday practices and reconcile ideas regarding pleasure, health and family food provision. In the UK, ways of eating associated with regionality or local food culture were only apparent in families with higher cultural capital who made references to seasonal or local produce, family food heritage (Poulain 2017) and traditional discourses on food (Beagan et al. 2014). For UK families with lower cultural capital, however, paradigms around feeding the family were associated with public health discourses on rules and restrictions. Enjoyment was not clearly embedded into their ideas of health and nutrition (Jallinoja et al. 2010) or their ideals of family mealtimes.

A further strength to the study was the examination of multiple family perspectives. The methodological approach highlighted the, sometimes contrasting, preferences of children and adults and the manner in which parental habitus governed the way children were socialised in both countries. It identified clear cross-country differences in the expectations and roles of children and young people through distinct approaches to television viewing at mealtimes. Television acted as literal and metaphorical lens into children's preferences as well as the social and cultural determinants that influenced how adults managed them. The findings suggest, that whilst attention to children's needs was generally helpful, offering children and young people excessive choice was not. In Spain, shared food narratives that formed the *cultural habitus* facilitated the process of children becoming 'the same' and avenues to become 'other' were less apparent. However, transitions in Spanish food culture suggested that cultural norms were currently being put under question.

There are a number of possible limitations to the research. The relevance of capital only emerged at the stage of analysis. However, I had not systemically collected data on social, cultural and economic factors at the outset of the study. During the process

of theoretical sampling I questioned all participants on education levels and home ownership. The remaining evidence on forms of capital relied on a detailed review of interviews and observations. Whilst this was valuable, it resulted in some inconsistencies in the amount of data acquired from each household. A further potential limitation lies in the chosen methodological approach. It became apparent that the Spanish families were less willing to produce photographic or video data that disclosed information regarding their home or personal life. Similarly, there was a sense that mealtime observations were more carefully orchestrated in Spanish households compared to many of the UK homes. Whilst this provided valuable data on cross country divergence, it also limited the insights generated. In the UK, the perspective of children and young people was voiced through the use of multiple methods but in Spain these viewpoints were less apparent. A further methodological issue was related to gendered perspectives. The initial interview was conducted with the main food provider. As women were more likely to assume this role, there was less opportunity to explore male standpoints on issues such as food work or television during meals. Men were also more likely to be absent from mealtime observations and contributed less to group interviews. The role of men was often viewed through the lens of the women who discussed them.

Based on this I would recommend that future research on mealtime dynamics continues to employ creative approaches to explore perspectives of *all* family members. Nevertheless, the findings from this study do suggest that the creation of conviviality is reliant on women, who paradoxically, may undergo significant challenges to construct convivial mealtimes. Therefore, in addition to the exploration of multiple roles I would equally recommend further research, particularly in Spain, on how the intransigent roles of women in the domestic area may be perpetuated by culturally driven models of health. In Spain, the public health agenda is entangled in cultural discourses on convivial dining that place women at the hub of food provision, without due recognition of their changing role in society. This idea may be also be worthy of investigation in other countries within the Mediterranean basin.

The study was grounded in sociological theory and approaches. Nevertheless the findings also carry relevance for future research in the public health arena. The

interest in conviviality stemmed from its promotion of the Mediterranean diet and the associated cultural discourses that have arisen from this public health model. (Morin 2010, Bach-Faig et al. 2011a, UNESCO 2013). The values attached to this model and to regional food culture created a sense of belonging and enhanced conviviality for many food providers in Spain. However, it also presented challenges in terms of maintaining traditional patterns of food provision. Another area of further research then, is the extent to which in health policy does and is able to, reflect the multifaceted nature of family mealtimes in a way that is both socially and culturally relevant. The study has exposed the potential problem with discourses that impose ideals about how families *should* eat together. This study has presented some clear findings and identified a number of areas for research. Whilst it may be the first empirical study that compares the conviviality in different cultural contexts, it is hoped it will be the catalyst for further investigation of this concept.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

The study has framed the idea of conviviality using Bourdieu's conceptual framework, highlighting that it a form of symbolic cultural capital, conceptualised according to hegemonic models of family dining. For many families, experiences of conviviality were shaped by their habitus. There were, however, clear cross-country differences in the extent to which capital and social distinction were apparent in experiences of convivial dining. Social divisions were clearly marked in the UK; families with less cultural capital discussed pragmatic solutions to the constraints of food provision, whereas those with greater resources sought answers through more culturally valid means. In Spain, this social differentiation was less apparent and families adhered to a *cultural habitus*, evidenced by collective unquestioned dispositions in the domestic *field*. However, the findings illustrated the presence of socio-cultural transitions, which were forcing families in Spain to revaluate their domestic practices and influencing social distinctions in consumption patterns.

The findings suggest that circulating discourses which, perpetuate the pivotal role of women in creating conviviality may, paradoxically, present a burden for them. The insights from twenty families, make a significant contribution to sociological scholarship as they foreground the challenges behind the more idealistic notions of convivial dining. Whilst the major contribution to knowledge made by this thesis has been in the domain of sociology, further investigation in public health may also be valuable to obtain multidisciplinary perspectives on the relevance of familial conviviality and ways in which this can be promoted in a manner that is both culturally relevant and reflects the multifaceted nature of family life.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Literature searches

On the advice of subject specialist librarians regarding searching literature of relevance to this study, the following English language databases were searched: JSTOR, EBSCO, Proquest, PsychInfo, Web of Science, Science Direct, Scopus AND Social Science Research Network. It was also considered critical to search Spanish language databases and these were as follows: Informe Academico, Fuente Academica, sciELO and Google Academico:

Different combinations of the terms listed in the tables below were searched for. Lateral searching included checking relevant references from the articles were accessed in order to retrieve potentially relevant literature not initially identified. There was considerable overlap with the databases with many of the Spanish language databases presenting English language papers, which had been translated into Spanish. Many of the papers found in Spanish were from Latin America and therefore not relevant to the study so were excluded from analysis.

BASIC SEARCH COMBINATIONS **English**	**Term One**	**Term Two**	**Term Three**
	Sociology Culture Soci*	Spain UK Mediterranean Mediterranean Diet	Conviviality Commensality Family meal Mealtimes Food Shar*(share/sharing) Eating Pleasure Enjoyment

BASIC SEARCH COMBINATIONS **Spanish**	**Term One**	**Term Two**	**Term Three**
	Sociología Cultura Soci *	España Reino Unido Mediterráneo Dieta mediterránea	Convivialidad Comensalidad Comida familiar Las comidas Comida compartir Comer Placer Disfrut*

Appendix Two: Adult study information sheet in English

How Families Eat Together Study: Information Sheet

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand what the research involves. Please take time to read the following information carefully. If you need any more information to help you make your decision, please get in touch. Contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the different ways in which families eat together. This will involve getting the views of the family members who buy and prepare the food as well as the views of everyone who shares mealtimes, including children.

Who is conducting this study and why?

The study is part of my PhD at the University of Hertfordshire. The PhD is about the differences in family dining in the UK and Spain. This may lead to further research studies that may influence policies in this area.

Do I have to take part?

It is completely your choice whether you take part in this study. If you agree to join the study you will fill in a consent form but this does not mean you have to complete the study. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason for doing so. If you decide to stop taking part this will not affect you in any way.

Who can take part in the research?

I am interested in working with a small number of families with children aged 5-16 years. I would like to know what all family members find pleasurable and challenging about family mealtimes and more generally what family mealtimes involve.

How long will my part in the study take?

Your participation in the study should take no longer than 3-4 weeks. In fact most of the information will be gathered over **one week** but I allow for this extra time in case I need to come back and ask you anything else once I have reviewed the materials.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part in the study I will make an initial visit to your home where I will interview the person or persons responsible for preparing and cooking food. Then I will arrange for 2 or 3 occasions where I can come and join you for a family meal. Over the period of one week I will also leave you with some cameras and encourage the whole family to film or photograph aspects of family mealtimes. Finally I will arrange an interview where we discuss all the data that we have collected.

What kind of information will you want?

The study aims to look at various aspects of family mealtimes. The kind of things I am interested in are:

- Who does the shopping, preparation and cooking of meals?
- How often do you eat together as a family?
- Who is present at family meals and who is not?
- What do different family members enjoy/not enjoy about eating together and what might they change if they could?

Will the information I provide be confidential?

The study may involve you revealing personal information such as the names of family members, occupations, age of children, and weekly schedules. This information and names and addresses will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Hertfordshire and will only be accessible to myself and my PhD supervisors (Wendy Wills and Angela Dickinson). Electronically held data such as recordings of interviews, photographs and videos will be stored on a secure computer drive to which only my supervisors and I have access. These data will only be kept for up to 10 years.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The data from the study will be analyzed and written up as part of my PhD study. I will also analyze it and write about it in future research projects on family mealtimes. If you give consent the information may be used for articles in specialist journals, teaching and conference presentations. You do not have to be identified in the findings if you do not want to and there are methods for making you less recognizable in photographs. If you do give consent for this kind of use it should be made clear that some of this information may be online and may be widely accessible for a long period of time.

Who has reviewed this study? This study has been reviewed by the University of Hertfordshire Health and Human Sciences Committee with Delegated Authority. The UH protocol number is: HSK/PG/UH/00327

CONTACT: If you require additional information about any aspect of the study, please contact me either by email or phone:

Surinder Phull Tel: XXXXXXX Email: XXXXXXX

Thank you for reading this information.

Appendix Three: Junior study information sheet in English

How Families Eat Together Project: Junior Information Sheet

Introduction

You and your family being asked to take part in a research project. It is up to you whether you take part. Read all the information on this sheet so you can make your mind up.

What is the reason for this project?

I am interested in how families eat meals together. I would like to know about anything you enjoy and things you might change if you could.

Who is doing this project and why?

I am studying at the University of Hertfordshire and this is part of my research project. I hope that it will give me a better idea of what different families like and why.

Do I have to take part?

It is totally up to you if you take part in this project. If you do, you will fill in a form to agree to take part but if you change your mind after signing the form that is fine. You can decide to stop being part of the project at any point and there is no problem if you do this.

How long will my part in the project take?

Most of what you need to do will be over one week but I may come back a few weeks later to ask you extra questions if I need to.

What will happen if my family takes part in the project?

- I will interview whoever cooks and shops for food in your house.
- I will also leave you with a camera and video camera for one week so that you can film any parts of meals or cooking that you think are interesting when I am not there.
- I will also come to watch 2 or 3 meals in your home. Lastly I will come back at the end of the week and interview you all about everything I have seen over the week.

Will the information about me and my family be shared with other people?

I will find out some information about you and your family and this will not be shared with anyone except two other researchers.

What will happen to the videos, photos and interviews?

I will look after these. If you and your parents agree they may also be used in books and journals and some of this information may even be used on the Internet. You **do not** have to agree to this and if you don't all the information will eventually be destroyed.

CONTACT: If you want more information about the study you can either ask your parents to contact me or contact me yourself with their permission.

Surinder Phull

Tel: XXXXXXXX Email: XXXXXXX

Appendix Four: Adult consent form in English

Household ID: ……

How Families Eat Together

Agreement to participate in a research study

Please read and tick the statements you agree with:

☐ I have been given a copy of the information sheet that explains what this study involves including the aims, methods and contact details of the research team. I know what I need to do. If the study changes, I will be given a new consent form.

☐ I understand that I don't have to take part in this study if I don't want to.

☐ I have had time to ask questions about this study and I agree to take part.

☐ I understand that I can stop taking part whenever I want to without saying why and that I don't have to answer anything I don't want to.

☐ I understand that you will only tell other people (apart from people in the research team) my name/address or what I say or do if you think someone in this household is in danger.

☐ I give my permission for you to record me and my household (using audio, video or photography)

☐ I agree that the information I tell or show you can be used in reports and other materials (including teaching materials) as long as I cannot be identified.

☐ I understand that personal information about me will be kept securely by the researchers for a maximum period of 2 years. Data from the study other than personal information may be kept for up to 10 years.

☐ I understand that findings from this research might be used in academic publications, conference presentations and teaching and these may be disseminated online.

☐ I understand that I can ask for things I say or show you (in photographs or video) to be deleted and not used.

FOR COMPLETION AT THE FINAL RESEARCH VISIT. Do you:

☐ Agree to be identified from photographs and video footage in any presentation of the research (including during teaching).

☐ Agree to be identified from photographs and video footage in any academic journal the research is published in and understand this may be disseminated online.

Parents only:

☐ I agree to my child/ren to taking part in this research, if they agree to.

☐ I agree to my child/ren to being identified (if they agree), from photographs and video footage in any presentation of the research (including during teaching).

☐ I agree for my child/ren to be identified (if they agree) from photographs and video footage in any academic journal the research is published in.

One signed copy for the research team; one signed copy for the participant

NAME: ……

SIGNATURE: …… DATE: …….....

RESEARCHER'S NAME: ……

SIGNATURE: …… DATE: …….....

If you would like to discuss this study please contact Surinder Phull:

Tel: XXXX or email: XXXXX

This research has been approved by the Health and Human Sciences Ethics committee at the University of Hertfordshire (protocol number: HSK/PG/UH/00327); complaints about the conduct of this study can be addressed to my PhD supervisor Wendy Wills (XXXXXX). If necessary you can also contact the Ethics Clerk, Academic Services, MacLaurin Building, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Herts AL10 9EU. Email: XXXX; Tel: 01707 285996.

Appendix Five: Junior consent form in English

Household ID:

How Families Eat Together

Junior Agreement Form

Please read and tick the statements you agree with

☐ I have been given a copy of the information sheet that explains what will happen in this project and who I need to contact for more information. If the project changes, I will be given a new form.

☐ I understand that I don't have to take part in this project if I don't want to.

☐ I have had time to ask questions about this project and I am happy to take part.

☐ I understand that I can stop taking part whenever I want to without, saying why and that I don't have to answer anything I don't want to.

☐ I understand that the researchers will only tell other people my name/address or what I say or do if you think someone in this household is in danger.

☐ I give my permission for you to record me (using audio, video or photography).

☐ I agree that the information I tell or show you can be used in teaching as long as you change my name or don't show my face (so you can't tell it is me).

☐ I understand that my name and address will be kept by researchers for a maximum period of 2 years. Photos, interviews and videos from the project may be kept for up to 10 years. Only the researchers will be able to look at this information.

☐ I understand that parts of this project (photos/quotes from interviews/videos) might be used in journals that may appear on the Internet.

☐ I understand that I can ask for things I say or show you (in photographs or video or recorded interviews) to be deleted and not used.

One signed copy for the research team; one signed copy for the participant

NAME: ……

SIGNATURE: …… DATE: ……..

RESEARCHER'S NAME: ……

SIGNATURE: …… DATE: ……..

If you would like to discuss this study please ask your parents to contact me:

Or you can contact me with their permission:

Tel: XXXXXX or email: XXXXXX

This research has been approved by the Health and Human Sciences Ethics committee at the University of Hertfordshire (protocol number: HSK/PG/UH/00327) complaints about the conduct of this study can be addressed to my PhD supervisor Wendy Wills (XXXXX). If necessary, you can also contact the Ethics Clerk, Academic Services, MacLaurin Building, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Herts AL10 9EU. Email: XXXXXX; Tel 01707 285996.

Appendix Six: Adult study information sheet in Spanish

ESTUDIO "CÓMO COMEN LAS FAMILIAS JUNTAS" ("HOW FAMILIES EAT TOGETHER STUDY"): HOJA INFORMATIVA

Introducción: Está usted invitado a formar parte de un estudio de investigación. Antes de que decida si quiere o no formar parte del mismo, es importante que comprenda qué supone el estudio. Por favor, tómese tiempo para leer la siguiente información detenidamente. Si necesita más información que le pueda ayudar a tomar su decisión, por favor, contacte con el responsable del estudio. Su información de contacto está detallada al final de esta hoja informativa.

¿Cuál es la finalidad de este estudio?

El objetivo de este estudio es explorar las diferentes maneras en que las familias comen juntas. Esto implicará la obtención de los puntos de vista de los miembros de la familia que compran y preparan la comida, además de los de aquellos que comparten la hora de las comidas, incluidos los niños.

¿Quién lleva a cabo este estudio y por qué?

El estudio es parte de mi proyecto de doctorado en la Universidad de Hertfordshire. El proyecto estudia las diferencias en la rutina de los almuerzos/cenas entre España y Reino Unido. Esto puede llevar a seguir investigando sobre qué políticas pueden influenciar en esta área.

¿Tengo que participar?

La decisión de participar en este estudio es enteramente suya. Si acepta participar en el mismo, rellenará un formulario de consentimiento informado, pero eso no significa que usted tenga que completar el estudio. Usted es libre de abandonar el estudio sin necesidad de dar una razón. Si decide abandonar el estudio, dicha decisión no le afectará de ninguna manera.

¿Quién puede formar parte de este estudio?

Estoy interesada en trabajar con un número pequeño de familias con niños de edades comprendidas entre los 5 y los 16 años. Me gustaría conocer, de todos los miembros de la unidad familiar, qué consideran más agradable y desafiante sobre las comidas familiares, y de manera más general, las implicaciones de esas comidas.

¿Cuánto tiempo debo formar parte del estudio?

Su participación en el estudio no durará más de 3□4 semanas. De hecho, la mayoría de la información será recabada en aproximadamente una semana, pero dejaré ese tiempo extra en caso de que fuera necesario volver y preguntarles alguna cuestión en caso de necesitarlo después de haber revisado el material recabado.

¿Qué ocurrirá si participo?

Si decide participar en este estudio, realizaré una visita incial a su casa donde entrevistarñe a la persona o personas responsables de preparar y cocinar la comida. Posteriormente,

estableceremos 2 ó 3 ocasiones en las que pueda ir a su casa y presenciar la hora de la comida con su familia. Del mismo modo, en el período de una semana, le dejaré algunas cámaras y animaré a toda la familia a grabar o fotografiar distintos aspectos de la rutina familiar en las comidas. Finalmente, organizaré una entrevista en la que discutiremos los datos que haya recogido.

¿Qué tipo de información busco recoger?

El estudio tiene como objetivo la observación de diversos aspectos de las comidas familiares. El tipo de aspectos en que estoy interesada son:

- ¿Quién hace la compra, prepara y cocina las comidas?
- ¿Con qué frecuencia comen juntos como familia?
- ¿Quién está presente en las comidas familiares y quién no?
- ¿Qué es lo que más disfrutan los diferentes miembros de la familia sobre comer juntos y qué cambiarían si pudieran?

¿La información proporcionada será confidencial?

El estudio puede implicar que usted revele información personal, como los nombres de los miembros de su familia, profesiones, edad de los niños, y rutinas semanales. Tanto esta información, como los nombres y direcciones serán guardados de manera segura en un armario cerrado con llave en la Universidad de Hertfordshire, que sólo será accesible para mí misma y mis supervisores de doctorado (Wendy Wills y Angela Dickinson). Los datos recogidos de manera electrónica, como entrevistas, fotografías y vídeos, serán guardados en un ordenador con acceso seguro al que únicamente tendremos acceso mis supervisoras y yo misma. Esos datos se guardarán por un período de 10 años.

¿Qué sucederá con los resultados del estudio?

Los datos del estudio serán analizados y redactados como parte de mi estudio de doctorado. Del mismo modo, analizaré y escribiré sobre los mismos en futuros proyectos de investigación sobre las comidas familiares. Si usted da su consentimiento, la información será usada para la publicación de artículos en revistas especializadas, seminarios y presentaciones en congresos. Usted no tiene porqué ser identificado en los resultados si no lo desea, y hay formas hacerlo menos reconocible en las fotografías. Si usted da su consentimiento para este tipo de uso, debe quedar claro que parte de esta información puede estar disponible de manera online, y podrá ser accesible en un amplio período de tiempo.

¿Quién ha revisado este estudio?

Este estudio ha sido revisado por el comité de Salud y Ciencias Humanas de la Universidad de Hertfordshire con Autoridad Delegada. Número de Protocolo de la Universidad de Hertfordshire: HSK/PG/UH/00327 **CONTACTO**: Si usted necesitara información adicional sobre cualquier aspecto del estudio, por favor, contacte conmigo ya sea por email o teléfono: Surinder Phull Tel: XXXXXXX Email: XXXXXXXXX **Gracias por su atención**

Appendix Seven: Junior study information sheet in Spanish

ESTUDIO "CÓMO COMEN LAS FAMILIAS JUNTAS" ("HOW FAMILIES EAT TOGETHER STUDY"): HOJA INFORMATIVA

Introducción:

Tu familia y tú habéis sido invitados a participar en un estudio de investigación. Puedes elegir si quieres participar o no. Lee toda la información de esta hoja para que puedas hacerte una idea sobre le tema.

¿Cuál es la finalidad de este estudio?

Estoy interesada en estudiar cómo comen las familias juntas. Me gustaría saber qué te gusta y que cambiarías de vuestras comidas en famila.

¿Quién lleva a cabo este estudio y por qué?

Estudio en la Universidad de Hertfordshire, y esto forma parte de in proyecto de investigación. Espero que me dé una idea de qué les gusta a diferentes familias y por qué.

¿Tengo que participar?

La decisión de participar en este estudio es enteramente suya. Si aceptas participar en el mismo, rellenarás un formulario de consentimiento informado, pero no hay problema si cambias de opinión. Eres libre de abandonar el estudio en cualquier momento sin ningún problema.

¿Cuánto tiempo debo formar parte del estudio?

La mayoría de la información la recogeré en aproximadamente una semana, pero puede que necesite volver en unas semanas para preguntaros algunas cuestiones.

¿Qué ocurrirá si mi familia participa en le estudio?

- Preguntaré sobre quién hace la compra, prepara y cocina las comidas en tu casa.
- También os dejaré una cámara de fotos y de vídeo durante una semana para que puedas fotografiar y grabar lo que te parezca interesante sobre las comidas o la su preparación cuando yo no esté presente.
- Además, os visitaré para estar presente en 2 o 3 comidas en vuestra casa. Finalmente, volveré al final de la semana y os entrevistaré a todos sobre lo que he visto a lo largo de la semana.

¿La información sobre mí y mi familia será confidencial?

Recogeré información sobre ti y tu familia que no será compartida con nadie excepto con otras dos investigadoras.

¿Qué sucederá con los vídeos, fotos y las entrevistas?

Yo me encargaré de guardarlos y vigilarlos. Si tus padres dan su consentimiento, la información será usada para la en libros y revistas, y parte de esta información puede estar disponible en

Internet. No tienes porqué aceptar eso. Si no quieres que se publique toda la información, esta será destruida.

CONTACTO: Si necesitaras información adicional sobre cualquier aspecto del estudio, puedes preguntarle a tus padres o mí misma pero con su permiso:

Surinder Phull
Tel: XXXXXXX Email: XXXXXXXX

Appendix Eight: Adult consent form in Spanish

Formulario de Consentimento: ID…

Acuerdo para participar en un estudio de investigación.

Por favor lea y marque las declaraciones con las que está de acuerdo:

☐ Me han entregado una copia de la hoja de información que explica en qué consiste este estudio, incluidos los objetivos, los métodos y los datos de contacto del equipo de investigación. Sé lo que necesito hacer. Si el estudio cambia, me darán un nuevo formulario de consentimiento.

☐ Entiendo que no tengo que participar en este estudio si no quiero.

☐ He tenido tiempo de hacer preguntas sobre este estudio y acepto participar.

☐ Entiendo que puedo dejar de participar cuando lo desee sin decir por qué y que no tengo que responder nada que no quiera.

☐ Entiendo que solo le dirá a otras personas (aparte de las personas del equipo de investigación) mi nombre / dirección o lo que digo o hago si cree que alguien en este hogar está en peligro.

☐ Le doy mi permiso para que me grabe a mí y a mi hogar (usando audio, video o fotografía).

☐ Estoy de acuerdo en que la información I (incluyendo materiales de enseñanza)

☐ Entiendo que los investigadores mantendrán de forma segura la información personal sobre mí durante un período máximo de 2 años. Los datos del estudio que no sean información personal pueden conservarse hasta por 10 años.

☐ Entiendo que los hallazgos de esta investigación podrían usarse en publicaciones académicas, presentaciones de conferencias y enseñanza, y estos pueden difundirse en línea.

☐ Entiendo que puedo pedir que se eliminen y no se usen las cosas que digo o les muestro (en fotografías o video).

PARA COMPLETAR LA VISITA DE INVESTIGACIÓN FINAL.

☐ Acepto ser identificado a partir de fotografías y secuencias de video en cualquier presentación de la investigación (incluso durante la enseñanza).

☐ Acepto ser identificado a partir de fotografías y secuencias de video en cualquier revista académica en la que se publique la investigación y entienda que esto se puede difundir en línea.

Sólo padres:

☐ Estoy de acuerdo con mis hijos a participar en esta investigación, si están de acuerdo.

☐ Acepto que mis hijos sean identificados (si están de acuerdo), a partir de fotografías y secuencias de video en cualquier presentación de la investigación (incluso durante la enseñanza).

☐ Estoy de acuerdo con que mis hijos se identifiquen (si están de acuerdo) a partir de fotografías y secuencias de video en cualquier revista académica en la que se publique la investigación.

Una copia firmada para el equipo de investigación; una copia firmada para el participante

NOMBRE: ……

FECHA DE FIRMA: ……..

NOMBRE DEL INVESTIGADOR: ……

FECHA DE FIRMA: ……..

Si desea discutir este estudio, comuníquese con Surinder Phull:
Tel: XXXX o correo electrónico: XXXXX
Esta investigación ha sido aprobada por el comité de ética de salud y ciencias humanas de la Universidad de Hertfordshire (número de protocolo: HSK / PG / UH / 00327); Las quejas sobre la realización de este estudio pueden dirigirse a mi supervisora de doctorado Wendy Wills (XXXXXX). Si es necesario, también puede comunicarse con el Secretario de Ética, Servicios Académicos, Edificio MacLaurin, Universidad de Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Herts AL10 9EU. Correo electrónico: XXXX; Tel: 01707 285996.

Appendix Nine: Junior consent form in Spanish

Formulario de Consentimiento (Jóvenes) ID….

Acuerdo para participar en un estudio de investigación.

Por favor lea y marque las declaraciones con las que está de acuerdo

☐ Me han entregado una copia de la hoja de información que explica lo que Pasar en este proyecto y con quien necesito contactar para mas información. Si el proyecto cambia, me darán una nueva forma.

☐ Entiendo que no tengo que participar en este proyecto si no quiero

☐ He tenido tiempo de hacer preguntas sobre este proyecto y me complace participar.

☐ Entiendo que puedo dejar de participar cuando lo desee sin decir nada y por qué no tengo que responder nada que no quiera.

☐ Entiendo que los investigadores solo le dirán a otras personas mi nombre /dirección o lo que digo o hago si cree que alguien en este hogar está en peligro.

☐ Le doy mi permiso para que me grabe (usando audio, video o fotografía).

☐ Estoy de acuerdo en que la información que te digo o muestro que puedes usar en la enseñanza siempre y cuando cambies mi nombre o no muestres mi rostro (así no puedes decir que soy yo).

☐ Comprendo que los investigadores mantendrán mi nombre y dirección durante un período máximo de 2 años. Las fotos, entrevistas y videos del proyecto pueden conservarse hasta por 10 años. Solo los investigadores podrán ver esta información.

☐ Entiendo que partes de este proyecto (fotos / citas de entrevistas / videos) pueden usarse en revistas que pueden aparecer en Internet.

☐ Entiendo que puedo pedir que se eliminen y no se usen las cosas que digo o les muestro (en fotografías o videos o entrevistas grabadas).

Una copia firmada para el equipo de investigación; una copia firmada para el participante

NOMBRE: ……

FECHA DE FIRMA: …….....

NOMBRE DEL INVESTIGADOR: ……

FECHA DE FIRMA: …….....

Si desea discutir este estudio, pídale a sus padres que se comuniquen conmigo:

O puedes contactar conmigo con su permiso:
Tel: XXXXXX o correo electrónico: XXXXXX

Esta investigación ha sido aprobada por el comité de Ética de Salud y Ciencias Humanas de la Universidad de Hertfordshire (número de protocolo: HSK / PG / UH / 00327) Las quejas sobre la realización de este estudio pueden dirigirse a mi supervisora de doctorado Wendy Wills (XXXXX). Si es necesario, también puede comunicarse con el Secretario de Ética, Servicios Académicos, Edificio MacLaurin, Universidad de Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Herts AL10 9EU. Correo electrónico: XXXXXX; Tel. 01707 285996.

Appendix Ten: Topic guide

Examination of Family Mealtimes

Topics / issues to be explored:

Family structures and activities

- Who lives here? Probe whether this has changed if applicable.
- How long have you lived here? Probe earlier living arrangements since having children
- Do you spend much time together as a family? Are there particular times when you spend time together? Before school? After school? In the evening? What about at the weekend? And holidays? When else is it different?
- Are there other family members who don't live here that you spend time with?

Mealtimes

- Tell me about your week in terms of the main meal – when do you have your main meal? On weekdays. And on the weekend?
- What time? Who is usually present – let's go through each day [go through the days of the week] – are there activities the children do that influence who eats when?
- What about your work / your spouse's work – how does this influence the main meal and when it is eaten?

Food Work

- Tell me who does most of the cooking? Does this vary? On weekdays? At the weekend? What about the children – are they involved in any way?
- What about the shopping – where do you buy your food? Do you tend to shop in one place (supermarket) or get food from different places? Let's go through where you would get your food on a typical week.
- Tell me about the sort of food do you cook when you eat together? Is it home cooked food or ready prepared?

All of the above will be asked with the research questions of the study in mind:

- How is pleasurable eating experienced and conceptualised by families?
- What are the facilitators and constraints to pleasurable eating?
- To what extent is conviviality part of dining culture?
- Are there normative pressures to engage in family meals? How does this influence experiences of conviviality?